

REALMS OF MAGIC.

How the Magicians Do the Tricks Which Coin Them Fortunes.

The Mysteries of Black Art—Exposure of the Famous Rabbit Trick—How Echo Plays the Cornet and Psycho Finds Square Roots—Astarte and the Skeleton Hand.

(New York Correspondence.)

There are few individuals connected with the stage who to-day are "doing better" than the magical personage.

The "Dabbler in Black Art," the famous Prestigitateur, the "Marvelous Illusionist," the "Modern Wizard," as he fondly and variously styles himself, has in the past couple of seasons been reaping a fat financial harvest.

The American public, a cynic has said, dearly loves a humbug. Nobody has a bigger corner on this commodity than the magical personage, and he deals out his accumulated stock against heavy cash returns.

To the average spectator sitting through a performance of the "professor" it doubtless appears that some really astounding feats have been performed—that some marvelous things are being done—that some marvelous things are being done—that some marvelous things are being done.

And, as a matter of fact, he has witnessed some really astounding feats—astounding in their very simplicity and in the audacity of their conception and carrying out.

Explain to the spectator any one of the magician's tricks and he forthwith passes into three stages of astonishment. First, astonishment as to the almost silly simplicity of the trick; second, astonishment as to how he could ever have been deceived by such a silly, simple trick; third, astonishment as to how the "professor" could ever have had the audacity to attempt to deceive him by such a direly silly, simple trick.

Oh, yes! It's awfully silly after you see discover how it's done. The most important stock in trade needed by the magical person is unlimited audacity. What is known among the boys as "bonndess, brazen, unmitigated cheek."

Add to this a good flow of small talk and some practice at sleight-of-hand, and the requirements for the business are pretty well complete.

And now step down to the footlights. Professor!

Don't be bashful!

Let us take a peep at you from behind the scenes and see how a few of your "wonderful feats" some of your "extraordinary marvels" are done.

The performance usually opens with some pure and simple sleight-of-hand tricks, such as taking a quantity of handkerchiefs out of the silk hat of the bald-headed man in the third row, or extracting a number of silver dollars from the hair, the noses or the knees of various members of the audience. All this simply depends upon sleight-of-hand, upon the scientific axiom that the hand if moved rapidly enough can travel faster than the eye can follow. Some of these tricks are decidedly interesting to watch, and are the most honest part of the entertainment, for their performance is dependent upon hard practice and sheer dexterity and skill.

THE MYSTIC HAND.

The appearance of the "Skeleton Hand" or the "Mystic Hand" as it is variously styled, usually marks the first stage when plain dexterity and skill step out and chicanery comes in. The "Mystic Hand" is a hand which the "Professor" takes from the back of the stage and lays upon a table near the footlights. He then steps down into the audience with a dice box and requests somebody to shake the dice. This having been done, the "Mystic Hand" proceeds to rap out upon the table the sum total of the throw.

The "Professor" throws the dice back into the box, steps over to another spectator and requests him to throw. Again, amid the hushed silence of the house, the hand slowly raises itself up and down and raps out the number. The "Professor" steps back on the stage amid loud applause—whether for himself or for the "Mystic Hand" is not clearly apparent.

How is it done?

Excessively simple. The "Mystic Hand" is connected by a thin, invisible wire with the fleshy hand of an operator behind the scenes. He works the raps.

But how does he know what the throw will be?

Again very simple! The dice are loaded. They will only fall a certain way. After the first throw, while stepping over to the second spectator, the "Professor," by sleight-of-hand changes the first set for a second set of loaded dice, and thus the hidden operator is enabled to direct the "Mystic Hand" to rap out the second throw as correctly as the first.

But what if a spectator should ask to make a number of throws?

The "Professor" depends upon his tact and quickness of passing from one trick to the other to obviate anything of that kind. He has, it is true, a third set of loaded dice in the event of such a contingency, but in an ordinary way if more than three throws were tried the "Mystic Hand" would be "stuck." It is contrary to etiquette to insist upon a trick being done too often.

ECHO AND PSYCHO.

On similar lines to the "Mystic Hand" are the two wonder-working automatons recently seen in this city—the one playing a popular air selected by the audience upon a cornet, the other picking out from numbers placed in a rack in front of its automaton hand the square root of any number named by the audience.

Let us call the cornetist Echo, the mathematician Psycho.

