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**Title:** Peerless Prestidigitation

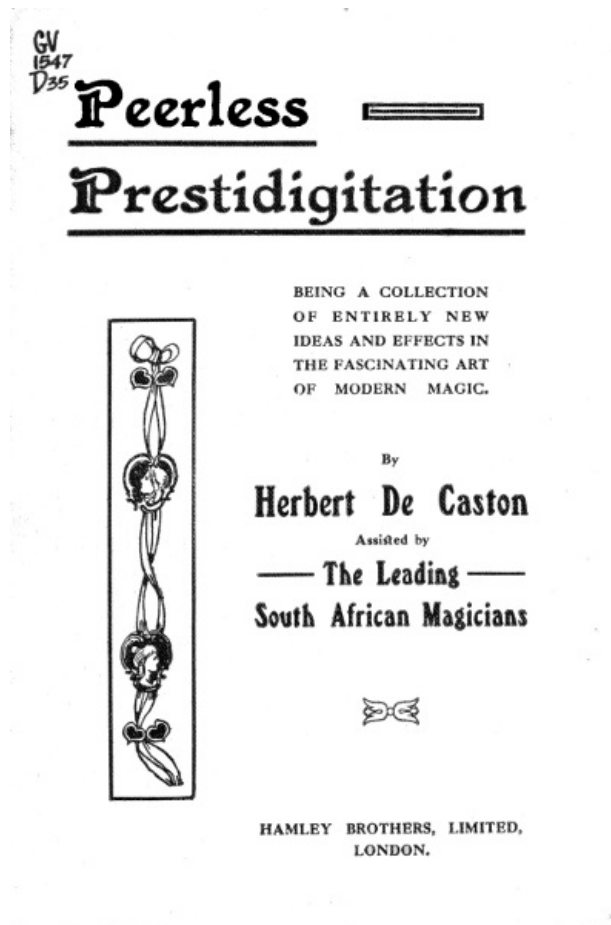
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## PEERLESS PRESTIDIGITATION

BY

HERBERT DE CASTON.

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**HERBERT DE CASTON.**

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# **Peerless Prestidigitation.**

**BEING A COLLECTION OF  
ENTIRELY NEW IDEAS AND  
EFFECTS IN THE FASCINATING  
ART OF MODERN MAGIC.**

**BY  
HERBERT DE CASTON**

**ASSISTED BY  
The Leading South African Magicians.**

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**INTRODUCTORY SPEECH.**

In calling your attention to a deceptive entertainment, Legerdemain, more generally known as Conjuring, a few introductory remarks may not be out of place. The superstition that existed in the early ages, when wizards and magicians were supposed to exist, time has not worn out; the mystery that hangs over all professors of magic is still in part retained. Many there are who class them amongst supernatural beings, their seeming impossibilities are converted into positive realities, their power supposed to be supreme. Now, were I, in this the twentieth century, to stand before you professing to be a wizard or a magician—or, in fact, to be that which I am not—endowed with supernatural power, it would be looked upon as a gross insult to your good sense; for in truth the only peculiarity of my profession is to deceive—yours to detect. If my hands are quicker than your eyes, I shall have the pleasure of deceiving you; but, on the contrary, if your eyes are quicker than my hands, the reverse will be the result.

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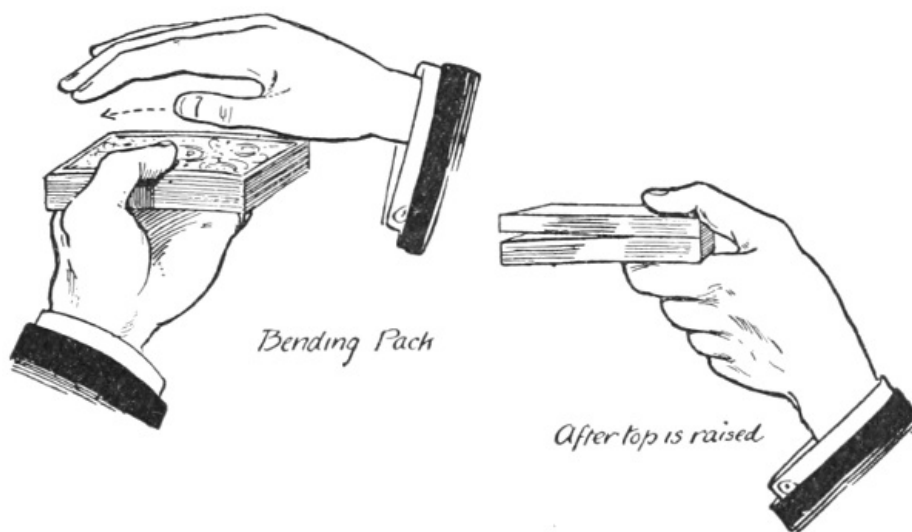
All Tricks described in this book can be purchased at HAMLEY BROS., LTD.

## Peerless Prestidigitation.

[Pg 5]

### THE LATEST CARD FORCE.

*Effect.*—A pack of unprepared cards is shuffled by any member of the audience and handed to the performer, who requests one of the spectators to secretly note a card by simply raising a portion of the pack whilst held in the hand of the performer, who turns his head away whilst this is being done. The cards are again shuffled, and the performer instantly names the selected card.



