

# MAGIC FOR AMATEURS—I

## COIN AND HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

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### INTRODUCTION.

As actions speak louder than words, so is the magician a better entertainer than the story teller. At his command the emptiness of darkness is seemingly peopled with a thousand demons which amuse and astonish, and when his audience creeps off to bed they pull the covers over their heads and shiver with the fright of what they cannot hear or see. They have been shown mysterious things that they have never seen before— weird things they cannot explain—and the performer has won for himself a certain prestige and respect which he probably could not have secured in any other way.

The fireside entertainment or the after-dinner performance is not by any means the only occasion when the clever one in the art of magic reaps his reward. At school or college, in the office of the store, or at the club, he can increase his popularity, assure his reputation as an entertainer, and by his ability to "queer" those generally considered wiser than himself, obtain an advantage over them that in few other ways could be secured as easily, quickly, and cheaply.

The tricks in this series will appeal to all. They require no complicated apparatus; in fact, anyone with ordinary mechanical ingenuity can make all the apparatus from common objects which are to be found in every household, and by the use of the simplest tools, such as jack-knife, hammer, scissors, gimlet, etc. Needles, thread, bees-wax, and mucilage are other requisites easily obtained.

So many of the magical tricks illustrated and described in present-day literature require such intricate and expensive apparatus that the would-be magician is often discouraged at the start, and forsakes without further investigation a field that might hold out for him a very brilliant future. Owing to the extreme simplicity of the apparatus required for this collection, the expense and labor of making the articles are a minimum, being well within the means and ability of the average school-boy.

Practically all of the tricks can be shown to advantage after one or two rehearsals. Care has been taken not to introduce sleight-of-hand tricks requiring such skill of manipulation that prolonged practice is necessary before they are available. To be able to realize at once the reward of one's labor, is one of the chief advantages of this collection. With this purpose in view, no part of any trick, no matter how simple, is assumed to be already familiar to the reader, but each part is thoroughly described, and when necessary, illustrated.

So cunningly are most of the tricky little devices designed, that the quickness of the hand plays practically no part in deceiving the eye; in other words, the apparatus when made according to the directions, embody such skillful applications of the principles involved, as to make the presentation of the tricks extremely simple and well adapted to amateurs. In connection with the instructions, bear in mind that success in this art depends largely upon a strict observance of the following rules:

First. Never tell your spectators in advance what you are going to do. If they are forewarned, they will more easily study out the cause.

Second. Never perform the same trick twice in one evening before the same audience. It not only loses half its effect by repetition, but the spectators having just seen the trick performed will know what to expect; the result will, therefore, be the same as would follow the non-observance of the first rule.

Third. Enter heartily into the spirit of the part you are performing. Force yourself to believe in your marvelous power as you would have your audience do, and you will achieve an almost unlimited mastery over their imaginations.

Fourth. Never get "rattled." Perform the trick easily, quietly, and gracefully. If asked to repeat a trick, do not flatly refuse to do so, but promise to repeat it later in some other form. Let the "other form," however, be based upon entirely different principles or clothed in a totally different garb. If unsuccessful in performing a trick, smile cheerfully and attribute it to the moon being in the wrong quarter or to a little misunderstanding between two of your "controlling spirits."

In preparation, arrange the tricks in a series of groups, with the first in each comparatively simple, and of such a nature as to prepare the audience for the greater marvel to follow. Each trick should depend upon a different principle than the one preceding, and there should be an interval of about two minutes between them, preferably filled in by music, to allow the performer sufficient time to make the necessary ar-

rangements. The programme should be worded in the vaguest possible terms, so that the actual effect of the different tricks will not be revealed beforehand.

### NO. 1. THE DISAPPEARING DIME.

Of all American coins the dime is, perhaps, the one most easily gotten rid of, magically, yet seldom can it be made to disappear so neatly, and completely as in the following trick.

The apparatus required consists of a white unruled piece of writing paper *a*, Fig. 1; a dime *d*; two iron rings, *b* and *c*, each about one inch and a half in diameter; and a piece of white cardboard *e*, one inch and a half square, marked with the "skidoo" number, 23.

Almost any small iron rings of round section will answer the purpose so long as both of them are of the same size. If they cannot be found in the house, they may be purchased at a hardware store for a penny apiece. Cut the cardboard *e* so that its length on each side is the same as the outer diameter of the rings, whatever that may be. If a calendar is available, cut the number 23 from it and paste it on the cardboard, as such figures look much better than those drawn by hand.

The only other preparation for the trick consists in pasting across one of the rings, *c*, a piece of writing paper *s*, having the same color as *a*. The best way of doing this consists in cutting out a somewhat larger piece of paper than will cover the ring, placing this on a flat surface, covering one side of the ring *c* with mucilage and laying it, this side down, upon the paper.

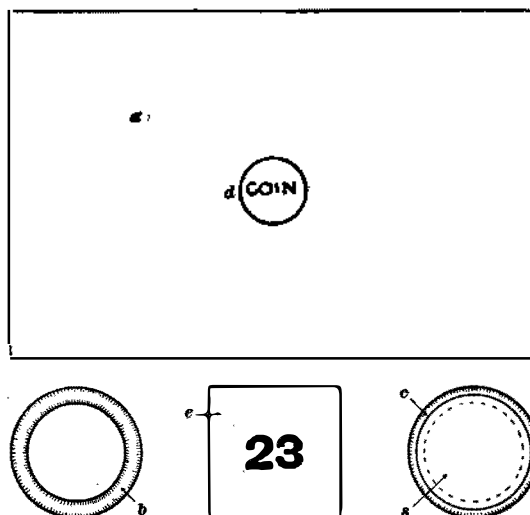


Fig. 1.—APPARATUS FOR USE IN TRICK OF THE DISAPPEARING DIME.

