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HOWARD THURSTON'S CARD TRICKS

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PREFACE

In presenting to my magical *confrères* and the public in general this contribution to the already extensive literature on Conjuring and Card Tricks, I would point out that I can make no excuse for the *raison d'être* of this book beyond the fact that I have been led to believe that a strictly ORIGINAL TREATISE, embracing the very latest sleights with playing-cards, combined with descriptions of many new and hitherto unknown non-sleight-of-hand card tricks, would meet with approbation from amateurs and professionals alike, taking into consideration the ever-increasing popularity of the Magician's Art.

HOWARD THURSTON.
PALACE THEATRE, LONDON,

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CHAPTER I.

A Few Incidents in the Life of Howard Thurston.

HOWARD THURSTON, the Premier Card Manipulator of the World, and known throughout America as "The Man who Mystified Hermann," was born at Columbus, Ohio, on the 10th of July, 1869, and is therefore now in his thirty-first year.

Originally intended by his father—a gentleman of firm Christian principles—for the ministry, he entered the D. L. Moody College, in Northfield, Mass., and completed a course of five years' training. During this period he came to the conclusion that Providence had never intended him to go through life as a parson, and his natural love of Magic always predominated over his liking for the more serious subject he was studying.

Upon graduating with honors from the College, very much against his father's wish he decided to adopt Magic as his profession. (How many other well-meaning enthusiasts have adopted this procedure, and with what result?) He did so, but found that there were already too many "all-round" Conjurers in the business. This somewhat damped his ardor at first; but, after cogitating for some considerable time, he decided to adopt a single branch of the Magician's Art, viz., Card Tricks.

Then came many weary months of assiduous practice, the greater part of the time being occupied in a strict adherence to a special system of strengthening and giving additional flexibility to the muscles of the hands (a system which, much as I should like, I am not in a position to divulge), and after five years' traveling in America, presenting a Magical Entertainment of two hours in length in the smaller cities, Mr. Thurston first made his bow to a public audience as a Card Manipulator at the Fountain Square Theatre, Cincinnati, Ohio, in January, 1895. Since then his career has been one of unprecedented success and brilliancy.

One of the chief characteristics of Mr. Thurston's act is his graceful stage deportment. No other living artiste, in my opinion (and I have witnessed the performances of the best Prestidigitateurs of the past quarter of a century) can compare with him in the incomparable manner in which he presents his tricks.

There is nothing automatic about this Past Master of the Art. During the whole of his performance he is thinking, and always on the alert, watching for new ideas to occur to his energetic brain. Magic, like Literature is a double Art: Mechanical Magic is the Prose, while Sleight-of-Hand is the Poetry, and it is in this latter branch that this great artiste excels.

Mr. Thurston's *pièce de resistance* is his celebrated Rising-Card Trick, with which he absolutely mystified that guardian of an honored name in the world of deception—HERMANN THE GREAT.

With regard to this trick I think it will be of interest to the readers of this book, to reproduce at this point the following extract from the *Denver Sunday Post*, of October 23d, 1898:

"HERMANN, THE GREAT, MYSTIFIED BY THURSTON.

"Hermann, the magician, and his entire company, including Mme. Hermann, were nonplussed last night on the Tabor Grand stage by another magician. The scene occurred about 7:30 o'clock, before the prestidigitateur had dressed for his performance, and while Mme. Hermann was yet in street costume. Both had come in with the understanding that they were to witness a performance before commencing their own.

"The chief actor in the scene was Howard Thurston, who has been filling a two weeks' engagement at the Orpheum Theatre.

"Hermann, having heard of Thurston's act, or trick, called at the theatre one evening to witness it, and was so pleased with it that he requested the young man to call. In response, Thurston called on Hermann, and they discussed the act.

Hermann told Thurston that he would be delighted to have him give the trick before his entire company, and, if its members were as favorably impressed with it as he himself, he would purchase it.

"Thurston set last evening as the time of the trial exhibition. The drop curtain was lowered and Thurston told all the company to line up before him on the stage. In the group of auditors, besides Mr. and Mrs. Hermann, were W. E. Robinson, chief illusionist of the company, also a representative of the *Denver Post*, the numerous stage hands and carpenters attached to the company and the theatre.

"Thurston occupied a position in the centre of the stage. Four of the witnesses drew a card from a pack which had been shuffled, looked at it, noted the denomination silently, and replaced it in Thurston's hands. Then he withdrew to a position further in the rear, and asked one of the spectators what card he had taken out of the pack.

"It was the ten of diamonds," was the answer.

"'Ten of diamonds, come forth!' commanded Thurston, who held the pack. Instantly the ten of diamonds arose from his left hand and ascended two feet to the right hand. Addressing the next man, he said: 'What card did you draw?'

"The jack of hearts."

"Thurston ordered the jack of hearts to ascend, and it instantly obeyed.

"To the next man Thurston propounded a similar question, with like results. He then asked the next man, Hermann himself, to name his card, which happened to be the ten of clubs.

"Let the ten of clubs appear !' said Thurston, and the familiar ten-spot silently arose as if propelled by an unseen power. Hermann smiled with wonder at the performance, and was completely mystified. Afterward Hermann acknowledged the trick was a winner, and offered to purchase it.

"Thurston was especially gratified at the fact that his trick was not seen through by the Hermann party. He had mystified the mystifier."

When this episode became known, there was a great rush on the part of the public to witness this trick, and since then Mr. Thurston has never

passed a single week out of an engagement.

In addition to his being otherwise highly connected socially, Mr. Thurston is the nephew of United States Senator John M. Thurston, of Nebraska.

I include the following opinions of well-known newspapers, taken from a large, well-filled scrap-book now before me, of flattering Press notices, clipped from leading newspapers of the world, as I am of opinion that everything appertaining to Conjuring is of interest to students of books of this description.

San Francisco Examiner, March 27th, 1899.

"Howard Thurston has accomplished the seemingly impossible in presenting a sleight-of-hand performance in a gentlemanly manner. The charm of his act is quite as much in the way he does it as in what he does. Some of his tricks are astounding."

New York World, August 21st, 1890.

"Admirable as is the work of all these, the act of Mr. Thurston provokes the keenest interest, owing to its novelty and to his remarkable expertness.

"As a manipulator of cards, he must be the envy of every slick and smooth card-sharp in the country. He is more adroit in his tricks than Kellar, Hermann, or any of the other great necromancers who have juggled the pasteboards among other feats of legerdemain.

"His tricks are worth studying by all who think they know a thing or two about shuffling cards."

In the United States Mr. Thurston always concluded his entertainment by producing numerous packs of cards from different parts of a spectator's clothing, finishing up by taking a live duck from under the gentleman's coat-collar.

With regard to the duck for this latter trick which Mr. Thurston carried with him in America, his trusted and intelligent colored assistant, Keno, who has been with him for three years, tells rather a humorous story, which, in addition to proving the shrewdness and sharpness of the lad, is distinctly interesting.

In Los Angeles, Cal., where Mr. Thurston was playing, his assistant was boarding with a colored family. One day, when a wedding was about to be celebrated in the house, they told him he had better go out in the yard and look for his duck, as they had missed it, and were afraid it had got away. He did so, but could find no duck. Poor Keno was in a fix; but being aware of a certain weakness for appropriating other people's poultry displayed by some classes of colored folk, he came to the conclusion that Mister Duck was intended to form part of the wedding repast. He thereupon concocted a story to the effect that it did not matter about the duck being lost, as the day previously it had eaten, by accident, at the theatre a large quantity of poison which Mr. Thurston used for cleaning his diamonds, and the doctor had told Mr. Thurston he had better buy another one, as it would certainly die from the effects of the poison within two or three days. Keno then went off to the theatre, and on his return at night was informed that his duck had in some mysterious manner found its way back into the yard, which, upon investigation, he found to be true!

After being the recipient of many flattering proposals to appear in Europe, Mr. Thurston decided to cross the Atlantic, and opened at the Palace Theatre, London, on November 12th, 1900, his success being instantaneous. His original engagement was for four weeks, but he went serenely on his way, the applause increasing at each performance, for twenty-six consecutive weeks at this theatre, which is conceded by all to be the most fashionable and beautiful vaudeville house in Europe.

The following extract from the *London Mail* is of interest, and I include it:

"THE KING OF CARDS.

"At the Palace Theatre there is just now appearing Mr. H. Thurston, who with some justice calls himself the 'King of Cards.' Mr. Thurston has developed quite a new form of card entertainment, one which not only amuses, but absolutely mystifies, the audience. He has brought to a pitch of perfection the art of palming a pack of cards, with results which can be readily imagined by any one acquainted with card tricks. He has wonderful digital strength, and his latest feat of distributing a pack of cards singly throughout the audience quite brings down the house. Not only does he throw single cards into the gallery of what is one of the largest theatres in town, but with such accuracy that he can almost throw to any particular individual in the audience."

His success was all the more gratifying, inasmuch as he was preceded in London by many ex-pert card manipulators.

Being a polished gentleman both on and off the stage, Mr. Thurston made, during his stay in the great Metropolis, a host of friends; but this does not seem at all strange to any one personally acquainted with this genial and affable artiste. In addition to highly salaried engagements booked in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, etc., etc., Mr. Thurston holds contracts which will keep him busy for the next four years. A gentleman and a born artiste to his finger-tips, Howard Thurston—Premier Card Manipulator of the World—will undoubtedly cause his name to be a household word among conjurers for very many years to come.

BERNARD EUSTACE LENNOX.

Piccadilly, London, *January, 1901.*

CHAPTER II

Indispensable Sleights.

I AM of course aware that the "pass," "force," and "change" have often been explained in the numerous excellent treatises on Card Tricks in existence, but I feel it my duty to include descriptions of them herein, inasmuch as many of the most brilliant illusions with cards would be impossible but for a thorough knowledge of these. So as not to tax the patience of my readers who are advanced in the Art, I will make my descriptions as terse as possible, first of all explaining what is acknowledged to be the foundation of card manipulation, viz.:

THE PASS.

For the accomplishment of this sleight, the pack is held as in Fig. i, with the little finger of the left hand inserted over the card to be brought to the top. Now cover the pack with the right hand. Grasp the lower portion of the pack lengthways between the second finger at the upper, and the thumb at the lower end, the left thumb lying slightly bent across the pack.