*Modus Operandi.*—After the cards have been thoroughly examined and shuffled by the spectators the performer takes the pack (face downwards) and quietly bends them over his hand, the bend being so slight that it is hardly noticeable. He then grasps the pack at one end between the first finger and thumb of either hand, and requests a spectator to select a card in the manner described above. It will be found that the action of raising the cards causes a slight break at the spectator's card, and enables the performer to insert his little finger beneath the same and make

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the pass which brings the selected card to the bottom. After getting a glimpse of the card the pack can be again shuffled and the trick brought to a conclusion in any manner desired.

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## THE PHANTOM CARD.

*Effect.*—A pack of cards is spread face downwards upon the table, and one of the audience is requested to choose five cards and hand the same to the performer, who arranges the cards fan-shape in his hand. The spectator is now asked to name any one of the five cards, after which the performer drops the cards face *upwards* upon the table, and, to the astonishment of the audience, the named card has entirely vanished, four cards only being visible. These cards are now turned face downwards and mixed with the remainder of the pack, which it will be remembered is still lying scattered upon the table. The performer, showing his hands quite empty, now proceeds to select another five cards, which he places face down upon the floor at the feet of his temporary assistant and asks him to touch with a stick any one of the five cards. The assistant does so, and, to his astonishment, the touched card is turned over and seen to be the missing card.

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*Modus Operandi.*—When the pack has been spread face down upon the table and the five cards handed to the performer, he asks for one of the five cards to be named. This having been done, he gives the cards a shuffle, and contrives to get the named card to the top, and secretly reverses it. It will thus be seen that when the cards are dropped faces up upon the other cards scattered about the table, the selected card has apparently vanished. The four remaining cards are now turned over and mixed with the others, the performer being careful not to lose sight of the named card. Five cards are now taken seemingly at random off the table, one of them of course being the selected card. The faces of these five cards are not shown, but are immediately placed upon the floor, care being taken to get THE card in the centre of the row. It will be found that in nine cases out of ten the spectator invariably touches the middle card, which, on being turned over, is found to be the one he originally selected. Should the spectator, however, touch any other card you simply revert to the well-known (to conjurers) dodge of "Very well, we don't require this card," etc., etc.

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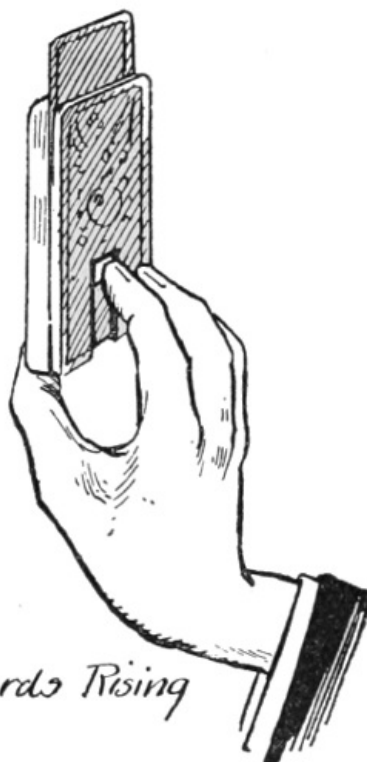
## THE "DE CASTON" METHOD OF "RISING CARDS" FROM HAND.

*Effect.*—Several cards having been selected and marked by the audience are returned to the pack, which is thoroughly shuffled. The cards rise from the pack whilst held in the performer's hand, and when two-thirds of the card is visible. The performer requests the spectator to remove his card himself, which he does, the card being drawn out from about the centre of the pack. The remaining cards are produced in a like manner, the effect being quite weird.

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*Prepared Back Cards*



*Cards Rising*

*Modus Operandi.*—For the purpose of this most mystifying card effect it is necessary to prepare a

few cards by cutting an oblong slit in each card wide enough to admit the first finger. These cards are then placed in a side pocket, or *pochette*, and the remainder of the pack handed to several spectators for the purpose of having cards selected and marked. This having been done the performer proceeds to collect the cards, each card when placed in the pack being brought to the top by means of the pass, and after the last card has been returned, the conjurer palms off all the selected cards and hands the pack out to be shuffled. On again receiving the pack in his hands he immediately replaces the palmed cards on top of the pack, and whilst calling attention to what has been done as regards freedom of choice, marking, shuffling, etc., he secretly secures the prepared cards and places them upon the chosen ones. By keeping a couple of fingers across the back of the pack it is an easy matter to casually show the front and back of the cards, and a great deal should be made of the fact that no threads, etc., are employed. When the first card (*i.e.*, the last one returned by the audience) is well out of the pack, the finger again covers the slit and the pack is presented to the chooser for him to remove his card and verify the mark. The other cards are similarly dealt with, and the prepared ones are finally palmed off, disposed of, and the pack again passed for inspection.

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## DE CASTON'S DISCOVERY.

