

SECOND SIGHT SECRETS

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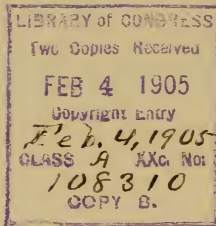
MECHANICAL MAGIC

BY

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BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

BEING A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF MANY OF
THE LATEST EFFECTS IN MECHANICAL MAGIC,
TOGETHER WITH SECRETS AND EXPLANATIONS OF
HOW MANY OF THE PERFORMANCES IN SECOND
SIGHT AND MIND-READING ARE PERFORMED.



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PREFACE.



THE author in presenting this little volume does so with the intention of assisting his readers to solve some of the mysteries and illusions that are performed on the public stage to-day by conjurors and so-called spiritualists, and also with the hope of dispelling the idea that these mysteries are accomplished by occult or supernatural methods, which belief is growing to quite an extent in this country.

The author has made a very careful study of the many illusions both in magic and in spiritualism, and of the transmission of thought, which is known by a great many different names, and in this little volume he intends to show how these illusions may be performed by purely mechanical means. It should be borne in mind, however, that it is not so much the apparatus employed as it is the shrewd, ever-observing methods employed by the performers, who are very sharp, keen men. The devices employed by the performers are so numerous that it is impossible to say just what methods they will use next. As soon as one method is exposed they immediately begin to plan, and evolve an entirely different method of performing the same illusion. The great success of the magician is in disarming the suspicions of the skeptic, and this is accomplished by leading him to think a certain


method is employed when he is really using another.

The author merely offers some solutions and points out certain fundamental principles which are usually employed, and which he thinks will assist his readers in solving these mysteries for themselves. No literary merit or perfection of style is attempted in this little volume for it is written in every-day language, but I hope it may prove of interest and value to my readers.

DR. HERMAN PINETTI.

CHAPTER I.

CABINET TRICKS.

 CABINET tricks have always been a great stand-by for performers in spiritualism. A committee from the audience is usually chosen, and after tying the performer securely to a chair or board or in some other way binding him very securely, he is then placed in a cabinet, the curtains drawn, and immediately manifestations take place, such as the ringing of bells, the banging of tambourines and playing of guitars.

I will now explain three of the latest and best cabinet tricks which I know. The first is known as the "Mahatma Miracles," and the effect of same is as follows:—

A cabinet with a translucent gauze opening in the front curtain stands on the stage and is freely inspected by a committee to see that there are no double backs, sides or tops. The medium then takes a seat in the cabinet and passes his or her hands through two apertures in the sides of the cabinet, where they are tied with ribbons and the ribbons held on the outside of the cabinet by the committee. The curtains are now closed, but due to the translucent gauze opening in the front of the curtain the medium's head and shoulders are seen by all. In spite of this, however, bells are rung, tambourines played, a glass of water is raised to the medium's mouth, a newspaper which is placed on the floor of the cabinet

is cut into beautiful designs, and many other manifestations take place.

The secret of this trick lies in the cabinet. It is an ordinary cloth one, with a raised platform about four feet square. The front curtain, as above mentioned, has a gauze opening about eighteen inches in diameter, and the two side curtains have openings large enough to allow the medium to pass his hands through. The legs of the cabinet are about six inches high and five inches in diameter. The secret of this cabinet lies in one of the front legs, which is hollow. The floor of the cabinet is laid off in squares so that one of the squares comes over the hollow leg and acts as a trap. A strong screw-eye is screwed in the under side of the trap and a rope attached to same. This rope passes down through a hole in the floor to an assistant underneath the stage, who holds the trap down while the committee inspects the cabinet.

The medium takes his seat on a chair in the cabinet, and passes one hand through each aperture in the sides, where they are securely fastened with ribbons or ropes, the ends of which are held by the committee. The curtains are now closed and the tests occur. The assistant under the stage works everything by pushing his hand and arm up through the hollow leg. He is thus able to ring the bells and play the musical instruments which are placed on the floor. In the glass-of-water test the assistant has a stuffed glove, with wires running up each finger, which is painted flesh color, and is fastened to a stick. He bends the wire fingers of this glove around the glass of water and pushes same up to the medium's mouth. In regard to the paper test. An ordinary newspaper is placed on the floor of the cabinet with a pair of

scissors. The assistant promptly draws this paper down through the hole in the floor and places another paper, cut into beautiful designs, on the floor of the cabinet, where it is found when the curtain is drawn aside. Many other tests can be performed, all of which I think will now be clear. It is needless to say that the assistant must always pull the trap down and hold it tightly by the rope after each test so the committee can discover nothing upon examining the cabinet. The medium gives the assistant a signal when to open the trap by tapping his foot on the trap. The cloth of the cabinet should be of some dark material.

The spiritualistic post test is the next which I will describe. In the most common form it consists of a post of pine wood two and a half feet long. This is given to the committee, one of whose members bores a hole through it, near its upper edge, and then passes an ordinary rope through the hole. A knot is then tied in the rope on each side of the post. The knots are pressed against the sides of the post to prevent the rope from being pulled through the hole. The ends of the rope are now unravelled, and the post is fastened to the floor with spikes. The medium takes a seat behind the post and his hands are securely tied to the post with the unravelled ends of the rope. Small pieces of court plaster are pasted over the knots so as to prevent him from slipping his hands from the fastenings. A nail is driven into the top of the post and a rope is secured to it. This second rope is held by the committee. A screen is now placed around the medium. Bells are rung, etc., showing that the medium has the use of his hands.

The secret of this trick consists in boring a hole in the

center of the end of the post. A chisel is then inserted in the hole and the opening closed with glue and sawdust colored with paint. In boring the hole through the post the medium starts the bit so that there is no danger of the committee boring the hole too low or so high that it will strike the chisel. When the nail is driven in the top of the post it forces the chisel down and cuts the rope. The medium may now ring bells, etc. After the medium is through he puts the rope ends back in the hole in the post and holds his hands very tightly against the post while the knots are inspected by the committee.