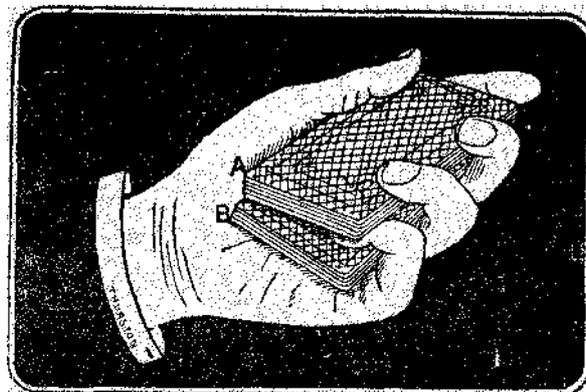
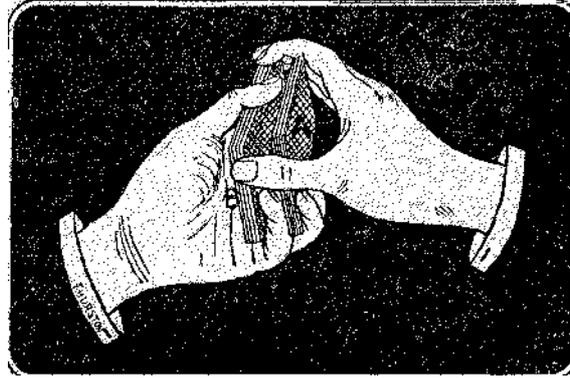
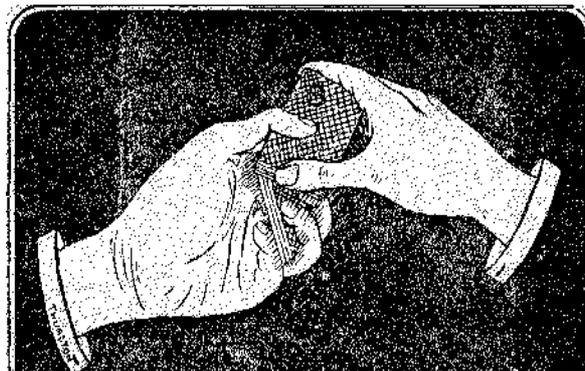


FIG. 1.

Press the upper edge of the lower packet into the fork of the left thumb so that the two packets will be in the position depicted in Fig. 2.

**Fig. 2**

The fingers of the left hand are now extended, causing the upper portion of the pack to be drawn away, at the same time raising (with the right hand) the lower edge of the under pack till the edges of the packets just clear each other (see Fig. 3), when, by the mere act of closing the left hand, they will be brought together

**Fig. 3**

as at first, save that they will have changed places, and the desired card will now be on the top. The letters A and B in the illustrations will make this clear.

The "pass" will appear exceedingly difficult of execution at the outset; but with careful practice, aiming more at neatness than rapidity, the different movements which I have described will melt, as it were, into one, and the sleight can then be accomplished in an absolutely undetectable manner.

There are numerous other methods of making the pass, some with the aid of only one hand; but as the above is conceded to be the most perfect, I have thought it necessary for me to explain merely this one.

THE FORCE.

The sleight with the above title consists of compelling a spectator to select a certain card, and is indispensable *in* certain tricks.

It is next to impossible *in* writing to teach the novice to force a card; but the idea will very soon become apparent after the learner has made a few experiments. The card which you desire selected is, in the first place, either at the top or bottom of the pack, the pass is now made (bringing the particular

card to the middle) and the pack spread out fanwise, the second finger of the right hand mean-while pressing on the bottom of the necessary card, as in Fig. 4. A spectator is now asked to select a card from the pack, the performer meantime running the cards quickly from hand to hand, and, as the drawer's fingers approach the pack, the second finger of the right hand literally pushes the desired card into his hand, as in Fig. 5, which represents the card being pushed forward. The card to be forced should be a little more exposed than the rest. This, however, is only the A B C of the "force," the successful operation of which can only be accomplished after innumerable trials. Above all, don't be in a great hurry to get it over.

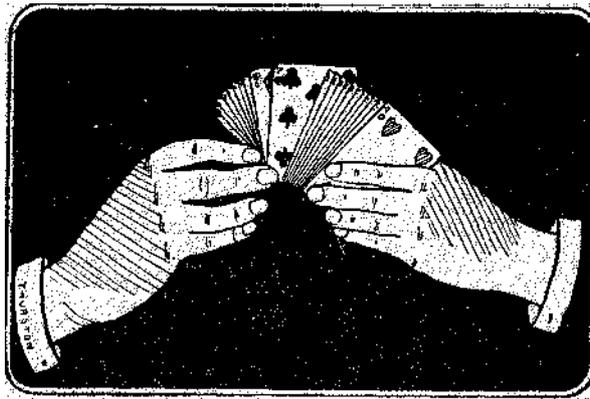


FIG. 4

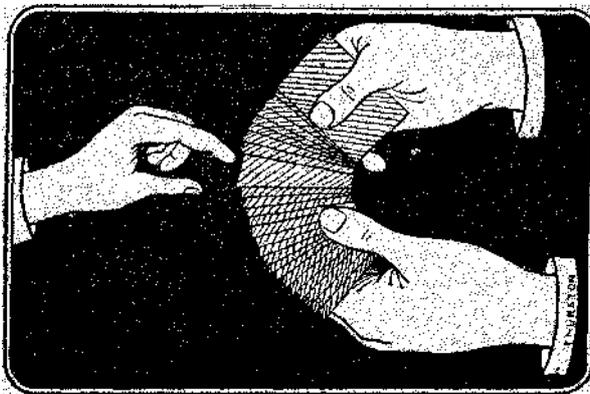


FIG. 5

Endeavor to appear to be absolutely indifferent as to where the card is taken, even going so far as to say: "Have your choice, sir; take any card you wish." If by any chance the force fails, and another card is chosen, the performer need not fear a *contretemps*, but with a "Thank you, sir; kindly re-place your card anywhere you like in the pack," put the little finger on it, make the pass bringing it to the top, from which position it can be palmed off, or the trick finished as fancy dictates. The first card is now "forced" on some more accommodating person.



THE CHANGE.

A card held in the hand mysteriously changes to an entirely different one. There are several methods of performing the above sleight; but I shall describe one only, which I consider to be the best.

The card to be changed is held between the first and second finger of the right hand, the pack being held in the left, with the card for which the first is to be changed slightly projecting from the top. The right hand now makes a sweeping motion, and, as it passes the pack, leaves the card at the bottom and brings away, with the thumb and first finger (see Fig. 6), the top one. This may appear to the neophyte to be impossible of undetectable execution, but with even a little practice it will be found that a perfect illusion can be created.

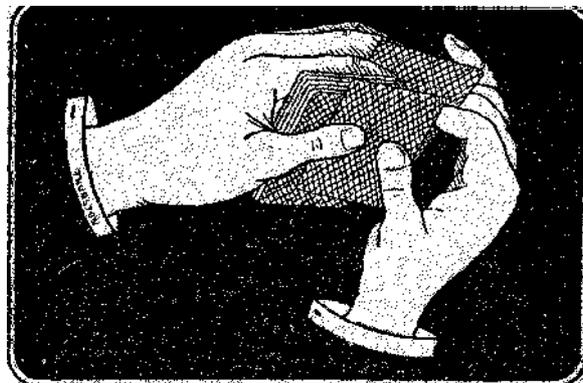


FIG. 6

If the body makes a half turn from right to left, it will greatly facilitate the deception, or if done in the act of addressing a spectator, and slightly bending forward at the same time.



THE ORDINARY PALM.

It is often necessary to palm or conceal a card the palm of the hand. Suppose, for instance, a card is chosen from the pack and replaced. The "pass" is then made and the card brought to the top. The pack is now held in the left hand, the right hand approaches the same, and with the second finger pushes forward the top card an eighth of an inch or more, at the same time exerting a slight pressure upon it. This causes the card to be tilted into the palm of the right hand, which forthwith grasps the pack between the first finger and thumb. (See Fig. 7.)

The pack can now safely be handed to another spectator to thoroughly shuffle, and, when returned, the performer has no difficulty in secretly replacing the palmed card on top.

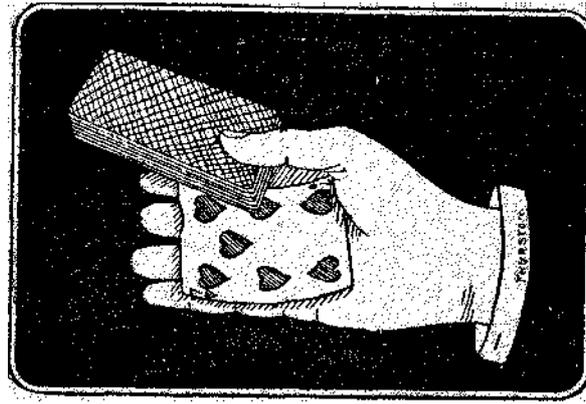


FIG. 7

While the card is palmed, allow the hand to hang down in a careless position, and never, under any circumstances, even glance at it.

The beginner should devote as much time as possible to the practice of the foregoing sleights, as when he is proficient innumerable new tricks and combinations will suggest themselves to his mind.

CHAPTER III

The Continuous Front and Back Hand-Palm and Tricks in Connection Therewith.

THE novel sleight with the above title is of comparatively recent invention, the idea it embodies being to enable the performer to conceal one or more cards in his hand, although at any moment showing back and front of the hand to be perfectly empty.

To successfully accomplish this feat, great digital dexterity is essential, but this, of course, can be attained by assiduous practice.

I will first of all describe the method of working this sleight with one card.

To begin with, the card is held between the tips of the middle finger and thumb, as in Fig. 8.

The first and little fingers now grip the card, as in Fig. 9.

The two middle fingers are next bent and brought down under the card and round to the front of same, thereby causing the card to revolve

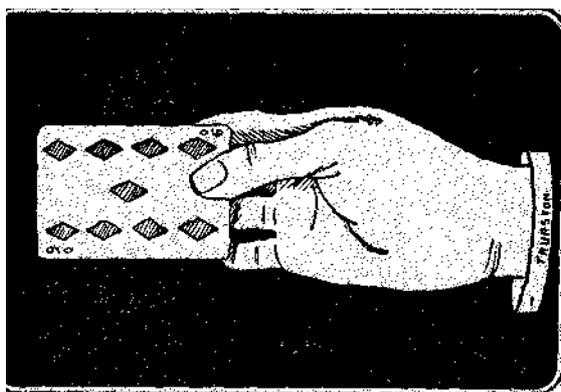


FIG. 8

between the first and fourth fingers, as though on an axis, and assume the

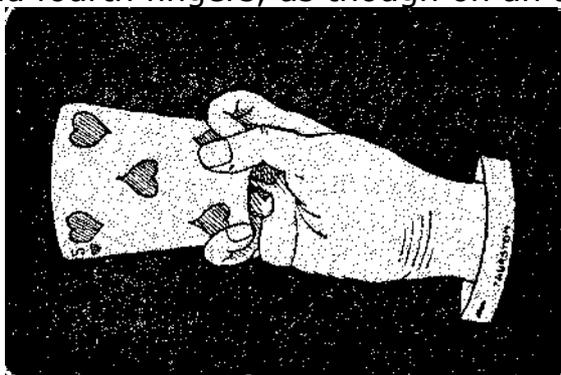
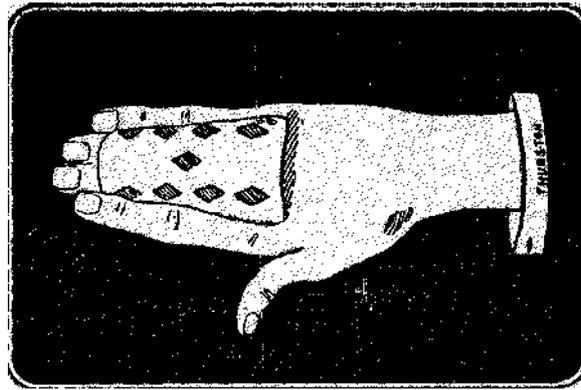


FIG. 9

position on the back of the hand clipped between the first and second and third and fourth fingers, depicted in Fig. 10.