### AN ENTIRELY NEW CARD EFFECT.

A pack of cards having been shuffled, the performer deals about fifteen cards one by one face upwards upon the table, remarking, "You will observe that the cards are thoroughly mixed." During this action (which is the whole secret of this experiment) the performer secretly notes the *fifth* card from the top of the pack, and when gathering up the cards takes care that the noted card is left in its original position. He now makes four heaps of cards (faces down and about eight or ten cards in each heap), taking the cards from the *bottom* of the pack, and when this has been done the conjurer quickly deals from the top of the pack one card on to the top of each heap, immediately throwing the next card (*i.e.*, the noted one) face downwards to one of the spectators, who is requested to remember the card (which has seemingly been thrown out at random), and while he is doing so the performer is busy dealing the remainder of the cards in his hands on to the top of the four heaps. The spectator is now requested to place his card in any heap he prefers, and put all the heaps together, and again thoroughly shuffle, during which time the performer turns his back so as not to see which heap the card is placed in. It is now an easy matter to tell the name of the card, which should be done with hesitation and plenty of dramatic gesture. Try this trick, and remember to work it at rather a high rate of speed, and watch the effect on your audience.

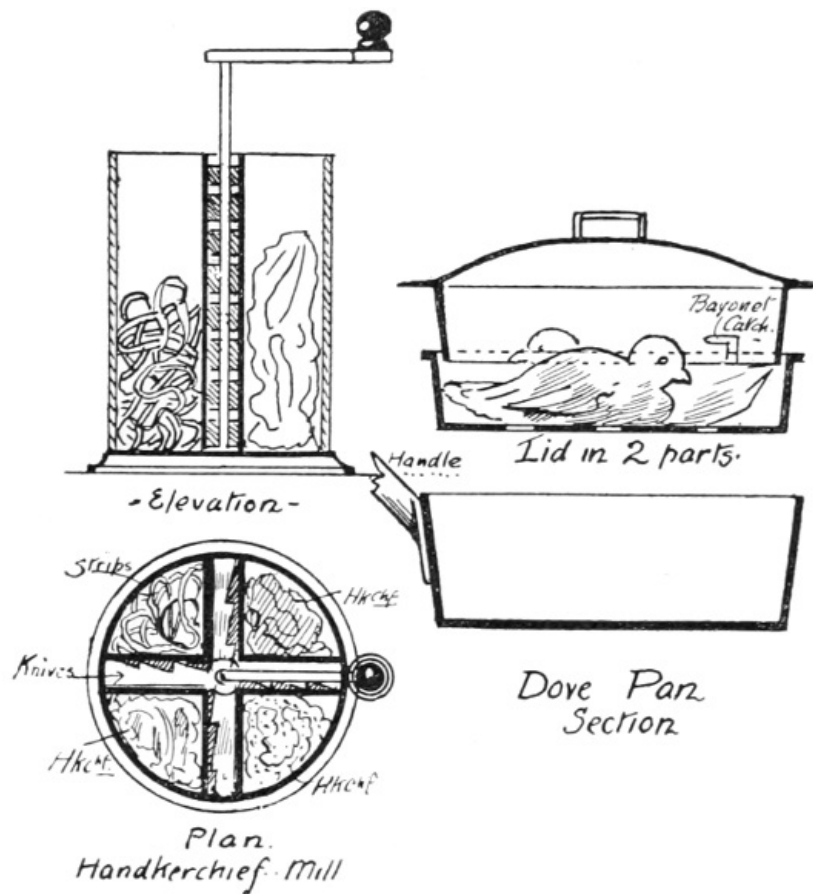
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## A SPECTACULAR HANDKERCHIEF COMBINATION.

*Effect.*—Three white handkerchiefs are borrowed, a coloured one being added to them (this being performer's own), and placed in a box; an umbrella is shown, replaced in its case, and a change is commanded to take place. The box is opened, and in place of the four handkerchiefs is the umbrella cover, and upon opening the umbrella case the umbrella is found minus the cover and the four handkerchiefs attached to its ribs. The handkerchiefs are removed and laid on a table, the umbrella being returned to the case, which is then placed aside.

[Pg 11]