I will now explain what is known as the cotton bandage test, which is usually used by female mediums. A male performer, as a rule, uses rope or wire. In this experiment the committee is chosen from the audience and furnished by the performer with pieces of cotton cloth about an inch and a half wide and three feet long. One of these cotton strips is tied securely around each wrist of the medium, the performer instructing them to tie a number of good hard knots. As an extra precaution, a needle and thread is now furnished and a number of stitches are made above the knots to prevent them from getting untied. Strips of court plaster are also fastened over the bandages on wrists to prevent them from being slipped off the hands. The medium now places her hands behind her, and the ends of the strips from each wrist are now tied together by a number of good hard knots by the committee. What ends are left are evenly cut off near the knots. Another strip of cloth is now produced and one of the committee ties this strip around the knots between her wrists, leaving the ends of about equal length. The medium now takes her seat on a small stool with her back toward a

ring in a board which has been fastened to the floor. One end of the last strip is passed through the ring and several knots are tied. Another strip is produced and tied around the medium's neck and then tacked against the upright board. Two more strips are now used, tying one around each arm above the elbow, and the ends of same are also tacked to the board. The committee having done all this work themselves are thoroughly satisfied as to its genuineness. As an extra precaution, to show that the medium does not use her limbs in any way, a cord is tied around both feet, an end of which is held by a member of the committee.

A cabinet is now placed over the medium, and no sooner is the curtain closed than the usual manifestations take place, such as the ringing of bells, tooting of horns, banging of tambourines, driving of nails, etc., etc. Each time the curtain is opened the medium is seen with her hands apparently securely tied as before. Finally a pocket knife is placed in her lap, the curtain is closed for a few seconds, and soon the medium comes forth with her bonds cut, but only the wrists separated. This is supposed to be done by the spirits. Now, I will explain this mystery.

In a convenient pocket in the back of the medium's dress or in her belt she has slipped a small sharp open knife, with which she cuts through the bands between her wrists. She is able to do this as her hands are not tied absolutely tight together, because in tying the bandages around the wrists the performer instructs the committee to tie a number of good hard knots, and furthermore to sew the bandages together about two inches above these knots. These knots are also tied on the inside of wrists or above the palms of the hands.

It will be readily seen that when the loose ends are tied together there is a three or four inch space between her hands, so it is not at all difficult for her to cut herself free. She cuts the bandage which connects her wrists close to the band which fastens her to the ring and slips this bandage off, leaving it whole and still tied to the ring, and now has the free use of both hands, and as the strips tied around her arms were tied above her elbows she has full use of her forearms, and is thus able to raise a glass of water to her mouth, tie knots in a handkerchief around her neck and drive nails into a chair. She makes what manifestations she chooses, and by placing her wrists one on each side of the ring and clasping her hands together, pressing all tightly together, she is ready for examination. The ring being wound with cotton cloth the same as used in the bandages the committee cannot see that anything has been changed, and, being a little ill at ease upon a public stage, they are ready to say that she is bound without making the most thorough examination possible. Another thing to notice is that she is finally cut free. The reason of this is that if the investigators were to release her they would discover the secret.

This cotton bandage test is also performed in a little different manner, in which the medium is not cut free at all. In this case, when she places her hands behind her, she rests one hand on each hip so that her hands are about nine inches apart, and then has the committee tie the four ends together and then fasten her as in former case. She is now able by reaching with her left hand in back of her as far as possible to slip her right hand into her lap and get hold of what musi-

cal instruments are placed there. At first thought this may seem impossible, but with a little practice and some contortion on the part of the performer it is quite easy to perform the trick in this manner.

CHAPTER II.

TABLE LIFTING.



MOST spiritualistic performers usually perform a test of table lifting or of floating tables. Small, light tables are lifted by the mere "laying on of hands."

The arms are raised in the air and the table is seen to cling to the hands and follow every motion. This is accomplished by a pin driven well into the table, projecting above the table about a quarter of an inch. There is a good-sized head to this pin. The performer wears a ring with a slot in it. The body of the pin easily enters the slot in the ring, but the head of the pin being of good size prevents the table from falling away from the hand. After the table has been floated successfully an extra strong upward pressure of the hand pulls the pin out and the table can be examined. This trick may be performed when the table is covered with a borrowed silk handkerchief, as the handkerchief, being of fine, soft texture, does not prevent the pin slipping into the slot cut into the ring. This addition makes the trick a little more effective.

There is also another method employed of raising a table which has been examined beforehand by a committee, who also examine the performer's hands to see that there is no sticky substance on them. In this method, instead of having

a slot cut into the ring, a strong needle point is soldered to the outside of the ring and at a slight angle to it. This ring is placed upon the performer's hand so that the point is sticking toward the tips of his fingers. The ring may be turned upon his finger so that the point can be concealed between the fingers when his hands are being examined. When he performs this trick he merely turns the point around to the inside of his hand, and the top of the table being of some soft texture, such as cardboard or wood covered with felt, he is able to push this needle point well into the top of the table, and is thus able to raise it without trouble.

Small, light tables are sometimes floated in the air with the performer holding his hand well above the table and not touching it at all. This is easily accomplished by having two strings running from one side of the stage to the other worked by assistants. They merely raise these strings from the floor so they come underneath the table, when by a little effort they are able to raise the table completely off the floor.

THE OBEDIENT HANDKERCHIEF.

This little trick is usually performed in connection with some other handkerchief trick or with some act in hypnotism.

The performer having borrowed a handkerchief from some one in the audience for some trick, before returning same to the owner states that he is going to try and make the handkerchief stand alone. He ties a knot in one corner of the handkerchief, rubs it between his hands, "to endow it with magnetism," and then places same on the floor. At his

command the handkerchief rises or falls, it dances to music, and altogether acts in a very strange manner. He now picks the handkerchief up and carries it forward to its owner.

There are several methods of performing this little experiment, and, while not much of a trick in itself, if well presented it is very interesting. The old method used to be of having a string extending from the floor to the ceiling and thence passing over a small pulley to the back or side of the stage. On the end of the string on the stage was a small bent pin or a pellet of wax. The performer when tying the knot in the handkerchief stuck the pin in the corner of same or stuck the wax to the handkerchief, whichever method was used. His assistant from the side of the stage was now able to operate the handkerchief. This was somewhat of a clumsy method, as it took a little dexterity to release the handkerchief from the string after the performance. The method now usually employed, and on which the details are worked out with care, is to have a fine black string passing from one side of the stage to the other. The performer has an assistant at both sides. When he is to perform this trick they raise the string to the height of his hands, and in tying the knot in the handkerchief he ties it loosely around the string. He now drops it to the floor, and at his command the assistants are able to raise the handkerchief and make it move forward and backward in a very mystifying manner. To heighten the effect the performer passes a chair or a tambourine over the handkerchief, thus showing that there is no connection made from above, which is the method usually supposed to be employed. Now, when he returns the handkerchief one assistant drops his end of the string and the

other holds his firmly, and the performer walking down to the front of the stage with the handkerchief, the string is drawn through the knot.

Another method of fastening the string to the handkerchief may be employed where the performer is able to carry the handkerchief to the side of the stage before performing the experiment. In this case he passes a needle to which is attached a thread through a corner of the handkerchief, and then walks to the other side of the stage, where he gives one assistant an end of the string, the other end being held by the assistant on the first side.