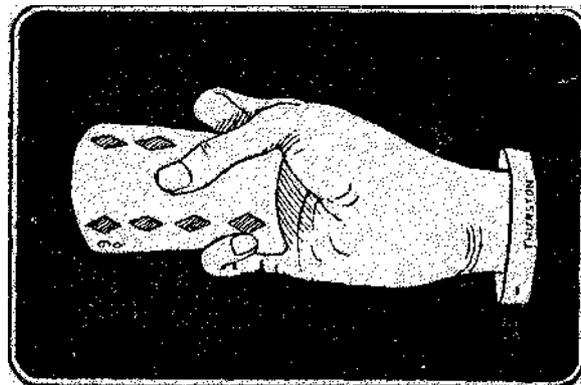
After considerable practice it will be found that all the movements I have just described will become practically one, and the card will apparently vanish from the hand without the most astute spectator having the faintest idea where, especially if the manipulation is accomplished with a sweeping motion, as though the card were thrown in the air.

**FIG. 10**

Now to reverse the card to the front of the hand again, so as to enable the back of the hand to be shown to the audience.

To accomplish this, the fingers bend forward so that the thumb can press on the middle of the face of the card (see Fig. 11), and pull it sharply round to the front of the hand, where it is held between the fingers, as shown in Fig. 12.

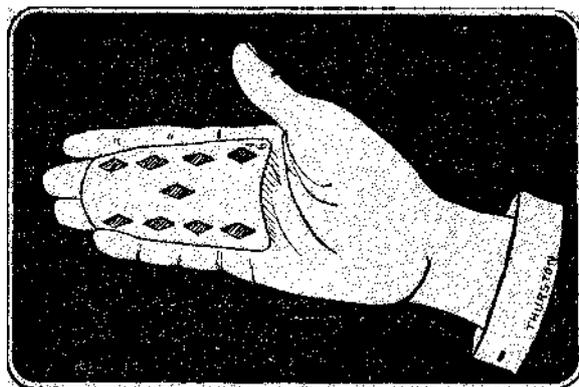
The principal difficulty encountered by students when learning this sleight, is to prevent the audience from catching a glimpse of the cards as they

**FIG. 11**

are brought from the back to the front of the hand, or *vice versa*. This can, however, be surmounted by practising before a mirror, as you will then be able to ascertain the exact angle at which the movement can be indetectably accomplished.

To further heighten the effect of the sleight, when the card is in the position (as in Fig. 12), with the back of the hand, of course, facing the audience, I push the card down into the palm, as shown in Fig. 13. This movement, which is absolutely impossible to describe in writing, will become apparent to the learner after a few trials.

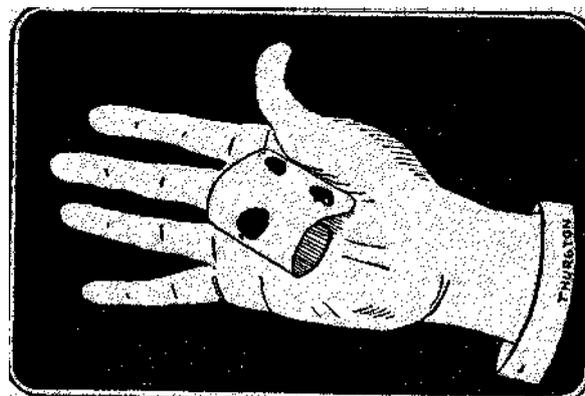
With the card in this position, of course the fingers and thumb can be spread wide apart. When manipulating more than one card, the above movements all hold good, with the exception of bringing the cards from the back of the hand to the front.

**FIG. 12**

Instead of the thumb pulling the cards round to the front, which would practically be impossible, it simply presses upon them, while the first finger moves to the other end of the cards, and pushes them down into the attitude illustrated in Fig. 12.

The foregoing is the correct method of executing the continuous front and back hand palm.

There are, of course, innumerable additions to the original idea, a few of which, used by me in my act, I will now describe.

**FIG. 13.**

**THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FIVE CARDS
ONE AT A TIME.
FIRST METHOD.**

In this trick the performer takes one card, as in Fig. 8, and back-palms it. He then takes another one between the middle finger and thumb, and slides it on to the back of the hand on top of the first one, the first and fourth fingers slightly opening to receive it. The other three cards are treated in the same manner.

This sleight will be found somewhat difficult at first, but, being so effective, it will amply repay the performer for any time he may spend on its acquirement, as I consider it one of the best tricks in my act.

SECOND METHOD.

In this method of performing the foregoing trick, after the artiste has back-palmed one card, in the act of placing the second card in position, he palms off with his left hand from the back of the right the first card vanished.

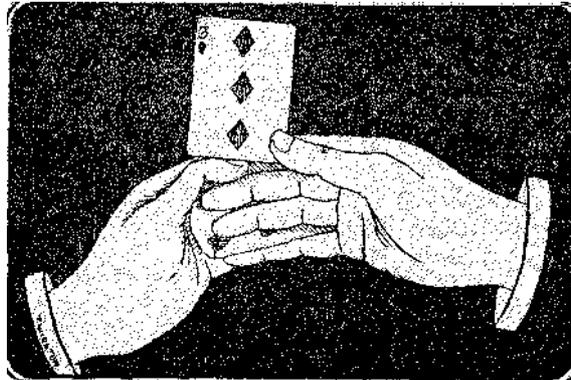
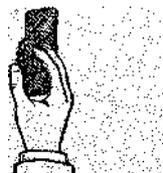


FIG. 14

(See Fig. 14 which represents the first card being removed). This is, of course, repeated with the remainder. Each card vanished is palmed off into the left hand in the act of placing the next one in position between the finger and thumb of the right, thus enabling the performer to show that he only holds one card in his right hand. The remaining four can then, if desired, be produced from the side of the left leg.

The sleight is, I believe, unknown to conjurers, and, if neatly executed, will cause great astonishment.



THE PRODUCTION OF CARDS ONE AT A TIME AT THE FINGER-TIPS FROM THE BACK-HAND PALM.

This is one of the prettiest effects in connection with the Back-hand Palm.

After the performer has vanished by means of the back-hand palm, say, five cards, and shown both sides of the hands to be empty, he proceeds to reproduce the cards one by one at the finger-tips, as in Fig. 15

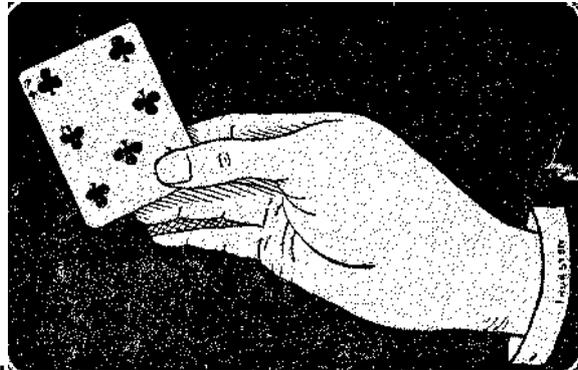


FIG. 15

This is accomplished in the following manner: When it is desired to produce one card from the back of the hand, the thumb bends round to the

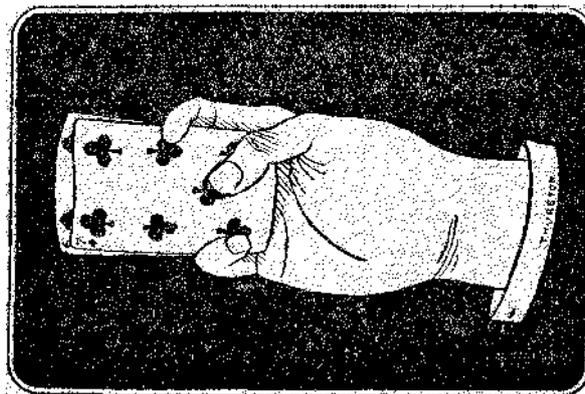


FIG. 16

middle of the nearest end of the outside card and literally pulls it away from the rest, the first and fourth fingers aiding in its release by slightly relaxing their pressure (see Fig. 16) Once quite free from the back of the hand, the card is pushed by the thumb into the position depicted in Fig. 15. This must be done very slowly at first, but, of course, in the actual performance all the above movements must be made simultaneously. If this is done with a slight wave of the hand, it will appear to the audience that the performer actually caught the card from the air.

The effect of this trick can be further heightened by the performer, after having caught, say, three cards, showing his right hand to be absolutely empty, back and front, and the fingers spread wide apart. The following is the procedure:

As each card is produced at the right-hand finger-tips, it is placed in the left hand. (Fig. 17 shows the exact positions of both hands.) When the performer has caught the third card, in the act of placing it in the left hand, he secretly

leaves the cards, still back-palmed, behind the three cards now in the left hand, gripped by the second finger. (See Fig. 18 which represents a back view showing the position of the hand and cards.)

The right hand is now shown empty, and the performer makes the remark: "No; certainly not. Nothing between the fingers. All we have here is three cards," meanwhile counting with the thumb of the right hand those in the hand. Under cover of this movement the two hidden cards are again back-palmed in the right hand (see Fig. 19), and reproduced at the will of the artist.

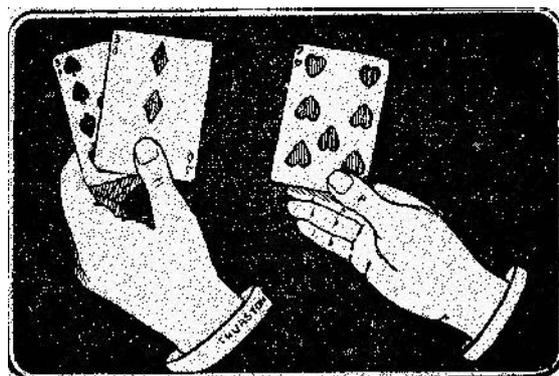


FIG. 17

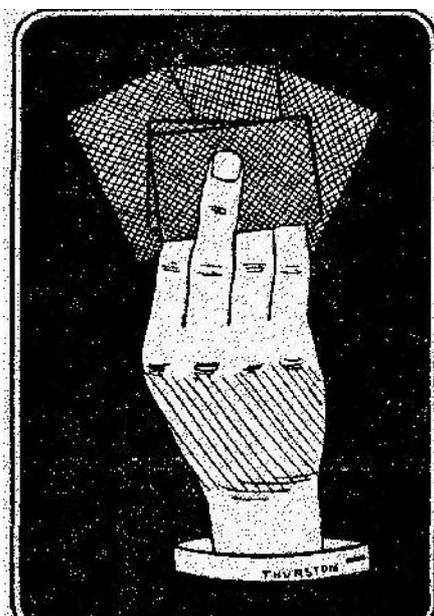


FIG. 18

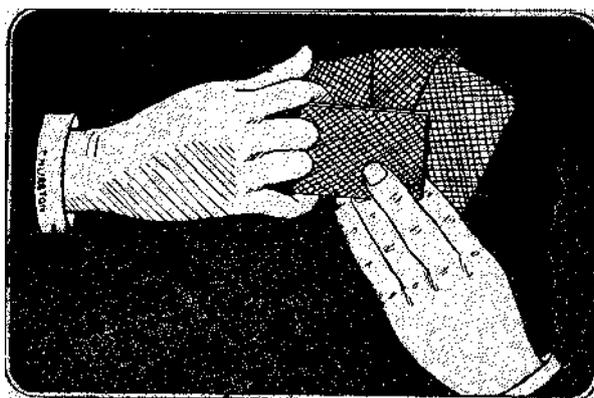


FIG. 19



THE PRODUCTION OF CARDS AT THE FINGER-TIPS FROM THE ORDINARY PALM.