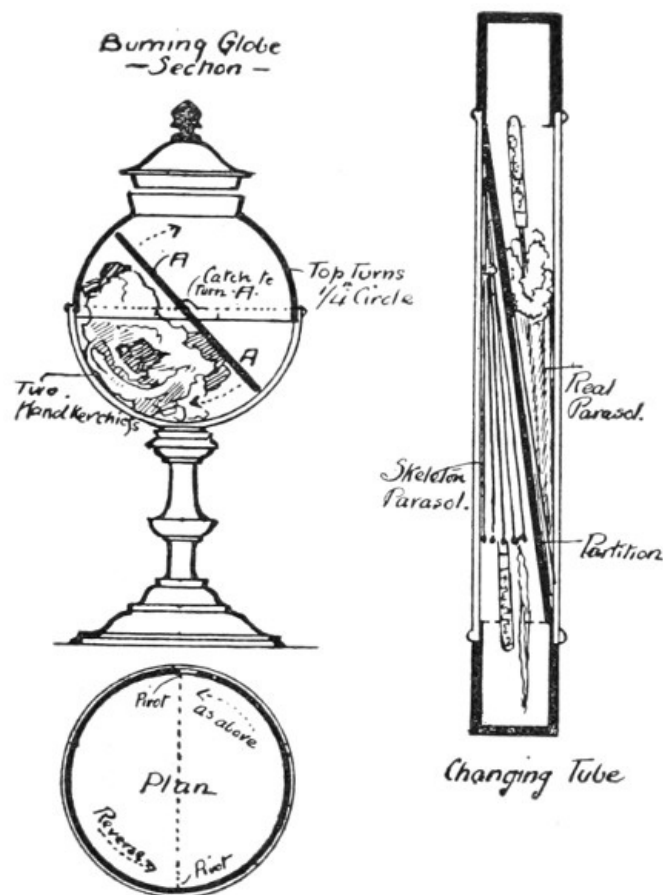


One of the white handkerchiefs and a pair of sharp scissors are taken to a spectator who is asked to mark the same, which he does, the result being (to the consternation of the performer) a large piece cut out of the centre. The performer apologises for the accident, and mentions that by a similar misunderstanding one of his own handkerchiefs was similarly treated the previous evening, in proof of which he shows a coloured handkerchief with a piece cut out of the centre. He says he will endeavour to restore the white handkerchief, and at the same time he will restore the coloured one. He places the two handkerchiefs with their respective loose centres in another piece of apparatus, and upon removing them discovers to his horror that the white handkerchief has the coloured centre and *vice versa*. He makes a frantic endeavour to unpick the stitches, finally giving it up in despair. Another piece of apparatus is now introduced into which he places the two handkerchiefs, and thinking that it would be more interesting if he used all the borrowed handkerchiefs, he picks up the remaining handkerchiefs from the table and places them along with the two unfortunates. The performer announces that he is about to cut them all up, but before commencing to do so bethinks himself of his own good handkerchief which he removes and places in his pocket. After some by-play the handkerchiefs are shown in dozens of strips, which are offered to the respective owners to sort out, but this not meeting with the approbation of the lenders, the performer introduces a dove-pan into which he places the torn strips, and whilst descanting upon his trials and troubles he holds a lighted candle near the dove-pan and the pieces of cambric catch light. In order to extinguish the fire the performer claps the lid on the pan, and on removing the cover, out fly two doves, and the conjurer immediately removes the three borrowed handkerchiefs and his own coloured one quite restored.

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*Modus Operandi.*—This combination will enable magicians to bring into play some apparatus which they have probably put aside as obviously too mechanical. Properly presented, no better effect can be wished for.



I shall not take up space by describing in detail the various pieces of apparatus, the working, I take it, being well known to magicians of the present day.

*You will require:—*

- A CHANGING DRAWER BOX, with umbrella cover in one compartment. [Pg 14]
- UMBRELLA CHANGING TUBE: in one side is the skeleton umbrella with three duplicate white handkerchiefs and one coloured handkerchief attached to the bare ribs. The other division contains the unprepared umbrella.
- BURNING GLOBE, containing a white handkerchief with coloured centre and a coloured handkerchief with white centre.
- HANDKERCHIEF MILL.—One of the compartments contains white and coloured strips, which will be shown to the audience later, as the borrowed handkerchiefs cut to pieces by the knives contained in the mill are produced.
- DOVE-PAN.—The pan only is placed on centre table, the lid and inner lining being left behind the scenes to be brought on during the experiment.
- THREE WHITE HANDKERCHIEFS (disposed of as mentioned above) to match those you intend to borrow.
- THREE COLOURED HANDKERCHIEFS—one has already been disposed of, the second one is placed in your pocket and the third one is prepared by cutting a piece out of the centre; this latter mutilated handkerchief is laid on your table, both pieces being required.
- A WHITE HANDKERCHIEF WITH COLOURED CENTRE, disposed of as above.
- A COLOURED HANDKERCHIEF WITH WHITE CENTRE, disposed of as above.
- A SMALL BOTTLE OF SPIRITS OF WINE, supposed by the audience to be water.
- A PAIR OF SHARP SCISSORS. [Pg 15]
- CANDLE AND CANDLESTICK.
- BOX OF MATCHES.
- REVOLVER, loaded with blank cartridge.
- TWO DOVES, and
- ONE INTELLIGENT ASSISTANT, if procurable.

*To perform:—*The conjurer requests the loan of several white handkerchiefs. A number being offered, he accepts three, which he throws over a chair back while he calls attention to the empty condition of the drawer box. The performer now takes the borrowed handkerchiefs one by one and places them in the box. After placing the third handkerchief in the drawer box, he looks round as if for another handkerchief, and remarks, "I should have borrowed *four* handkerchiefs, but I will not trouble you again, I will use my own." Drawing this (the coloured one) from his pocket and placing it in the box with the three white ones, he closes the drawer. The drawer box is now placed on a table or chair near the footlights. The performer next introduces the umbrella tube, being careful to remove the lid from the end containing the unprepared parasol, which he withdraws, opens, and passes for inspection to prove its unpreparedness. The parasol being returned is placed back into the tube, the lid put on, and in turning to place the tube on the table, it (the tube) is reversed, which brings the lid covering the division containing the skeleton

