

# *The* DAI VERNON BOOK *of* MAGIC



by

LEWIS GANSON

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## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER ONE.—BACKGROUND TO A LEGEND.

A short biography of Dai Vernon—a magician who has become a legend in his own lifetime.

### CHAPTER Two.—THE VERNON TOUCH.

Dai Vernon reveals the methods he employs for the evolution and performance of his magic—the magician's line of thought when studying a new trick—the approach to original presentation—advice on naturalness of action—adapting a trick to suit one's own style and personality—conditions of performance—practice—simplification of handling—lessons to be learnt from great magicians of the past and present.

### CHAPTER THREE.—A CHINESE CLASSIC.

Dai Vernon's superb routine for “The Coins through the Table”. Three coins pass through a solid table top—the handling is so natural and the method so subtle, that the effect appears to be real magic, especially when the magician repeats the penetration under seemingly impossible conditions.

### CHAPTER FOUR.—PENETRATION OF THOUGHT.

A card which is merely thought of by a spectator passes from a packet of cards held by the performer to another packet held by the spectator. An intriguing feature is that the spectator does not reveal the name of the card until the last moment, when a card with a different coloured back is seen to have appeared in the packet he has been holding. When turned over, this card proves to be the one just named. An original Dai Vernon effect brought about by subtle means.

### CHAPTER FIVE.—THREE BALL TRANPOSITION.

Dai Vernon's famous routine in which three solid balls travel mysteriously from one hand to the other. The effect is repeated continuously with interesting variations; even when balls are placed in the pocket, they travel back into the hands. Finally, the balls vanish completely.

The moves are so cleverly conceived that, although the handling is simple, the effect is truly magical.

This routine is suitable for performance as a close-up item or before quite large audiences, as two spectators hold a close-mesh net stretched between them into which the balls are allowed to fall. This enables the effect to be clearly seen and appreciated from a distance.

## CHAPTER SIX.—APPLICATION OF THE TENKAI PALM.

The clever magician, Tenkai, has evolved a unique method for palming a card. By employing this method of palming, Dai Vernon has originated two new sleights. One is a startling colour-change which he has called “ SVENGALI ” because the card seems to change through an hypnotic gesture, and the other is a subtle method for secretly exchanging one card for another. By utilizing the latter sleight, he has built a routine, the basic effect of which is the transposition of two cards. Only two cards are seen the whole time, a Jack and an Ace—the Jack is rested against a wine-glass on the table but jumps back to the hand of the performer — hence the title “ JUMPING JACK ”.

This is the routine which has brought so much comment from well-informed card specialists—many contending that the effect could only be brought about by the use of a mechanical “ hold-out ”. Here is the true method revealed in print for the first time.

## CHAPTER SEVEN.—THE LINKING RINGS.

Delightful moves with the Linking Rings which will enhance any routine. These include SPINNING THE RINGS—when a single ring is linked to the key-ring, this move makes it appear that the performer spins both rings ; THE CRASH LINKING—rings are linked together through any point in their circumference ; THE PULL-THROUGH METHOD OF UNLINKING—a spectacular method of unlinking a single ring from the key-ring, the appearance being that one ring is actually pulled through the other ; THE FALLING RING—the top ring of a chain tumbles down from ring to ring until it spins from the bottom ring.

## CHAPTER EIGHT.—SEVEN CARD MONTE.

From a pack of cards, six black cards and a red court card are dealt in a row, face up, on the table. The red court card is in the centre of the row. Three of the black cards are turned face down ; the packet of cards is squared, then turned over. Once again the cards are placed on the table, but this time, of course, the face of the red court card will not be seen, as it is now one of the face-down cards. A spectator is asked to place one hand over the remainder of the pack of cards, then to guess which is the court card—he fails three times. Because each card has been turned face up after the spectator's choice, all cards are now face up—the court card has vanished, but when the spectator lifts his hand, that card is found on top of the pack.

The effect is repeated, and, and even though the spectator tries to catch the performer by peeking at the top card of the pack, the court card vanishes once more and is found on top of the pack.

It would be difficult to find a card trick which can be performed under such conditions to equal the effect of SEVEN CARD MONTE.

## CHAPTER NINE.—QUICK TRICKS.

Often some small piece of trickery will steal the limelight from more elaborate illusions. This chapter contains several tricks which, although the performing time is short, are extremely effective.

**LEIPZIG'S COIN ON THE KNEE.** This unusual method of causing a coin to vanish is particularly effective and amusing.

**MARTIN GARDNER'S CIGAR VANISH.** A lighted cigar vanishes from under a handkerchief by one of the "cheekiest" moves ever conceived.

**DAI VERNON'S FIVE COIN STAR.** Five coins appear, each one seen separately between the tips of the extended fingers and thumbs of the hands which are held together, palm to palm—the handling has been so simplified that it can be learnt quickly.

**DAI VERNON'S "PICK OFF PIP".** Showing a three-spot card on the face of the pack, the performer picks off the centre spot.

**DAI VERNON'S ADAPTATION OF BILL BOWMAN'S "CLIPPED".** A trick with a story in which a note secured by two paper clips and a loop of string comes free, leaving the clips and loop all linked together. **CLIFF GREEN'S MULTIPLE COLOUR CHANGE.** The face card of a pack changes rapidly time and time again.

**MALINI-VERNON "THREE COINS FROM ONE".** A borrowed coin has two other coins "broken" from it—a wonderful example of maximum effect achieved by simple means.

## CHAPTER TEN.—EXPANSION OF TEXTURE.

Dai Vernon's original routine, in which a copper and a silver coin are placed inside a handkerchief, the corners of which are held by a spectator. At the request of the spectator, either the copper or silver coin is removed magically, leaving the remaining coin to be removed by the spectator. Offering to reverse the process, the performer places the silver coin only in the handkerchief, then asks the spectator to grasp the coin through the handkerchief and hold the four corners of the handkerchief in his other hand. Taking the copper coin, the performer causes it to vanish, when it is heard to clink against the coin in the handkerchief. On opening the handkerchief, the spectator finds both coins inside.

A classical effect achieved by subtle and simple moves.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN.—THE CHALLENGE,

In this fine effect, the performer shows the faces of two cards, then places them about two feet apart, face downwards, on the table. A spectator is requested to think of one of the cards and the performer wagers that he will state which card is in the spectator's thoughts. At the outset, it appears that the performer is merely taking a two-to-one chance, but when, as the effect is repeated, he is constantly correct, the mystery deepens, especially as no questions are asked throughout the demonstration. In addition, there is a novel and amusing climax to the trick which builds it up into an exceptionally strong item.

This is one of Dai Vernon's tricks which is a particular favourite with his friend Faucett Ross.

## CHAPTER TWELVE.—DAI VERNON'S DOUBLE LIFT.

The Double Lift is one of the most useful sleights in card magic. Dai Vernon reveals his own method, which allows the cards to be handled in an apparently casual and natural manner.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN.—THE CUPS AND BALLS.

Here is Dai Vernon's wonderful routine in which there is no over-elaboration ; it has been kept simple, both in plot and handling. The audience is in no doubt as to what has happened or is happening, although they are given no clue as to how it is accomplished. Everything appears to be free from trickery, the props are simple, the movements of the performer natural ; there is no clever hand-play which could be interpreted as sleight of hand, so that, as each phase of the plot unfolds, the audience becomes more bewildered. When finally the cups are lifted to disclose an apple, an onion and a lemon, then they are prepared to admit that they have witnessed the ultimate in magic.

Surely this is the finest routine with the Cups and Balls ever evolved.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN.—NATE LEIPZIG'S CARD STAB.

It was Dai Vernon's particular wish that this chapter should be included in his book, as he was anxious that certain subtleties that Leipzig disclosed to him, and which had been omitted from previously published versions of the card stab, should be credited to the originator.

This is the true version of the Leipzig Card Stab as taught to Dai Vernon by Leipzig himself. The originator left nothing to chance in his magic and included no difficult sleight of hand. His effects were obtained by subtle methods and naturalness of action, and this routine exemplifies Leipzig at his very best.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN.—TIPS ON KNOTS.

Interesting and entertaining magical effects, in which knots apparently tie and untie themselves, are popular features in many performer's acts.

In this chapter Dai Vernon reveals three original knot effects.

**DAI VERNON'S FALSE KNOT.** A knot is tied in the centre of a silk handkerchief. The performer strikes the knot with his extended forefinger, which causes the knot to vanish.

**DAI VERNON'S METHOD FOR UPSETTING A SQUARE KNOT.** A new and natural-looking method for upsetting a knot. Ideal for such tricks as The Sympathetic Silks, Multiple Knots, etc.

**SPLITTING THE ATOM.** Two silks are firmly tied together ; a click is heard and the knot splits in two, causing the silks to fall apart.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN.—SIX CARD REPEAT.

Dai Vernon's entirely new and original method for performing this popular and entertaining card trick, in which apparently no matter how often the performer removes three cards from six he still has six cards left.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.—FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE OF SILVER

When Dai Vernon performs this trick it causes a riot of fun. He reveals his own simplified handling of the moves by which he causes coins to appear under several articles on a table. His climax is particularly entertaining, as coins apparently appear faster than he can pick them up and stuff them into his pockets.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN.—MENTAL SPELL.

After shuffling and cutting the pack, the performer removes ten cards, which he hands to a spectator with the request that any one card be thought of. Now the spectator is asked to mentally spell the name of his card. This is done without a word being spoken, the spectator removing a card from the top of the packet and placing it on the bottom for every letter in the name of his mentally selected card.

At the conclusion of the mental spell, the performer reveals the spectator's card in a startling manner.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN.—POT POURRI.

This chapter contains several items of Dai Vernon's magic which are either not complete tricks in themselves, or, if complete, are not of sufficient descriptive length to form a chapter on their own.

**DAI VERNON'S CLIMAX FOR A DICE ROUTINE.** A beautiful series of moves which provide an excellent climax for any dice routine.

**DAI VERNON'S " ONE UNDER AND ONE DOWN ".** A spectator hands the performer ANY ten cards from the pack, then names any one of them. Leaving the cards in exactly the same order as they were handed to him, the performer places the top card to the bottom and the next card on the table and repeats these actions until one card remains. It is the named card.

**CHARLES MILLER'S CUPS AND BALLS MOVE.** A beautiful move which can be incorporated into any Cups and Balls routine. Originated by this fine magician, who is a great friend of Dai Vernon.

**WELSH MILLER'S CARDS AND MATCHES.** A fine routine with three cards and three match-sticks. The matches vanish, appear and multiply under the cards in the same way as the balls in a Cups and Balls routine. An excellent item of impromptu magic.

**TIPS FOR EXPERTS.** Dai Vernon reveals several all-important but little known tips for the improvement of certain sleights with cards and coins.

## CHAPTER TWENTY.—BALL, CONE AND HANDKERCHIEF.

This is the exquisite routine which was a feature of Dai Vernon's famous Harlequin Act.

The performer removes a silk handkerchief from his pocket and draws it through his otherwise empty hands—a large white ball appears from the corner of the handkerchief. After draping the handkerchief over his left hand, he places the ball on the palm and covers it with the cone. The cone and handkerchief are tossed into the air—the ball has vanished, but is found in the performer's pocket.

A series of vanishes and reappearances of the ball now take place and during the process it changes colour from white to red, then back again to white. Eventually the empty cone is placed on the table and the ball is wrapped in the handkerchief—but it penetrates the centre of the handkerchief. Again it is wrapped up securely, but this time it vanishes completely. However, the ball, like a homing pigeon, has returned once more to its hiding place under the cone on the table.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE.—THE LAST TRICK OF DR. JACOB DALEY.

During the last months of Dr. Daley's life he evolved another of his excellent card tricks, which he demonstrated for Dai Vernon. Dai Vernon was a very close friend of the Doctor's, and includes this trick in his book as a tribute to a great magician.

This is a routine with just the four Aces—a perfect transposition of the black and red Aces. The handling is so clean and natural in appearance that there appears to be no opportunity for trickery—a fine effect by a master magician.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO.—PAUL ROSINI'S IMPROMPTU THIMBLE ROUTINE.

This was one of the favourite impromptu effects of Paul Rosini. A thimble jumps from the forefinger of the performer's right hand on to the forefinger of his left hand—then back and forth. The performer confesses that he uses more than one thimble—and reveals five thimbles, one on each finger and one on the thumb of his right hand. He now causes them to jump singly from his right hand on to the fingers and thumb of his left hand, and finishes by dropping each thimble singly into a glass.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE.—THE VERNON POKER DEMONSTRATION.

This is a most entertaining demonstration in which the performer offers to show the methods employed by crooked gamblers when playing Poker. Although the spectators are shown that cards are stacked during a shuffle and see the performer deal himself four Aces, they still cannot understand why those cards should turn up in the dealer's hand. However, the performer repeats the effect, and eventually every hand is a good one—but the dealer has a Royal Flush.

Dai Vernon employs subtle but simple methods to bring about his effect and has evolved a routine which holds the interest of the audience from start to finish.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR.—THE THUMB TIE.

Dai Vernon credits Ten Ichi and Paul Rosini with the subject matter of this chapter, but undoubtedly he has enhanced the routine with the “Vernon Touch”!

Here is the most convincing method of all for having a spectator tie the performer's thumbs together, and a really first-class routine which has been a feature of Dai Vernon's act for many years. Every detail is given, so that there will be no difficulty in understanding every move.

## FOREWORD

Times without number during the past two decades I have been asked : " Why don't you write a book on Magic ? " On one occasion I received a severe reprimand from the kindly and well-known publisher Carl Jones (who was responsible for the publication of GREATER MAGIC), who stated that I had given him fourteen negative reasons why I had not written a book but not a single positive one. My main objection was that there was so much to be said, even on the subject of playing cards alone, that I just would not know where to begin. In addition (and more to the point), I did not feel capable of doing full justice to the almost limitless " tricks of the trade ".

About eighteen months ago, while in London with my good friend Faucett Ross, I met Lt.-Col. Lewis Ganson, and we became close friends. I had read his excellent books on magic and greatly admired his clear and detailed instructions. Faucett Ross, who is a keen observer and has read almost everything written pertaining to the art, was as equally convinced as I was that here was the man to do the writing if he were willing. By a fortunate coincidence, Lewis had decided to ask me to let him write a book about my magic, so he was not only willing, but positively enthusiastic about the idea. Moreover, he resolutely refused to accept any remuneration whatsoever ; he claimed he felt honoured to do the work. I certainly consider this a wonderful compliment and I wish to thank him and let him know how fortunate I feel.

We started work almost immediately, first in London, then travelled to Nottingham, the town associated with the colourful Robin Hood, where Lewis lives. There I spent over a week as his house guest, and his charming wife Jo was most tolerant of the incessant " magic talk ". We received expert help from Ken Scholes, whilst dozens and dozens of photographs were taken by George Bartlett, who excels in showing details in pictures of hands performing intricate moves.

Since I returned to the United States Lewis has kept up a steady stream of correspondence, and he is as meticulous as any writer could possibly be.

Since I was a boy of five I have been almost passionately interested in magic, particularly that branch utilizing cards and coins, so I feel qualified to give advice on the subject. I have had the good fortune of knowing nearly all the "greats" over a period of fifty years. I have listened and heeded the advice of those talented and gifted performers who have been so generous to me, and in this way I have accumulated what I consider to be a number of sound ideas. The contents of this book are the result of the application of these ideas.

One great regret is that I never met David Devant, L'homme Masque nor Hofzinser.

When I was in my teens my four idols were J. Warren Keene, Silent Mora, Nate Leipzig and Max Malini. I knew them all well, and my admiration for them was due to the fact that none of them used the type of apparatus that could only have been constructed for trickery. They all did "mysterious things"—there was little, if any, display of dexterity. Although magic was their business, they treated it and displayed it as an art. These were the things which fascinated me.

Before the reader turns the pages I would like to ask a question. Why does "practice" frighten so many people? Practice can and should be thoroughly enjoyable because it brings the pleasure and satisfaction of achievement. Achievement is a universally gratifying thing, and, by practising, one ends up with something of value to one's self—and others. If skill and cleverness could be acquired for the asking, there would be little to profit anyone. Will my readers conduct an experiment? Sometime, when alone, start trying to improve some move or sleight that has already been learnt. Experiment with it, strive to improve it by incorporating your own ideas—keep trying—it is surprising how the time will fly by, but when headway has been made a most satisfactory feeling of delight will be experienced. Even a very minor achievement is most gratifying, and, as the result has been brought about by practice, it makes practice enjoyable. If people just cannot derive pleasure and satisfaction from practice and are not prepared to expend the time and thought and energy required because they find it irksome, then magic is not for them—they should turn to a different hobby.

The contents of this book are practical effects that have been tested before audiences for many years. The results have been good and they have been well received.

My original intention was to eliminate all reference to cards. However, my friend Faucett Ross persuaded me to include a few card items.

When I visit England again soon I am considering having Lewis write a card book for me. That is, if I can come to terms and he will agree to share in the rewards.

In the meantime, I trust that readers will enjoy and use this book and find it helpful in the pursuit of that fascinating and absorbing art—legerdemain.

DAI VERNON.

New York City.

## INTRODUCTION

When Harry Stanley informed me that he had been able to persuade the legendary Dai Vernon to visit Europe on a lecture tour, I did cherish a faint hope that the Professor might also be persuaded to release for publication a secret or two whilst he was in England. In my most optimistic moments this hope was stretched to him consenting to my writing a small booklet containing one or two of his routines.

It was rumoured that, although Dai Vernon is most generous in divulging his secrets to magicians at his lectures and will explain every detail most carefully so that the members of his audience may benefit from his wonderful knowledge and experience, it is almost impossible to get him to put those secrets on paper. It was a pleasant surprise, therefore, when he readily consented to my request soon after our first meeting. Faucett Ross, who accompanied Dai Vernon on his tour, was with us when the subject was discussed, and it was he who handed me a sheet of paper next morning at breakfast—they had sat up all night deciding upon the chapter headings!

Time was short ; Dai Vernon had a full engagement book, but nevertheless was prepared to devote every spare minute to the project. Faucett Ross proved to be the ideal advisor and general manager. Harry Stanley, who had made the book possible by bringing Dai to England, now gave us the run of his studio ; Bill Ellis in London and Ken Scholes in Nottingham produced tape recorders. George Bartlett was telephoned and caught the first train from Nottingham to London, bringing with him his cameras and lighting equipment. From our first intention of a slim booklet, the enthusiastic suggestions of the Professor and Faucett Ross provided sufficient material for a substantial volume to be produced. My Army leave ran out, so Dai Vernon gave up a scheduled week's holiday to come to stay with my wife and me in Nottingham, where he and George Bartlett spent their days in the photographic studio, producing more photographs to illustrate the text I was to write, eventually, from the notes made in the evening and at night as Dai Vernon demonstrated and explained his magic.

When Dai Vernon continued his tour, I had a pile of notes a foot thick and a stack of photographs—but it was all there. Before me was the pleasant task of setting it down in book form.

Since that time, over eighteen months ago, chapter after chapter has been written, typed by my wife, and mailed across the Atlantic for Dai Vernon to correct, observe on and return. You now hold the finished product—THE DAI VERNON BOOK. All the fine magic it contains has been contributed by this great magician who has devoted a lifetime to his art. Every photograph in the book is of himself or of his hands performing the hundreds of moves.

It has been an honour for me to have been entrusted to write this book about Dai Vernon's magic. I value most highly the close friendship with him which has resulted from our association.

LEWIS GANSON.

# CHAPTER ONE

THE BACKGROUND TO A LEGEND

*Page 19*

## *CHAPTER ONE*

### **THE BACKGROUND TO A LEGEND**

Dai Vernon has been interested in magic for over half a century, but, although so many tricks and sleights have been credited to him, until recently the literature of magic told us surprisingly little about the man himself.

It was not until Jay Marshall published a brief biography on Dai Vernon in "THE NEW PHœNIX" (No. 311) and Frances Ireland Marshall wrote two articles about him for the GEN (Vol. 10, No. 9, and Vol. 11, No. 1) was it possible to piece together the story which can be regarded as the background to a legend, for it deals with the facts of a man who is a legend in his own time. The story which follows has been compiled almost entirely from the sources mentioned above, permission having been kindly granted by the authors to quote verbatim from their writings.

The gold and onyx ring worn by Dai Vernon has engraved upon it a boar's head and a staff. This is the family crest of the Verner family, and is said to have originated centuries ago when the Royal Family of the United Kingdom went on a hunting trip to Northern Ireland, the country of origin of the Verners. One of the local gentry who accompanied the Royal party was an ancestor of Dai Vernon, and at an inopportune moment he strayed away from the main party to find himself confronted by a wild boar. He picked up a stout stick and battled with the boar for an hour before killing the ferocious animal. He was knighted later, as Dai puts it, "for killing a pig"!

It was in 1835 that Dai's grandfather, Arthur Cole Verner, emigrated to Canada, and ten years later, on March 14th, 1845, was born James William David Verner. He married Helen E. Spiers, and in Ottawa on June 11th, 1894, their first child was born—DAVID FREDERICK WINGFIELD VERNER—DAI VERNON, affectionately known now as THE PROFESSOR.

The Professor began giving magic shows while he was still at Ashbury College in Ottawa, appearing often at Government House under the auspices of Lady Maud and Rachel Cavendish. There were also command performances for the Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Connaught when they represented the Crown.

One performance was in an Ottawa church hall, and young Verner was given a very demonstrative reception at the conclusion of his show, but when he returned home he found his mother weeping. He asked what was the matter, and she sobbed : " It was that show tonight, David." " But," Dai objected, " the show went very well." " That's just it, David," said his mother. " It was too terribly professional."

In 1912 young Verner heard that in the city there was another boy, Cliff Green, who did some very good tricks. A meeting was arranged and they began to size-up each other. It was Dai who finally said : " I'll show you the sort of stuff I do." He borrowed Cliff's pack, shuffled them, and said : " Name a card." Cliff named the Three of Diamonds, and Dai said : " Cut the pack." Through a freak of luck Cliff cut right at the card named. Young Mr. Verner looked young Mr. Green straight in the eye and said : " That's what I do. What do you do ? "

Over forty years later Cliff Green still recalls that the card was the Three of Diamonds.

By a similar stroke of luck Nate Leipzig was victimised. Nate had just come from South America and had an unopened pack of cards in his dressing-room. Nate told Dai to open the pack—he did and saw to his amazement that it contained two Aces of Spades. To his dying day Nate never forgot the miracles performed with his own cards by a young Canadian named Verner.

Dai Verner's first trip to New York was in 1913. He had learned the art of cutting silhouettes and spent the Summer at Coney Island earning his living in this way. At the end of the season he returned to Canada and entered the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario. During the first World War he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Artillery, but later transferred to the Canadian Air Force. When the Air Force chose to assign him to the drafting depot he availed himself of the first opportunity to be demobilised, and in 1917 he went back to New York.

Bond drives and bazaars occupied a good deal of his time and magicians took the remainder. In Clyde Power's 42nd Street Magic Shop he met Kellar, Han Ping Chien, Alfred Benzon, Ching Ling Foo and Dr. Elliott, as well as many others.

The next phase of his life took him to Chicago and Cincinnati teaching art. Always he had the black paper and his scissors for cutting silhouettes. One night Dai was cutting " shadows " at a bazaar in Bay Shore, Long Island, New York. Showing nearby was Horace Goldin, assisted by Sam Margules and two lovely young ladies. The feature trick was Sawing a Woman in Half. Dai noticed that one of the petite young ladies had long, long eyelashes, and he bothered to find out that her name was Jeanne.

On March 5th, 1924, Mr. David Verner and Miss Jeanne Hayes were married in New York City at The Little Church around the Corner. About this time there appeared in the magic and novelty shops a book of card tricks called **SECRETS**—few if any knew that the man who compiled these 25 tricks was Dai Vernon. The book was a best seller and is still in print, but Dai had sold the copyright—for 20 dollars.

Dai Vernon had taught Larry Grey the art of cutting silhouettes ; Larry was one of the world's best card workers, and their mutual love of magic had brought them together. In 1925 they were both cutting silhouettes for a living at the Little Blue Book Shop at Broadway and 50th Street in New York. Jack Davis had a magic and joke counter there, and in walked a young magician named Cardini, newly arrived from England. He had the harrowing experience of meeting two silhouette artists who did better card fans, sleights and magic than most professional magicians.

This meeting was the beginning of a life-long friendship with Cardini, who's act Dai Vernon considers to be one of the most outstanding of all times. Some twenty years ago, whilst Cardini was fulfilling a lengthy engagement at Billy Rose's famous " Casino de Paree ", Dai Vernon was also performing at the same Night Club, but in the role of close-up magician, doing intimate magic at the tables. Dai watched his friend's act every night for an entire month and at the end of this time told him : " Dick, I have carefully watched your act every night and have tried to detect some spot in which it might be improved, but I cannot suggest even the slightest change or improvement. For me the act is flawless."

At the end of 1925 Dai toured a professional magic act. It featured the Al Baker Cut and Restored Ribbon, Dyeing Silks through the Hand with a fake explanation. Diminishing Cards with a regular pack ; Cards up the Sleeve ; the De Kolta Card Shower ; Wine and Water using one pitcher and one glass ; and for a finish, the Clock Dial. Jeanne Vernon pulled threads off stage.

On 27th May, 1926, Jeanne presented Dai with their first son—Edward Wingfield " Teddy " Verner. Dai had about 3 dollars at the time, so it was back to cutting profiles. So it went from 1924 until 1935 : in the summer he cut silhouettes and in the winter he did tricks.

Francis Rockefeller King managed Dai Vernon during the winter months. In 1929 he added the mask and ended his act as an old Chinese magician performing the Linking Rings. Summers he cut silhouettes in Virginia, New York, Miami, Atlantic City, Chicago, Peoria, Wichita . . . any place he could earn dollars with this art.

Dai was still cutting them one day in Colorado in 1932, so Paul Fox took Jeanne to the hospital. It was on 14th August, 1932, that their second son, David Derek " Neepie " Verner was born. It was Faucett Ross who gave " Neepie " his nickname, as when Dai asked him to suggest names for his son on the day of his birth Faucett said as a gag : " Why not call him Nepomuk—the middle name of the great Viennese card expert, Hopzinser ? " He later suggested that the somewhat forbidding name be changed to " Neepie ", and, somehow, this has stuck throughout the years.

The year 1933 saw the Verners at the World's Fair in Chicago and 1934 in Wichita with Faucett Ross. This association led to the publication of a manuscript describing some of Dai's secrets, which sold at 20 dollars a copy—this was followed later by another manuscript selling at 3 dollars.

The management of the magic act by Miss King terminated in 1935, but in the late thirties the Professor conceived with friends the idea of his famous Harlequin Act. This idea was big and encompassed all the arts.

It was to be magic, but magic enhanced with dancing, music, colour, lights and drama. The basis of the music was a Tchaikovsky orchestration and the magic was to interpret the music, the music to beautify the magic. Dai took ballet lessons so that Harlequin could walk like a dancer, strike graceful and interpretive poses during the routines, and move like the spirit of the music that was such an integral part of the act.

The artist's original sketches of the costume were most lovely and were faithfully followed when the clothes were made. The satin suit was a special shade—half red and half pale green, covering only the torso. The long silk-stockinged legs were one green and one red. The huge ruff of white satin and gold almost touched the big black hat that swept in medieval splendour over the Vernon brow. For an entrance a cape 14 ft. in width—black without and red and green within—swathed the Vernon person. For a dramatic opening effect this was flung wide open to reveal the splendour inside.

White gloves were removed, tossed and changed to a dove. The dove flew high and returned to Dai's shoulder. A rope trick was done with 1-inch thick white tapestry cord. At the finish his hands stroked the rope and from it seemed to pull a white billiard ball. In the same manner a leather cone was produced and a most engaging routine followed, in which the cone was put over the ball on Vernon's hand, the hand first being covered with a white silk. The ball disappeared, the silk shaken out, and from it the ball reappeared. The big hat was tossed away, to reveal a skull cap, and on the cap Vernon stood the leather cone. The ball was permitted to penetrate the silk, and then, with flourishes of the silk and the ball, the ball finally disappeared. The cone was lifted from the head and there was the ball. Again with the cone and the ball in the hand, the ball changed colour. Then the  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inch ball began to appear and disappear from the pocket, then changed to a black ball with stars on it (symbolic of medieval necromancy), and finally, under the cone, the ball changed to a salt shaker.

The salt trick followed with a long, long pour that looked most magical with the aid of the many special lights. Diamond dust was used instead of salt when the act played Radio City Music Hall—for greater visibility.

A fine ring routine followed with 14-inch rings, half an inch in diameter, said to have the most musical ring due to their hollow steel construction. The act ended with the beautiful "Snowstorm in China", and at the premiere performance in the Rainbow Room at Radio City the finish was accomplished with real live moths and butterflies. Jeanne Vernon assisted in a Pierrot costume. Another assistant (soon dropped because he wrecked the Vernon apartment) was a little monkey named Compeer. The original opening had Vernon walking out with a coconut, which he threw into the air. When it came down it opened and out came Compeer. At the end of the act Compeer came out in a costume duplicating Vernon's.

The act was an artistic triumph, but was never permitted to be a financial one on account of the misbehaviour of Compeer.

In 1941 Dai put out SELECT SECRETS and worked on a Chinese act which was booked as Dai Yen and afterwards as Dr. Chung. This

act opened with bare hand card productions and embodied some of the routines from the Harlequin act. Later the Dr. Chung act was presented gratis to Dai's good friend, S. Leo Horowitz, and many elements of this act have been incorporated into Horowitz's present routine.

Some of Dai's tricks were published in the *Sphinx* and the *Jinx*; but Dai was making very little money from magic, so he took a job as a tool checker on the East River Drive Project. One day he was carrying a pail of mercury across some scaffolding when the whole thing collapsed. It dumped the Professor in the East River with two badly fractured arms, eight broken ribs and severe lacerations. Recovery was slow and painful—his right arm is still stiff—but the war years found him fit again and out on U.S.O. Camp Shows.

In the mid-forties he released some secrets to the Stars of Magic publications, taught sleight of hand to a few selected pupils—and cut silhouettes. In the fifties the Professor started performing on the cruise ships going to South America and lecturing on magic between cruises.

In 1955 Dai Vernon, in company with Faucett Ross, travelled to Europe on a lecture tour under arrangements made by Harry Stanley, of London. On 1st May over two hundred magicians assembled at London's Victoria Hall to see and hear the Professor. He soon got into his stride, and the audience was treated to a display of magical virtuosity—sleights, tricks and words of wisdom delivered with a sincerity that shone like the sun. What an ovation he received—it was a complete triumph for Vernon.

During Dai's stay in London Harry Stanley was asked to arrange a magical entertainment at the home of Lt. Commander Robert du Pass, R.N., at which Earl and Lady Mountbatten were to be present. Dai Vernon, Jay Marshall (in England at that time and appearing at the London Palladium), Faucett Ross, Cy Enfield, Robert Harbin and myself were invited to appear. The show was a great success, and a repeat performance was requested at a later date before Her Majesty, the Queen of Sweden, and Princess Andrew of Greece. Dai put on a great act and after the main show gave an additional superb solo performance of his close-up magic for Her Majesty, and at her special request.

After lectures in many cities in England and Scotland, Dai journeyed to the Continent to lecture in Amsterdam, where he was equally successful.

To sum up the tour, the words of Harry Stanley are quoted from the GEN : "He is undoubtedly the most inspiring magical experience we have had in this country for many a long day . . . his ideas and sincerity will have a tremendous influence on British magic in the future."

Dai Vernon has proved that he was correct to concentrate on his close-up magic, in which field he has no equal. On at least three occasions in his life he has trodden the boards at the insistence of well-meaning advisers, but confesses that in each case he detested it heartily. He was successful at it, as he is excellent at anything to do with magic, but it simply was not his medium. In the unerring judgment regarding himself that he has always shown, he always ended these theatrical episodes before they had had a chance to prove themselves one way or another. He felt that if a career

as a stage magician proved highly successful he would, as they say, be stuck with it, and he decided he would rather just not know what the ultimate result might be. He loved close-up magic, he felt very right and in his element doing that work, and here he elected to remain.

To see Dai makes you think of some slightly younger Mr. Chips—a genial, kindly soul, living in a little world apart, far from the cares and problems of the workaday world. He does not venture an opinion on politics, finance, world crises, the future or any other things that keep the rest of us in a turmoil. Dai lives while others exist, because he never worries, keeps serene and happy, and thinks only the thoughts he wishes to think. That he can accomplish this in today's world makes him even a greater magician than first suspected.

Magic is Dai's world, his life, his past and his future. Except for his family, it is his love and his constant inspiration. You cannot name another so dedicated.

Almost 25 years ago Max Holden wrote : "I consider Vernon the greatest man with a pack of cards of the present day."

An old brochure heralds : "Vernon—the man who fooled Houdini."

To us he is : THE PROFESSOR.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE VERNON TOUCH**

*Page 27*

## *CHAPTER TWO*

### **THE VERNON TOUCH**

In the magical magazine THE GEN (Vol. 10, No. 11) the clever American magician Bill Simon wrote the following about Dai Vernon :—

*“ How can one person among thousands actively engaged in magic create so many effects, develop so many principles, improve so many sleights ? . . . I remember discussing this with Dr. Daley, one of the finest gentlemen and most skilful magicians I have known. ‘ How does he do it, Doc ? ’ . . . I remember saying to Daley one time; ‘ How can Dai come up with such unusual approaches all the time ? ’ ”*

‘ Well,’ Doc slowly replied, ‘ Dai not only has the background and capacity for magic, but also has a great love for the subject. When you combine Dai’s knowledge and experience with his great magical drive, you get that wonderful result known as THE VERNON TOUCH:

*“ THE VERNON TOUCH ! That’s a magical recipe. I’ve seen Vernon take hundreds of ordinary effects and change them into clean-cut startling miracles. I’ve seen complicated and difficult sleights changed to exquisitely simple handling that anyone could learn. I’ve seen a handkerchief and a handful of coins become a symphony of production-vanishment-penetration . . . all blended into a striking routine. How ? Simple—THE VERNON TOUCH.”*

It was my good fortune to be able to attend most of the lectures that Dai Vernon gave on his European tour. During these lectures, in addition to demonstrating and explaining his excellent tricks, he gave his audiences a great deal of practical advice, advice which he himself had always acted upon and which was the basis of the evolution and performance of his magic.

His method at these lectures was first to perform a trick, then to give a detailed explanation of how the effect was accomplished. This explanation included the history of the trick ; how the first idea was born, his train of reasoning in the evolution of the method, and the analysis he had made for examining every aspect in order to simplify the handling. It was apparent that here was no magic that was performed according to a set of instructions prepared by someone else, but magic that had been painstakingly developed by Dai Vernon for Dai Vernon. He gave his audiences his formula and assured them that if they would take his tricks,

but, instead of performing them exactly as he did, would tailor them to suit themselves, altering the handling to fit their own individual styles and personalities, then they would enjoy the same success with those tricks as he had.

Throughout the lectures Dai Vernon used two phrases repeatedly : " Use your head " and " Be natural ", and it is this advice which, when acted upon, will enable the reader to reach a high standard in the performance of his magic ; to enrich it with that magical ingredient—THE VERNON TOUCH.

Let us examine each phrase and elucidate the full meaning, the meaning which Dai Vernon emphasised both by description and example. USE YOUR HEAD.

His reference is to the amount, type and quality of thought that should be applied to a certain carefully selected magical effect from the time the decision has been made to work upon it until it has reached the stage of continuously successful performance.

Several examples of this need for thought were given by Dai Vernon in his lectures and in our discussions. For instance, a successful businessman gives a great deal of thought and attention to detail to problems peculiar to his own business. He is successful in business because he has studied it thoroughly and is prepared to devote his thoughts, time and talents to each and every problem that arises. If this same man takes up magic as a hobby, he may fail to realise that the same amount of thought (but along different lines) is necessary before he can perform creditably. He may give an indifferent performance because he has adopted the wrong approach to his hobby, the easy approach of giving insufficient thought to the problems that beset him. When he accepts that magic imposes certain demands for the solution of its problems, similar to those of his business, and is prepared to devote the time and thought required, then his standard of performance will improve.

One of Dai Vernon's pupils was the New York businessman, Jimmy Drilling. In this instance the student realised that he had to get down to work if he was to be successful. His progress was so rapid that, although he did not take up this hobby until middle life, he has become recognised as a very fine magician—one of the very best.

Mr. Drilling has a business maxim which he has found to be a wonderful asset. It is : " Tackle the difficult problems first," and Dai Vernon was surprised and amused when, after being shown some comparatively simple card sleights, his pupil said : " Dai, don't bother me with the easy ones yet ; give me the really difficult ones to practise. If I can master them, then I know I can deal with the others."

Somewhat reluctantly, Dai consented, but was agreeably surprised some days later when his pupil returned to demonstrate that he could make a creditable showing with one of the more difficult card sleights—a showing of which Dai says many an experienced magician would have been proud.

Dai Vernon certainly does not recommend the student of magic to attempt the difficult feats first, but quotes Mr. Drilling's experience as an example of a businessman who, finding that it suited him personally to overcome his most difficult business problems first, applied the same principle to his hobby with great success.

To supplement the notes taken at the lectures, we arranged for the use of a tape recorder so that Dai could elaborate on his theme in discussion with Faucett Ross and myself. It is from one of these recordings that the next examples are taken.

**DAI VERNON** :—“Faucett, I think we should quote another actual instance of a magician who uses his head. As you know, in America there is a very fine intimate or close-up magician by the name of McDonald. This fellow does a marvellous demonstration of magic at a table. He is greatly handicapped by the loss of his right arm, so that all his tricks have to be performed with his left hand only. Now remember that fact, because he cannot just do a trick in the same way as another magician, everything he does has to be adapted to overcome his handicap.

“Here is how Mac sets about it—someone shows him a trick, or he reads about one, or perhaps he even thinks up an effect. He gets interested in that trick and decides to add it to his repertoire. Well, instead of sitting down immediately and starting to practise, he begins in quite a different way.

“After he has learnt the basic requirements, he mulls and meditates over that trick for several days. He walks around the streets, ponders over it, thinks about it, exhausts every possibility as to presentation, handling and actual method.

“Not until he knows every aspect of the trick and has them all clearly in his mind does he sit down and take whatever props that are necessary—a coin, a deck of cards or whatnot—and goes to work. But when he picks up those props he pretty well knows what can be done with them. He has definite ideas and he arrives at these ideas because he has made a simple analysis of all the factors that constitute his problem.

“Every magician must know the old and over-used rattle bars ; for years it has been sold, and still is being sold, by every novelty shop in England and America, until at the present moment there is not much mystery left about it in the hands of the average magician. Now in the hands of McDonald this trick takes on a new significance. Why ? Because he's used his head. He has devised little dodges, little simple methods, natural methods of handling those rattle bars, which fool well-posted magicians.

“He thought out the clever idea of placing the little fake—the little tube with the rattle in it, inside a cigarette—a lighted cigarette. He picks up a bar (one that does not rattle) and rattles it, and gets the illusion that it was the bar that rattled because he holds his lighted cigarette in the same hand. That's a good example of using one's head to devise a method, but it does not stop there. Mac does not present the trick as if it was a three card monte effect—he has evolved quite a different presentation.

“He talks about modern methods of handling goods, transporting them from one place to another, conveyor belts, production lines, etc. He says he's found a new way of sending goods, a way which he proposes to patent.

“He opens up one of his small tubes or containers and shows a piece of metal inside and says that the metal will be transported from one container to another, then goes into his routine from there.”

**FAUCETT ROSS** :—“ Yes, Dai, that certainly is a good example of using one's head—he's worked out a new approach and a new handling.

“ I recall that in Chicago some years ago, when everyone was working the vanishing cigarette in handkerchief by the thumb-tip method, one performer had everyone fooled—they were all looking for the thumb-tip ; he didn't use one—he used a finger-tip! The magicians didn't bother to look at his fingers, they were watching his thumb—and so not only did he fool the general public but the magicians as well!

“ By the way, Dai, reverting back to McDonald ; how about his Egg on Fan presentation as a fine example of using one's head ? ”

**DAI VERNON** :—“ Yes, Faucett. I'll just confine that example to the presentation side, as, of course, he uses the Max Sterling method. It's the way he presents it which shows the thought he has put into it.

“ He bases his presentation on the creation of life—he does not just bounce a little piece of paper on a fan until the paper assumes the shape of an egg. He tells an interesting story about eggs, about the life that comes from an egg—he does not create life, but he does create an egg which itself contains life. His story is so good and his showmanship so convincing that people are carried away into a world of fantasy and are momentarily prepared to accept that he can do anything—even create life.

“ Yes, every trick that Mac does has quite a different form of presentation to that which other magicians use—that's what makes him outstanding—he uses his head.”

“ Now don't get the idea that what I mean by ‘ using one's head ’ applies to originality in method and presentation only. Of course, one should use it for all aspects of magic ; everything we do in magic should only be done after and as the result of some pretty clear thinking. There is going to be a lot of writing done before this book is completed, and although there is no doubt in my mind that Lewis will make it all easy to understand, the reader must use his head when reading how the tricks are done—or, more important, how to do them. What I think looks right to me might not look so well in a person's hands who has quite a different sort of personality. I know that, basically, the methods and the routines are right, but everyone has a different style, so what is a natural handling to me might look unnatural when performed by someone with totally different characteristics in his general make-up. The reader will have to appreciate this and use his head when adapting the tricks to suit himself.

“ I'd like you to see Tony Slydini, Lewis—he's a wonderful performer who can fool even the best brains. Why ? Because he's used his head to such good purpose that he's built his magic right into and around his own personality. Tony speaks with an attractive accent, his temperament is Latin, with the hand gestures and (to us) excitable manner that goes with it—it's the most natural thing in the world for Tony to gesture with his hands—he speaks with them. What he has done is to study himself ; he's analysed every gesture he makes which is NATURAL to him and NOT altered his gestures one bit, but used those gestures as the perfect cover, the perfect misdirection for his trickery. When Tony gestures with his hands to emphasise something he is saying then that's the time to watch—although you still won't see anything you shouldn't because he has practised his art so thoroughly that he has eliminated all chance. Anyhow, it's

only a ten-to-one chance that he has done anything on that occasion, for, you see, his actions are identical whether there is trickery involved or not—these are natural actions, natural to Tony Slydini.

" The point I would like to make is that if, say, an Englishman were to perform Tony's tricks exactly as Tony does them, then he would have no chance at all of fooling anyone. The gestures which help to promote the misdirection, the excitable personality of which those gestures are part, would be entirely foreign to his natural self—the whole performance would scream of trickery—unless, of course, that person was a great actor and could play the part of Tony Slydini. However, given the same tricks and using his head so that he adapted them to his own personality and style (mind you, he would have to work hard), altering a move here and a move there to fit his own natural style, then it would be possible for him to produce similar magical effects. That is what I mean by reading your instructions intelligently, Lewis. You are writing about my tricks ; if your readers interpret the instructions correctly and use their heads in adapting the moves to suit the style that is natural to them, then they will perform good magic. Perhaps in quoting Tony Slydini as an example I have given an extreme case, but, believe me, if you could see Tony perform then you would instantly appreciate my point."

Later it was my good fortune to see Tony Slydini perform, because in June 1956 I visited America on a lecture tour and one evening was taken by Dai Vernon to Slydini's apartment in New York. Together with Ken Brooke, Dr. Stanley Jaks and Charles Riess, we sat for five hours watching Tony perform in the style that is all his own—beautiful magic performed by a master.

On leaving the apartment in the early hours of the morning, we stopped for a coffee at a small cafe. Dai was delighted to have been able to let me see for myself the points he had made on the tape-recording in London. He then added the following observations :—

" Did you notice how Tony performed under his own conditions ? Quietly and naturally he arranged for everyone to be seated where he wanted them to be. Like a good General, he chose his own battleground. If you ask Tony to do a trick when the conditions are not to his own choosing, then he will not risk spoiling his effects. He'll murmur " Later ", then, when he has found his own spot, he'll call you over and perform near miracles. That's the result of intelligent thinking—a good lesson for the magical student—be a good General ; choose your own conditions. There is no need to insist on moving people around and making it obvious what you are doing—wait, the time will come all right if you watch for it. I've seen fine performers spoil their tricks just because they have let themselves be persuaded to perform under impossible conditions. We learn by mistakes, but the really wise ones learn by the mistakes that have been made by others."

#### BE NATURAL.

Let us switch on the tape recorder again and hear Dai Vernon discuss his advice to " be natural ".

" What I mean by this is ' be yourself '—watch a good performer and note that he is perfectly at ease because he is doing the things that are natural to him ; he's not trying to be Cardini, Slydini or any other of

the ‘greats’ ; he may have learnt a lot from watching and reading about other performers, but he has adapted the tricks so that they fit him like a glove ; he is master of the tricks which have been tailored to suit him—he does not try to make himself fit tricks that have been evolved by someone else. Every action he makes is a natural action, natural to him ; if he picks up an object which he is going to vanish, then he does not pick it up in a way that only takes into account the position he needs to hold it to perform a sleight ; he has altered the sleight so that when he picks up the object in the way which is natural to him it is already in position to be vanished.”

Let us take an example, a simple sleight which Dai Vernon uses to vanish a small object such as one of the balls in his Cups and Balls Routine.

The sleight itself is The French Drop, but instead of keeping to the usually accepted method of performance, Dai Vernon has analysed all the factors that lead up to the sleight, then simplified the actual mechanics so that in effect no sleight as such is performed.

His reasoning is that, if no clue is given that a sleight is about to be performed, then the audience must be off guard. Couple with this the natural handling of the object and logical reasons for everything that is done, then the whole thing is over and done with before any suspicion can be aroused—all that remains is the effect—the first thing the audience knows is that the object has vanished.

So many performers make it perfectly obvious that they are going to perform a sleight ; they telegraph the fact that the trickery is about to commence ; they make a performance of the sleight itself ; a display of skill which draws attention to the fact that a sleight is being performed. A sleight should be a secret thing, unheralded, unhurried and unseen. Study Fig. 1 and see how many performers begin the French Drop ; notice how the ball is held between the right thumb and second finger in quite a natural position, but they will often pick it up quite differently, then have to re-position it, after which they hold it for a moment whilst they bring over the left hand and insert the left thumb between the ball and the fork of the thumb. Notice how the left fingers are extended and open in a most unnatural manner. The whole picture telegraphs that trickery is being done—it’s unnatural.

Now study the Vernon way, the way where the trickery is accomplished under cover of natural, necessary movements. When picking up the ball in the first place, he takes it between his right thumb and second finger and does not have to alter the position for the performance of the sleight.

If the ball is to be taken from one hand into the other, then there must be a reason why this is necessary. In Dai Vernon’s routine his wand is at the right side of the table and he is going to pick it up, therefore it is natural to transfer the ball from his right to his left hand in order to pick up the wand with his right hand. Having provided a logical reason for the transference of the ball, no suspicion can be aroused by an unnecessary action.

The next action appears casual and natural—he appears to forget all about the ball itself, his mind is now upon the wand which he requires

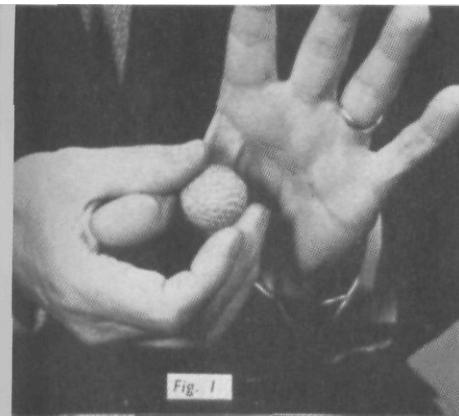


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

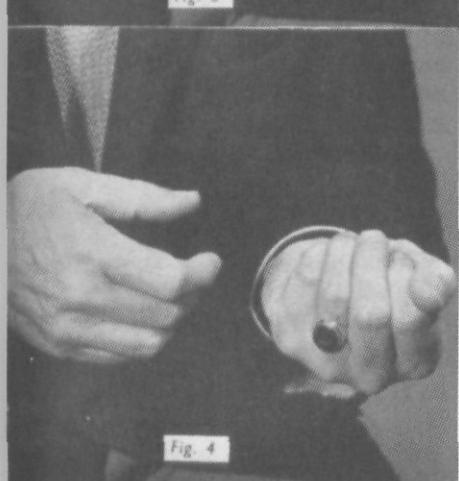


Fig. 4

for the next part of his trick. His eyes turn towards the wand, his hands move together, the left hand to take the ball from the right hand. No exaggerated movements, just a natural transference from one hand to the other.

Fig. 2 shows the hands coming together ; notice the relaxed position of the left thumb and fingers. The left fingers approach the ball to take it, the left thumb goes behind and to the right of the ball but not right through the arch formed by the right thumb and ringers (Fig. 3). The ball is covered for just a fraction of a second by the left finger-tips in the natural manner for *taking*, but during this time the ball is allowed to fall on to the right fingers so that when the left hand moves away an empty space is seen between the right thumb and fingers. Actually at this point both hands move, the right hand turning inwards just a little, then moving to the right and down on its way to pick up the wand, whilst the left hand turns over slightly, with fingers closed as if holding the ball. Fig. 4 shows the position of the hands as they move apart. Notice the gap between the right thumb and fingers—the place where the ball was seen a moment previously ; see how the fingers of the left hand are closed, but not too tightly—a ball is supposed to be in that hand and it requires space so the action of holding an object (the ball) is simulated.

The points that the reader is urged to study closely are :—

- (a) The ball is picked up naturally in the position required.
- (b) There is a logical reason for transferring it to the other hand.
- (c) Dai Vernon forgets about the ball—his thoughts have turned to the wand and he glances in its direction.
- (d) The hands come together naturally ; not hurriedly.
- (e) There is no unnatural French Drop “get ready”—no telegraphing that a sleight is about to be performed. The thumbs and fingers are relaxed, not held stiffly.

- (f) The ball is covered by the tips of the left fingers as the left thumb goes behind and to the right of the ball. The ball drops on to the right fingers under the cover of the left fingers.
- (g) A space is seen between the right thumb and finger-tips as the hands move apart—the space was occupied by the ball a second before.
- (h) The left fingers are closed, not tightly, but as if holding the ball.
- (i) The right hand picks up the wand. It also holds the ball secretly, but as it is being used to hold the visible wand everything appears perfectly natural.
- (j) All that remains is for the maximum effect to be obtained by causing the ball to vanish from the left hand.

I have purposely gone into great detail in analysing this simple but important operation, as that is just what Dai Vernon does with every move he makes. In performance his moves appear casual and unpremeditated, but long before the public see the finished products they are thought about, pulled apart and put together in many different ways, practised time and time again, and only included in a routine when every aspect has been covered. He advises us to “be natural”—believe me, he does not belittle the task he has set us in acting on this advice. He knows that each and every one of us has a different problem, as no two persons have quite the same natural characteristics and have to adapt sleights to suit our own style.

On one occasion I asked him how long he had spent in attempting to perfect a certain sleight that he had shown me. “Don't know, Lewis,” he said, “but I do know that Charlie Miller will sit up twenty hours if necessary, just making a movement look natural—and that's after he has learnt how to do the actual sleight! ”

In one part of the tape recording the conversation goes as follows :—  
 DAI VERNON :—“A lot of people might have difficulty in understanding exactly what I mean by being natural. It's very important that movements made when a secret sleight is accomplished are natural movements, but being natural also means being yourself. If you work in a conversational style, you work as you feel, you do not try to ape somebody else, unless you are playing a part. This naturalness must not be used in a narrow sense, but also in a general sense ; it must be used in everything . . . not only in the sleights, but in everything you do.”

“Faucett, you have known me many many years and know my style of working ; what's your interpretation of this ‘being natural’ ? ”  
 FAUCETT ROSS :—“Well, Dai, you've been doing this for so many years that your approach, your speech, your movements are exactly the same when you are performing magic as when you are doing anything else in your daily life, that's why you not only fool the public, but you fool your friends who know you intimately.”

“Many magicians have difficulty in fooling their wives or their friends because anyone who is constantly with them sees them as their natural selves and knows their natural movements ; they become accustomed to all personal mannerisms. When something is done that is foreign to what would be done naturally, then it registers immediately and a clue is

given that trickery is taking place. Even strangers to a lesser extent sense that something is happening, because a movement that is out of keeping with the general make-up sounds a discordant note . . . it breaks the natural rhythm . . . it upsets the tempo."

When Dai was staying at my house I lent him a book which contained a simple but effective card sleight that had appealed to me. I was certain that I had learnt it in about ten minutes and showed it to him—this was at breakfast and I hurried away to my work. Arriving home about six o'clock in the evening I found Dai with the book closed, but with a new piece of beautiful magic born of the idea he had heard about many hours previously. What I had thought good was now as near perfect as was possible to make it—I would say perfect, but Dai will not have that word.

Dai Vernon often referred to his friend, Francis Carlyle, as a good example of one who is natural in performance. "Francis is the epitome of naturalness in his sleights," Dai would say. "He has a wonderful style of his own, in which he combines his terrific sense of humour with his tricks. He works at a somewhat accelerated speed which is in keeping with the timing of his humour, but slows down at just the right moment to get his dramatic effect. He even fools magicians with their own tricks because he has altered them to suit himself, handles them so naturally and excites his audience with his presentation."

As Dai tells us, this business of "being natural" takes practice ; practice coupled with "using one's head", but practice need not be the dull pastime which many of us are inclined to look upon it. There is a terrific incentive to progress once the first glimmers of achievement are apparent. Practice becomes fascinating because achievement of any kind is extremely satisfying, and the more one achieves, the greater the satisfaction that is obtained.

This does not only apply to practising sleight of hand ; practice with apparatus is just as important. On many occasions we see a trick advertised ; let us assume that it is a box of some kind or another. Many magicians will buy it, some will perform it according to the instructions, whilst others will alter it around a little. Then perhaps just one person will knock the whole thing apart, re-assemble it in a different form, weave an entertaining story around a new plot and, after much practice, perform it in such an entirely different manner that even those who have purchased the original apparatus will gather round and say : "Where did you buy it. I must get one!"

Most things in life which appear as if they might cause us some personal inconvenience make us invent excuses why we should not exert ourselves. "My hands are not big enough (or not the right shape) to palm a card" is something which one often hears. Well, Max Malini had a really tiny hand ; it was the same size as Mrs. Jeanne Vernon's (Dai measured them), and her hand is so small that there is not a lady's glove made that will fit her. Malini managed—so can others if they will practise—and use their heads.

Another good excuse : "I'm a busy person ; I don't get time to practise." Maybe, but quite honestly this is open to doubt. There is a saying : "If you want a job done quickly, take it to a busy person." A

really busy person has time for most things because the thing that makes him busy is that he has the will to get things done. He has schooled himself to overcome the urge to invent excuses and in consequence tackles every job with determination.

Perhaps you are thinking at this very moment : " What's the use—I will never be capable of doing Dai Vernon's tricks." Well, it is true that Dai has devoted a lifetime to magic and has become one of the most accomplished and knowledgeable magicians in the world, but he is the one that would encourage a very busy person who is determined to be a good performer. He would tell them to carefully select just one or two of his tricks that appeal to them and which are suitable to their own style. I can hear him saying : " Practice just those few tricks, but make up your mind to use your head—be natural." It will not be tomorrow, but in time, providing the advice has been acted upon, those same tricks can gain for the performer the reputation of being a first-class magician.

Another pearl of magical wisdom that Dai Vernon repeated for the benefit of magicians was a favourite saying of the late Al Baker : " Don't run when nobody's chasing you." By this Al Baker meant : " Don't try to prove something when it is not necessary to do so." Many magicians consider that it is desirable for even the most innocent-looking piece of apparatus to be examined. They often create suspicion by the mere fact that, in having an article examined, they suggest to the audience that the article could be faked. Perhaps the best example that Dai Vernon gave was in the use of a double-faced card. Providing the two sides of the card are never seen at once, there is no reason at all why the audience should not accept it as just what it seems to be, but some magicians will place it on the face of the pack, then perform a double lift to prove that it has a back! Why ? Even if the double lift is made perfectly, the magician has instantly telegraphed to his audience that it need not have had a back—it could have had another face!

By acting in this manner a magician is challenging his audience ; he is virtually asking them to try to catch him out. Instead of allaying suspicion by acting perfectly naturally and handling faked objects as if they were innocent, he is provoking his audience into watching and doubting every move he makes.

Dai Vernon had a great respect for the late Al Baker, and considers that, in addition to having been a very fine magician, he ranked with the best of American humorists. " His timing was wonderful," Dai will say. " A dry, kindly humour—but the timing ! Jay Marshall learnt a lot from Al and was a fine pupil. Jay has got his own attractive style now, but it was Al who taught Jay that all important timing."