My original method of producing the cards singly at the finger-tips, with the back of the hand toward the audience having met with such a great amount of success, I am pleased to acquaint my readers with the correct method of its execution.

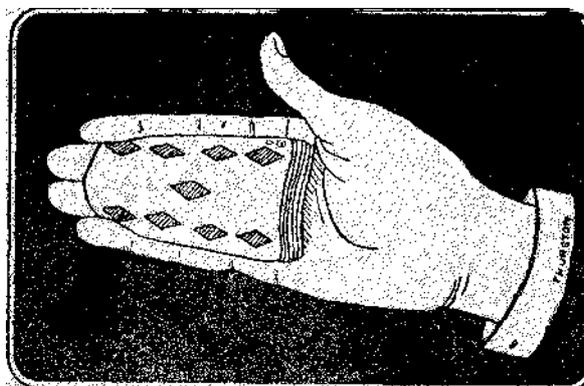


FIG. 20

From the ordinary palm the cards are transferred to the finger palm, as in Fig. 20. The little finger now very slightly relaxes its pressure on the cards, when it will be found upon practice that one card will be released (see Fig. 21).

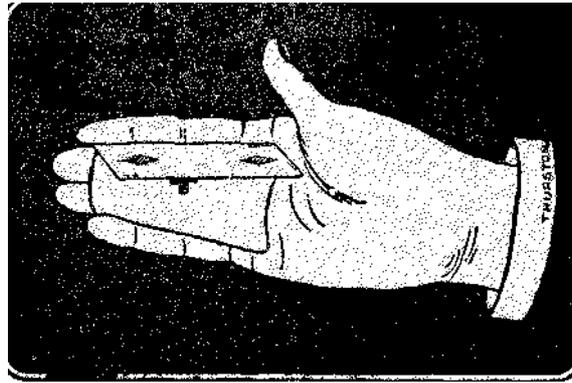


FIG. 21

The thumb now comes down under the end of the card and pushes it up into the position depicted in Fig. 22 the back of the hand, of course, facing the audience.

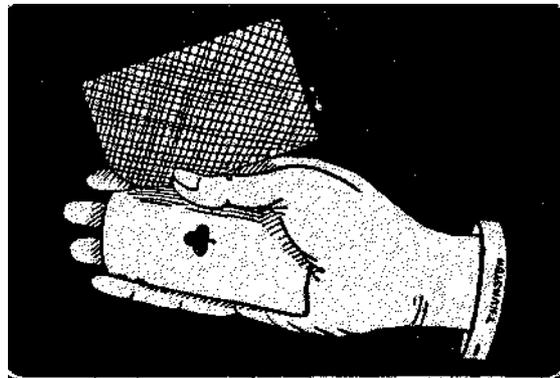


FIG. 22

I am usually in the habit of performing this sleight with from twenty-five to thirty ordinary cards, but three or four will be quite enough for the beginner to commence with.

PASSING A CARD THROUGH THE KNEES, ETC.

A card—say the ace of spades,—is held in the left hand in the position shown in Fig. 23. It now vanishes, immediately reappearing in the right hand (see Fig. 24), having apparently passed through the knees. It is next passed back to its original position, and then again into the right hand.

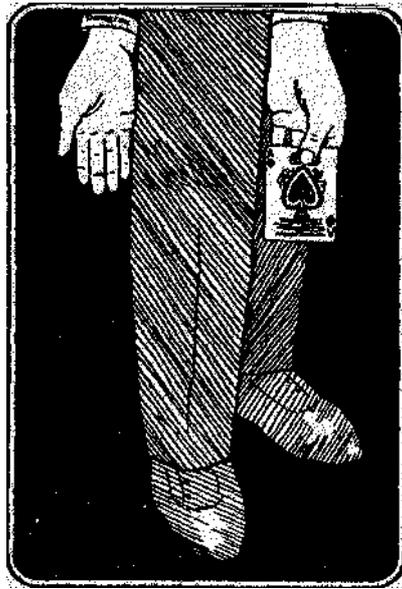


FIG. 23



FIG. 24

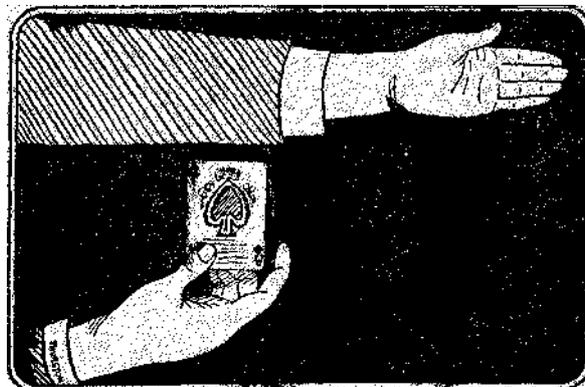
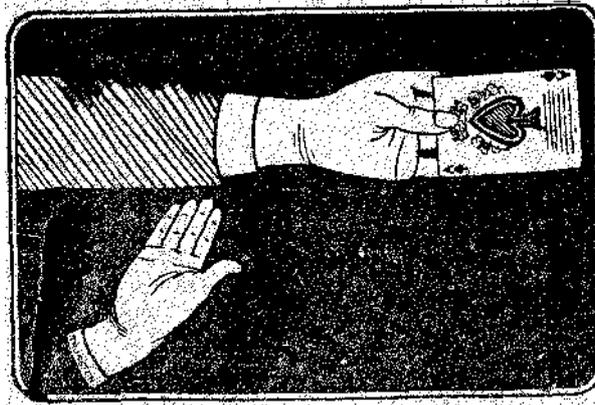
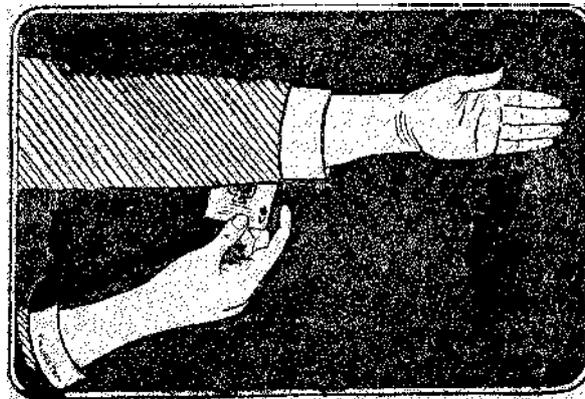


FIG. 25

**FIG. 26**

Both hands now assume the attitude illustrated in Fig. 25. The card is caused to apparently pass along the arm into the left hand (see Fig. 26), and

**FIG. 27**

then back into the right (see Fig. 27). It is then taken in the left hand and vanished, both hands being shown empty, and the card is reproduced at the finger-tips as though caught in the air.

This, to my mind, excellent trick is accomplished chiefly by the performer being able to execute the front- and back-hand palm with both hands with equal facility. There are, of course, two cards used, and as the method for secretly obtaining possession of the duplicate card is some-what unique and novel, I have come to the conclusion that I had better describe this trick in detail, as it is the foundation for innumerable other sleights.

In the first place, the performer takes in reality two aces of spades, but held closely together so that they appear to the audience as one card only. Both cards are now back-palmed, and hands shown empty. One only of the cards is "caught" at the finger-tips, and this is forthwith taken into the left hand and held in the first position for passing through the knees. It is now (with a swinging motion of the hand as if to throw the card behind the knee) back-palmed, and the duplicate (which has remained on the back of the other hand) produced in the right hand. This can be repeated at the wish of the performer. A certain time must be spent in getting the hands to work harmoniously together. If this is done, the illusion is perfect. The passing of the card along the arm is, of course, accomplished in a similar manner. The right hand now places the card which is visible to the audience between the second finger and thumb of the left hand, which forthwith back-palms it on top of the duplicate (by the method described on page 25). Both hands

are now shown empty, and as a *finale* the two cards are produced as one and laid on the table, this being easily brought about by tightly holding them together as in the first stage of the trick.

CHAPTER IV

The "Thurston" System of Expert Card Manipulation.

In this chapter I propose describing a system of Card Manipulation originated by myself a few years ago. I am, however, indebted to my friend, Mr. Si Stebbens, of America, for many valuable suggestions and ideas with regard to its conception.

The series of tricks about to be described are specially recommended to professionals, amateurs, and novices alike, as they are all absolutely new.

The whole system can be thoroughly learned in an hour, and when once this is done, the performer can exhibit tricks with cards which, to the uninitiated, seem altogether to transcend human ability.

A few effects to be obtained with the aid of this system are as follows:

Seven or eight cards are selected (not forced) in a bunch from a previously shuffled pack. The performer can instantly name the chosen cards.

The artist first shuffling the pack, a spectator is then asked to name any card, whereupon the performer states its correct position in the pack, and, to corroborate his assertion, immediately proceeds to cut the pack at the desired card.

Three cards are selected by a member of the audience, and, without looking at same, are placed by himself in his pocket. The performer now calls out the name of a certain card, which we will suppose is the eight of diamonds, and requests the spectator to take one of the three cards from his pocket, which, upon examination, is shown to be the eight of diamonds. This is repeated with the remaining two cards.

The foregoing are but a few of the many brilliant and bewildering tricks possible of performance by the method I am about to describe.