umbrella towards audience when laid on the table. The performer now commands a change to take place, and picking up the box he pulls out the drawer containing the parasol cover, which he removes and shows to audience. On opening the umbrella tube, he withdraws the skeleton parasol with the four duplicate handkerchiefs attached to the ribs; the four handkerchiefs are unfastened and laid on the table, the audience believing them to be those originally borrowed. The performer now selects one of the white handkerchiefs, takes up the pair of scissors and asks one of the spectators to mark the handkerchief so that he will know it again—the conjurer holding the handkerchief in such a manner that the spectator is compelled to cut a circular piece out of the centre. While the gentleman is cutting the handkerchief, the assistant enters and removes the drawer box and umbrella tube, as having been finished with, and when behind the scenes he opens the box and removes the three borrowed handkerchiefs and the performer's coloured one, all of which he folds neatly and places in the inner lining of the dove-pan, finally putting in the two doves and locking lid to lining by the usual bayonet catch. During this time the performer has been apologising for the damage done to the white handkerchief, and the owner not caring to accept his property in its present condition, the performer calls attention to the burning globe, and states that by placing the mutilated handkerchief in the globe he can immediately restore it; at the same time he mentions that "the previous evening I had the misfortune to have my own handkerchief marked in a similar manner" (picks up coloured handkerchief and loose centre from table and shows to audience), "and will take the opportunity of restoring my own coloured handkerchief whilst I am restoring the borrowed white one." After showing the globe to be empty, the performer places the two damaged handkerchiefs, with their respective loose centres, into same and gives the body of globe a quarter-turn, which brings the compartment containing the white handkerchief with coloured centre, and the coloured handkerchief with white centre uppermost. After allowing the "spirits" due time to repair the damaged MOUCHOIRS the performer requests one of the spectators to remove the handkerchiefs, and on his doing so, it is found that the centres have been sewn into the wrong handkerchiefs. The conjurer now makes an attempt to undo the stitches, but finds it impossible, so states that "I shall have to cut the handkerchiefs up in order to restore them to their original condition." During this little bit of by-play, the assistant enters, bringing with him, unostentatiously, the lid of the dove-pan, which he places on the centre table, retiring immediately with the brass globe, now finished with. The performer now introduces the handkerchief mill and removes the knives in order to show their sharpness, and the two handkerchiefs are placed in the empty compartment (the other division, it will be remembered, contains the strips of handkerchiefs); but on second thoughts the performer considers that it is unfair not to treat all the handkerchiefs alike, so he picks up the remaining two white handkerchiefs and the coloured one from the table and places them also in the mill.

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[Pg 17]

Before commencing to cut the handkerchiefs up, the performer removes his own coloured one and places it in his pocket, remarking that "to damage my own handkerchief would be ridiculous." The performer now makes the knives revolve, and shortly afterwards pulls the strips of handkerchiefs out of the second compartment and drops them into the dove-pan, saying, "The damage to the handkerchiefs is irreparable, but I will endeavour to iron the pieces and the lenders can sort them out at their leisure. I believe it is necessary when doing any ironing to sprinkle a little water over the objects to be ironed" (sprinkle strips with spirits of wine from bottle) "and also to wax the iron, but as I have no wax and no iron, I will light the candle and drop a little of the melted wax on the pieces of handkerchiefs." Whilst lighting the candle the conjurer carelessly drops the lighted match in the dove-pan, the spirits of wine become ignited and there is a great blaze. The performer gets excited and endeavours to blow out the flames, and not being successful, he frantically grasps the lid of the pan and claps it on to same, immediately afterwards picking up his revolver and firing over the pan, finally removing the lid (which leaves the inner lining inside pan) and allowing the doves to escape.

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The handkerchiefs are now removed and handed back to their respective owners, the performer's coloured handkerchief being returned to his pocket.

If the above description has been carefully followed it will be seen that although an enormous amount of destruction has apparently been going on, in reality only one white handkerchief is destroyed at each performance of the experiment.

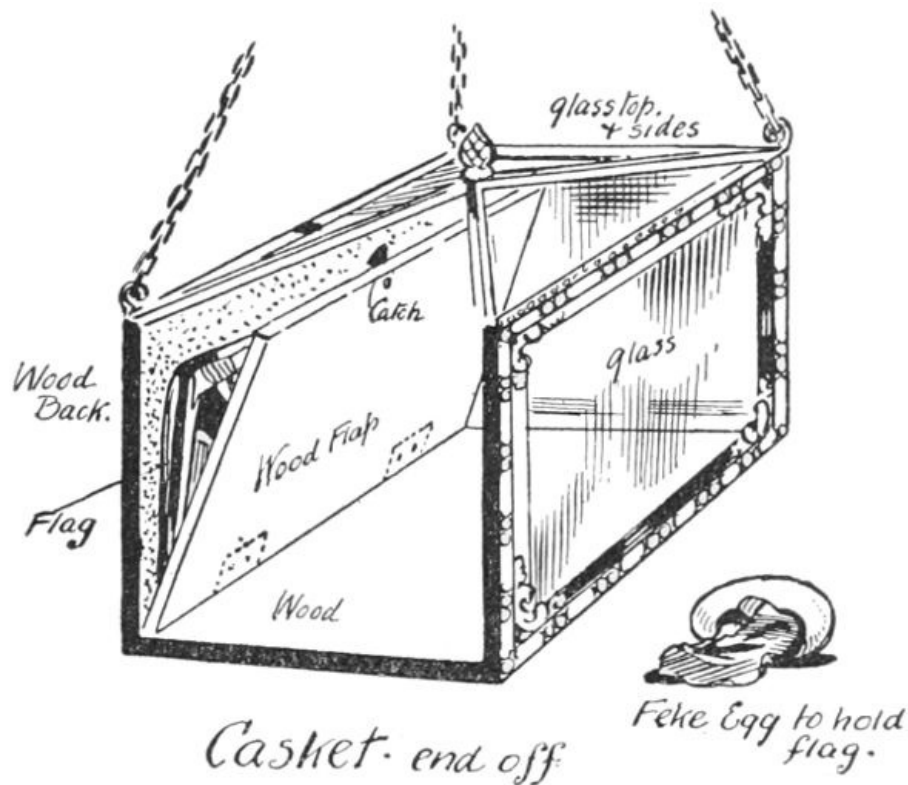
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## AN ORIGINAL CONCEPTION WITH EGGS AND FLAGS.

