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AFTER THE DESSERT

BY

MARTIN GARDNER

*"After the Dessert . . . 'Tis a
Goodly Time for Pleasantry"*

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



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TO
"DORNY"

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH approximately half of the tricks described in this work are new (in the sense of having never before been in print) the work was not compiled primarily to present new material. It was written for the performer, professional or amateur, who is seeking good, well-tested effects which do not require elaborate practice, preparation, or skill.

I have chosen only tricks which make use of objects found at any dinner table. All are performed while seated, with spectators on both right and left.

A few of the effects are original, but most of them have been picked up from friends who picked them up from friends, so it was impossible to trace them to their origin. I have given credit as fully as my information permitted.

MARTIN GARDNER.

Chicago, 1941.

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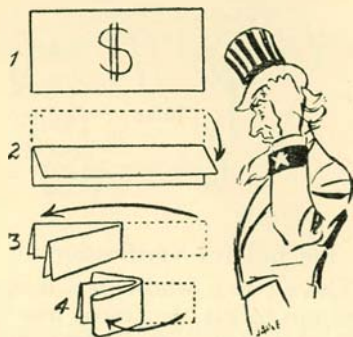
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BILLS

THE CURIOUS FOLD

I have never seen this in print, but I believe it is rather old. However, it is not well known, and it always provides good entertainment for a dinner table audience.

The bill is held upright as shown in Fig. 1, then folded down from the top as in Fig. 2, and twice to the left as in Figs. 3 and 4. These moves are now reversed, but when the bill is open once more, it is upside down!



The secret is to make the second fold **backward** as shown in Fig. 3, and the third fold **forward** as shown in Fig. 4. When the bill is opened, however, these two folds are both opened from the **front**. This automatically turns the bill upside down.

Unless the spectators have observed you very carefully, they will be unable to duplicate the moves.

In making the folds, the bill should be held at the left side by the left thumb and fingers, the right hand doing the folding. Make the folds rapidly and the moves will be more difficult for the spectators to follow.

Do not repeat the trick too often. A good presentation is to cause the bill to turn upside down, then repeat, bring it right side up and hand it to the spectators to see if they can do it.

NAMING THE DATE ON A BORROWED BILL

Few people know that all dollar bills now in circulation bear the date 1935. The date will be found in the lower right hand corner.

You can make use of this fact in a mystifying and little known mind reading trick.

Ask for the loan of a dollar bill. Tell the person not to

look at the date, but to wad the bill into a ball. Place the ball against your forehead and appear to be concentrating. Very slowly call out the date 1-9-3-6, and start to return the bill. Then look puzzled and place it to your forehead once more. Say, "No, that's not correct. I'm sorry I spoke so soon." It's a 1935 bill." This line of patter helps suggest that bills are differently dated.



Hand back the bill for verification.

My friend, Dave Price, who cuts a mean deck of cards in Nashville, pointed out to me that most five dollar bills now in circulation are dated 1934, and the few that are dated 1928 have the date in red, which is easy to spot at a distance. He also called my attention to the fact that it is possible to secure 1928 dollar bills. You can carry one in your pocket, and when you perform the trick, use your bill to make clear to the spectator where he will find the date on **his** bill. The fact that the two dates are different will throw him off the track in trying to solve the trick—a neat little presentation touch.

FOUR PILES AND A DOLLAR BILL

The previous trick, **Naming the Date on a Borrowed Bill**, can be combined very neatly with a card effect.

Previous to showing, place an ace, nine, three, and five on the bottom of the deck. False shuffle, and have a spectator cut off about two-thirds of the cards. Discard these cards, handing the lower third to the spectator with the request that he deal them into four piles.

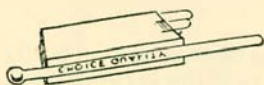
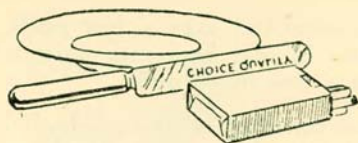
The reasons for the cut are that it takes too long to deal an entire pack into four piles, the deal from a cut makes things seem fairer, and when the cards do not come out even at the end of the deal (as is often the case) it also makes things seem more on the up-and-up.

After the piles are formed, borrow a bill, have the date called out, then turn up the top cards of each pile to reveal the four figures of the date.

CIGARETTES.