Watching Jay Marshall on stage at the London Palladium confirmed all that Dai had to say about timing. It takes a terrific personality to hold that London audience—alone on stage with just a glove puppet on his left hand (the lovable " Lefty ") Jay brought the house down. Anybody could have repeated Jay's words, but it is his split-second timing and magnetic personality which makes him a star.

In my note-book I see some interesting facts that Dai told his audiences about Nate Leipzig and other great magicians.

Leipzig used the Peek Control, but as a peek at a card was taken by a member of the audience, he would say : "Just think of a card." Although the pack was broken by the spectator for the peek to be taken, and in consequence Leipzig was able to gain control over that card, by saying "Just think of a card" the inference was that that was all the spectator had done. The fact that the pack had been touched was forgotten and the effect was that Leipzig had been able to do startling things with a card, the name of which had only been in the mind of the spectator. Leipzig was the first magician to use this method of approach to card magic.

During practice Leipzig always used wide cards in preference to Bridge cards. By learning to do everything with larger cards, he had an additional advantage if he was ever handed a Bridge pack for his impromptu demonstrations. Most card specialists adopt this procedure these days.

Nate Leipzig always gave magic a great dignity. He never performed his close-up tricks unless he had the undivided attention of everybody present and was sure that they were anxious to see his work.

The late Paul Rosini also made his effects important, and, like Leipzig, gave his audiences the impression that they were watching great art, not just seeing someone perform tricks.

Dai Vernon loves to simplify the handling of his tricks. He tells how he studied an idea of Max Malini's which concerns forcing a card. Most magicians will have the card to be forced on top of the pack, then, before they can offer the pack for a card to be selected, have to bring the card to the centre by means of the Pass or a shuffle.

Malini would have his pack on the table with the force card already in the centre, but with a "step" above this card. The pack would be on the table for a considerable time before he used it, the tiny "step" remaining unnoticed. Even if a very observant spectator did glance at the pack, it merely looked as if it was not perfectly squared—a natural occurrence.

All Malini had to do when the time came for his force was to pick up the pack and secure a break under the "step". It was now just a question of spreading the pack for the classical force, but, as the handling of the pack had been so clean, no suspicion was aroused.

Sometimes Malini would have a card palmed in his hand perhaps half an hour before he needed to use it! By palming the card before there was a likelihood of anybody knowing he had done so, he was prepared for his trickery without having to handle the pack again.

Many magicians are nervous about palming a card for any length of time, but Malini would rest his hand on the table, his fingers perfectly relaxed, and seemingly forget that he had a card palmed—he did not mind how long he had to wait for the right moment to put it to use.

Dai tells of a card-sharp who did much the same thing, but he used the hand in which he had the card palmed, mainly to cover his mouth as he coughed. To his associates he became known as "The Coughing Kid"!

Our own Johnny Ramsay was one of the first magicians to exploit this technique of "preparing and waiting". This is the answer to the

question asked by so many magicians after witnessing Johnny perform the Cups and Balls : " When and from where does Johnny get the extra ball ? " Johnny has that ball in his hand long before it is even thought that he is going to perform the trick.

Johnny Ramsay attended Dai's first lecture in England at the Victoria Hall, London. It was good to see the good fellowship between the two magicians ; each had a mutual respect for the abilities of the other. When some inner subtle secret was about to be revealed by Dai, he would look down from the platform at Johnny sitting in the front row and with a twinkle in his eye say : " Johnny knows—he's a rascal when it comes to this kind of thing."

Dai Vernon is a master of showmanship, but today it is of the quiet type ; he gets his effect by being himself, by being natural. Some say that Dai looks like a magician ; he looks like a person who can perform wonders, but, speaking personally, he does not have quite that effect upon me. Perhaps this is because I have come to know him well, but to me he is a kindly gentleman, one whom it is a real pleasure to know. When he comes into a room it is not with a fanfare of trumpets, but his presence is felt immediately ; a magnetic personality to whom one is drawn by his warmth and sincerity. He is a " man's man ", but he has that charm of appearance and manner which also endears him to the ladies. There is no acting here—this is Dai Vernon.

Here is the solution to the terrific effect he obtains when he does perform magic, as, disregarding for the moment all the thought and effort he has put into his tricks, he is still that same sincere person, still the same Dai Vernon whom you were chatting to pleasantly a moment ago. He has not altered his style or apparently raised his voice, there are no flamboyant gestures or ' gimmicks ' to focus your attention upon him. He conducts his performance in the same style as if he were still talking to you personally ; the same warmth, the same sincerity—how could such a person be resorting to trickery ? After the performance you know in your heart that there must be some natural explanation for the wonders he has performed, but, whilst it is happening, you are carried away into a strange world where all things are possible—possible for Dai Vernon.

From here onwards this book contains tricks, and in the explanation of those tricks I have endeavoured to embody all the stratagems which Dai Vernon employs to gain the maximum effect. When studying the text the reader is urged to bear in mind the information, examples and advice given in this chapter. It will pay rich dividends, as the sum total adds up to—THE VERNON TOUCH.

## CHAPTER THREE

A CHINESE CLASSIC

*Page 41*

## *CHAPTER THREE*

### A CHINESE CLASSIC

This was one of the first tricks that I had the pleasure of seeing Dai Vernon perform. Seated in London's Victoria Hall amongst two hundred magicians who had come from all parts of the British Isles to see and hear a lecture-demonstration by the Professor, we watched carefully for those beautiful moves over which magicians enthuse—we saw none! He did exactly what he told us he was going to do—made three coins pass through a solid table-top ; what is more, he repeated the penetration and still gave no clue as to how it was accomplished.

The volume of spontaneous applause from his audience indicated their appreciation of his skill in making his trickery appear to be real magic. Every gesture he made was perfectly natural ; he emphasised the fairness of his actions and invited our closest scrutiny, but still there was no apparent explanation.

The majority of the members of his audience were familiar with the fine Han Ping Chien effect ; many of us had performed it ourselves and knew of certain variations, but here was something that only a few of the magicians present had experienced previously—we were having the privilege of witnessing THE VERNON TOUCH.

During his stay in this country I watched him perform this routine on several occasions before magicians and lay audiences. The applause he received was always preceded by a genuine gasp of astonishment—music to the ears of a magician.

At his lectures he explained and demonstrated his presentation most carefully. He was sincere in his wish that the magicians who had journeyed from near and far should benefit by knowing and appreciating every small detail. In preparing the material for this book he has demonstrated the moves over and over again in order that there should be no doubt as to the EXACT actions necessary for duplicating the effect he obtains,

To enable the reader to visualise the effect, it is proposed to give a true and detailed description of the sequence of actions as seen by the audience then, so that the method can be learnt thoroughly, to explain the routine stage by stage.

#### WHAT THE AUDIENCE SEES.

The performer is seated at a table upon which he places six half-crowns and a ring. The half-crowns are placed in two rows (three in each),

one row to the left and the other to the right. The rows are about a foot apart and extend away from the performer. The ring is placed between the two rows of coins. That is the STARTING POSITION.

Picking up the ring in his right hand, then holding both hands palms upwards, the performer tosses the ring from hand to hand slowly and deliberately, leaving it eventually in his right hand. Except for the ring, both hands are seen to be empty and are then closed into fists.

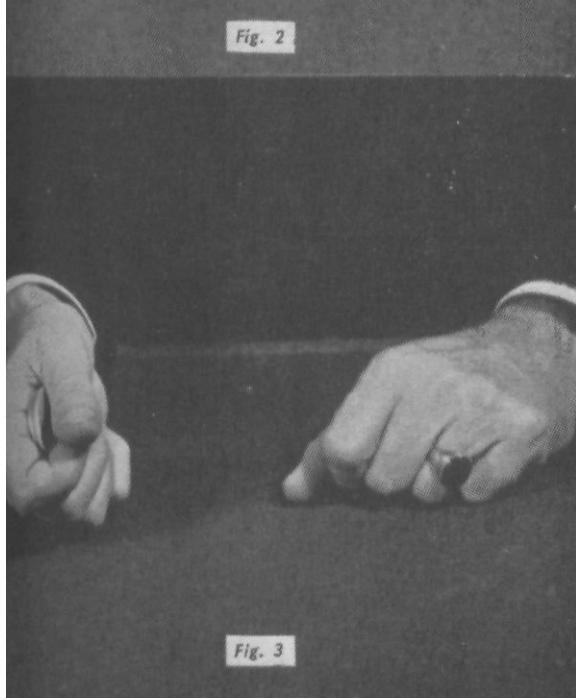
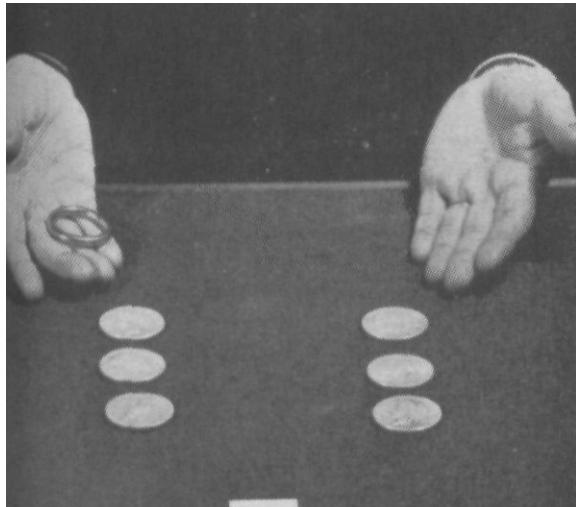
With his right hand the performer picks up each coin in the row to the right, counting them—"One, two, three"—as he does so. He then picks up the coins in the left hand row with his left hand, counting "One, two, three coins".

Now the performer brings both hands together rather quickly as if he were doing some manipulative movement, and asks a spectator to name which hand holds the ring. Should he name the right hand, then the performer asks him if he is willing to wager, when, usually, he will be doubtful. Nevertheless, the performer stresses that he wants everyone to be certain where the ring and the coins are before he proceeds. He gestures with his left hand and asks how many coins it contains. Regardless of the answer, he turns the hand with the fingers downwards and lightly slaps the three coins down on to the table. Again he picks them up with the left hand, then, gesturing with the right hand, he says : "The ring is here, of course, with the other three coins," and slaps the ring and coins down on to the table to prove his statement. Once again he picks up the three coins and the ring with his right hand and holds both hands well apart, then he slowly places the right hand UNDERNEATH the centre of the table. Fixing his gaze firmly on his left hand, he says—"Watch", then he moves his closed left hand (back upwards) OVER the centre of the table and brings it down sharply on to the table-top, his fingers opening as the hand reaches the table. The coins are heard to strike the table and his hand presses down firmly, then swivels backwards and forwards a little, as if rubbing the coins through the solid material. When he lifts his hand it is seen that the coins have gone—apparently right through the solid wood, as he now brings his right hand from underneath and pours SIX COINS AND THE RING on to the table!

This is first surprise, but when the effect is repeated with the audience watching every move very intently (as they are invited to do), then the climax is terrific.

Only the visible moves of the first penetration have been described above. Magicians will appreciate that for the repeat a slightly different sequence of moves is employed, which throws the audience off the scent. These moves will be given in detail as we proceed. The purpose of the description is to paint a true picture of what the performer is SEEN to do ; slowly, deliberately and apparently perfectly fairly. Apart from the fake manipulative move which is made openly and purposely, apparently to provide an excuse for emphasising the exact location of the coins and ring, every action is natural and necessary, giving no cause for suspicion.

When studying the method of performance the reader is urged to keep in his mind a mental picture of the actions that should be seen by the audience. NATURALNESS OF ACTION is the important factor. The sequence of moves has been evolved to give the impression that the performer is emphasising the fairness of the whole operation. It is essential that the routine be learnt thoroughly so that the moves can be made without having



to think, the performer being able to concentrate his attention on the presentation.

There is a basic move to be learnt ; it is not a difficult one, but it is necessary for the performer to practise it until it is second nature. It is a subtle move which looks perfectly natural when performed smoothly, but the whole effect depends upon its mastery. It will be described in the description of the performance.

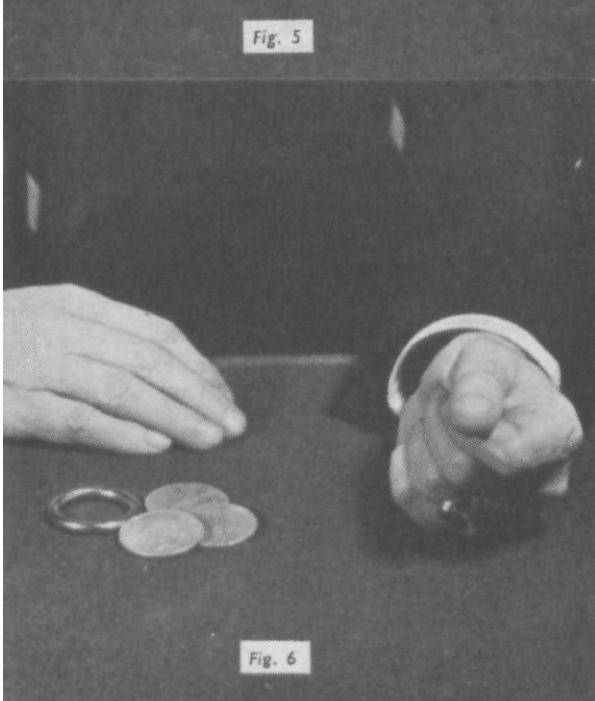
#### PERFORMANCE.

STAGE 1. The reader will remember that the performer should be seated at a table and places six half-crowns in two rows (three in each row), about a foot apart. The ring is placed between the rows. If preferred, a coin of contrasting colour can be used instead of the ring.

With this as your starting point, pick up the ring in your right hand and, with both hands held palm upwards, toss it deliberately from hand to hand, leaving it eventually in the right hand. Notice the position of the ring on the fingers in Fig. 1 ; it rests on the third and little fingers, which enables it to be held by these fingers when the hand is closed. Close both hands.

The actions you have made so far have drawn attention to the fact that SIX coins and one ring are employed, and that, except for the ring which you now hold in your right hand, the hands are empty.

STAGE 2. Pick up the coins in the row on the right with the right hand, counting as you do so : "One, two, three coins and the ring." Fig. 2 shows an exposed view of the position of the ring in the right hand ; notice how the third and little finger hold it, leaving the thumb and first and second fingers free to pick up the coins. It is necessary that the three coins are held together in a stack at the thumb end of the fist, where



they can be gripped secretly between the side of the thumb and the top of the palm. This grip can be seen in Fig. 3, which purposely exposes the manner in which the coins are held. In performance, of course, the coins are further down in the fist and out of sight.

Now pick up the coins in the row on the left with the left hand, counting "One, two, three coins". Both hands are closed at this point (Fig. 3).

STAGE 3. Now you make a feint by bringing both hands together quickly so that they just touch, then move apart again, just as if you were doing some manipulative movement. Actually no trickery is involved, but you look at one of the spectators and say : "Which hand contains the ring ?" If he names the right hand, ask him if he would be willing to wager and, usually, he will be doubtful. His answer is immaterial, as what you have done is to provide an excuse to say : "I want you all to be quite certain of the position of the coins and the ring before I proceed . . . I have three coins here . . ." With the left hand lightly slap down the three coins on to the table and move the hand back towards the body to allow a clear view of the three coins (Fig. 4). After a slight pause to allow the coins to be seen, pick them up with the left hand again. Now comes the basic move, which is made as you continue your patter with ". . . and three coins and the ring here . . .".

BASIC MOVE. After the left hand picks up its coins, it is closed into a fist and rests on the table, thumb upwards. The coins (in a sideways stack) are allowed to slide down the fist until their edges actually touch the table top. The left fingers,

although closed into a fist, are held loosely, but there must be no movement of the fingers as the next action is made. A simultaneous movement of both hands now takes place ; the right hand moves to the left and over the left hand in a slapping action, and as it almost touches the left hand the latter moves to the left, which, because the edges of the coins it holds are touching the table and the left fingers are held loosely, causes the stack to tilt to the left and remain behind on the table as the left hand moves away. The coins leaving the left hand are covered by the right hand, which opens and **RELEASES THE RING ONLY**, which falls on top of the three coins on the table. Fig. 5 exposes this action ; notice the stack of coins leaving the bottom of the left fist (the fist is NOT lifted from the table) as the left fist moves to the left. In the photograph the right hand has opened to release the ring and covers the coins leaving the left fist. Remember that three coins are held by the right thumb against the side of the palm. Fig. 6 shows the completion of the move ; the right hand (with three coins in the thumb-palm position) has moved back towards the body and rests on the table in a relaxed position ; the left fist has moved to the left and three coins and the ring are in view on the table.

The move depends upon timing and confidence. All the actions should flow together smoothly with no pauses, then the illusion of the coins and ring being slapped down on to the table from the right hand is perfect. It is over in a second as you say : “ . . . and three coins and the ring here ”.

**STAGE 4.** Keeping the hands apart and the left fist closed, of course, slowly pick up the coins and ring with the right hand. This hand now contains six coins and the ring, but due to the subtle basic move the spectators believe that there are three coins in the left hand and three coins and the ring in the right—they have just seen you slap three coins down from the left hand and pick them up again with the same hand, then you slapped down three coins and the ring with the right hand and picked them up again! It all appears perfectly fair.

All that remains is to make the penetration as startling as possible—with showmanship.

Place the right hand **UNDER** the centre of the table, then, as you say “ **Watch** ”, bring the left fist (back upwards) **OVER** the centre of the table and slap it down sharply, opening the fingers and making a rubbing motion with the palm of the hand on the table. Your gaze should be directed intently on the left hand. Simultaneously bring the right hand up against the underside of the table, open the fingers and grind the coins and ring against the hard **under-surface** of the table. Slowly lift the left hand and gaze at the centre of the table. Turn the left hand palm upwards, fingers open, then bring the right hand from under the table and allow the six coins and the ring to pour from the hand on to the table—**CLIMAX!**

#### THE SECOND PENETRATION.

**STAGE 5.** Offer to repeat the **effect** and invite the spectators to watch very carefully.

This time you use a different sequence of moves, although, to the audience, they appear the same.

**Place** the coins and the ring on the table in the STARTING POSITION, then pick up the ring and toss it from hand to hand as before. Retain it in the right hand, holding it with the third and little fingers in EXACTLY the same manner as in the first presentation. Pick up the coins in the row on the right with the right hand, counting "One, two, three coins and the ring". These coins are held in the right thumb grip. Now pick up the left row of coins with the left hand, counting "One, two, three coins".

At this point you make another feint—different to the first one. The right hand is quickly placed under the table and, whilst out of sight, the three coins are placed in a stack on the right knee (or clipped between the knees if you prefer), but the ring is retained in the hand. Look at the audience and smile, then, as you bring the closed right hand from under the table, say ". . . but, of course, you know what I'm going to do this time ; I'll have to play fair . . . look".

As you say "look", slap the three coins down with the left hand saying "Three coins here". Pick them up again with the left hand, then make the BASIC MOVE, releasing the ring from the right hand as you say "Three coins and the ring here". This time, as the right hand picks up the coins and the ring, it is shown palm upwards so that the spectators can see that it does contain only the exact articles stated.

**STAGE 6.** **Place** the right hand UNDER the centre of the table (do NOT pick up the coins from the knee at this point). Bring the left hand sharply down OVER the centre of the table, open the fingers and make the rubbing action as before, then lift the left hand and show the palm. Remove the right hand from under the table and, as it passes the knees, **PICK UP THE THREE COINS WITHOUT PAUSING** and complete the effect by pouring the six coins and the ring from the right hand on to the table—**CLIMAX!**

That concludes the description of the routine, but Dai Vernon added the following suggestions and advice when he demonstrated it to me :—

- (a) All the moves appear natural, so when performing them BE NATURAL—be yourself. If you have learnt the routine thoroughly and practised diligently, you will not have to think : "What comes next?" RELAX—YOU are the master of the situation.
- (b) When performing at a dinner table it is natural to have a napkin on your lap. This will help you with the second part of the presentation, as the coins can be left on the napkin until you are ready to pick them up AS THE RIGHT HAND PASSES THE KNEES ON ITS WAY BACK FROM UNDER THE TABLE.
- (c) When commencing your practice, concentrate on the BASIC MOVE. Once you can do this smoothly and confidently, the rest falls into place.
- (d) Additional effect can be obtained for the actual penetration by altering the position of the coins in the right hand, bringing them to the finger-tips (as the hand is out of sight under the

table), then, as the left hand makes the rubbing motion on the table top, allow the coins to fall singly into the right palm.

- (e) When picking up a row of coins, hold the hand over the first coin as seen in Fig. 2. Lift the outer edge of the coin with the tip of the forefinger, then with the aid of the thumb move the coin forward and over the second coin. Lift the outer edges of both coins with the forefinger and move them forward and over the third coin. Now pick up the three coins together. In this manner the coins are in a stack ready to be gripped in the thumb-palm position.

## OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

### FIRST PENETRATION.

1. Place coins and ring in starting position.
2. Toss ring from hand to hand, leaving it in right hand (on third and little fingers). Close hands.
3. Pick up right hand row in right hand in position for thumb-palm.
4. Pick up left hand row in left hand.
5. Make feint and ask : " In which hand is the ring ? "
6. Slap left hand coins down, then pick up again.
7. Make BASIC MOVE.
8. Pick up coins and ring in right hand.
9. Right hand under table ; left hand makes rubbing motion on table top.
10. Coins and ring poured from right hand on to table.

### SECOND PENETRATION.

11. Place coins and ring in starting position.
12. Toss ring from hand to hand, leaving on third and little fingers of right hand. Close hands.
13. Pick up right hand row with right hand and left hand row with left hand.
14. Make feint with right hand (under table), leaving coins on the right knee.
15. Slap coins from left hand on to table. Pick up in same hand.
16. Make BASIC MOVE.
17. Pick up ring and coins in right hand—show with palm up, then close hand.
18. Right hand under table ; left hand rubs centre of top of table, then hand lifted to show empty.
19. Collect coins from knee on way back from under table and pour six coins and ring from right hand on to table.

## CHAPTER FOUR

PENETRATION OF THOUGHT

*Page 51*

## *CHAPTER FOUR*

### PENETRATION OF THOUGHT

A problem that intrigued Dai Vernon for a considerable time was to evolve a clean-cut method whereby he would be able to make a card that was merely thought of by a spectator pass from one packet of cards into another packet. The conditions he imposed were severe ; only a small number of cards were to be in each packet (he decided upon four in each) ; the spectator was to have an entirely free choice of any one of four cards and the back design or colour of one packet of cards should be different to that of the second packet in order that, when the receiving packet was fanned, the back of the card thought of could be recognised instantly.

In a letter to Alexander Elmsley in England, Dai Vernon detailed one of the several methods that he had worked upon, and it was the moves for that method that I had originally studied. However, when the Professor reached England he showed me a superior presentation, which he informed me was his final choice, then kindly gave permission for it to be published in this book,

Although the reader has been given the general effect in the description of the problem set, it is proposed to amplify it so that it will be possible to visualise the full presentation.

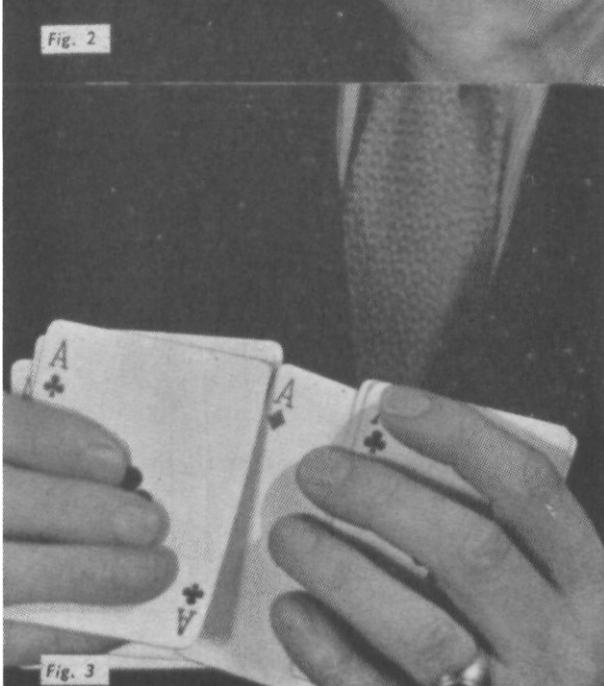
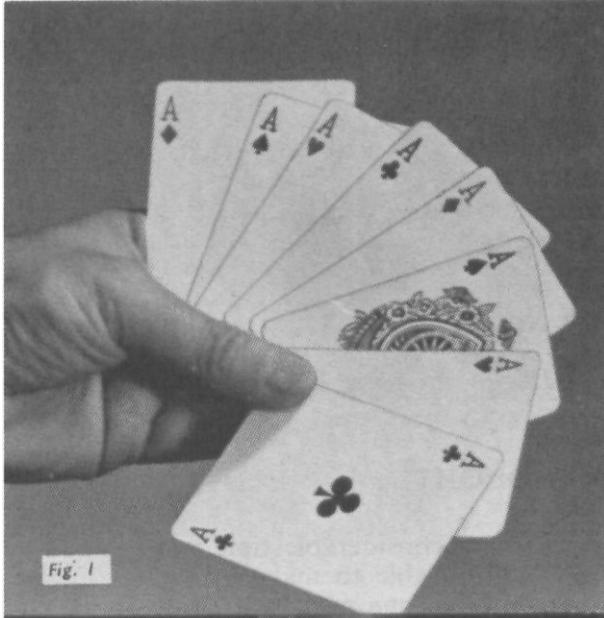
#### EFFECT.

The performer displays a fan of eight cards and asks a spectator to merely think of one of them. Four of the cards have red backs ; the other four are duplicates but have blue backs. After counting the cards from hand to hand and showing that there are just eight cards, the performer divides them into two equal packets. The cards with the blue backs are counted and shown to be four in number ; they are then placed on the table and a spectator is requested to place his hand over the packet. The remaining packet of red-backed cards are counted and seen to be four cards.

The performer touches the back of the spectator's hand with the red packet then counts the cards on to the table—there are now three only. When the spectator lifts his hand, the performer fans the packet of blue-backed cards and shows that a red-backed card has joined them. The spectator names the card of which he is thinking, and upon the red-backed card being turned face up it proves to be that same card.

#### REQUIREMENTS.

Four different cards having blue backs and four duplicates of these cards, but having red backs, are required.



For clarity it is proposed to describe the method as if Aces are being used, but in actual performance it is more effective if each set of cards consists of, say, the Nine of Clubs, the King of Hearts, the Four of Spades and the Ace of Diamonds, arranged in the CHaSeD set-up. Of course, any four cards of different suits may be employed, but if they are all Aces the trick may become labelled as "another four-ace trick".

Both sets of cards are arranged in the same order. In our example, reading from right to left, both sets of Aces are in the CHaSeD set-up. Fig. 1 shows the eight cards fanned as they will be when first shown to the spectator.

#### PERFORMANCE.

The performer holds the fan of eight cards with the faces towards a spectator and patters as follows :—  
"As you can see, here are eight cards. I want you, Sir, to think of just one of them ; I won't influence your choice in any way—just *think* of one card."

After the spectator has signified that he is thinking of a card, the performer emphasises that he really has only eight cards by counting them aloud, but, although the count itself is fair, the way in which the cards are taken from hand to hand is not so innocent as it appears. In appearance it looks as if single cards are pushed fairly from the left hand into the right, but what actually happens is as follows.

The cards are squared and held face down in the left hand in the dealer's position. The right hand is held close to the left hand and the top card of the packet (say red-backed) is pushed over the side of the packet with the left thumb and received into the right hand, the fingers of which extend under the card with the thumb above and at the centre of the right side. The hands

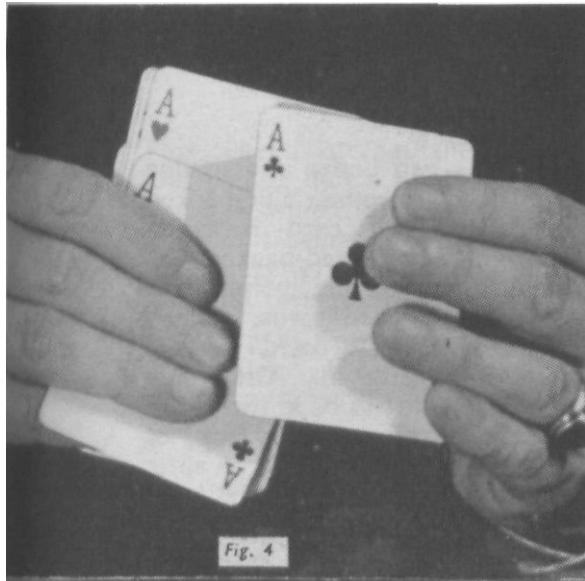


Fig. 4

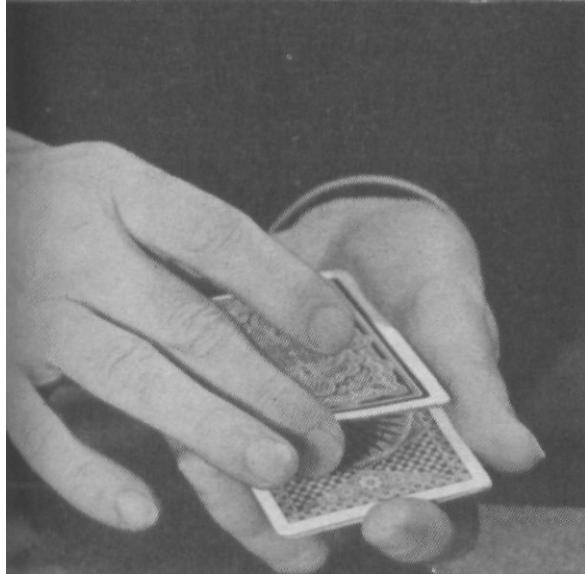


Fig. 5

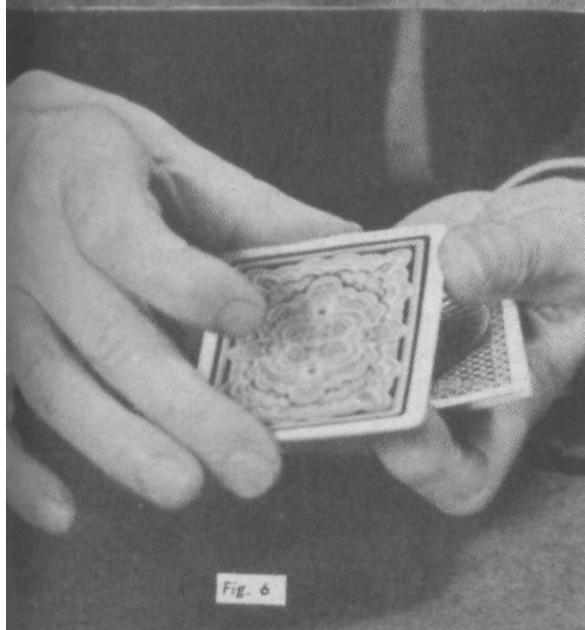


Fig. 6

part a little distance, then come together again. As the card is taken into the right hand the performer counts "One". Now the left thumb pushes over the second card, which goes UNDERNEATH the first card as it moves on to the right fingers. The performer counts "Two" as the hands part. The third card is similarly treated as the count continues. The right little finger is inserted under the third card, so that, when the fourth card is pushed over, it slides UNDER the little finger. Fig. 2 shows a view from underneath. Notice how the fourth card (Ace of Clubs) is sliding across the right little finger and how the right first, second and third fingers are under the card and in position for pulling it well over to the right of the right-hand packet. Viewed from above (spectator's view), the fourth card is pulled completely out of sight.

At this point the two hands separate a little more, the red packet in the right hand and the blue in the left. The hands come together again and the top card of the blue packet is pushed to the right, when, although it appears to go beneath the right hand packet, it actually slides into the gap above the bottom card, as with an upward movement the right inner corner of the blue card contacts the under surface of the three red cards. The blue card is immediately carried forward until it projects over an inch from the outer end of the red packet.

Another view from underneath is shown at Fig. 3, in which can be seen the first blue-backed card (Ace of Diamonds) being inserted ABOVE the fourth card and ABOVE the right little finger. Seen from above, the action is smooth, without pause, the appearance being that cards are counted, one under the other, into the right hand. The second and third blue-backed cards are pushed separ-

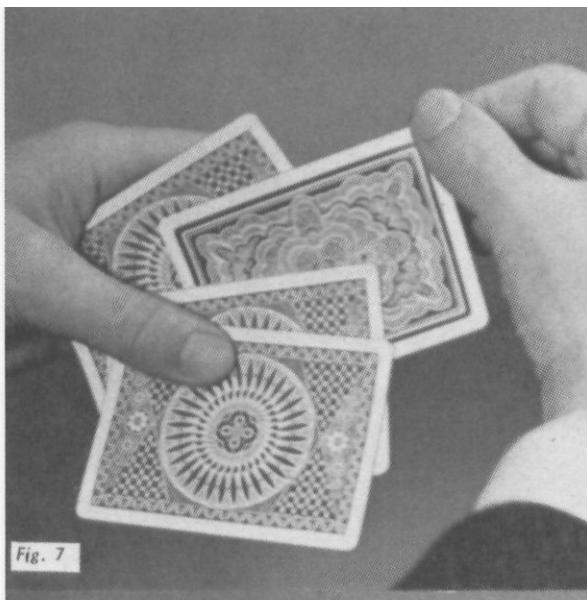


Fig. 7

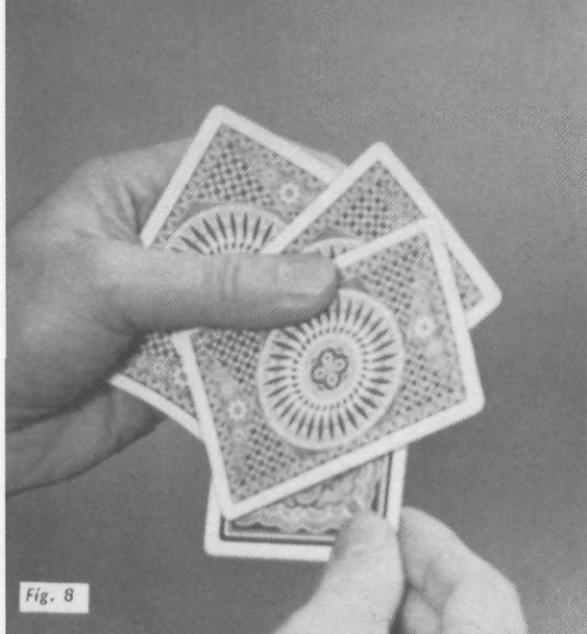


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

ately into the gap under and in line with the first projecting blue-backed card, but the last card is taken UNDERNEATH the red-backed Ace of Clubs, but projecting in line with the other blue-backed cards, and so becomes the bottom card of the packet of eight (Fig. 4). The whole packet now appears to be in two steps, the blue cards projecting in front of the red cards.

The count looks perfectly fair ; each card is taken separately, the hands parting a little as each card is pushed by the left thumb under the preceding card.

The entire packet is now taken into the dealer position in the left hand, then the three UPPER red cards are gripped from above with the right hand, the thumb at the inner end and the fingers at the outer end (Fig. 5). These cards are moved forward in the action of removing them, the red packet being plainly seen to be separate from the blue packet as their front edges are kept tilted fully an inch above the blue packet. As the red cards are moved forward the right thumb pushes the fourth (separated) red card into and square with the blue packet. The right hand continues its forward action, carrying the three squared red cards clear of the blue cards and places them on the table.

Study Fig. 6 and notice how the left thumb moves to the left long edge of the red packet, and, with the left second finger at the opposite long edge, forms a guide through which the packet slides, keeping the cards in perfect alignment as they are carried forward and away by the right hand, to be placed on the table.

When the above moves are performed smoothly, the spectators believe that the cards have been divided evenly, four red-backed cards now being on the table and four blue-backed cards in the left hand.

This belief is strengthened by counting the five cards in the left hand as four by the BUCKLE FALSE COUNT (see description at the end of this chapter), which not only shows four blue-backed cards and reverses their order, but brings the red-backed card to the centre of the packet secretly. This packet is now placed on the table and the spectator is asked to place his hand over the packet.

The red-backed packet is picked up and, if the reader wishes, these three cards can be false counted as four. This is not entirely necessary, and whether it is done or not should depend upon the reader's ability to perform a really convincing false count of the type required to count three cards as four. Actually, Dai Vernon does false count them. He does this casually and naturally, but was careful to point out that he did not consider it a particularly important feature of this trick. His reason is that eight cards have been shown and counted ; four have been removed and counted, therefore it is logical for the spectators to be convinced that four remain.

Apart from the introductory remarks, the patter up to this stage need be purely explanatory, but at this point the performer should recap to emphasise what has been done and ensure that the spectator is thinking of one of the cards.

The performer now touches the back of the spectator's hand with the red-backed packet of cards, then counts them slowly and singly, face down, on to the table. It is seen that there are three only. Lifting the spectator's hand, the performer picks up the blue-backed packet and spreads them in a fan ; a red-backed card is seen in the centre.

Now the performer says : " As you see, Sir, one card from the red-backed packet has penetrated into the blue-backed packet. For the first time I want you to reveal the name of the card of which you are thinking."

If the card named is the Ace of Clubs (or the corresponding card when cards other than Aces are used), then a near-miracle has been performed and all that remains is for the red-backed card to be removed and revealed dramatically. However, there are, of course, three other possibilities, and, according to the card named, so does the method of revelation differ.

#### ACE OF SPADES.

Holding the packet of cards squared in the dealer position in the left hand, push the top card over to the right with the left thumb and receive it with the right hand, thumb on top and fingers underneath. Treat the second card in the same manner, but receive it underneath the first card and swivelled slightly in a fanned position. Now move the right hand (and the two cards it holds) backwards for half the length of the cards remaining in the left hand and GRIP ALL THREE LEFT-HAND CARDS AT THE RIGHT INNER CORNER. It will be found that the tips of the right first and second fingers come into contact with the right inner corner of the underside of the bottom card, enabling the grip to be taken. Immediately buckle the bottom card by pulling to the left with the tips of the LEFT third and little fingers which pull the right inner corner of this card only away from the right-hand grip. Without a pause, move the right hand forward again to its original position, carrying the cards it holds

(the two fanned blue-backed cards and the other two protruding in perfect alignment) with it. As the right hand brings its cards into the position described, move the left thumb over to hold the fan of cards against the left fingers which are underneath the fan. Study Fig. 7 and see how the left thumb holds everything firmly in position—its pad is on the back of the first blue card, but the point of pressure is directly over the centre of the inner short edge of the red-backed "two as one" card.

This whole manoeuvre takes but a second and appears as if the cards have been fanned singly until the red-backed card has been reached, which is then pushed forward until it protrudes for half its length out of the fan. Actually, of course, the red-backed card has the Ace of Spades beneath it, but as both cards are in perfect alignment it appears as one card.

Move the right hand over to the protruding card(s) and grasp it at the left outer corner between the tip of the thumb (above) and the tip of the second finger (underneath)—the tip of the forefinger is at the extreme left corner. Fig. 7 shows the holding position of the right and left hands at this stage.

Move the right hand in a clockwise direction so that the "two as one" card is swivelled round until it protrudes from the right side of the fan (Fig. 8), from where it is removed and turned in one continuous movement to show the face of the Ace of Spades (Fig. 9). After a sufficient pause for the spectators to see that the red-backed card (?) is indeed the Ace of Spades, the two cards (as one) are turned face down on top of the fan and the packet is squared. Finally, the red-backed card is thumbed off on to the red packet on the table and all eight cards assembled in a face-down packet, to prevent an over-curious spectator from checking.

Exactly the same moves are made for revealing the Ace of Diamonds and the Ace of Hearts, but, of course, whichever one of these cards is named it is necessary to bring that card to position underneath the red-backed card. This is accomplished in one of the following ways.

#### ACE OF HEARTS.

If this card is named, the performer spreads the cards to show the red-backed card, then says : "We started with four blue-backed cards, but you see a red-backed card has penetrated to the centre of the packet, so that we now have one, two, three, four, five cards." The cards are counted from the left hand into the right, reversing their order, which brings the Ace of Hearts directly underneath the red-backed card.

From here on the procedure is the same as before.

#### ACE OF DIAMONDS.

Begin to fan the cards and, when the red-backed card is reached, push it forward slightly. Take the cards into the right hand and under cover of an emphasising gesture, remove the card underneath the red-backed card with the left hand and tap the red-backed card with it as you say : "Wouldn't it be surprising if this red-backed card was the very one you thought of ?" Casually replace the card in the left hand underneath the packet, take the cards into the left hand, square them, then proceed as before.

Dai Vernon advises that even if the Ace of Clubs is the card thought of then it should be pushed forward in the fan and taken round in a clockwise

direction before it is removed and its face shown. By using the same method of revelation for whichever card is chosen, a spectator will have no cause for suspicion if he happens to be present on another occasion when the trick is shown and a different card is named.

A point which may have occurred to the reader is that the backs of only four cards show in the fan prior to the revelation of the card. This fact is *never* noticed. If proof be needed—Dai Vernon taught this trick to Dr. Daley and Jimmy Drilling—Dr. Daley performed it hundreds of times during the last year of his life ; Jimmy Drilling performs it regularly.

#### THE BUCKLE FALSE COUNT.

This false count is particularly deceptive when it is desired to show that a small packet of cards contains less than its actual number. In “Penetration of Thought” it is necessary to count five cards as four, and the Buckle False Count allows this to be accomplished cleanly and convincingly.

It will be remembered that after the performer counts the packet of eight cards, due to the secret stratagem employed he is able to divide the cards into two apparently equal packets ; one of which is supposed to contain four red-backed cards and the other four blue-backed cards. Actually the red-backed packet contains three cards only, the fourth card already being in the blue-backed packet at the position next to bottom. It is now necessary to count five cards as four only, to reverse their order and to show them to be all blue-backed cards ; in addition, it is necessary to bring the red-backed card to the centre of the packet.

Hold the packet of cards squared in the left hand in the dealer's position, with the outer short end protruding about half an inch over the side of the left forefinger. Curl the left fingers under the packet so that the tips of the fingers contact the right long edges of the cards and keep them squared. With the left thumb push the top card to the right and receive its outer right corner between the right thumb (above) and the right first and second fingers (underneath). Carry the card away to the right and clear of the left hand packet on the count “one”. The left finger-tips keep the rest of the cards perfectly squared, as the top card only is pushed to the right, to be taken by the right hand.

Treat the second card similarly, taking it into the right hand, the outer right corner of the card going UNDER the right thumb and ABOVE the first card. Carry the card away in the right hand on the count “two”.

It is the next two cards which must be taken as one, but the action must appear exactly the same as when one card only is taken (see note at end of chapter).

Curl the left third and little fingers inwards, pressing their tips on the inner right corner of the bottom card of the left-hand packet. This causes the bottom card to *buckle at the inner end only*. As the tips of the left third and little fingers are right at the edge of the buckled card, part of them will also be in contact with the underside of the second (middle) card. By uncurling the left third and little fingers, but exerting pressure from their tips on to the underside of the middle card, the two upper cards are carried to the right in perfect alignment, the left thumb providing the other point of pressure from above the top card. From above the left thumb is seen

to move in the same pushing action as before, but this time, of course, due to the pressure from underneath, the two cards move as one to the right, where their outer right corners are taken under the right thumb and over the top card of the two in the right hand. Move the right hand to the right, carrying the four cards with it as you count "three".

Push the last card over the left fingers with the left thumb and take it under the right thumb so that it can be carried away on the count of "four". Transfer the complete packet back into the dealer position in the left hand.

The count must be practised until it can be made smoothly and naturally, with no pause between the counts of "two" and "three".

Dai Vernon has been using the principle of buckling the bottom card for over thirty years. He developed it for his own use, and, although he personally has not claimed it as his own origination, it seems certain that he was the first magician to make good use of this clever idea.

**NOTE.**—When I received the corrected copy of this Chapter from Dai Vernon it was clear that my original text was incorrect in that I had described the method of false counting he uses when counting cards on to a table or on to a spectator's hand. Instead of re-writing, in this instance, I propose to quote Dai Vernon's comments :—

"I usually use the count you have described when counting on to a spectator's hand or on to the table ; otherwise I grip the cards in the right hand at the *inner* right corner. BUT be *sure* to mention in your description that when the actual buckle is made, it is NOT done until all THREE remaining cards are well gripped by the right fingers (underneath). Now the bottom card is buckled and is *pulled away* from the right fingers, leaving the other two cards to be taken as one. This ensures that there will be no slip-up with any type or condition of cards.

"The count appears perfectly uniform, although on the count of 'three' the right hand goes in deeper (more to the left).

"Timing and *casualness* of manner are the essentials necessary for complete deception with this count."

## CHAPTER FIVE

THREE BALL TRANSPOSITION

*Page 61*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THREE BALL TRANSPOSITION

Edwin T. Sachs, in his book SLEIGHT OF HAND, mentions that although performers from the East have the reputation of being able to produce marvellous feats of magic, he personally had been disappointed in the effects that some Chinese conjurers had shown him when they visited England. However, there was one trick which impressed him considerably ; a novel and quaint effect with marbles.

For this trick the performer placed some marbles in his mouth, where he held them temporarily whilst showing his hands to be empty. He then took the marbles separately from his mouth and held them in his closed fists, from where he caused them to vanish, only to reappear from the tip of his wand, from the table-top and from his mouth again.

This description intrigued Dai Vernon, who became determined to evolve a routine which, whilst eliminating the distasteful action of placing marbles in the mouth, would allow him to bring about a mysterious transposition of marbles or balls from one hand to the other. After a considerable amount of experimenting, he produced an original routine which met with instant success and which has remained a feature of his act for many years.

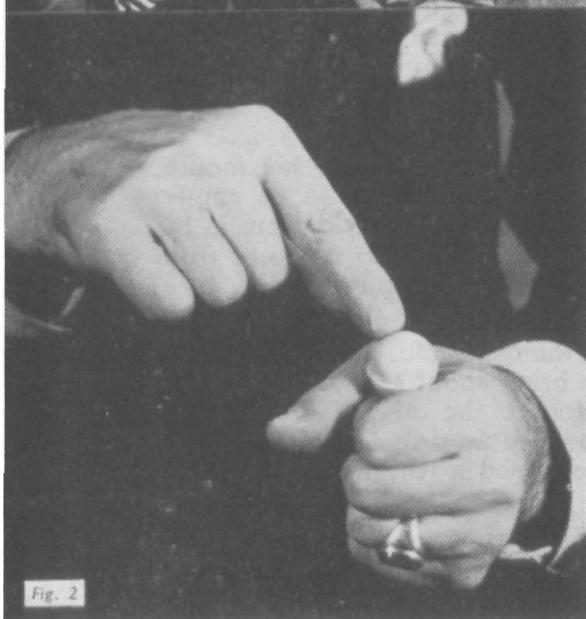
In the Vernon effect, the balls used are about an inch in diameter. The material from which they are made matters little, although he recommends solid rubber. On occasions he will pick up olives from the dinner table and perform with those. For his demonstrations in this country, in addition to rubber balls, he used balls turned from wood and also balls that looked like miniature golf balls, made from a plastic material, which he purchased from a toy shop.

Although the audience is aware of the existence of three balls only, he actually has FOUR in his jacket pocket on the right hand side at the commencement of the performance.

When procuring balls for this routine, it will assist the reader if he bears in mind that the diameter required is **about** the same as an English halfpenny.

The photograph at Fig. 1 shows the performance in progress, and it will be seen that two volunteer assistants from the audience are holding a handkerchief between them into which the balls are dropped at various stages in the routine.

When performing before a large audience, Dai Vernon provides a close-mesh net, which is held by the assistants in place of the handkerchief. The advantage of the net is that the balls can be seen by spectators who may be sitting below the level of the performer. Incidentally, the idea for using a net is Dai Vernon's own. He passed it on to Silent Mora, who



had constructed another fine routine, quite independently, on the same lines.

As an important BASIC SLEIGHT is used several times during the routine, this will be described first, as it is essential that it should be mastered before attempting the rest of the moves. The purpose of the basic sleight is to allow the spectators to see two or three balls apparently placed into the left hand, whereas, in reality, the hand eventually contains a single ball only.

#### THE BASIC SLEIGHT.

After casually permitting the left hand to be seen empty, close it into a fist and hold it, thumb end upwards, in front of the body just above waist level. With the right hand pick up a ball and place it on top of the left fist, then, after touching it with the tip of the right forefinger (Fig. 2), allow it to sink slowly into the fist by opening the left fingers just sufficiently to let the ball sink downwards by its own weight. So far there is no trickery involved, except that the ball does not go far down into the fist, only just out of sight.

Pick up a second ball with the right hand and apparently place it on top of the fist as before, then allow it to sink in, but during these visible actions you perform the following secret move :—

After the first ball is in the left fist, and during the action of reaching forward for the second ball, drop the left hand about eight inches and turn it so that the thumb end of the fist is to the right. Relax the fingers sufficiently to allow the ball to roll right into the opening at the thumb end of the fist, but at this point the opening should still be covered by the thumb. Notice the position of the left hand in Fig. 3. With the right hand pick up the second ball and display it between the pads of the thumb and second finger (Fig. 3). Now simultaneous actions take place with BOTH hands. Bring them towards each other ; the right hand making a quarter turn to bring the back towards the audience as the first, third and little fingers come around the ball, obscuring it from view (Fig. 4). As the hands are coming together, they BOTH begin to turn to the left until, when they actually touch, the right hand is above the left fist. During this turning movement, move the left thumb aside and slightly down so that when the



top of the left fist is covered by the right fingers, the left forefinger (assisted by the thumb) can squeeze the ball to the top of the fist.

The foregoing moves appear complicated in print, but if the reader will attempt them whilst reading the text, they will be easily understood. Refer to Fig. 5, which shows a rear view of the final position—the first ball has been squeezed to the top of the left fist, whilst the right hand (containing the second ball) has apparently placed the ball on the left fist. The photograph shows how the action is *covered*—notice how the right fingers cover the second ball on three sides, obscuring it from the view of the spectators in front and the two volunteer assistants on the left and the right of the performer.

When the right hand is removed, what appears to be the second ball is visible on top of the left fist. Actually it is the first ball again. Apparently to draw attention to the ball the right second, third and little fingers curl into the palm (conveying the second ball automatically to the finger-palm position), and the extended forefinger touches the visible ball (Fig. 2), which then sinks down into the fist as before.

The same operation is repeated with the third ball, and at the conclusion the audience will **believe** that there are three balls in the left fist; actually there is one only, the other two are in the right finger-palm position.

Practise the moves until the movements of both hands can be perfectly synchronised, as it is upon the timing and the naturalness of the actions that the illusion depends.

Although the right forefinger touches the ball before it sinks into the fist, it is not necessary to push

the ball down. Touching the ball looks perfectly natural, as the action draws attention to it, but what is important to the performer is that by extending the right forefinger and curling the other fingers into the palm the second ball is taken automatically to the finger-palm position under cover of a natural movement. From the finger-palm position a ball can be conveyed to the palm-proper position if required.

Once the mechanics of the moves are understood, the reader will find that they are not difficult to perform, but it is essential that they are practised until they can be made smoothly and automatically—remember that it is the timing and the naturalness of performance which creates the perfect illusion.

#### THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ROUTINE.

With FOUR balls in your jacket pocket on the right hand side and the handkerchief or net readily available, you are ready to present the effect.

Obtain the services of two volunteer assistants from the audience ; position one on your right side and the other on your left, then instruct them to hold the handkerchief or net between them (Fig. 1). If the performance is taking place before a large audience, then a better view will be obtained if the performer and his assistants are standing. It is also desirable to use a net on these occasions, as the mesh permits a view of the balls from a low angle.

STAGE 1. Tell the audience that it is proposed to use three small balls for this effect, and, after removing *three* of the four balls from the jacket pocket, let them drop singly from the right hand into the net. Now hold both hands palms upward with fingers curled slightly to permit the audience to see that they are empty.

Say : “ Watch carefully . . . ” then close the left hand into a fist and hold it, thumb upwards, in front of the body, just above waist level. Pick up a ball from the net between the pads of the right thumb and second finger, and place it on top of the left fist; touch it with the right forefinger (Fig. 2) and as you say : “ One ball . . . ” allow it to sink slowly into the fist by opening the left fingers just sufficiently to let the ball sink down by its own weight.

As you reach forward to pick up a second ball from the net in the same manner as before, allow the left fist to turn and drop naturally in readiness for the BASIC MOVE. Apparently place the second ball on the left fist, but actually make the BASIC MOVE. Touch the ball with the right forefinger and say : “ Two balls . . . ”, then allow it to sink into the fist again.

Repeat these actions (BASIC MOVE) with the third ball.

At this point the audience believe that the three balls are in the left fist, but due to the fact that the basic move has been employed twice, there is only ONE ball in the left fist and TWO balls in the right finger-palm position.

Close the right hand into a fist and hold it, thumb upwards, in front of the body and about a foot from the left fist. Gesture with the left fist

towards the right fist (without bringing them together), wiggling the fingers in the process, then squeeze a ball to the top of the RIGHT fist and, by tipping the fist to the left, allow the ball to fall into the net, saying : "One ball . . . "

Repeat these actions, and, as the second ball falls from the right fist into the net, say : "... two balls . . . ". Now turn to the assistant on the left and pretend to hear him remark that there is no ball in the left hand, so say : "... no, no, there is still a ball in this hand ". Open the left hand and show him the ball on the palm. Pick it up with the right hand and show it to the assistant on the right, then apparently take it back into the left hand, which is then again closed into a fist. Actually, this is a fake transfer (Chapter Two), the ball remaining in the right hand, where it is taken into the palm-proper position as the hand drops momentarily whilst attention is focused on to the closed left fist.

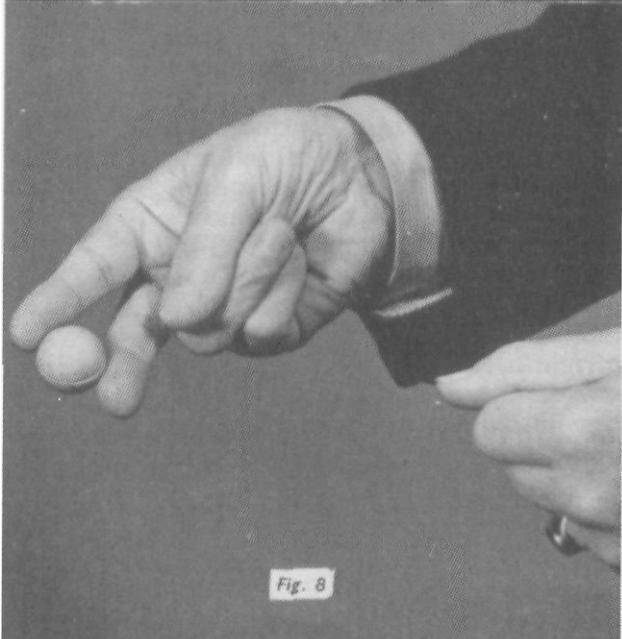
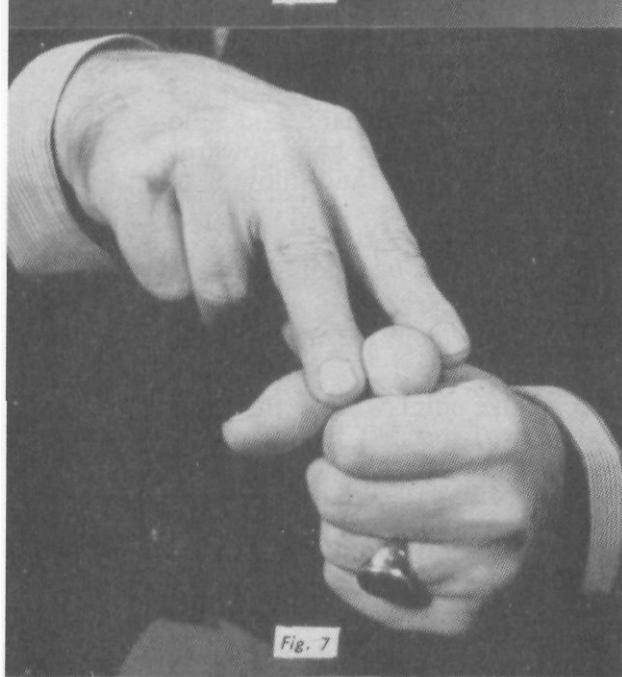
Gesture to the assistant on the right with the right hand. The ball is in the right palm-proper position, the fingers opened a little and curled slightly, so that the hand is natural in appearance, NOT with fingers spread "starfish" fashion. Say : "Watch", then close the right hand and hold it in front of the body again. Make a gesture with the left hand towards the right, then squeeze the ball to the top of the right fist and allow it to drop into the net. Show both hands casually, palms upward.

STAGE 2. At this stage the effect is repeated, but on this occasion there is a slight variation in the moves.

Saying : "I'll do that again", pick up a ball from the net with the right hand and place it on the left fist as before.