There is also another method of performing this, in which the performer passes a solid hoop completely over and around the handkerchief while it is suspended in the air. This little contrivance, being one of my own, consists of a fine piece of wire made on the same plan as the apparatus used in suspending a woman in mid-air, which I will explain in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLOATING GIRL.

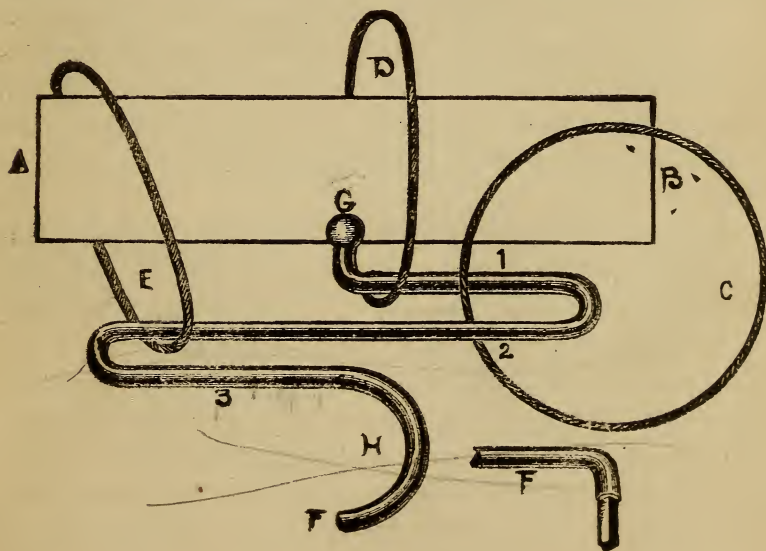


THE following illusion is usually performed in connection with an act of hypnotism, and is very sensational and mystifying. The effect is as follows:—

On the stage is a long, narrow couch with back and ends, usually upholstered in some dark material. The legs of the couch are about twelve inches high, and the audience are able to see plainly underneath the couch. The performer introduces a young lady, and apparently hypnotizes her. She then lies down upon this couch and the performer continues to make more passes over her, arranges the draperies of her dress, and sometimes covers her with a small shawl. He then takes a position in back of the couch directly over her and continues his hypnotic passes. To the wonderment of all, she is seen to rise slowly from the couch to a considerable height. The couch is now removed by two assistants, and she is apparently suspended in mid-air. To disprove the agency of any mechanical appliance the performer now has brought to him a solid wooden hoop, which he passes completely over, in back, and again over the suspended girl. His two assistants then bring back the couch, and she slowly sinks back upon the seat of same. The performer now rouses her from her hypnotic sleep, she rises,

bows to the audience and retires.

I will now explain how this illusion is usually performed. It can only be performed on a theatre stage or where there is plenty of room underneath, as this is where the working of the trick takes place. There is a false seat to the couch, which consists of a board from four and a half to five feet long and from six to eight inches wide. This board is upholstered in the same material as the couch, and when laying on the seat of the couch cannot be noticed. There is a small slot cut in the back of the couch in the very center, from the top down to the seat. This slot is hidden by the upholstery so it cannot be noticed by the audience.



I will now call attention to the accompanying cut, by

the aid of which I can better explain this illusion. "A-B" is the board or false seat which I have described. In this diagram we are supposed to be looking directly down upon it. At "G" there is firmly connected to this board a heavy metal coil, as illustrated in the cut. This coil consists of three metal bars, numbered, respectively, "1, 2 and 3." This entire apparatus is in the same horizontal plane as the board "A-B." The connection "G" is made through the slot in the back of the couch of which I spoke, and the back of the couch extends between rod "No. 1" and the board "A-B," running out considerably beyond the ends of this board. It will now be seen if this metal coil is raised upward it will carry with it the board "A-B." At "F" there is a small stud, connected to metal coil either by welding or having the bar bent over. This little stud is of triangular shape and several inches long, and is at right angles to the metal coil and perpendicular to the floor. The smaller cut "F" at the right will make this plain to the reader.

This stud "F" fits firmly into a bar having a triangular opening at its end. This bar is pushed up through a small trap in the stage from underneath same. This bar is free to move up and down, but otherwise is firmly secured underneath stage. Underneath it is a strong screw-jack, which is capable of raising the complete apparatus above, even with the additional weight of the young lady reclining on the board "A-B." The performer, after the young lady lies down on the seat of the couch, in reality on the board "A-B," walks around in back of the couch and stands close up to bar "No. 3" with his right leg in the space "H." The stud "F" is thus in back

of his right leg. The small trap in the floor is now opened and the bar is pushed up in back of the performer's leg and connected with the stud "F." The bar being painted black would not be noticeable against the performer's black trousers and shoes should it come into view. It is, in fact, hidden from view by the performer's right leg. All the performer has now to do is to remain in this position, and heighten the effect by his spectacular play, such as hypnotic passes directed toward the young lady. His assistants underneath the stage merely raise the young lady by screwing up the jack, or raising her by whatever appliance may be used. When she comes to a position above the top of the couch the couch may be removed by two assistants of the performer. Of course, it will be understood that the dress and draperies of the girl will completely hide the board and the apparatus in back of same.

Now, for passing the solid wooden hoop over the suspended girl. To do this the performer takes the hoop in his left hand, passes it over the end marked "A" of the board and down between rods "No. 1" and "No. 2," the hoop assuming the position of that in the diagram marked "D." It is now carried forward by the performer's right hand and off at the end of board "B." The hoop is now turned around and assumes the position "C." The whole hoop is now passed in back of the girl, running between rods "No. 2" and "No. 3." When it reaches the end of the board "A" it is again passed over the girl and board and assumes the position marked "E." It may now be completely withdrawn from off of the end marked "B." The performer may now reverse the motion of the hoop by starting it at "B" if he chooses.

The foregoing is somewhat difficult to explain, but if the reader will bend a piece of wire into the shape as above and take a small ring and follow these directions he will see how this is accomplished.

The position which the legs of the couch occupy are marked off on the floor, so that when the couch is returned it will be in the same position as at first, and thus the little bar "G" slips through the slot in back of couch when the girl is again lowered. This slot may be cut diagonally through back and then cannot be seen. When the board "A-B" comes to rest on the seat of couch the bar which passes up through the hole in the floor is now withdrawn through the floor and the trap closed. The performer then walks around to the front of the couch and apparently awakens his subject.