[Pg 19]

*Effect.*—An egg is produced and wrapped in a handkerchief, which is then placed over a chair back. A glass casket is next shown to be empty and a piece of tape tied round same by a member of the audience. The casket is suspended from a stand and covered with a borrowed handkerchief. A Union Jack flag is produced and changes into an egg. The casket is uncovered, and flag seen within. Handkerchief removed from chair back, opened out, and egg has disappeared.





*You will require*.—A glass casket for handkerchief, double handkerchief with slit in centre of one side, two small flags, one ordinary and one hollow egg (with opening at side), a piece of red tape long enough to go twice round the casket, candle in candlestick, box of matches and a folding brass music stand carrying a frame in which is suspended the casket. The casket has the front lid and two sides of glass, the back and bottom being of wood. A wooden flap is hinged to lower portion of back, and a small silk flag is roughly rolled up and placed behind the flap, which is held up by a small catch operating from back of casket. Casket can now be shown empty amongst the audience without fear of flag or flap being seen. The hollow egg is vested, and the second flag rolled up and placed in matchbox ready for production from flame of candle. The ordinary egg can either be brought on openly or magically produced. I prefer using one of the eggs I have previously produced in the "four eggs at finger tips" trick.

[Pg 20]

*Modus Operandi*.—Show the egg and wrap same in the double handkerchief, taking care that the egg is placed in the slit; twist the handkerchief round so as to show shape of the egg, and call attention to the fact that the egg can be seen throughout the performance, and lay same over chair back, egg towards audience. Show casket empty and hand the tape to spectator, asking him to tie same round the casket, the performer holding casket whilst it is being tied. It is now suspended in the frame on stand (two small brass chains with hooks at end being used for this purpose), and covered with borrowed handkerchief. In the act of covering the casket, performer releases the flap which drops down inside the casket, thus releasing the duplicate flag previously placed therein. The candle is now lighted and the flag produced from flame. While calling attention once more to the egg in the handkerchief and to the empty (?) casket, the performer secures the hollow egg from vest and proceeds to vanish the flag by working it into the opening at the side of egg. When the flag is well tucked in, the conjurer, without showing egg, explains what he is about to do—to cause the egg to leave the handkerchief and appear in his hand, and the flag to pass from his hand into the empty casket. *Presto!* the hands are opened, the egg is shown, and placed in a conspicuous position on the table; the casket is uncovered and handed to spectator to untie the tapes and remove the flag.

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The performer now commences to introduce his *next* trick, seemingly forgetting about the handkerchief which is still hanging over chair back, and of course the usual "smart" gentleman asks, "What about the egg in the handkerchief?" Performer seems flurried, but otherwise takes no notice of the remark, and pretends to be anxious to get on with his next item. The audience insists that the egg is still in the handkerchief, and performer then calls attention to the egg on the table, which he asserts is the one he wrapped up in the handkerchief, and "eggstracted" by magic. The audience do not believe it, so the magician, with seeming reluctance, very gingerly picks up the handkerchief from the chair and shakes same out (the handkerchief, not the chair), and the egg is "found" to have disappeared, proving (?) that the egg seen on table is the identical one which was wrapped up at commencement of trick.

[Pg 22]

I am indebted to my esteemed brother magicians, Messrs. T. HAYES, W. G. MALVERN, and J. HEMPSTEAD, for the description of the following original and novel experiments:—

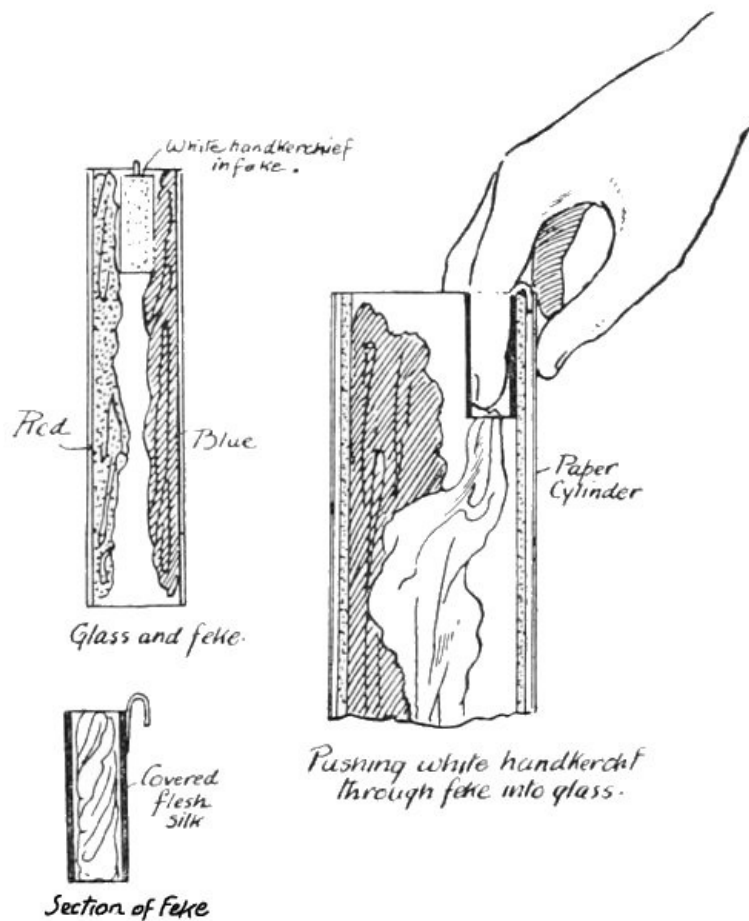
## A NEW HANDKERCHIEF COMBINATION.