THE UNREVERSED WORD

The well known trick of holding a pack of Camel cigarettes to a mirror, causing the word "choice" on the side of the pack to remain unreversed in the reflection, first appeared in print in a little manuscript by Dr. Harlan Tarbell called "Ten After Dinner Tricks." The stunt is still an excellent one for dinner table purposes.



BOB
EDDIE
JOE

The simplest way of presenting it is to lean a table knife against a plate, so that the shiny side of the knife acts as a mirror when the pack is placed flat on the table in front of it. First place the pack on the table with the words "choice quality" right side up. Call attention to the fact that both words are reversed in the knife. Then take the pack in hand, casually turning it over as you do so, and pretend to manipulate something on the side of the pack. Replace it in front of the knife, this time with the words upside down. In the reflection, the word "quality" will appear reversed, but the word "choice" is unchanged. This is due, of course, to the curious construction of the letters in the word "choice."

If glass stirring rods are available, a more effective way of presenting the trick is made possible. Place the rod over various words on the pack, calling attention to the fact that when you read the words through the rod, they are reversed by the refracting power of the glass. Shine the rod briskly with a napkin, stating that static electricity causes a peculiar change in portions of the glass. Hold the rod over the words "choice quality." The word "choice" is unchanged, although "quality" is reversed!

An interesting variation of this trick can be performed with the names of people whose first names are Bob, Eddie, or Joe. Merely print their full names on a piece of paper, printing the first names in the manner shown. Through the stirring rod

(or in a mirror) the first names will not be changed, although the last name will be reversed.

Also note that Spud cigarettes carry the phrase "choice tobaccos" on the side, and therefore can be used as conveniently as Camels.

BITING THE CIGARETTE

A startling bit of hokum, easy enough for anyone familiar with the art of "tonguing" a cigarette.

Light a cigarette and take a few puffs. Then turn it around so that the lit end goes into your mouth. Light the other end. Take a few more puffs.

Now bite the cigarette in half. The half that remains in your mouth will lie on the tongue, the lit end projecting into the mouth cavity.

Remove the half that projects from the mouth. The spectators, unaware that the cigarette has been divided in half, will think that you merely removed the cigarette from your mouth.

Open your mouth slightly, and with your tongue quickly reverse the half, popping it out through your lips. Puff on it a few times to prove that it is lit.

Sam Berman, Chicago's ace ball manipulator, showed me this novelty years ago.

THE MAGIC INHALE

The magician inhales on his cigarette, but when he breathes out, there is no smoke in his lungs!

Secret: blow gently through the cigarette instead of inhaling. This causes the end to flare up as though you had inhaled. Take the cigarette from your lips and breathe out slowly and vigorously.

Try it, and you'll be surprised at the number of people who fall for it!

COINS

COIN THROUGH THE PLATE

For this trick you need a small piece of wax, about half the size of a pea. You can carry it behind a vest button. Before showing the trick, secretly transfer this piece of wax to the underside of a saucer. The center of the underside is usually

concave, so the saucer may rest on the table without the wax sticking to the table cloth.

Borrow a coin, preferably a half dollar, and a small square of paper. Have the spectator mark the coin for later identification. Wrap the coin in the paper, using the well-known fold which permits the coin to slide into the hand.



Tap the paper on the edge of the plate to prove the coin is still inside, then permit the coin to slide into the left hand. Lower this hand to your lap as your right hand takes the paper and places it on the saucer.

Ask someone to strike a match. While this is being done, hold the saucer in the right hand and bring it to the edge of the table. The left hand comes up from beneath and presses the coin against the wax, causing it to stick to the underside of the saucer.

Place the saucer on top of a glass of water. The spectator sets fire to the paper. As it burns, the heat melts the wax and the coin falls visibly into the glass below.

Retrieve the coin, and dry it with a napkin (this also serves to remove the wax that may have adhered). Return it to the owner for identification.

VANISHING COIN

To perform this subtle vanish (first shown to me by Joe Berg of Chicago) you must be resting your chin on your left hand as shown in the drawing.

Hold the coin in your right hand and place it in front of you on the table. Ask the person opposite you to cover it with his hand. As he reaches forward say, "No—I mean the **other** hand." As you say this draw back your hand (it is a

perfectly natural gesture) in such a way that your fingers bring the coin just above the opening of your left sleeve. The person is confused about the changing of hands, so it is a simple matter to drop the coin, unobserved, down the left sleeve!