Actually the moves are the same up to the point where you begin to squeeze balls from the right hand—that is : (a) the first ball is placed on the left fist and sinks in ; (b) the second ball is apparently placed on the left fist and sinks in—basic move ; and (c) the third ball is apparently placed on the left fist and sinks in—basic move. This leaves one ball in the left fist and two in the right, although apparently there should be three balls in the left fist only. After the previous demonstration the audience will be watching carefully, so a variation is brought into play.

This time hold the fists closer together in front of the body, and, as the left hand gestures towards the right, the left-hand ball is secretly brought outside the left fingers and gripped by the base of the thumb and the bent third finger—the thumb rolls it to this position under cover of the movement of the left hand as it gestures towards the right. Fig. 6 shows an exposed view of this hold. All attention will be on the right hand as it squeezes a ball to the top of the fist and then tilts to the left to make the ball fall into the net. Squeeze the second ball to the top of the right fist, but this time, although the tilting action appears the same as before, the right hand moves UNDER the left hand (the left hand is kept STILL). Allow the ball on the right fist to sink back into the fist and simultaneously DISLODGE THE BALL FROM THE LEFT HAND so that it falls on to the right fist, then into the net. When these movements are correctly timed, it appears as if the ball has been squeezed from the right fist to fall into the net. In Fig. 6 the left hand has been lifted to show the position of the ball outside the fingers and the right-hand ball sinking into the fist; in performance the hands would be together momentarily.



Now squeeze the ball to the top of the right fist and allow it to fall into the net as the fist is tilted. Apparently the three balls have passed magically from the left hand to the right hand. Both hands are opened and shown casually, palms upward.

STAGE 3. State that the effect will be repeated again. This time really do allow the first two balls to sink into the left fist (no basic move is made). Place the third ball on top of the left fist, then say : " I'll place this ball in my pocket ". Reach over with the right hand as if taking the ball, but as the right fingers come around the ball allow it to sink into the left fist. The right hand goes to the jacket pocket, palms the fourth ball, and is then removed.

Looking at the assistant on the right, say : " How many balls in my left hand ? " Whatever he answers, say : "... but you see I have three balls in my left hand "—allow the three balls to fall singly from the left hand into the net.

Remember, at the conclusion of this stage, the fourth ball is palmed in the right hand, unbeknown to the audience.

STAGE 4. The moves, with certain variations, are repeated.

Pick up a ball from the net and place it on top of the fist. Actually this ball sinks into the fist under cover of the right fingers, and it is the palmed ball that has been brought to the finger-tips, which is seen on top of the left fist as the right hand moves away. Refer to Fig. 5, which is an exposed view. It will be seen that the ball which was taken from the pocket and brought to the finger-tips rests on top of the first ball, then, when the first ball is allowed to sink into the left fist, the second ball drops on top of the fist

just before the right fingers are removed. Let the visible ball sink into the fist as you say : "One ball". Pick up another ball from the net and place it on top of the fist; allow it to sink in as you count : "Two balls". Take the last ball from the net and place it on top of the left fist.

This time, pick up the ball again between the tips of the right first and second fingers (Fig. 7), and as you say : "I'll place the third ball into my pocket", move the right hand to the right, turning it over to show the other side. Notice in Fig. 8 how the third and little fingers are closed into the palm and the thumb is extended adjacent to the second finger. In this instance, nothing is concealed in the palm, but the audience are being conditioned for the occasion when it is necessary to conceal balls. By making actions when no trickery is involved, no surprise will be aroused when apparently IDENTICAL moves are made and balls are concealed. Place the right hand in the pocket, palm the ball and bring the hand out again.

Open the left fingers slowly and allow the three balls to roll singly into the net.

#### STAGE 5. Again you repeat the moves with variations.

Pick up a ball with the right hand, place it on the left fist and allow it to sink in counting : "One ball". Pick up another ball, place it on the left fist and allow it to sink in counting : "Two balls".

Turn to the assistant on the left, open the left hand and show him the two balls, saying : "Remember, two balls". Holding one ball back with the left thumb, bring the left hand (back upwards) over the right hand and open the fingers of both hands. One ball only leaves the left hand and joins the palmed ball in the right hand, which you now show to the assistant on the right, saying : ". . . two balls"—the left hand has closed into a fist.

Place one of the balls from the right hand on top of the left fist and let it sink in, then do likewise with the second ball. Pick up the last ball from the net, place it on the left fist, then saying : "Once again I'll place the third ball into my pocket", pick it up in EXACTLY the same manner as before (Fig. 7), display it (Fig. 8), and place the hand in the pocket. Really leave the ball in the pocket this time.

Squeeze the three balls from the left fist, allowing them to fall singly into the net.

#### STAGE 6. This is the concluding stage and all is ready for the climax.

Casually show both hands empty, then close the left hand into a fist. Pick up the first ball and place it on top of the fist; touch it with the right forefinger, then allow it to sink in, saying : "One ball". Pick up the second ball and apparently place it on the left fist, but this time make the basic move. Touch the visible ball with the right forefinger, then allow it to sink into the left fist, counting : "Two balls". Now pick up the last ball and apparently place it on the fist, but make the basic move again ; this time the ball remains on the fist as you count : "Three balls". At this point, although the audience thinks that there are two balls in the left fist and one on top of it, actually there are two balls in the right hand and the visible ball is the only one contained by the left hand. *Do not*

let this one sink into the fist, but as you say : “ Again I'll place the third ball into my pocket ”, pick it up between the right first and second fingers in EXACTLY the same manner as has been done on previous occasions (Fig. 7). As you display it to both the assistant on your left and the assistant on your right, the other two balls in the right hand are concealed by the third and little fingers and thumb, so, this time, keep the hand back upwards. Place the hand in the pocket and leave ALL THE BALLS BEHIND, then remove the hand.

Remember, there are supposed to be two balls in the left fist, and it is MOST IMPORTANT that it appears that there really are balls in the fist—make a point of this, even moving the fingers a little as if adjusting their position. To the audience you are going to repeat the effect of making a ball leave the pocket and join the two in the left fist.

Hold the hands apart then slap them together—**ALL THE BALLS HAVE DISAPPEARED!**

This is a terrific climax—watch the audience reaction.

Dai Vernon tells me that when he is performing several shows in an evening, people will often stay especially to see this routine performed again, so he likes to have a variation for the climax. For a repeat performance he has a small lemon in his jacket pocket in addition to the balls. As he reaches the climax he leaves all the balls in his pocket, but palms out the lemon. When he claps his hands together he allows the lemon to fall from his hands into the net.

The instructions for the performance of this fine routine are somewhat lengthy because all details have been given. It will be appreciated that a small move that is over in a second often takes many paragraphs to describe. When the basic move has been mastered and the moves for the first stage memorised, it is simply a question of remembering the variations. Like all good things in magic, practice is the key to success. Practise until the moves can be performed automatically, then the presentation can be concentrated upon.

In performance the first two stages should be presented fairly slowly, but as the routine continues the tempo should be quickened until the last stage is performed briskly—but not hurried.

## OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

### STAGE 1.

1. Remove THREE balls from pocket and allow them to drop singly into net.
2. Pick up ball in right hand, place on left fist and allow it to sink in.
3. Pick up second ball and make BASIC MOVE.
4. Pick up third ball and make BASIC MOVE.
5. Close right fist; squeeze first one ball, then second ball from top of right fist into net.
6. Show ball in left hand and pick it up with right to display, then make fake transfer back into left hand.
7. Close fists and squeeze ball from top of right fist into net. Show hands empty.

STAGE 2.

8. Repeat same moves as 2, 3 and 4 above.
9. Bring ball outside left fingers (Fig. 6).
10. Squeeze ball from top of right fist into net.
11. Squeeze second ball to top of right fist; right hand goes under left and ball allowed to sink into right fist and second ball drops from left hand on to right fist, then into net.
12. Squeeze ball to top of right fist and allow to fall into net. Show hands empty.

STAGE 3.

13. Pick up ball, place on left fist and allow to sink in.
14. Pick up second ball, place on left fist and allow to sink in.
15. Pick up third ball and place on left fist, then reach over with right hand as if taking ball, but under cover of right fingers allow ball to sink into left fist. Right hand goes to pocket and palms the fourth **ball**.
16. Ask : “ How many balls in left hand ? ” Allow three balls to fall from left hand into net.

STAGE 4.

17. Pick up **ball** and place on left fist, but do not remove right fingers until first ball has sunk into fist and palmed ball is resting on top of fist.
18. Let visible ball also sink into fist as you count “ one ”.
19. Pick up another ball and place on fist and allow to sink in on count “ two ”.
20. Take last ball from net and place on left fist, but pick it up again between tips of right first and second fingers. Show hand both sides and convey to pocket but palm ball.
21. Open left fingers slowly and allow three balls to fall singly into net.

STAGE 5.

22. Pick up ball and place on left fist and allow it to sink in.
23. Repeat with second ball, then open hand and show the two balls to spectator on left.
24. Hold one ball back with thumb and bring left hand over right hand, releasing one ball only to show spectator on right that you have two balls.
25. Place one ball on left fist and let it sink in.
26. Repeat with second ball.
27. Pick up last ball from net, place it on left fist, then pick it up between right first and second fingers and place in pocket.
28. Squeeze three balls from left fist into net and show hands empty.

STAGE 6.

29. Pick up one ball, place on left fist and allow it to sink in.
30. Pick up second ball and apparently place on fist (BASIC MOVE) and allow to sink in.
31. Pick up last ball and apparently place on fist (BASIC MOVE), but do NOT allow to sink in.
32. Take visible ball between tips of right first and second fingers ; show to spectators, then place in pocket, leaving all balls in pocket.
33. Clap hands together—balls have vanished!

## **CHAPTER SIX**

APPLICATION OF THE TENKAI PALM

*Page 73*

## CHAPTER SIX

### APPLICATION OF THE TENKAI PALM

During the time that Dai Vernon was in England, on many occasions he highly praised the performances of TENKAI and remarked on the excellent ideas that this clever magician has made available to the magical fraternity. He was particularly enthusiastic about the unorthodox method for palming a card that Tenkai had evolved, and it was obvious from the demonstrations that the Professor gave at his lectures and private sessions that he had given much thought and spent a considerable amount of time exploring the possibilities of applying this palm to old and new effects.

Dai Vernon has originated two new sleights based on Tenkai's palm; a startling colour change and a subtle method for secretly exchanging one card for another. By employing the latter he has built a routine, the basic effect of which is the transposition of two cards. As no duplicate cards are required for bringing this about, the pack used can be borrowed for the performance, but a particular aspect that will delight the discerning magician is that apparently only two cards are used, the transposition being accomplished after the remainder of the pack has been discarded. For this reason, all opportunity for trickery appears to have been eliminated—remember, two cards only are seen throughout the trick.

#### THE TENKAI PALM.

First we will study the position in which the card is held in the hand in this method of palming. The photographs at Figs. 1 and 2 will make this clear. In Fig. 1 the photograph has been taken from the left side to give an exposed view of the right thumb, which is extended along the short edge of the card, one top corner of the card being against the pad of the thumb and the opposite top corner against the flesh of the palm of the hand immediately below the thumb. Very little pressure is needed to hold the card in position. Notice how the card is at right angles to the hand, which, when held in front of the body with its back to the audience, obscures the view of the card from the front, whilst the right arm prevents the card being seen from the right side. If it is borne in mind that these two angles are covered, then, during the course of the explanation of the sleights and routine referred to above, it will be shown how adequate cover can be provided under all normal conditions of performing.

Fig. 2 is another exposed view of the card, with the hand turned purposely to reveal the exact method of holding.

When first holding a card in this position it feels awkward and doubt is felt about the invisibility of the card. Try it in front of a mirror; see that when the hand is bent inwards a little from the wrist the fingers can be opened naturally without a glimpse of the card being given. Care must be taken to restrict the range of movement in turning the hand up or down



Fig. 1

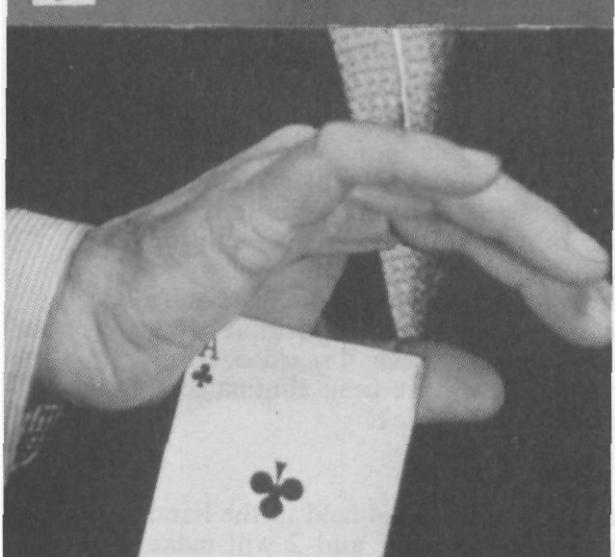


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

so that the card is not seen over or under the hand, but a trial will show the amount of movement that is permissible.

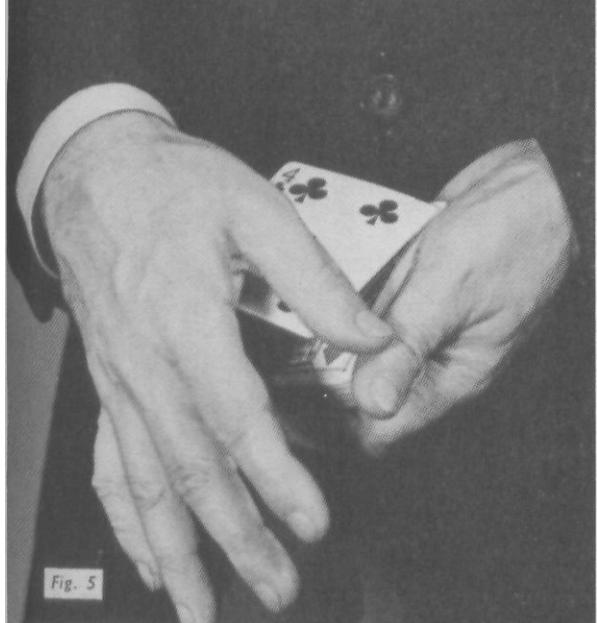
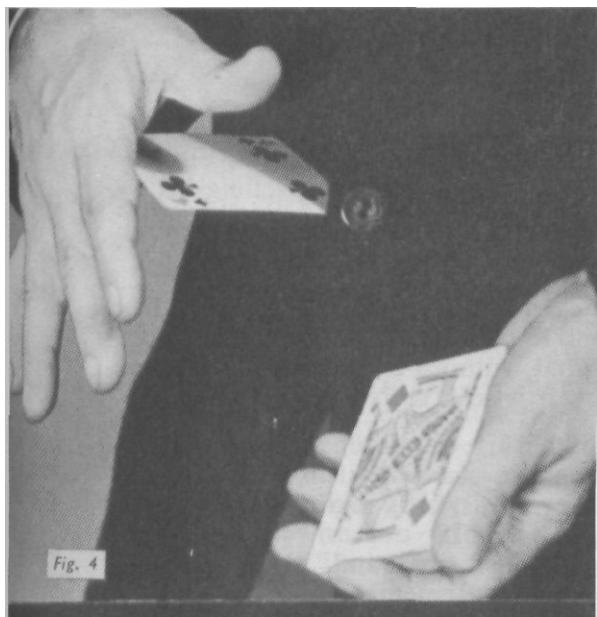
At the start, concentrate on holding the card correctly—how it is brought into that position secretly will be described as we proceed.

### THE SVENGALI COLOUR CHANGE.

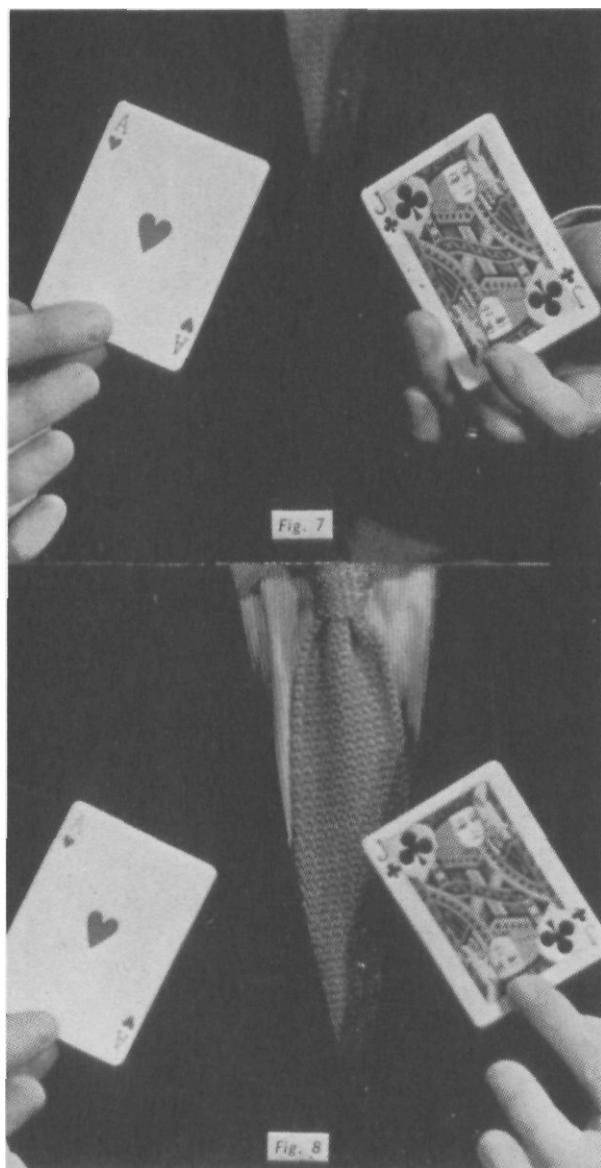
The colour change about to be described has been titled "Svengali" for the reason that the performer makes an hypnotic gesture towards the face card of the pack, which changes instantaneously and apparently without being covered in any way.

For the moment, assume that the Four of Clubs has been obtained secretly and held face upwards in the Tenkai palm position in the right hand ; the pack, with the Jack of Diamonds showing on the face, is held in the left hand just below waist level. Fig. 3 is an exposed view taken from the left side of the performer. Note how the fingers of the right hand are in a relaxed position, slightly curled as they would be if the hand were empty. The right elbow is bent so that the hand is to the right of and above the pack in the natural relaxed position that it should be for drawing attention to the face-up Jack on top of the pack in the left hand.

For performance, stand facing the audience with the pack and palmed card held as described above. If you wish to use the same patter as Dai Vernon (which is suitable when performing for magicians, but should be altered for lay audiences), explain : " You have all seen the well-known colour change where the hand is passed over the cards . . ." As this is said bring the right hand over the



pack in a gesture as if performing the usual colour change, but at this point DO NOT deposit the palmed card on to the pack ; the right hand covers the pack for a fraction of a second only, then is moved back to its original position at waist level (Fig. 3). Continue the patter : “ . . . but I am going to do it with the fingers WIDE OPEN ”. In Figs. 3 and 4 it will be seen that the inner end of the palmed card is resting against the jacket at waist level, which permits the right fingers and thumb to be opened “ starfish ” fashion, the card being held in position between the right hand and the jacket. Actually only the right outer corner of the card is touching the hand, just below the base of the thumb. Watch the timing for opening the fingers—it is done on the word “ WIDE ”, which itself is emphasised in speech, being said a little louder and slightly more drawn out than the rest of the words—“ W-I-D-E ”. Fig. 4 shows an exposed view as the right hand fingers and thumb open. Immediately the sentence is finished, relax the right fingers and thumb again, pick up the card in the Tenkai Palm position and move the hand (still in a natural relaxed position) over the pack. As the right hand reaches the pack, the fingers travel past the outer end of the pack and begin to open ; the palmed card is deposited on the face of the pack (Fig. 5), then the right hand travels back in the opposite direction, with the fingers and thumb wide open in a “ Svengali ” hypnotic gesture. Fig. 5 is an exposed view of the Four of Clubs at the point when it is being deposited on top of the Jack of Diamonds. Notice how the right fingers are opening, but, due to them being extended beyond the pack in the left hand, the action of depositing the card on the pack is obscured by the back of the right hand. KEEP THE LEFT HAND AND THE PACK PERFECTLY STILL THE WHOLE TIME.



In the photograph at Fig. 6 the right hand is seen travelling back from the pack, fingers and thumb wide open as if hypnotising the pack. All that remains is for there to be a pause for effect, then for the right hand to be relaxed and turned casually so that, without over-emphasising the fact, it is seen to be empty.

This colour change is one of the most startling it is possible to perform, as, although the Jack of Diamonds IS out of sight for a fraction of a second, this is never realised. Remember that the right hand is seen, with fingers wide open, before it approaches the pack, and, although the fingers relax as the hand moves, the fingers open as they extend beyond the pack, then remain fully open as the hand is withdrawn. The illusion of "hypnotising" the card to change is amazing.

Correct timing is essential to gain the maximum effect, the points to watch being :—

- (a) Right fingers and thumb open on the word "W-I-D-E".
- (b) Relax fingers and pick up the card on "OPEN", then immediately move the right hand to the pack.
- (c) Right fingers pass the outer end of the pack and begin to open as the Four of Clubs is deposited over the Jack of Diamonds.
- (d) Right hand travels back from the pack ; fingers and thumb wide open in "hypnotic" gesture.
- (e) Pause for effect, then the right hand relaxes and turns casually.
- (f) Keep the left hand and the pack still the whole time.
- (g) There must be no appreciable pause whilst the palmed card is deposited on to the pack. It must appear that the right hand approaches the pack, then moves away from it immediately.

The most effective change that can be made is from a red picture card to a low value black spot card, as in our example above, or from a black picture card to a low value red spot card. Because the contrast between the cards is so great, the maximum visual effect is obtained.

## STEALING A CARD FROM THE PACK INTO THE TENKAI PALM POSITION.

Hold the pack in the left hand in the usual position for dealing. If the requirement is that the card, when in the palm position in the right hand, shall be face up, then the pack must be face up in the left hand. Bring the right hand over the pack, the fingers curled around the outer short edge so that the pads of the first and second fingers contact the bottom card of the pack. Under the cover afforded by the right hand, push the TOP card to the right with the left thumb until the outer right corner of the card touches the flesh immediately below the base of the right thumb. Now the tip of the right third finger holds the card in position against the base of the right thumb. It is now a simple matter to carry the card away from the pack when, by slightly bending the right thumb, the pad can be brought into contact with the outer left corner of the card, which means that the card is in the Tenkai palm position.

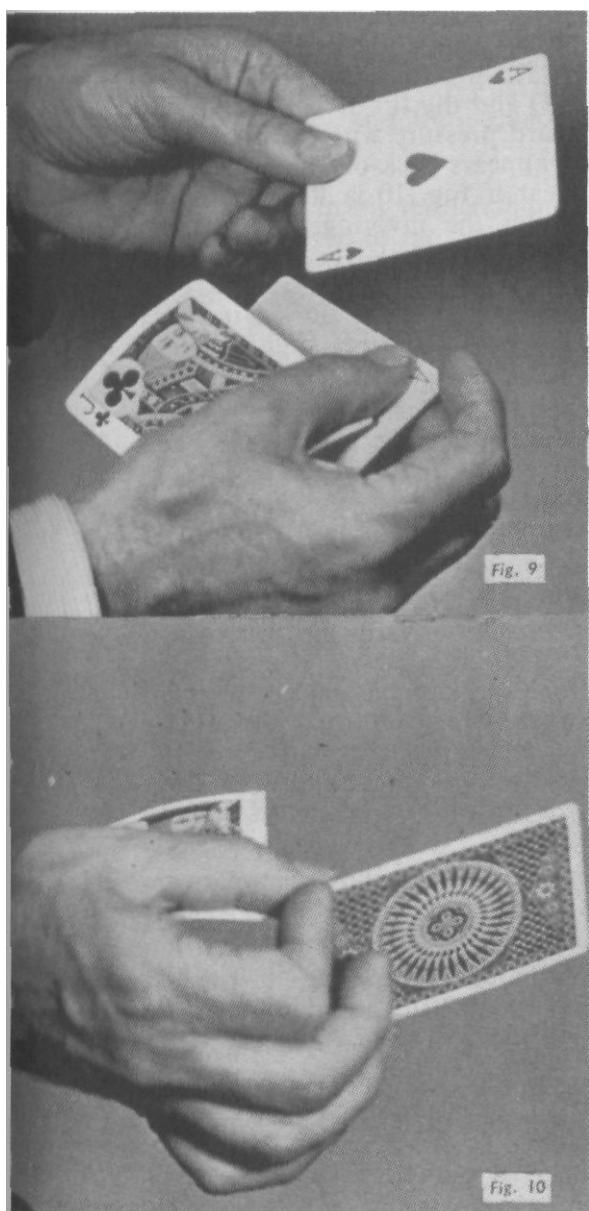
The description above is purely the mechanics of the steal ; misdirection must be introduced if the steal is to be effective. There must be

a reason for the right hand to approach the pack, the most simple example being that the pack is actually taken into the right hand momentarily to enable the left hand to either move some object or to make a gesture. Once the top card has been pushed over to the right by the left thumb and the right third finger holds the card against the base of the thumb, the complete pack can be transferred to the right hand. When the pack is again taken by the left hand, the top card remains behind in the right hand.

Very little alteration to the move is necessary to enable the *bottom* card of the pack to be stolen. It is a simple matter to push the bottom card to the right with the left forefinger and from then on the moves are the same.

## TO EXCHANGE A CARD.

Assume that the Ace of Diamonds is secretly held, face up, in the Tenkai palm position in the right hand. The left hand displays the Jack of Clubs and the requirement is that the Jack shall be secretly exchanged for the Ace. It is accomplished during the action of taking the Jack into the right hand, then resting it, back outwards, against some object on the table, such as a glass tumbler.



As the Jack is to be taken into the right hand, and eventually into the Tenkai palm position, it is necessary to alter the hold on the Ace which already occupies that position.

When holding a card in the Tenkai palm the hand must assume a relaxed position, with fingers lightly curled as they would be if the hand were empty. It is natural, therefore, for the tip of the SECOND finger to be almost adjacent to the pad of the thumb. Very little extra movement is necessary for the tip of the second finger to contact the underside of the card at the outer left corner and hold it against the thumb, whilst the forefinger bends slightly inwards and comes OVER the same corner of the card. As this corner is now clipped between the tips of the first and second fingers the thumb can be released.

The left hand, holding the Jack between the thumb and forefinger at the inner left corner, approaches the right hand, slides the face-up Jack over the face of the Ace until the right thumb can take up its grip along the outer short edge of the Jack (Tenkai palm position). Study the right hand in Fig. 9 and the position will be clear. Notice that the right thumb, although holding the Jack, extends past the outer left corner so that the tip of the thumb can rest on the index of the Ace. The right forefinger now moves to the underside of the corner, leaving the corner of the Ace clipped between the tip of the thumb (above) and the tip of the side of the second finger (below). By exerting an upward pressure with the forefinger the Ace pivots around the second finger and appears back-outwards between the thumb and forefinger. This will be clear if Fig. 10 is studied, as the photograph shows the back of the Ace after the pivoting, namely, the position in which it is rested against an object. For clarity the Jack has been exposed in the photograph to enable the reader to understand how both cards are held. In performance the hand would be turned inwards more, towards the wrist, and the Jack pointing downwards slightly—only the back of the Ace would be visible.

The movements must be synchronised so that the appearance is that the card is taken from the left hand into the right and turned back outwards before being rested against an object on the table.

### THE JUMPING JACK.

This is the transposition routine mentioned earlier in this chapter, in which the effect is that two cards, the Ace of Hearts and the Jack of Clubs, are displayed, then the Jack is placed back outwards against a glass, leaving the Ace still visible in the hand. After the back of the Ace has been turned towards the audience the performer snaps his fingers, the card in the hand is turned and seen to be the Jack, whilst the card against the glass is seen to be the Ace. Once again the Jack is placed against the glass, but jumps back to the performer's hand on command. Finally, the performer shows that he ends, as he began, with just the Ace of Hearts and the Jack of Clubs.

Three cards are used in this routine, although the audience are aware of two only. A wine glass or tumbler is standing on the table to the left and in front of the performer.

At the start, hold the three cards squared and face up in the left hand ; the Ace of Hearts on top, the Jack of Clubs in the middle and the Ace of Diamonds on the bottom nearest to the left palm.

With the left thumb push the Ace of Hearts to the right and receive it into the right hand, but take the centre of the outer end with the tip of the right forefinger above and the thumb underneath. By pressing upwards with the right thumb, the Ace is levered upright, to stand, face towards audience, between the right thumb and forefinger.

As the right hand card comes upright, bend the left second finger under the outer right corner of the two squared cards in the left hand, then, by bending the left first and third fingers over the same corner of the cards, lever both cards upright (still perfectly squared) by straightening the first, second and third fingers. Fig. 7 shows how the cards are held in the hands, the left-hand cards being held as one. Now alter the grip on the left-hand cards by bringing the thumb to the back, so that the grip is taken up by the thumb at the back and the first finger at the face of the cards, which frees the second and third fingers (Fig. 8). The holding position of the cards in both hands is identical.

After displaying the cards, the right second finger moves behind the Ace and exerts a slight pressure, whilst the thumb moves to the face of the Ace to bring it to a horizontal position (the card tilts backwards). The position of this card now is that it is face upwards gripped between the thumb (above) and the second finger (below) at the centre of the outer short edge.

The grip on the left hand card(s) does not alter yet, but the whole hand turns over to the right and inwards, enabling the card(s) it holds to be placed across the face of the Ace of Hearts in a fanned position ; the face-up Jack (and the other Ace beneath it) being fanned to the right of the Ace of Hearts. The outer short edge of the left hand card(s) is slipped beneath the right thumb, which permits the fan of cards to be held momentarily by the right hand, whilst the left hand grip is altered to bring the left thumb above the inner short edge of the cards and the left first and second fingers beneath.

As the body turns to the left (towards the table) fan the cards still further apart with the right hand, which enables the right second and third finger-tips to contact the Ace of Diamonds (underneath the Jack). The right thumb glides across the outer end of the visible Jack and at the same time the right second and third finger-tips bring the Ace of Diamonds into the Tenkai palm position in the right hand. Perfect cover is provided for this steal, as the right hand shields it entirely.

The left hand moves to the left, displaying the fanned Ace of Hearts and Jack of Clubs, and it is as both front and back of the fanned cards are shown (by turning the left hand) that the right hand prepares for the exchange.

Take the Jack into the right hand and exchange it for the Ace of Diamonds in the action of placing it back outwards against the glass. Fig. 9 shows an exposed view of the start of the exchange ; the Jack has been taken into the Tenkai palm position, whilst the Ace of Diamonds is being gripped ready to be pivoted back outwards (Fig. 10) and placed against the glass. The right hand should be moving towards the glass when the

position at Fig. 9 is reached, so that the exchange is performed as the hand turns the card back outwards and commences to move towards the glass.

Now take the visible Ace of Hearts into the right hand and make the exchange so that the Jack is held back outwards between the right thumb and forefinger as you command the Jack to jump from its position against the glass up to your hand. A snap with the left thumb and second finger is effective here. Take the Jack between the left first and second fingers at the left upper corner and pivot it over the left thumb to reveal its face broadside on to the audience. **YOU MUST NOW LOSE ALL INTEREST IN THIS CARD** as you reverse the moves and take it back into the right hand. Your eyes and your manner of gesture concentrate all attention towards the card against the glass, which you reach for with the left hand and pick up, the thumb covering most of the centre pip as you display it. It is whilst attention is upon the Ace that the right hand makes the exchange as it quietly and unobtrusively puts its card (now the Ace of Hearts) back outwards against the glass.

All is ready for the finish when the Jack for the second time “ Jumps to the hand of his master ”.

You are holding the Ace of Diamonds, the left thumb almost over the centre pip. Bring the hands together, making more movement with the right hand than the left. The Ace goes **UNDERNEATH** the Jack—now keep the right hand perfectly still as the left thumb and fingers square the inner non-index corners of the cards. It appears that all that has happened is that the left thumb has moved from the centre to the corner of the card.

When the corners are perfectly squared, then, and only then, does the right forefinger press inwards on the upper left corner of the long edge of the card(s), the right second finger moves to the back of the card(s), and, slightly aided by the left thumb and forefinger (to help keep the cards squared), the card(s) is brought with the back towards the audience. By removing the left hand momentarily, the position of the card(s) in the right hand is exactly the same as it has been on the previous occasions when a back of a card has been displayed (Fig. 10), only this time no card is in the **Tenkai** palm position.

After snapping the left thumb and second finger and commanding the cards to change, take the cards into the left hand, the left thumb at the top long side about a third of the way from the left end, and the second finger opposite at the bottom long side (the back of the card(s) is still towards the audience). Place the nail of the right forefinger behind and at the centre of the right short edge and exert pressure to cause the cards to revolve from right to left until the face of the Jack is towards the audience. The right hand now goes to the card resting against the glass and lifts it, turning it face-on to the audience to show that it is the Ace of Hearts (Fig. 7). Now place the left forefinger at the left short edge of the left-hand cards and press, causing them to slide to the right until the second finger reaches the bottom left corner. Transfer the second finger to the back of the cards at this corner, the left third finger taking up the hold on the bottom side of the card(s). By straightening the left first, second and third fingers and releasing the thumb **hold**, the cards will be at the finger-tips, perfectly squared, as seen in Fig. 7. A perfect transposition has been accomplished.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LINKING RINGS

*Page* 82

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE LINKING RINGS

In his famous Harlequin act Dai Vernon performed a five-ring routine with the Linking Rings. He used 14-inch rings, constructed from half an inch hollow steel, said to be the most musical of all rings.

During his European Lecture Tour in 1955 he demonstrated many of the moves he performed in his original act. He selected those moves which could be incorporated into existing routines in order that other magicians might benefit from his knowledge and experience.

The moves described in this chapter are those he demonstrated, and, whilst he makes no claim that they are all original, the effect of SPINNING THE RINGS and THE PULL THROUGH METHOD OF UNLINKING are certainly his own *creations*—the remainder have been performed by him on so many occasions that they have acquired additions ~~of~~ his own.

All of the moves can be performed with the standard sets of linking rings available from magical dealers, but for ease of performance Dai Vernon recommends that the opening in the key ring should be about half an inch wide. The ends of the opening should be cut square (not cut diagonally) and any rough edges filed away. The opening in the key is covered by the fingers at all times, therefore there is no reason why the opening should not be wide enough to permit easy and instantaneous linking.

#### SPINNING THE RINGS.

The starting position for this series of moves is that the performer has a single ring hanging from the key ring. He apparently spins BOTH rings, and therefore proves, without actually saying so, that the rings have no openings in their circumference.

The stance the performer adopts is with the body facing right and the right arm held extended so that the hand holding the key ring is just above shoulder height. The right fingers hold the key ring over the opening. This position can be seen in Fig. 1.

With his left hand the performer grasps the top of the single ring, close to the point where it hangs from the key ring, and with a quick downward jerk of the left hand causes the single ring to spin on the key ring. Before the single ring has stopped spinning he again brings the left hand to the single ring, but this time he grasps it near the bottom, taking it with the left hand PALM UPWARDS (Fig. 1). Now he turns his body until it faces left, and DURING THE TURN brings the hands together and folds the bottom ring up to the top ring. This brings the left hand back upwards and permits the key ring (at the opening) to be dropped into the left hand as the right hand releases its grip and catches the single ring—in other words, the hands change over rings by a slight throwing action.

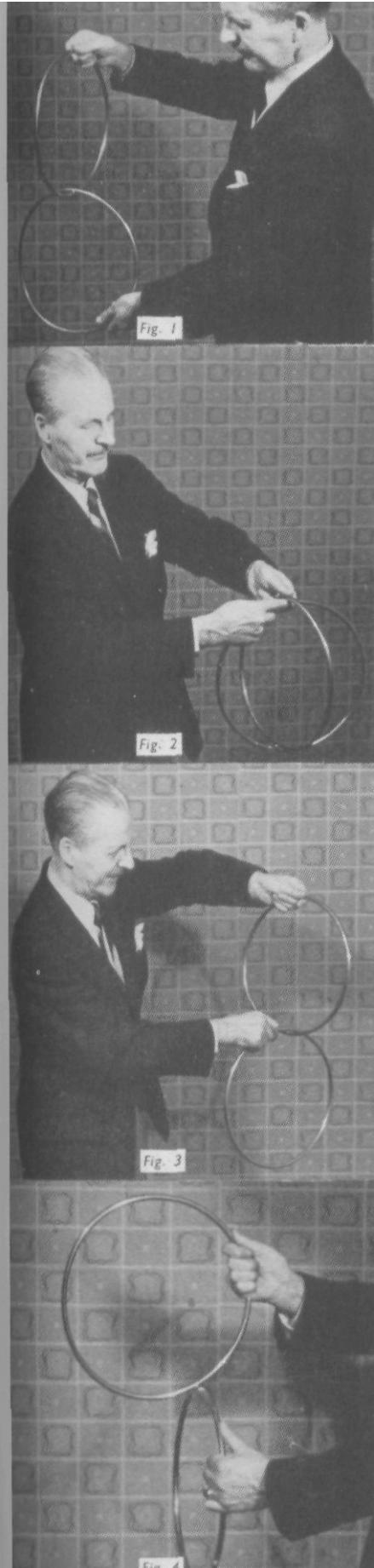


Fig. 2 shows the change being made at the point where the body turn to the left is almost completed. Now the left arm is lifted to bring the hand to just above shoulder height, which, of course, lifts the key ring upwards and leaves the right hand in the correct position for spinning the single ring again (Fig. 3). Due to the secret exchange of rings in the hands, the illusion of spinning first one ring and then the other is perfect.

### THE CRASH UNKING.

This move was shown to Dai Vernon by Han Ping Chien, who used it to demonstrate that it is possible to link rings together at ANY point in their circumference. An important factor in this move is the manner in which the key ring is held in the right hand. Study Fig. 4, where it will be seen that the right hand grasps the ring above the opening—the bottom side of the opening projecting just below the little finger. In this way the top side of the circumference of the ring is held firm, but the bottom side is free, although the opening itself is covered by the bent third and little fingers, except for a fraction of an inch which projects below the little finger.

Held in this way, the key ring is brought at right angles to and above a single ring in the left hand. Notice in Fig. 4 how the left thumb is extended away from the fingers on to the edge of the single ring to act as a brace, which keeps the ring firmly in position.

Strike the rings together twice by lifting the right hand, then bringing it down sharply, the key ring striking the single ring at an obviously solid point in its circumference. On the third strike the key ring is brought forward slightly in the action of crashing it downwards, so that, when the point of impact is reached, it is off centre (Fig. 4). The force of the downward movement causes the outside of the key ring to slide down the edge of the single ring until the opening in the key comes adjacent to the circumference of the single ring. Due to the force of impact, the free end of the key springs inwards, then outwards again, very rapidly, causing the rings to become linked. Lift the left hand quickly so that the rings become "balled", then, holding the right hand still, release the ring from the left hand.

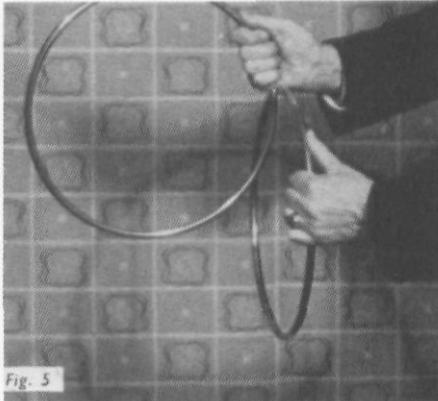


Fig. 5

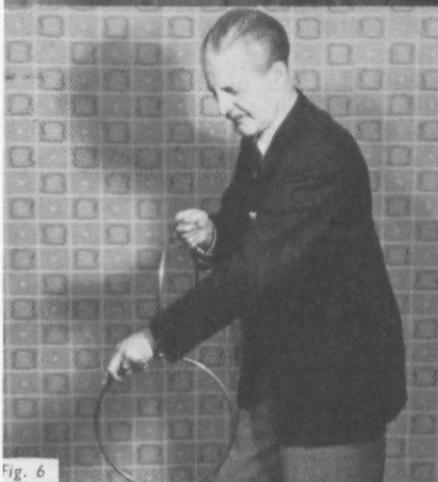


Fig. 6



Fig. 7



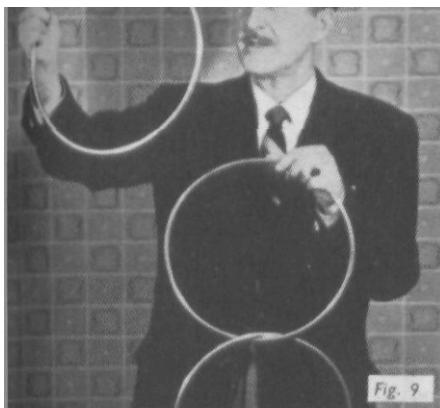
Fig. 8

In performance, the downward striking action, then the lifting of the left hand and the release of the ring, is so rapid, and the automatic linking of the rings so quick, that the illusion of the rings becoming linked together at obviously solid sections of their circumference is perfect.

#### THE PULL THROUGH METHOD OF UNLINKING.

This is one of Dai Vernon's originations published for the first time. It is an extremely neat and spectacular method of unlinking a single ring from the key ring, the appearance being that one ring is actually pulled through the other.

In the starting position the single ring is hanging from the key, which is grasped by the right hand in EXACTLY the same manner as for the CRASH LINKING. The performer is facing to the right, the rings held in front of his body with the key ring pointing almost edge-on to the audience. In this position the performer spins the bottom ring, then, whilst it is still spinning, he reaches THROUGH the key ring with his left hand and grasps the circumference of the single ring at the point where the figure eleven would be if the ring were a clock face. Study the position of the two hands on the rings and the stance adopted in Fig. 6. With a quick upward movement of his left hand he lifts the single ring, and in so doing twists it to a horizontal position parallel with the floor so that both sides of the key touch both sides of the single ring, the inner circumference of the single ring also touching the underside of the right fist (Fig. 7). Now by pulling the solid ring rapidly to the left, the solid ring passes through the opening of the key, the rings being at right angles to each other and the unlinking taking place immediately adjacent to the little finger of the right hand.



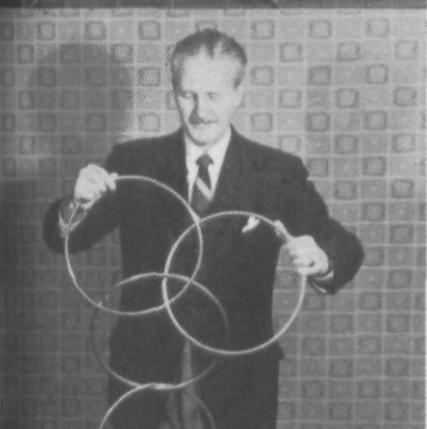
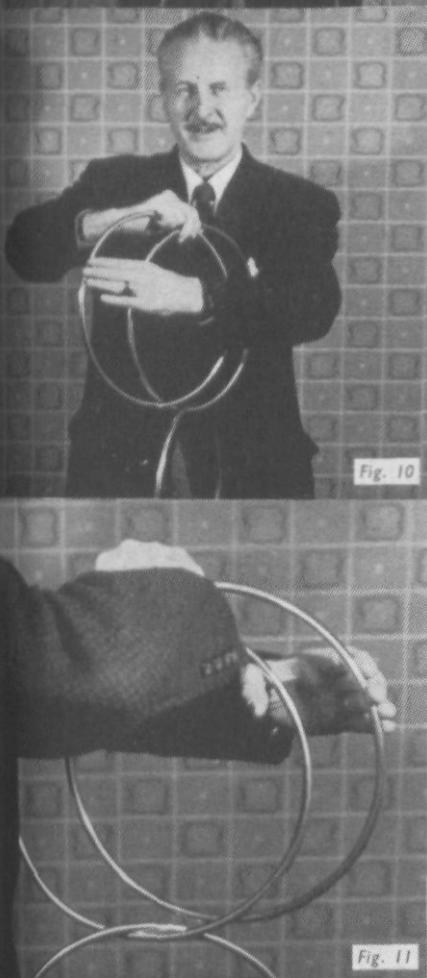
The unlinking is made sure by a slight upward move of the right hand. Fig. 8 shows the completion of the unlinking move.

### THE FALLING RING.

Readers may be familiar with the small puzzle often sold by street vendors, which is a small chain of linked rings ; when the top ring is released it tumbles down from ring to ring until it reaches the bottom. The effect created by the series of moves about to be explained is similar to the puzzle, but the tumbling ring is controlled by the performer as it falls from ring to ring.

The top ring of the chain of three is held chest high by the left hand as the key ring is displayed in the right hand (Fig. 9). The key ring can be given the well known twisting move which implies that there is no opening in it.

Now the key ring is brought in front and over the top ring of the chain of three and the right hand holds the two rings together at the top, allowing the solid ring to enter the opening of the key ring under cover of the right fingers. The left hand moves across the front of the body (and rings), the left thumb going BEHIND the right edge of the solid ring and the fingers extending in front until the tips contact the right edge of the key ring (Fig. 10). Fig. 11 shows a close-up view from the rear of this position. The top ring of the chain of three is now turned from right to left, but by a slight twisting action from left to right the impression is created that the ring (key) is taken in the left hand, the left fingers sliding from the edge of the key ring and curling round the edge of the solid ring at the commencement of the turning action and the right hand releasing its grip on the solid ring as the left hand takes up its grip. As the hands move apart it will be found that the rings will bind together. This position is shown in Fig. 12.



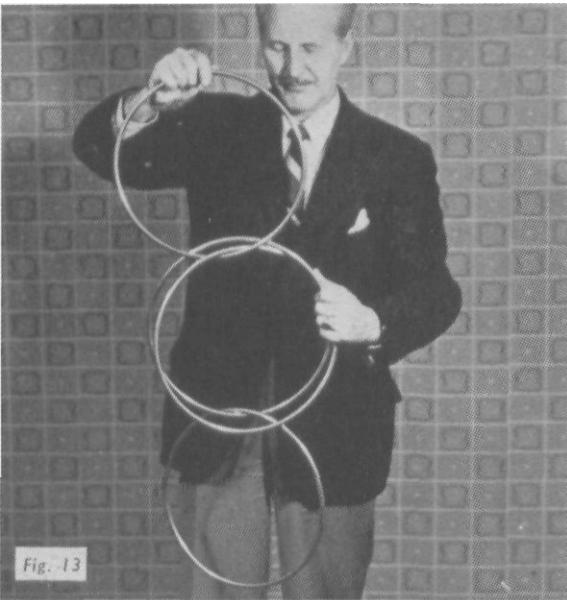


Fig. 13

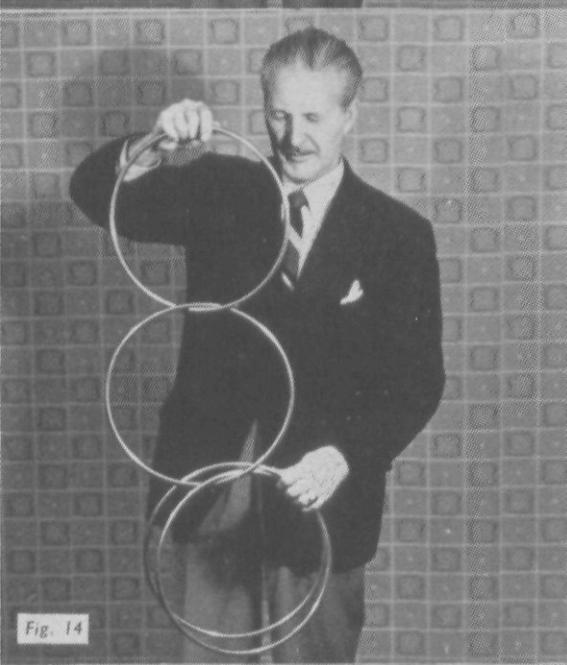


Fig. 14

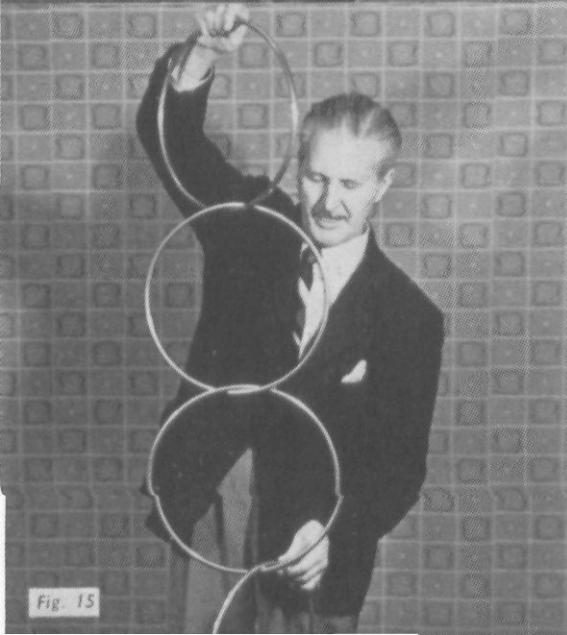


Fig. 15

By lowering the left hand, the ring it holds is brought down and lines up with the second ring of the chain (Fig. 13), the left hand grasping both rings at their left edges — study Fig. 13, which shows this position. This second ring is pushed through the first ring with the left thumb and comes into the left hand. Now this second ring is brought down and lined up with the third ring of the chain (Fig. 14), and then, after the edge of the third ring has been pushed through the second ring with the left thumb, it is taken by the left hand and brought down to hang as the bottom ring of a chain of four (Fig. 15). In this position it is given a spin by the left hand.

When the series of moves are performed smoothly, without pause, the appearance is that one ring is held against the top ring of a chain of three and then travels down the chain until it reaches and becomes linked to the bottom ring, where it spins round—obviously there can be no opening in its circumference.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

SEVEN CARD MONTE

*Page 88*

## *CHAPTER EIGHT*

### SEVEN CARD MONTE

During the many discussions I had with Dai Vernon and Faucett Ross when they were in England, they constantly referred affectionately to a magician known to his friends and admirers as "Mac" McDonald. This gentleman must labour under one of the most terrific handicaps possible for a magician—he has only one arm—but due to his strength of character, nimble brain and determination to succeed as a magician in the top flight, he has evolved new stratagems to enable him to accomplish what few people can do with both hands.

The Seven Card Monte is a favourite trick of the fabulous "Mac", who, being a superb showman, obtains from it every possible ounce of effect. Of necessity, his method is somewhat different from that about to be described, but the excellent effect is identical.

This trick was performed and explained by Dai Vernon during his Lecture Tour of Europe, and it was at the Victoria Hall, London, that Jack Avis, one of England's leading card specialists, went on stage to assist Dai Vernon. After the lecture he told me that he considered it would be difficult to find a card trick, which could be performed under such conditions, to equal the effect of Seven Card Monte.

#### EFFECT.

From a pack of cards, six black cards and a red court card are dealt in a row, face up, on the table. The red court card is in the centre of the row. Three of the black cards are turned face down, the packet of cards is squared, then turned over. Once again the cards are placed out in a row, but this time, of course, the red court card will not be seen, as, because the packet has been turned over, it is now one of the face-down cards. A spectator is asked to place one hand over the remainder of the pack of cards, then to guess which is the red card, but fails three times. Because each card is turned face up as it is chosen, all cards are face up after the spectator's final choice—the red card has vanished, but when the spectator lifts his hand the card is found on top of the pack.

The effect is repeated, and, even though the spectator tries to catch the performer on this occasion, the red card vanishes again and is found under the spectator's hand.

#### REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION.

A double-faced card is required, preferably one with a red court card on one side, say the Jack of Hearts, and a black spot card on the other. The black spot card must be different in value to the other six ordinary black spot cards that are also required, but should have about the same number of spots. In our example, a good card for the other face of the

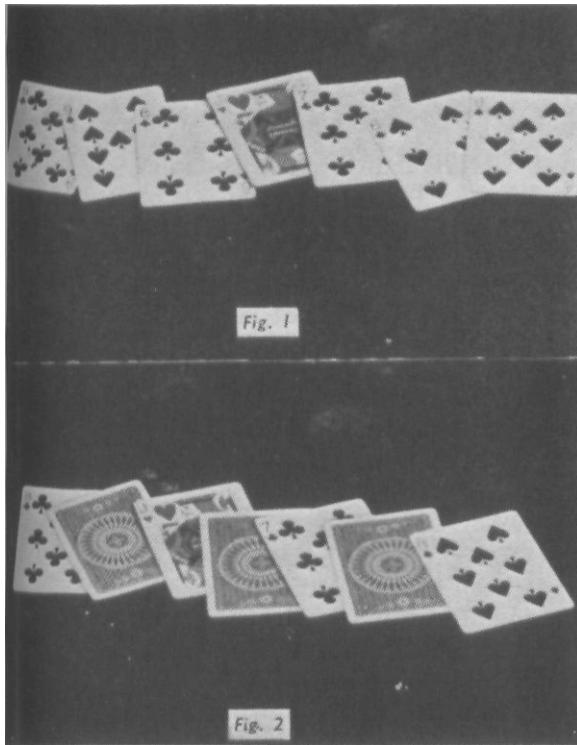


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

the audience. It will be appreciated that, due to the fact that all the cards (with the exception of the Jack of Hearts) have about the same number of black spots on them, it would be extremely difficult to remember all of them in the short time they are displayed, especially as the spectator is only asked to take note of the Jack of Hearts. For this reason, when later in the trick the other side of the Jack of Hearts is seen as the Nine of Clubs, it will have no particular significance.

The photographs at Figs. 1 and 2 have been taken from the audience side of the table ; the text has been written for *the performer to make the moves*, and as he will be sitting behind the table what is the performer's right will be left to the audience.

## PERFORMANCE.

The assistance of a spectator is requested, and he is seated on the left of the performer, who begins his patter as follows :—

“ I am sure you have heard of the ‘ Three Card Trick ’ or ‘ Find the Lady ’—this is the ‘ Seven Card Trick \* or ‘ Find the Jack ’! ”

The performer deals cards from the FACE-UP pack in a row on the table, from his right to left, which from the audience will be seen as in Fig. 1, then places the remainder of the pack FACE DOWN in front of the spectator and asks him to place his left hand over the pack.

The patter continues : “ As the Jack of Hearts is the only court card on the table, it will be easy for you to pick it out—watch it carefully, please.”

Taking the card on the RIGHT (performer's right) of the Jack, the performer turns it face down and replaces it in the row, BUT AT THE

**LEFT OF THE JACK.** The card now on the **RIGHT** of the Jack is turned face down and replaced in its original position. The second card from the **LEFT** end of the row is turned face down and replaced in its original position. At the conclusion of this stage the row of cards will now appear as in Fig. 2 (audience view). Notice how they overlap so that they will retain their order when swept up from right to left by the right hand.

The performer says : " You see I have reversed alternate cards so that when I pick them all up (the performer sweeps them up with the right hand and holds the packet square) and turn the packet over (the packet is turned over and taken into the left hand), certain cards, including the Jack, will be face down. As you know the order of the cards, I propose to cut them—so."

Holding the cards in his left hand, the performer gives them an upward riffle with the right thumb, which has been placed at the inner short edge of the packet. From the performer's angle he can see when the Jack shows up—remember it is face down, so will be seen from underneath, the upward bending of the cards as they are riffled making this possible. The cards are cut at this point, which brings the face-down Jack, with the Nine of Clubs on the reverse side, to the bottom of the packet.

So that the reader may check during practise he should remember that when the packet is turned over the double-faced card should be third from the top. It is then taken to the bottom by the cut.

Holding the packet of cards from above with his right hand, right thumb at inner short end and right fingers at outer short end, the performer ruffles off the two bottom cards with his right thumb, and the left fingers with a fanning movement remove the third (face down) card from the bottom. It appears that the card removed is next to the bottom one. THEN the remainder of the cards are fanned out and the two remaining face-down cards are seen still alternated. These two cards are removed and placed on the table with the other one. Finally, the face-up cards are dealt on the table, the double-faced card (now showing as the Nine of Clubs) being at the extreme right (performer's right) of the row.

The performer says : " One of these three face-down cards must be the Jack of Hearts and I want you to guess which one you think it is."

When the spectator indicates a card, it is turned face up and shown to be a black spot card, which is then replaced face up in the spread. Again the spectator is asked to indicate one of the two remaining cards, but, of course, it will be another black spot card when turned over and replaced in the spread.

Now the performer turns over the last card and shows it to be another black spot, which he replaces in the spread. All cards are now face up—the Jack has vanished.

The performer requests : " Please lift your left hand and turn over the top card of the pack."