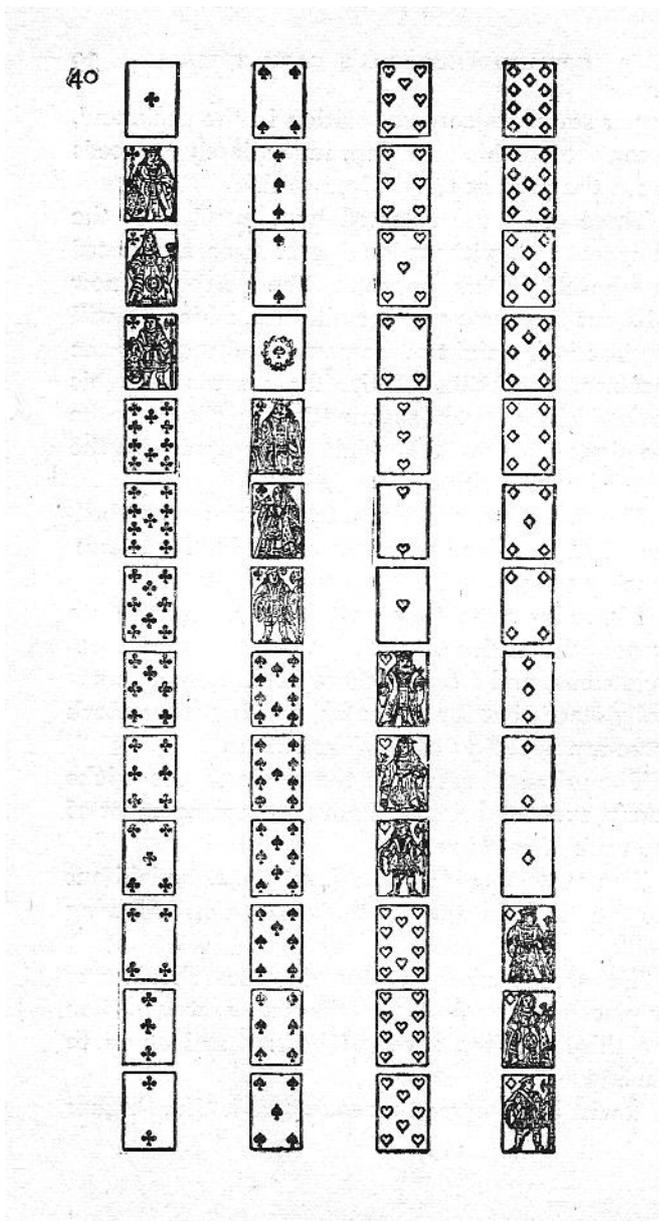
I have for some time past been accustomed to present this series of tricks at all my private engagements, and I can, without hesitation, emphatically state that for parlor or drawing-room work there are no better card-tricks extant.

The principal secret of the whole of the tricks herein explained lies in a novel prearrangement of the pack of cards used.

The cards should, in the first place, be laid out on the table in the order as shown on following page.

The second card (the four of spades) should now be placed on the first one (the ace of clubs), then the third one (the seven of hearts), and so on to the end.

It will be observed that each card is three higher than the one immediately



behind it, the arrangement of the suits being: Clubs, spades, hearts, diamonds. The precise arrangement of the suits is practically immaterial, and it would, perhaps, be as well for the student to adopt a system of his own. The arrangement of the Court cards is: jack—11, queen-12, king—13, so that supposing the bottom card of the pack was the jack of clubs, the performer would instantly know that the next card beginning at the top of the pack is the ace of spades.

The performer should, by means of his pocket or otherwise, exchange the pack he has been previously using, for a similar pack, prepared as just described.

For stage or drawing-room purposes, a very ingenious little piece of apparatus has recently been devised to enable the artiste to indetectably change one pack for another, and as it would be most useful in this case, I think I cannot do better than give my readers a description of it.

The principal part of this piece of apparatus consists of a metal ring, 6in. or 8in. in diameter, to which is attached a black cloth bag. To the ring is soldered a flat strip of metal, having riveted to it a spring clip. By means of a

sharp point protruding from the rear, the apparatus can be easily and quickly attached to the back of a chair by pushing the point into the woodwork (see Fig. 28). In the clip is inserted a pack of cards arranged in the order I have explained, which the performer must substitute for an ordinary pack by means of the following ruse:

With the pack in the right hand, he takes hold of the chair in such a manner that the thumb only is visible to the audience, the pack and the fingers being hidden by the back of the chair.

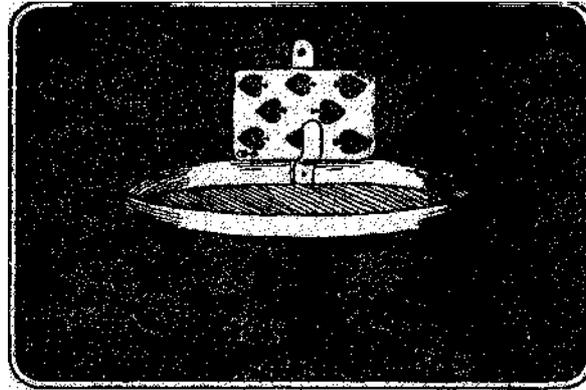
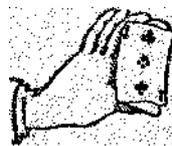


FIG. 28

The left hand now takes hold of the seat of the chair, which is set on one side, as if it were in the way. During this operation the pack of cards is dropped from the right hand into the bag, and the duplicate pack removed from the clip. If this is done neatly and without undue haste, the audience will never suspect that a change has been accomplished.

A more simple change, but which will answer the purpose quite as well, especially for an impromptu performance, is to simply place the pack which you have been using in your coat pocket, and an instant later take out from the same pocket the prepared pack.

The performer next proceeds to make what is known as a false shuffle with the prepared pack. As this is a most useful adjunct to many beautiful experiments with cards, I will describe two of the methods employed in its execution.



FIRST METHOD.

This is one of the very many deceptive sleights originated by the celebrated Professor Charlier, and is undoubtedly the best false shuffle in existence, but owing to the great amount of practice required for its successful accomplishment, it is rarely made use of except by professionals, but if thoroughly mastered the performer can deceive experts.

The pack is held in the left hand, and three or four of the top cards are passed into the right. Now pass the remaining cards in small parcels alternately above

and below these, but the cards that are passed below are taken from the top of the left-hand packet, and the cards that are placed above are passed from the bottom of the left-hand packet, this being exactly the reverse of the ordinary movement.

To pass the cards *from* the top of the left-hand packet to the bottom of the right-hand packet is fairly easy, they being pushed forward with the left thumb, but it is the reverse movement that is difficult.

I recommend this style of false shuffle to the lover of deceptive sleights, but for those who do not care to devote sufficient time for its undetectable execution I herewith describe a very easy, but at the same time effective, false shuffle originated by myself.



SECOND METHOD.

The pack is held in both hands, as in Fig. 29. The lower half of the pack is now removed with the right hand, but in doing so a few of the hinder-most cards of the pack in the left hand are left slightly protruding, as in Fig. 30.

The parcel in the right hand is now replaced on the front of the pack. If this is repeated with rapidity, the effect to the audience will be that the cards are thoroughly mixed, whereas in reality they are only cut. Armed with the prearranged pack, and the ability to execute one of the false shuffles, the

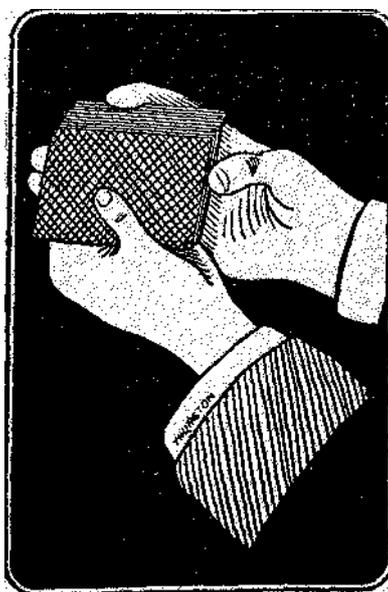
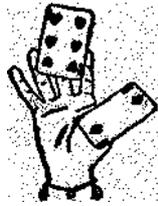


FIG. 29.

performer is now ready to present the following series of tricks :



TO INSTANTLY NAME ANY CARD
CHOSEN.

The pack is spread out fanwise to a spectator, with a request for him to select a card. When this is done, the performer, in a casual manner, cuts the cards at the point where the chosen card was removed, thereby



FIG. 30

bringing the card that was next above the selected one to the bottom of the pack, and the artiste has simply to catch a glimpse of the bottom card, which tells him the name of the chosen one. For instance, suppose the bottom card was the six of spades, the performer knows that the selected card must be the nine of hearts, because hearts follow spades, and, therefore, the next card (the one drawn) is a heart, and it will be remembered in the arrangement of the pack that each card is three higher than the preceding one. Therefore, if the bottom card is the six of spades, the selected card will be the nine of hearts,



TO TELL THE NAMES OF ANY NUMBER
OF CARDS CHOSEN.

A spectator is asked to take out a few cards in a bunch—eight or nine, or in fact as many as he likes. The cut is now made, and the bottom card noted,

and the performer is able to instantly name the chosen cards. When this has been done, if the cards are replaced on the bottom of the pack one by one in the order as chosen, the pack will still be in the correct condition for further tricks.

When naming the cards selected, so as not to give any astute member of the audience a chance to observe that each card is three spots higher than the preceding one, it is advisable not to call them out in their exact order.

Supposing the cards selected were the jack of spades, ace of hearts, four of diamonds, seven of clubs, ten of spades, king of hearts, three of diamonds, and six of clubs, the performer could name them in the following manner, thereby eliminating all suspicion of prearrangement:

Jack of spades, ace of hearts, then pass the four of diamonds and call the seven of clubs, then call the four of diamonds. But in placing the four of diamonds on the bottom of the pack, be sure to get it under the seven of clubs so as not to upset the order of arrangement. The performer will now have the seven of clubs on the bottom, so will instantly know that the ten of spades is the next card to be called.

In performing this trick I generally ask three or four members of the audience to each select a number of cards—all in bunches—from the top of the portion of cards held in the left hand.

It is well to ask those who have selected cards to mix them before starting to call out their names, as this disarranges the order of the cards they hold, otherwise they might note that the cards in their possession were called in the order they held them.



TO TELL THE EXACT POSITION IN THE PACK OF ANY CARD NAMED BY THE AUDIENCE.

The following explanation will require a little study, but if the rules are followed just as stated below, the student will soon comprehend the idea

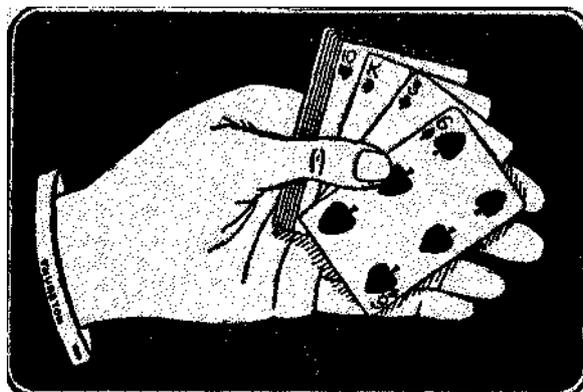


FIG. 31

I intend to present, and I dare say will be greatly pleased with the result. In my mind it is the key to the greatest combination of card tricks in existence.

To begin with, the card is named by the audience, the artiste so holding the pack as to see at a glance, and note the last four cards, as seen in Fig. 31. These last four cards are: Ten of hearts, king of diamonds, three of clubs, and six of spades.

Say the card named is the three of spades. Now, according to table No. 1, you subtract the given card (three of spades) from the first card of the suit (six of spades), which leaves three. Next multiply by four—twelve; therefore, the three of spades is the twelfth card from the top. Now cut the cards as *near* as possible to what you think is twelve. Should you cut at the eleventh card—which would be the king of clubs--you immediately know the card following a club is a spade, and if you cut at the king of clubs, the next card is three spots higher—the three of spades—so you open at the next card. Or, should you cut the pack at the thirteenth card, which in this case would be the six of hearts, you know a heart is preceded by a spade, and if you have the six of hearts, the card before it is the three of spades.