Place your right hand on the table once more as though it still held the coin. Have him cover your hand with his. Then ask him to remove his hand. Slowly open your fingers to show that the coin has vanished.

The vanish can, of course, be used for any small object that can be dropped down the sleeve without difficulty.

TESTING A HALF DOLLAR

This is more of a gag than a trick, but it never fails to get a laugh.

Ask your audience if they have seen the new method of testing half dollars to determine if they are genuine.

Place the half on the table, then grasp an empty tumbler in the manner shown. Strike the half several times, using the



tumbler as a hammer. The "X" in the drawing labels the portion of the glass which strikes the coin. It makes a terrific racket, but the tumbler never breaks.

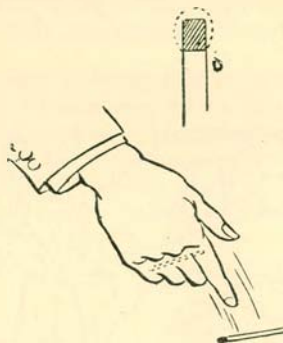
Pick up the half dollar saying, "And if the half doesn't break, you know it's not a counterfeit."

Matt Schulien, of Schulien's north side German restaurant and bar, was the first person I saw present this stunt. The gag line at the finish comes from Dorny.

MATCHES

LIGHTING A MATCH TWICE

From time to time various methods of making a match burn twice have been devised. One method is to strike the match, blow it out, then dip the head in water. Under pretense of drying the match, you stroke it through your hair, and in doing so, exchange it for a match previously placed there. This second match is then struck.



A method employing paper matches appeared recently in one of the Magic magazines. With a razor, trim off the sides and top of the head. If this prepared head is struck on the side, and quickly blown out, you will discover that the other side of the head will not ignite. Consequently the match may be struck a second time.

To my mind, however, the most effective method for this effect consists of preparing a handful of wooden matches in advance by covering the heads and a small portion of the stick beneath the head with black ink. You can do this by merely dipping the heads into the ink. Let the matches dry and carry them in your pocket until you wish to use them.

When you find yourself seated at the table, secretly drop several of these matches into the ash tray. The heads will pick up ash and look exactly like burned matches.

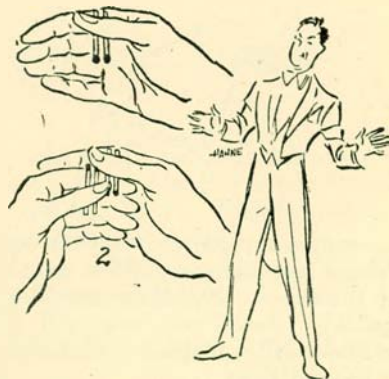
In presenting the effect, first take a genuinely burned match from the tray and attempt to strike it. You are, of course, unsuccessful. Then take one of the prepared matches, and with appropriate patter and hokum, strike it triumphantly.

If you are adept at switching small objects you can present it this way. Have one of the prepared matches finger palmed in the right hand. Light another match, quickly shake it out, and toss it on the table. Needless to say, as you toss it to the table you retain the match just struck and throw down the faked one. State that as soon as the match cools, you will strike it again. Feel the head of the match gingerly, jerking your fingers away as though it were still warm. Blow on it to cool it more rapidly, then strike it with a flourish.

COLOR CHANGING HEADS

This sleight, which I worked out several years ago, has since become a popular impromptu stunt with a number of night club performers who work tables. Le Paul, I think, was the first to start using it. A description of the effect appeared in the winter issue of the *Jinx* 1938.

At the beginning of the trick, the left hand holds two matches with **blue** heads. The right hand has palmed two matches with **red** heads, concealing them in the manner indicated in Fig. 1.



State that you intend to pull the heads from the matches in the left hand. The fingers and thumb of the right hand grasp the heads and make an attempt to pull them off. Do this twice. The third time, the fingers of the left hand take the matches from the right hand and the right fingers carry away the two matches previously held in the left hand. The exchange is a very natural one, and no one is expecting a switch.

After the switch, the matches in the left hand will be upside down. It appears as if the heads have been pulled away. The right hand pretends to toss the heads under the table or to place them in the coat pocket. This enables you to dispose of the two matches in the right hand.