As the spectator complies with the performer's request and finds the Jack under his hand, the performer places his left hand at the left end of the spread and his right hand at the opposite end and casually gathers

up the cards. The double-faced card goes to the face of the packet. The packet is now held with one long side on the table, the double-faced card being towards the performer ; the fingers of both hands are curled around the short ends of the packet and on to the back of the cards (towards audience) ; the two thumbs are at the face of the packet. By tilting the packet towards the audience at an angle of forty-five degrees the thumbs can slide the double-faced card flat on to the table, when the fingers immediately pivot the packet back (towards the performer) and bring it on top of the double-faced card. This action is covered from the front by the cards themselves and from the sides by the two hands. The action has reversed the double-faced card, which is at the bottom of the packet.

As far as the spectators are concerned, the trick was over when the Jack was found on top of the pack, so there is ample opportunity for the performer to perform the action described above and to ensure that the real Jack is returned to the top of the pack if the spectator did not happen to return it to that position.

Whilst the audience are appreciating the effect they have just witnessed the performer takes the pack by its left short end in his left hand and rests the long side on the table (face card of pack is towards performer). With his right hand he holds the packet of cards by the right short end and brings them behind and towards the top of the pack (packet is towards audience). The cards of the packet are in a carelessly fanned position, which gives cover for the right thumb to come over and contact the face card of the pack and slide it up so that it can be taken on to the face of the packet as the packet is added to the pack. In this way an extra card has been added between the real Jack of Hearts and the packet. The pack is squared.

The performer offers to repeat the trick, turns the pack face up and takes off cards from the underside. These cards are placed in a row on the table as before ; the seventh card is the double-facer with the Jack of Hearts now face up. This will appear to be quite in order, as it will be remembered that the Jack was discovered and replaced on top of the pack and the black spot cards placed on top at the conclusion of the trick. The Jack is now placed in the centre of the row as before ; the remainder of the pack is turned FACE DOWN, placed on the table, and the spectator is asked to place his left hand over it again. Unbeknown to the spectators, the real Jack of Hearts is the SECOND card from the top of the pack.

The patter continues : "Once again I will turn some of the cards face down (*the cards in the position shown in Fig. 2 are turned face down; the one card being moved from one side of the Jack to the other as before*). Then turn the cards over so that the Jack will be face down (the cards are gathered up, squared and turned over). I'll cut the packet again (the packet is cut at the Jack again), then see if you can find the Jack."

Exactly the same moves are made as previously for putting down the face-down cards, then the face-up cards, on the table.

At this point the performer turns to the spectator and says : " You're trying to catch me—you peeked at the top card."

Now it is quite possible that the spectator really has cheated ; the temptation is great, but, if so, he will have found an indifferent card on

top of the pack. However, even if the spectator denies peeking, the performer continues :—

“ Let's be on the safe side—**take** the top card of the pack and push it into the **middle**, then place your hand on top of the pack again.”

Whatever the spectator's answer might be, the top card of the pack has been placed in the centre, leaving the Jack of Hearts as the new top card.

The same procedure as before is adopted for having the spectator guess which of the three face-down cards is the Jack. After the second failure the performer turns over the last card (another indifferent one), then tells the spectator to look at the top card of the pack—the climax is excellent.

Showmanship plays a great part in this trick. The first stage is just a rather good vanish and a surprising discovery ; repeating the effect builds it into a routine in the top flight of magical entertainment, particularly if the performer acts his part convincingly of believing that the spectator **peeked** at the top card of the pack. This requires careful handling, as the spectator must not be antagonised ; the performer's attitude should be one of kindly understanding that his helper should succumb to the strong temptation. The accusation should be made laughingly, so that if he has really peeked he will be brought back to the performer's **side**—if he hasn't, then he will not be offended or embarrassed.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **QUICK TRICKS**

<b>NATE LEIPZIG'S</b> Coin on the Knee . . . . .	<i>Page</i> 94
<b>MARTIN GARDINER'S</b> Cigar Vanish . . . . .	<i>Page</i> 96
Five Coin Star. . . . .	<i>Page</i> 98
<b>Pick Off Pip.</b> . . . . .	<i>Page</i> 101
<b>DAI VERNON'S</b> Adaptation of Bill Bowman's "Clipped" . . .	<i>Page</i> 103
<b>CLIFF GREEN'S</b> Multiple Colour Change. . . . .	<i>Page</i> 104
<b>MALINI-VERNON'S</b> Three from One . . . . .	<i>Page</i> 105

## CHAPTER NINE

### QUICK TRICKS

Those readers who attend Magicians' Conventions and meetings of Magical Societies will be aware of the number of occasions that **some** small piece of trickery steals the limelight from the host of more elaborate and pretentious illusions on display. Usually it is a trick, apparently performed impromptu, perhaps based upon an old principle but given a new dressing, which captures the imagination of the spectators and causes the trick to become the main topic of conversation.

At many of his performances during his European tour, **Dai Vernon** delighted his audiences with some quick tricks of the above category and they caused such favourable comment that it was decided to include the most popular of them in this book. Accordingly, in this chapter will be found several tricks which, although the performing time is **short**, are extremely **effective**, and which, when included in a magical performance on appropriate occasions, will create a strong impression.

#### LEIPZIG'S COIN ON THE KNEE

Nate Leipzig used to delight in showing this trick at his performances of close-up magic. It is an unusual way of causing a coin to vanish, and is particularly intriguing to the spectators because the result is unexpected.

The performer is seated with his right side towards the spectators and places a coin on his right knee. Saying how difficult it is to pick up a coin in the palm of the hand without touching it with the fingers, he proceeds to demonstrate. He holds his right hand with fingers and thumb spread wide over his knee, then brings the palm of the hand down over the coin. It is apparent that his statement concerning the difficulty of the operation is true, because he fails on at least two occasions to lift the coin ; it is seen still resting on his knee as he slowly raises his hand. On the last occasion he is successful apparently, as when he raises his hand no coin is seen—it *must* be gripped in his palm. However, the spectators are due for a surprise, for when he turns his hand over the palm is seen to be **empty**—the coin has vanished!

The method by which the coin is vanished is ingenious, use being made of a “pocket” which forms almost automatically in the cloth of the trouser leg when a person is seated. The crease forming the mouth of the pocket can be seen in the photographs. Should the crease not form in just the right position in the action of sitting, then it can be adjusted in the natural action of hitching up the trousers at the knees. When the performer is seated with the right side of his body towards the spectators, the crease on the inside of his right leg is out of sight.

To perform the trick, place a large coin (**half-a-crown** is ideal) on the right knee, then state that much practice is required before it is possible



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

to lift it by placing the palm of the hand over it and gripping it by a contraction of the muscles of the palm. Bring the right hand over the coin (Fig. 1) so that the coin is adjacent to the palm, then press down with fingers and thumb extended and open. Move the thumb and fingers slightly whilst downward pressure is applied by the hand, as if endeavouring to grip the coin with the flesh of the palm. Now raise the hand slowly and carefully ; look a little disappointed when the coin is seen still resting on the knee. Try once more—act the part of making every effort to lift the coin, moving the base of the thumb inwards and outwards in your efforts to grip the coin. Raise the hand slowly and carefully again—still the coin remains on the knee. Make another attempt but this time although the actions appear exactly as before, bring the thumb close to the side of the hand as it descends, bringing the fleshy part of the base of the thumb over the left edge of the coin. By extending the thumb away from the side of the hand, the coin is moved to the left. Continue the slight movements of the fingers and thumb as if trying to grip the coin but during the thumb movements, secretly work the coin to the left when it will eventually be clear of the hand and held against the inner side of the leg by the thumb (Fig. 2). Release the coin to permit it to slide out of sight into the crease where it will remain secure. Continue the efforts to grip the coin (?) even after it has been disposed of in the crease, then carefully lift the right hand (Fig. 3) showing the knee—no coin. Look pleased with yourself in having succeeded in lifting the coin and say : “ See how flat my hand is ”, then after a pause, turn the right hand over slowly and show that the palm is empty (Fig. 4). Alter your own expression to one of surprise then smile—the result is excellent !

Do not be in a hurry to retrieve the coin ; there will be ample opportunity later as you adjust the trousers to either cross the legs or stand.

Convincing acting plays an important part in this trick ; the method itself is simple but to obtain the maximum effect the spectators' interest must be aroused by your efforts to pick up the coin in this unusual manner. They



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

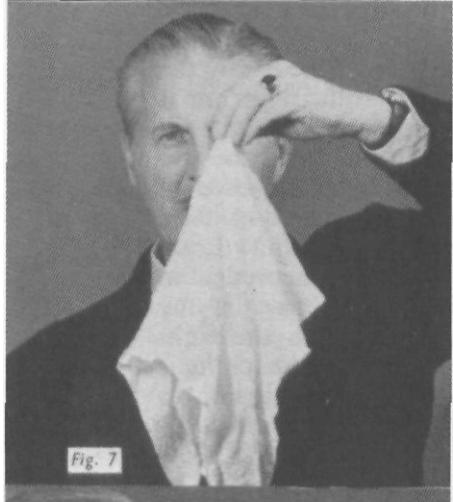


Fig. 7



Fig. 8

will be interested in your actions and pleased when you apparently succeed—then comes the surprise, the vanish of the coin, which is all the more mystifying because it is totally unexpected.

#### MARTIN GARDNER'S CIGAR VANISH

MARTIN GARDNER is preparing an ENCYCLOPEDIA OF IMPROMPTU TRICKS which on completion will be the most complete collection of this type of trick in existence. From this collection, Dai Vernon has selected "CIGAR VANISH" which is a particular favourite with him. He performed it at a small party at my home when he was staying with me and I shall never forget the astonishment I felt when the cigar vanished—then the delight some minutes later when realisation came of the manner in which the deception had been carried out. It is that kind of trick—complete bewilderment for the audience for a minute or so then laughter as the clever way in which the temporary mystery is brought about dawns upon them.

#### EFFECT.

The performer, who is smoking a cigar, removes a handkerchief from his pocket and holds it by one corner in his left hand so that it hangs down in front of his body. Taking the cigar from his lips with the right hand by grasping it between the tips of the second finger (above) and the thumb (below) at the lighted end, he brings the unlighted end of the cigar behind and pointing to the centre of the handkerchief (Fig. 5). By moving his right hand forward, he brings the end of the cigar against the centre of the handkerchief, then turns the hand to point the cigar upwards. His left hand now releases the corner of the handkerchief and grasps the end of the cigar through the centre of the handkerchief. At this point the cigar is completely covered by the handkerchief which is draped over it. After a pause he shakes out the handkerchief—the cigar has vanished.

## THE SECRET.

The secret of the vanish is extremely ingenious and although it does not remain a secret for very long, nevertheless the effect is first class.

Most of the story is told in the photographs which when studied, reveal that the cigar does not vanish—it is simply replaced between the performer's lips in the natural smoking position. It is because it is in this natural position at the completion of the moves that some time elapses before the spectators realise that a hoax has been played upon them.

To obtain the maximum effect it is necessary for the spectators to get used to seeing the performer smoking a cigar ; therefore the trick should be performed *after* the cigar has been smoked for a while, no reference being made to the trick until immediately prior to its performance. If the performer is known to some of the spectators as a regular cigar smoker, then it is certain that they will be extremely puzzled for some time after the handkerchief has been shaken out !

## PERFORMANCE.

At a suitable moment when smoking a cigar, take a large white handkerchief from your pocket and hold it by one corner in the left hand. The handkerchief should hang down in front of the body, the corner held by the left hand being about chest high.

Reach up with the right hand and grasp the cigar near the lighted end with the second finger on top of the cigar and the thumb below. The tips of the second finger and thumb hold the cigar about an inch from the lighted end so that, with care, there is no real danger of a burn. The other ringers are bunched around the lighted end of the cigar but do not actually hold it.

Remove the cigar from between the lips and hold it momentarily with the unlighted end pointing upwards as you call attention to it by simply saying : “ Watch ”. Make no reference to what you are about to do, the fact that you are holding the cigar in a prominent manner and ask for the attention of the spectators, is sufficient to focus their eyes on the cigar.

Now drop the right hand and bring the cigar behind the handkerchief, the unlighted end pointing to the centre (Fig. 5). Move the right hand forward until the end of the cigar touches the centre of the handkerchief then change the direction of the movement so that the cigar and the centre of the handkerchief travel upwards in an arc. When the cigar is almost upright (carrying the handkerchief with it), pull the right hand and cigar quickly backwards and away from the handkerchief as you exclaim : “ That's hot ! ” It appears that you have inadvertently burnt yourself with the lighted cigar but in reality you have shown the spectators that it is your intention to completely cover the cigar with the handkerchief. By actually covering the cigar the first time, the audience will be ready to believe that you do exactly the same thing on the second occasion. The excuse for removing the cigar, provided by the accidental (?) burn, is accepted by them if the acting is convincing so make sure that it really does appear as if you have burnt yourself ; make the exclamation real ; draw the right hand back quickly and look slightly annoyed that you have been so clumsy.

Begin once more, make the same moves again of holding up the cigar then carrying it behind the handkerchief with the unlighted end pointing

towards the centre (Fig. 5). This time, however, as the cigar almost touches the centre of the handkerchief, extend the first finger keeping the cigar (held by the second finger and thumb) at right angles to the first finger. It is the first finger tip which strikes the centre of the handkerchief and carries it upwards in an arc, the unlighted end of the cigar being now pointing towards the performer (Fig. 6—side view). From the front it appears that the cigar has been carried up, with the handkerchief closing around it as before.

Release the grip on the corner by the left hand and bring that hand over the centre of the handkerchief to apparently grasp the end of the cigar through the handkerchief. Actually the left first and second fingers take the centre of the handkerchief at the front whilst the thumb goes behind. The shape of the right first finger underneath the handkerchief makes it appear that it is the cigar which is being held (Fig. 7—front view). Move both hands upwards and as the unlighted end of the cigar comes level with the mouth, take it between the lips ; the hands continue their movement upward. There must be no pause in the hand movement as the cigar is taken between the lips.

At this point the right hand drops then takes one of the hanging corners between the thumb and forefinger. A view from the side is shown in Fig. 8, but from the front it appears that the cigar is under the handkerchief, the end held by the left hand (Fig. 7),

Release the left hand hold, allowing the centre of the handkerchief to fall and immediately look down at the handkerchief hanging by the corner from the right hand. By looking downwards, the head is tilted forward and although this does not completely obscure the spectators' view of the cigar, it does make it less conspicuous, especially as you refrain from puffing any smoke. Their eyes follow the falling handkerchief which is now about knee level. The secret at this stage is to forget about the cigar and act naturally ; display the handkerchief between the hands turning it to show both sides, then crumple it up and tuck away into a pocket. By the time the spectators lift their eyes again to face level, they will have experienced the surprise of the cigar vanishing then, although the cigar is clearly visible between your lips for them to see, it is usually quite a time before the cigar they see is associated with the vanish. Remember, they have been "conditioned" to knowing you with a cigar between your lips and although it should not be there because you are supposed to have made it vanish, it is accepted subconsciously. The misdirection has been so good that it is not until they begin to think without their minds being misdirected, that they become conscious of the cigar and realise that it should not be there. Even then they wonder how it jumped back between your lips.

#### DAI VERNON'S FIVE COIN STAR

This flourish was made popular by MANUEL, a fine manipulator who used to be billed as "Master of the Almighty Dollar". The effect is mystifying and surprising as from the performer's empty hands, five coins appear, each one seen separately between the tips of the extended fingers and thumbs of the hands which are held together, palm to palm (Fig. 13).

Manuel's own method for performing this feat is clearly described in the book edition of THE TARBELL COURSE IN MAGIC (Vol. 3,



page 137) and although the text and fine line drawings made it very easy for the reader to understand, the Manuel method does need a considerable amount of practice to position the coins correctly so that they can be contacted by the tips of the fingers and thumbs. However, many performers have mastered this method ; in PAUL LePAUL's hands, the effect is beautiful.

Dai Vernon has simplified the method for positioning the five coins and whilst the effect itself remains unchanged, he has made the handling much easier to master.

First let us study the main part of the effect—how to make the coin star.

Hold the five coins in a stack between the tips of the left forefinger and thumb as shown in Fig. 9. Notice how the left thumb is on the bottom left edge of the stack right above the middle joint of the forefinger. All the fingers of the left hand are together.

Begin to fan the coins to the right with the left thumb, making an even fan across the tips of the fingers, the top coin coming eventually over the tip of the left little finger (Fig. 10).

Bring the right hand over to the left hand, the tips of the fingers and thumb towards the faces of the coins. The tip of the right little finger contacts the face of the coin on the extreme right, the third finger tip contacts the second coin on the right, the middle finger tip contacts the middle coin and the tip of the forefinger contacts the fourth coin — in that order. The left thumb has been moved to the left to allow the fingers to contact the coins but is now brought behind the original bottom coin of the stack enabling the right thumb to be placed on the opposite face of the coin — Fig. 11 shows an edge-on view of finger and thumb positions of both hands. It is in this position that the point of balance of each coin is felt, any necessary adjustment of the fingers or thumbs being made to bring their tips opposite each other and so enable the coins to be held without twisting. Fig. 12 shows a view of the left hand fingers and thumb being adjusted to bring their tips opposite those of the right hand.

Immediately it can be felt that all the coins are held firmly, the palms are brought together, the fingers straighten out and spread

apart, bringing into full view the five coins, each held separately at the tips of the fingers and thumbs—Fig. 13.

After a little practice, the star can be made quickly and smoothly, the main point on which to concentrate being the evenness of the fan so that the left forefinger still holds the bottom coin of the stack until the thumbs are brought into position. Remember, the finger and thumb adjustment is made at the stage shown in Fig. 11. After confidence has been gained through practice, the fingers slide into position almost automatically and pick up the correct point of balance.

When the star can be made confidently, an additional refinement should be added to enable the coins to be held at the very edges (as shown in Fig. 13) and so display as large a portion as possible of the faces of the coins. This is accomplished at the stage shown in Fig. 11. As soon as the point of balance is felt, the right hand is moved forward slightly, pushing the coins over the tips of the left fingers and thumb, then slides back to bring the tips of the right fingers and thumb to the bottom edge of the coins.

The coin star is an excellent climax to a routine with five coins. Let us assume that after a series of manipulations, the coins have been caused to vanish but in reality are in the finger-palm position of the right hand. If the second and third fingers are curled over the stack of coins, the palm of the hand can be turned towards the audience without exposing the coins.

To make the star, turn the body to bring the right side towards the audience then lift the right hand in front of the body to a point between waist and shoulder. The right elbow should be bent and, of course, the back of the right hand is towards the audience. Now bring the left hand up to the right hand and take the stack of coins from the right finger-palm to between the left thumb and forefinger—the right hand prevents the coins being seen at this stage. Fan the coins as explained and make the star extending both hands as the fingers open wide to reveal the coins at the finger-tips.

Dai Vernon often covers his hands with a silk handkerchief, makes the star under its cover then blows the silk away, revealing the coins at his fingertips. If the handkerchief used is of a heavier material than silk, then a spectator can be asked to remove it—the effect is excellent.

A star can be made with five playing cards, the moves being almost identical to those described above. Actually it is more simple with cards although the effect is extremely good.

The five cards are held squared between the left thumb and forefinger at the left bottom corner of the packet. The left long edge of the packet is in line with the forefinger and extending outwards from the tip of that finger. By moving the thumb to the right, the cards are fanned and from this point on, the moves are the same as with coins.

To make the card star the climax of a manipulative card routine, arrange for the last move but one of the sequence to bring the cards into the normal palm position in the right hand. Now with the right side of the body towards the audience, move the hands in front of the body in exactly the same way as described above for coins. The left thumb and forefinger grasp the packet of cards at the corner nearest to the base of the right thumb and the fan is started under cover of the right hand, which then moves into position for the fingers and thumb to take up their hold on the bottom edges of the cards.

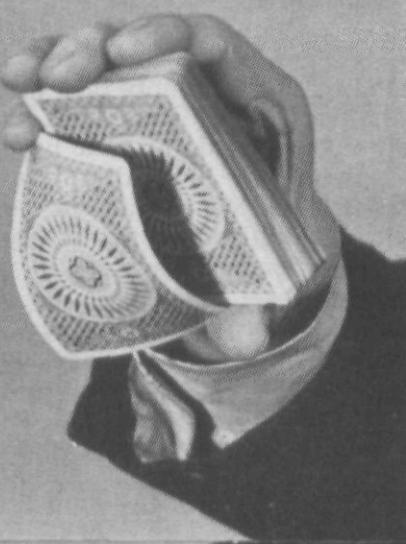


Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

## DAI VERNON'S "PICK OFF PIP"

The effect of this quick trick is that the performer shows a three spot card on the face of the pack then proceeds to pick off the centre pip with this thumb and forefinger, leaving two pips **only**. As the effect can be produced with a borrowed pack, there is no question of a trick card or of an extra pip being stuck on to the card.

In magical **parlance**, this a “colour change”. A three pip card, say the Three of Clubs, is on the face of the pack whilst unbeknown to the audience, the Two of Clubs is on the back of the pack. To get ready for the colour change, hold the pack with the right hand over the top of the cards, the thumb at the centre of the inner short edge and the pads of the first, second and third fingers at the outer short edge. Bring the left hand to the pack, the fingers going under the cards and contacting the back of the Two of Clubs so that it is pushed to the right. As the card slides to the right, twist it diagonally to bring the outer right corner against the pad of the right little finger and the inner left corner against the pad of the right thumb. By moving the right little finger a short distance down the right long edge of the pack, the Two of Clubs is caused to buckle. When the left hand is removed, nothing suspicious can be seen as the back of the right hand covers the buckled **bottom** card. A view from underneath is shown in Fig. 14 in which can be seen how the Two of Clubs is held by the pads of the little finger and thumb at diagonally opposite corners.

The above manoeuvre is performed whilst patterning, perfect cover being provided as the back of the right hand covers the action.

Now, gripping the cards as in Fig. 14 but with the back of the right hand and the face of the pack sloping towards the audience, gesture with the

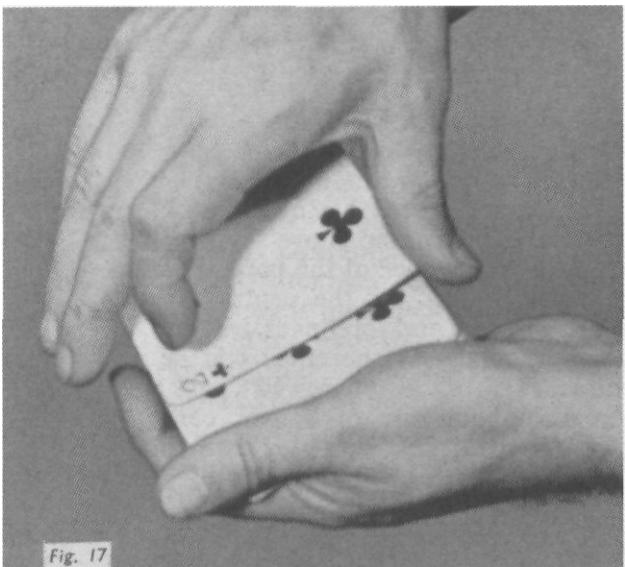


Fig. 17

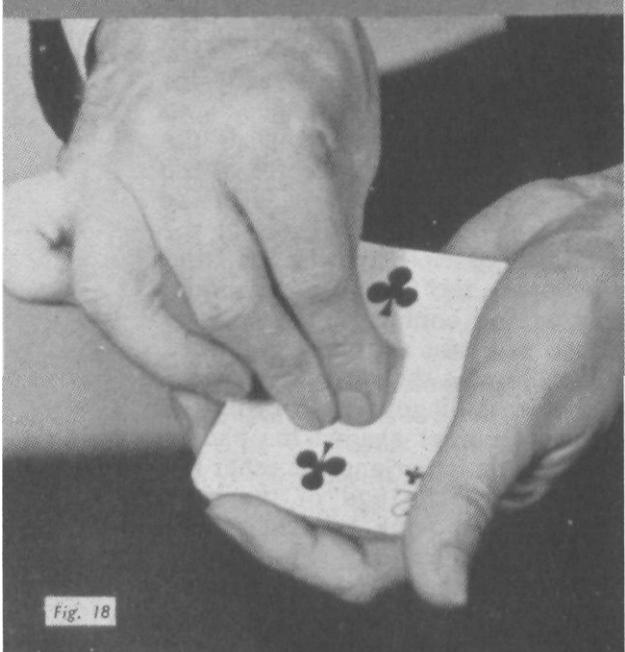


Fig. 18

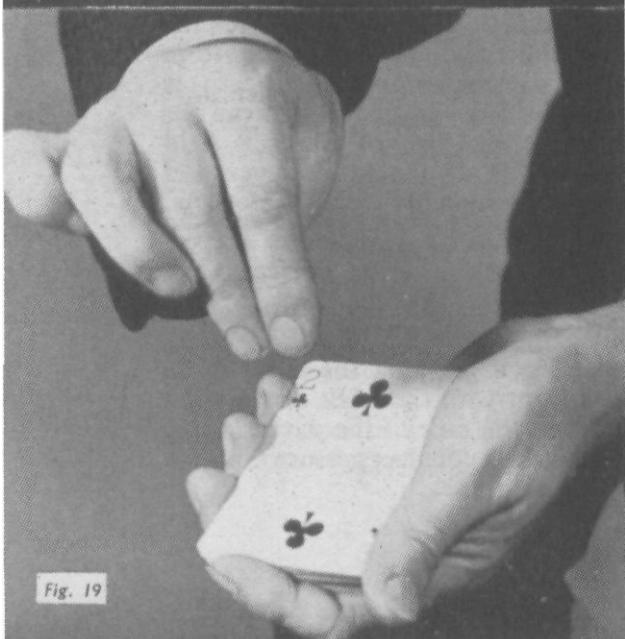


Fig. 19

left hand to show it empty then bring it to the pack as before but this time the left second, third and little fingers slide between the buckled card and the pack. Fig. 15 shows a view from underneath—notice how the left forefinger is extended underneath the outer right corner of the pack. To the audience, it appears that the pack is being taken into the left hand which, indeed, is what is done but the left hand remains still as the right hand is lifted free, which causes the buckled card to pivot a little on the axis formed by the pads of the right little finger and thumb.

The left hand is seen to be holding the pack, the Three of Clubs clearly visible on the face ; the right hand is above the pack and a little to the right. In this position, attention is drawn to the Three of Clubs on the face of the pack ; the right forefinger pointing down at the card. Fig. 16 is a side view showing the position of the hands and cards at this stage.

With hardly a pause, the right hand is brought over the face of the pack, the long edge of the Two of Clubs sliding across the face of the Three of Clubs and pivoting on its axis until it is square on the top of the pack. As the Two of Clubs slides across the face of the Three of Clubs, the right forefinger begins to move inwards (Fig. 17—side view) then, immediately the cards are squared, the tip of the right thumb moves inwards also to join the tip of the forefinger over the centre of the card (Fig. 18). There is a slight pause here as the right thumb and forefinger pick at the centre pip which, when the thumb and forefinger are lifted, is seen to be no more—the illusion being that it has been picked off, leaving a blank space in the centre of the card (Fig. 19). The right hand makes a tossing action as if throwing away the pip and, of course, this gesture permits the spectators to see that the hand is empty.

## DAI VERNON'S ADAPTATION OF BILL BOWMAN'S "CLIPPED"

For some years, BILL BOWMAN of Seattle, Washington, has been showing a neat trick with paper clips and a treasury note. It was eventually published in the NEW PHOENIX (No. 310) and since then many variations have been shown, some of which have also been published. When Dai Vernon was in Seattle for the purpose of giving a lecture, Bill Bowman showed him his trick. Dai liked it very much, made an addition to it then wrapped it around with an interesting story—here is the result.

Dai tells the following story to his audience :

"In Mexico the Peons get very little money for their toil and in consequence they take particular care to see that once it is in their possession, it does not get lost. Any notes they receive are bound with string and actually tied into one of their pockets.

"On one occasion an old Peon came to me and told me that although he had taken extra precautions, he had had his money stolen and asked me, as a magician, how the thief had accomplished this feat.

"I asked him to show me how he had secured his money and what the extra precautions were to which he had referred. I lent him a note which he threaded through his loop of string then he secured the ends of the note with two clips, making it impossible to remove the note from the string without removing the clips. However, as you will see, he had not reckoned with a thief with a knowledge of magic—watch ! "

During the patter, the actions are performed of threading a note that has been folded in half lengthways, through a loop of string (or a rubber band) and placing two paper clips on to the note to secure it in position. A spectator is asked to hold on to the string. When the performer says "Watch !" he pulls the note which comes free in his hand but what is more surprising, the clips and loop of string are all linked together !

Two paper clips, a rubber band and a treasury note are needed. Fold the note in half lengthways then slip it through the rubber band. The band should be positioned about a third of the way along the length of the note from the left. Now, with the folded edge of the note upwards, fold the left-hand third of the note to the right and slip a paper clip over the note to hold the thickness at the folded edge together. The longest side of the clip should be over the folded third of the note. Fig. 20 shows this arrangement with the rubber band around the note and the first clip placed in position—the long side of the clip is showing in the photograph.

Turn the note over from right to left and bend the free end of the note from left to right. Slip the second paper clip over the top edge of the note to hold the folded end in position but ensure that the clip goes over two folded edges only and not over the third—the long side of the clip must be outwards. Looking from the top, the edge of the note will now appear as a figure 8—Fig. 21.

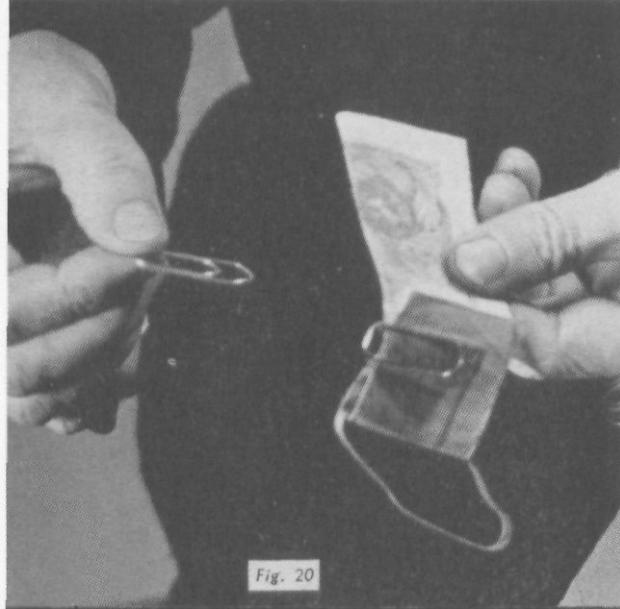


Fig. 20

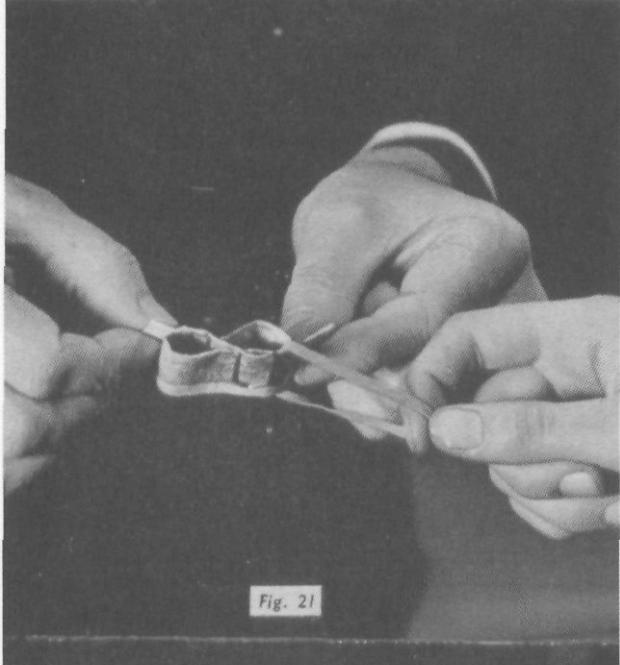


Fig. 21

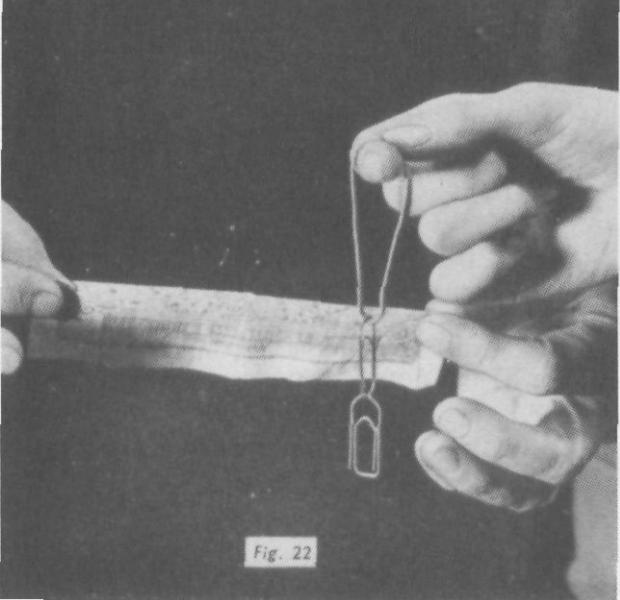


Fig. 22

Ask a spectator to hold onto the rubber band then take one end of the note between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand and the other end of the note between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. Fig. 21 shows this position. Move the hands apart rapidly (the paper clips and the rubber band will become clipped together) then release one end of the note and pull it free from its rubber band. Immediately the note is free, grasp the end of the note again and hold it stretched between the hands. The spectator is left holding the rubber band from which are suspended the two paper clips linked together.

### THE MULTIPLE COLOUR CHANGE

For the early part of his life, Dai Vernon lived in Canada, and as a boy met and became friendly with CLIFF GREEN. They practised their magic together and this multiple colour change was one of the effects which Cliff Green evolved and which later in life he used most effectively in his own act.

Ten to fifteen cards are stolen secretly into the right-hand palm position, the remainder of the pack being held face up in the palm of the left hand.

To make the change, the right thumb tip goes to the edge of the packet of cards nearest to the finger tips and bends back one card. In Fig. 23, the right hand has been turned to permit a view of this happening—in performance, of course, the back of the hand is upwards and the action is covered. The right hand is now brought over the top of the cards in the left hand but the hands remain a few inches apart. Both hands move upwards together and during this action the right thumb releases its



Fig. 23

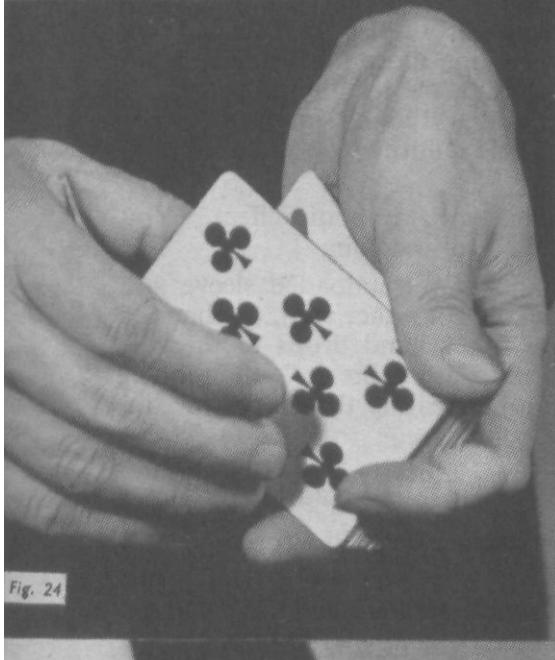


Fig. 24

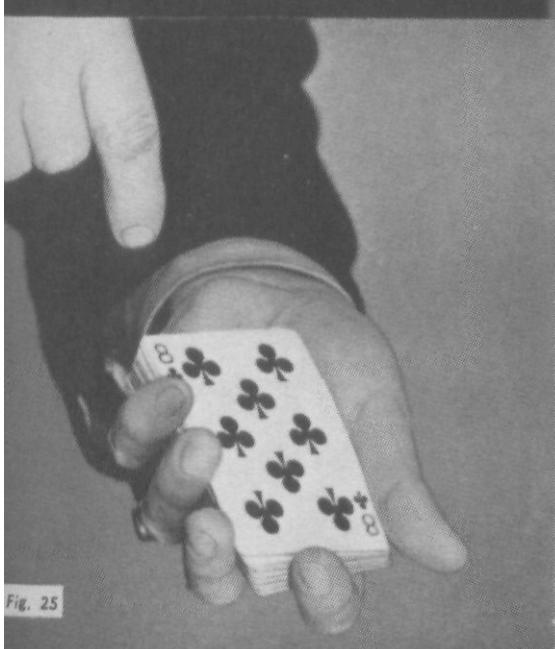


Fig. 25

hold on the bent card causing it to straighten and shoot forward onto the left hand packet. Notice in Fig. 24 how the left forefinger tip extends above the outer short edge of the cards and forms a stop for the right-hand card to strike against and come to rest squared on top of the left-hand cards.

Both hands move down again then the right hand moves up a little to reveal the new face card on the left-hand packet. As the right hand moves away with the forefinger pointing downwards at the new face card (Fig. 25), the right thumb bends back the next card in readiness for the colour change to be repeated. In this manner, the changes can be made rapidly, the hands moving upwards in unison, the right hand covering the face card only momentarily before the hands are lowered again for the right hand to be moved away to show the change. The moves are repeated in rapid succession until there are no more cards in the right hand.

#### MALINI - VERNON— THREE FROM ONE

Dai Vernon watched Max Malini perform this effect on many occasions and by a careful analysis, evolved the method described below. It is a fine example of maximum effect accomplished by extremely simple means.

It is essentially a "close-up" item and is performed when someone happens to have a silver coin in his hand. Max Malini did it with a fifty cent piece.

Simply "load" each of your sleeves with a similar coin then say to the person : "May I borrow that for a second?" and receive the coin from him.

Toss the coin from palm to palm which shows that, apart from the

coin, your hands are empty—without drawing undue attention to this fact. Next place the coin on top of either fist and allow it to sink slowly inside—as this happens, the fist is elevated somewhat and the other hand drops to the side and secures the coin from the sleeve. This second coin should rest on the two middle fingers, as far forwards as possible, and is clipped in the “ Down's position ”.

The hand holding the other coin now opens and adjusts its grip on the coin so that it is held by the extreme edge between the forefinger and thumb—all other fingers are extended. The two hands are brought together and the concealed coin appears to be “ broken off ” and so two coins are displayed.

The exact handling is as follows :—Assume that the concealed coin is in the left hand and the right hand is holding the visible coin by the extreme edge. When the hands come together, the left thumb makes a movement as if to seize the coin as the right index finger goes between the tips of the left index and second fingers to grip the other coin. The thumb actually goes *between* the two coins which are otherwise fairly squared. This position is held for a second then, by an apparent breaking motion of the left hand and a pinching of the right forefinger and thumb, the left thumb snaps out and causes a decided clicking noise. Immediately the left forefinger slides to the left edge and both coins are separated, held daintily by both forefingers and thumbs at their edges.

This effect is quite startling if handled with dramatic effect. You must *act* as if you have really broken off a piece of the coin.

Both coins are now taken in the hand of the unloaded sleeve and as the spectator is told that he may have a choice of either coin, the hand is extended towards him. Simultaneously the other hand drops to the side and secures the remaining coin. Without a pause “ break ” off another “ piece ” from the coin in the hand by simply repeating the moves used in the first instance.

Malini used to state : “ That's how I make money ” but Dai Vernon smiles and says : “ May I keep these ? ”

This is an ideal impromptu effect and the reader will appreciate how strong it is if he will practice it then give it a trial performance.

**NOTE.**—After the clicking sound has been produced and due to this manner of handling, the coins will be *perfectly* squared up and a kind of squeezing motion is used to separate them.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

EXPANSION OF TEXTURE

*Page 109*

## CHAPTER TEN

### EXPANSION OF TEXTURE

Credit is given by T. NELSON DOWNS in his book “THE ART OF MAGIC”, to Jose Antenor de Gayo, Marquis de Orighuela (who was famous as L'HOMME MASQUE), for the invention of the trick usually known as EXPANSION OF TEXTURE. The plot of this trick is similar to that of THE MAGICAL FILTRATION OF FIVE-FRANC PIECES performed by the late ROBERT HOUDIN.

In the version credited to L'HOMME MASQUE the effect is that two halfcrowns are borrowed from the audience after being marked by the owners. One of the coins is placed in the performer's pocket ; the other wrapped in a handkerchief (which is also borrowed for the purpose) by a volunteer spectator. The handkerchief never leaves the spectator's hands but nevertheless the coin passes from the performer's pocket to join the one already in the handkerchief. Eventually both coins are magically removed from the handkerchief.

A trick similar in effect but utilising a different principle is SILVER OR COPPER EXTRACTION : three methods of which are given in J. B. BOBO's “MODERN COIN MAGIC”. In this trick two coins, one silver and the other copper, are wrapped in a handkerchief. A spectator is given a free choice of one of the coins and whichever coin he names, it is removed magically from the handkerchief, leaving the other remaining within its folds.

For some years, Dai Vernon has been performing his own version of EXPANSION OF TEXTURE, in which he also makes use of the principle employed in SILVER OR COPPER EXTRACTION. By combining two methods, improving the moves employed and altering the plot, he has evolved a beautiful routine.

#### EFFECT.

The performer removes a silver and a copper coin from his pocket and places them on the table whilst he borrows a handkerchief. Picking up the silver coin, he covers it with the handkerchief then lifts a corner to show that the coin is right in the centre. He now picks up the copper coin and places this into the handkerchief alongside the silver coin. A spectator is requested to hold all four corners securely, the two coins being trapped in the bag-like form of the handkerchief.

The spectator is now given a free choice of either of the coins and whichever one he names, it is magically extracted from the handkerchief by the performer ; the other coin remaining in the handkerchief is then removed by the spectator.

Offering to reverse the process, the performer places the silver coin only in the handkerchief then asks the spectator to grasp the coin through the material with one hand whilst holding the four corners of the handkerchief in his other hand. Picking up the copper coin, the performer causes it to vanish whereupon it is heard to clink against the coin in the handkerchief. On opening the handkerchief, the spectator finds *both* coins inside.

#### REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Two identical copper coins ; English pennies are ideal. One penny is in the pocket on the right side of your jacket and the other is in the pocket on the left side.

(b) A silver coin : A halfcrown is in your jacket pocket on the right side with one of the pennies.

(c) A gentleman's white handkerchief which may be borrowed.

#### PERFORMANCE.

##### PART ONE.

State that, for this item, you will need a silver and a copper coin, placing *both* hands in your jacket pockets to find them. Whilst your left hand is in the pocket finger-palm the penny then remove both hands, the halfcrown and second penny displayed on the palm of the right hand.

Call the attention of the spectators on your right to the coins by extending the right hand in their direction then bring the hands together, right over left, so that the palms come together, the left palm obscured from view by the back of the right hand, and drop the halfcrown only leaving the penny finger-palmed in the right hand. Extend the left hand towards the spectators on your left for them to see a penny and a halfcrown on the palm. Place these two coins on the table whilst you borrow a gentleman's handkerchief.

When performing to a few persons only, where to display the coins to the right and left would be out of place, make the transfer by apparently tossing both coins from the right hand into the left but release the halfcrown only which joins the penny in the left hand. The right-hand penny is retained in the finger-palm position.

Pick up the halfcrown and hold it by the edge between the tips of the first finger and thumb of the left hand. Take the handkerchief into the right hand, holding it at one corner but gripped into the palm of the hand with the fingers to ensure that it spreads out. Bring the right hand in front of the left so that the centre of the handkerchief is adjacent to the coin. Fig. 1 is the position from the performer's viewpoint and shows the way in which both the coin and the handkerchief are held.

Move the right hand backwards and over the left forearm bringing the centre of the handkerchief over the coin. Half of the handkerchief is draped over the left forearm leaving the front portion hanging down in front of the coin and the left hand. Release the right hand grip.

With the right thumb and forefinger grasp the coin, low down at the right edge, through the material and give it a half turn inwards, then secure a new grip on the inner edge of the coin with the left thumb and forefinger. There is now a tiny fold of cloth held against the coin by the left thumb and forefinger. Fig. 2 shows the coin being turned inwards.

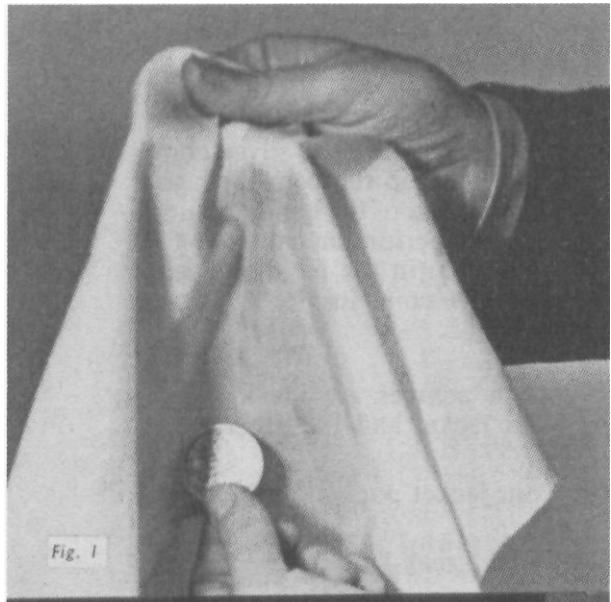


Fig. 1

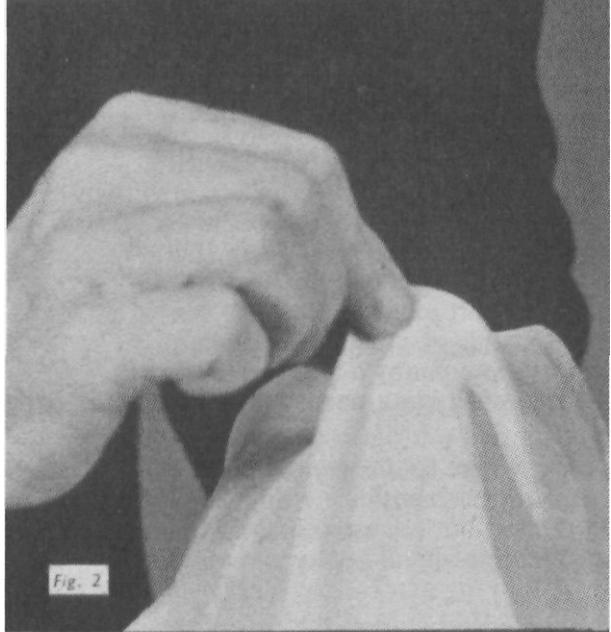


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Lift the front portion of the handkerchief with the right hand, lowering the left hand at the same time and giving the spectators a brief glimpse of the coin (Fig. 3)—no part of the left hand must be seen. Release the grip on the handkerchief by the right hand. Give a slight shake with the left hand causing the handkerchief to fall around the coin which is now in an outside fold at the back of the handkerchief and not in the centre as it would seem.

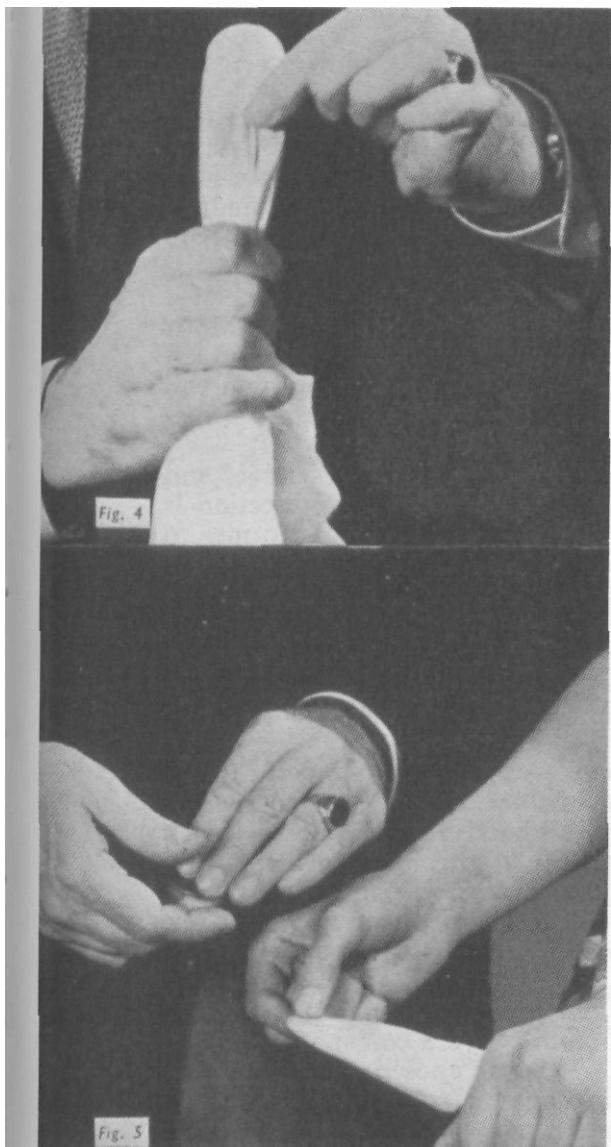
Pick up the penny from the table with your right hand and slowly and deliberately place it upwards under the folds of the handkerchief so that it really does go up into the centre. It is now alongside the half-crown but there is a thickness of cloth between the two coins ; the order being—halfcrown (at the back), thickness of cloth (back portion of handkerchief), penny, then a thickness of cloth (the front portion of the handkerchief). The left thumb and forefinger are grasping both coins at this stage, the right hand having been removed after the penny has been placed in position.

To your audience it appears that you have placed a halfcrown and a penny into the centre of the handkerchief in the fairest manner possible.

Ask a spectator to hold the corners of the handkerchief, bunched together in one of his hands then offer to remove magically either of the coins he may choose—copper or silver.

Should he choose the silver coin (which is usually the case) then it is a simple matter to remove it as it is in an outside fold. Draw it out with the right thumb and forefinger as if by some magical process you have caused the weave of the material of the handkerchief to expand and permit the coin to pass through.

If it is the copper coin that is chosen then as you have the duplicate penny finger-palmed in the right hand, this is the coin which is brought



to the fingertips as the hand is under the handkerchief and drawn into view, apparently right through the cloth. You then remark that : " It is as easy to remove the silver coin as it is the copper " and pretend to work the penny back into the handkerchief —as the right hand goes under the handkerchief the penny is finger-palmed and the halfcrown is brought out into view. Whatever the choice has been, you have eventually removed the silver coin and left the penny inside the handkerchief for the spectator to remove.

At the conclusion of this stage of the trick, you will be left with a penny in the right finger-palm position, the silver coin on the table, which you have placed there after having removed it magically from the handkerchief, and a penny also on the table which was removed by the spectator.

#### PART Two.

Offer to repeat the effect.

Pick up the halfcrown and hold it vertically, gripped at the bottom edge between the right thumb and forefinger. Cover it with the handkerchief, then, by doubling back the right second finger, bring the penny to position below the silver coin so both can be grasped, as *one*, through the handkerchief by the left thumb and forefinger (Fig. 4). Remove the right

hand from under the handkerchief and grasp the outside of the handkerchief, the fingers curling round the fabric below the two coins (Fig. 4).

Ask the spectator to grasp the silver coin by its edge (through the material) with his right hand and as he takes the coin, give the handkerchief a couple of tugs with the right hand as you make an appropriate remark about its security. At the same time release the penny so that it falls down the cloth cylinder until prevented falling further by the right hand.

Lift the right hand to bring the cylindrical bag to the horizontal position and direct the spectator to take hold of the bunched four corners in his left hand (Fig. 5). He will now be holding the halfcrown and the handkerchief in the position shown in Fig. 5. The penny, the presence of which he is unaware, will be halfway along the cylinder and will remain in that position whilst the handkerchief is in the horizontal position.

Pick up the penny from the table with the right hand and pretend to take it into the left hand, the left fingers closing as if over the coin. Bring the left hand down smartly on to the right end of the handkerchief, opening

the fingers as the hand strikes the fabric and knocking the silver coin and the right end of the handkerchief out of the spectator's right hand. As he still holds the bunched four corners of the handkerchief in his left hand, the penny in the cylinder will fall against the halfcrown and cause an audible clink. Apparently the penny has been passed back into the handkerchief to rejoin the halfcrown.

Study Fig. 5 which shows the spectator holding the handkerchief—notice that the coin end is held by the right thumb and forefinger only whilst the bunched four corners at the opposite end are grasped firmly in the left hand as directed by the performer. It is natural therefore for the right end to be knocked out of the spectator's hand, especially as the performer strikes the handkerchief at that end.

All that remains is for the spectator to open the handkerchief and remove the two coins—a penny and a halfcrown. Ample misdirection is caused by the surprise of the coins clinking together for the performer to either sleeve or pocket the duplicate penny.

## OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

### PART ONE.

1. Place both hands in jacket pockets, finger-palm penny in left hand and bring penny and halfcrown into view with right hand as both hands are removed from jacket pockets.
2. Toss halfcrown from right to left hand—apparently both coins tossed but a penny remains finger-palmed in right hand. Place penny and halfcrown from left hand on table whilst handkerchief is borrowed.
3. Pick up halfcrown in left hand and cover with handkerchief. Give coin a half turn inwards and re-grip between left thumb and forefinger. Lift outer corner of handkerchief and drop left hand to show coin ; shake left hand and handkerchief falls around coin (coin now in outer fold).
4. Place penny under handkerchief and grip both coins between left thumb and forefinger (thickness of cloth between coins).
5. Offer choice of silver or copper. If silver chosen (usual) remove halfcrown ; if copper chosen, bring out finger-palmed penny then apparently place back (finger-palmed again) and bring out silver.
6. Spectator opens handkerchief and removes penny.

### PART Two.

7. Offer to repeat the effect.
8. Place halfcrown under handkerchief with right hand and grip halfcrown and the transferred finger-palmed penny (penny below halfcrown) through cloth with left thumb and forefinger. Right hand then grasps outside of handkerchief below coins.
9. Tell spectator to grasp halfcrown (through cloth) between right thumb and forefinger. Tug handkerchief and release lower coin. Move right hand up to bring handkerchief to horizontal position then direct spectator to firmly grasp bunched corners of handkerchief in left hand.
10. Fake transfer of other penny from right to left hand. Strike coin end of handkerchief with left hand knocking it from spectator's grasp. Coins clink together.
11. Ask spectator to open handkerchief—finds penny and halfcrown.
12. Sleeve or pocket second penny under cover of surprise.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CHALLENGE

*Page 114*

## *CHAPTER ELEVEN*

### THE CHALLENGE

In this fine effect the performer shows the faces of two cards then places them about two feet apart, face downwards, on the table. A spectator is requested to think of one of the cards and the performer wagers that he will state which card is in the spectator's thoughts. At the outset it appears that the performer is merely taking a two-to-one chance but when, as the effect is repeated, he is constantly correct, the mystery deepens, especially as no questions are asked throughout the demonstration. In addition there is a novel and amusing climax to the trick which builds it up into an exceptionally strong item.

In London, I had the pleasure of seeing Dai Vernon perform this feat on several occasions and it always registered exceedingly well. Even people who are not usually keen on card tricks, appreciate this one ; perhaps because it appears that cards are only being used because they happen to be the articles most readily to hand. It seems that the performer could demonstrate his powers with any objects although, of course, this is not possible.

This trick is a particular favourite with FAUCETT ROSS who not only delights in watching Dai Vernon perform but uses it in his own entertainment. I shall never forget the expression of delight on Faucett's face as Dai placed a bulging wallet (Faucett's own I suspect !) on one of the cards, stating emphatically that it was the one of which an unsuspecting spectator was thinking. Of course, he was right every time—when the climax was revealed, it was a joy to hear Faucett's chuckle which he never failed to produce even though he must have seen the same result hundreds of times.

The only requirement so far as sleight of hand is concerned, is to be able to perform a convincing double lift and if the reader can already accomplish this sleight, then he can proceed to learn the routine. However, Dai Vernon's own double lift is described in Chapter Twelve so the reader is in possession of all the knowledge he requires.

### PERFORMANCE.

Dai Vernon prepares his audience for what is to follow by talking in a conversational manner about the fascination, to some people, of trying to beat the stock market. Others, he says, like to bet on which colour, black or red, will be indicated by the ball when a spinning roulette wheel stops. Even people averse to betting will toss a coin to decide on one of two eventualities ; for example, they will take a two-to-one chance on calling correctly to determine if their side at cricket will bat or bowl first.

The next remarks are addressed to a specific spectator who, Dai Vernon says, he has singled out because he is sure that this person is naturally observant and perhaps will not mind participating in a little harmless game

of chance. He will not be asked to wager any money but there is a possibility that he will benefit.