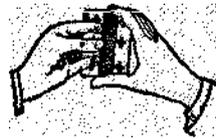


TABLE NO. 1

The following table should be thoroughly learned and memorized.

We will suppose the performer has effected the change of packs and is ready to find any given card in the pack, therefore he proceeds as follows:

Subtract the given card from first card of suit from the bottom of pack. Now multiply it by four, and deduct the number of cards following the first card of suit.

We will refer again to Fig. 31.

Say the given card is the five of hearts, subtract five from first card of suit (which is ten of hearts) —five.

Now multiply by four—twenty, less the number of cards before the first card of suit from the bottom, which is three, which, deducted from twenty leaves seventeen. Therefore, the five of hearts is the seventeenth card from the top.

TABLE No. 2.

If the card named is higher than the first card of suit from the bottom, subtract the given card from thirteen.

Now add the number of first card of suit, then multiply by four, less the number of cards following the first card of suit, and you will have the exact number of the given card from the top of the pack. In Fig. 31 the last four cards are the ten of hearts, king of diamonds, three of clubs, and six of spades.

We will say the five of clubs is named, the three of clubs being the first card of suit.

As it is impossible to subtract five from three, you deduct it from thirteen (as explained in table No. 2), which leaves eight. Now add the number of first card of suit, which is three—eleven; multiply by four — forty-four, less the number of cards following the first card of suit (which is one)—forty-three. You will upon examination now find that the forty-third card is the five of clubs.

With a little careful practice the student will soon become familiar with the arrangement, and that which now appears somewhat difficult will become very simple and easy.

I can, within the space of three seconds, cut the pack to any given card.

MIND OVER MIND, OR THE MARVELLOUS WILL POWER.

A spectator draws three cards from the pack, not forced, and without looking at them, or the performer touching them, places them in his breast pocket, from which he has previously removed the contents. The performer now calls out the name of a card, and requests the spectator to hand him one of the three cards from his pocket. Upon this being done, the card is found to correspond with the one previously named by the performer. This is repeated with the other two cards.

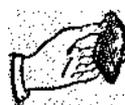
This is a vast improvement on the old method of performing a very similar trick, and is highly commended.

The performer asks a spectator to select three cards (making sure that the three cards are selected in a bunch). He then cuts the cards as usual, bringing the card just above the three chosen to the bottom.

The three cards chosen must now be placed in the pocket with the faces toward the person, which is the natural way of doing it. The performer now notes the bottom card of the pack, which enables him to know the names of the chosen cards. Suppose the bottom card was the five of hearts, the first of the three cards would be the eight of diamonds. Therefore, the performer asks the gentleman to place his hand, as quickly as possible, into his pocket and hand him the eight of diamonds, which nine times out of ten will be correct, for this reason: In the act of the spectator placing his left hand in his right inside breast-pocket, owing to it being done quickly, he will seldom, if ever, place more than his four fingers in the pocket, the thumb remaining on the outside. For this reason the only card possible for him to take from the pocket in this condition is the top one, which is the eight of diamonds. If the reader will try this experiment with himself, he will readily catch the idea.

After the first card is produced, the performer calls for the next, which is the jack of clubs, and as there is but one remaining card there can be no mistake, as the performer asks for the ace of spades.

I find this trick always has a great effect on the audience, and causes a considerable amount of excitement and interest.



TO CAUSE A CARD SELECTED BY A SPECTATOR TO BE NAMED BY THE AUDIENCE.

A card is selected by a spectator and laid on the table without its face being seen. The performer now states that it is impossible for any one to know the name of the card, but that he will cause the audience themselves to name it.

The *modus operandi* employed for this experiment is not absolutely new, but fits in well with the series of tricks in my system, and I, therefore, include it.

Supposing the card selected was the eight of hearts, the performer secretly ascertains its name in the same manner as explained on page 53, and forthwith addresses the audience as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen, there are four suits in the pack : hearts, spades, diamonds, and clubs. I shall ask some gentleman to name either two of them. Thank you, sir. The gentleman says hearts and spades, therefore it must be a heart or a spade. Now, will some one kindly name one of these. A spade! Thank you, sir; that leaves a heart, therefore it must be a heart."

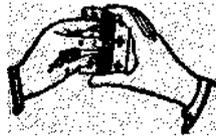
To explain the above. The artiste knows, in the first place, that the card is a heart, and he interprets the answers from the audience to suit his own purpose, in the following manner: Had the audience said diamonds and clubs in place of spades and hearts, the performer would have said: "Very well, sir; that leaves hearts and spades." Now, with regard to the heart and the spade, had the audience said hearts instead of spades, the reply would have been: "Very well; it must be a heart."

Example: There are two cards left—hearts and spades. The performer wants the audience to name hearts. Suppose the audience names spades, the reply is: "Very well; that leaves a heart."

Should they have named a heart, the reply is: "Thank you; we will make it a heart," and thus the performer practically forces the card on the audience.

Now, to continue the trick and cause the exact name of the card to be called, which is carried out on the same principle, the performer continues: "The suit is a heart, there are thirteen cards in a suit, and it must be one of the thirteen. We will divide the thirteen into odd and even numbers. Will some one kindly say either odd or even? Odd! Thank you; that leaves even. The even numbers are two, four, six, eight, ten, queen. We will divide them into two parts, above or below seven. Will some one kindly name above or below seven? Above seven! Thank you, sir. It, therefore, must be either the eight, ten, or queen. Will some gentleman kindly name two of these three? Eight and queen! Thank you. Now, will some one select either the eight or the queen? Queen! Thank you. That leaves the eight of hearts. Will the gentleman kindly turn up this card? "

A suggestion as to the tone of voice in naming these cards will be of great advantage. For in-stance, suppose the queen and eight are left, the performer, wishing the audience to name the eight, says : "Will some one name the eight or the queen? "with a strong accent on the eight, and nine times out of ten, if the words are properly spoken, the desired card will be selected.



A NEW MIND-READING FEAT WITH CARDS.

I wish to tender my sincere thanks to my friend, Mrs. Hartley Milburn, of London, for the idea of this splendid trick.

One or more cards should be selected by a spectator, and the pack laid on the table.

A lady or gentleman sitting on the opposite side of the room (without even as much as a look from the performer) immediately informs the drawer the number and the names of the cards chosen.

This trick, which can, if desired, be presented as an exhibition of genuine mind-reading, will create a profound sensation.

The medium, or second party, to this experiment must be thoroughly acquainted with the order in which the pack is arranged, and should be seated on one side of the performer.

After the card or cards have been selected, the pack is cut, and the card that was above those selected brought to the bottom. In the act of laying the cards on the table, the bottom card is momentarily exposed to the view of the assistant, thus enabling him or her to name the selected card, this, of course, being easily accomplished when one thoroughly understands the arrangement of the pack as set out on page 40.

With a judicious addition of one of the false shuffles described in this present chapter, two clever people can perform tricks on the above principle that not so many years ago would have caused them to meet the fate of a sorcerer.



CHAPTER V

An Incomprehensible Divination.

*An Entirely New and Original Collection of
Miscellaneous Card Tricks, Including the
Correct Method of Performing Thurston's
New Rising Cards.*

UNDER this title I have pleasure in describing what is, in my opinion, a very clever non-sleight-of-hand trick. It has never yet been published, and is, in fact, absolutely unknown. It is so simple that a child can learn it in five minutes, yet it can be exhibited to experts for hours without the slightest fear of detection. It is one of the *very* few tricks that can be repeated *ad lib.*

In effect it is as follows:

Eleven cards are placed face downward on the table in a heap. The performer is now securely blindfolded, and, if desired, can be led into another room. In his absence a spectator cuts the cards, and after counting the lower portion replaces them on what was originally the upper portion.

The performer now enters the room, still blindfolded, waves his hands over the cards, and immediately picks one of them out of the packet, which upon examination proves to have the number of pips or spots that corresponds with the number of cards counted.

For instance, suppose four cards were removed, the performer would unhesitatingly turn up, say, the four of clubs. Supposing that no cards were removed, and the packet was left in its original state, the knave would be turned up by the artiste. Not only can the performer be blindfolded, but a thick cloth or handkerchief can be covered over the packet, and yet the card with the proper number of pips is produced. This trick can be repeated as often as desired without any rearrangement of the pack, and it is this part of the experiment that mystifies conjurers unacquainted with the *modus operandi*.

For the performance of this excellent drawing-room trick, the performer must previously arrange eleven cards as follows:

Place a knave face downward, and on the top an ace, then a deuce, then a tray, and so on to the ten, and the cards must be kept in this order throughout the trick. They can, however, be cut as often as desired before you start the experiment; but as the packet is placed on the table the performer must manage to catch a glimpse of the bottom card, as this forms the key to the whole mystery.

Supposing the bottom card is the four spot, the cards will be arranged one on the top of the other, as in first table:

Now, no matter how many cards the spectator moves, all that the performer has to do is to show the fourth card down from the top, and this will have the number of spots that corresponds with the number of cards removed.

We will suppose a spectator moved seven cards, which would leave the cards as in second table:

The performer now shows the fourth card from the top, which is a seven-spot. Now, without rearranging the cards, or even looking at the bottom one, the trick can be repeated.

The artiste remembers that the card just shown —a seven-spot - was fourth from the top, and he, therefore, knows that the third card from the top must be the eight-spot, the second the nine-spot, and the top card the ten-spot, leaving the jack at the bottom.

A certain number of cards are again moved, and, as in all cases when the knave is at the bottom

Table 1



Table 2



of the packet, all the performer has to do is to turn the cards over, and on the bottom card will be found the correct number of spots.

Should the ace be at the bottom of the pack, then the top card will always denote the answer.

If the two-spot be at the bottom, the second card from the top will denote the answer, and so on all through.

If no cards are moved, say, when the cards are in the position shown in the first table, it is apparent that the performer would turn up the knave, this being fourth from the top, so that if no cards are shifted the knave always turns up.

After five minutes' study, this trick will be found quite easy of accomplishment.



A MECHANICAL CARD FOR THE BACK— HAND PALM.

Having received so many inquiries from amateur magicians as to whether it was possible to obtain a mechanical card for performing the continuous front-and back-hand palm, some time ago I devoted considerable labor and time to devising a card by which this otherwise exceedingly difficult sleight can be accomplished with ease; and as Many readers of this book may not be inclined

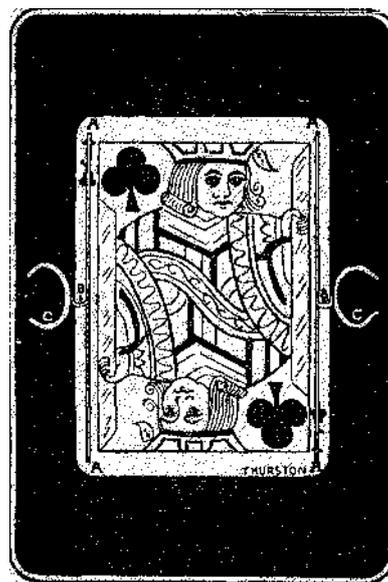


FIG. 32

to spend sufficient time to learn the sleight-of-hand method hereinbefore described, I will explain the easier plan.