Some performers have a different connection with the rod from under the floor, having a thread cut on the end which screws into the coil at "F." This may be a more secure fastening, but it takes longer to insert and remove.


I wish to call attention to the fact that this little diagram, which is made very roughly, is not drawn to scale, being more to illustrate the course of the hoop than for any other purpose. The small semi-circular space "H" has a diameter of about a foot, and the performer stands in this, the semi-circular hoop encircling his leg. The apparatus may be raised up as high as performer's waist or even higher, and the hoop will then be encircling his body, while the rod connected to "F" running through the floor will be hidden by the performer.

This illusion was first performed by having the girl lie

on a couch or upon a board supported by two wooden horses, quite close to the rear curtain of the stage, and instead of having the connection made underneath the floor a rod was passed through a slot in the back curtain which connected to the metal coil. The end of the rod in back of the curtain was firmly fitted into a heavy block which slid up and down in a perpendicular frame. This block, by means of ropes and pulleys, could be raised or lowered by the assistants in back of stage. Without a doubt, however, the method of performing this illusion now, where the performer stands over the girl in the center or even in the front part of stage, is very much better and more mystifying in every way.

CHAPTER IV.

SECOND SIGHT AND KINDRED PHENOMENA.

S far back in history as one cares to go he will find mention of magicians and the works of magic which they performed. Even before the building of the Pyramids in Egypt magic was a reputed art.

We read in the Bible of Aaron casting down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants and its becoming a serpent. The magicians of Egypt then being summoned by Pharaoh did likewise with their enchantments, turning their rods into serpents. (Exodus, Chapter seven, Verses ten and eleven.)

Magic was greatly in vogue in the middle ages, and we read weird tales of ghosts and gnomes in literature of that time.

One of the earliest of the necromancers of whom we read was Joseph Balsamo, known as Count Cagliostro. He married a very beautiful girl at Rome, who proved of great assistance to him in his impostures, and with her and a retinue of servants traveled all over Europe and scattered money right and left. He, however, reaped an abundant harvest by his impostures. He was very cordially received wherever he went, and was believed in by serious-minded and educated men. In Paris he became involved in some affair and was thrown into Bastille. Though eventually liberated, he was compelled to leave Paris. Cagliostro was

the last to win any great fame as a pretender to occultism, although there was a feeble attempt to revive thaumaturgy in the nineteenth century by Madame Blavatsky. Science, however, has laughed away sorcery and witchcraft.

In London, 1784, we read of Chevalier and Madame Pinetti, and his wonderful experiments of new discovery. We read of Madame Pinetti being seated in one of the front boxes of the theatre, blind-folded, and guessing at everything imagined and proposed to her by any person in the company. Here we have the first mention of the second sight trick which, in the hands of latter-day artists, has become so popular. Houdin rediscovered it, passed it on to Robert Heller, who improved it, and at the present day Keller and others make it a feature of their performances.

Heller's performance was very remarkable and mystified the people for years, even after his death; in fact, until Mr. Fred Hunt, Jr., who was Heller's assistant for many years, made an *exposé* for the "London Times."

Heller used to perform with his sister, Haidee Heller. She was introduced to the audience blind-folded and seated upon the stage. Heller would then go among the audience and receive from them various articles, which Miss Heller accurately described. Heller's method consisted of a very elaborate code of words, which system he so simplified as to embrace every variety of article, classified in sets. One question with a word or two added sufficed to give the desired information to his sister, who had a thorough knowledge of the code, and she could at once describe any desired article.

Heller also had a silent method of performing these tricks, in which he did not speak a word, and this effect

puzzled every one. It was accomplished by means of electricity. A confederate sat among the spectators, near the center aisle of the theatre, and the wires of an electric battery connected with his chair, a small push button being under front part of seat. The wires ran from the confederate's chair to the floor and under the carpet and underneath the stage, then up to the floor of the stage, and connected to a small metal plate. The chair on which Miss Heller sat had two little pins in one leg, and these were placed upon the metal plate in the floor. In the chair was a little mechanical contrivance connected with wires which ran through the woodwork and down through the leg of the chair, and connected to the two little pins before mentioned. When the chair was placed on the plate the connection was made, and when the button was pressed by the confederate the little contrivance used made a slight tapping upon the chair which could be heard or easily felt by Miss Heller. In this manner the code used by them could be telegraphed by the assistant. Heller would bring the article to be described down near where the assistant sat so that he could see it, and he would then telegraph in their code a description of what the article might be to Miss Heller, who sat blind-folded on the stage, and she, to the wonderment of all, would accurately describe the article.

This method of telegraphing information to an assistant has been used by later performers in a slightly different manner. The assistant is concealed at the side of stage where he can see the audience and performer. The medium is blind-folded, and a committee of gentlemen come upon the stage and write numbers on a blackboard. The blind-

folded medium adds or subtracts, and tells whatever figure is pointed to by any one in the committee; also tells the value of cards, and gives other tests in numbers.

The assistant at side of the stage can see all numbers on the blackboard and can also see the cards. He communicates the answer to the blind-folded medium by pulling a little string which runs under the stage and which causes a little metal rod to come up through a small hole in the stage floor. The medium sits with her foot directly over this small hole, and also has a hole about one inch in diameter cut in the sole of her shoe. Now, when the string is pulled the small rod presses against the medium's foot, and when the string is released the rod, which is fastened to a spring or stout elastic band, again recedes into the floor.

Suppose the sum of several columns of figures on the blackboard is 5037. The assistant at the side of stage quickly adds them up himself, and then pulls the string seven times, and the medium calls out in slow tones, as if under great mental pressure, (not foot pressure) "Put down number seven." The assistant now pulls the cord three times and pauses. "The next figure is number three," says the medium. To telegraph the cipher the assistant now gives a long steady pull. The medium now calls for cipher, and then on receiving five pulls calls out the last number five. She is thus able to tell any number pointed to by any one. When vacant space is pointed to the assistant does not pull the string, and, there being a long pause, the medium knows that no figure is being pointed to, and says: "You are not pointing to any figure." The signal to stop is a series of two pulls in rapid succession.

It sometimes happens that the assistant cannot see what

number is required, say, for instance, the number on a watch or the date on a coin. In this case the performer communicates with the assistant by sign language, and the assistant now telegraphs the desired number or numbers to the medium. The signs may be gotten up as in the following table:

- Closing right hand, sign for number 1.
- Frowning, sign for number 2.
- Smiling, sign for number 3.
- Right hand on hip, sign for number 4.
- Raising eyebrows, sign for number 5.
- Rubbing chin, sign for number 6.
- Drawing mouth to right, sign for number 7.
- Rubbing ear, sign for number 8.
- Hand to brow, sign for number 9.
- Looking to floor, sign for 0.