The magician places each of these figures upon a hollow glass cylinder, so that the audience may see, he declares, that there is nothing at work underneath them. Audacious magician! He boldly draws attention to a fact as non-existing which really exists. Through that hollow glass cylinder run a number of invisible wires and tubes. A dumb cornet is played beneath the stage by the magician's pretty assistant and the wind supplied by her is carried through a tube to the instrument as Echo's lips. In the same way whenever she presses a key of her instrument the same movement is conveyed through the wires to Echo's fingers and the correspond-

ing key of his instrument is pressed down. Thus it is that Echo plays the cornet.

With Psycho the *modus operandi* differs only in detail.

Somebody in the audience selects a number of which Psycho is to find the square root. The "Professor," standing on the stage, repeats in a loud voice the number, adding, "Now, Psycho, find me the square root of that!" Beneath the stage is an assistant with a number of arithmetical charts setting forth the square root of any given number. He turns to these charts, rapidly finds the number, and by means of an air pump supplies the necessary power to Psycho's hand to pick out the required numbers from the cards in the rack before her. In Psycho, which works precisely as the figure above, so that he can see just what he is doing.

THE RABBIT TRICK.

But interesting as are these automatons their feats awaken nothing like the speculation and enthusiasm that does the famous rabbit trick with which another well-known magician usually closes the first act of his performances. The rabbit trick is as follows: The "Professor" takes two young rabbits which he passes around among the audience, so that people may see for themselves that the animals are really alive.

Convincing proof of this fact having been given and the rabbits having been headed back to the "Professor," he proceeds to rub them slowly and laboriously together. Suddenly he holds up his hand, and the spectators discover to their amazement that the two long, thin rabbits have been rubbed into one short, fat rabbit.

This phenomena invariably elicits a roar of laughter. Before the echoes of this laughter have died away the "Professor" raises a pistol, levels it at the audience and blazes away. Crack! A few shreds from the ladies' and, presto! the amalgamated rabbit in the "Professor's" hand has disappeared.

General astonishment and a pause of suspense. Where, in the name of all that is mysterious, can bunnies have gone?

The "Professor" rushes down from the stage.

"I want my rabbit back, sir," he cries, sternly, to a man in the audience.

"The individual addressed grumbles some unintelligible disclaimer.

"Give me back that rabbit," commands the man of magic, more sternly than ever.

Another grumbled reply.

"Since you will not give him back to me quietly I will take him by force!"

And the "Professor" precipitates himself upon the man, and in a twinkling drops from beneath his coat the amalgamated rabbit.

It is the same rabbit! There is no mistaking that! See the two black spots on his white back!

The man from whom the rabbit has been taken gapes in open-mouthed astonishment. He is a picture of confusion and dismay. As for the spectators, they shout themselves hoarse.

A mighty clever trick!

Two living rabbits rubbed into one, the dual rabbit made to disappear on the open stage and then recovered in the inside pocket of a gentleman in the audience!

The "Professor" concealed either one or both of the rabbits in the tight fitting sleeve of his well fitting dress coat is only too obviously possible.

How, then, did he manage it?

It is perfectly inexplicable.

Some weeks ago in the Park Theatre, in Brooklyn, a gentleman in the audience evidently conceived that he had an inkling of how the trick was done. He rose from his seat and declared that in his opinion the audience had been imposed upon; that the person from whose clothing the rabbit had been taken was a confederate who had come into the theatre loaded with the game.

The "Professor" indignantly declared it was nothing of the kind.

Ah, indeed! If this was so would the "Professor" repeat his trick.

No, certainly not. The "Professor" never repeated his tricks. It was a standing rule with him.

Just so. A very healthy standing rule for the "Professor," for he could not repeat the trick.

At this point the audience was on the tip-toes of excitement and expectancy and the "Professor" was wrought up to his high pitch. He proceeded to gird up his loins for battle.

No, he declared, he would not repeat his trick—that is, for nothing. But since the gentleman was so sure of his point, if he liked to lay a wager of \$100 that the trick could not be repeated the "Professor" would consent to reproduce it. If he failed the "Professor" would forfeit \$100, the amount of the winning in either event to be donated to any Brooklyn charity which Colonel Sinn, the manager of the theatre, might select.

The gentleman was not to be bluffed. With the greatest alacrity he accepted the wager. The house went wild with excitement.

The "Professor" retired to the stage and called for two rabbits, which were brought him. Slowly, and with great difficulty, he rubbed them together, and finally blended them into one. He handed it down for inspection. There was no mistaking—there was only one rabbit there.

No far the first part of the trick was successful.

Once more the "Professor" took possession of his rabbit and retired to the stage. Slowly he raised his pistol in the air. Bang! The rabbit had vanished.

With one spring the "Professor" was down among the audience. Down the aisle he rushed, and made straightway for the man who had challenged him.

"You have my rabbit, are you—yes?"