The rest of the trick is patter and build-up. State that you are going to expose how you did the trick. Of course you didn't really pull off the heads, you explain. Under cover of the right hand you merely turned the matches upside down, so the lower ends would be brought to view. But—you continue—you have never been able to understand why the trick always causes the heads to change their color. With the right

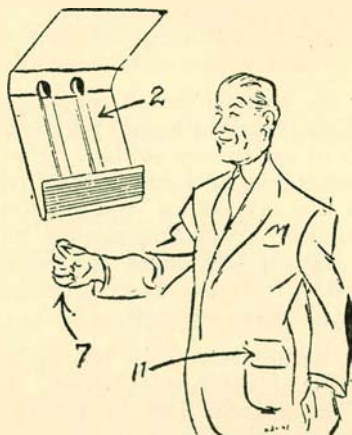
forefinger, rotate the matches around to reveal the red heads. Toss the matches on the table for inspection.

Emphasize at the outset that the heads are blue, otherwise the audience may forget the original color.

FOLDER MATHEMATICS

I think this clever match trick first appeared in print in an issue of Ted Annemann's **Jinx**.

Hand a full folder of matches to someone with the request that while your back is turned he tears out a few matches and place them in his pocket. The number must be less than ten. After doing this, he is to count the number of matches that remain in the folder, and to tear from the folder a sufficient number of matches to be able to form that number on the table.



For example, he first tears out five matches and pockets them. This leaves fifteen matches. He then tears out enough matches to form the number fifteen on the table. The number is formed by placing one match to the left, then enough matches in a pile on the right to represent the last digit of the number (1—11111). These matches are also to be placed in the pocket. Once again the spectator tears out some matches. These he holds in his closed fist.

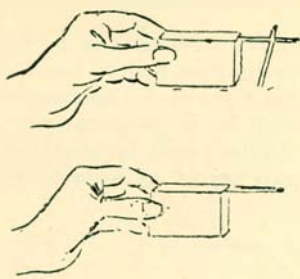
At this point you turn and face the table. One look at the folder and you are able to state the number of matches in his hand.

Secret: subtract the number in the folder from nine.

SHOOTING THE MATCH

J. B. Ward, of Dewsbury, England, sent me this effect shortly after the publication of my book **Match-ic** in 1936. I have never seen it performed by American magicians.

A match box is placed on its edge, with one match inserted into the top, and a second leaning against the first as shown. The left hand grasps the box, the thumb pressing against the side nearest you.



Patter about the vertical match representing a soldier behind a trench. With the right hand, take a third match. This represents the gun of an enemy soldier. Place the right hand in front of the match box and pretend to "shoot" the soldier in the trench. As you say "bang" the left thumb slides a trifle forward. If the thumb is pressing against the box, this slight and indetectable motion will cause the leaning match to fly suddenly backward! It is the same principle as that which produces "spirit raps" from a pencil.

The effect can be heightened by having the spectator place his forefinger on top of the box to steady it. He will feel a slight tremor as the match flies backward, but the *modus operandi* will remain a mystery.

MATCH FOLDER WAGER.

Challenge anyone to strike, one at a time, all twenty matches in a folder. Only one striking attempt is allowed for each match.

The odds are enormously in your favour because of the chemical on the striking surface quickly wears off, making it difficult to strike the last few matches.

It can be done by striking the first ten matches on the **right** side only of the striking surface, then the remaining matches on the left side.

THE NAZI CROSS

This is an amusing gag that has been making the rounds in recent months. Place five matches on the table and ask if anyone knows how to make a Nazi cross with five matches. The answer: stick four of them in his ear and light them with fifth!



Stress the fact that the matches must not be broken, and that no more than five are permitted. This throws them off the gag and helps build up the punch line.

MISCELLANEOUS

TAPPING TABLE OBJECTS

I first ran across a version of this ingenious table effect in Walter B. Gibson's excellent volume, the **New Magician's Manual**.

The magician arranges seven objects in front of him on the table. A spectator is asked to think of one of the seven. The magician starts tapping the objects with his table knife. At each tap the spectator is to spell (to himself) a letter in the name of the object he has in mind. When he completes



the spelling, he says "stop." This is done. When he says "stop" he discovers, to his surprise, that the magician is touching the chosen object with his knife.

The seven objects used are as follows:—

- | | | |
|---------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. Cup | 3. Plate | 5. Ash tray |
| 2. Fork | 4. Napkin | 6. Match Box. |
| | | 7. Cigarette |

This list must be memorized. In presenting the trick it is necessary to make the first two taps on any objects you wish, then start tapping them in the order indicated by the list.