A great many signs can be used, and most performers have their own. The telegraphic method is very good for tests in numbers, but for the communication of words or questions is too slow, and it is also difficult for medium to get the question, if it be a long one, as she cannot write it down, and, therefore, this method is not often used in anything but number tests.

Some of the performers in magic around the country are now giving very mysterious exhibitions in thought transmission. Notably among these are the Baldwins, known as the "White Mahatmas," and the Fays in their act called "Thaumaturgy." Their performances are remarkable, and I will now describe the effect, and offer some solutions to the

mystery. I do not say that the methods I suggest are the only ones used, for there are so many methods that it would be impossible to describe them all. I will merely tell the principal methods employed for producing these effects by purely mechanical means. Now, for a description of the tricks performed by some of the present conjurors.

i. The performer announces that his assistant, who is usually a woman, and whom I choose to call a medium in the following description, will read and answer questions written by the people in the audience, which they may have written at home on their own paper or at the theatre. He instructs them to write a short question and sign their name if they wish an answer, then to fold the question up and place same in their pocket or pocketbook. For the convenience of those who have not written their questions at home the performer and the ushers distribute slips of paper and pencils among the audience. They also pass out pieces of millboard to act as a rest on which to write the question. They (the performer and ushers) disclaim any preparation of these millboards and they are only passed out to obviate the inconvenience of writing on the knee. A number of these boards are torn in two and given to the audience to examine, and keep as souvenirs, if they so wish. This is done to show that there is no preparation about the boards. After the questions are written the boards are brought back by the ushers and laid upon the stage in view of all. A little vaudeville show now usually takes place, which occupies a half-hour or so, the star performance or that of thought transmission or telepathy being held until last.

Before commencing this last part the performer makes

a few remarks and impresses it upon the audience that if they wish their questions answered they must concentrate their minds upon them, for if they oppose "the one with attributes not usually utilized by man" or think that the medium cannot read their questions then she cannot, and they will not be answered. He instructs the audience that if any person's name be called, whether he or she has written a question or not, to promptly respond by raising his hand so as to put himself in direct communication with the medium. Why the raising of the hand, which is somewhat embarrassing to a person, places him into closer or more direct communication with the medium the performer fails to explain. To assist the audience to concentrate their thoughts on the questions he bids them take out their questions from their pockets or purses or wherever they may be concealed, and occasionally read them over. At this point a rustle of paper is usually heard all over the house, showing what faith the audience have in the performance.

The performer now presents the medium. She is very carefully blind-folded, and then mesmerized by the performer. A large sheet is now usually thrown over the medium, ostensibly to shut out material vision and to retain the personal magnetism, which cannot escape through the white sheet, provided it be a very white one. The performer and ushers now distribute themselves about the theatre, and the medium now starts in something after the following:—

"Sitting down stairs and to my right there comes to me the name of Smith. I believe it is Clarence R. Smith."

Now the performer requests Mr. Smith to raise his hand, which he does, and the medium continues:—

"He is sending me a thought about himself. Now,

concentrate your thoughts, Mr. Smith, and think very hard, and I will see if I can get your question. Yes! He says: 'Will I be successful?'

Mr. Smith now states that this is the question which he has written, and the medium now proceeds to answer him in something of this manner:—

"I see no reason, Mr. Smith, why you will not be successful, and I think you will. However, you will make a change in a short time and will leave your present position as bookkeeper for Brown & Jones.

"You wrote that question out at home, Mr. Smith, and on a card, didn't you?

"Yes,—I thought so. It is written in ink, and you wrote it at your home, No. 734 Main Street. Am I not right?"

Mr. Smith now states that everything the medium has told him is correct as far as he knows.

The performer now collects the card from Mr. Smith and brings it down to the front of the house, and calls attention to the fact that it is not written on his paper. If there is some printed matter on the card he may ask the medium to read what is there, and she, after a little hesitation, does so.

This test which I have described would be known as a star test, as the question was written outside of the theatre and besides reading and answering the question she describes the card on which it is written.

I will now enter into an explanation of a variety of methods used, or that may be used, to perform these seemingly remarkable experiments, by the pure aid of science and trickery.

The very innocent-looking little millboards play a very

important part in performances of this character. Out of a lot of about fifty boards there are twelve to fifteen that are "faked" in a manner which I will presently describe. The rest of the boards are, however, without any preparation, and can be broken open and examined by any one. The "fake" boards are prepared by inserting under the top thin layer of the board a piece of white paper and over this a sheet of carbon paper. The thin layer or face of the board, really a piece of brown paper, is now pasted down around the edges, which, when sandpapered off, bears casual inspection without disclosing the secret. Both sides of the board may be prepared if desired, but one side is usually deemed sufficient, for the ushers who pass out the boards know which is the "fake" side. They place a piece of paper on this side and pass it to the person to write on, and not one person in a hundred will turn the board over to write on the other side. Any question written on the paper, using this board as a rest, will be transferred by means of the carbon paper to the sheet of white paper underneath. The ushers armed with a handful of good solid boards and four or five "fake" boards now pass among the audience. By a little practice they are able to pick out a skeptic or any one whom they think may cause trouble by stealing a board or tearing it open for the purpose of discovering the secret in the board. To those they give the genuine boards, and if that person should now break it open for the purpose of exposing the performer he feels very cheap on finding no preparation about it. As before stated, to all of those of whom the ushers are suspicious they pass genuine boards, and to others they pass the "fake" boards with paper and pencil, and they are very careful to get all of these boards

back. They may occasionally break open a good board to show that there is no preparation. Several questions can be written on each prepared board, as the questions, being brief, are not apt to be written on the same part of the board, and even if they are can easily be read.

The ushers, after they have collected all the boards, retire to the back of the house, where they slip the "fake" boards under their coats or vests, and then bring down the genuine ones with some little show, holding them above their heads and throwing them carelessly down upon the stage, where they remain during the entire performance.

The performer also passes out some boards to be written on, but as all eyes are on him he has no opportunity to slip any of these boards under his vest, so he uses only genuine boards, and is not very particular whether they are returned or not. Questions written on these boards are not answered, that is, not by any assistance of the boards, but they may be answered by some of the other methods, which I will describe later.

The ushers now carry their boards around to the back of the stage to the medium, where they are arranged in piles. The usher who distributes the boards on the right side of the house places his in one pile; a pile is also made by the usher from the left of the house, another by the usher from the center of the house, and still another by the usher from the gallery. In this way it is known in what part of the house the questioner sits.