During the foregoing patter, Dai Vernon casually spreads the cards in a fan, faces towards himself, then cuts the pack and fans the cards again. Actually, what he has done is to note a conspicuous card and cut it to the top. He remembers the card. Now he says that he proposes to find two cards that he believes will be suitable for the occasion and psychologically in keeping with the state of mind of the spectator. This is purely by-play—what is required is two contrasting cards, say the King of Hearts and the Three of Spades. Let us assume that when the pack was fanned he saw the King of Hearts and cut it to the top of the pack—it need not have been the King of Hearts, any court card (the first one seen) can be the one used but for our example, we will assume it to be this card.

Holding the cards in a fan (the faces of the cards are towards him) he removes say the Three of Spades and without showing its face, places it on top of the pack but MISCALLS IT THE KING OF HEARTS. Next he removes another card, ANY CARD, MISCALLS IT THE THREE OF SPADES and places it on top of the pack (without showing its face, of course).

The set-up now is that there is an indifferent card on top of the pack which has been miscalled the Three of Spades ; underneath this is the real Three of Spades which has been miscalled the King of Hearts, whilst third from the top is the real King of Hearts.

The pack is squared and turned face down then a double lift is made to reveal the Three of Spades, Dai Vernon emphasises its value by naming it aloud. He now turns the two cards as one face down on the pack and pushes off the top card on to the table (at his left side) with his left thumb. As the card is pushed off the pack, he again says : “ The Three of Spades ”—actually it is the indifferent card, of course. Again he makes a double lift to reveal the King of Hearts which he names aloud for emphasis, then after the two cards are turned (as one) face downwards on the pack, he pushes off the top card with his left thumb on to the right side of the table, calling it “ The King of Hearts ”—really it is the Three of Spades.

It is essential to keep emphasising the names of the cards, the performer pointing first to the card on the left and saying “ The Three of Spades ”, then to the card on the right calling it “ The King of Hearts ”.

Dai Vernon now asks the spectator to think of one of the cards stating that he will determine which card is being thought of. His continuing patter is brief and is made to drive home the position of the cards—“ Three of Spades ”, pointing to the left-hand card ; “ King of Hearts ”, pointing to the right-hand card. Dai removes a wallet from his pocket, holding it first over the left-hand card, saying “ Three of Spades ”, then over the right-hand card, saying “ King of Hearts ”. Finally after suitable hesitation and apparent concentration, he places the wallet on the card to the RIGHT as he says “ You are thinking of this card ”. Now if the spectator was thinking of the King of Hearts, he will agree that the performer is correct and although he might not be over-impressed as he will think that it might have been a lucky guess (it is only a two-to-one chance), his interest increases when Dai offers to repeat the demonstration. Due to the emphasis and re-emphasis of the position of the cards, the fact that Dai is right in his deduction registers without the spectator doubting that the card is other

than the King of Hearts. Of course, there is another alternative but let us assume that the spectator was thinking of the King of Hearts and that the demonstration is to be repeated.

The cards are allowed to remain in position and Dai names and points to them again. For the second time the spectator is requested to think of one of the cards. It is a fact that a person will more often than not think of the same card again, reasoning that Dai will surely place the wallet on the other card on the second occasion. Again Dai places the wallet on the card on the RIGHT (in fact, he must always place it on that card !) stating, " You are thinking of this card ". If the spectator is thinking of the King of Hearts again then when the wallet descends upon the right-hand card, the effect upon him is greatly increased and continues to increase each time the effect is repeated until he changes his mind and thinks of the " Three of Spades ". This time when the wallet descends upon the card on the right, he will be quick to inform Dai that he is wrong. However, Dai asks : " Well, what is the card you are thinking of ? " and upon receiving the reply " The Three of Spades ", he lifts the wallet and turns over the card to show that it is, in fact, the Three of Spades. Remember, all Dai said was, " You are thinking of this card ", he did NOT say, " You are thinking of the King of Hearts ".

Should the spectator have thought of the Three of Spades on the very first occasion, then of course the right-hand card is turned and its face shown. In this event, Dai has shown an interesting and amusing " quickie ". However, the chances are much greater that, providing the performer has acted his part convincingly, the spectator will think of the King of Hearts, then the routine can be built up into a bewildering and entertaining feature.

After a little experience with this routine, it is possible to sway the thoughts of the spectator towards the King of Hearts—an almost certain force. This can be done by either a little extra emphasis on this card when showing and naming it or a little less emphasis according to your assessment of the reactions of the spectator chosen as the victim. The force cannot be one hundred per cent but even if it is not successful, the performer is always in a position to bring the trick to an unexpected conclusion.

A great deal depends upon the performer's acting ; it is necessary to *convince* the spectator of the position of the cards in the first place then there is no question of him wishing to see the face of the card after the performer has placed the wallet on the right-hand card—he KNOWS it is the King of Hearts and providing he is thinking of that card, then he will agree automatically that the performer has guessed his thoughts. Should he have been thinking of the Three of Spades, then he will be bewildered and amused when the card is turned over and shown to be that card.

In the preliminary patter the fact that the cards are placed face downwards can be explained by saying that when cards are face up, people's thoughts fluctuate from one to the other and they are inclined to constantly change their mind. When they have to visualize a card it becomes a different matter as they form a mental picture of one card and keep that card in mind.

It is difficult to convey in cold print the effect this trick has upon spectators. Those readers who are fortunate enough to have seen Dai Vernon perform it, will already know its worth—to those who have not had the opportunity, then I can do no more than to recommend it highly.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

**DAI VERNON'S DOUBLE LIFT**

*Page J\9*

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### DAI VERNON'S DOUBLE LIFT

The sleight whereby two cards are lifted as one from the pack, is one of the most useful in card magic. For it to be really convincing, the handling of the two cards must appear the same as when only one is lifted.

To enable the sleight to be accomplished it is usual for there to be a secret preparation—a “get ready” move—which separates the two top cards from the remainder of the pack. This “break” beneath the two cards is held by the little finger of the hand holding the pack until the sleight is to be made when, because of the break, both cards can be lifted together,

In Dai Vernon's method for performing the double lift, the “get ready” move is accomplished under cover of excellent misdirection and the subsequent handling of the two cards is as natural as if only one is being lifted.

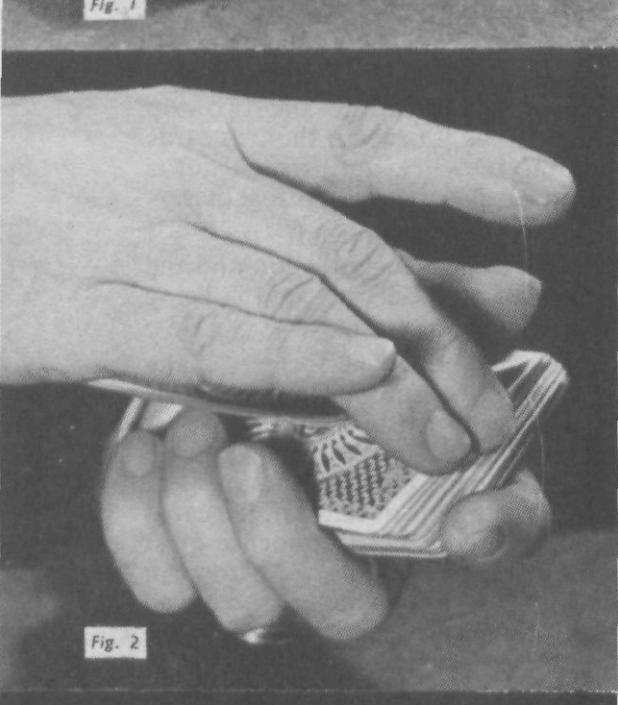
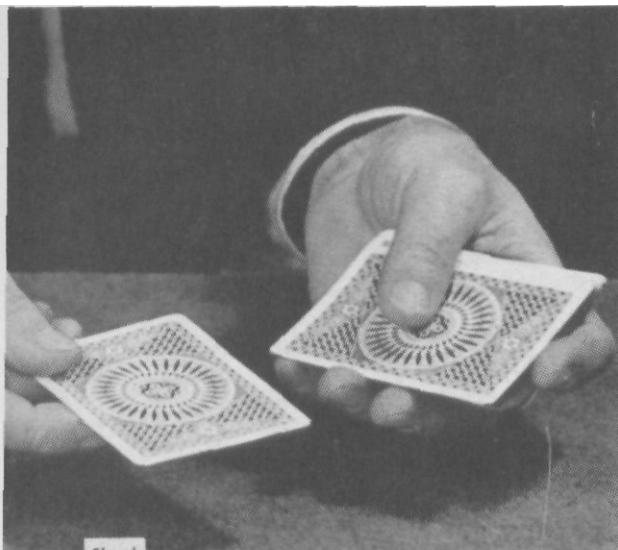
The most common faults noticeable when many performers make the double lift are a pronounced tight grip on the pack and on the cards being turned and the unnatural way in which the cards are turned over on to the pack. Cards are light in weight and when handled in play, where no trickery is involved, are not gripped as if one's life depended upon them not being dropped ; therefore if the double lift is to appear natural, the cards must be treated as light objects and not slabs of concrete. Confidence must be gained by constant practice to overcome the fear that the two cards will separate. The lifting and turning of those cards must be made in such a way that the onlookers will accept it as the natural one for turning a single card.

If we analyse the actions for turning over a single card, we find that the following will be accepted without arousing suspicion.

Hold the pack in the left hand in the position usually adopted for dealing. It is now natural to push the top card over the right side of the pack with the left thumb ; receive it between the right thumb and second finger at the right lower corner then, when the left long side of the card coincides with the right long side of the pack, flip the card over with the right forefinger, as if closing a book. As the forefinger flips the card over the grip of the right thumb and second finger is released and of course, the left thumb is moved aside to allow the card to fall face up, square on top of the pack. To bring the card face down again, the actions are repeated.

An onlooker would be prepared to accept these movements as normal, indeed he would appreciate the casual way in which the top card was flipped over to reveal the face.

The actions made in Dai Vernon's Double Lift *appear* to be the same as the foregoing.



#### THE "GET-READY".

At the beginning of the trick, THE CHALLENGE, the pack is held in the dealer-position in the left hand. A perfect excuse is provided to obtain a break under the two top cards and hold it with the tip of the left little finger by the performer saying : " I'm going to use the top card ", then pushing it to the right with the left thumb and taking it into the right hand between the tips of the thumb and forefinger (Fig. 1). This appears as just a gesture to emphasise the statement that has been made, but it enables the left thumb to push the new top card to the right so that the right long edge extends a little way over the right edge of the pack (Fig. 1). Then the tip of the left little finger contacts the underside of the right edge of the card.

The right hand replaces its card on top of the pack, then comes over the top of the cards to square the pack (thumb at inner edge and middle finger at outer edge), providing extra cover for the left little finger to hold a definite break under the two top cards. The right hand is *not* removed yet, as it has an additional function to perform, namely, the first move of the double lift.

#### THE DOUBLE LIFT.

There is no pause after the squaring of the pack ; the right hand moves the two top cards (in perfect alignment) about an inch to the right and over the left second and third finger-tips, which have joined the little finger over the right long edge of the pack (Fig. 2). The right hand leaves the top of the pack and moves to take up position at the inner short edge. The pad of the left thumb presses on the centre of the two cards when, because the left second and third fingers extend over the right long edge of the pack, a concave crimp is put into the two cards. Fig. 3 shows the

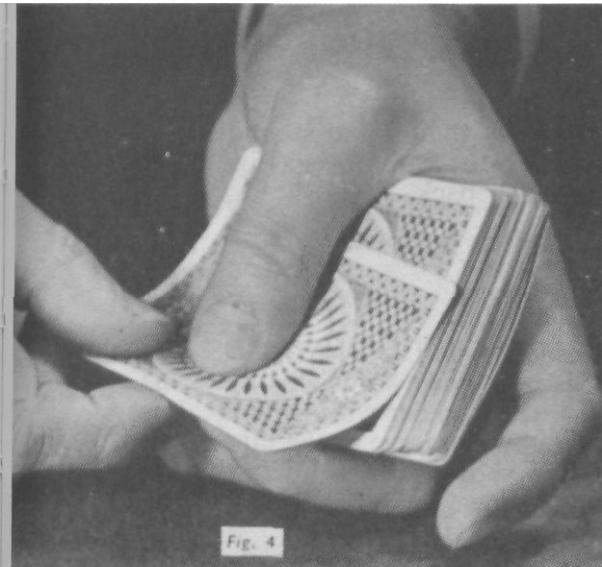


Fig. 4

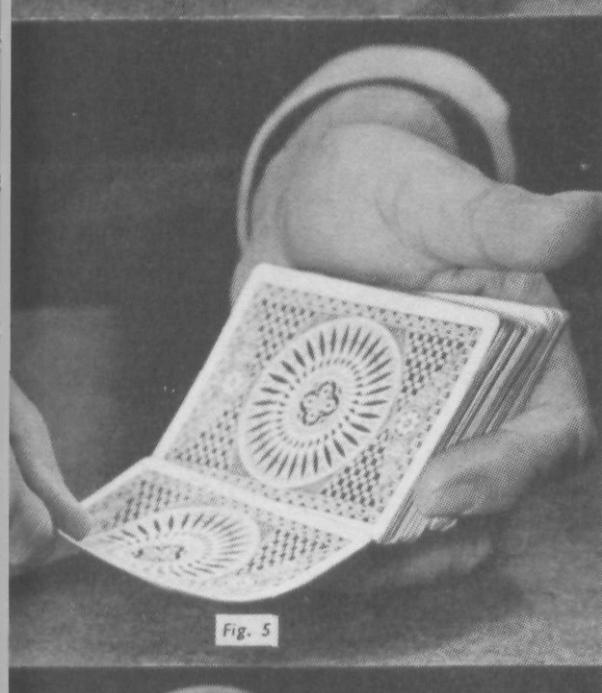


Fig. 5

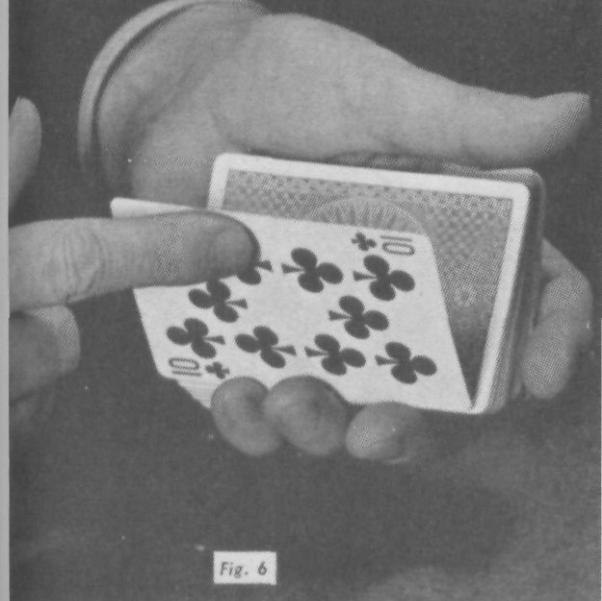


Fig. 6

position of the left thumb and fingers and the way in which the two cards are crimped near the centre by pressure between the pad of the thumb above and the tips of the second and third fingers below. The concave crimp holds the cards together during movement.

The right hand grasps the cards between the thumb and second finger at the right inner corner, the forefinger being extended so that the tip is underneath the right long edge (Fig. 4). Now the cards are moved to the right by the right hand (assisted slightly by the left thumb) in a sort of "stropping" action until the left long edge of the cards coincides with the right long edge of the pack (Fig. 5). When this "hinge point" is reached, the right thumb and second finger release their grip and the forefinger flips the cards over on to the top of the pack in an unhurried, casual movement (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6 shows the forefinger flipping the cards over; like closing a book, to reveal the face of the original second card.

To turn the cards face down again, the right hand moves over the top of the pack once more in a squaring action. Due to the upward curve put into the two cards by the crimping, they can be moved about an inch to the right as one. To do this, the right second finger-tip contacts the centre of the outer short edge, the thumb the centre of the inner short edge. Both these positions are the point of maximum curve and, in consequence, stand away from the pack.

From here on the moves are the same as described already for making the first turn, the left thumb pressing down on the centre of the cards to put in a crimp in the opposite direction (Fig. 3), then the right hand grasping the cards as in Fig. 4 and moving them to the right in a "stropping"

action (Fig. 5). At the " hinge point " the right thumb and second finger release their grip for the right forefinger to flip the cards over (Fig. 6), to bring them face down on top of the face-down pack.

The pack is squared and the double lift is complete.

#### NOTES.

1. Whenever he holds a break, Dai Vernon pulls DOWNWARDS with the left little finger so that the pack itself is bent downwards slightly at the inner right corner. This permits the card or cards under which the break is held to remain perfectly flat and no tell-tale upward curve at the inner right corner is seen. As a youngster, Dai Vernon showed this subtlety to DR. ELLIOTT, who was highly delighted with the idea.

2. Dai Vernon tells me that ARTHUR FINLEY was the first person to use a method for flipping over two cards as one, giving the impression that there is no control over them, as all grips are released.

3. The special feature of this way of displaying the face-up card is that, once the two cards (or even several cards) are flush with the pack and face up, they will stand the closest scrutiny.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CUPS AND BALLS

*Page* 125

## *CHAPTER THIRTEEN*

### **THE CUPS AND BALLS**

“ The Cups and Balls ” is one of the oldest forms of sleight of hand magic known to mankind. Drawings in the ancient Egyptian temples depict conjurers of that early civilisation performing this effect, and we also have proof that it was known to the Romans, who called the performers “ *acetabularii* ”, from the Latin word “ *acetabulum* ”, meaning a cup. From India, China, Japan, Turkey and the East Indies comes information that the trick has been performed in those countries for many hundreds of years. In Europe the strolling players included a version in their repertories and its progress can be traced fairly accurately from then until the present day.

Over the years and in different countries the shape of the cups and the material from which they were made has varied considerably ; whilst small pebbles, cherries, olives and balls made from cloth, cork and wood have all been used at one time or another.

Although such simple props are employed, nearly every effect possible in magic can be embodied in a Cups and Balls routine. The balls can be made to vanish from under the cups, appear and multiply, change colour and form, penetrate cups and transfer themselves from one cup to another. The climax is often reached by tilting the cups to show that fruit, vegetables or both have appeared seemingly from nowhere. Baby chicks, mice and other forms of livestock, even glasses of liquid, can all be produced from under the cups. No wonder, then, that this trick has stood the test of time and has become one of the classics of magic.

Up to the time when MAX MALINI came into prominence conjurers made use of the \* *servante* ’ to obtain their loads. However, the changing conditions of performance, where the conjurer often had to perform whilst surrounded, made it impossible for the *servante* to be used, and in consequence the trick became neglected by the younger magicians. The ingenious Malini evolved a method of eliminating the need for a *servante* by obtaining loads from his pocket, and it was on this basis that Dai Vernon built the routine which his fellow magicians agree to be one of the finest in existence.

Professor \* Pop ’ Kreiger made a considerable reputation in New York with his Cups and Balls routine, in which he embodied many clever ideas, but still obtained his loads from a *servante*. It gave Dai Vernon considerable satisfaction when he performed his new routine for ‘ Pop ’ Kreiger’s daughter, who admitted that she was amazed at the effects he obtained and congratulated him on being able to produce his magic without the aid of the *servante*.

Although the fact that the method of obtaining loads from the pockets under cover of excellent misdirection contributes to the success of the Vernon routine, it is by no means on that alone that the routine is outstanding. By far the most important factor is that there is no over-elaboration ; it has been kept simple, both in plot and performance. The audience are in no doubt as to what has happened or is happening, although they are given no clue as to how it is accomplished. Everything appears free from trickery, the props are simple, the movements of the performer natural ; there is no clever hand play which could be interpreted as sleight of hand, so that, as each phase of the plot unfolds, the audience becomes more bewildered. When finally the cups are lifted, to disclose an apple, an onion and a lemon, then they are prepared to admit that they have witnessed the ultimate in magic.

In 1949 GEORGE STARKE edited Dai Vernon's Impromptu Cups and Balls Routine for the " Stars of Magic " Series—a series of publications beautifully produced, describing some of the best tricks of the leading American magicians. GEORGE KARGER took the excellent photographs which illustrate the text. As the name implies, this routine was evolved to enable the Cups and Balls to be performed impromptu, tumblers wrapped in paper being used in place of metal cups and crumpled paper balls (or Treasury notes) taking the place of the regular balls. Many of the same moves that Dai Vernon uses in his full routine are employed in the impromptu version, so that, if the reader will procure the " Stars of Magic " routine (if it is not already in his possession), he will never be at a loss when wishing to perform this classic.

For his European Tour Dai Vernon brought with him his sterling silver cups shown in the photographs. They are somewhat smaller than the regular cups, of a more artistic shape and beautifully engraved. To the best of my belief, there are only two such sets in existence, so we must console ourselves with the knowledge that the same magical effects can be obtained with the standard sets of cups.

Solid rubber balls, just over an inch in diameter and enclosed in a tight-fitting crochet-work cover, are the balls he uses. These are easy to handle and do not ' talk ' on those occasions when dropped secretly into the cups. For practice, I have used sponge balls, but the Professor himself does not advise that they should be employed in actual performance before an audience, as the collapsible nature of the sponge may lead them to suspect that this has something to do with the trick.

For his climax he has an apple, an onion and a lemon of such a size that each will just fit into a cup. For emergency, when no fruit or vegetables are available, he carries three large rubber balls, one red, one white and one blue, to load into the cups for his climax.

The only other article needed is a wand ; the one seen in the photographs is made of metal, which unscrews in the centre for ease of packing.

Before describing the routine I will inform the reader that there is one move that he may have difficulty with at the outset. This is a beautiful vanish of a ball which Dai Vernon accomplishes under the misdirection of spinning the wand between his fingers. Being the only move in the routine that may hold up progress, it will be described on its own at the end of the chapter. As it is the last of a series of three vanishes of balls, it is suggested that the method for vanishing the first two balls is employed

also for the third vanish until such time as the wand spinning move has been mastered. However, the reader is urged to practise the move in question until it can be included in the routine, as it is one of the most astounding vanishes of a ball possible.

## PREPARATION.

- (a) The three items for the final load (fruit, vegetables or large balls) are in the hip pocket on the left side, or, when performing standing, they can be in the left trouser pocket if preferred.
- (6) Four small balls are in the jacket pocket on the left side.
- (c) The cups are stacked and stand on the table.
- (d) The wand rests on the table well to the right of the stacked cups.

## PERFORMANCE.

An outline only of the patter will be given (in *italics*), as when Dai Vernon performs he ‘ad libs’ according to the occasion, suiting his story to the type of audience for whom he is performing.

For clarity in the description, the right hand cup will always be referred to as “No. 1”, the centre cup as “No. 2” and the left hand cup as “No. 3”. The cups themselves will change position during the routine, so disregard the actual cup and think rather of the number referring to the position it is in—right No. 1, centre No. 2, or left No. 3.

### STAGE 1. INTRODUCING THE ARTICLES USED.

“*This is one of the oldest feats in magic—one of the classics—I use these three cups . . .*”

Pick up the stack of cups, mouth downwards, in the left hand, then with the right hand remove the top cup and place it mouth downwards to the right, calling it “No. 1”. Take off the second cup and place it in the centre, calling it “No. 2”, then place the last cup to the left, calling it “No. 3”. The three cups are now in line, mouth downwards, six to eight inches apart.

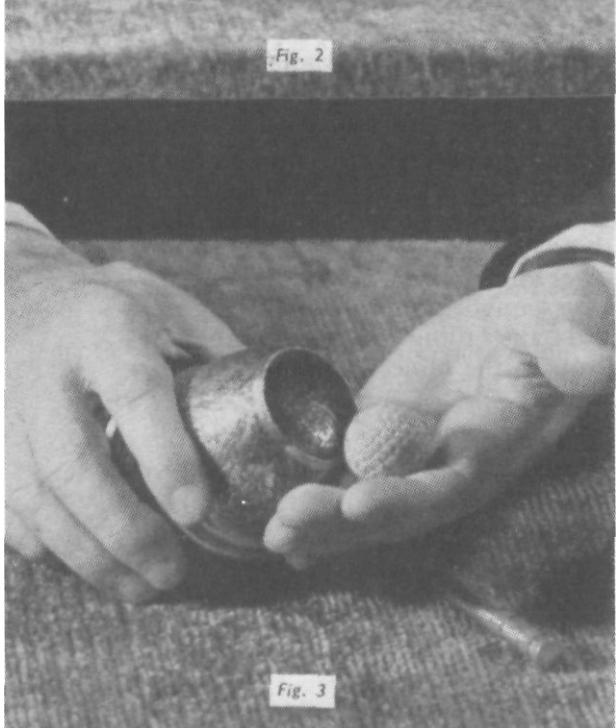
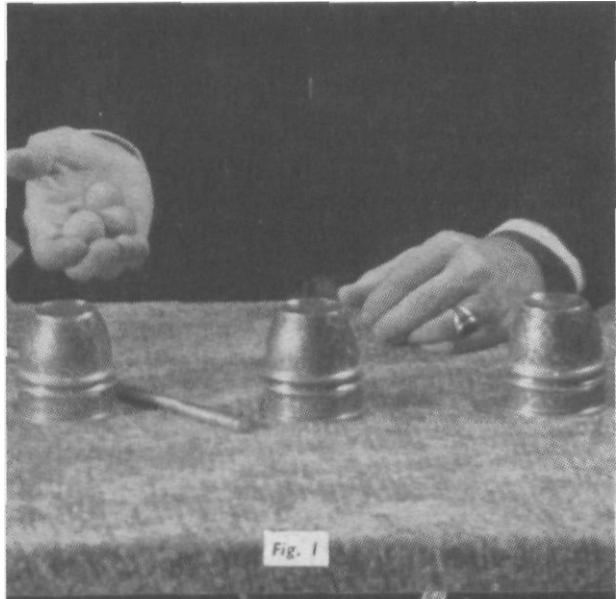
“*The only peculiar feature about these cups is that No. 1 passes through No. 2 and No. 2 passes through No. 3 . . . only more rapidly!*”

As the above is being said, perform the ‘cup through cup’ move, passing No. 1 cup through No. 2, then No. 2 through No. 3. For readers who are not familiar with this move, here is the method :—

The centre cup is picked up and held mouth upwards in the left hand, the thumb and forefinger curled round the rim, holding it lightly. The right hand picks up No. 1 cup and holds it (mouth upwards) about a foot above the cup in the left hand. With a slight downward jerk the right hand cup is released and drops into the lower cup, causing it to be knocked out of the left hand, while the upper one is caught and held in its place. By moving the right hand rapidly downwards, the falling cup can be caught, or, alternatively, it can be allowed to fall on to the table. The illusion of one cup passing through the other is excellent.

Pass the cup in the left hand to the right hand, pick up cup No. 3 in the left hand and repeat the move, concluding with the words “. . . only more rapidly !”

In addition to providing some amusing by-play, the above moves



have proved the cups to be empty without a statement of fact having been made.

Set up the cups, mouth downwards, in line once again.

*"I also use three small balls . . ."*

Reach into the jacket pocket on the left side and, whilst the left hand is out of sight, grip one ball by curling the little finger and bring out all four balls. The left hand leaves the pocket back upwards and drops three balls into the right palm, which is then extended to show the balls to the spectators to the right of the performer. Fig. 1 shows the balls being displayed in the right palm ; notice how the left hand (holding the fourth ball by the curled little finger) is rested naturally on the table. Now the right hand is brought to the left and turns partly palm downwards. It reaches a position just in front of the left hand, which turns palm upwards under the cover afforded by the right hand. The right hand fingers are pointing to the left and the left hand fingers to the right. Two balls only are poured from the right hand into the left to join the one already in that hand. The fourth ball is held back in the right hand by curling the right little finger. In this way there is no danger of the audience being permitted to see a 'flash' of the ball in the left hand.

Immediately the two balls from the right hand join the one in the left, the left hand moves to the left to show the three balls to the spectators on the performer's left side. Fig. 2 shows the left hand displaying the balls as the right hand comes to rest on the table.

As the left hand places a ball on top of each cup, the right hand grasps the wand at one end. Point to the cups with the wand and push them into line, saying : ". . . and, of course, I must have the wand." Now replace the wand on the table.

## STAGE 2. BALLS VANISH FROM THE HANDS AND APPEAR UNDER THE CUPS.

*"It is said that the quickness of the hand deceives the eye, but I propose to perform slowly and deliberately to give you a chance to see how it is done."*

Reach forward with the left hand and hold it palm upwards IN FRONT of the cup on the right. Grasp the cup by curling the right thumb and forefinger around the rim and tilt it forwards. The ball on top of the cup falls into the left palm and simultaneously the curled right little finger releases its grip on the ball it holds and allows it to roll under the cup, which is then brought back to the upright position. The right hand moves away from the cup and catches the ball, which is tossed from the left hand.

Dai Vernon's hands can be seen in Fig. 3 secretly loading a ball under a cup as the cup is tilted to permit the visible ball to fall into his left hand. He is holding his cup about half way up, but then the cups he uses are shorter than the usual ones. With standard cups the correct position for grasping with the right thumb and forefinger will be found to be at the top of the raised shoulder or rim.

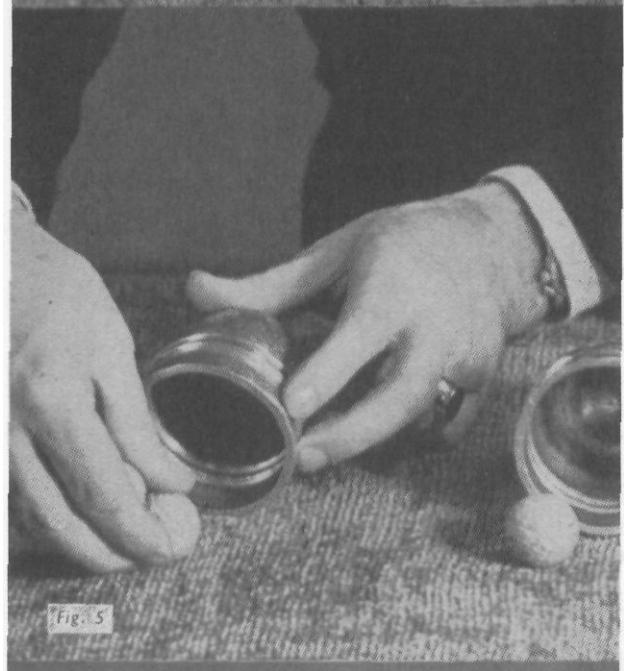
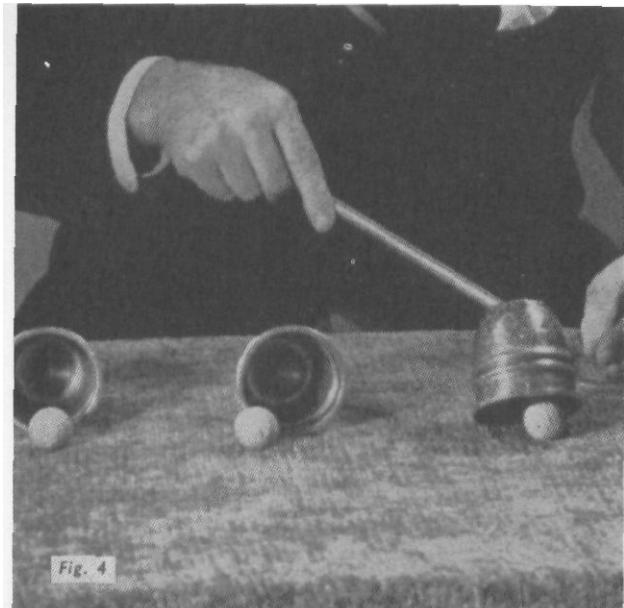
After a little practice, this move can be made naturally and with certainty. The action of tilting the cup with the right hand makes the secret loading of the ball almost automatic. It is simply a question of releasing the grip of the right little finger as the cup is tilted forward, then the ball rolls forward slightly of its own accord and is in position beneath the cup as the latter is brought back to the upright position.

Make a fake transfer of the ball from the right to the left hand (Chapter Two), retaining the ball secretly in the right hand, which immediately picks up the wand. Tap the wand against the closed left hand, then open the fingers wide and strike the open palm with the wand to show that the ball has vanished. Place the wand on the table or under the left arm and tilt the centre cup with the right hand, making the same moves as previously so that the ball in the right hand is loaded under the cup secretly as the left hand receives the visible ball, then tosses it from hand to hand. Now make the fake transfer with the ball and vanish it as before.

Make the tilting and secret loading move with cup No. 3, but this time, after tossing the visible ball from hand to hand, show it in the LEFT hand. This is the point where the wand spinning move, previously referred to, is introduced for the vanish of the ball. Until it is thoroughly mastered it is suggested that the ball is left in the RIGHT hand after being tossed from hand to hand and the previous method of vanishing a ball repeated.

Pick up the wand with the right hand (which secretly holds a ball), place the tip of the wand on the top of cup No. 1 and tilt it backwards on to the table to disclose the ball underneath. Repeat this action with the other two cups (Fig. 4 shows the last cup being tilted). At the conclusion of these moves the three cups are mouth-on to the audience, with a ball in front of each. In addition, the fourth ball is held secretly in the right hand.

At no time during the routine is a ball held in the standard palm position. The method for holding a ball secretly is by curling the little finger (or little and third fingers) around the ball so that the hand assumes



a natural, relaxed position at all times.

### STAGE 3. SPECTATOR'S CHOICE.

Place the wand under the left arm.

Reach forward with the right hand and pick up the ball in front of cup No. 1 between the thumb and fingers. The concealed ball is allowed to roll on top of the visible ball, but is concealed by the bunched fingers. Hold the cup with the left hand in the manner shown in Fig. 5 ; the thumb on the top of the cup and the first and second fingers against the rim. The right hand moves towards the mouth of the cup, and as the hand comes right over the mouth BOTH balls are released as a unit and shot into the cup. Simultaneously the left hand tilts the cup back to the upright position. In Fig. 5 both balls can be seen in the right hand, but, of course, in performance only the ball between the thumb and forefinger would be seen by the audience.

The same actions are simulated with cup No. 2 and the ball in front of it, but in this instance the ball is not released by the right hand, but is rolled by the thumb on to the curled fingers as the hand reaches the mouth of the cup. As the cup is brought to the upright position by the left hand, the right hand moves away, carrying the ball with it, exactly as in the first move, and picks up the third ball and holds the two balls as a unit. It is the continuity that creates the illusion. The same moves are made with cup No. 3 as were made with cup No. 1, the two balls being shot, as a unit, into the cup, although the audience is aware of one only.

At the conclusion of these moves there are two balls under each of the end cups, but the centre cup is empty ; the audience believes that there is a ball under each cup.

Remove the wand from under the arm with the right hand and point to the cups, then address the next remarks to a member of the audience.

*"Please choose one of the cups—one, two or three."*

Should he choose one of the end cups, move that cup forward a little with the end of the wand.

*"You have chosen cup No, 1 (or 3 as the case may be). Watch it carefully, as I propose to take out the ball from the centre cup and transfer it invisibly to the cup of your choice."*

Tilt the centre cup forward with the left hand just sufficiently to allow the tip of the wand to be inserted under the back of the cup (do not tilt the cup too much or the audience will see that there is no ball underneath). Remove the end of the wand from under the cup, then hold the wand upright as if balancing a ball on the end. Mime the action of taking the ball from the end of the wand between the left thumb and forefinger and tossing it towards the chosen cup.

With the end of the wand, tilt the chosen cup backwards on to the table to reveal the two balls beneath, then pick up the centre cup in the left hand and hold it with the mouth towards the audience and point to it with the wand (Fig. 6). Place the cup down on to the table with the mouth pointing towards the audience, then place one of the balls from the end cup in front of it.

Now make similar moves as were made at the start of this stage—that is, roll the ball into the chosen cup and bring the cup to the upright position, then simulate the action of rolling the other ball into the centre cup, but actually retain it in the right hand. Immediately pick up the wand with the right hand.

*"Had you chosen this cup (indicate the cup at the opposite end to the one previously chosen) I should have simply passed the ball into it so . . ."*

Repeat the procedure of placing the tip of the wand under the back of the centre cup, miming the action of balancing a ball on the tip of the wand, then tossing it towards the end cup. Place the wand under the arm, then lift the end cup with the left hand and transfer it to the right, loading the ball from that hand by allowing it to roll into the cup. Two balls are seen on the table, which are then covered with the cup in the right hand as the left hand lifts the centre cup to show that there is nothing underneath.

*". . . but, of course, there is still a ball here."*

As this is said, lift the cup (with the right hand) which has only one ball under it, nest the two cups you now hold, and, holding the cups in the right hand, pick up the ball on the table with the left hand and place it ON TOP of the cup remaining on the table. Bring the two nested cups, mouth downwards, over the third cup and immediately lift all three cups together in a stack—three balls are revealed on the table, the ball placed on the cup having apparently penetrated the top.

NOTE.—If, when the original choice of cups is made, the centre cup is chosen, the action of inserting the tip of the wand under the back

of the centre cup is made, then, when the wand is removed and the balancing of the ball on the end mimed, a further choice is given of either of the end cups. In this way every eventuality is covered.

#### STAGE 4. ALL THREE BALLS APPEAR UNDER THE CENTRE CUP.

At the conclusion of Stage 3 there are three balls together on the table and the cups are held in a stack in the right hand ; unbeknown to the audience, the fourth ball is between the middle and bottom cups.

Transfer the stack to the left hand and hold it mouth upwards. With the right hand remove the bottom cup, turn it mouth downwards fairly rapidly, and place it at position No. 1 ; repeat the moves with the middle cup (containing the ball) and place it at position No. 2 ; place the last cup at position No. 3. Pick up the three balls from the table and place one on top of each of the three cups.

*“Now, I’ll make one more manoeuvre, then I will show you exactly how the trick is done.”*

With the right hand pick up the ball from the top of the cup at No. 1 position, make a fake transfer of the ball from the right to the left hand, tilt No. 1 cup forward with the right hand and insert the closed left fist under the cup from the back, open the left fingers as the hand is withdrawn from under the cup—the hand is seen empty as it emerges, the edge of the cup scraping across the fingers, and so the audience believes that the ball was placed under the cup. Actually, of course, due to the fake transfer, the ball is in the right hand, which has tilted the cup, then returned it to the upright position.

Pick up the ball from the top of cup No. 2 (with the right hand) and place BOTH balls into the left hand, closing the left fingers over the balls to prevent the audience seeing that there are two instead of one. Tilt the centre cup forward with the right hand and insert the left fist under the cup (remember that there is a ball under this cup already, so some care is required) ; open the left fingers as the hand is withdrawn and the two balls will be scraped off the fingers by the edge of the cup and will join the ball already under the cup.

The ball on cup No. 3 is then picked up in the right hand, really placed into the left hand and held between the left thumb and forefinger. Cup No. 3 is lifted about two inches from the table by the right hand, the thumb and forefinger of which holds the cup by the rim, the other fingers curling and forming a slanting screen between the bottom of the cup and the top of the table. The left hand holds the ball at the left side of the cup, about two inches from the table. The ball is now released and falls, touching the left second finger which has been extended purposely. This causes the ball to roll under the cup and out at the right hand side, where it is caught by the curled little finger of the right hand. The right hand lowers the cup to the table the instant the ball is dropped, then moves to pick up the wand. If the lowering of the cup is correctly timed the illusion is that it has trapped the ball underneath.

Touch the top of each cup with the tip of the wand, then place the wand on the table. With the left hand pick up cup No. 3 by the rim and

simultaneously pick up cup No. 1 with the right hand in the same manner. Turn the hands and bang the mouths of the cups together. Drop the right hand a little and let the ball secretly roll into the cup, then place the left hand cup into the right hand cup. Place the two nested cups on to the table, mouth towards the audience. With the left hand tilt the remaining cup backwards on to the table to show that the three balls have come together beneath it.

Insert the single cup into the two nested cups and take the stack of three cups into the left hand—mouth of the bottom cup towards the body. Unbeknown to the audience, there is a ball between the cup furthest from the body and the middle cup. With the right hand line up the three balls on the table so that they are about eight inches apart.

Remove the cup nearest the body with the right hand and place it mouth downwards over the ball in No. 3 position. Remove the next cup and place it over the ball in No. 2 position. Take the last cup into the right hand, holding it with the thumb and forefinger around the rim, then hesitate, smile at the audience, then lift the cup again in No. 2 position with the left hand, saying : “*Yes, there really is a ball under the cup*”, then replace No. 2 cup. Under cover of this misdirection, tilt the cup in the right hand sufficiently for the ball to roll out on to the right fingers, where it is retained by curling the third and little fingers. Take back the cup from the right hand into the left and place it over the ball in No. 1 position, then immediately pick up the wand with the right hand.

#### STAGE 5. LOADING THE CUPS FOR THE CLIMAX.

As this stage is reached there is a ball under each cup, and it is necessary to sell this fact strongly—even lift the cups again to show the balls as proof. There is also a ball in the curled fingers of the right hand.

During the next series of moves the audience is led to believe that balls are placed in the pocket when, in some instances, the hand which goes to the pocket is empty. It is essential that the action of placing balls in the pocket should be made *casually*; there should be no fancy passes or hand contortions—just *act and feel* as if you are placing balls in the pocket, even though the hand is empty. Do not try to PROVE anything.

*“I said I would show you how the trick is done, so I think it would help if I removed two balls and demonstrated with one only . . . I'll take this ball away and place it in my pocket.”*

Lift No. 1 cup with the left hand and transfer it to the right hand, which secretly loads the ball into the cup as the left hand picks up the ball from the table. Replace the cup on the table, then toss the ball about twelve inches into the air and catch it in the right hand. Make a fake transfer of the ball to the left hand, which then goes to the pocket (the one in which the load for the climax is secreted) as if placing the ball there. Now lift No. 3 cup with the left hand, transfer it to the right hand and secretly load the ball as the left hand picks up the other ball from the table. Replace the cup on the table, then, after tossing the ball from the left hand into the right as before, make a false transfer from the right hand to the left and place the left hand in the pocket. The right hand picks up No. 2 cup to reveal the ball beneath—the left hand has secured a fruit in the pocket.

*“Of course, that leaves a ball under the centre cup . . .”*



The right hand loads the ball into the cup, then replaces the cup over the visible ball at No. 2 position. Immediately the right hand lifts No. 1 cup—the left hand is leaving the pocket with the fruit—the right hand carries the cup towards the left hand, which is now out of the pocket and moving forward a little to take the cup. The two hands meet at the left side of the body and the left hand receives the rim of the cup between the thumb and forefinger, which curl round the rim. Fig. 7 shows the position in which the cup is taken into the left hand; in the photograph

the fruit is exposed to show how it enters the cup, but in performance the hand is turned more so that the back is towards the audience and the fruit obscured from view. As the cup is taken into the left hand, the right hand moves to the ball on the table, the forefinger pointing to the ball (Fig. 7) as the performer says : “ . . . but this ball has returned ”. Now the cup is casually taken into the right hand, the right little finger extended underneath the cup to hold the fruit in position. The loaded cup is placed on the table behind the visible ball.

The above moves must be made smoothly and casually—the timing is all-important—the left hand goes to the pocket, secures the fruit and emerges at the correct moment for it to receive the cup from the right hand. The left hand holds the cup for a second only, just long enough for the right hand to point to the ball on the table, then the cup is taken back by the right hand and placed behind the ball on the table.

*“ I expect you are wondering how the ball came back. This is what happened.”*

Pick up the ball in the right hand and hold it between the tips of the fingers and thumb in readiness for the French Drop. Make an obvious and clumsy French Drop, exposing the fact that the ball remains in the right hand.

*“ Although it looks as if I take the ball into my left hand, actually it remains in the right hand.”* Show the left hand empty. *“ I only pretend to place the ball in my pocket; all that I put there is my empty left hand . . . ”* Put the left hand into the pocket. *“ . . . then, as I pick up the cup, I roll the ball underneath like this . . . ”*

Pick up No. 3 cup with the right hand (holding the ball in the curled fingers), but as the cup is lifted push it forward so that the rim strikes the ball that is underneath it already—the ball rolls forward just as if it had been dropped from the hand. Actually the right hand retains its ball in the curled fingers.

Under the misdirection of the rolling ball, the cup is transferred to the left hand, which has emerged from the pocket with another fruit; then the loaded cup is placed on the table as the right hand picks up the ball.

*"That's the old-fashioned way of doing it, but if you see the ball actually held in the left hand and slowly placed in the pocket, you must be convinced . . ."*

Place the visible ball from the right hand openly between the left finger-tips, then slowly and deliberately put it in the pocket.

*". . . but how many of you have been watching closely enough to tell me how many balls are under the centre cup ? "*

As this is said, the left hand is in the pocket securing the third fruit. The right hand still has a ball palmed. Regardless of the answer, the right hand goes to the centre cup and lifts it with a combined forward and upward movement, so that the two balls already beneath it roll forward ; simultaneously the ball in the right hand is released as well and joins the other two. Immediately transfer the cup to the left hand which has emerged at that instant from the pocket with the fruit. The left hand places the loaded cup on the table as the right hand reaches for one of the balls. Pick up each ball separately and place them between the finger-tips of the left hand. Openly place the balls in the pocket and bring out the empty left hand. Pick up the wand with the right hand.

*"If I put all the balls in my pocket, which cup do you think they will appear under ? "*

Do not wait for an answer—tilt each cup backwards on to the table with the tip of the wand, to reveal the fruit—CLIMAX!

#### OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

##### STAGE 1.

1. Stack of cups picked up and cups placed in line on the table.
2. Cup through cup move and cups replaced in line.
3. Left hand takes four balls from pocket ; drops three into right hand, which are shown ; two balls from right hand dropped into left hand and three shown, then placed one on each cup as right hand picks up wand. Push cups into line and replace wand on table.

##### STAGE 2.

4. Cup No. 1 tilted by right hand for left hand to receive visible ball Right hand secretly loads ball. Fake transfer of ball from right to left hand—vanish. Repeat with cups 2 and 3 but wand spin vanish of last ball.
5. Cups tilted backwards to reveal ball under each.

##### STAGE 3.

6. Ball in front of No. 1 cup thrown into cup and ball from right hand added secretly.
7. Ball in front of No. 2 cup retained in hand as fake throw made into cup.
8. Ball in front of cup No. 3 thrown into cup and ball from right hand added secretly.
9. Spectator given choice of cup—if end cup chosen, place wand tip under centre cup and mime action of removing ball and throwing towards chosen cup. Show nothing under centre cup and two balls under chosen cup.

10. Fake throw of ball into centre cup ; throw one ball into chosen cup.
11. Mime action of taking ball from centre cup and throwing towards other end cup. Lift centre cup and show nothing underneath ; lift end cup and show two balls, and load third ball as cup replaced. NOTE.—If centre cup chosen, mime action of removing ball on wand tip, then give choice of end cups. Proceed as if end cup had been chosen in first place.
12. Place single ball from under one end cup on top of other end cup (with three balls underneath) ; stack two cups and place over cup containing balls. Lift stack and show three balls underneath.

STAGE 4.

13. Unstack cups into line on table—ball under centre cup.
14. Place a ball on top of each cup.
15. Ball from cup No. 1—fake transfer to left hand ; left hand apparently places ball under cup.
16. Ball from cup No. 2 taken in right hand ; both balls taken in left hand, which places them under cup.
17. Ball from cup No. 3—fake transfer to left hand ; left hand apparently places ball under cup.
18. Left hand picks up cup No. 3 as right hand picks up cup No. 1—mouths of cups banged together. Secret load of ball from right hand into cup as left hand places its cup into right hand cup.
19. Cup No. 2 picked up, to reveal three balls. Cup dropped into other two.
20. Place the three balls in line on table.
21. Cup from stack placed over No. 3 ball, second cup over No. 2 ball, other cup taken into right hand and ball rolls out secretly into fingers as cup No. 2 is lifted to prove there is a ball underneath. Last cup placed over No. 1 ball.

STAGE 5.

22. Lift cup No. 1 in left hand, transfer to right and load ball as ball from table is picked up.
23. Fake transfer of ball from right to left hand ; apparently placed in pocket.
24. Lift No. 3 cup in left hand, transfer to right, and load ball as ball from table is picked up.
25. Fake transfer of ball from right to left hand ; left hand goes to pocket ; centre cup lifted to show one ball and other ball loaded as cup replaced. Left hand leaves pocket with fruit to take No. 1 cup from right hand, which has lifted it to reveal ball beneath. Load fruit and take cup into right hand and replace on table as left hand picks up ball.
26. Explanation with clumsy French Drop ; left hand goes to pocket during fake demonstration of sneaking ball under cup No. 3 ; left hand leaves pocket with fruit and takes cup from right hand. Left hand places loaded cup on table as right hand picks up ball.

27. Ball taken into left finger-tips ; left hand goes to pocket, secures fruit and comes out as right hand lifts cup No. 2, dropping ball to join two already under it ; cup transferred to left hand, which loads fruit and replaces cup on table.
28. All three balls placed into left hand, which conveys them to pocket.
29. Cups tilted backwards with wand to reveal fruit.

The foregoing outline of the routine is intended as a \* prompter \* only for the reader during practice. Every move has been explained in the complete text, and it is essential that each detail is studied carefully, then the routine will flow smoothly and naturally.

Do not attempt to commit the whole sequence of moves to memory at one sitting. Take a stage at a time and learn it thoroughly. Only after several rehearsals will the reader be able to make the moves naturally and convincingly, then the stages can be blended together into the complete routine.

This is not a routine that can be learnt in an hour, but with the knowledge that it is one of the finest Cups and Balls routines ever originated, the reader will have the incentive to persevere until it is mastered.

#### THE VANISH OF A BALL WHILST SPINNING THE WAND.

It will be remembered that this move was referred to in Stage 2. Dai Vernon performs it to vanish the third ball instead of repeating the fake transfer. He adapted it from a favourite move of SILENT MORA, who used a closed fan and a small billiard ball.

Readers who are familiar with the better known Drop Vanish will realise that the wand spinning is simply an addition which provides excellent misdirection.

First of all it is proposed to analyse the Drop Vanish (and omit the wand spin), as it is upon the mastering of this that the success of the wand spinning move depends.

The ball is really placed in the left hand, the spectators being permitted to see the ball actually in the palm before the fingers curl inwards to enclose it. The hand turns over (to a punching position) and during the turn the fingers work the ball on to the heel of the hand so that it is held there by the tips of the fingers only. It is now possible to drop the ball by simply relaxing the pressure of the finger-tips, there being no perceptible movement of the fingers when viewed from the front.

The right hand makes a circling gesture around the left fist, and it is during this gesture that the ball is allowed to fall from the left hand, to be caught by the curled fingers of the right hand. There is no finger movement of either hand.

A most important factor is that the ball is actually released from the left hand whilst the right hand is ABOVE the left fist, the speed of the circling movement of the right hand being such that, as the falling ball leaves the bottom of the left fist, the right hand has caught it up and obscures it from view. The rate of fall of the ball has increased by the time it reaches the bottom of the fist, as the initial friction of the hand has been overcome, therefore when the right hand movement is timed correctly, the speed of the ball and the speed of movement of the right hand are now the same, which ensures that the ball is obscured from view from the front during its downwards flight. Immediately the right hand stops, the ball falls



into the fingers which have been curled inwards since the beginning of the circling gesture. There must be no snatching or catching with the right hand, the ball must simply be retained by the curled fingers. Remember, the ball and hand are moving at the same speed so there will be no \*bounce'.

It is quite impossible to convey in print the speed of movement of the right hand or the correct timing needed ; only trial in front of a mirror will show this. When the move is performed correctly no \* flash' is seen of the ball between the two hands.

At the outset the reader should practise the move without attempting to incorporate the wand spinning. The position for holding the left hand can be seen in Fig. 8 ; the right hand is brought over the top of the left fist (ball released) and moves down in front of the left fist. The right hand movement should appear as a gesture only.

When the move can be made perfectly without the wand, then the next stage can be practised. Dai Vernon's addition of the wand spinning is a vast improvement on the usual Drop Vanish, as it provides perfect misdirection ; apparently the hands do not go near one another, as all attention is on the spinning wand.

The photographs at Figs. 8 to 13 have been taken to show the movements of the right hand and fingers. Study them in conjunction with the text, then the wand spinning will be understood.

The wand is held in the right hand between the thumb and forefinger ; the hand is almost palm upwards at this point (Fig. 8). Keeping the wand parallel to the table, turn the hand to the left and back upwards so that the wand makes a half turn to the left (Fig. 9).

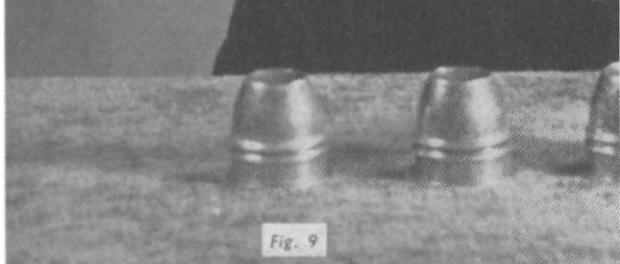




Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

Now the second finger moves *behind* the wand (Fig. 9) and the grip is taken up by the first and second fingers. As the wand is turning, now between the first and second fingers, the thumb moves to the other side of the wand (the side nearest the body)—at this point the right hand has been brought over the top of the left fist (Fig. 10). Remember, this is the time to release the ball from the left fist. As the thumb presses against the wand to keep it turning, the right hand moves down in front of the left fist and turns palm up—the wand has made a complete revolution at this point. It is as the hand is turning palm up that it reaches the bottom of the left fist; the right hand fingers are curled in the action of spinning the wand, so that the ball comes into the right hand fingers, which continue with the spinning action. Fig. 11 shows the right hand, which now contains the ball, at the point where the thumb has moved to the side nearest the body, In Fig. 12 the thumb has continued its pressure and turned the wand to bring it between the thumb and forefinger. The right hand now makes a quarter turn towards the body, bringing the wand to the position shown in Fig. 13.

All that remains is for the left fingers to be opened quickly and the palm smacked with the wand to show that the ball has vanished.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

NATE LEIPZIG'S CARD STAB

*Page 143*

## *CHAPTER FOURTEEN*

### NATE LEIPZIG'S CARD STAB

Much has been written concerning the method used by the late NATE LEIPZIG to bring about the effect of stabbing a knife between two previously selected cards after they had been returned to the pack. Several ingenious solutions have been offered, but the fact remains that any version published to date is at variance with that actually taught by Leipzig himself to Dai Vernon.

It was at Bennett's Theatre, Ottawa, in 1905 that Dai Vernon first saw Leipzig perform, and although Dai was then a youngster, after the performance he was able to fool the master with some card tricks. Leipzig warmed to him and a firm friendship resulted which lasted until Nate's death. Dai always speaks of Leipzig with great admiration, both as a person and as a magician.

It is Dai Vernon's particular wish that this chapter should be included in this book, as he is anxious that certain subtleties that Leipzig disclosed to him, and which have been omitted from previously published versions of the card stabbing, should be recorded and credited to the originator.

In those fine American publications "STARS OF MAGIC" there is an issue devoted to some of Leipzig's favourite effects; it is entitled "VERNON ON LEIPZIG" (Series 10—edited by BRUCE ELLIOTT and GEORGE STARKE, with photographic interpretations by GEORGE KARGER). Before describing the effects, it gives a brief but interesting insight into Leipzig's character and his attitude to magic. We are told that he "... was genteel and quiet, soft in manner and voice, and gave at all times the impression that here was a gentleman it would be pleasant to know better". On one occasion, when discussing audience reaction with Dai Vernon, he said: "Dai, I've been performing magic for almost fifty years and find that they like to feel that a gentleman has fooled them".

It is interesting to note that, although Leipzig played before large audiences all over the world and his main fame was a result of these performances, he was really a close-up magician. His personality and method of presentation were those of a close-up performer, even though he was playing before theatre audiences.

The articles used in Leipzig's performances were small—thimbles and cards. He commenced with his thimble routine, then, having established himself as a magician with his audience, he proceeded to persuade a committee of two or four persons to come on to the stage for the remainder of his act, which consisted of card effects. Now cards are difficult to see in a large theatre, so the entertainment that Leipzig produced was brought about to a great degree by his handling of his committee, by his own manner

and personality, and by his superb showmanship. He left nothing to chance, for, to quote Dai Vernon again, "He was *deadly* sure in every trick he did". Having analysed every detail of a trick and eliminated unnatural movements, he had a reason for every action he performed. He permitted no difficult sleights to be included, and therefore was perfectly confident that his tricks could always be brought to a successful conclusion. This confidence allowed him to devote all his efforts to his presentation.

The information given above should be borne in mind by the reader when studying Leipzig's method for the card stabbing.

### EFFECT.

With one spectator on his right and another on his left, Leipzig would fan a pack of cards and ask the two spectators to freely select one each. Now he would say that he made one stipulation, *that the two cards must be placed together in the pack*, so the spectator on the right was requested to hand his card to the spectator on the left, who then placed *both* cards into the pack. Leipzig squared the pack and held it towards the left for the spectator to confirm that the cards were lost somewhere in the centre.