And tearing open the man's coat without ceremony, the "Professor" dragged forth the missing rabbit.

Never did mortal man show greater bewilderment and amazement. Never did an audience laugh and applaud and cheer more boisterously than that audience.

A really marvellous feat, that rabbit trick! How on earth is it done?

Again, very simple!

Now it is done.

The material needed to perform the trick consists of a strip of black velvet and three rabbits.

Two of the rabbits ought to have a more or less close family resemblance. A slight observation of the rabbit tribe will lead to the conviction that it is not

very difficult to find a couple of bunnies cousins each of which has a white back with a couple of black spots upon it, or a black back with a couple of white dots upon it, and are at the same time much about a size.

Now, the fact has of late been discovered by magicians that a strip of black velvet placed across the stage will be utterly invisible to the audience on the other side of the footlights. All that is necessary to render the black velvet invisible to the audience is to prevent any side lights being thrown upon the stage and to keep the footlights burning at their full brightness.

When the "Professor" begins rubbing his two rabbits together, he gradually approaches them to the edge of the strip of black velvet, and holding the body of one of the rabbits in his hand, he quickly conceals the body of its companion, the quickly drops the second rabbit behind the strip of velvet, and it disappears from view. A rabbit is a very elastic bit of goods. Its body can be readily drawn out to great length so as to look thin and attenuated, or can be rolled up into a short, puffy little mass. To add to the illusion of the two rabbits having been rubbed into one, the "Professor" gives the remaining rabbit a little professional squeeze at the base of the body, and bunny suddenly presents the appearance of being very short and squat.

The next thing the "Professor" does is to fire his pistol. Now, the effect of firing a pistol is to cause an involuntary and momentary winking of the eyelids of the spectators. At the instant that the detonation rings forth and the involuntary wink takes place the quick hand of the "Professor" drops the second rabbit, like the first, behind the invisible strip of black velvet, and it is lost to view.

The "Professor" then rushes down into the audience and finds the missing rabbit in the pocket of a spectator.

How did it get there?

It has been there all along. It is the third rabbit bearing a family likeness to the second one. The man came into the theatre with it in his pocket. It is astonishing into what a small compass a young rabbit will fit, and now he will expand and look large when drawn forth. The man with the game is of course a confederate.

How, then, was it that upon the occasion of the Park Theatre incident the "Professor" was not confounded and exposed?

For a very good reason.

Just this. The challenger was also a confederate. He, too, was loaded with game. It was simply a very pretty little coup de theatre.

THE INVISIBLE VELVET.

Speaking of black velvet, all the feats performed in the widely advertised "black art" exhibited during the past season in this city by each of two well-known magicians are accomplished through this agency. The stage is darkened, but the footlights are left burning, brilliantly. Broad strips of black velvet run here and there across the stage, with passages between them so as to allow of the movements back and forth of the magician. Behind these strips of velvet, which are absolutely invisible to persons on the other side of the footlights, no matter in what part of the house they may be, are assistants completely enveloped from the crowns of their heads to the soles of their feet in black velvet. They can move about as they will and be utterly invisible to the audience.

The magician, usually clothed in white, invokes Mephistopheles to appear. Mephistopheles is standing only a few feet away from him on the stage, holding a barrier of black velvet between himself and the audience. The moment the words conjuring him to come forth are uttered he lets fall the barrier of velvet, and presto! he appears to the audience as if he had dropped from the skies or had been cooked from the surrounding air. The illusion is highly effective and positively startling.

A lady is next commanded to materialize. She forthwith appears in the same way and under the same conditions that Mephistopheles has appeared—that is, she simply drops the barrier of black velvet that has been concealing her. Watch closely and you will notice that the head of the apparition always appears first.

"Offer thy lady a seat," commands Mephistopheles.

"I have no seat to offer her," replies the magician.

"Yes you have."

"Where?"

"There."

And at the cue "there" one of the black robed assistants evokes the required seat from behind one of the strips of black velvet, giving to it a peculiar vacillating motion so as to lend to the illusion that it is slowly drifting through the air.

In the same way goblets, snakes, balls and a variety of other articles are made to appear, and when they are required to disappear they are simply wafted back by the assistant or assistants to their places of concealment behind the black velvet. If it is desired to move a woman's head detached from the trunk across the stage all that is necessary is to cover her with black velvet up to the throat. Her head then only will be visible, and as the magician takes it between his hands and moves across the stage, followed by the body concealed behind the velvet, the illusion to the audience will be complete that a bodyless head is before them.

Such is the famous "black art," or, more correctly speaking, the great black velvet act.

ASTARTE.