A paper knife is now inserted under the top sheet of board and the top sheet removed and the white sheet with the copy of the questions on it is taken out. The medium and

her assistants now either cut these questions out, making little slips of them, or copy them into a little book, making notes regarding the answers under each question where it is necessary. Of course, the sensational part of the performance is in the answers the medium gives, and the quicker and cleverer she is in her answers determines the success of the performance.

The medium and assistants now, while the vaudeville show is taking place on the stage, work up the answers. They are provided with recent issues of local papers from which they can get information about local affairs, and also are able to post themselves on the latest stock quotations, if any question is asked about them, and there usually are a number. They also have a directory of the town they are in, which contains a great deal of useful information for their business. Suppose the medium only has the name of some man in the audience. She can look that person up in the directory, find out his business and his home address, and, by consulting the street directory, can find out his next-door neighbors. If, in her performance, she calls out this man's name, telling him she cannot seem to catch his question, as he does not concentrate his thoughts upon it, she may bring in, in a very clever manner, the information which she has obtained from the directory, telling him where he lives and naming his neighbors, also telling him where he is employed. This makes a very good impression on the audience, especially if the man is well-known in the town and one who all would know was not in collusion with the performer. The directory also gives a list of all city and town officials, names of all physicians, clergymen and lawyers, names of men in the different

departments, such as the police and fire departments, besides giving a list of all stores and manufactories in the town, their owners and officers, and it is all in a very convenient form for reference.

I will now describe a similar method of gaining possession of questions by the aid of the boards, but in this case the boards are free of preparation, but not so with the small slips of paper distributed, on which the questions are written. One side of these slips of paper is prepared by rubbing it over with a piece of hard soap of good quality. Nothing will be noticed about the paper except that one side seems to be glazed. The cardboards used have a hard smooth face. In passing out the slips of paper and boards the soaped side of the paper is placed down upon the face of the board and passed to members of the audience. They write their questions upon these papers, naturally using the side uppermost. The pencils provided have a rather blunt point.

These boards being collected they are carried back of stage as in the former method. Here the boards are dusted over with some pigment, such as bronze powder or lamp black. This is now shaken off, and the questions written will now show up plainly on the boards, the particles of lamp black or whatever is used sticking to the outline of the soap, which adhered to the board in the act of writing the question, and which was not visible until dusted with this fine powdered pigment.

The medium now having a list of questions on which she has made up suitable answers conceals these in her dress and comes forward onto the stage, where she is blind-folded. As soon as the large sheet is thrown over her, however, she

pushes this bandage up from her eyes, and the sheet being of thin material or having a number of threads drawn out in that portion which covers her face, she is enabled to read her questions and answers under the sheet.

I think this will fully describe the methods employed where the questions are written upon the performer's boards.

I will now describe a number of methods by which she obtains questions which are written outside of the theatre, and upon the people's own paper.

Besides the ushers and assistants we see with the performer at his exhibition he also employs a number of men and women of whom the audience know nothing. They act as assistants to the performer in many ways. Usually one or two of them make a systematic canvass of the town to be played in a week or so in advance of the performer in the ostensible occupation of book-agent or peddler of some sort. Their real mission is, however, to keep their eyes and ears open and gain all the knowledge possible that may be of assistance to their employer. They mail a list made up with index to the performer before they leave the town for the next. On this list they have described subjects of local interest in the town which they have canvassed. The list may contain a description of some local mystery, such as a robbery, murder, fire or wreck, together with a list of names of those persons who are, or are thought to be, implicated in any way. If an election of any sort is soon to take place they send the performer a list of the candidates, with the probable successful candidates, and about how many votes each is expected to carry. If some race or athletic event is

soon to occur the favorites are mentioned.

This information the performer's "advance guard" find out from local papers and by overhearing conversations in the hotels, on the streets, and at the houses and offices at which they call. By using a little diplomacy, they can "pump" a whole lot of local gossip and useful information from the unsuspecting citizens whom they run across, all of which is sent to the performer, who follows along a week or two afterwards. This preliminary work is known by professionals as "planting a town," and the performer usually reaps the harvest.

Another use of the confederates is to have them scattered through the audience at the performances. They make it their business to see and learn what questions those around them write or have written. They can often overhear one person telling another what question he has written. The confederates or "cappers," as they are known, make copies of these questions they learn of by spying on those around them and by hearing them talked of. Sometimes they cannot get the person's name, and in this case they give the number of the seat the person is sitting in or a description of the person. In other cases a person's name is all they can see or overhear. They write this down, however, for all information, no matter how trivial, can be made use of in the performance. The "cappers" also write down a description of the question, whether written in ink or pencil and the color of same, and a description of what it is written on, whether a large, small or narrow piece of paper, card or envelope.

When the boards and papers are passed around the "cappers" write down all the information they have gathered.

This writing by the "cappers" is not noticed by those sitting around them, for they write the questions on one of the boards distributed and at the same time all are writing. When the "cappers" return the boards and pencils to the ushers they pass the slips, containing the information which they have gathered, rolled up in little balls to the ushers, who take them in back of stage to the medium.

A star test is usually worked up by aid of the "cappers," the medium answering some question which they are supposed to have written, about the past or present, describing the details of what they inquire about in a very tragic manner, the "cappers" announcing that all she tells them is absolutely correct.

The treasurer or ticket seller of the theatre or hall is usually taken into the confidence of the performer, and he can furnish additional information, as he knows the people in town well and by name, and is able to tell the performer what seats they are sitting in. He is also able to draw out from those buying tickets what questions they intend to ask, or they will often volunteer the information, telling the treasurer that they are coming to see the performance to find out who stole their watch or who will be the next mayor, or whatever they may wish to know. The treasurer makes a note of all this, and this information is used in the act. The person, however, who tells the treasurer what he would like to know may not write the question at all. In this case, the medium calling on him and being informed that he has written no question states that he is thinking of such or such a thing, and this adds greatly to the act and makes a number of converts to occultism.

It will be seen now that if at every performance the four or five "cappers" sitting among the audience are all successful in finding out two or three questions which are written at home or outside of the theatre and a description of what they are written upon, together with what information is obtained from the treasurer of the house, and also the questions which the medium obtains from the "fake" boards, the medium has now obtained abundant ammunition of mystery to fire at the audience for about an hour, the solution of which passes over their heads.

This method of employing confederates to find out questions written outside of the theatre is, of course, expensive, and some performers do not like to use it, not only on account of the expense, but because often-times "cappers" or "planters" leave the performers and start a show of their own or give away some of the secrets, so some resort to another method, which is simple and worked very openly, the working of which I will now describe.