Leipzig then shuffled the pack, after which he held it between the tips of his left thumb and forefinger for all to see plainly as he picked up a piece of newspaper. He wrapped the pack in the newspaper, held the package in his left hand at waist level, and, grasping a table knife dagger fashion, he posed with the knife in his raised right hand.

After a dramatic pause, accentuated by a roll on the drums, he would bring the knife down rapidly so that the blade penetrated the pack at one long side and protruded from the other. Holding the package (with the knife through it) in his right hand, perfectly still, he would tear away pieces of paper with his left hand until all of the paper had been removed.

Leipzig would now say that the knife *should* be between the two cards and would ask the helpers to name their cards. He would repeat the name of the card of one of the spectators, then turn the knife slowly, lifting the knife and all the cards above it so that the face of the card against the blade could be seen by all—it was the card named. Now he repeated the name of the second spectator's card, then flipped over the top card of the cards remaining in his left hand with the point of the knife so that the face could be seen ; again it was the correct card.

Leipzig would appear relieved and triumphant at his success in finding the two cards.

### SETTING.

In the photographs accompanying this chapter DAI VERNON is the performer, FAUCETT ROSS is the spectator on Dai's right and I am the spectator on his left.

It will be seen that we are standing in front of a table on which, at the start, is a piece of newspaper (a quarter of a full page), a table knife and an unprepared pack of cards. At the commencement of the performance Dai is purposely positioned a little to the right of the centre of the table—by making a half turn to the left he can indicate the articles on the table. By having the newspaper slightly creased across the centre, one edge tilts upwards, enabling it to be picked up easily and without fumbling.

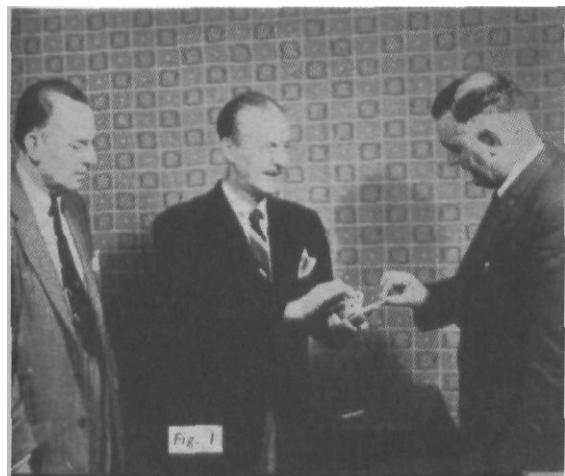


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

A tape-recording, made by my friend Bill Ellis, of Dai's step-by-step description as he was demonstrating, has enabled me to include many small but important points that Dai was particularly careful to emphasise.

#### PERFORMANCE.

STAGE 1. Leipzig would pick up the pack and fan the cards face down, then, making a half turn to the right, would ask the spectator on that side to select any card. He would then turn to the spectator on his left and have him also select a card. As he asked his temporary assistants to look at and remember their cards he would square the pack.

STAGE 2. At this point Leipzig told his audience that he made one stipulation—*the two cards must be returned together to the pack*. He then asked the spectator on the right to hand his card, face downwards, to the other spectator.

In Dai Vernon's demonstration at which the photographs were taken Faucett Ross, on Dai's right, selected the Queen of Diamonds and I selected the Five of Clubs. Faucett handed me his Queen, which I placed underneath my Five.

STAGE 3. At this point Leipzig would give the outer end of the pack an UPWARD riffle as he demonstrated that the two cards were to be placed anywhere in the centre of the pack.

As the cards were riffled, the pack was held towards the spectator on the left, who, when instructed, returned the TWO CARDS TOGETHER to the pack (Fig. 1). He was not permitted to push them right home, as Leipzig withdrew the pack with the two cards still protruding and pushed them into the pack himself.

In pushing the cards home, he did so in such a manner that they

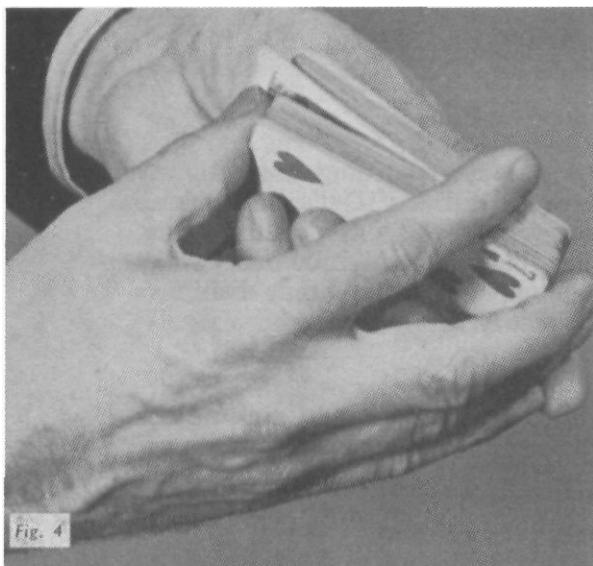


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

protruded from the back end of the pack. This he accomplished by bringing his right hand over the pack, the first, second and third fingers extended over the outer edge of the protruding cards and pushing them DIAGONALLY into the pack. Notice in Fig. 2 how the cards are being pushed in diagonally to the left, the right forefinger tip being on the left outer corner of the cards. As the cards go into the pack, their left outer corners pass the left corner of the pack so that, when they are squared with the pack, they are lower down than the rest of the cards and therefore protrude from the inner end.

As the cards were squared Leipzig took the pack at the inner end into his right hand (covering the protruding cards—Fig. 3), and, with a smile, would hold the pack right forward towards the nose of the spectator on the left, causing him to almost jerk his head back (Fig. 3). Leipzig would say : " Is that alright ? "

In print this gesture would appear to be out of keeping with Leipzig's normal genteel manner, but his smile and attitude made it appear to the audience (and to the spectator) as amusing byplay, included to emphasise the fairness in which the cards had been returned to the pack.

By analysing this stage, we find that there is a reason for every action ; everything appears to have been done openly with the object of ensuring that the audience and the two assistants are perfectly satisfied with the fairness of the performance. In Fig. 3 we see that the spectator who returned the cards is given a good view (!) of the pack, whilst the cards protruding from the inner end are covered from all angles.

STAGE 4. Leipzig would now take the pack back into his left hand and perform an overhand shuffle, undercutting all the cards below the pro-

truding cards with his right hand and shuffling them on top of the left hand packet. In Fig. 4 the right thumb tip can be seen contacting the protruding cards at the inner end of the pack, enabling all the cards below the Queen of Diamonds to be taken by the right hand for it to shuffle them on to the top of the left hand packet. This leaves the two selected cards on the bottom of the pack.

Again Leipzig would shuffle the pack, this time drawing off the top and bottom cards of the pack together (Fig. 5), then shuffling until the original card that was second from bottom (Five of Clubs in the photograph) was thrown on top. This left the selected cards one on the top and the other on the bottom of the pack.

In Dai Vernon's demonstration we have the Queen of Diamonds on the bottom and the Five of Clubs on the top.

After the shuffling, Leipzig would hold the pack face down in his left hand and say that, of course, the cards were now lost in the pack. As if to emphasise this point, he would give the outer end of the pack a pronounced UPWARD riffle with his right fingers, whilst keeping his left thumb pressed firmly on the centre of the back of the pack. This riffle was purposely drastic and would be repeated if necessary, according to the condition of the cards he was using, his secret object being to bend (bridge) the complete pack UPWARDS. At this moment he would sight the bottom card and remember it, for the reason that will be apparent in Stage 7.

STAGE 5. As the newspaper and the knife were on the table behind him and to his left, Leipzig had a perfect

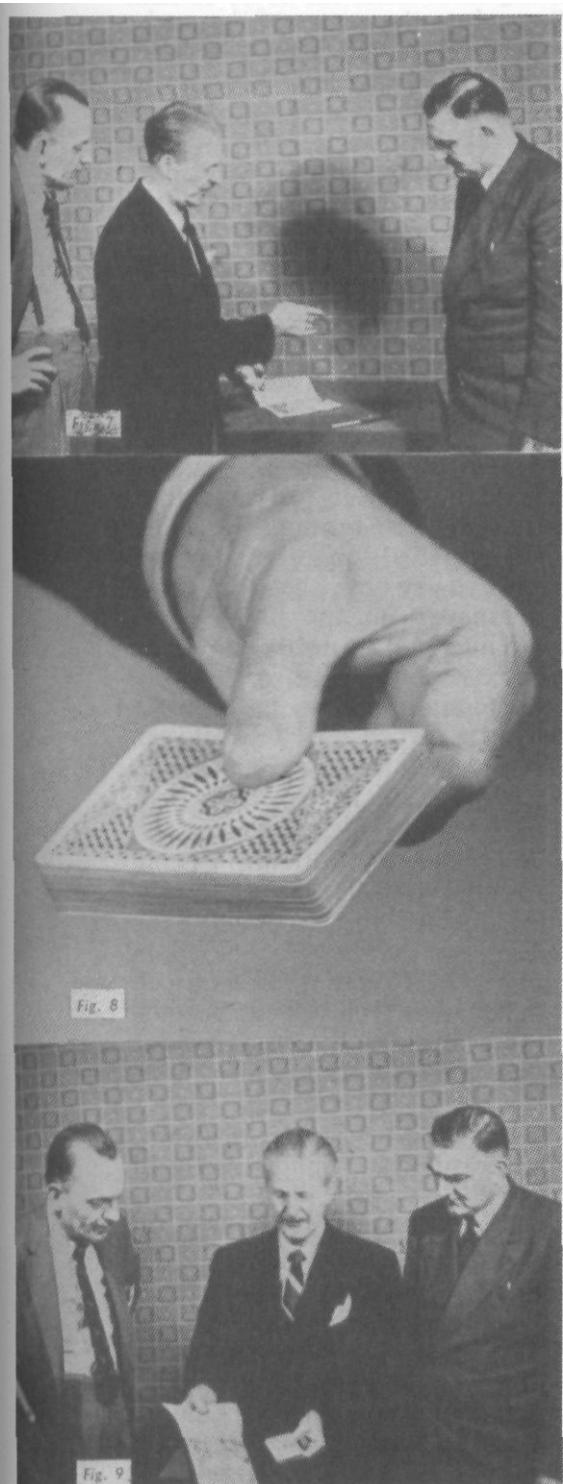




Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

excuse to turn to his left to indicate this position. During the turn he would insert his left little finger into the centre of the pack, and, as he brought his right hand over the back of the pack, he would lift the bottom half of the pack with his right thumb (at the rear) and fingers (at the front). This was, in effect, the commencement of the 'Pass', but it was not completed immediately. The hands remained together momentarily as the left thumb pushed the cut off front packet of cards inwards towards the right palm. Fig. 6 shows an exposed view of this happening, the result being that the cut off front packet was bent drastically in the opposite direction to that which was accomplished when a bridge was made during the riffle. Notice how the right forefinger is extended in a pointing gesture to indicate the objects on the table. The packets were now brought together (completion of the 'Pass') and the complete pack was carried away by the left hand towards the newspaper on the table. This position is seen in Fig. 7—notice how the right hand remains pointing to the paper as the left hand (containing the pack) picks up the paper by the turned-up edge between the first and second fingers.

If we analyse this stage, we find that, although a form of 'Pass' was made, it was done under perfect cover; all attention being directed towards the objects on the table. The cut off under packet was bent during the action of pointing, so that it was curved in the opposite direction to the packet which still retained the bridge from the riffle—the chosen cards were brought together in the centre of the pack, bent in opposite directions.

STAGE 6. Bringing the newspaper forward, Leipzig took it into his right hand, then held his hands apart, the pack in his left hand being now held between his thumb on the back and his forefinger underneath (Fig. 8). His thumb pressure kept the bridge closed, so that the pack could be closely inspected by the spectator on his left and seen clearly by the audience.

He now brought the pack and the paper towards each other (Fig. 9) and placed the right long edge of the pack against the crease along the centre of the paper. As he folded one half

of the paper over the pack, his left hand secretly moved the pack about an *inch or so to the left*. *This made a gap between the edge of the pack and* the paper, for a purpose that will soon be apparent. The folding of the paper sideways around the pack was now completed until a long package was formed ; the outer end was then bent down and under the pack and the inner end similarly treated. During the folding the pack itself was kept still, the paper being folded around it so that when the package was complete the pack was still back up. At each stage of the folding he applied pressure with his thumb and fingers to keep the bulge in the pack from opening. Actually, although it appeared that the paper was wrapped around the pack in the normal manner, it was not pulled tight and in addition secret " slack " was obtained in the beginning. For this reason there was sufficient space for the " bulge " to be developed when required.

STAGE 7. Leipzig held the package in his left hand, the hand over the back of the pack, the pads of the fingers at the outer short edge and the pad of the thumb at the centre of the inner short edge. He then asked the spectator on his left to hand him the knife, which he took with his right hand.

At this point he would tell his audience that he proposed to stab through the side of the package, when, if he was successful, the knife blade *should go between* the selected cards.

Holding the knife in his raised right hand and the package in the left hand at just below waist level, he turned the left hand to bring the long edge of the packet upwards (back of his hand to the left), and posed in this position (Fig. 10) for dramatic effect as the drummer gave a roll on the drums. By exerting pressure with his left thumb and fingers on the short edges of the pack, the **bulge** would open wide, the way in which the pack had been wrapped in the paper permitting this to happen.

On a crash of cymbals he would plunge the knife down rapidly, the blade would penetrate the paper, pass through the large gap formed by the bulging cards and emerge from the other long side of the pack. He would release the pressure on the ends of the pack, allowing the cards to close again against the blade. Fig. 11 is an exposed view of the stab with the paper omitted to show the large gap between the cards through which the blade could pass.

Still keeping the pack at the same height from the floor, he turned it sideways to bring the handle of the knife to the right, then took both pack and knife into the right hand, the right thumb pressing on the back to flatten the bulge. Keeping the package perfectly still, he began to tear (almost pick) pieces of paper from it with his left hand (Fig. 12) in time to music until all the paper had been removed. Still without moving the pack or knife, he would place his left hand underneath the pack and ask for the names of the two selected cards to be revealed. He would repeat the names, then he would say : "The card above the blade should be (naming the card sighted—Stage 4)—at least I hope so!" As he named this card he lifted the knife and all the cards above it with his right hand and brought the face of the card against the blade towards the audience—it was the correct card. Leipzig would turn it half towards himself to see it and appear relieved that so far he had been successful. Now he named the

second card given to him, then brought the point of the knife to the packet in his left hand and flipped over the top card. His great relief was apparent when he saw that he had been totally successful.

Now holding both cards face on to the audience (Fig. 13), he posed for effect, looking triumphant, as if he had just risked his reputation on being able to find the selected cards.

Leipzig acted the dramatic parts of his *effect* extremely well. He did not let his audience think that he was certain to succeed ; after he had wrapped the cards in the newspaper and proceeded to tell his audience that he was about to stab the pack with the knife, he said that the blade *should* go between the selected cards—he never said that it *would* go between them. He maintained the suspense and action as if he, too, was anxious about the result. When the roll on the drums came the suspense was heightened—the audience felt that something very difficult was being attempted. There was a clash of cymbals as the blade plunged through the packet—the packet was held quite still to focus all attention on it as the paper was picked away to a musical background. Then the tension as the knife was lifted ; the look of apprehension on Leipzig's face until he saw the card ; the slow smile of relief, not too pronounced, as only half the trick had been successful as yet—the flipping over of the second card to reveal its face, which caused the smile on his face to expand into one of triumph. The final pose with the faces of both cards held towards the audience and Leipzig smiling, as if to say : “ I'm pleased I didn't miss ”. All these things meant so much to the presentation—it was showmanship at its very best.

#### NOTES.

1. The transposition of the two halves of the pack to bring the two selected cards to the centre has been referred to as the \* Pass ' because the result brought about is the same as with that sleight, and, indeed, the mechanics are very similar. However, in performance it is more like undercutting the pack, but instead of moving the back half to the front (as is usual when undercutting), it is the front half which is moved to the back. In addition, the front half is bridged heavily in the process. There is a distinct pause as the front packet is taken by the right hand and bridged ; in fact, during his demonstration, Dai Vernon showed how the right hand could move away from the left hand, each hand holding half of the pack ; the left hand packet visible and appearing as the full pack, and the right hand packet obscured by the back of the hand and bridged heavily as the right forefinger pointed to the articles on the table at the rear. The hands were brought together again and the right hand packet taken on TOP of the left hand packet. The essence of the transposition and bridging is ease of accomplishment and provision of perfect cover (by the hands and a turn of the body) and misdirection (pointing to the articles on the table).

In this description of this move I have referred to the packet which is cut off by the right hand as the “ front ” packet. It will clarify the meaning if the reader will hold the pack in his left hand, one long side of the pack towards the ceiling and the face of the cards towards his palm—the packet referred to is the half nearest the palm.

2. We know that Leipzig “ was *deadly* sure in every trick he did ”, and this should be remembered when “ bridging ” the pack. The upper riffle should be very pronounced—the cards are really *bent* upwards ; the cut-off packet is squeezed hard in the gesture of pointing. When they are put together one half of the pack bulges in one direction and the other half in the opposite direction, leaving a pronounced opening in the centre, thus () .

#### OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

1. Spectator on right selects a card, then spectator on left selects a card.
2. Spectator on right gives his card to other spectator.
3. Performer riffles pack and has cards placed BOTH TOGETHER anywhere in centre of pack, but does not permit them to be pushed square.
4. Performer appears to push cards square, but they go in diagonally to the left and protrude from inner end of pack.
5. Pack pushed under the nose of spectator on left as performer says : “ Is that alright ? ”
6. All cards below protruding cards undercut and shuffled on top.
7. Top and bottom cards drawn off together and shuffle continued until original second from bottom card is thrown on top.
8. Heavy upward riffle as pack shown and statement made that selected cards are lost somewhere in the pack. Sight bottom card.
9. Under cover of a half turn to the left to point to objects on the table, front half of pack taken by right hand, bridged and placed at the back.
10. Newspaper picked up by left hand and transferred to right as pack is held in left hand, pinched between thumb and forefinger.
11. Pack wrapped in paper (space left between pack and paper). Package held in left hand.
12. Knife handed to performer, roll on drums, knife plunged through long side of pack.
13. Paper picked away. Card names revealed by the two spectators.
14. Performer repeats name of card that should be above blade, then lifts knife to show face of card against blade.
15. Name of second card repeated and top card of left hand packet flipped over to reveal face.
16. Pose with faces of both cards towards audience.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### TIPS ON KNOTS

*Page 155*

## *CHAPTER FIFTEEN*

### TIPS ON KNOTS

Interesting and entertaining magical effects in which knots apparently tie and untie themselves are popular features of many performers' acts. Dai Vernon has made several additions to the previously known methods of causing knots to untie, and three of them form the subject matter of this chapter.

Japanese silk is the ideal material for most forms of magic with silk, as it is soft, pliable and can be obtained in bright colours which are pleasing to the eye. A silk square, held by diagonally opposite corners, can be twirled quickly into a rope-like length, with which real or false knots can be tied.

For stage performers, the silks should be large ; twenty-four inches or even thirty-six inches square, then they look right even from a distance. So many performances are spoilt through the use of tiny silks, which look out of place in a male performer's hands, and in which it is quite impossible to tie knots large enough to be effective when viewed from a distance. When one silk is to be tied to another the colours of the two silks should contrast. If the colours are the same or similar much of the effect is lost. Needless to say, the silks should be clean, the colours fresh and bright, and they should be ironed before the performance.

In the photographs which illustrate this chapter, rope has been used instead of silk, as with rope it is possible to follow each twist and turn when studying how the knots are made. Where two ropes have been used to represent two silks, one is red and the other white. The red rope is the dark one in the photographs, making it easily distinguishable from the white rope.

#### DAI VERNON'S FALSE KNOT.

##### EFFECT.

A knot is tied in the centre of a handkerchief. Holding the handkerchief by one corner between the left thumb and forefinger so that the opposite corner hangs free, the performer strikes the knot with his extended right forefinger. The knot vanishes.

##### PERFORMANCE.

Hold the silk between the hands by diagonally opposite corners and twirl it to make it into a rope-like length.

With both hands held palms upward (little ringers touching) in front of the body, position the silk so that the centre of it is towards the body and the ends are across the fingers of the hands, pointing away from the body. Place the left side of the silk OVER the right (Fig. 1), then move

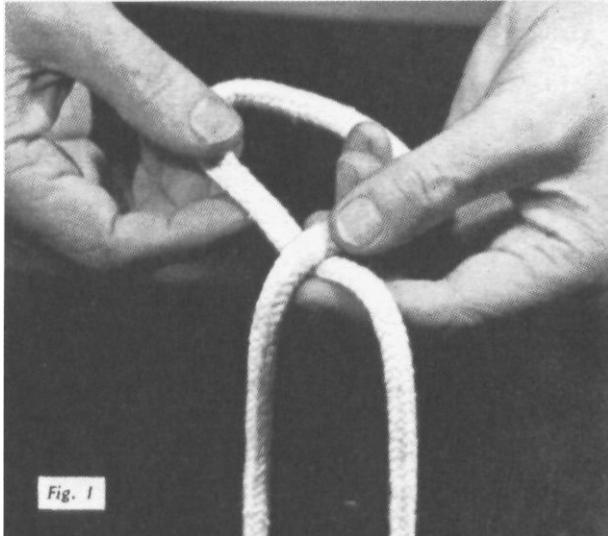


Fig. 1

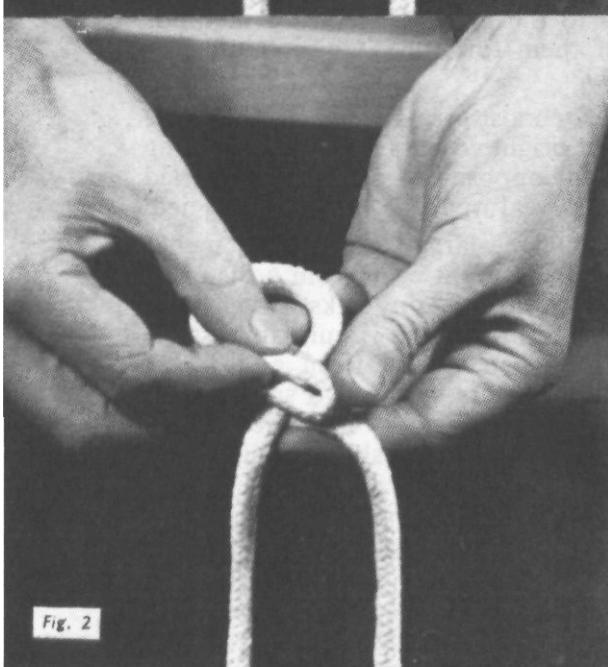


Fig. 2

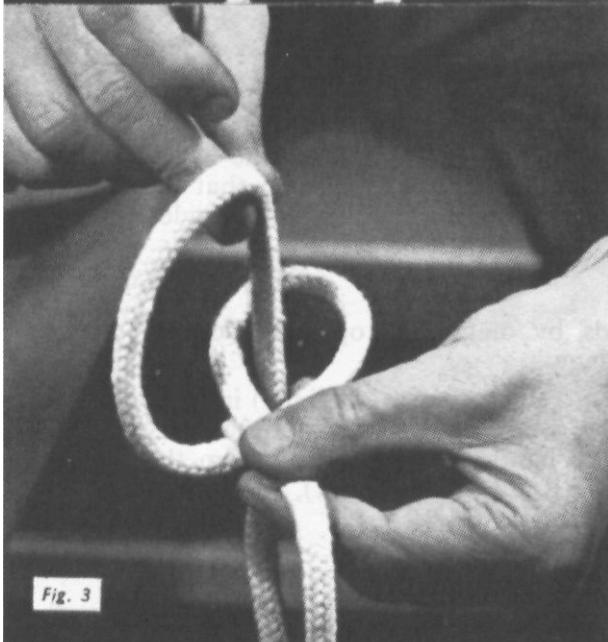


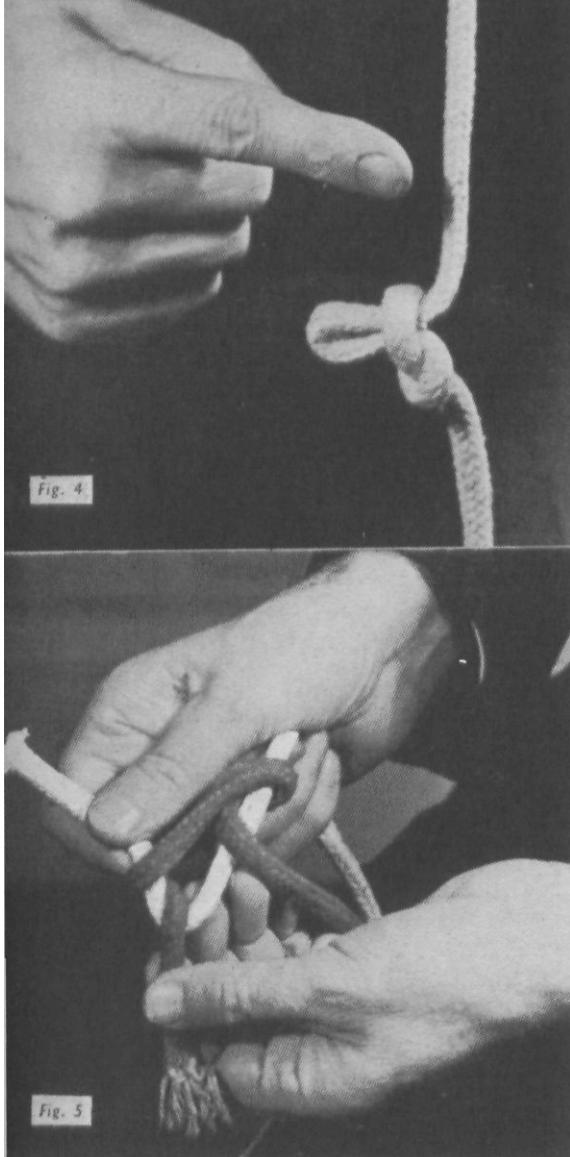
Fig. 3

the left thumb (above) and the left forefinger (below) to the point where the sides cross (point of contact) and hold them together. Study Fig. 1 and note that, although the tip of the left forefinger is directly underneath the point of contact, the left thumb is a little to the left of this point.

With the right thumb and forefinger begin to stroke the length of silk on the right side, starting from the loop nearest the body, then just before the thumb and forefinger reach the point of contact, pick up the silk and carry it forward to form a loop over the top of the point where the two lengths cross (Fig. 2). Move the left thumb over to hold the loop in place and to hide it from view—continue the stroking movement. There must be no pause in the stroking movement as the loop is made; the appearance must be that you have merely stroked the silk from back to front.

Pick up the end of the silk hanging to the right and pass it through the main loop (Fig. 3), then, still holding the point of contact with the left thumb and forefinger, tighten the knot by pulling on the end of the silk that you have just passed through the main loop. Slide the left thumb and forefinger along the left length of silk as the knot is adjusted by the right thumb and forefinger.

Hold one end of the silk between the left thumb and forefinger so that the opposite end hangs free, then, after a suitable pause to allow the spectators to appreciate that a firm (?) knot has been formed, strike the knot with the extended right forefinger in a downward direction. The force will cause the fake knot to break up and the silk to straighten.



## DAI VERNON'S METHOD FOR UPSETTING A SQUARE KNOT.

Before studying this method of upsetting a square (or reef) knot, here is a brief description of how one is tied.

We will assume that the corners of a white silk and a red silk are to be tied together by means of a square knot. Hold the white silk near an upper corner in your left hand and the red one near an upper corner in your right hand, in readiness for tying a knot.

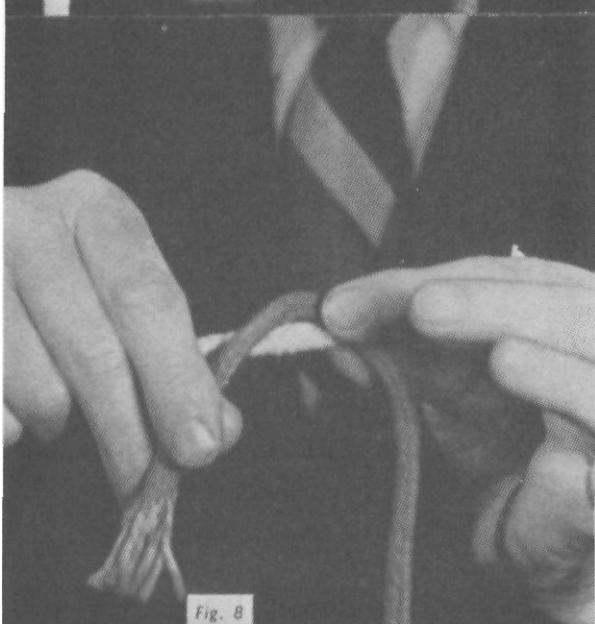
Cross the red silk *over* the white silk, then twist the white silk back over the red and around it so that both the red and white ends are pointing upwards again. Now bring the white end *under* the red end; twist the white around the red and push the white end through the loop which has been formed. Tighten the knot by pulling on the ends.

In its present form the knot will not slip, but it can be upset by holding the end of the white silk in one hand and a portion of the same silk below the knot in the other hand and pulling. This causes the white silk to straighten, the red silk being now tied around it, when it is a simple matter to slide the red knot along the white silk until it slips off the end.

Briefly:—To tie a square knot, remember it is right end over left end the first time and right *under* left the second time. To upset it, straighten one silk by holding the corner and a portion of the silk below the knot and pulling.

This principle of upsetting a square knot is used in many effects with silk (Sympathetic Silks, Multiple Knots, etc.), knots being made to untie by slipping the silks apart secretly after the knot has been upset under the pretence of pulling it tight.

It will be apparent that, as it is the same silk that has to be held in two different places during the straightening process, an observant spectator may notice this fact, especially as it is customary to change the ends of the silks from hand to hand—an unnatural move. Dai Vernon has overcome this weakness by devising a method of straightening one of the silks whilst holding an end of both silks, one in each hand. The starting position for the upsetting is the same as the finishing position for the tying of a square knot.



Curl the right second, third and little fingers into the palm, carrying a portion of the white silk below the knot into the right palm. Fig. 6 shows an exposed view of the holding position—the end of the white rope being held between the right thumb and forefinger ; the curling fingers are holding a portion of the white rope below the knot against the right palm.

The action of pulling the white rope against the right palm causes the white rope to straighten (Fig. 6) so that the red rope is knotted around it. When silks are used, the red knot will slide easily along the white silk until it slips off the end.

In this method of secretly straightening one of the silks, to all appearances the performer is merely pulling the knot tight.

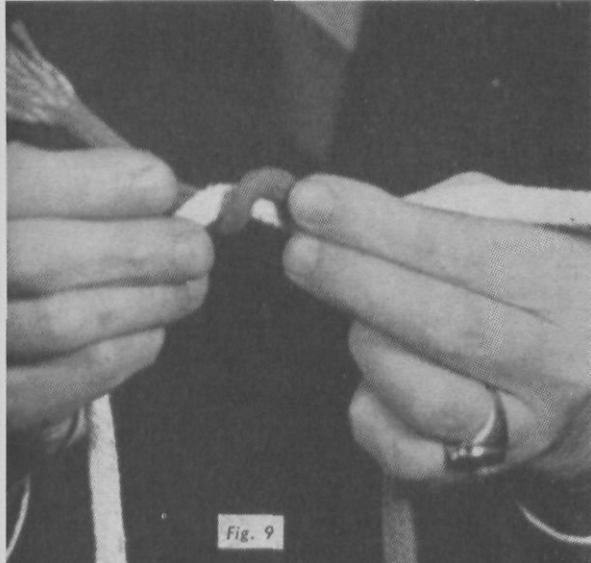
#### SPLITTING THE ATOM.

In this pretty effect two silks are tied together, the knot which secures them being gripped by the fingers and thumbs of both hands. A click is heard and the knot splits in two, causing the silks to come apart.

It all depends upon the method of tying, so study the photographs carefully, as with the rope used to illustrate the moves the necessary twists can be seen clearly.

About three inches from their upper corners hold a silk in each hand. We will assume that it is a white silk in the right hand and a red silk in the left hand to correspond with the ropes in the photographs.

Bring the left hand silk (red) in front (away from you) of the white silk and cross them as in Fig. 7. The point of contact is held by the left thumb behind the white silk and the left forefinger in front of the red silk. Actually in Fig. 7 the left forefinger has been moved aside to show the point of contact.



Bring the red end down in front of the white end, as in Fig. 8, then twist the red under the white and up as in Fig. 9. As the left thumb and forefinger are holding the point of contact, the twist will stay in position and will look as if the first part of a knot has been tied. Now tie a single knot on top with the red and white ends—still holding the point of contact.

From this position both ends are rotated to the left once as the right hand strokes both silks downwards. When the right hand is low down, pick up the white silk and hold it at right angles for a moment (the hands should be further apart than in Fig. 10), then allow it to drop. With the right hand take the red silk to the right side, then move the right hand back to the point of contact.

The result will appear that a firm knot has been tied—the knot being held on one side by the fingers and thumb of the right hand and on the other side by the fingers and thumb of the left hand. Actually there is no knot, but the point of contact is covered by the fingers.

After a sufficient pause to allow the spectators to see this position, bring the nails of the two thumbs together behind the point of contact and pull one nail over and off the edge of the other to make a sharp clicking sound. At the same time move the hands apart, when the silks will move with them, the knot appearing to split in the centre (Fig. 11).

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SIX CARD REPEAT

*Page 163*

## *CHAPTER SIXTEEN*

### THE SIX-CARD REPEAT MYSTERY

One of the most successful card tricks of modern times is Tommy Tucker's Six-Card Repeat. The plot is novel, the effect is excellent, and the patter can make it very funny ; in fact, it contains the ingredients to provide first-class entertainment.

Performers were quick to realise its possibilities, and when a description of the method was published, revealing that, in addition to its other virtues, it was comparatively easy to perform, then it found its way into many—too many—acts.

As with all good tricks, many variations were devised, some good, some not so good ; different patter stories were woven round the original theme ; banknotes were sometimes used instead of cards ; performers devised new methods for bringing about the same effect—in short, it has benefited (and suffered) because it is a very good trick.

At one time it seemed that every magician was performing it ; again and again it would be seen repeated on the same programme at Magical Society functions. Its popularity caused it to become almost a joke amongst magicians—the Six-Card Repeat, repeated too often.

Dai Vernon's version of the trick was devised by him originally to mystify two people only—his friends Faucett Ross and Eddie McLaughlin, who were naturally interested in the Six-Card Repeat and its many variations. Dai baffled them with it.

In the original trick eighteen cards are used, which are false counted as six only ; three are thrown away, then the remaining fifteen cards false counted again as six. On four separate occasions during the routine three cards are discarded and each time the cards remaining are false counted as six, so that at the conclusion six cards still remain. That is the trick shorn of its dressing, but with appropriate patter it makes fine entertainment.

Dai Vernon starts with nine cards only, but twice during his routine he adds six cards in a very subtle manner, which makes a total of twenty-one cards in all, which allows him to discard three cards on five separate occasions. Six cards still remain at the end.

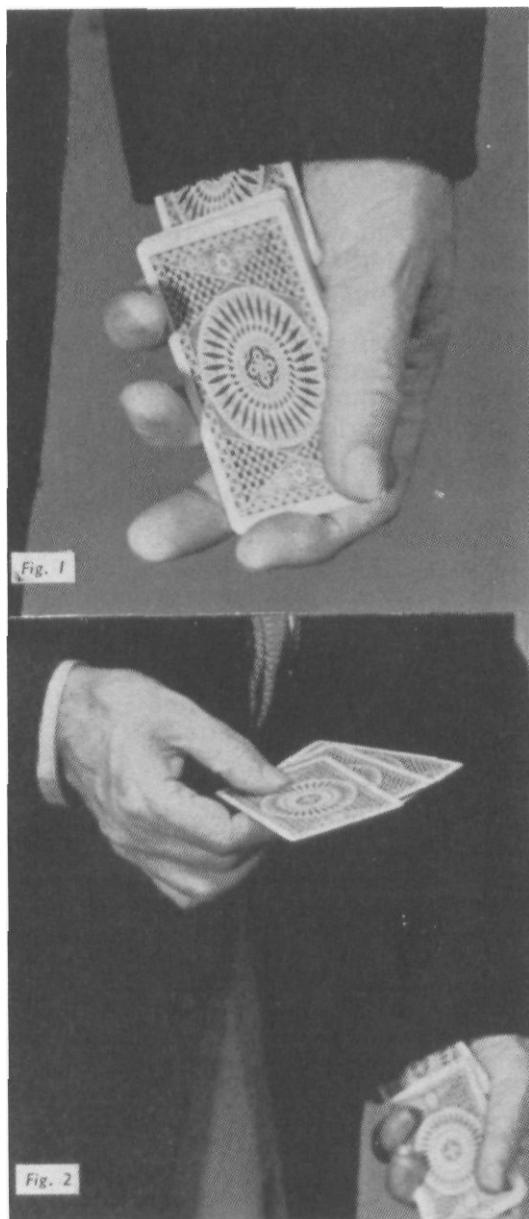
## PREPARATION.

Place a packet of six cards in each sleeve ; the faces of the cards towards the wrists. The cards will stay out of sight in the sleeves whilst the hands are held in front of the body, where they can make all the actions necessary for counting that are required.

Another nine cards are held in the left hand in position for false counting them into the right hand.

The above arrangement is **all** that is necessary for performing the routine, but before studying the description it will be advisable for the reader to practise the method for secretly adding cards from the sleeves to the packets held in the hands. Actually the first addition is made after the first three cards are counted off and handed to a spectator,

It is as the right hand moves towards a spectator, for him to take the three cards, that the left hand (now holding six cards) falls naturally to the side, when the packet of six cards in the sleeve will slide out to join the six cards in the hand. Study Fig. 1 and notice how the six cards of the original nine are held, faces towards the palm, but with the short end of the packet nearest the wrist levered away from the palm. The thumb is along one long side of the packet and the second, third and little fingers at the opposite long side. The first finger is bent so that the first joint is against the centre of the short edge of the packet, furthest from the wrist. When the arm is dropped to the side, the cards in the sleeve will slide out and into the V formed by the palm of the hand and the packet of cards, coming to rest at the face of the packet.



This is a beautiful idea for adding cards secretly to a pack, but it is not proposed to enlarge upon it at this stage or it may prove confusing. For further uses of this secret addition see the note at the end of this chapter.

### THE ROUTINE.

Dai Vernon usually performs this routine for magicians, and in consequence his patter is appropriate to those occasions, but there is no reason why the reader should not adapt patter on the lines used for the original version of the trick, when it will be suitable for lay audiences.

Commence with a packet of six cards in each sleeve and nine squared in a packet held in the left hand as described above. Say : "I wonder if you have seen that trick with ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX cards . . ."

As you are speaking, false count the nine cards as six by the push-off move.

" . . . where the magician takes away ONE, TWO, THREE cards . . . "

Count off three cards from the top of the packet into the right hand and extend them towards a spectator for him to take. As the right hand is extended, allow the left arm to drop naturally to the side, when the cards in the sleeve will slide out on to the face of the packet. Fig. 2 shows this action, but in performance the left hand would be turned with its back towards the spectators, to hide the cards leaving the sleeve. Take care with the timing—the left arm must drop to the side naturally as the right arm is extended.

Usually at this stage the spectator/magician will inform you that he has seen that trick, but, nevertheless, you insist that he sees it again!

" Look, I still have ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX cards, from which I take ONE, TWO, THREE cards . . . "

False count the twelve cards as six, then count three cards from the top of the packet and hand them to the spectator as before.

" . . . you're not watching—I still have ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX cards."

False count the nine cards as six. Again remove three cards, give them to the spectator, and say :—

" Look, there are ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX cards—I'll count them again for you."

Count the cards through twice—you only have six now, so you make certain that he sees just how many you have. Magicians will think you have come to the end at this point, but you are getting ready for an unexpected climax.

Holding the six cards in the *right* hand, count three cards into the left, then say :—

" Are you sure there are three ? "

Whatever his answer, ask him to hold out his hand, then extend

your left hand towards him and count the cards singly on to his hand as you say :—

“ Are you sure ? Look, ONE, TWO, THREE . . . ”

Your right hand drops to your side at the start of the count, the six cards in the sleeve sliding on to the face of the three cards that are in the right hand.

“ . . . which leaves me with ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX cards . . . ”

False count the nine cards as six.

“ . . . look, it's easy, you always take away ONE, TWO, THREE cards . . . ”

Count off three cards and give them to the spectator.

“ . . . which leaves you with ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX cards ! ”

Count the six cards and hand them to the spectator—CLIMAX !

#### OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

1. Commence with six cards in each sleeve and nine cards in the left hand.
2. False count the nine cards as six.
3. Count off three cards into right hand, and, as right arm is extended, drop left arm to add cards from sleeve.
4. False count the twelve cards as six. Count off three and hand to spectator.
5. False count the nine cards as six. Count off three and hand to spectator.
6. Count the six cards *twice* slowly, leaving the packet in the right hand at the end of the second count.
7. Count off three cards into the left hand ; re-count the same three from the left hand into the spectator's hand. Drop the right arm during the count to add the six cards from the right sleeve.
8. False count the nine cards as six. Remove three and hand to spectator.
9. Count the remaining six cards, then hand them to spectator.

NOTE.—The method for secretly adding extra cards to a packet or pack described above can be used in many tricks. Here are a few suggestions :—

- (a) For a Four Ace trick, where it is necessary to have the four Aces on top of the pack at the commencement of the routine, the Aces can be in the sleeve. It is now possible to have the pack shuffled by a spectator, the Aces being added as described.
- (b) Cards arranged in a set order can be added to the top or bottom of the pack after the pack has been shuffled.
- (c) In the Thirty Card Trick or Cards from Pocket to Pocket, cards can be secretly added to the pile that has been counted by a spectator. If the spectator actually counts the cards on to the performer's hand, then nothing could appear more fair.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE OF SILVER

*Page 169*

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE OF SILVER

T. NELSON DOWNS, in his book THE ART OF MAGIC (edited by JOHN NORTHERN HILLIARD), gives a description of a trick called FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE OF SILVER. He tells us that he saw it performed by a conjurer in a Viennese cafe and, liking the effect, purchased the secret from the performer.

The original version depended upon loading three coins secretly and singly under three objects on a dinner table. At a suitable moment the performer would exhibit a fourth coin, then ask a spectator to nominate which one of the three objects under which he would like the coin to appear. When an object had been selected the performer would cause the visible coin to vanish by pretending to place it from one hand into the other, then lift the object and reveal the coin that had been secretly placed under it beforehand. The coin that was supposed to have vanished was secretly reloaded under the object as it was replaced on the table by the hand secretly holding the coin, enabling the effect to be repeated. The climax of the trick came when several objects on the table were moved and coins found under each, this being possible because each time an object was lifted to reveal one coin, it was replaced by another as the object was placed down on the table.

Dai Vernon has altered the plot and built up the action so that when he performs it in its new form he almost causes a riot! Perhaps the best way to convey the effect to the reader is to describe the scene enacted by Dai during his London visit in one of the small but excellent restaurants in the Soho district, where he and Faucett Ross had joined Harry Stanley and myself.

After an excellent lunch, we were sipping our coffee when Dai pulled the ash tray towards him to deposit the ash from his cigar. Where the ash tray had stood we were surprised to see a half-crown and still more surprised when Dai picked it up and, after looking around guiltily, slipped it into his pocket! After a pause, Dai reached over gingerly and lifted a packet of cigarettes and peered underneath—only a two shilling piece this time, but again it went into his pocket! Puzzled, but obviously pleased with himself, Dai began moving other objects on the table—the cups and saucers, the cruet, the packet of cigarettes again, plates—nearly all had coins underneath, which he pocketed. By this time we were gaining attention from other patrons, and most certainly from the waiters, who began to get a little worried and gathered round as Dai, now half out of his chair, began frantically moving every object on the table and stuffing coins into his pockets. Things got out of hand : Dai could not get the coins into his pockets fast enough and was having to leave them scattered around on the



table. By this time we were helpless with laughter, Dai's acting was superb; here was a very bewildered person who just could not cope with the situation. Finally, now right out of his chair, he looked around in an embarrassed fashion, then reached over somewhat like a guilty boy stealing an apple and took a bread roll from the basket. He broke it open and right inside, for all to see, was a half-crown, which fell to the table. Dai collapsed into his chair!

As the trickery is accomplished by a few simple moves, it is obvious that much depends upon the presentation of the **Dai Vernon** version of this trick. Performed at a dinner table, the stage is already set, as there are so many objects under which coins can be introduced secretly, especially as there is a perfectly logical reason for lifting most of them. Obviously no previous announcement is made that a trick is going to be performed, so no suspicion is aroused when the unknown performer-to-be is good-mannered in passing the condiments, the basket of rolls, the sugar, etc., only helping himself when the others have partaken. Each time an object is received back or is moved a coin can be secretly introduced underneath.

It is not essential to deposit coins under very many objects at the start—Dai told me that on the occasion to which I have referred he began with a coin under each of three articles, as, coming towards the end of our luncheon, many of the accoutrements had been removed by the waiter. He introduced the coins in one of two ways, according to the type of object and the excuse he had for its movement.

To prepare for the effect he slipped his right hand into his pocket and obtained four coins, three of which he placed on his knee, the other

one he palmed in his right hand. He reached for the ash tray and pulled it towards himself with his right hand (Fig. 1), allowing the coin to fall to the tablecloth behind the ash tray prior to pulling it towards himself and so cover the coin. After obtaining the second coin from his knee, he loaded it under a packet of cigarettes in the same way. He then picked up a third coin from his knee and loaded it under the saucer as his coffee was handed to him. To do this he received the cup and saucer in his left hand and passed it into his right hand, which he opened as the saucer covered it, bringing the coin to rest on the top joints of his fingers (Fig. 2). It was now a simple matter to set down the cup and saucer on the table with the coin underneath.

Having loaded a coin under each of three objects, and with a fourth coin resting on his right knee, he did not begin his performance immediately, but paused in order that our minds should not associate any of his previous actions, however natural, with the performance that was to follow.

It is a natural mannerism for Dai Vernon to gesture with his hands whilst talking, and, whilst no mention was made of the empty state of his hands during the pause, this fact registered subconsciously with those of us around the table.

When he considered that the time was right to begin, Dai dropped his right hand to his knee, palmed the fourth coin, then brought his right hand up to the cigar he was smoking and removed it from his lips. He extended his right hand (holding the cigar and palmed coin) towards the ash tray as he continued his conversation, but, apparently absorbed in what he was saying, did not knock off the ash. At the completion of his sentence he replaced the cigar between his lips and listened attentively whilst the conversation continued.

As the conversation abated he reached forward with his right hand and, as his thumb and second finger closed round the rim of the ash tray, he allowed the palmed coin (Fig. 1) to fall to the tablecloth and immediately drew the ash tray backwards over the coin. His action brought into view the coin which had been secreted under the ash tray previously, and as he removed his cigar from his lips with his left hand and reached forward to knock off the ash he noticed the coin in front of the ash tray.

With a puzzled look on his face, he reached over with his right hand and picked up the coin, turned it over as he gazed at it, then, as if realising what it was for the first time, looked round guiltily, as if to see if he had been observed, then slipped it into the pocket on the right side of his jacket. Actually he brought the coin into the palm position whilst his hand was in his pocket, then withdrew his hand with the coin palmed in readiness for the next move.

By having a coin palmed in the hand which reached for an object he was able to load another coin each time an object was moved backwards, to reveal a coin for him to take (Fig. 3). As he continued he alternated this method of loading with the one when he loaded a coin under his cup and saucer (Fig. 2), so that sometimes the hand which reached for an object was seen to be empty, the coin being loaded as the object was transferred to his other hand.



As the pace quickened, he lifted objects under which there were no coins, but, as he set them down, he loaded coins in readiness for revelation later. In this manner he was able to produce coins from under objects which had been previously shown to have nothing underneath.

Having extra coins in the outer pockets on each side of his jacket made it possible for him to obtain them as his hands went to those pockets in the action of supposedly putting away the coins which had already been revealed. Obviously the loading can be done with either the right or the left hand, and, after the fairness of the production had been emphasised by the slow and natural way in which the first few coins were revealed, either hand could obtain two or more coins at a time from the pockets for loading under different objects as the pace of the performance was speeded up.

After about eight or nine coins had been picked up and apparently placed in his pockets there were sufficient coins under different objects on the table for Dai to perform the next stage.

By now Dai was working fast and rattling the remaining coins in his pockets as others were apparently put away ; he gave the impression that the situation was getting out of hand and that coins were appearing faster than he could pick them up and put them away. This he did by moving objects and leaving some of the coins exposed on the table (Fig. 4) until quite a number were scattered around on the tablecloth.

He had arranged his moves to leave him with a half-crown in the finger-palm position of his right hand, and this enabled him to bring about his climax of causing a coin to fall out of the interior of a bread roll, for which he used the following moves.

He took a bread roll from the basket with his empty left hand, then brought both hands together to grasp the roll between them in the natural position for breaking it open. As the roll was brought over and covered his right hand the fingers opened beneath it, enabling the coin to rest on the finger-tips in the same way as has been described for loading a coin under a saucer (Fig. 2). His right finger-tips then pressed the coin against the bottom of the roll. With his two thumbs on top of the roll at the centre and the fingers of both hands underneath, he bent his hands upwards and inwards, causing the crust of the bottom of the roll to break. His fingers pressed upwards on the coin, pushing it into the roll (Fig. 5—view from underneath), then his hands bent outwards and down, which made the roll break open at the top, to reveal the coin in the very centre of the bread (Fig. 6). Pulling the break open wider, he tilted the roll forward so that the coin fell from it on to the table.

So ended a magical interlude which had been greatly enhanced by superb natural acting.

Dai Vernon tells me that it was FAUCETT ROSS who suggested to him that the coin falling from the centre of the bread roll would make a splendid climax for the FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE OF SILVER. Faucett was very gratified to see how effectively his suggestion had been used.

The reader will understand that the trick in its new form should only be performed when the circumstances are perfectly suitable. It may be that even at a dinner table, when it appears that the trick will be appreciated and the preliminary secret loading of the first three coins has been accomplished, the situation may alter to make it undesirable to perform. When Dai pointed this out to me, I asked him what would have happened if, say, someone who wanted to discuss business with one of us had joined the party in the restaurant at that late stage. This may have had the effect of introducing a more serious note into the party spirit and either greatly lessened the effect if it had been performed or may even have caused embarrassment. Dai's answer was definite and instructive. He said : " If there had been the slightest risk of it not being as effective as I hoped it was, then I should not have performed. Remember, no one knew I had loaded three coins ; it would have been easy for me to unload them secretly. Even if that had not been possible, then I would rather let the waiter think that I was a trifle eccentric in my form of ' tipping ' than risk not gaining the maximum effect from the trick."

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

**MENTAL SPELL**

*Page 177*

## *CHAPTER EIGHTEEN*

### MENTAL SPELL

There are very many card tricks in which a previously selected card is found by the performer, or even by the selector himself, by means of spelling the name of the card and moving a card for each letter in its name. In one chapter alone of the *Encyclopaedia of Card Tricks* (edited by Jean Hugard) there are forty-three such tricks. However, there are comparatively few spelling tricks in which the card to be found is selected by being merely thought of, and it is this problem which is particularly intriguing to magicians who enjoy evolving methods to bring about these spelling effects.

Perhaps the ideal spelling effect would be if a spectator could take his own pack, shuffle it, think of any card, then spell out the name of that card and discard one card from the top of the pack for each letter in the name of the card of which he was thinking, only to find that the next card was the one which he alone could possibly know the name.

If we could find the perfect method to bring about the ideal effect, then we should be performing real magic and not the type of which mortals are capable. However, it is by considering the ideal effect as a base and finding how near we can duplicate it, yet still have a practical method for bringing about the desired result, that some of the best tricks are evolved.

Dai Vernon has studied his spelling problem from this aspect, and in the true Vernon manner has evolved a superb effect which he calls "Mental Spell".

#### EFFECT.

The performer shuffles and cuts the pack, then removes a packet of cards from the top. He fans these cards with their faces towards a spectator, with the request that one will be merely thought of. The packet of cards is then handed immediately to the spectator.

Now the spectator is asked to mentally spell the name of his card. This is done by removing from the top of the packet and placing on the bottom, one card for each letter in the name of the mentally selected card.

At the conclusion of the mental spell the performer reveals the spectator's card in a startling manner.

## PREPARATION.

Before your performance remove the following ten cards from the pack, placing them face up on the table, one on top of the other, in the order given :—Six of Clubs, Ten of Hearts, Four of Spades, Ten of Diamonds, Four of Diamonds, Seven of Diamonds, Queen of Hearts, King of Diamonds, Queen of Diamonds and Ten of Clubs. Place these cards on top of the pack—the top card of the pack will be the Six of Clubs and the tenth card from the top will be the Ten of Clubs.

With the pack in its case, you are ready to perform at any time.

## PERFORMANCE.

The patter that **Dai Vernon** uses will be given.

Remove the pack from its case and, if you wish, give the pack a false shuffle, leaving the top stack intact. You may prefer to false cut the pack a few times.

“ Many times a card is removed from a pack and replaced the magician then attempts to find it. Now, if a card is merely mentally selected . . . not touched but merely thought of . . . then we have impossible conditions.”

Remove the top ten cards from the pack, then say to a spectator :—

“ Sir, will you please mentally select any one of these cards. Just think of one, but do not let me know of which card you are thinking.”

Fan the ten cards and hold them with their faces towards the spectator. When he indicates that he has made a mental selection, place the remainder of the pack aside, hold the ten cards face down in your hands and give them a few false cuts (do not disturb their order), as you continue to patter :—

“ I am going to hand you this packet. I want you to think of your card and mentally spell its name to yourself. Then I want you to remove a card from the top of this packet and place it on the bottom of the packet and continue to do this, removing one card for each letter in the name of your mentally chosen card. For example, let us say your thought-of card was the Two of Clubs. You then spell as follows : T-W-O O-F C-L-U-B-S.”

As you are speaking, you actually run through this demonstration. At the conclusion of your spelling the Two of Clubs the cards in the packet will be in their original order.

“ I want you to remove a card for each letter in the complete name of your card, but spell the card mentally.”

Hand the packet to the spectator and watch him spell the name of his card. He places one card from the top to the bottom for each letter.

COUNT THE NUMBER OF CARDS HE REMOVES AS HE SPELLS. Do this silently and give no indication that you are counting. It is through the total of cards that he removes that you have enough information to effectively conclude the effect.

(A) *If the spectator moves ten cards* as he mentally spells the name of his card, you know that his card is either the Six of Clubs or the Ten of Clubs. Ask the spectator the name of his card. If he says it is the Six of Clubs, tell him to turn over the top card of the pack—this will be the Six. If he says it is the Ten of Clubs, tell him to look at the bottom card of the pack. Either of these denouements is effective.

(B) *If the spectator moves eleven or twelve cards* as he mentally spells, then do not ask him any questions. Simply tell him to think of his card and then have him turn over the top card of the packet. To his surprise, his mentally chosen card will be staring at him.

(C) *If the spectator moves thirteen, fourteen or fifteen cards* as he mentally spells, you immediately say :— ‘ You were thinking of a picture card, weren’t you ? ’ If he says “ No ”, then you say : “ Well, concentrate on your card and hold the packet tightly.” Make a magical wave over the packet and have him turn over the top card of the packet. It will be the card he has mentally selected.

Note that the above groups A, B and C take care of seven cards. The remaining three cards will be dealt with in the following way. Also note that the following only concerns the picture cards.

(D) *If the spectator moves thirteen, fourteen or fifteen cards* as he mentally spells, and after you ask him : “ You were thinking of a picture card, weren’t you ? ” he says “ Yes ”, then the following handling is applied to each case :—

- (1) If thirteen (and a picture card) you say : “ Look at the bottom card and remember the numerical value. Remove that number from the top of the pack and look at the card in that position.” They will note the bottom card and see that it is a four spot. They will then remove four cards from the top of the pack. The fourth card will be the mentally selected card.
- (2) If fourteen (and a picture card) you say : “ Look at the top card and replace it on the top. How many spots did it have ? ” Spectator will say “ Four ”. You then say : “ Remove the fourth card from the top.” It will be the mentally selected card.
- (3) If fifteen (and a picture card) you say : “ Look at the bottom card and remember the numerical value. Remove that many cards from the top.” They will note that the bottom card is a four spot. The mentally selected card will now be exactly fourth from the top. This is the same procedure as in (1).

Although this description is lengthy, the trick is quite simple to perform and easy to master. After rehearsing the effect just a few times you will be able to perform it with confidence and conviction.