The trick is puzzling enough to withstand several repetitions.

VANISHING COFFEE STEAM

The magician waves his hand over his coffee and the steam suddenly stops rising from the cup!

Secret: Either the magician or a confederate seated next to him blows gently at the cup. Waving the hands misdirects attention from your lips, which should appear as normal as possible.

JAPANESE PAPER BIRD

There are three reasons why I feel justified in including this item in the book.

One: It is the most ingenious and entertaining paper-folded toy ever invented.

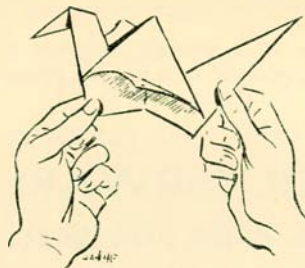
Two: Very few people, including magicians, have seen it.

Three: It lends itself to one or two novel presentations.

Rather than repeat here the complex instructions necessary in order to explain how the bird is folded, let me refer the reader to Houdini's **Paper Magic**, page 117, where the method of folding is described. For those who are interested, I might add that the earliest description I have found of this item is in Tissandier's **Scientific Recreations**, a French work published in 1881 and later translated into English. Both Houdini and Tissandier ascribe the invention of the bird to the Japanese.

The bird itself is extremely lifelike. When the tail is pulled, it flaps its wings. It can be folded from any type of paper, and from a square of almost any size. It never fails to delight persons of all ages.

Carry some four-inch squares of flash paper with you. Fold the bird from one of them. Pass it around the table so that others can have the fun of operating it, then place it on top of an inverted glass. Patter about the bird's extreme fear of fire. To illustrate why—touch a lit cigarette to the bird's tail.



Another presentation angle is to conceal a dime in your hand, dropping it into the paper (in this case a larger piece of ordinary paper) while you are folding it, so that the dime will later be inside the bird's body. Refer to the bird as a "magpie" and patter about its love of coins. Often it swallows the money that it carries in its bill, you say. Tear open the body and shake out the dime.

Or better, have a borrowed dime marked, and fold it in a piece of paper, making the usual fold so that the dime drops into the hand. Then fold the bird from another sheet of paper, leaving the dime inside. Fly the bird over to the folded paper, touching its bill to the place where the dime is supposed to be. Then tear up the paper to prove the dime has vanished and find it inside the body of the bird.

TRAVELLING FOUNTAIN PEN

A borrowed fountain pen (or eversharp pencil) is caused to travel invisibly from your inner coat pocket to that of the gentleman on your right.

Yes, the gentleman on the right is tipped off in advance.

Borrow a fountain pen. Take it in the left hand and appear to place it in the inside coat pocket, saying "That's a fine looking pen, mind if I keep it?" Actually, drop it down the right coat sleeve, near the arm pit. The right arm hangs normally at the side so that the pen drops noiselessly into the fingers.

Remove the left hand from the coat, open the fingers wide, and look at the hand. While the attention of the audience is on this hand, the right hand drops the pen into the

lap of the person on the right who quietly clips it to his coat pocket while everyone is watching you.

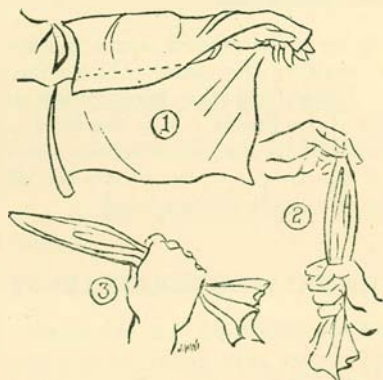
By this time the owner of the pen is asking to have it returned. "But," you protest, "I really haven't got the pen. However, I believe the gentleman on my right can return it to you." If your stooge is a convincing actor, the trick can be built into a real piece of magic.

In the absence of a stooge, slip the pen under a napkin on the table, and produce it later by removing the napkin to expose it.

SILVERWARE

TABLE KNIFE THROUGH BODY

Hold a cloth napkin by the two upper corners, then swing it over the left arm as shown, as though you were about to produce a fish bowl. Exhibit a table knife in the right hand. Appear to place this knife behind the cloth, the point of the knife touching the center of the napkin; and with the knife, lift the cloth from the left arm so that your right hand holds the knife and cloth in the manner shown in Fig. 2.