Fig. 32 shows the manner of preparing the card; **A A** are slits cut one on each side of the card, as near the edge as possible; **B B** are tiny rings soldered to the clips **C C** (all painted flesh-color). The rings are of the familiar split-ring pattern, thereby enabling them to be attached to

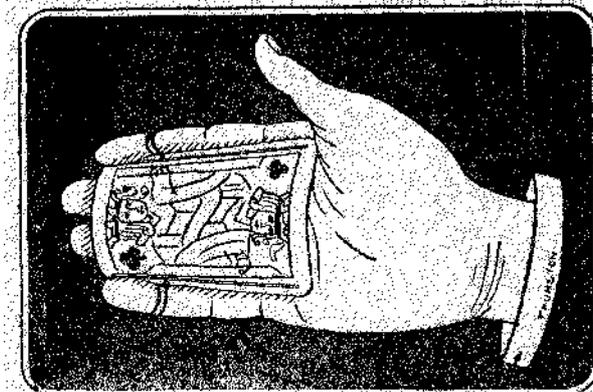


FIG. 33

the card, as shown in the illustration. The two clips fit the top joints of the first and fourth fingers, and in this position the card is ready for the trick (see Fig. 33).

The thumb now pushes the card toward the finger-tips (the slits allowing it to slide along the rings), and it will then be found quite easy for the two middle fingers to bend round under the card, which forthwith assumes the position depicted in Fig. 34.

For the reverse movement the thumb pulls the card round into the first position. In a word, practically all the movements necessary for executing the sleight with this card are identical with those described in the sleight-of-hand method, with the exception that in the method now explained it is impossible for the card to fall or become visible between the fingers.

Five minutes' practice with a card of this description suffices to enable the student to execute this trick in an indetectable manner.

With two similar cards, of course, the effects of passing a card through the knees, from hand to

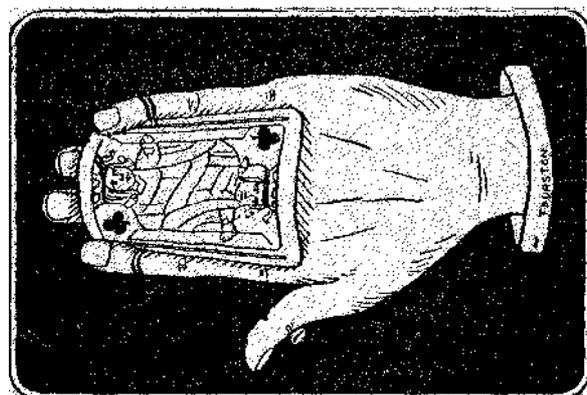


FIG. 34

hand, etc., can be accomplished by having a card attached to each hand.

I may mention that this card may be obtained from Martinka & Co., 493 Sixth Avenue, New York.

A CARD CAUGHT ON THE CORNER OF A BORROWED HANDKERCHIEF.

The above trick is a variation of a much older feat of catching chosen cards on a sword, and is to

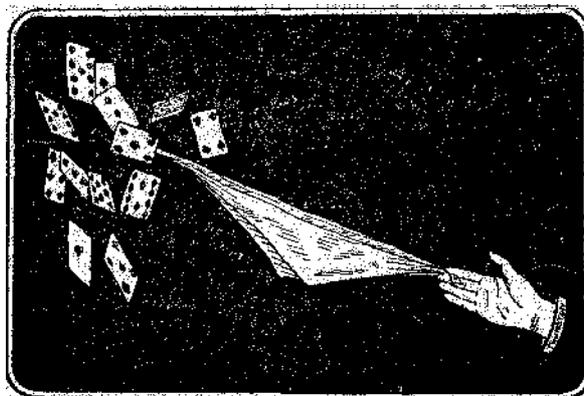


FIG. 35

be recommended, inasmuch as no special apparatus is necessary.

A card is selected, not forced, replaced, and the pack shuffled and held by a spectator.

The performer now requests the loan of a gentleman's handkerchief, which he shows to be an ordinary one. The gentleman holding the pack is now requested to throw the same in the air, and, as the cards descend, the performer waves the handkerchief amongst them, whereupon the chosen card is caught on the corner of same (see Fig. 35), both being immediately passed for inspection.

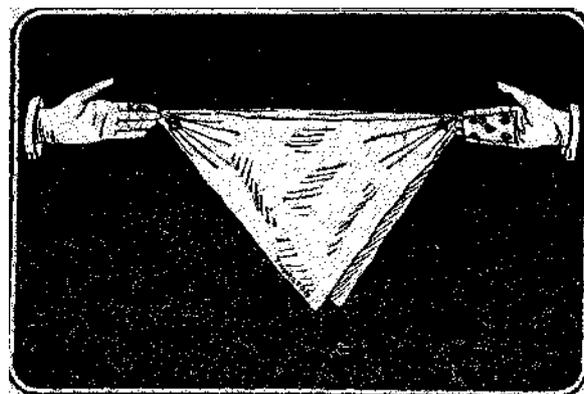
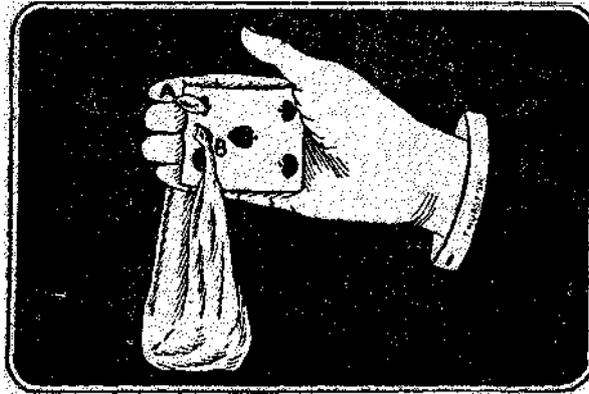


FIG. 36

**FIG. 37**

The following is the explanation of this effective little trick:

On the top vest-button the performer has a small portion of soft adhesive wax. When the chosen card is returned, the pass is made and the card is palmed off, the pack being immediately handed to a spectator to thoroughly shuffle. While this is being done the artiste removes the wax and sticks it to one corner of the palmed card. A handkerchief is now borrowed and held, as in Fig. 36, the back of the hands, of course, facing the audience (in the illustration they are drawn as they appear to the performer).

The left hand now places the corner A of the handkerchief in the right hand, as in Fig. 37, at the same time pressing corner B on to the wax.

In this position the handkerchief can be waved in the air to still show it is unprepared, but when the spectator throws the cards, the performer slips the end between his fingers, and, again waving the handkerchief among the falling cards, releases the card from the palm, which thereupon becomes visible on the end of the handkerchief (see Fig. 35), the effect being that the performer has actually caught one of the falling cards.

The above trick does not require much practice when once the reader is proficient in the "pass" and "palm," but is, in my opinion, a very pretty and effective experiment.

THE "THURSTON" METHOD OF THROWING CARDS.

I am acquainted with the fact that many performers of note (in particular, Felicien Trewey) have made a specialty of throwing cards among the audience to a great distance. As I usually conclude my act with an exhibition of card-throwing, and as my method varies somewhat from the orthodox one, I venture to think it will prove of interest to my readers.

In the first place, the cards used should be of fairly stiff pasteboard, with as smooth a surface as possible (preferably the Angel back, No. 35 cards, manufactured by the New York Consolidated Card Company.

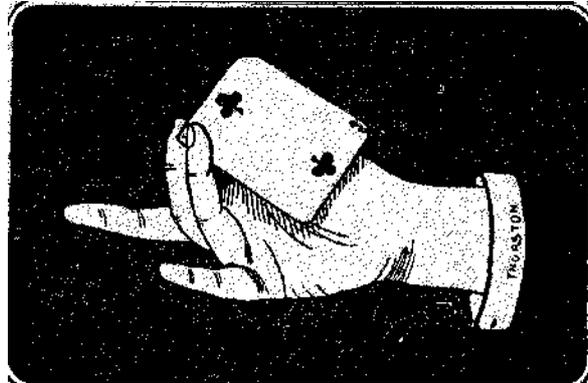


FIG. 38

The card is held lightly between the second and third fingers (as shown in Fig. 38), the back of the hand facing the audience. The hand now moves to the shoulder, and, with a short, quick jerk, lets the cards go. This movement imparts a terrific velocity to the card, and with practice, it will be found that the performer can throw the same into the back of any theatre or hall. I can always manage in the course of my performance to get several cards into the gallery of any theatre where I may appear.



TRICKS FOR THE NOVICE.

I here take the liberty of presenting the following four simple tricks—not intended for the professional or advanced amateur, but for the beginner:

A PACK OF CARDS CHANGED TO TWO LARGE BALLS.

A pack of cards shown from all sides is held in the left hand, but upon being stroked changes to two parti-colored balls.

An ordinary pack must be secretly exchanged for a dummy—in reality, a case opening in the centre (as shown in Fig. 39).

In each end place a spring ball (to be obtained cheap from any magical store), and close the "pack." It is then exhibited as an ordinary pack, and, under cover of stroking it, first one ball is removed, and then the other, the false pack being doubled and palmed.

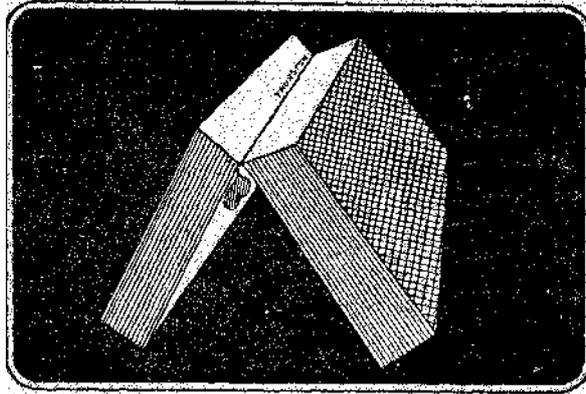
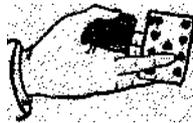


FIG. 39



NEW CARD AND EGG MYSTERY.

Many of my readers are doubtless acquainted with the trick wherein a chosen card, after being mutilated, is discovered whole in the centre of a previously examined egg.

Under the above heading I will explain a trick somewhat similar to the foregoing, except that the mystery in connection with it is much deeper.

A hard-boiled egg is passed for examination to prove that the shell has never been broken or tampered with in any way, and the same egg is placed in full view of the audience.

A card is now selected by a member of the audience, noted, and replaced in the pack, which is then shuffled. The egg, which has never been out of sight of the audience, is now handed to a spectator with a request to crack and remove the shell. Upon this being done, the name of the selected card is found to be written on the white of the egg.