## **CHAPTER NINETEEN**

### **POT POURRI**

Climax for a Dice Routine	<i>Page</i> 183
One Under and One Down	<i>Page</i> 186
CHARLES MILLER'S Cups and Balls Move	<i>Page</i> 188
WELSH MILLER'S Cards and Matches ..	<i>Page</i> 189
Tips for Experts	<i>Page</i> 193

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### POTPOURRI

From an author's point of view this is a convenient chapter, as many of the items of magic Dai Vernon demonstrated for publication, which are either not complete tricks in themselves or, if complete, are not of sufficient descriptive length to form a chapter on their own, have been collected together and will be found here.

#### DAI VERNON'S CLIMAX FOR A DICE ROUTINE.

There are several excellent routines with two dice which are dependent upon the deceptive 'twist' move. This move enables the two dice to be twisted secretly whilst held together between the thumb and forefinger. The climax described below has nothing to do with the twist move itself, but makes an ideal ending for routines in which it is employed.

For the complete routine you will need four regular dice of a size that you use for the twist move. Two of these are in your right jacket pocket, together with a tiny die. A large die is in your left jacket pocket if you are to perform the routine seated, or in the left trousers pocket if standing. The comparative sizes of these dice can be seen in Fig. 1, the dice on the left being the size of the four identical dice.

Let us assume that you have reached the conclusion of your favourite dice routine in which you have employed two dice only and are ready for a surprising climax.

STAGE 1. Pick up the two dice with the right hand and start to put them away into your right jacket pocket, then, as if a thought had just occurred to you, say :—

"Oh, I forgot, perhaps you are interested in dice ; I'll show you something peculiar."

As the right hand is in the pocket, grasp one of the dice of the pair already in the pocket and remove the hand. Throw two dice on to the table, but retain the one you have just stolen in the right finger-palm position.

Pick up the two dice with the left hand, then, as you shake them and throw them down again, say :—

"If I throw them with my left hand, I get (call whatever you have thrown) for a point . . ."

Pick them up again with the left hand and apparently toss them

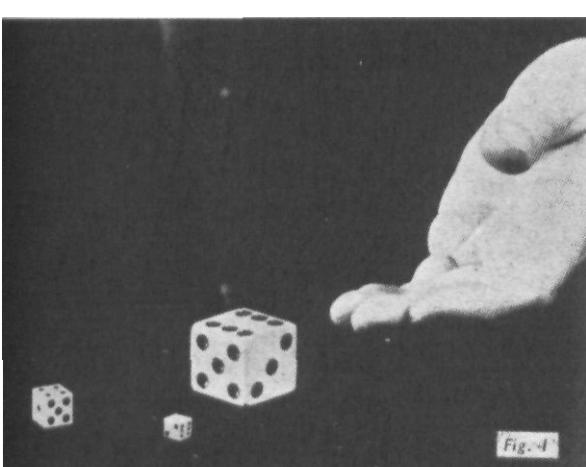


Fig. 4

both into the right hand, but actually release one only, which joins the one you have already in the right hand. Shake the right hand and throw both dice.

“ . . . but if I throw them with my right hand I get (call whatever you have thrown) for a point.”

Pick up a die in each hand. Remember, you already have one unbeknown to the audience in the left hand, so the position at this stage is that you have two in the left hand and one in the right.

“ If I put one away (place the right hand in the jacket pocket but do not release the dice) and throw one, what do I get ? ”

Whatever the answer, throw both dice from the left hand and say :—

“ No, TWO ! ”

STAGE 2. Pick up the two dice from the table with the right hand, and, in the action of replacing them in the left hand, allow the third die that you are holding loosely to go with them, the left fingers closing over all three dice, which conceals the fact that a third die has been added. You then say :—

“ Of course, I have an extra one in my pocket . . . ”

Reach into the pocket with the right hand and bring out the fourth die, show it and return the hand to the pocket, but retain the die in the finger-palm position as you remove the hand.

“ . . . so, of course, that's why I have three.”

Snap the right second finger against the right palm, then throw the three dice from the left hand as the words are said.

STAGE 3. Pick up one die with the right hand and throw it into the left hand. Pick up a second die with the right hand and throw it *and the extra die* into the left hand, closing the fingers to prevent a glimpse of the number of dice. Say :—

“ I always have an extra one and I'll put it away again.”

Pick up the remaining die from the table with the right hand and put it into the pocket ; drop it this time, but secure the tiny die, holding it clipped between the second and third fingers (at the fleshy part at the base of the fingers). Remove the hand from the pocket, then throw out the three dice from the left hand on to the table.

Reach over with the right hand and pick up two of the dice from the table. If the right hand is now turned palm upwards and the fingers opened, only the two regular size dice will be seen, as they will completely cover the tiny die. Say :—

“ I'll place this extra one on this side where I can get at it.”

Pick up the remaining die on the table with the left hand and convey it to the left jacket pocket ; drop the die and secure the large die. At this point you misdirect by gesturing with the right hand and saying :—

“ How many do I have now ? You count one, two . . . ”

Place down the two regular sized dice singly from the right hand, then pause after the count “ Two ”. Make a rubbing motion with the right finger-tips and place down the tiny die.

STAGE 4. Now you say :—

“ Well, I'll show you how that's done! ”

During the misdirection of the above, take the left hand from the pocket. The fingers are closed into a fist—unbeknown to the audience the large die is in the fist. Hold the fist, thumb end upwards, in front of your body and place one of the regular dice on top of the fist. Poke it down into the fist with the right forefinger.

Pick up the second regular die with the right finger-tips and apparently place it on top of the left fist. Actually you perform the basic move of The Three Ball Transposition described in Chapter Five, so that it is the regular die that was already in the left hand that is seen on top of the fist, the other one being carried away in the right hand. Push the visible die down again with the right forefinger, then pick up the tiny die and place it on top of the fist and say to a spectator :—

“ Would you mind poking that one in, please? ”

When the tiny die has been pushed in, turn the left hand downwards. Place the regular sized die down on the table, then the little one. Ask :—

“ I have a big one and a small one. Now is this a big one or a small one? ”

As this is said, gesture with the closed left hand. If the answer is “ Big ”, you open the hand and roll out the big die, saying :—

“ That's right, a BIG one! ”

If the answer is “ Small ”, you say :—

“ Well, I wouldn't call that small! ”

Under cover of the surprise caused by the appearance of the large die it is a simple matter to drop the die you are holding in the right hand into your pocket, or, if you prefer, pick up the regular die and tiny die and drop them into the pocket, leaving the palmed die in the pocket at the same time.

Leave the large die on the table for a moment so that anyone can examine it if desired.

If the reader will study one stage of the routine at a time and understand it thoroughly before proceeding to the next stage, little difficulty will be experienced in mastering the clever moves.

Although it was stated at the beginning that the series of moves were suitable for dice effects in which the twist move was used, it was not intended to mean that the moves could only be used with such a routine. Most effects with two dice will be enhanced by this climax, but the reader should be careful to ensure that the addition does not make his own routine too lengthy.

When Dai Vernon appeared before Her Majesty, Queen Louise of Sweden, this effect with the dice caused great amusement and was repeated by royal request.

## DAI VERNON'S " ONE UNDER AND ONE DOWN ".

The reader will be familiar with the effect where a card is chosen from a packet of cards and then located by the performer placing the top card on the table, the next card from the top of the packet to the bottom, the next card on the table and so on until one card only remains in the performer's hands—it proves to be the selected card.

Previous methods have depended upon either a set-up or on bringing the selected card to a certain position in the packet. Dai Vernon has evolved a method whereby the effect is brought about with any ten cards, from which one is selected freely, but not moved, and without the packet having to be shuffled or cut to bring the card to a known position.

### METHOD.

Ask a spectator to hand you any ten cards from the pack. Spread the cards in a face-up fan so that a portion of the face of each card can be seen and ask him to name **one**—a free choice.

Unbeknown to him, you note the position of the card from your left of the packet. As you have made sure that the cards are evenly spread, it is a simple matter to note the position of the card as it is named.

Square the packet of cards, then proceed in accordance with the following formula. If the card is at the—

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| FIRST POSITION.   | Hold the packet face down, move the top card to the bottom, deal the next card down and so on until three cards remain, buckle the bottom card and place two cards as one under, then buckle and deal two as one—the card remaining is the selected card.                       |
| SECOND POSITION.  | <b>Hold</b> the cards FACE UP, then carry out the instructions for the NINTH POSITION (face down).  |
| THIRD POSITION.   | Hold the cards FACE UP, then carry out the instructions given for the EIGHTH POSITION (face down).  |
| FOURTH POSITION.  | <b>Hold</b> the cards face down. Deal the top card, place the next card on the bottom and so on until one card remains.   |
| FIFTH POSITION.   | Hold the cards face down. Move the top card to the bottom, deal the next card and so on until one card remains.   |
| SIXTH POSITION.   | Hold the cards face down. Deal the top card, place the next card on the bottom and so on until FOUR cards remain. Double buckle, placing two cards as one under the remaining two cards. Deal the top card, place the next card on the bottom and so on until one card remains. |
| SEVENTH POSITION. | Hold the cards face down. Move the top card to the bottom. Deal the next card and so on until FOUR cards remain, then as for sixth position (when four cards remain).   |

**EIGHTH POSITION.** Hold cards face down. Deal the top card. Move next card to bottom and so on until THREE cards remain. Buckle bottom card and place top two cards as one under it. Place next card on table and so on until one card remains.

**NINTH POSITION.** Hold cards face down. Move top card to bottom, deal the next card and so on until THREE cards remain. Buckle bottom card and move top two as one under it. Deal next card and so on until one card remains.

**TENTH POSITION.** Hold cards face down. Deal first card, move next card to bottom and so on until THREE cards remain. Buckle the bottom card and place top two as one under it, then buckle new bottom card and deal two as one—the card remaining is the selected card.

The method for buckling the bottom card is described in Chapter Four—remember, it is done with the left third and little fingers at the inner right corner of the card. In some positions, when four cards remain, a double buckle is necessary, namely, to buckle the two bottom cards. In this case, the left thumb presses on the right inner corner from above, allowing the third and little fingers to buckle first the bottom card, then the card second from bottom. This allows the two top cards to be taken cleanly as one.

Sometimes on Positions Two and Three Dai Vernon palms off the bottom card and allows the spectator to do the operation himself. Having only nine cards (a fact the spectator will not notice if the palm has been made cleanly), the selected card will remain according to its original position and whether he is instructed to deal one or move one in the first instance.

Dai Vernon usually repeats the effect and varies his patter to suit the circumstances.

If, on the first occasion, the position of the card makes it necessary for the packet to be dealt face up, then his patter would be :—

“ I'll show you how simple it is. I'll leave the cards face up and you can see what happens.”

Now if, on the repeat, it is necessary to turn the packet face down, he alters his patter to :—

“ It is not even necessary to see the faces.”

It will be seen that only when the selected card is at either Position Two or Three is it necessary to hold the packet face-up.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

## CHARLES MILLER'S "CUPS AND BALLS MOVE".

Dai Vernon was particularly keen to include in this book a magical item by his friend, Charles Miller, a fine magician for whom he has the highest regard. Charles Miller may not have received the amount of publicity as that accorded to many other magicians, but nevertheless he is, without doubt, one of the finest in the world today.

Here is his fine move with the Cups and Balls, which, although not difficult, must be practised thoroughly, then the reader will possess a move for inclusion in his own routine which is of the highest order.

Let us assume that near the beginning of the routine the three inverted cups have been stacked and, unbeknown to the spectators, there is a ball between each cup and one under the bottom cup. The spectators are aware of the existence of one ball only at this point—the fourth ball.

Close the right hand into a fist and rest the bottom of the fist on the solid bottom of the uppermost cup. Place the visible ball on top of the fist, then hold the top cup with the left hand, the first and second fingers curled around the rim with the thumb at the rear (Fig. 2).

An action now takes place that must be timed perfectly. The right fingers open a little to allow the ball to sink rapidly into the fist, and, as the ball disappears from sight, the left hand lifts the cup to disclose a ball resting on the centre cup (Fig. 3). Only practice will give you the correct timing.

Watch yourself in a mirror and time the movements so that the ball on the fist would just have sufficient time to sink through the fist and the bottom cup before the ball is revealed moving slightly on the centre cup. The actions must not be hurried—smooth actions, coupled with perfect timing, create a perfect illusion of the ball passing mysteriously through the solid bottom of the cup. The hands must work in unison, the left hand lifting the cup against the right hand—in other words, as a unit—as if the right hand was glued to the cup. Also the edge of the cup (as it is raised) should just graze the ball so as to agitate it slightly. A dead ball is not nearly as effective.

Pass the cup to the right hand for the left hand to pick up the visible ball. Notice in Fig. 4 how the cup has been taken into the right hand, the thumb at one side of the rim and the fingers at the other, in the ideal position to allow the finger-palmed ball to roll into the cup as it is placed down on the table.

The same moves are repeated with the second and third cups, so that it appears eventually that a ball has been made to pass through three solid cups and has come to rest on the table.

From start to finish of the sequence of moves the actions should be smooth and unhurried, with no pause between the appearance of a ball as a cup is lifted and the start of the repetition of the moves.

At the conclusion, the three cups will be mouth down on the table and, unbeknown to the spectators, there will be a ball under each cup. The fourth ball will be resting on the table—you are ready to proceed with your routine.

#### WELSH MILLER'S CARDS AND MATCHES.

The clever magician, Welsh Miller, inventor of the coin wand, coin droppers and several other ingenious gimmicks, devised a routine with three cards and some match-sticks which has much the same basic plot as the Cups and Balls. The matches appear, vanish and multiply under the cards in the same way as do the balls under the cups.

Dai Vernon has been performing Welsh Miller's routine for many years and has enriched it with some of his own delightful subtleties.

#### REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION.

You will require :—

- (a) Three cards which are bridged along their centre length in the same way as for the Three Card Monte, although the bridging is not so deep as is usual for that trick. All that is necessary is for the cards to be slightly curved along the centre to enable them to be picked up easily and quickly. The bridging can be done in view of the audience, and the cards, one on top of the other, placed face down on the table.
- (b) Four pieces of wooden match-sticks. Do not use the heads, but break off pieces from the stick about three-quarters of an inch in length. By breaking off the head of an English match of normal size, the stick remaining will, when broken in half, give you two such



pieces. Four pieces are needed for the routine, although the audience must believe that you are using three only.

In America they have the 'household' size of match, which is longer than the box type. Dai Vernon uses just one of these, breaks off the head, then breaks off a quarter length and conveys these two pieces to his pocket or apparently discards them. Actually he keeps the quarter length secretly clipped between his right first and second fingers and retains it there as he breaks the remaining portion of the match into three pieces. When using the box type of match it will be necessary to use two as described in (b) above, placing the two heads and one of the pieces in the pocket, but actually retaining the fourth piece.

The holding position for the fourth piece is important—it should rest along and be clipped between the top joints of the first and second fingers of the right hand. The fleshy part of the inside of the fingers holds the match securely.

## PERFORMANCE.

Pick up the three cards with the left hand, spread them in a fan and pass them into the right hand, the right first and second fingers going underneath to the faces of the cards and the thumb holding the back of the fan. In this position the fan can be turned to show the faces of the cards, the match between the first and second fingers remaining out of sight.

With the left hand, position the three visible match-sticks to form a "T" or triangle, two matches being towards the front of the table and the other at the rear and in the centre.

For clarity in the description we will call the match position shown at the right of the photographs No. 1 position, that at the left No. 2 and the centre rear position as No. 3.

Pass the fan of cards into the left hand, but retain one card in the right hand ; first and second finger (holding the match) under the face of the card and thumb on the back. Throw this card down over the match at position No. 1, but do *not* release the match you are gripping between the first and second fingers. Take another card into the right hand and throw it over the match at position No. 2, but this time release the match you are holding so that it goes down secretly underneath the card, to join the match already in that position. Fig. 5 shows an exposed view of the match under the card during the action of tossing it to position No. 2. Note that the first finger has moved away, allowing the match to be held against the face of the card by the second finger-tip. Do not throw the card from a distance ; if you toss it down from a few inches the action will appear casual and the match will go with it and stay under the card. When tossing just a card, or a card and a match together, the actions must be identical.

Take the last card into the right hand and toss it to position No. 3. Turn over the card at No. 3 position, remove the match with the right hand, between the first and second finger-tips, and hold in position by the thumb. The greater length of the match should be protruding above the finger-tips (Fig. 6). Reach over with the left hand and take the match between the thumb and forefinger (Fig. 6), hold the left hand above the card at position No. 2 (Fig. 7), and drop the match so that it falls on to the centre of the back of the card.

Pick up the match from the card with the right hand *exactly* as before and apparently take it into the left hand again. This time, however, as the left hand reaches to take the match (Fig. 6), push the match down with the left thumb until it is out of sight behind the right first and second fingers, where it can be clipped between those two fingers in the position already described. As if holding the match, move the left hand above the card, then open the fingers and thumb with the same action as if dropping the match. Of course, the actions of actually taking the match into the left hand and pretending to take it must appear the same.

Pick up the card at No. 2 position with the left hand and immediately transfer it to the right hand. Two matches are seen to be at No. 2 position, one of them having apparently penetrated the card.

Toss down the card over the matches at position No. 2 *without adding* the match held by the right fingers. Lift the card at No. 1 position with the left hand and transfer it into the right hand as you draw attention to the match still at No. 1 position. Toss down the card over the match at No. 1 position, adding the extra match.

With the right hand, turn over sideways the card at No. 2 position (leaving it face up) and pick up one of the matches. Pretend to take the match into the left hand (fake transfer), then hold that hand over the card at No. 1 position and apparently drop the match on to the card ; pick up the card and immediately transfer it to the right hand—it appears that the match has penetrated the card, as there are now two matches disclosed.

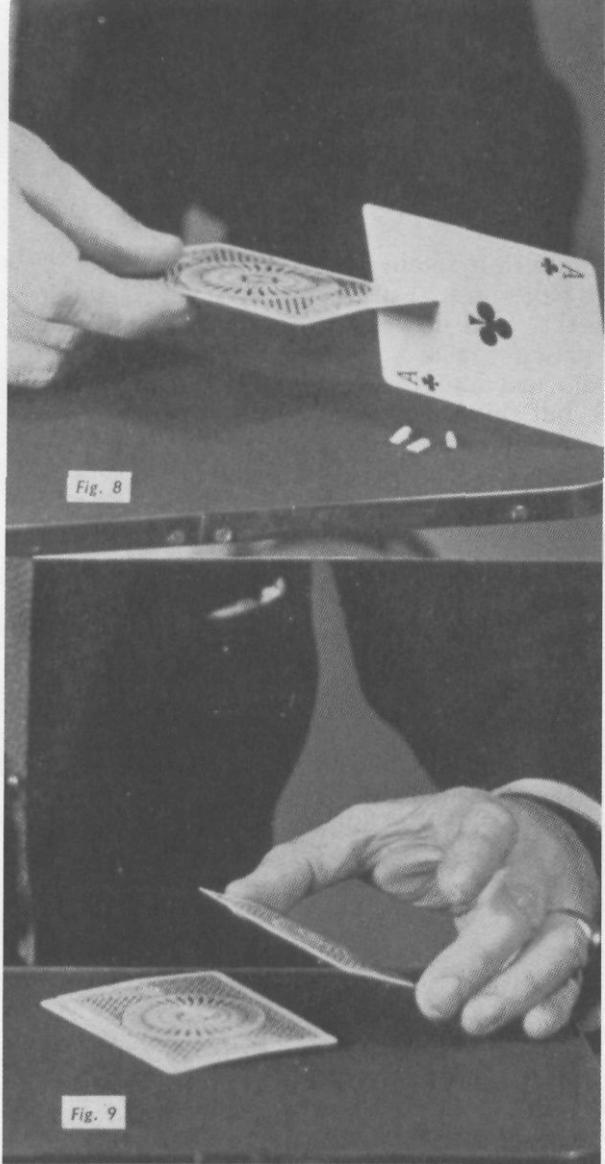


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

the second and top cards. Pick up the last match and pretend to drop it on the top card.

By lifting each card separately (Fig. 9) it is now possible to show that the matches have penetrated the cards, as a match is seen between the top and second cards, the second and bottom cards and underneath the bottom card. There is ample opportunity to get rid of the fourth match by picking up the three visible matches in the right hand and disposing of all four together.

#### OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

1. STARTING POSITION. Three matches placed in "T"; fourth match held secretly between right first and second fingers. Three bridged cards held in fan in left hand.
2. Take a card into right hand and toss to cover match No. 1. Take second card and toss to cover No. 2, adding match. Toss card to cover No. 3.

Toss the card over the two matches at No. 1 position, adding the match.

Take the remaining match at No. 2 position with the right hand; apparently take it into the left hand (fake transfer), then hold the hand over the card at No. 1 position and again pretend to drop the match on the card. Pick up the card at No. 3 position with the right hand and use it as a scoop to turn over the card at No. 1 position (Fig. 8)—three matches are disclosed. Return the card at No. 3 position, adding the fourth match.

Pick up a match from No. 1 position in the right hand, apparently take it into the left hand (fake transfer), and pretend to drop it on to the card in No. 3 position. This time do not lift the card to show the match, but immediately pick up the card at No. 1 position with the left hand, turn it face down as you take it into the right hand, then toss it *on top* of the card at No. 3 position, adding the match. The match will now be between the two cards. Repeat the same moves with another match picked up from No. 1 position, apparently dropping it on top of the two cards at No. 3 position, then take the card at No. 2 position, turn it face down and toss it on top of the two cards at No. 3 position, adding the match between

3. Take match from No. 3 with right hand, transfer to left hand and drop on top of card No. 2. Pick it up again with right hand, fake transfer into left and pretend to drop on No. 2, lift card with left hand and show match has penetrated. Transfer card to right hand and toss over No. 2 without loading match.
4. Lift card at No. 1 with left hand, transfer to right hand and toss over No. 1 again, loading match.
5. Turn over card at No. 2. Pick up one match with right hand, fake transfer to left hand and pretend to drop on No. 1. Pick up card at No. 1 with left hand, transfer to right hand, toss card again over No. 1, loading match.
6. Take remaining match at No. 2 and repeat moves of dropping on No. 1. Use card at No. 3 as scoop to turn over card No. 1. Toss card down at No. 3, loading match.
7. Pick up match from No. 1 and pretend to drop on No. 3.
8. Pick up No. 1 face-up card, turn face down and toss on top of card No. 3, loading match between cards.
9. Pick up match from No. 1 and pretend to drop on No. 3. Pick up card at No. 2, turn face down and drop on No. 3, loading match.
10. Pick up last match at No. 1, pretend to drop on No. 3.
11. Show that matches have penetrated cards ; one between top and middle cards, one between middle and bottom cards and one underneath bottom card.

#### TIPS FOR EXPERTS

No doubt the reader will have experienced those occasions, perhaps when practising a certain sleight or move, when a colleague has suggested some slight alteration in the handling which has caused everything to click into place. It may have been only the gripping of a card by a different finger or exerting pressure from another angle, but it is such little things which make all the difference.

In a recent letter to me Dai Vernon wrote down the following items of information which might well be just the advice that the reader is seeking to take that step nearer to perfection.

**THE PASS.** To excel—practise for smoothness ; forget speed. It is better if the left thumb tip is at the side—more illusive than when in the crotch.

**SECOND DEALING (Strike Method).** DELAYED timing is the true secret. The top card must not move until the right thumb has commenced its stroke to the right. Narrow margin is of minor importance. Timing and rhythm is everything.

**BOTTOM DEALING.** Card is pulled out with either index or second finger by a pivoting motion—not a straight pull.

**CARD PALMING.** Regardless of how a card is palmed, the hand concealing the card must never ‘freeze’. The card must be shifted to the gambler’s palm position or deep palm position as the hand is used either to gesture or for any other purpose.

The regular magician's palm is limited to a flat or partly curved position. The Gambler's Palm has four basic positions—flat, curved, partly closed or fully closed fist and in a pointing or indicator gesture. NEVER attempt to point with the finger when the card is in the Magician's Palm unless the card is almost completely folded or warped.

The use of the hand concealing a card is most important to allay suspicion. This applies also to any objects which are secreted in the hand or palm.

**SLEEVING.** The method Dai Vernon uses, and which he considers to be the best of all for sleaving a coin, is to 'shoot' it up with the ring finger aided by the second finger. This action is NOT a 'snap'. The two middle fingers close sharply as the hand is rotated and the index finger is raised as if to get attention.

A heavy coin, such as a silver dollar, can be sleeved with the back of the hand towards the audience. The coin must hit on the shirt cuff and it will force its way by gravity under the sleeve of the jacket, although it is close to the shirt cuff in this instance.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

BALL, CONE AND HANDKERCHIEF

*Page 197*

## *CHAPTER TWENTY*

### **BALL, CONE AND HANDKERCHIEF**

When Dai Vernon was selecting effects for his Harlequin Act he wished to include a routine on similar lines to the Cups and Balls. In his efforts to achieve originality he decided to employ one cup only, and for the sake of visibility from the stage the small balls usually associated with the cups were replaced by balls  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches in diameter.

The plot of his magical story was to be the alchemist's dream of turning base metal into gold ; a ball apparently changing from one metal to another (colour change) as the visual story to music unfolded. During his initial experiments the cup was exchanged for a cone, as he considered this would be more in character with the story. Having decided upon his theme and selected the articles he was to use, he then proceeded to evolve new sleights and adapt known ones to enable him to bring about the effects he wished to obtain. The final result was the exquisite routine, which was such a strong feature of his stage act.

When he made his decision to devote his talents entirely to the type of magic which he has always loved—close-up—Dai Vernon altered the routine slightly to enable him to perform it under the conditions which prevail in that sphere of magical entertainment. The routine described in this chapter is the one which he includes in his present act and lecture demonstrations.

#### **EFFECT.**

The performer removes a silk handkerchief from his pocket and draws it through his otherwise empty hands—a large white ball appears from the corner of the handkerchief. After draping the handkerchief over his left hand, he places the ball on the palm and covers it with a cone. The cone and handkerchief are tossed into the air—the ball has vanished, but is found in the performer's pocket.

A series of vanishes and reappearances of the ball now take place and during the process it changes colour from white to red, then back again to white. Eventually the empty cone is placed on the table and the ball is wrapped in the handkerchief—but it penetrates the centre of the handkerchief. Again it is wrapped up securely, but this time it vanishes completely. However, the ball, like a homing pigeon, has returned once more to its hiding place under the cone on the table.

From the foregoing description it will be apparent that the routine consists of a series of surprises. Every action has been carefully thought out and all of them beautifully blended together so that the routine flows smoothly for the whole of its running time.

## REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION.

The articles required are :—

- (1) An opaque silk handkerchief about 24 inches square. The colour should be in contrast to the colours of the balls that will be used. Before the performance the handkerchief is placed in the breast pocket of the jacket.
- (2) Three balls—two white and one red. Dai Vernon performs with solid ivory balls  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches in diameter, but the reader is advised to experiment to determine the largest size and weight he can conveniently handle (see Basic Sleight). At the start the three balls are in the right side pocket of the jacket or trousers. The jacket pocket is preferable, as the balls will rest in a line along the pocket ; the two white ones to the front and the red one at the rear.
- (3) A cone. The one shown in the photograph is the original that was used in the Harlequin Act, although at that time it was gaily coloured. It is made of leather, is six inches high and has a bottom diameter of three and a quarter inches. The small hole at the top is half an inch in diameter.

The size of the cone will, of course, depend upon the size of the balls to be used. Each ball must go right inside the cone so that when it is inverted (large opening upwards) there will be a space of at least an inch between the edge of the opening and the ball.

Although the original cone is made of leather, it could be made of stiff paper, cardboard, etc. I have practised with a cardboard cone and the moves can be made quite satisfactorily. At the start, the cone is on a table to the performer's right.

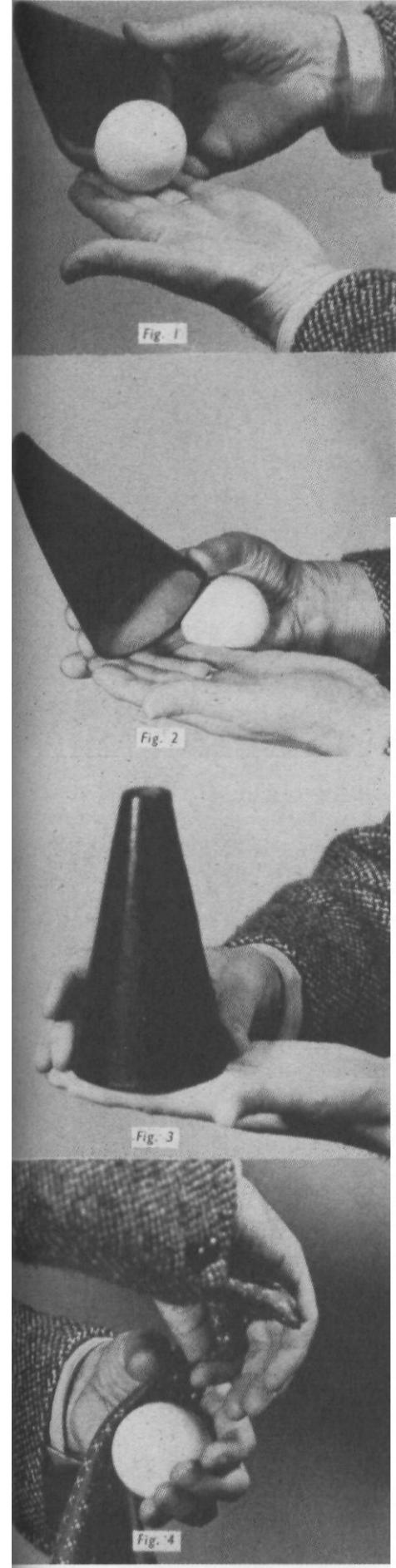
## THE BASIC SLEIGHT.

The basic sleight, which is employed throughout the routine, is used to secretly transfer the ball from the left palm (on which it is displayed) to the right palm, in the action of appearing to cover the ball with the cone. Although by no means difficult, the sleight must be practised until it can be made perfectly, as it is upon its mastery that the illusion depends.

When selecting suitable balls, it should be remembered that weight helps, and, as it is not necessary to hold the balls in the position usually known as the palm-proper, they can be quite large. In performance either the thumb or fingers are always in contact with the ball when it is held secretly.

Real billiard balls will be found suitable for most performers, but if difficulties are experienced, then rubber, plastic or wooden balls can be tried. Do not be discouraged by the fact that with a real billiard ball the hand will feel 'full to overflowing' at the start. This is quite natural when perhaps lighter and smaller balls have been used by the performer for the Multiplying Billiard Balls—the manipulations required for that trick are quite different from those necessary for this present routine.

Study Fig. 1 carefully—the ball is on the FINGERS of the left hand, which is held palm upwards, the fingers extended and pointing TOWARDS the audience. Notice how the ball rests on the second and



third fingers at about their middle joints. This is the position in which the ball is displayed. Its WEIGHT keeps it steady and firm on the fingers.

The right hand holds the cone, the thumb at the rear of the greatest diameter and the first and second fingers curled around the circumference ; the third finger is alongside the second finger and the little finger is free. The cone is brought in front of the ball, the small hole TOWARDS the audience and the bottom of the rim placed on the finger-tips. With a pivoting action the cone is brought upright, which, were there no trickery, would bring the cone over the ball. However, as the cone begins to tilt the second finger of the left hand is moved upwards *a fraction of an inch*, simultaneously the third and little fingers are lowered. This causes the ball to roll to the right and come against the right palm, where it is aided into position by the left little finger. The position at this stage can be seen at Fig. 2, where the ball is now held against the right palm by the left little finger—the cone is in the process of being brought upright and is just missing the ball. As the cone reaches the upright position (Fig. 3) the right thumb comes automatically over the ball and holds it against the palm. All is in readiness for the ball to be carried away in the right hand.

Whilst practising this move, the points to watch are :—

- (a) The left hand must NOT be tilted to the right. It is the finger movement which causes the ball to roll. This finger movement is very slight indeed and even without cover is almost imperceptible. With the cover afforded by the right fingers (Fig. 2) no movement can be seen. **KEEP THE LEFT THUMB PERFECTLY STILL.**
- (b) The left little finger only moves *sideways* at the last moment to help the ball into the right palm and hold it there momentarily.
- (c) If Figs. 2 and 3 are studied, the excellent cover from the front (given

by the cone itself and the back of the right hand and fingers) will be seen. Keep the right first and second fingers curled around the cone, fingers closed (the third finger is adjacent to the second finger), then it is impossible to see any movement of the left fingers or the rolling ball. The photographs have been taken from a position at the rear and to the left to give an exposed view.

- (d) Timing is an important factor—as the cone is tilted, it only just misses the ball. The action of bringing the cone upright commences BEFORE the ball rolls to the right.
- (e) Immediately the ball is against the right palm and the cone is upright on the left palm, the **RIGHT THUMB** is in the natural position to hold the ball against the palm. At this point the **LEFT LITTLE FINGER** is brought back against the side of the third finger **UNDER COVER OF THE RIGHT FINGERS**. When the right hand is removed, the left hand is in exactly the same position as it was at the start, but the cone is now standing upright upon the palm, when, if necessary, it can be steadied with the pad of the left thumb.

A good deal of space has been devoted to the description of this sleight, which takes but a fraction of a second to perform, but every detail has been given in order that the reader may study it carefully and practise it until it becomes second nature.

#### THE ROUTINE.

As all the actions in this routine flow so smoothly, it is ideally suited for performance to musical accompaniment. Personally, I think it would be a pity to break up the even tempo that patter would almost certainly bring about, although it may be possible to perform it to rhyme. In his demonstrations Dai Vernon performs it in silence—it speaks for itself.

STAGE 1. Stand facing the audience and place **BOTH** hands in the side pockets of the jacket—as if searching for a handkerchief; look down at the breast pocket, then, apparently realising that the handkerchief is there, remove the hands from the pockets (the right hand now secretly contains a white ball in the curled fingers) and immediately bring the left hand up to the breast pocket to withdraw the silk. On its way up to the breast pocket let the left hand be seen empty (without drawing undue attention to the fact); grasp the corner of the handkerchief that is protruding from the pocket between the left thumb and forefinger (back of hand now towards audience) and pull it away from the pocket. Bring the hands together, but left above right, then make a half turn to the left, stroking down the full length of the silk with the fingers of the right hand, the silk travelling over the ball in the right hand. Make no attempt to transfer the ball from hand to hand during the first stroking action. When the right hand is about half way down the length of the silk, turn the left hand, giving the audience a glimpse of the empty palm. The right hand travels the entire length of the silk and comes free.

After the first stroking action, bring the hands together again, turning the left hand palm downwards to bring the corner of the silk held by that hand pointing to the right. Grasp this corner of the silk between the right



thumb and forefinger, then turn the body to the right, bringing the hands to the right of the **body**. As the body turn is made, turn the left hand palm upwards, then drop the ball from the right hand and catch it with the curled left fingers, which come around the ball AND SILK to begin a stroking action down the length of the silk. Fig. 4 shows an exposed view of the position at this stage ; the left fingers, which have caught the ball, have closed around the ball and the silk and are starting the stroking action.

As the left hand begins to travel down the length of the silk, turn the *right* hand to give the audience a view of the empty palm. This brings the silk behind the right fingers, the corner of the silk curled over the right forefinger and pointing downwards and across the front of the right fingers (the right thumb now holds it in position). Curl the right second, third and little fingers into the palm and immediately open them out again, but to the *back* of the silk. Release the grip with the thumb and the corner of the silk will now be held between the right first and second fingers (Fig. 5—front view). Complete the stroking action with the left hand down the length of the silk until the silk falls free.

Stroke the silk once again, this time with the right hand, turning the body to the left and repeating the actions for transferring the ball from the left hand into the right hand, which does the stroking. Let the end of the silk fall free again so that the other end is held by the left hand only.

It is emphasised that the drawing of the silk through the hands is made smoothly, without pause, the alteration of the grip on the silk and the transference of the ball from hand to hand being made without stopping or changing the tempo of the drawing action.

It will be found that, as the ball is dropped secretly from one hand to the other, it falls into position almost automatically—it falls a short distance only, leaving the curled fingers of one hand and is caught by the curled fingers of the other hand. The hands are brought together for a logical reason, and, providing the transfer is made smoothly, no suspicion is aroused.

At the completion of the moves described above the ball is in the right hand and the silk hanging from the left hand, the corner held between the left first and second finger. Again without a pause, bring the hands IN FRONT of the body and the silk IN FRONT of the RIGHT HAND (the left hand a little above the right hand). BRING THE SILK OVER THE RIGHT FINGERS AND DOWN BEHIND THEM. Move the right LITTLE FINGER away from the third finger sufficiently for the silk to be taken from rear to front between the third and little fingers. To allow the silk to pass across the inside of the fingers, hold the ball against the palm by the thumb so that, in fact, the silk is BETWEEN the ball and the fingers. Move the left hand DOWN and the right hand UP, causing the silk to be drawn through the right hand. When the free corner of the silk is about to enter the right fist, move the right thumb down under the ball and lever it up to the top of the fist ; the ball can be helped into position by the curling right fingers, which squeeze it upwards until it is balanced on the right fist. DO NOT pull the silk completely through the right fist ; grip the corner in the curled right fingers and RELEASE THE LEFT HAND HOLD. From the front the ball is seen balanced on the right fist, from which the silk is hanging. The actions have made it appear as if the ball has been squeezed from the corner of the handkerchief.

STAGE 2. Move the left hand up to the centre of the silk and grasp a corner, then move the hands apart to the full extent of the silk. Fig. 6 shows this position—actually the hands would be further apart, the silk stretched between them and the ball balanced on top of the right fist.

After only a slight pause to let the audience see the ball and silk, quickly release the corner held by the left hand and place that hand palm upwards BEHIND the centre of the silk. Release the right hand grip when the silk is draped over the left hand—actually the right hand can assist in the draping, even though the ball is balanced on top of the fist.

Holding the left hand in the position described for the BASIC SLEIGHT, toss the ball from the right fist so that it falls on to the handkerchief over the left fingers. With the right hand pick up the cone, show it empty, then bring it over the ball—in appearance the movements are EXACTLY the same as for the basic sleight, but on this occasion the ball is actually covered by the cone. Leaving the cone on the left hand, move the right hand to the bend of the left elbow and hitch up the sleeve, then move it back to the cone and lift it, to reveal the ball. Once more cover the ball with the cone, but this time perform the BASIC SLEIGHT (it is even easier with the silk over the left hand). Move the right hand up to the bend of the left elbow, hitch up the sleeve again, then move the hand down to grip the hanging corner on the right side of the silk. The corner is gripped between the right thumb and forefinger, the other fingers relaxed and natural in appearance.

Make an upward tossing motion with the left hand—the cone travels upwards and simultaneously the right hand jerks the silk away from the left hand. As the cone descends, catch it in the left hand with the large opening towards the audience—the ball has vanished. Now take the silk



Fig. 9

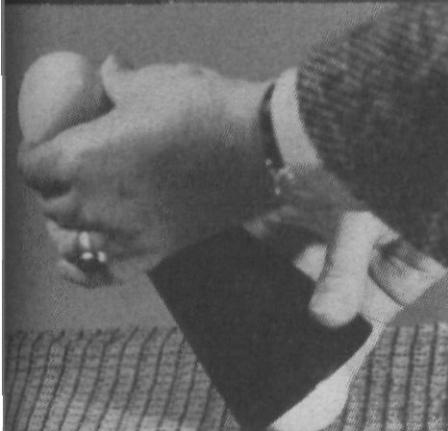


Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

into the left hand and the cone into the right hand, the right thumb on one side of the larger end and first, second and third fingers curled around it. The small end of the cone should be pointing downwards at an angle of 45 degrees. In this position allow the ball to roll secretly into the cone. In Fig. 7 can be seen a rear view of the holding position of the ball and cone in the right hand at the moment of loading. When the ball is in the cone, except for the silk in the left hand and the cone in the right BOTH palms are seen to be empty.

Place the silk in the pocket on the left side of the jacket and at the same moment bring the cone nearly upright in the right hand to allow the ball to roll out into the palm, where it is held in position by the curled little finger. Transfer the cone to the left hand and hold it with the large opening towards the audience. Place the right hand in the pocket, then, when it is removed, show the ball held between the thumb and forefinger. This is the duplicate white ball, the original ball being held in the palm by the curled second and third fingers (Fig. 8). The left hand is dropped and turned to bring the cone to the position shown in Fig. 8.

Toss the visible ball into the air and take the cone into the right hand. Catch the ball with the left hand and simultaneously allow the palmed ball in the right hand to roll into the cone.

Although a ball is inside the cone, it is still possible to perform the BASIC SLEIGHT, and that is the next move, which, on completion, leaves the duplicate ball under the cone and the original ball palmed in the right hand. After displaying the cone on the left hand, bring the right hand to the front of the cone at the bottom, then slide it up the outside. Move the right thumb down under the ball and, as the right hand reaches the top of the cone, lever the ball upwards and into view. It appears that the thumb and forefinger have squeezed the large ball through the tiny opening at the top of the cone (Fig. 9). It is essential that the ball travels up the front

of the cone at the exact centre, then the illusion of the ball emerging from the top is excellent. It can even be balanced on the small opening on the top of the cone.

With the right hand take the visible ball and place it into the pocket ; remove the *empty* hand then lift the cone to show that the ball has returned. Again cover the ball (BASIC SLEIGHT), toss the cone up and catch it in the left hand (opening towards audience), then reach into the pocket and bring out the other white ball (Fig. 8). The visible ball is tossed into the air ; the right hand takes the cone and loads the palmed ball into it (Fig. 7) as the visible ball is caught in the left hand. Perform the BASIC SLEIGHT, then apparently squeeze the ball through the small opening at the top (Fig. 9). With the right hand place the ball into the pocket, but this time bring out the RED ball palmed. Lift the cone with the right hand to show that the white ball has returned, then place the cone, large opening upwards, between the left thumb and forefinger, and, holding cone and ball together, lift and turn the left hand to show the interior of the cone to the audience. Drop the left hand to its original position, then take the cone into the right hand again, secretly loading the red ball (Fig. 7) as the white ball is displayed on the left fingers. Place the cone over the white ball (BASIC SLEIGHT), tap the cone with the right forefinger, then lift the cone to reveal the red ball. Take the cone between the left thumb and forefinger and show it to be empty in the manner described above, then take the cone into the right hand and secretly load the white ball again (Fig. 7). Cover the ball with the cone (BASIC SLEIGHT), now, without lifting the cone this time, place the right hand into the pocket, drop the red ball and bring out the white ball between the thumb and forefinger ; display it, then return it to the pocket, but actually bring it out again in the palm. Lift the cone and show the white ball on the left fingers, and, as it is displayed, secretly load the other ball into the cone (Fig. 7).

Place the cone on the table and balance the visible ball on the top. Fig. 10 shows a side view of how this is accomplished, the ball in the cone being prevented from falling out by holding the right little finger over the bottom. Ample time and misdirection is provided by the action of the left hand, which takes the visible ball to the small opening at the top of the cone and holds it there so that when the cone is in the upright position the ball will be balanced on the top.

Many different operations have been described in this stage, and, on reading through it the first time, it is almost certain that the reader will be confused. However, a trial will prove that it is simply a question of variations of the same moves, the basic sleight being the main feature throughout. The variations can soon be committed to memory and the movements will be automatic after a little practice.

A ball is only ever held in the palm momentarily, being loaded into the cone almost immediately, so that the hands are free to handle the visible ball and cone. The palms are seen otherwise empty at nearly all times, although no undue attention is drawn to this fact.

Once again smoothness of action and evenness of tempo is emphasised

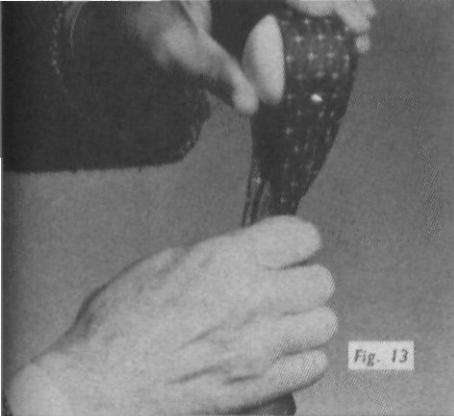


Fig. 13



Fig. 14

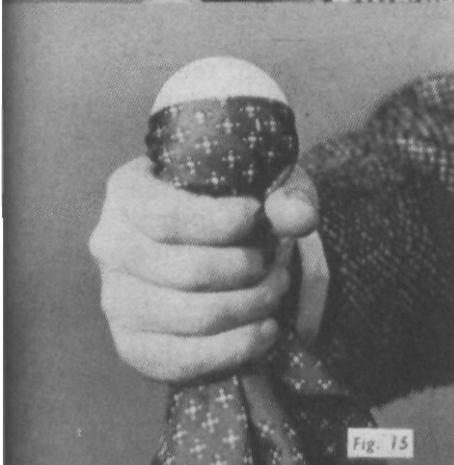


Fig. 15



Fig. 16

—remember, no long pauses ; allow just sufficient time for each surprise to be appreciated before continuing the action. It is the series of surprises that bewilder and mystify the audience ; they are allowed insufficient time to think out HOW it happens before the next surprise is upon them. DO NOT HURRY, but keep the action moving all the time.

STAGE 3. Take the silk out of the left side pocket with the left hand and pick up the ball from the top of the cone with the right hand. Hold the ball between the thumb and fingers of the right hand (palm upwards), then cover the ball with the handkerchief (Fig. 11). Bring the left fingers IN FRONT of the handkerchief over the ball and with the thumb pinch a small portion of the handkerchief. Lift the handkerchief a little and give it a shake, but retain the ball in the right hand, which is now outside the handkerchief at the back (Fig. 12). Immediately lift the right hand and place the ball at the back of the left fingers, holding it in position momentarily with the right thumb as the right fingers curl round the right side of the handkerchief. Hold the ball in position with the left thumb, then stroke the handkerchief downwards with the right hand.

To the audience the ball is still under the handkerchief, its removal being secret and covered by the handkerchief itself. To enable this move to be performed smoothly, the centre of the handkerchief is not brought over the ball when it is covered in the first place. Reference to Figs. 11 and 12 (side view) will make this clear, as they show that only a short section of the handkerchief projects at the rear, the larger portion being in front of the ball. Therefore, when the left hand lifts the handkerchief, it does not have to travel a great distance in an upwards direction before the right hand and ball are clear. The left fingers are curved, and as a pinch of the handkerchief has been taken by the left thumb it appears that you are holding the ball through the handkerchief the whole time.

As soon as the ball is behind the

handkerchief, held in position by the left thumb, and the right hand has stroked downwards once, grasp the handkerchief under the ball with the right hand and begin to twist to the right. Simultaneously, with the left fingers pull the handkerchief more over the top of the ball to prevent it appearing prematurely (Fig. 13—side view from the right). When the right hand has twisted the handkerchief sufficiently to prevent it slipping over the ball, move the left hand down, grasp the handkerchief below the right hand and continue the twisting. Fig. 14 shows a side view (from the left) at this point—the ball, covered at the front by the handkerchief, is resting on the top of the right fist ; the left hand is continuing the twisting. As the handkerchief gets tighter, exert a squeezing pressure on the ball (and the portion of handkerchief that covers it) with the right thumb and forefinger, so that the handkerchief begins to ‘ skin ’ off the ball. From the front (Fig. 15) the appearance is that the ball is slowly penetrating the handkerchief.

When the ball has fully appeared, grasp the handkerchief just below the right fist between the left thumb and forefinger and carry it away to the left. It spins prettily as it untwists.

STAGE 4. Cover the ball again with the handkerchief in EXACTLY the same manner as before—not centrally, but with only about six inches of the handkerchief hanging down at the back. This time really hold the ball through the handkerchief with the left fingers and thumb. Bring the right hand down and behind the handkerchief and hold the projecting rear corner in the fork of the thumb (Fig. 16—side view from right). Extend the right fingers under the handkerchief ready to catch the ball secretly as the next move is made.

Holding the hands so that the left hand is about chest high, release the handkerchief and ball, the latter falling into the right fingers ; simultaneously drop both hands downwards, level with the thighs, and turn the right hand so that the back is towards the audience. The handkerchief flutters as it drops, and, due to the corner being held in the fork of the right thumb, there is sufficient material to cover the ball in the right fingers until the right hand is turned. The illusion of the ball simply dissolving under the handkerchief is excellent.

Bring the left hand over to the right and begin a stroking action along the handkerchief, secretly transferring the ball into the left hand. This is the same move as you made at the commencement of the routine, but this time the left hand stops half way along the silk. Release the right hand hold and gesture with that hand towards the cone on the table. As the gesture is made push the centre of the handkerchief into the jacket pocket on the left side (the ball goes with it), leaving the ends hanging out.

Lift the cone with the right hand—the ball has returned to base!

Take your bow.

#### OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

1. Place hands in jacket pockets ; remove ; remove silk from breast pocket with the left hand ; right hand secretly contains ball.
2. Pull silk through hands ; transfer ball from hand to hand secretly.

3. Produce ball from corner of silk (on top of right fist).
4. Silk over left palm ; ball on silk ; cover ball with cone ; hitch up left sleeve.
5. Lift cone ; cover ball (**BASIC SLEIGHT**) ; hitch up left sleeve ; toss cone in air, catch in left hand and transfer to right, where ball is loaded.
6. Place silk in pocket (left). Unload ball from cone into right hand, take cone into left hand and show empty as right hand goes to pocket and produces duplicate ball.
7. Toss visible ball into air ; take cone into right hand and load palmed ball as left hand catches visible ball.
8. Basic sleight ; produce ball from top of cone ; place in pocket ; remove empty hand.
9. Lift cone and show ball returned. Cover again (basic sleight) ; toss cone in air ; produce ball (duplicate) from pocket.
10. Toss visible ball into air ; take cone into right hand, load palmed ball as left hand catches visible ball.
11. Basic sleight ; produce ball from top of cone, place in pocket, hand palms red ball.
12. Lift cone and show white ball ; show cone empty (in left hand) ; take cone into right hand and load red ball.
13. Basic sleight ; lift cone and show red ball ; show cone empty (in left hand) ; take cone into right hand and load white ball.
14. Basic sleight ; place right hand in pocket, drop red ball and bring out white ball between thumb and finger, place back in pocket but palm in hand ; lift cone and reveal white ball ; load duplicate.
15. Place cone on table, visible ball on top.
16. Remove silk ; cover white ball in right hand ; left hand apparently holds ball through silk, but actually right hand places ball behind silk.
17. Twist silk ; ball penetrates silk.
18. Cover ball again ; vanish ; stroke silk for half its length only ; place silk (and ball) in pocket ; lift cone and reveal ball.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE LAST TRICK OF DR. JACOB DALEY

*Page* 210

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### THE LAST TRICK OF DR. JACOB DALEY

On the 17th February, 1954, Dr. Jacob Daley was a guest at the Art Directors' Club Luncheon in New York. He, with other well-known magicians, entertained the party with magic. Dr. Daley gave a sparkling performance and returned to his seat to well-deserved applause. Shortly afterwards he fell from his chair, and, although medical aid was immediately available, it was found that he had passed away.

His sudden death shocked and saddened the world of magic. He was a friend to all magicians, and nothing pleased him more than to perform for them and devise new effects and routines for their entertainment and use. To quote from M-U-M, the monthly magazine of the Society of American Magicians :—

*“Dr. Daley was a distinguished specialist in two fields—surgery and sleight of hand.*

*“A few days before he died he explained that the surgeon and the sorcerer were closely akin. Both produce, change and cause matter to disappear.*

*“He enjoyed conjuring for magicians. He was a perfectionist, a master technician, a great innovator. Magic to him was an art and he was an artist in the first sense of the word.*

*“Few know of his work behind the scenes aiding magicians and their families in less fortunate circumstances. He was always ready to help in any emergency.*

*“Leipzig inspired Dr. Daley, Hofzinser was one of his idols, and Erdnase was his favourite text. For twenty years he was a member of the Parent Assembly.*

*“Magic has lost an outstanding performer and we have lost a close friend.”*

Dr. Daley's interest in magic was aroused by meeting the clever amateur magician, Dr. Henry C. Falk, who showed him the Herrmann Pass and recommended that he should practise it until perfect. Those magicians who knew Dr. Daley will agree that his execution of this sleight was superb.

Later the Doctor met and enjoyed the confidences of Nate Leipzig, Sam Horowitz and Dai Vernon.

During the latter years of Dr. Daley's life rarely a day passed without he and Dai Vernon contacting each other, either by visits or by telephone, to discuss magic. They shared their views and secrets and each had a great respect for the other as a close friend, a gentleman and a magician.

When performing Dr. Daley had a disarming manner which threw spectators completely off the scent. He was apparently indifferent to what was being done even at the vital moment of the trickery, and this, together with his unique dexterity, made his tricks appear to be real magic.

When studying methods for performing a new effect or improving an old one, Dr. Daley assumed that there would always be at least one weak spot and he strived for its elimination. The success of his efforts were obvious in his own fine performances and can be judged from his writings in magical magazines and in the "STARS OF MAGIC" series.

It was BILL SIMON who suggested the theme for the trick which Dr. Daley perfected during the last weeks of his life. The method is a fine example of the Daley technique, it being enthusiastically acclaimed by those of his associates who form the "inner circle" of card specialists in New York.

The plot is simple and direct. The four Aces are held face up in the left hand ; the red Aces on top of the squared packet and the black Aces underneath. Each card is shown separately, then a black Ace is placed on top of the packet and the other black Ace underneath—the cards are spread and the red Aces are seen to be sandwiched in the centre. After turning the cards face down, the two outer (black) Aces are placed on the table, leaving the performer holding the two red Aces. A spectator is asked to indicate the position of the Ace of Spades which a moment previously he saw dealt on to the table. When he points to the card the performer turns it face up—it is a red Ace. The other card on the table is also a red Ace! Both black Aces are in the performer's hand ; an extraordinary transposition has taken place.

## PERFORMANCE.

Remove the Aces from the pack, then hold them squared up and face up in the left hand. The position of the Aces at this point should be that the two red Aces are on top of the face-up packet, with the two black Aces underneath.

So that the reader may follow the actual cards from the photographs the set-up at the start should be :—From the top of the face-up packet—Hearts, Diamonds, Spades and Clubs. In performance the order of the suits is immaterial, providing the red cards are together and the black cards together. However, it is advisable to always keep to a set order, then the routine will be easier to commit to memory.

1. The first step is to show the face of each card individually, in a natural manner, when, although it appears that the order is rearranged to bring one black Ace to the top and the other to the bottom of the packet, actually the order from the top will be black, red, black, red. This is accomplished with the aid of the **BIDDLE MOVE** (credited to ELMER BIDDLE), which is performed as follows :—

Hold the packet of cards face up in the dealer position in the left hand, then bring the right hand OVER the packet, grasping the outer short edge of the cards at the right corner with the right second and third fingers and the right corner of the inner short edge with the pad of the right thumb. Holding the cards with the right hand, move them to the right, but hold back the top card, the Ace of Hearts, by extending the left thumb across the face of the card. As the rest of the packet clears the left fingers, the

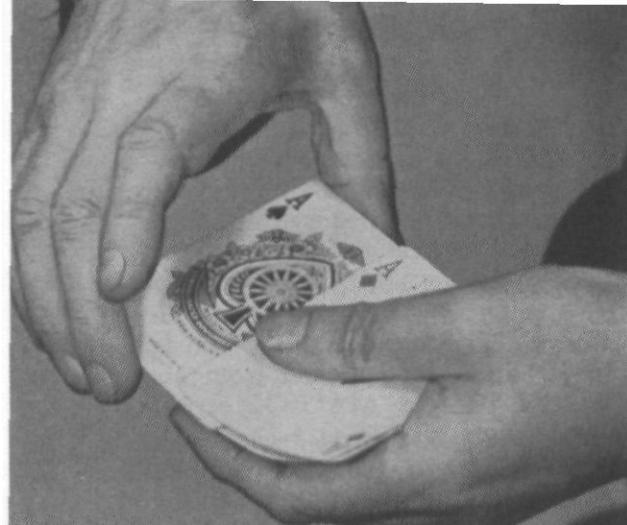


Fig. 1

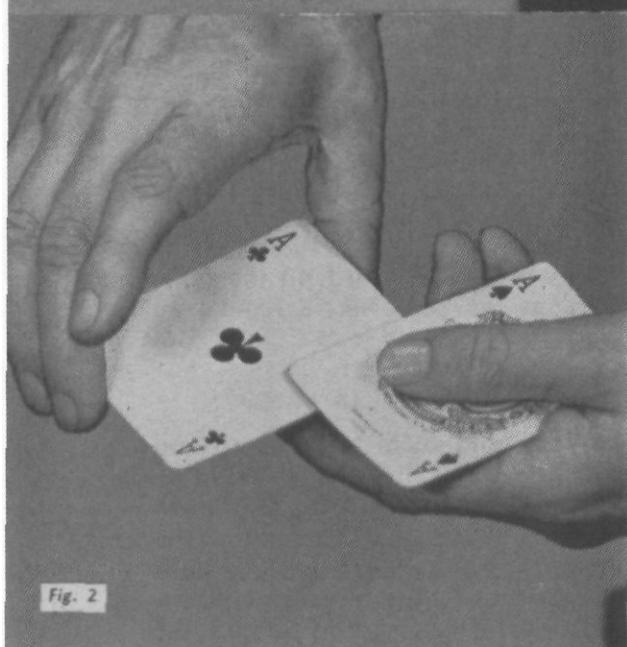


Fig. 2

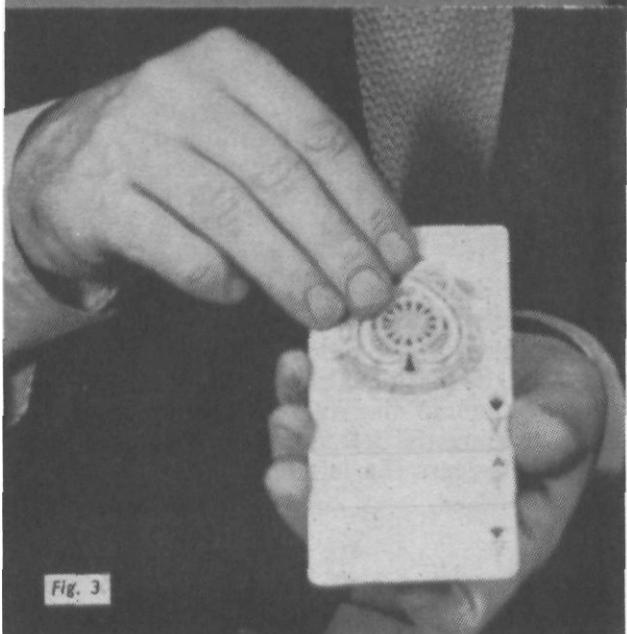


Fig. 3

Ace of Hearts falls on to the left fingers. Call attention to it by stating its name.