Actually, as soon as the knife is behind the napkin, it is pushed into the left sleeve. The right forefinger is extended, and with this finger the napkin is lifted from the arm. The illusion is perfect from the front.

With the left hand pretend to take the point of the knife through the cloth. The right hand comes out from under the napkin and grasps the cloth at the base. If the left hand pulls on the cloth, it can release its hold and the napkin will retain its shape as though the knife were still inside.

Hold the cloth horizontally (Fig. 3) then suddenly turn

to the person on your left and stab him in the chest with the extended cloth. At the same time your left hand is lowered, permitting the knife to drop into your left palm. With the left hand reach behind the person's body, under his coat, and bring out the knife.

This last touch is a product of the nimble brain of Laurie Ireland.

BREAKING THE SPOON

"Everybody knows this old method of **bending** a spoon." As you say this, grasp the spoon and pretend to be bending it, using the familiar method of letting the handle slip through your fists. After having done this, show the spoon to be unharmed, and place it on the edge of the table.



Now look directly into the eyes of the person seated opposite you. This will cause him to look at you. At the same time, pretend to lift the spoon from the table by placing both hands over it. Actually, as soon as your hands cover the spoon, the fingers flip it backward into your lap. Raise your hands as though they held the spoon; keeping your fists next to each other and tightly closed. Lean forward so that your fists are almost under the nose of the person opposite you.

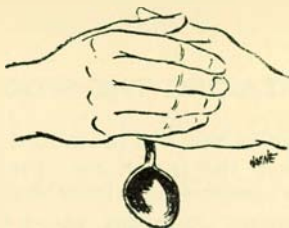
Ask him if he has seen the new method of **breaking** a spoon. When he says no, suddenly pretend to break the spoon in half, making a "pffft" noise with your mouth. Immediately open both hands showing that the spoon has vanished. It never fails to create surprise and astonishment.

I must thank Bob Hummer, the vagabond magician, for the misdirection features involved in this sequence of moves.

BENDING THE SPOON

This is not recommended for privately-owned silverware, but in a public restaurant no harm is done and the gag always goes over. It's a favourite of Henry Gordiene's.

Take a spoon between your hands and go through the well-known moves of pretending to bend it, the head of the spoon resting on the table, the handle concealed by your fingers.



Instead of pretending, however, you actually do bend the spoon. A thumb beneath the end of the spoon makes this a simple matter. Bend the spoon until it is almost a right angle.

At this point look up and ask, "How does that look? Does it look as if the spoon is bending?" There will be a chorus of affirmations.

"Well, it should!" you say, as you take the spoon by the handle and hold it up to view.

The spoon can, without damage be easily straightened.

SWALLOWING THE KNIFE

An old favourite (described in 1885 in Sach's **Sleight of Hand**) but here are some new angles.

Place the knife near the edge of the table. Cover it with both hands as shown, and lift it to your mouth, actually taking the knife in your hands. Start to place the blade into your mouth, then change your mind and replace the knife on the

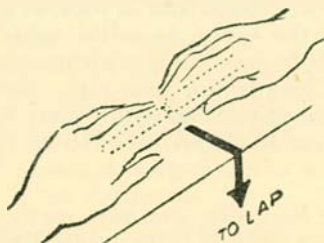


table. State that you forgot to salt the knife. Take the shaker and sprinkle some salt over it. This is always good for a chuckles. Pretend to lift the knife once more. This time your hands draw the knife to the edge of the table and permit it to drop into your lap. Keep your hands in the same position as before, as though they still held the knife. Raise them to

your mouth, then suddenly pretend to drop the knife down your throat. Show your hands empty and smack your lips.

Someone is sure to ask where the knife went. Lower your hands to your lap and push the knife into your left sleeve. Raise the hands, and extract the knife. The audience will be convinced that the knife went into your sleeve, and they give you credit for some fancy manipulative work.

Another variation is to tip off a friend in advance so that when the audience asks where the knife went, your friend (who is preferably seated at the other end of the table) stands up and shakes a table knife out of **his** sleeve. (You can take advantage of this moment by replacing your knife, unobserved, on the table).

THE MUSICAL KNIFE

This is an old stunt, but one of the most entertaining when properly presented.