When the medium is covered with the sheet an assistant under the stage passes up through a small hole or trap in the floor either a rubber speaking-tube or a small telephone receiver connected by wires. This is either connected to the medium's ear by a band which passes around her head or is held to her ear by her hand. The rubber speaking-tube or the wires from the telephone, whichever is used, run under the stage to an assistant. The arrangement of theatres being very different, there is no fixed place for the assistant to conceal him or herself, but it is always in the most advantageous position—sometimes at the side of the platform, sometimes in one of the lower boxes, but usually underneath

the stage, directly under the footlights or under the runway which runs from the stage out to the auditorium. The sides of this runway being boarded up or covered with rugs or carpets, the assistant is concealed from view of the audience. In one of the steps leading from the runway down to the floor of the auditorium there is a secret opening, by means of which the performer is able to pass, unobserved, slips of paper containing questions and suggestions, which are read by assistant and telephoned to medium sitting under sheet.

The performer usually stands near these steps and walks back and forth, while his assistants or ushers wander over the theatre locating the people whose names are called.

As the performer has requested the audience to take out their questions and read them over, they are usually held in their hands. The ushers often on seeing a person holding a question ask to see it for the purpose of assisting him in thinking about it. The ushers experience very little difficulty in collecting these questions, as the majority of the people in the audience believe that the performance is one in pure thought reading, and think the reason their questions are not answered is due to their being unable to concentrate their thoughts upon them, and as they are usually anxious for an answer are very willing to accept the proffered assistance of the ushers and give them their questions outright. The usher usually makes a few inquiries about the question. The usher, if he does not retain the question or slip, on walking down the aisle makes a copy of it on a little slip of paper, either in longhand or in some code understood by the assistant, and furthermore adds what information he has obtained about it.

Suppose the question be:—

"Where is my sister, Mary," signed, "Annie Laurie." The usher asks Miss Laurie when and where her sister was last heard from, and may be informed that it was a year ago, from Germany.

On the questioner's slip or copy of same he writes: "last heard from in Germany a year ago."

This slip and many others which he has obtained he rolls up into small balls, and on passing the performer, or under cover of talking to him, secretly passes him these slips. The performer in turn passes them through trap opening in the step to the assistant concealed under same, or possibly drops them over the railing of the lower box, if the assistant is concealed there, where they are gathered in from the floor of the box by the assistant and telephoned to medium.

The medium is now able to answer the person's inquiry about their missing sister. She utilizes as much dramatic power as possible in her answers and works them up cleverly, often-times giving information in her answers which she gains from the written question alone. For instance, she will probably answer the "lost sister" question as follows:—

"Some one is sending me a thought from down stairs. It is a lady and I think her name is Annie Laurie."

"I see the lady right here!" exclaims an usher, and a connection being now established between the medium and Miss Laurie, she is able to read the question. She proceeds.

"Miss Laurie is sending me a thought about her sister, and wants to know where she is.

"I think I can tell you your sister's name, Miss Laurie. It is Mary. Isn't that right? Yes,—I thought so, and you have not heard from her for over a year.

"It seems to me she is in a foreign land, and I seem to see the flag of Germany.

"Your sister is well, Miss Laurie. She has written you a letter and it is now on its way, and you will receive it next Tuesday."

"Wonderful!" exclaim the audience, and Miss Laurie goes home a firm believer in the supernatural, wondering, possibly, if there will be money in "Mary's" letter.

The majority of questions written pertain to lost or stolen articles and questions regarding the future. This is natural, for most people are not interested in the past or present. It, of course, makes the answering of the questions very much easier for the medium, for where the questioner is in ignorance about the answer she can tell him anything, and the success of her answers is limited only by her skill and dramatic ability.

There are, however, always a number of skeptics at the performances, who try and test the value of the medium's answers by asking questions, the answers of which they know, such as:—"What is the number of my watch?" "What was the score of such and such a game?" "What is the date of the coin in my hand?" etc. The answers to these have to be worked out with more care, and is usually performed in this way. The medium has gained knowledge of the question in some of the preceding methods I have described, and when she answers this question she calls out the questioner's name, and states that he or she is thinking about a watch, about a game, or coin, or whatever the question may be about. She states she cannot seem to see more, asking the person to think intently about it and she may get it.

She now proceeds to answer some other questioner, but she has given the performer a cue that she desires more information about the question she left unanswered.

The performer now goes to the person, asks for his question (we will in this case consider the questioner a man) and reads it. He also asks for the answer, which is usually told him. (If it is not the question will not be answered.) He now tells the person to think about it intently and he may be answered.

The performer now leaves the person and walks down to the stage. On his way, secretly or openly, the latter is usually the better method of disarming the suspicious, he writes down the answer to the question, such as the number of the watch, score of the game or date of the coin, on a slip of paper. He now passes this through trap to assistant, who reads it off to medium, and she returns to the questioner, stating that she can now see his question, reads it and answers it. Questions of this kind always make a decided hit.

Some performers, when they wish to convey a number to their assistant, do so by sign language, the assistant keeping his eye on the performer through a peep-hole from his place of concealment.

By the aid of a verbal code the number may be conveyed directly to medium by a question or sentence spoken by performer. I will explain an example of this code. For instance, we will say

Please, means	1
Tell, means	2
Can, means	3

We, means	4
Hurry, means	5
Give, means	6
Quick, means	7
I, means	8
Speak, means	9
What, means	0

Suppose the performer wishes to communicate the number 68,401. He says to the medium:—

“Give us an answer. I wish it. We all do. What is the number of so and so? Please tell me.”

By making short sentences or questions, using the code word first in each sentence, the number is conveyed to medium. It may also be done by making up one sentence and slightly emphasizing the code word; for example:—

“*Give* Mr. Blank an answer, for *I* wish it and *we* all do; *what* is it, *please?*”

There is another clever way of getting questions directly to medium. On the medium's first coming on the stage she takes a seat on a chair that is upon a table, and is then covered over with the sheet. This is done to show there is no connection from underneath the stage, as the audience can see under the table.

She now calls off a number of questions and answers same. These are the questions, however, she has concealed on her person, which she obtained from the boards or from the “cappers” before going on.

She becomes restless after a while, however, and requests to be taken down from the table. The performer and

one of the ushers go upon the stage and lift her, chair and all, on to the floor. The performer and usher have in their hands a quantity of questions they have collected from the audience, or copied, rolled up in little balls, and in lifting medium down from the table place their hands under the sheet in a perfectly natural way to take hold of the chair. Under cover of the sheet, however, the medium takes the questions from their hands, and now has ammunition for a lot more mystery.

It will be seen that there are any quantity of ways to get questions to the medium.