This trick will cause a profound sensation wherever presented, as the egg will bear the strictest examination. The secret is as follows:

Dissolve an ounce of alum in a quarter of a pint of vinegar. Now dip a camel's-hair brush in the solution, and inscribe on the outside of the shell of an egg the name of the card you intend to force. Now let it dry, whereupon all traces of the writing will vanish. The egg must now be boiled for ten minutes, and it is then ready for use. When the shell is removed, whatever you have written or name will be found on the white of the egg.

DISAPPEARANCE OF A CARD THOUGHT OF BY A SPECTATOR.

The performer passes a number of cards from hand to hand, with faces toward the audience. A spectator is now asked to remember any card he sees. Upon this being done, the performer again passes the cards from hand to hand, one at a time, when it is discovered that the card thought of has disappeared.

A second card is similarly treated.

To produce the above effect, the performer must obtain a pack of cards consisting only of twenty-six, but with no backs, each side being a face. On one side are pictures of twenty-six cards, and on the other side the remaining twenty-six. The cards should be arranged in a haphazard manner. When the spectator has mentally noted a certain card, the performer, under cover of his hand, turns the pack round, so that the other twenty-six cards are visible to the audience. Upon their being passed slowly from hand to hand, it is found, of course, that the chosen card has vanished.

This can naturally be repeated. If desired, two or three spectators can note cards at the same time.



THE ELECTRIC CARDS.

Ten cards are handed to a spectator on a tray with a request for him to take two. These are duly noted and placed among the remaining eight. The performer now takes the cards, two at a time, and passes one in front of the other. This is repeated until, when in the act of passing the cards, flashes of

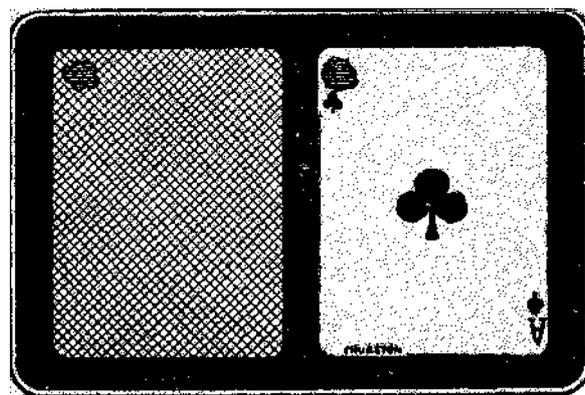


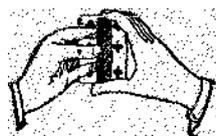
FIG. 40

fire shoot forth from the two cards, which, upon being turned with their faces to the audience, are found to be the two cards selected.

This somewhat startling effect is brought about by preparing ten cards as follows:

The front top corner of each card is coated with potash and sugar, and the corresponding back corner is covered with sulphuric acid (see Fig. 40). These

are laid out on a tray with the prepared ends toward the performer. The spectator selects two. Meanwhile, the performer changes the tray from the right to the left hand, thereby reversing the position of the cards, so that when the chosen ones are returned the artist knows that the only cards with the prepared corners toward himself are the two selected. In passing the cards he is careful only to rub the tops, not the bottoms, so that when he comes to the chosen ones and rubs them, they emit flashes of fire, and upon being turned to the audience are found to be the correct ones.



THE "THURSTON" RISING CARDS.

The Rising Card trick is, of course, very old; but owing to the method I employ, and the manner in which I present the same, it is, in my opinion, the feature of my act. It is the trick which I had the honor of performing before that peer of modern prestidigitateurs, the great Hermann, who graciously acknowledged that I had completely mystified him.

I feel that this little volume would be incomplete were I not to include this experiment, and I, therefore, take great pleasure in acquainting my readers with the full *modus operandi* of the Rising Card trick, as I have presented it in the principal theatres of the world, including six consecutive months at the Palace Theatre, London.

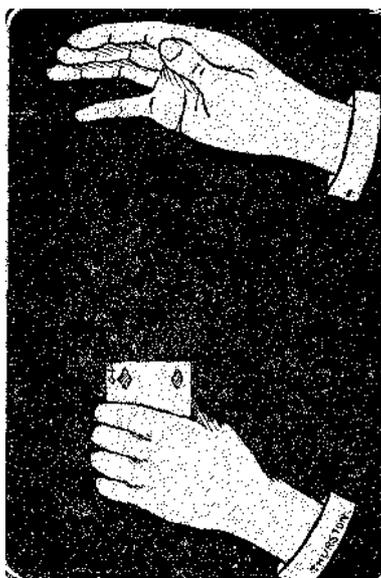


FIG. 41

The effect of this illusion to the audience is as follows:

Five cards are selected haphazard (not forced) from an ordinary pack. The five cards are then handed to an independent member of the audience, with

the request that he will replace the same and shuffle them into the pack thoroughly.

The performer now returns to the stage and holds the pack in the left hand, with the faces of the cards toward the audience. He passes the right hand completely round the cards to prove there are no threads, etc., used. The hands and cards are now left in the position depicted in Fig. 41, being about three feet apart. The performer text inquires the name of the first card selected, whereupon it immediately leaves the pack and soars as gracefully as a bird up to the right hand, where it is held between the fingers and thumb, the beauty of the experiment lying in the fact that the performer does not move a muscle during the rising of the card. The card is now placed on the front of the pack, and the second card called for, when it immediately ascends in the same manner as the first one. This is repeated until the five chosen cards have made their appearance.

The performer is not compelled to stand in any particular part of the stage; in fact, the trick can be just as successfully presented in any drawing-room, without the aid of assistants, etc.

As I desire to explain the secret of my Rising Cards in as thorough and comprehensive a manner as possible, I will describe each little detail from start to finish, so that no difficulty may arise in the mind of the conjurer who desires to add this trick to his *repertoire*.

The principal secret of the illusion depends upon the ingenious piece of apparatus depicted in Fig. 42. It resembles in principle the well known self-coiling measuring tape. A piece of very thin, but strong silk thread, say, about three to four feet long, is coiled on a drum within a cylindrical box or case. The thread can be drawn out to its full extent, but upon slight pressure being brought to

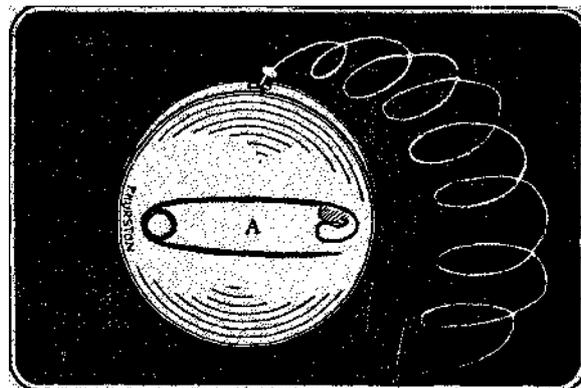


FIG. 42

bear on a little stud not visible in the illustration) on the face of the box it is gradually withdrawn, the slow action of the drum being brought about by an exceedingly weak internal spring. A in the diagram is a safety pin soldered to one side of the case, thus enabling the performer to attach the same to the top of his trousers between the suspender buttons on the left side. The thread is now pulled out about 2 feet 6 inches, a small pellet of soft wax being attached to the end. The wax is then affixed to the top vest button, the slack portion of the cord being tucked into the vest.

The performer now invites five members of the audience to select cards. He collects them himself, and, in the act of turning round to ask another spectator to shuffle the cards, changes the chosen five for five other cards by means of the right hand *profonde*. If this is done neatly, the spectator never imagines but what he saw, shuffling the selected cards into the pack.

On the return journey to the stage there is ample time and opportunity to regain possession of the chosen cards, which are palmed and replaced on the top of the pack, care being taken that they are in the correct order. Now, as the performer turns round to face the audience, he very adroitly removes the wax, together with the thread, from the vest button and presses it on the back of the hindermost card. The right hand now passes round the cards and secures the thread between the first and second fingers, so that when the hands assume the attitude shown in Fig. 41 the thread is in the position illustrated in Fig. 43.

This thread, if of the correct thickness, is absolutely invisible, even at close quarters.

When the name of the card is called out, the performer, with the elbow of the left arm, presses on the vest at the place where he knows the drum to be, thus causing the thread to recoil and the card to rise to the right hand. The card is now replaced on the front of the pack, and, under cover of asking the name of the next card, the wax is fastened to the back card, and the same movements

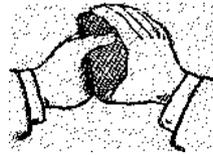


FIG. 43

repeated. The rest of the cards are similarly dealt with.

I have performed this trick now for five years, but have never heard or read a correct solution of it; and I hope my readers will appreciate what is my favorite card illusion. I have hitherto very carefully guarded the *modus operandi* of this trick, although having been the recipient of many tempting proposals for its secret. There are several other ways by which this trick may be performed and used by those who have copied it. It has been amusing to me to read the many different theories as to how the trick is performed

published by newspapers, etc., in giving descriptions of my act. Some suggest a magnet held in my hands. Others explain how it could be performed by electricity. Some suggest threads hanging from the flies, or stretched across the stage, or fastened to my shoulder, with a weight hanging down my back to draw the card up, and numerous other methods. The apparatus used in the above trick can be had from Martinka & Co., 493 Sixth Avenue, New York, or any other reliable dealer in magical goods.



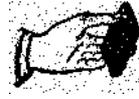
FINAL REMARKS.

I trust that the tricks and ideas embodied in the foregoing pages will meet with appreciation from all interested in magic.

Conjuring, and particularly sleight-of-hand, is undoubtedly becoming a great pastime. In the course of my travels I have met thousands of people (among them a large percentage of ladies) deeply interested in this unquestionably fascinating art. The ambitious amateur, however, must not imagine because he can do a few tricks in his own drawing-room, and is told by his friends he is wonderfully clever, that he can step on to the stage and immediately become famous. My advice to the amateur who has serious thoughts of adopting conjuring as his mode of livelihood is that he should, in the first place, obtain an engagement—letting the question of salary be of secondary importance—with some small show or concert company. This will help considerably to give him an idea of how to present his tricks to the audience. The best trick in the world would lose nine-tenths of its effect unless exhibited in the proper manner. Above all, never copy another performer. Witness all the magical performances possible, and then go home and try to improve on what you have seen; or, if you see through any particular trick, try to work out a new trick on the same principle. This book, of course, has only to do with cards; but should the reader be desirous of obtaining a comprehensive knowledge of all-round magic, I recommend him to first of all purchase Professor Hoff-man's celebrated work, "Modern Magic," and T. Nelson Downs' (King of Coins) book, entitled "Modern Coin Manipulation," both published by George Routledge & Sons, New York. To the conjurer who would be up-to-date, this latter book is invaluable, the great feature of the work being that it is written by a conjurer with the reputation possessed by Mr. Downs. I also advise the student to subscribe to the conjurer's newspaper, *Mahatma*, as this is an excellent journal, and contains new sleights and ideas which make it absolutely indispensable to magicians.

In this book I have endeavored to make my descriptions as lucid and plain as possible: but I suggest that the student should obtain lessons from some expert should he desire to excel; and then who knows but what at some not far-distant date he may invent original tricks which will put into the shade

"HOWARD THURSTON'S CARD TRICKS."



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