The requirements for this excellent trick are as follows:—A glass gas chimney, four silk handkerchiefs—one red, one blue, and two white. A small *fêke*—consisting of a brass tube about two inches long and just large enough to slip over the forefinger of the right hand. There must be soldered at the top of the *fêke* on the outside, a piece of wire forming a small hook. The *fêke* should, for obvious reasons, be covered with flesh-coloured silk.

A sheet of cartridge paper rolled up to form a tube and of such a size as to fit over the glass cylinder is also required.

The presentation of the trick is as follows:—The performer commences by showing an ordinary glass cylinder to be unprepared and free from deception. The three handkerchiefs are next shown, and in placing them on the table the blue handkerchief is casually dropped over the *fêke* which is lying there loaded with a duplicate white handkerchief. The red handkerchief is then picked up along with the cylinder and placed in one end; then the blue handkerchief (and with it the *fêke*) is inserted in the other end of the cylinder. The hook on the *fêke* engages the rim of the cylinder, which prevents it from slipping down. The performer now covers the cylinder with the tube of paper, and in doing so the forefinger is pushed through the *fêke*, which action causes the concealed handkerchief to appear between the blue and red handkerchiefs, and when withdrawing the finger, the *fêke* is brought away on it, which, of course, cannot be seen owing to the flesh-coloured silk.

[Pg 23]



The trick is now practically finished; all the performer has to do is to vanish the white handkerchief into the *fêke*, which is removed from the finger, and command the white handkerchief to appear between the red and blue handkerchiefs in the cylinder. On removing the paper tube this is seen to have been done.

## THE "PHANTOM" COIN TRICK.

[Pg 24]

By J. HEMPSTEAD, MAGICIAN.

The coin trick I am about to describe is most suitable for performing in a room, and has the advantage of being easily mastered by anybody after five minutes' practice. This sleight has perplexed many of the world's leading magicians, amongst whom may be mentioned Mr. Horace Goldin.



The effect of the trick is as follows:—The performer rolls up his right sleeve to the elbow, and then sits down at a table. One of the spectators is requested to sit down opposite him, and having obtained the loan of a sixpence, he places the coin in his palm in full view of everybody. The performer then closes his hand on the table, knuckles upwards, and asks the spectator sitting opposite him to place his hand on his (performer's), which he does, and then the performer, saying "One! two! three! Pass!!" asks the spectator if he felt the coin leave the hand and pass through *his* (spectator's), to which, of course, the answer is "No"; but, nevertheless, on the spectator removing his hand, and the performer opening his, the coin is found to have completely vanished. The hands are shown absolutely empty, fingers wide apart, no palming being employed.

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The effect of this little trick cannot be sufficiently judged by a description in print, but must be put into actual practice to be thoroughly appreciated.

*To perform.*—When the performer (with right arm bared to elbow) asks the spectator to place his hand on his (performer's), he brings his left elbow on to the table and rests his head on his left hand—quite a natural position—and when the spectator puts his hand on the performer's (which in nine cases out of ten will be in the form of a fist like performer's), the conjurer exclaims, "No, no! not that way; put your hand *flat* on mine," on saying which the spectator will naturally remove his hand for an instant—and now comes the conjuring part of the experiment. As the spectator removes his hand performer raises his fist with a quick up-and-down motion, and as his hand descends the coin is thrown through the bottom of fist into left sleeve. This motion must be done very smartly and at the right moment, but with a little practice will be found quite easy of accomplishment.

It will now be clear that when the spectator again puts his hand on top of the performer's, the trick is done, and it does not take much of a magician to cause the disappearance of the coin. Of course, should the spectator at first place his hand *flat* on your fist, the same formula is gone through as before, only *vice versâ*.

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## AN ORIGINAL "EGGSTRA" SPECIAL COMBINATION.

BY T. HAYES, CONJURER AND ILLUSIONIST.