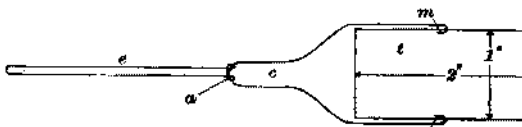


Fig. 2.—DEVICE USED IN TRICK OF CHANGING HANDKERCHIEF INTO A FLAG.

When thoroughly dried, cut the surplus paper from around the ring, so that none will be visible about the sides when the ring is resting with its paper side down.

In performing the trick, the dime *d* is placed in full view of the audience upon the paper *a*, which previously has been laid on a flat surface with the prepared ring *c* resting upon it, papered side down. The cardboard *e* is then laid across the top of the ring *c*, its numbered side uppermost, and upon this the other ring *b* is placed. The structure thus formed is next raised and placed upon the dime. After a few waves of the performer's hand across the pile, accompanied by his command of "Skidoo!" he removes first the upper ring *b*, and then the cardboard *e*, laying both on the paper, near the ring *c*.

To all appearances the dime has vanished, for it cannot be seen through the under paper-covering of the ring *c*, and as this covering is not distinguishable from the paper *a* beneath it, none except the performer knows the reason.

After the dime has thus been made to disappear, it can be brought back without any perceptible decrease in its face value. Covering the ring *c* as it rests in its innocent-looking position over the dime, with the cardboard (now turned with the "skidoo" number out of sight) and the ring *b*, the performer exclaims, "Come back!" Then raising the entire combination of rings and cardboard off the dime and placing them on another part of the paper, he shows that the coin has obeyed his command.

### NO. 2. CHANGING A HANDKERCHIEF INTO AN AMERICAN FLAG.

Notwithstanding the title of this trick, it is necessary to procure the flag, which should be a small one—about eight by twelve inches—preferably of silk, because this material can readily be compressed into a small space. If such a flag cannot be obtained, a colored or dyed handkerchief conforming to the requirements may be substituted.

A simple and satisfactory device for holding the flag at the beginning of the trick, and afterward causing the handkerchief to vanish, can be made from a two-inch length of pasteboard mailing tube about one inch in diameter. Through diametrically opposite sides of this tube *t*, Fig. 2, midway between the ends a hair pin bent as shown at *c* should be inserted for about one-quarter of an inch, and the ends of the pin bent over as at *m* and *n*.

The loop at the middle of the pin, provides a means of fastening the device to an elastic rubber band *e*, of such length and elasticity that when the free end of *e* is looped around the suspender button on the left side of the performer's trousers, the tube can be brought out in the left hand in front of the body, but when released will quickly fly back out of sight under his coat. A convenient form of loop to make in each end of the elastic band is that shown at *a*. Although but one elastic band *e* is shown in Fig. 2, it is perhaps advisable to use two, side by side; these should be about two inches long and not very thick. Not only is there greater range of movement with a given elasticity when two elastic bands are used in place of one, but there is less liability of the trick being spoiled by the breakage of the elastic.

Before commencing the trick loop the free ends of the elastic bands around the suspender button as previously explained, and tuck the flag in one half of the tube so that it is completely inclosed, with its center near the center of the tube and its edges near the end of the tube. Allow the tube thus loaded to hang from the elastic bands, under the coat, the loaded end uppermost. While procuring from the audience a lady's handkerchief, on account of its smaller size, secretly gain possession of the tube in the left hand.

Standing with the left side toward the audience, spread the handkerchief over the left hand, now raised in front of the body and surrounding the tube, and proceed to tuck in the open end of the tube the handkerchief, center foremost. Tell the audience that by simply passing it through the hand as shown, the electricity in the hand transforms the handkerchief into a beautiful flag.

With each portion of the handkerchief inserted in the upper end of the tube, pull out from the lower end an equal amount of the flag, so that the effect is as explained to the audience.

When all the handkerchief has been well tucked in the tube, arrange so that there yet remains a portion of the flag in the other end of the tube. Remove this portion with the fingers of the right hand under cover of the left, and tuck it in the left hand alongside of the tube. This enables the tube to be gotten away before the audience begin wondering where the handkerchief has gone. A few movements of the right hand as if to tuck in the last remaining traces of the handkerchief, after the tube and handkerchief have sprung back, greatly add to the effect.

The moment the grip of the left hand on the tube is released, the elastic band or bands pull the tube back out of sight. The bands when in use are screened from the audience by the left arm, so that they are not noticed. Let the performer give a slight cough as the tube flies back, to smother any suspicious noise made by the recoil of the bands. When the performer opens his left hand to show that he has the flag but no handkerchief, the astonishment of the spectators is ample reward for his efforts.

(To be continued.)

Before the American Electrochemical Society a paper was recently presented by Prof. Samuel A. Tucker and Mr. Farel L. Jouard on "The Electrolytic Preparation of Magnesium." Magnesium can be obtained by electrolysis of its molten chloride in the presence of potassium chloride, but the bath is troublesome and expensive to prepare. Electrolysis of magnesium fluoride with additions of other fluorides for dissolving oxide of magnesium give practically no metal, and there seems to be no direct solution of magnesium in such molten compounds. Alloys of magnesium with aluminum or copper are easily made by electrolysis with the use of a chloride bath.