Hold a fork in the left hand so that the handle is almost touching the table. Take a table knife in the right, and with the blade, pluck one of the center prongs of the fork. Immediately hold the tip of the knife blade over an empty tumbler. At the instant the knife is above the glass, the left hand allows the handle of the fork to rest on the table. This will produce a musical note, easily heard unless you are in a very noisy



restaurant. Do this several times, stating that the note occurs only when the knife is held over something **empty**. Place two empty glasses side by side and move the blade of the knife from one to the other. The left hand raises and lowers the handle of the fork so that the tone occurs only when the knife is directly over the brim of each glass.

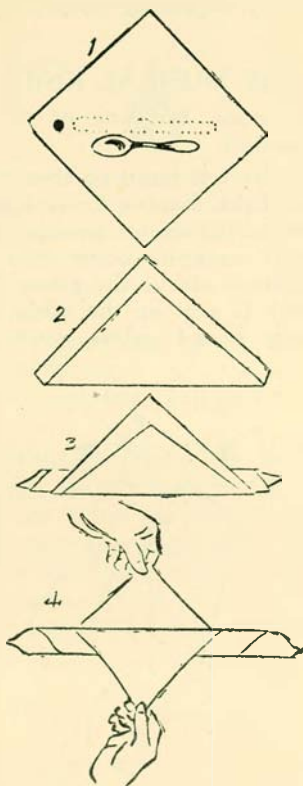
Conclude the effect by holding the blade over the **head** of the person nearest to you!

I am indebted to Dorny for this routine and gag finish.

SPOON TO KNIFE

The effect is as follows. A spoon is wrapped in a cloth napkin. When the napkin is unrolled, the spoon has changed to a table knife.

Spread the napkin on the table as shown in Fig. 1 with the knife concealed beneath it. Place the spoon on the cloth just **behind** the knife. Now fold the corner nearest you over to meet the opposite corner. Note that the corner on top must be an inch or so **behind** the lower corner.

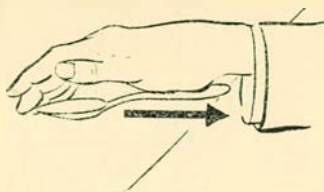


Start to roll the spoon in the napkin, making the roll **beneath** the napkin so that the knife is included in the roll. After rolling forward a few inches, turn the napkin over, bring the roll upward, and continue rolling forward until you reach the far corners. As you complete the roll, one end of the cloth is permitted to go around the roll once, so that it comes flush with the other corner. This is concealed by the hands which are held over the center of the roll as it is rolled forward on the table.

Place the fingers of the left hand on the **lower** corner, holding it against the table. The right hand takes the **upper** corner and pulls it toward you, unrolling the napkin. This automatically causes the spoon to drop into your lap (this is concealed by the cloth) and exposes the knife inside the napkin!

THE VANISHING SPOON

This requires a little practice until you get the knack. The spoon rests on the table, with the handle pointing toward you. Cover it with your right hand. The fingers touch the bowl of the spoon, tipping it slightly to raise the handle about one half-



inch from the table. The fingers then flip the spoon backwards, into the sleeve. The hand is raised to show that the spoon has vanished. Performed rapidly, the vanish is very surprising.

NAPKIN

CHARACTER READING FROM THE TEETH

Tell your table companions that you have recently learned the art of reading character from the biting impressions of a person's teeth. To prove it, pass a cloth napkin around the



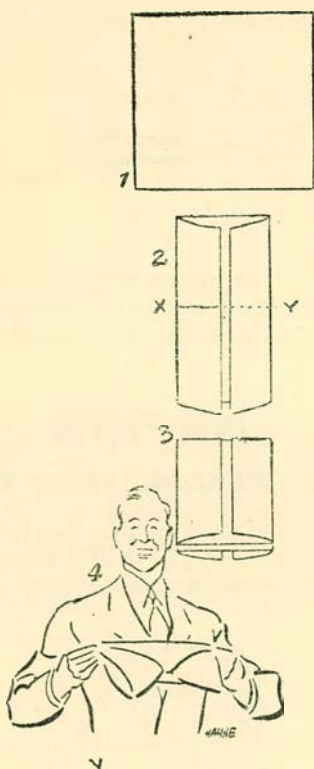
table, asking each person to bite into the cloth to leave an impression. Take back the napkin and study the impressions carefully. Then put it down saying, "You folks certainly bit on that one."

IMPROVISED BRASSIERE

I have been unable to discover the source of this clever napkin stunt which began making the rounds recently.