*Effect.*—Appear with wand in hand, and after usual introductory patter lay wand on table and pick up a piece of white tissue paper—size, say, 6 by 4 inches. Roll this up into a ball and place on the palm of the left hand; then, shaking it to and fro, it gradually assumes the form of an egg. Lay this on the table while you light a candle (ready in candlestick); pick up the egg again and hold it over the candle to harden it. In a minute show the egg and have the same examined. Make a few passes—limited only by the skill of the performer—eventually placing it in the left hand (back to audience) and command it to pass; show empty hand, at the same time point to candle on table,

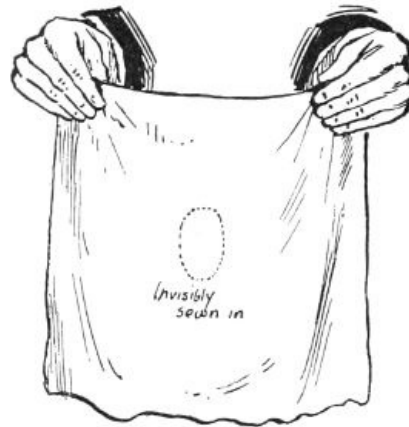
when the audience see the egg balanced on top of same. Take it off and bring forward with candle and show. Replace the candle and pick up a handkerchief. Cover egg with handkerchief and taking hold of egg through same, gather up the four loose ends and give to someone to hold. Take up your pistol and fire at same, and laying down pistol, pick up plate and ask assistant to place the handkerchief on it; then open out handkerchief, and in centre in place of the egg he finds original piece of paper (initialed previously if desired).

[Pg 27]

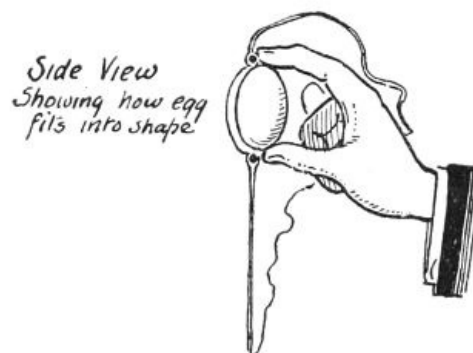
Now take piece of paper, and laying down plate and handkerchief, make a fist of left hand and push paper in at top, draw it out at bottom of hand, when it is seen to have changed to a white silk handkerchief. Show this both sides, holding it at two top corners; then roll it up rope fashion, and pulling hands apart, a handkerchief is seen in both hands—one white and one yellow (here you may remark "The white and yolk; simply a question of colour"). Now roll these two together in the hands, and hold in right hand over candle, saying, "I will hard-boil it," and show the egg again. Pass for examination, asking if it is a good one; on reply of "Yes," say "Well, I have my doubts, but we will test it." Throw it in the air two or three times and the egg disappears, you remarking, "I was afraid there might be a chicken in it."

*Explanation.*—When you pick up piece of paper at first, you take up with it a "skin" egg, neatly folded, with a thin strip of paper round it to prevent it prematurely expanding. It is this that is placed in palm of left hand, and paper strip torn loose. Lay gently on table and light candle, and as you lay down matchbox with right hand (right side to audience), palm egg in left hand from hip pocket or vest. Pick up "skin" egg and hold over candle, presently remarking "It's getting hot"; suddenly place it apparently in the left hand (really crushing it up and finger palming), and show palmed egg in left hand. After sundry "passes" "vanish" to candle. This is worked on same principle as "Card in Candle," or "Card on Ale Bottle," using a half shell (cut lengthwise). When you go to take egg, remove with left hand and place in right, in which is original egg still palmed. The shell fits on this, so only one egg appears. Pick up the candlestick in left hand, and bring it forward to show it quite unprepared, allowing the *fêke* to fall forward flat on table.

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Front View Showing wire shape



Replace the candle and pick up the handkerchief. This has an oval wire shape in centre covered by a piece of the same material as the handkerchief—this fits over egg, which presses out handkerchief into proper shape. When you pretend to take hold of the egg through handkerchief, you really seize this—allowing egg to drop into right palm out of sight. Gather up the four ends of the handkerchief with this hand, which adds cover for egg. Let go top (egg?) with left hand and ask assistant to hold handkerchief for you. In handing it to him first take it in your left hand and let your right fall naturally to side, and either "vest" or "*profonde*" egg. Now take up pistol and fire at egg (?) in handkerchief, and picking up the plate or tray, lay down pistol and ask assistant to lay handkerchief with the egg gently on it. With your other hand open out handkerchief—when he sees roll of paper on same. (This is original piece, palmed in when pretending to place egg in. The wire frame holds it in position.) Let your assistant open out the paper and verify mark (if one was made). Meanwhile, lay down the plate and handkerchief on the table, at the same time palming small *fêke* containing white silk handkerchief in left hand. Now take back piece of paper from assistant and thank him; then make left hand into a fist and push the paper in at top till all

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is in. This pushes out handkerchief from the *fêke* into the palm; then secretly remove *fêke* on finger, continuing the pushing with another finger (old idea). Now draw out silk handkerchief from bottom of left hand—show it by holding it at the top corners, in front of you—gradually raise right hand and lower left; as you do so, seize the corner of the yellow handkerchief which protrudes through one of waistcoat buttonholes. (I have a small black bead sewn to the corner to make this easy.) As soon as yellow handkerchief is clear, the left hand should have reached buttonhole and now seizes last corner; then a quick turn (ropewise) rolls up the yellow in the white. Pull hands apart gently, retaining end of yellow handkerchief in one hand and the end of white in the other, and let the audience see both, one in each hand. Now roll these up in the hands, "balling" them well, and hold over candle (or a Stodare egg can be used, making all safe). After a minute, show egg, saying, "It's getting hot!"—change from hand to hand, thus changing for real original egg, which you had just before palmed from vest or pocket, and hand for examination. The final vanish is, of course, into the *profonde* and needs no explanation.



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