Now place the right hand packet OVER the Ace of Hearts so that it is completely covered momentarily and extend the left thumb over the face of the Ace of Diamonds.

Draw off the Ace of Diamonds by moving the right hand to the right again (Fig. 1). As the packet clears the left fingers the Ace of Diamonds falls on top of the Ace of Hearts, but unbeknown to the audience hold a break between them with the tip of the left little finger. Call the name of this second card.

Bring the right hand packet over the cards in the left hand again, when, because of the break, the Ace of Diamonds can be picked up by the right fingers and thumb and carried away on the bottom of the right hand packet as the Ace of Spades is drawn off by the left thumb. Complete cover is provided for this move, as the Ace of Diamonds is hidden by the packet then the Ace of Spades remains behind as the packet is carried to the right. The position now is that, as far as the audience is aware, there are three cards in the left hand, the Aces of Hearts, Diamonds and Spades ; actually there are two cards only, the Aces of Hearts and Spades. The Ace of Diamonds is underneath the Ace of Clubs in the left hand.

Performed smoothly, the appearance is that the whole face of each card has been shown slowly and fairly, as the cards are pulled from the right hand packet into the left hand.

2. The next move is to place the two cards in the right hand (the audience is aware of the Ace of Clubs only) underneath, but protruding from, the cards in the left hand.

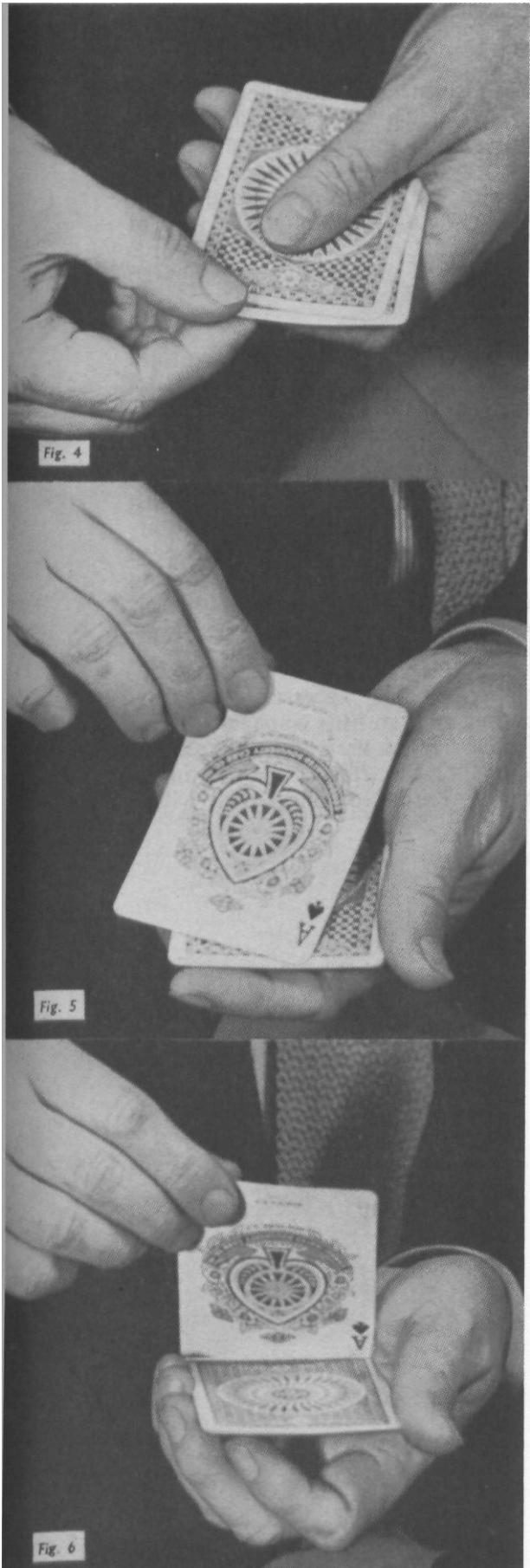


Fig. 2 shows how this is done, the right hand sliding its cards underneath the right outer corner of the left hand cards. The cards should protrude for half their length. Now, if no trickery had taken place, the protruding card would be the Ace of Clubs only, but actually it has the Ace of Diamonds underneath it.

3. When the cards are in line, lift them together so that their right long edges can be held by the tips of the left fingers and the left long edges by the pad of the left thumb. Now, with the right finger-tips, slide the Ace of Spades backwards, to reveal a portion of the face of the Ace of Hearts. There is only one red card in the centre of the black cards ; there should be two, but as they would be squared and only one seen, the fact that only one red card is visible looks perfectly natural (Fig. 3).

Say : "Black Aces on the top and bottom, red Aces in the middle," then slide the cards together and hold them in a squared packet.

4. Turn the packet face down in the left hand and deal the top card face down to the right of the table as you say : "Black Ace". Now you apparently draw out the bottom card, show it to be the other black Ace, and deal it on top of the first Ace (supposedly black but really red). Actually the following move takes place.

As the right thumb and forefinger go to the outer top edge of the packet, in the natural manner for the forefinger to slide out the bottom card, push the top card of the packet diagonally to the right with the LEFT thumb. Only a very slight movement of the top card is necessary (Fig. 4), just sufficient for the right thumb to be able to contact the edge of the back of the second (middle)

card. Draw out BOTH the middle and bottom cards together, perfectly squared so that they appear to be one card. To cover this action, tilt the left hand upwards. Lift and turn the right hand, then draw it backwards towards the body to reveal the face of the Ace of Spades (Fig. 5), whose free short edge rests momentarily on the back of the card in the left hand. Now bring the right hand forward again so that the Ace of Spades (two cards) tilts forward, the free short edge sliding backwards across the back of the left hand card (Fig. 6) until the cards can be squared in a packet by releasing the right hand grip.

5. Deal the top card of the packet on top of the card to the right of the table—this top card has just been shown as the Ace of Spades (the other black Ace); actually it is the Ace of Hearts. Both red Aces are now face down at the right of the table, but, due to the subtle moves that have been performed, the audience believes them to be the black Aces.

Ask a spectator to point to the Ace of Spades. As he has just been shown its face and seen it dealt from the packet, he will, quite naturally, point to the top card of the two on the table. Turn over the card indicated and show it to be a red Ace, then turn over the second card 'on the table, which also proves to be a red Ace. Turn the cards in the left hand face up, when it is seen that they are the black Aces—the transposition is complete.

Although the description of this routine is necessarily lengthy, the performing time is quite short. The fact that so little appears to have been done makes the climax extremely effective. When the question is asked : "Where is the Ace of Spades ?" it seems that the trick is just starting—the effect is upon the spectators before they have time to collect their wits.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

PAUL ROSINI'S IMPROMPTU THIMBLE ROUTINE

*Page 217*

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### PAUL ROSINI'S IMPROMPTU THIMBLE ROUTINE

For many years Dai Vernon has been performing this impromptu thimble routine, which was a favourite with Paul Rosini. Dai has made certain alterations in the handling to suit himself, but the routine remains basically the same as when performed by the originator.

When the well-known Scottish magician, Johnny Ramsay, came down to London to attend Dai Vernon's first lecture in England he brought with him some of the thimbles that have become known as his trade mark. He made a present of a set of them to Dai, who has used them in the photographs for this chapter.

#### EFFECT.

The performer reaches into his pocket and brings out a thimble on the forefinger of his right hand. The thimble jumps magically from his right forefinger on to his left forefinger then returns to its original position.

Stating that his audience will suppose that he is using more than one thimble, the performer confesses that this is so ; in fact, he admits to having five, which then appear, one on each finger and one on his thumb.

Now, starting with the five thimbles on his right fingers and thumb, the performer causes them to jump magically, one at a time, on to his left fingers and thumb until his right hand is empty.

#### REQUIREMENTS.

Six thimbles are required. Five are in the jacket pocket on the right side and one is in the jacket pocket on the left side.

#### PERFORMANCE.

Reach into the jacket pockets with both hands as if searching for something and load the thimbles on to the hands, the right hand getting a thimble on each finger and one in the finger-palm position (with the opening towards the thumb) and the left hand getting the thimble into the thumb-palm position.

Bring the hands from the pockets with only one thimble showing (on the right forefinger), the remaining right hand fingers being curled into the palm, holding and hiding the thimble in the finger-palm position (Fig. 1). All the photographs show the performer's view.

Hold both hands in front of the body at chest height, fingers pointing upwards, and, after a pause of sufficient length to allow the audience to see that there is only a thimble on the right forefinger, quickly move the hands towards each other, but do not let them touch. As the movement is made, curl the right forefinger rapidly inwards, leaving the thimble in the thumb-palm position before straightening the finger again. Simultaneously, rapidly bend the left forefinger inwards and get the thimble on to its tip from the left thumb-palm position—straighten the finger immediately (Fig. 2).

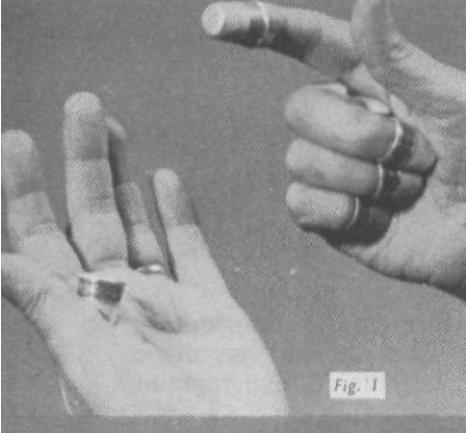


Fig. 1

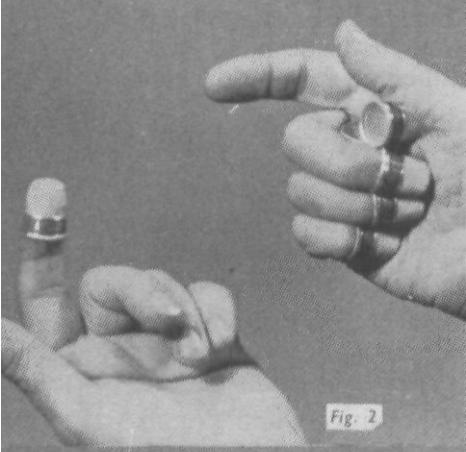


Fig. 2

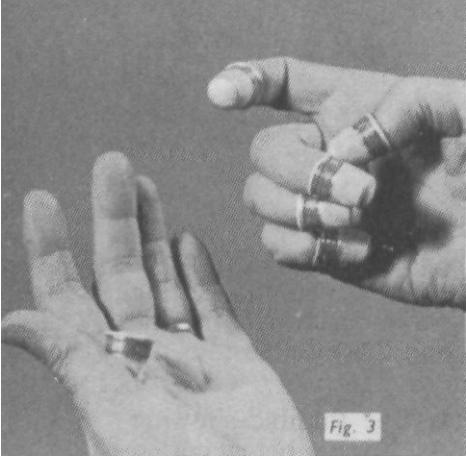


Fig. 3

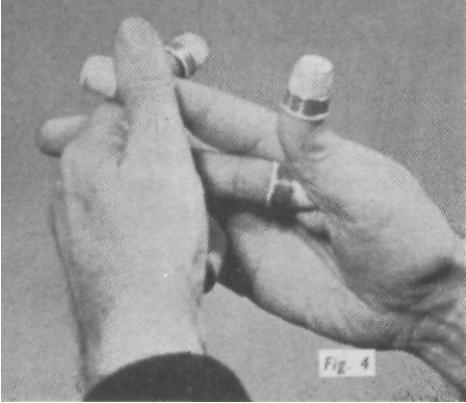


Fig. 4

If these movements are carried out rapidly and timed correctly, it will appear from the front as if the thimble has jumped from the right forefinger on to the left forefinger.

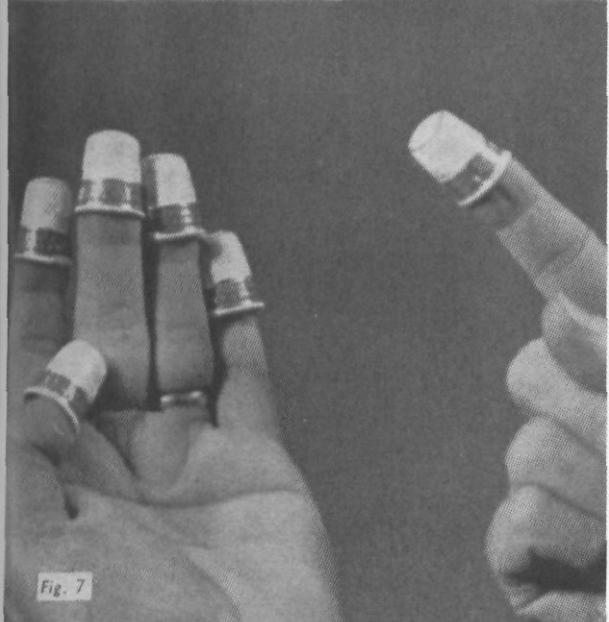
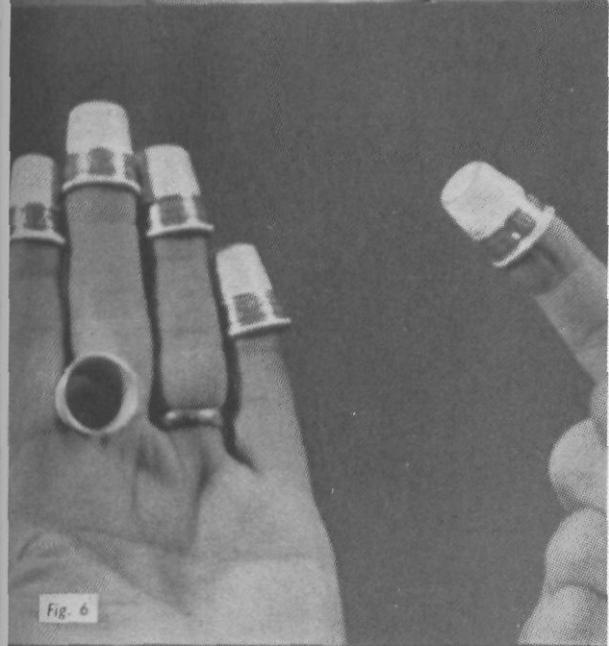
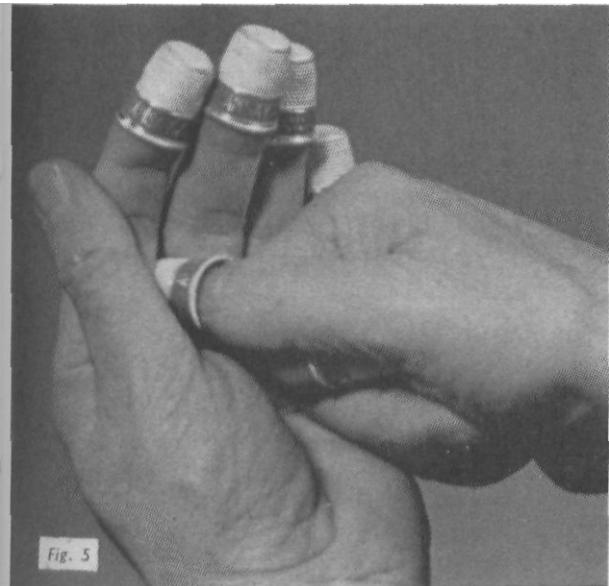
Repeat these movements a few times, making the thimble jump from forefinger to forefinger, but finally leave it showing on the right forefinger. Do not overdo this jumping movement : just repeat it a few times.

Now say : " I know what you think. You think I use more than one thimble. Well, you are right ; I do ... I use five ". At this point bend the right thumb rapidly and insert the tip into the finger-palmed thimble, then immediately straighten all fingers and the thumb. Five thimbles are brought into view. In Fig. 3 the tip of the thumb has just entered the opening of the thimble and the fingers and thumb are ready to be straightened.

Next make a thimble travel from the right forefinger to the left forefinger by thumb-palming the thimble from the right forefinger and producing the thimble from the left thumb-palm position on the left forefinger. This is done under cover of the gesture of quickly moving the hands towards each other and is a repetition of the move you made previously when causing the thimble to jump from hand to hand.

Bring the left hand over to the right hand and take the thimble on the right little finger between the left thumb and forefinger (deep down on the finger), and as you place it on the right forefinger the left second finger-tip enters the thimble held in the right thumb-palm (Fig. 4). Keep the left second, third and little fingers curled into the palm, concealing this thimble as you separate the hands.

By quickly bending the right forefinger and taking its thimble into the right thumb-palm position, then straightening the forefinger and simultaneously straightening the left second finger, all under cover of the gesture of moving the hands together, the thimble will have appeared to have jumped from the



right forefinger on to the left second finger.

Repeat these moves, except that it is the thimble on the right third finger which is taken by the left thumb and forefinger and placed on the right forefinger, the thimble in the right thumb-palm position being stolen by the left third finger-tip. The thimble just placed on the right forefinger is made to jump on to the left third finger.

Again repeat the moves, but this time it is the thimble from the right second finger which is placed on the right forefinger, whilst the right thumb-palmed thimble is stolen by the left little finger. The thimble jumps from the right forefinger on to the left little finger.

Wiggle the right thumb to draw attention to the last thimble, then move the right hand behind the left hand, steal the thimble from the right thumb-palm position on to the tip of the right forefinger and push the top of the thimble on the right thumb into the flesh between the base of the left first and second fingers. In the exposed view at Fig. 5 the right forefinger is stealing its thimble, whilst the right thumb is pushing the top of its thimble between the base of the left first and second fingers. If the right forefinger is straightened as the right hand is brought from behind the left, then it appears that all you have done is to transfer the thimble from the right thumb to the right forefinger.

Fig. 6 shows the performer's view at this point, where a thimble can be seen gripped at the base of the left first and second fingers, the opening of the thimble pointing at right angles to the fingers.

Under cover of the gesture of quickly moving the hands towards

each other, the thimble from the right forefinger is taken into the right thumb-palm position and simultaneously the left thumb-tip moves into the opening of the thimble at the base of the left first and second fingers. When the right forefinger is straightened and the left thumb brought into view again, it appears that the thimble has jumped from the right forefinger on to the left thumb.

Fig. 7 shows the right forefinger beginning to bend inwards and the left thumb stealing its thimble.

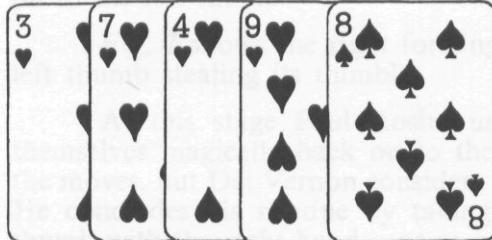
At this stage Paul Rosini used to cause the thimbles to transfer themselves magically back on to the right fingers and thumb by reversing the moves, but Dai Vernon considers that this is somewhat of an anti-climax. He concludes his routine by taking the thimbles off the left fingers and thumb with the right hand, one at a time, and dropping them into a glass, adding the extra thimble as he drops the next to last one. The *last* thimble is dropped in the glass with style and some ceremony, so that the routine finishes in a clean and showy manner—with a grand flourish.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE VERNON POKER DEMONSTRATION

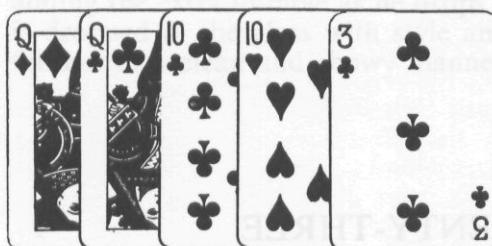
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## THE VERNON POKER DEMONSTRATION



**1**

1st hand discards the 8 of spades and draws king of hearts to make a flush.



**2**

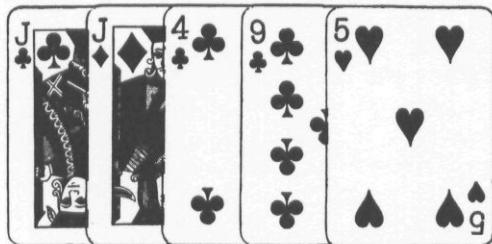
2nd hand discards the three of clubs and draws queen of hearts to make a full house.



**3**

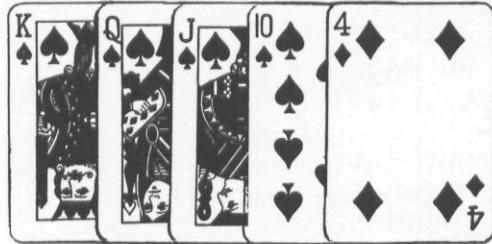
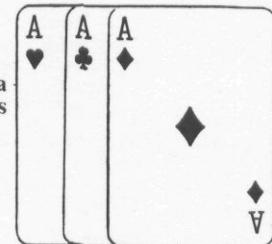
3rd hand can stand pat or if one is drawn deal a bottom — or slip one to top and deal.

?



**4**

4th hand holds a pair and draws three aces to make a full house.



**5**

5th (dealers) hand discards the four of diamonds and draws the ace of spades to make a royal flush.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### THE VERNON POKER DEMONSTRATION

We are indebted to Jay Marshall, the well-known magician and editor of *The New Phoenix*, for permission to include The Vernon Poker Demonstration in this book, for it was he who won permission for it to appear in *The New Phoenix*. Actually it was a game of chess which made the publication possible, as, after it had been demonstrated by Dai Vernon during his lecture at the 1954 Convention of the Society of American Magicians in Chicago, Jay Marshall sought permission to include it in an issue of his magazine. At that time Dai Vernon was reluctant to release it, but could not resist a challenge to a game of chess—the editor warily suggesting that the Poker routine be the winner's prize ; Jay Marshall defeated Dai Vernon two games out of three.

Most people are interested in gambling in some form or another, and, although some members of an audience may not personally indulge in gambling or even approve of it, even the most antagonistic will be curious to see the methods used by crooked operators.

An entertainer with cards is often asked if he knows these methods and will have an interested audience if he offers to demonstrate.

The Poker demonstration about to be described is ideal for such a situation, as the magician confesses that he is going to cheat ; in fact, he states that he is going to stack the cards in the manner a crooked gambler would in play. Although the audience are shown what they believe to be a method of stacking as the cards are shuffled, they still will have no clue as to how the final result is brought about.

The secret is in a pre-arrangement of the pack before the demonstration commences, and the reader is referred to the illustration, which, together with the following instructions, will make this clear.

On the left-hand side of the illustration is shown five hands of cards (five cards in each hand). From a pack of fifty-two playing cards remove the corresponding twenty-five cards and lay them out on a table in the same order as in the illustration. Also remove from the pack the cards shown on the right-hand side of the illustration and place them on the table, but apart from the five hands—in fact, place all the cards out exactly as you see them in the illustration.

Now let us deal with the five hands of five cards each. Pick up the top card of No. 1 hand (Eight of Spades) and hold it FACE UP in the left hand, then the top card of No. 2 hand (Three of Clubs) and place it on top of the Eight of Spades ; continue with the top cards of hand Nos. 3, 4 and 5, then go back to No. 1 hand and take the top card (Nine of Hearts)—and so on from hand to hand until you have picked up all the cards and will

now have twenty-five cards face up in your left hand, the King of Spades being the uppermost card. Now add the King of Hearts to the packet, then the Queen of Hearts—the latter card is now the uppermost card. In all, you have twenty-seven cards in the left hand—TURN THEM FACE DOWN.

Leave the Aces on the table for a moment, but DROP THE REMAINDER OF THE PACK ON TOP OF YOUR TWENTY-SEVEN CARD STACK.

So that you may check your stacking, if you turn the pack face up at this stage the cards will run in the following order :—

QH, KH, KS, JC, 2S, QD, 3H, QS, JD, 2D, QC, 7H, JS, 4C, 2C, 10C, 4H, 10S, 9C, 2H, 10H, 9H, 4D, 5H, 5S, 3C, 8S, then 21 cards in any order.

Finally, push the four aces into the pack, not together, but space them throughout the pack. It does not matter if one or two are in the stack ; you will remove them again at the commencement of the demonstration, so will leave the stack intact.

Place the pack in its case and you are ready at any time for your demonstration.

In print the preparation appears lengthy, but in practice it can be completed in a few minutes. All details have been described, so that you will have no difficulty in understanding the stacking and can check to see that the cards are in the correct order.

## PERFORMANCE.

Dai Vernon's patter will be given ; it describes the actions that the audience see performed and leads them to believe that they are being told how the cards are being stacked. Unbeknown to them, the cards are already in a certain order, so that, although they receive an explanation, it leaves them completely fooled when the final result is reached.

*“Everybody has heard about stacking cards, but veryfew people know how it is done.”*

Remove the cards from the case, fan them face up and remove the four aces, being careful not to disturb the order of the twenty-seven card stack. The aces are placed face up on the table.

Turn the pack face down and secretly CRIMP the bottom card (Queen of Hearts).

*“We're going to use the old-fashioned haymow shuffle.”*

As if to demonstrate this shuffle, shuffle *four* cards from the top to the bottom of the pack. Let it be seen that you shuffle off each card singly, because you are going to emphasise this fact later in the fake explanation of stacking.

Pick up three Aces and show them.

*“A gambler would be satisfied with getting three cards that he requires; very seldom would he want four. He puts the three cards on top of the pack. If he desires a fourth, he puts it on the bottom.”*

Put the three **Aces** on top of the pack and the fourth Ace on the bottom.

*"First he counts off one more than twice the number of players.  
In a five-handed game, twice the number of players is ten and one  
more is eleven. Using the old haymow shuffle, he runs off eleven cards."*

Shuffle off eleven cards singly from the top of the pack, and, when these eleven cards are in the left hand, stop and say :—

*"See how simple it is?"*

Put the eleven cards BACK ON TOP of the pack. This has reversed the order of the eleven cards.

*"Now he counts one less than the number of players—that's  
four—and throws the pack on top"*

Shuffle off four cards from the top of the pack and throw the remainder of the pack on top of them,

*"Now the number of players—five—and throws the pack on  
top."*

Shuffle off five cards and throw the pack on top.

*"One, then the number of players again."*

Shuffle one card from the top to the bottom of the pack, then five cards from the top to the bottom.

*"Of course, the gambler always has a partner, who cuts in exactly the right place."*

Cut the pack at the crimped card. Check to see that the Queen of Hearts goes to the bottom of the pack.

Deal five hands in the normal manner, each hand eventually consisting of five cards. As each card is dealt to the dealer's hand (the last hand of the five), turn the card face up. At the completion of the deal, the dealer's hand will contain the four Aces and one indifferent card. Now show the other players' hands one at a time. Do this casually and comment on their low value. Conclude by saying :—

*"There is no use in dealing yourself four Aces when the other hands offer no competition."* (Should, by chance, a good hand show up, remark that this would be the only one to remain in the pot.)

There should now be twenty-five cards on the table and the twenty-seven card stack in your hand.

Set aside the four Aces and square up (face down) the other twenty-one cards on the table. Put the Ace of Spades on top of this pile, then the other three Aces on top of that. Drop the twenty-seven card stack on top.

To check at this point (in practice but not in performance, of course), you have your twenty-seven card stack on top of the face-down pack, then three Aces, then the Ace of Spades, and, finally, the twenty-one cards that were on the table after the deal.

To continue with the routine. As you have twenty-one cards on the bottom of the pack that are not set up, by turning the pack so that the faces of the cards are towards the left (if you shuffle from the right hand into the left, but to the right if you are left-handed), you can shuffle the bottom cards, being careful not to disturb the order of any but the twenty-one.

*"Once again I will deal, but for the time being I will not show you the dealer's hand—or any other hand for that matter—then we will have the same conditions as if the gambler was playing in a card game"*

Deal five hands as before, but this time all five hands are face down at the completion of the deal.

*"This time I'm not only going to deal myself the winning hand, but I'll also try to call the hand of every player. The first player on the left has a . . . a Heart flush . . . with the exception of one card."*

Pick up the first hand dealt and show it, leaving the cards face-up on the table. This hand will contain the cards shown in Hand No. 1 in the illustration.

*"This next hand is known as a 'safety-raiser'—two pairs. Most good players raise on two pairs."*

Show the second hand (Hand No. 2 in the illustration) and leave the cards face up on the table.

*"Now this third hand has four-of-a-kind—the four deuces—a very good hand in a game of Aces Wild"*

Show hand No. 3 (see illustration) and leave the cards face up on the table.

*"This fourth hand belongs to the inevitable player who always has a bad hand—but refuses to be driven out of the game."*

Show the fourth hand (see illustration) and leave the cards face up on the table.

*"Now for the honest dealer—we'll see what he has."*

DO NOT show the whole hand, but pick up the cards and allow the audience to get a flash of the Four of Diamonds on the bottom. Place the cards face down on the table again.

*"Remember, this is draw Poker, so we'll let the players draw. The first player discards and draws one . . . to make a King-high flush."*

Discard the Eight of Spades from Hand No. 1 and take the top card of the pack; turn it over and place it with Hand No. 1, to make a King-high flush.

*"The man with the two pair discards one and draws . . . the Queen of Hearts, making a full house"*

Discard the Three of Clubs from Hand No. 2. Take the top card from the pack, turn it face up (Queen of Hearts) and place it with Hand No. 2, making the hand a full house.

*"The four deuces . . . shall we draw or stand pat?"*

If the audience decide to stand pat on Hand No. 3, all well and good, but if they state that a discard shall be made, then discard the Five of Spades and either deal a card from the bottom of the pack or slip one from the bottom to the top and deal that. Alternatively, if the reader is worried about either of these moves, do not give the audience the option, just state that the third player decides to stand pat.

*"Now we come to the man we can't drive out of the game. With all the raises this man would drop out, but to keep it a sociable game we'll let him hold the pair of Jacks and draw three cards. He considers himself very lucky as he draws the three cold Aces."*

Discard the Five of Hearts, Nine of Clubs and Four of Clubs from Hand No. 4 ; take the three top cards from the pack (three Aces), turn them over and place them with Hand No. 4, to make a full house.

Pick up the dealer's hand (No. 5) and openly discard the Four of Diamonds, then draw the top card from the pack.

Point to the fourth hand and say :—

*"This man would have been better off to have drawn four cards, for he left the fourth Ace on top for the dealer. Now he has the Ten, Jack, Queen, King and Ace of Spades—a Royal Flush."*

Deal the cards from the dealer's hand faceup on to the table as you name them.

#### OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

1. Prior to the demonstration, arrange the cards in accordance with the instructions given.
2. Fan the pack face up and place the four Aces face up on the table, being careful not to disturb the order of the rest of the pack.
3. Turn the pack face down, crimp the bottom card (Queen of Hearts), then run four cards singly from the top to the bottom.
4. Place three Aces on top of the pack and one on the bottom.
5. Shuffle off eleven cards singly from the top (reversing their order), then place them BACK ON TOP.
6. Shuffle off four cards from the top of the pack and throw the pack on top of them.
7. Shuffle off five cards and throw the pack on top of them.
8. Shuffle one card from the top to the bottom, then five cards from the top to the bottom.
9. Cut the pack at the crimp and check to see that the Queen of Hearts goes to the bottom.
10. Deal five hands, turning up each card of the dealer's hand—Four Aces and one indifferent card. Show the other hands.
11. Push aside the Aces for a moment, square up the other twenty-one cards on the table, place the Ace of Spades on top, then the other three Aces on top of that. Drop the twenty-seven card stack on top.

12. Shuffle **pack**—actually only the bottom twenty-one cards are disturbed.
13. Deal five hands again face down, then turn each face up with exception of dealer's hand, but allow audience to see the bottom card (Four of Diamonds).
14. Treat the hands in the following manner :—
  - Hand No. 1.—**Discard** Eight of Spades and draw King of Hearts.
  - Hand No. 2.—**Discard** Three of Clubs and draw Queen of Hearts.
  - Hand No. 3.—Give audience option of standing pat or drawing.  
If drawing, discard Five of Spades, then either deal from bottom or slip card from bottom to top and deal. Just stand pat if you wish.
  - Hand No. 4.—**Discard** Five of Hearts, Nine of Clubs and Four of Clubs. Draw three **cards**—three Aces.
  - Hand No. 5 (dealer's **hand**).—**Discard** Four of Diamonds, draw Ace of Spades and display Royal Flush.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE THUMB TIE

*Page 231*

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### THE THUMB TIE

Since the introduction by TEN ICHI of the trick known as THE THUMB TIE, many of the world's leading magicians have included the effect in their own programmes. Different methods have been evolved for having the thumbs tied together, and many variations to the original presentation have been made, but TEN ICHI will always be remembered as the magician who made it famous.

Dai Vernon gives credit to both TEN ICHI and to PAUL ROSINI for the subject matter of this chapter, as it was the latter who demonstrated his routine in order that the Professor could perform it in his own programme. Readers will find many Vernon touches included, as he has adapted the Rosini routine to suit his own style of magic ; naturalness of action being such a disarming feature of the whole presentation.

When performed expertly, the thumb tie never fails to please an audience, as there is adequate scope to create entertaining situations which, whether they be of a serious or humorous nature, always leave the spectators extremely puzzled. Here we have all the ingredients of a classic ; a simple plot which can be easily followed and remembered by the members of the audience ; a first-class mystery and an ENTERTAINING routine.

#### THE EFFECT.

The performer persuades a member of the audience to become his temporary assistant and hands him a length of string. Holding his two thumbs, one above the other, the performer instructs the assistant to tie them together as securely and tightly as possible. There can be no doubt that the assistant makes a thorough job of the tying, but nevertheless, when two solid hoops are thrown towards the performer they pass on to his arms. When the assistant is asked to hold the hoops they come away from the performer's arms as unexpectedly as they passed on to them. The string around the thumbs is constantly checked by the assistant, who can only confirm that the knots remain secure at all times.

Next the volunteer links one of his arms between the performer's, placing his hand on the performer's shoulder ; again an inexplicable penetration takes place, as the arms are seen to become unlinked.

#### REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION.

To present the routine you will require the following articles :—

- (a) Two large metal rings or wooden hoops about a foot in diameter.
- (b) A large pair of sharp scissors.
- (c) About a yard of specially prepared cord. This cord is easily made up from common string and 'masking' tape.

The string you require is rough and fairly stiff ; it is cheap to buy, as, although strong, it is of the more common type used for tying up parcels. The photographs show the thickness and quality.

Masking tape is a strong brown paper tape about an inch in width, with a permanent sticky surface on one side. It is sold in rolls at shops dealing in decorators' requirements, as it is normally used by interior decorators for masking edges of walls or woodwork on which they do not wish paint to run. With the tape stuck along a surface, a straight edge of paint can be brushed on quickly and surely, as the width of the tape permits a margin of error, the paint going on to the tape if the brush oversteps the margin required. When the tape is removed the edge of the paint on the surface is in a straight line. Should any difficulty be experienced in obtaining the tape from the usual source, then the reader is advised to contact a firm undertaking car body building, as these firms use it extensively in their paint shops.

To prepare the cord, take about a yard of string and unroll about a foot of tape ; place one end of the string across the sticky surface of tape at an angle of about 60 degrees. Now twist the string so that the tape is wound around it in a spiral, pressing the tape firmly on to the string and unwinding more tape from the roll as required. When all the string is covered, cut off the surplus tape. You will now have about a yard of fairly stiff cord, enough for one performance. Of course, when you have satisfied yourself that you can make the cord correctly, several lengths can be prepared for future performances.

The photograph at Fig. 1 shows the cord being prepared.

At the beginning of the performance the rings, cord and scissors are on a table positioned at centre stage.

#### THE THUMB TIE.

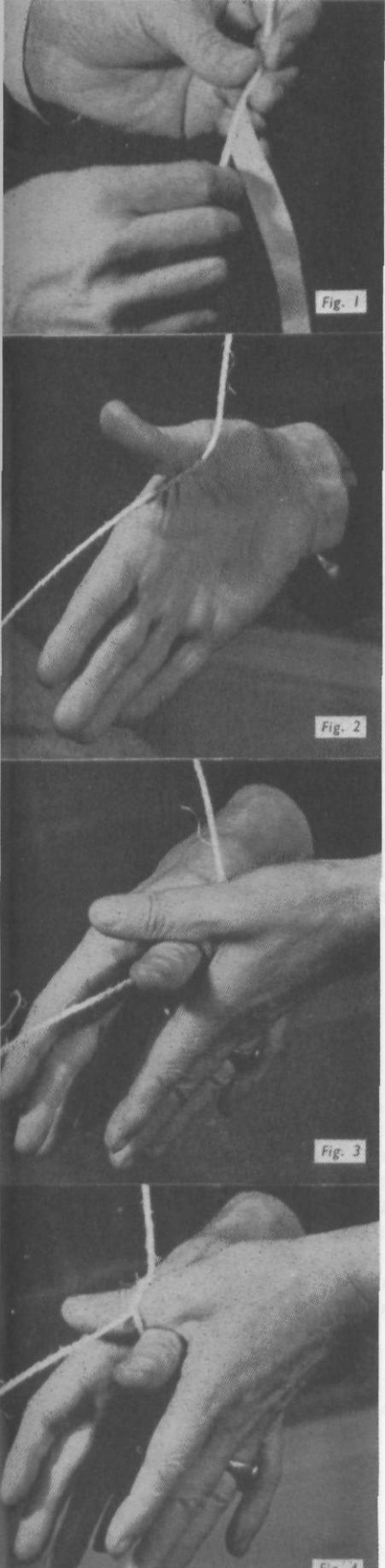
Before dealing with the presentation of the routine it is proposed to describe the way in which the thumbs must be tied. Photographs have been taken of each stage of the tying in order that every move will be perfectly clear. In the photographs the string has *not* been covered with the tape for the reason that the rough surface shows up much more clearly than if it were smooth—each knot and twist in the string can therefore be seen by the reader.

In performance the person who does the tying is convinced that it is done according to his own wishes ; actually he is influenced by the way in which the thumbs are held and the instructions he receives. This will become apparent as we proceed.

When practising, the reader will find that every action and request appears natural if the instructions given here are followed.

The assistant who does the tying must be standing to the RIGHT of the performer.

In the description of the presentation you will find that the assistant is given the cord to test by holding one end in each hand and pulling. After he is satisfied that the cord does not stretch, and whilst he is still holding the cord stretched between his hands, bring your RIGHT hand UNDER the cord, then extend the right thumb OVER the centre of the cord (Fig. 2). Pull the cord to the left, then place the LEFT thumb over the top of the right thumb. Notice in Fig. 3 how the left thumb is diagonally across the right thumb ; not at right angles, but if we imagine that the thumbs



are blades of a pair of scissors, then the blades are half closed.

By pressing downwards with the thumbs the outer end of the cord is brought BETWEEN the thumbs (between the open blades of the scissors in our example), whilst the inner end of the cord comes up over the backs of the thumbs. Ask the assistant to even up the ends, then tie a knot. If he wishes he may tie a double knot. This makes the position shown at Fig. 4—nothing complicated, just a knot tied ON TOP of the left thumb ; everything appears quite fair, as indeed it is. Lift the hands and have the assistant carry the ends down again, the outer end passing between the open thumbs (between the open blades of the imaginary scissors) and the inner end down at the backs of the thumbs. The assistant is requested to cross the ends underneath the hands (Fig. 5), then bring the ends up again in EXACTLY the same manner as before and tie as many knots as he wishes on top of the left thumb. Notice the directness and simplicity of the method of tying—at the beginning the cord is under the thumbs ; it is brought up between them and a knot tied, taken down between them, crossed, brought up between them again and more knots tied on top of the left thumb. You can help the assistant when he is tying knots on top of the left thumb by crooking the left forefinger and holding the tip against the first knot to prevent it slipping as he forms the second knot.

At this point tell the assistant to release the ends of the cord, then approach various members of the audience and, by spreading the hands, show them that the cord really encircles the thumbs and that they are definitely tied together tightly. During the movements necessary for this display ensure that the outer end of the cord falls between the hands at the front and the inner end between the two arms at the rear (Fig. 7).

As you approach the assistant again, ask him to tie "in between the thumbs". Raise the hands and move them to allow the INNER end of the hanging cord to come near to his hands. He will take hold of this end ; as he does so, pull the cord taut. By moving the RIGHT thumb cause the cord to be pulled TO THE FRONT AND BETWEEN

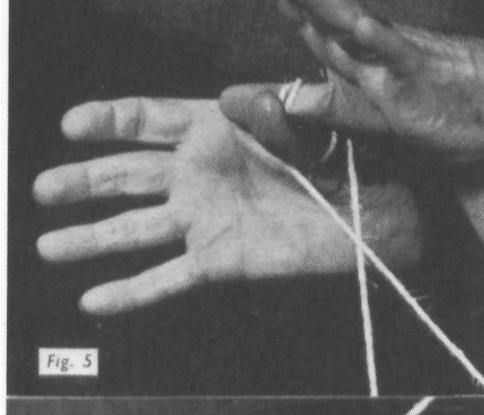


Fig. 5

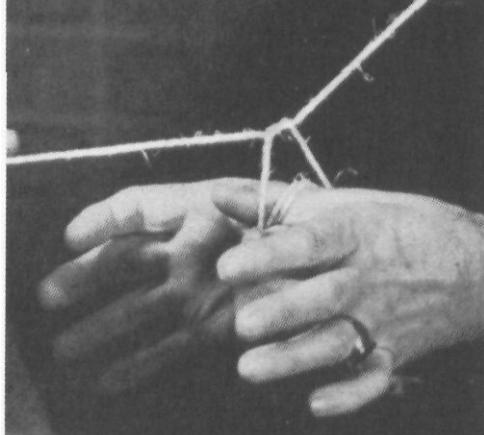


Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

the two thumbs. Note the position of this cord in Fig. 8—it is OVER the RIGHT thumb, but between the thumbs. The other end of the cord is then brought OVER the LEFT thumb and to the RIGHT. This is accomplished by pulling the cord to the right with the aid of the RIGHT forefinger. Fig. 8 shows the position of both ends of the cord at this point. Now have the assistant tie a knot. In Fig. 9 the knot can be seen—note that it comes against the underside of the LEFT thumb, but between the thumbs. THE TIGHTER IT IS TIED THE BETTER, so coax the assistant to really pull hard on the ends of the cord. Again ask the assistant to bring the ends of the cord to the top and tie a few more knots. In Fig. 10 the last knots can be seen being tied. When he is quite satisfied that he has made a thorough job of the tying, have him cut off the surplus ends of the cord with the scissors. The tie, when completed, will appear as seen in Fig. 11.

As far as the audience and the assistant are concerned, every opportunity has been given for the latter to tie the thumbs together securely ; actually, without appearing to do so, you have influenced the way in which he has performed the task. Even now, with the closest scrutiny, he will be prepared to swear that it would be impossible for you to part the thumbs without untying the knots, but in reality it is a simple matter to free the RIGHT thumb.

Refer to Fig. 11 once more ; notice how the fingers of both hands are curled together, the tips of the forefingers touching. These curled fingers obscure from the front the action of the LEFT SECOND FINGER, which is curled so that the tip comes behind the twists of cord around the RIGHT THUMB. The left second finger holds the loops whilst the right thumb turns to the left (pivots against the underside of the left thumb) and is withdrawn from the loops. The photograph at Fig. 11 has been taken from above and shows the start of the withdrawal, whilst Fig. 12 is the view from underneath of the right thumb almost free of the loops. The cover afforded by the fingers when viewed from the front can be appreciated in Fig. 12.



The right hand has been removed completely in Fig. 13 to show how the loops stand out firmly from the left thumb in readiness for the right thumb to be slipped back into them easily and secretly when required. In performance, of course, the hands are always kept together, the removal of the right thumb being made secretly at all times.

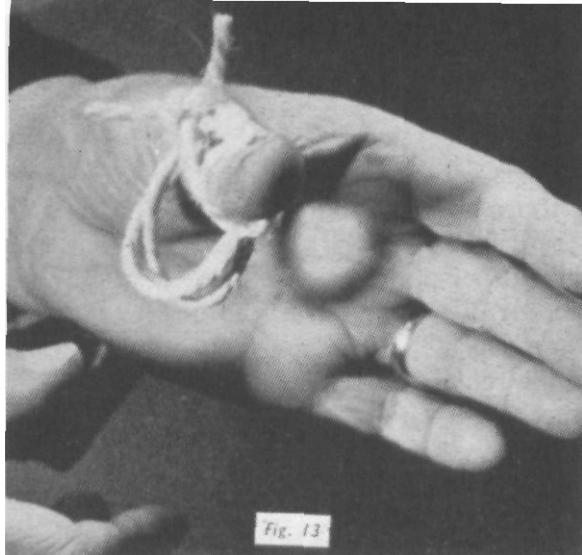
This description of the manner of having the thumbs tied and the way in which the right thumb is slipped from the loops is rather lengthy, but by knowing every detail, and with the additional aid of the photographs, no difficulties should be experienced in understanding every move. Once it has been mastered the reader will have at his command one of the most effective thumb ties in existence.

#### PRESENTATION.

1. Pick up the two rings and pass them out into the audience for examination. When two or three people have satisfied themselves that the rings are free from trickery, have them tossed back to you, then bounce them on the stage to demonstrate their solidarity.

2. Place the rings on the floor (centre stage), then pick up the cord from the table and approach a male member of the audience. Ask him to wind the end of the cord around his hand a few times. When he has done this, pull on the other end of the cord sufficiently to cause him to rise from his chair, then, smiling graciously, ask him to assist you.

When performing in a theatre, comedy can be introduced by making it appear that you are pulling the assistant forcibly on stage. A whispered word to your temporary assistant will ensure that he does not take offence. If you whisper "Help me to make them laugh", you will find that he will enter into the spirit of the occasion and will co-operate. Experienced performers tell by their appearance the most suitable type of person to select.



Obviously you do not want one who will act the comedian the whole time, so avoid the boisterous types. Look for a person who smiles easily and warmly, dresses conservatively and neatly, is well groomed; who does not push himself forward, but, on the other hand, does not appear too nervous or shy. Certainly a lot to look for in the few seconds that are available to make the choice, but it is surprising how accurately and quickly the assessment can be made.

If possible, look around the audience *before* going on and spot one or two likely assistants in suitable chairs.

3. Having brought your assistant in front of the **audience**, have him stand at your right side. Show him one thumb, then the other, and ask him to examine them. Next have him hold one end of the cord in each hand and pull on it to assure himself (and the audience) that it does not stretch.

When he has tested the cord he will have it stretched between his hands in the position you require for the commencement of the tying (Fig. 2). Now continue having the thumbs tied in the manner described above.

4. At the completion of the tying pick up the scissors from the table (both hands will be required for this, of course), hand them to your assistant and have him open and close them a few times. You can ask him if he is a surgeon at this point, or add any joking remark that you consider fitting, then have him trim off the surplus ends of the rope. When this has been done, request him to replace the scissors on the table.

5. Next pick up the rings from the stage and lead your assistant off several yards to the right side of the stage. Return to centre stage and ask him to catch the rings as you toss them to him, one at a time, telling him you are merely demonstrating how you wish him to throw them to you.

After he has caught both rings, walk up close to him and show him that the thumbs are still secured in the manner in which he himself tied them. **DO NOT MAKE ANY MOVE TO RELEASE YOUR RIGHT THUMB UNTIL YOU ARE BACK AT CENTRE STAGE, FACING HIM, AND GIVING HIM HIS NEXT INSTRUCTIONS.**

6. Tell him to throw a ring when you call "Ready". Gesture with both hands as you are saying this, and at the same time, keeping the fingers firmly together, slip out the right thumb from the loop. There should be no movement of the fingers; only the right thumb moves—remember that the left second finger tip holds back the twists of cord which helps to free the right thumb (Fig. 11). Immediately the right thumb is free bring it back to its former position, but, of course, outside the loop.

Give the assistant the signal to throw. Catch the hoop between

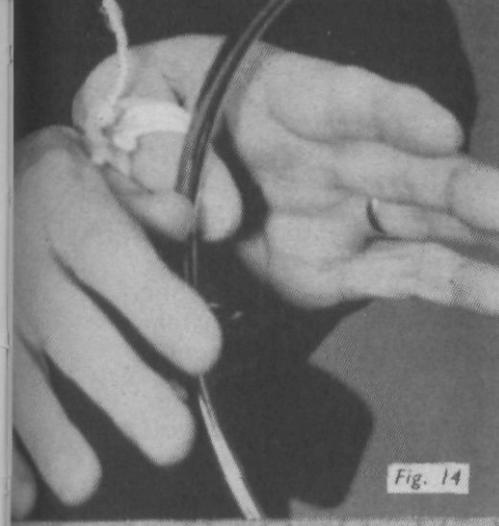


Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

the hands, then, as you make a tossing motion, let the hoop go over either arm by causing the hoop to squeeze between the thumbs and on to the arm. The penetration should be quick but smooth, the rim of the hoop squeezing between the thumbs, which are side by side at this stage. Fig. 14 shows the view with the fingers moved aside for clarity ; notice how the rim of the hoop is squeezing between the thumbs. In performance the fingers would be together after having opened slightly and momentarily to catch the hoop, then closing again around the rim. From the front and sides the thumbs are covered at all times.

The same procedure is followed with the second ring, which is allowed to go over the other arm. DO NOT TRY TO REPLACE THE THUMB IMMEDIATELY. Walk towards the assistant again, then, when you are close to him, raise the hands to his eye level and ask him to examine the knots. IT IS DURING THE ACTION OF RAISING THE HANDS FOR EXAMINATION THAT THE RIGHT THUMB IS SLIPPED BACK INTO THE LOOP.

Allow the assistant to examine the knots and thumbs and have him confirm that they are still tied securely.

7. Tell the assistant that, as he caused the hoops to go over your arms, he should be able to remove them. After suitable by-play showing how impossible it is for them to come off, tell him to hold the outer rims of both hoops in both of his hands and pull upwards sharply. Quite naturally, he is unable to take the rings from your arms. However, under cover of lowering your hands, you release the thumb again. Now tell him to try once more, this time much harder. On this occasion, when he pulls upwards, he staggers backwards as you allow the hoops to go freely between the thumbs and there is no resistance. As he staggers and you help to steady him you have ample opportunity to replace the thumb, then you hold both arms outstretched for him to examine the knots once again.

Request him to place the hoops on the table, then bring him centre stage once more.

8. Stand with the left side of your body towards the audience and have the assistant stand facing you. Raise your arms and tell the assistant to place his right arm between your arms with his hand on your right shoulder (Fig. 15) and *be sure* not to remove his hand. Your whole finish will be greatly weakened if he removes his hand as you apparently penetrate his arm.

Now extend your fingers towards his face and move them as if you were attempting to hypnotise him. Exaggerate the gesture by waggling the fingers, which will amuse the audience—notice in Fig. 15 that Dai Vernon's head has been slightly lowered so that his mouth is obscured from the view of the audience by his raised left elbow. Under this cover the assistant is cued, the performer saying : “ Make them laugh—do the same to me with your left hand.”

**NOTE.**—This idea of telling an assistant to “ Make them laugh ” will be worth the price of the book to a working performer who does not already use it.

As the assistant brings up his left hand, raise your head and allow your hands to drop on top of his arm (Fig. 16). Notice how the fingers are together on the assistant's arm—in the correct position for the removal of the thumb.

Look surprised at the action of the assistant who, so far as the audience is concerned, has taken the initiative and is apparently trying to hypnotise you. Now say : “ Hey ! I'm the magician.” During the laugh duck down and in one smooth action release the thumb and bring the hands down, one on each side of his arm. As the hands come together beneath his arm, raise them on the inside and, during the upward movement, slip the thumb back into the loop. Continue the upward movement, bringing the hands towards the assistant's face, then open the hands for his inspection (Fig. 17). Say in a whisper : “ Look at your arm ”—this causes great amusement, as the audience do not know that the assistant has been cued.

9. Have the assistant satisfy himself that the thumbs are still tied securely, then request him to cut you free with the scissors. Show him your thumbs and the marks left by the cord. Thank him for his assistance and direct the applause to him, joining in yourself as he returns to his seat.

I would draw the attention of the reader to several interesting features of this routine.

It will be noted that there is no over-elaboration. After the thumbs have been tied securely the hoops are made to pass, one over each arm, then they are removed together. The only other effect is the penetration of the assistant's arm—nothing more, BUT THESE EFFECTS ARE BUILT UP STRONGLY ; any additional features would be repetition. The running time is just right and permits emphasis to be placed on the fairness of the tying and the ability of the magician to accomplish the penetration of inanimate (hoops) and live (the arm) objects at will, even though his thumbs are secured. Humour is interspersed throughout the routine

without detracting from the mystery. Excellent misdirection is employed ; each time the thumb is removed or replaced it is done on the 'off beat'. Notice particularly the clever misdirection during the arm penetration ; the cueing of the assistant by covering the mouth under cover of the natural raising of the left elbow, so that the actual penetration takes place as laughter is caused by the assistant's hypnotic gesture. The assistant is caused to direct his gaze at the performer's face and away from his hands at the vital moment. Every single feature of the routine has been most carefully thought out and thoroughly tested during actual performance over a number of years.

If the directions and the photographs are studied carefully, the reader should have little difficulty in mastering this fine routine ; the result of years of thought and effort by TEN ICHI, PAUL and CARL ROSINI and DAI VERNON.

#### OUTLINE OF THE ROUTINE.

First master the method of having the thumbs tied, then learn the routine, studying ALL the points described. The following outline of the routine is given to prompt the reader during practice.

1. Pass hoops for examination. On being tossed back, bounce them on stage, then place centre stage.
2. Approach male member of audience with cord ; he winds it around hand ; pull him from chair (or on to stage).
3. Show thumbs, then proceed with tie. Have surplus ends cut off.
4. Lead assistant to side of stage ; return to centre stage ; pick up hoops and toss to him as demonstration.
5. Walk over to assistant, show tied thumbs, then return to centre stage.
6. Cue him for throw and RELEASE THUMB DURING TOSSING GESTURE.
7. Give signal for throw. Catch hoop and toss on to arm.
8. Repeat for second hoop. Catch and toss on to other arm.
9. Walk towards assistant again. DO NOT REPLACE THUMB UNTIL HANDS ARE BROUGHT UP FOR EXAMINATION.
10. Ask assistant to remove hoops (unable to do so). UNDER COVER OF LOWERING HANDS, RELEASE THUMB.
11. Tell him to try again and to pull sharply upwards. He staggers backwards with hoops, as there is no resistance. REPLACE THUMB.
12. Assistant thrusts arm through yours and hand placed on your right shoulder.
13. Hypnotic gesture and cue to assistant as left elbow obscures view of mouth.
14. Assistant makes hypnotic gesture. DURING LAUGH, RELEASE THUMB, duck down and bring both arms up inside. THUMB REPLACED DURING UPWARD MOVEMENT OF HANDS FOR EXAMINATION.
15. Assistant cuts you free, examines marks on thumbs and returns to seat. You direct applause.