The napkin is placed flat on the table as in Figure 1. The right and left sides are folded to the center as in Figure 2.

Grasp the napkin in each hand at points X and Y, lifting it so that it folds backward along line XY. Lay it on the table again in the position shown in Figure 3.



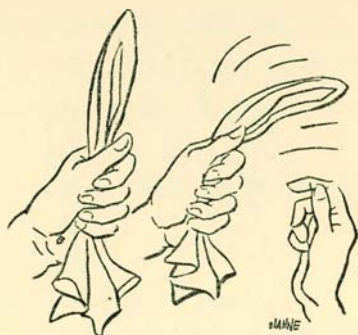
Take the two corners on the left between the thumb and fingers of the left hand, and the two on the right in the right hand. Bring the hands suddenly against the chest, as in figure 4, with surprising results.

There are so many patter versions which might accompany this stunt, that I have left them to the reader's imagination.

THE INVISIBLE HAIR

You must have a cloth napkin, well-starched, for this amusing stunt.

Take the center of the cloth in the right hand and draw it up through the left fist. The napkin will retain its shape so that the hand can hold it as shown in the first drawing. With the right hand pretend to pluck a hair from the head of the nearest person, and tie one end of it around the tip of the napkin. Hold your right hand about a foot to the right, as though it held the free end of the hair. Move your right hand back and forth. At the same time, the thumb of the left hand moves up and down. This causes the napkin



to bend over to the right and back up again. With a little practice you can harmonize the motions of the napkin and the hand so that it gives a perfect illusion of a hair attached to the tip of the cloth.

As a finish, pull the cloth over as far as you can to the right, then bend over and pretend to **bite** the hair in two. As you click your teeth together, the left thumb allows the cloth to spring upright.

SALT SHAKER

THE VANISHING SALT SHAKER

This is undoubtedly one of the most startling table tricks. Its success depends almost wholly upon the use of misdirection.

Place a coin (say a dime) on the table before you. On the coin, place a salt shaker. Cover the shaker with a cloth napkin (folded twice), pressing the cloth around the shaker so that it assumes the shape of the shaker. If paper napkins are available, so much the better. Use three or four of them together.

State that you intend to cause the dime to vanish. Make some passes over the shaker, mumble some double-talk, then lift the shaker and napkin, drawing them back toward the edge of the table. As you do this, lean forward and look intently at the dime. All eyes will be misdirected toward the coin. This permits you to let the shaker drop into your lap. The napkin retains the shape of the shaker. Shake your head as though the trick had failed and cover the dime once more. Repeat the passes and the double-talk. Remove the napkin, but the dime is still there. This is build-up to strengthen the belief of the audience that the shaker is still beneath the cloth.



Pretend to be thinking then say, "No wonder the trick isn't working. It's not the dime that's supposed to vanish, but the salt shaker." As you say this, smash the napkin to the table with you fist.

As a variation, start the trick with a **pepper** shaker on your lap. State that you intend to cause the dime to change to a penny. When you drop the salt shaker, your left hand comes up and pushes the pepper shaker into the napkin. After the trick has apparently failed, state that you had it all wrong. It's the salt shaker that changes, not the coin. Take away the napkin and show this to be the case.

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Will Blyth: Match-stick Magic; Money Magic; Handkerchief Magic.

Martin Gardner: Match-ic.

Harry Houdini: Houdini's Paper Magic.

Jean Hugard: Close-up Magic; Coin Magic Money Magic.

Harlan Tarbell: Ten After Dinner Tricks.

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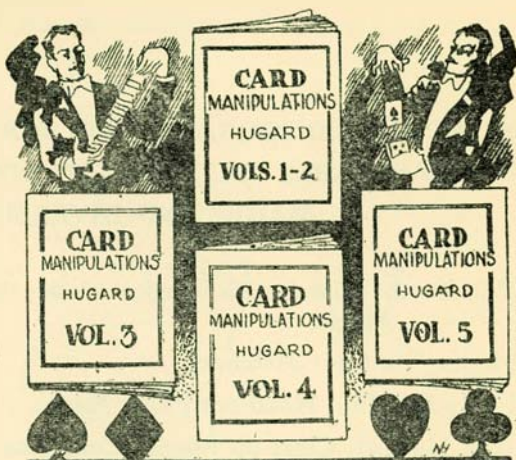
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