Regarding the part of performance where the medium describes a card or envelope which the performer holds in his hand on which some person has written his question, she not only reading the question but the printed matter on the card or envelope as well. This is often done by holding the article to be described so that the concealed assistant at the side or under the stage or in a lower box can see it through a small peep-hole, either with his naked eye, or with the assistance of a powerful spy-glass, with which he is able to read fine print, the information being immediately telephoned to medium.


Some performers do not cover the medium with a sheet. In this case one of the rear legs of the chair, in which she sits, comes directly over a small hole in the stage. The leg of the chair is hollow and this opening extends up the back of the chair, the chair being one of the bent-wood variety.

The medium has a small rubber tube, one end connected to her ear, the other end running around her head and down the back of her neck. This tube is concealed by her hair and dress. The performer, in blindfolding the medium, slips the

free end of this tube into a small hole in the back of the chair which opens into the hollow back and leg. One end of another tube is passed up through the hole in the floor into the hollow chair leg; the other end of this tube is in the hands of the assistant where he has concealed himself. Anything whispered into this end, to which is attached a mouth-piece, is distinctly heard by medium.

The rest is easy, for instead of medium having a list of questions to read they are in possession of assistant, who reads them to her through the speaking tube, together with notes regarding the answers and all other information passed into him by performer. In my opinion, this is a very much neater way of performing the trick, for there has never been a good reason advanced for covering the medium with a sheet.

CLOSING REMARKS.

T must be remembered that in this little volume the author has not been able to enumerate and discuss all the methods used by clairvoyants or mind-readers on the public stage, or suggest what methods they will next use, for they will surely plan and contrive new ones as soon as the old methods are discovered. But I think, however, by the aid of the preceding explanations and suggestions the reader will perceive how most of the performances of this kind are now accomplished, and by the knowledge of

these secrets discover other methods and, possibly, those to come in the future.

I hope I have been successful in removing my readers from the hazy clouds of occultism and bringing them to earth, where we are all predestined to remain, both body and soul, until death. The only mind that any of us can read is that of our own, and that, many times, not too well. If any of us could fathom the thoughts of others an interview with financiers of Wall Street would enable us to own the world in a short time, especially if we could also predict the future, which would be, in my opinion, an easier and shorter way of gaining earthly riches than two performances a day at popular prices.

CHAPTER V.

PARLOR AMUSEMENTS.



WILL now explain a few simple little tricks in second sight which may be performed by any one in his own home, but which, if well done, will be very mystifying.

DISAPPEARANCE OF A CARD THOUGHT OF BY A SPECTATOR.

The performer brings forward a pack of cards which he shuffles well, and then passes the cards from one hand to the other with faces toward the audience. A spectator is now asked to remember any card he sees. Upon this being done the performer again shuffles the cards and passes them from hand to hand, one at a time, when it is discovered that the card thought of has disappeared. A second card is similarly treated.

To produce the above effect the performer takes an ordinary pack of fifty-two cards, but pastes them back to back, so he really has twenty-six cards with a face on each side. It will thus be seen that on one side are pictures of twenty-six cards and on the other side the remaining twenty-six. After

the spectator has thought of any card the performer in shuffling the pack merely turns them over and next exposes the other side. It will be readily seen that any card selected, in fact, all of the cards first exposed have now apparently disappeared. To any one with a pack of cards so arranged would be suggested a number of clever experiments, such as changing the colors of the cards from all red to all black, and by waving a single card in the air to change its suit and color, etc., etc.

DISCOVERING A SELECTED COIN.

In this experiment the performer has an assistant, usually a young lady as the effect is better, whom he blind-folds, and she takes a seat in the room. He next borrows a number of coins from those in the audience, and has some one person select a coin. The performer asks this person to notice the coin carefully so that he can identify it. He then asks the person to hold the coin tightly in his hand and think very intently about it. The rest of the coins are now placed in a hat, and after a short period the person who has selected a coin is asked to drop the coin into the hat with the others. The coins are now well shaken up, and the hat taken to the blind-folded assistant. She puts her hand into the hat and promptly withdraws the selected coin. This, while a very simple trick, is very effective. The coin which the person selects and holds in his hand becomes slightly warm from the heat of the hand, and the assistant is thus able to distinguish it from the other coins, which are cool.

TEST IN ADDITION.

In this experiment the performer brings forward an ordinary slate and piece of crayon and requests some person to write a column of figures on the slate. The performer now takes the slate, quickly draws a line underneath the column of figures, and places the slate, face downward, on a table, on the top of slate placing a small piece of crayon. His assistant, who has been out of the room during this part of the experiment, now enters, and on walking up to the slate picks up the crayon and marks down the total sum of figures on the other side of the slate, which are found to be absolutely correct on turning the slate over and adding the figures up.

To perform this experiment the performer is armed with a small piece of crayon in addition to the crayon which he gives to the spectator. One side of the crayon which he retains is filed smooth. The performer also has a small lead pencil concealed in his hand along with the crayon. When the person in the audience is writing down the figures the performer mentally adds these up, and secretly writes the sum total on this small piece of chalk which he has in his hand. He now takes the slate, places it face downward upon the table, and on top of it places the prepared piece of chalk, flat side down, retaining the chalk which the spectator used. All that is now necessary is for his assistant to pick up the piece of chalk, secretly read the figures written on it, and mark them down upon the slate.

SECOND SIGHT TRICKS.

By the following method quite mysterious tricks may be performed in one's own house. The performer's assistant is blind-folded and sits in a remote part of the room. She has attached to her finger an end of a fine black silk thread. The other end of this thread the performer carries. He is now able by sharp twitches upon the cord to communicate with his assistant, telling her the dates of coins, the suit of a card, the number of a watch and many other experiments by using a little code which they have arranged between them. It is needless to say the performer must keep his hand hidden in making these twitches on the thread so as not to be observed by the audience. This little trick can be worked up with good effect, as the performer may stand quite some distance from his assistant, and no words are spoken.

ENVELOPE TRICK.

A person is requested to write a question with ink upon a card. The card is now placed in an envelope and sealed. The performer takes the envelope from the room for a few seconds. On coming back he returns the envelope to its owner and also another envelope, which on being opened will be found to contain a card, on which is written an answer to his question. The envelope, however, in which his question is sealed shows no evidence of having been tampered with in the slightest.

When the performer leaves the room he immediately takes a sponge which is saturated with alcohol and rubs it over the surface of the envelope, which makes it transparent, and he is thus able to read what is written on the card inside. He then writes a suitable answer on another card, which he seals in another envelope. The alcohol evaporating very quickly there is no sign of it upon the envelope when returned to its owner.

The End.