Few illusions have attracted more general attention than that known as Astarte, which was recently produced amid a great flourish of trumpets at Dockstader's, in this city. Astarte is a girl who walks back and forth through space, and turns somersaults in the air without any visible means of support.

Nothing very wonderful about that, is the thought of the audience. She is suspended by wire, of course.

But the "Professor" has a surprise in store for them. It is he himself who first gives audible expression to the suspicion of his audience.

"You think Astarte is dependent upon wires," he remarks. "Well, you shall see for yourselves."

And he hands Astarte a large ornamental hoop.

Astarte takes the hoop and whirls it above her head and under her feet, just as a girl uses a skipping rope.

The spectators have been given a genuine

surprise. They are thoroughly taken aback. There certainly can be no wires there.

But there are wires, just the same, or more strictly speaking, steel supports, which hold her up at the waist and are connected with an upright placed behind a barrier of black velvet. The upright rests upon a truck, also concealed by the black velvet, which is moved backward and forward as the movements of Astarte may require. By closely watching Astarte after an energetic movement the dancing movement imparted to her frame by the steel spring which forms a part of the supporting apparatus may plainly be discovered.

But how is it, then, that the hoop passes through the wire or steel connecting her with the cross-beam of the supporting upright?

How, indeed!

A solid circle or hoop must certainly stop when it is brought in contact with the supporting line.

Yes, a solid hoop certainly would.

But the trouble with this hoop that Astarte whirls about her is that it is not solid. It is a split hoop. At one portion of it—the portion which strikes the supporting line—there is a long, easy working catch. Whenever the hoop sharply strikes the supporting line this catch flies back, and allows the hoop to pass through.

Let somebody take a solid iron hoop to the top and shove it into Astarte to whirl that about her airy form. A revolution will ensue—but not on the part of the hoop.

THE BASKET MYSTERY.

The "basket mystery," in which a child is placed in a basket through which a sword is then driven until the child is heard shrieking inside, is a much simpler mechanical contrivance than that of "Astarte." The basket employed is a double basket, which is so devised that there is ample room for the child to conceal itself between the outer and the inner basket. When the lid is opened in a certain way the child is entirely concealed from the audience. All a person has to do is to carefully watch the lid of the basket and he will readily perceive where the child is concealed.

Our Children's Eyes.

A mother sends the following kindly, wise words: Allow me to say a few words in regard to the children's eyes. Years ago, when the children studied their lessons from their books, we did not hear very much about their eyes giving out. Let us consult our blackboards and see what they can tell about this world-wide subject.

Dear parents and guardians, all over this broad land, how many hours through the day are your little children sitting in school staring at a blackboard, upon which are placed by the teacher most of the lessons, for the day, many times the lines being so fine and pale they could not be easily read more than half or two-thirds the way across the room, but the children are required to see them all the way across and from the remotest corners. Many of the children when first looking at the board do not see much of anything, but by looking very sharp for a few seconds the lines reveal themselves. This, my friend, means weakened or diseased optic nerves, possibly no eyes at all, it all depending upon the severity of the strain. Even when the work is quite distinct, for children who have naturally weak eyes the distance many times is so great that the air waves coming between the poor, tired eyes and the board cause the lines to waver and flicker, and especially is this the case when the light is poor and the ventilation bad. Anything put on the board for children to see, whether old or young, should have large proportions and broad, clear lines throughout, so no extra efforts will have to be made to discover it. There is a great difference in eyes: one child will readily see what another could not without the fatal strain. I know whereof I speak, for my own eyes were nearly destroyed through this same practice, and I know others who have suffered a like fate.

A Strange Prayer.

A Hartford clergyman tells this anecdote: Early in life, while occupying another charge, he invited a clergyman whom the unregenerated would call conceited and dull to preach in his pulpit. During the sermon our Hartford preacher dozed away in the sweet old way till he was suddenly called on to continue the service with prayer. The humbly of his Creator's instruments, and forgetting that he had not delivered the sermon, he began with: "We beseech thee to accept the weak and feeble effort that has been addressed to Thee, and more richly to endow Thy servant in the graces he so greatly lacks."

Hartford Courant.

Every drop of blood in the system passes through both kidneys and lungs many thousand times in each twenty-four hours. This explains why 52 per cent. of the patients of Brompton Hospital for Consumption, London, England, have unsuspected kidney disorder. If the kidneys were in a healthy condition they would expel the waste matter or poisonous acid and prevent the irritation of the lungs. But if diseased they are unable to perform their functions. This explains why Warner's Safe Cure has proved so valuable in cases of lung trouble. It removes the cause.

The Baby Its Own Thermometer.

Anxious mother—I wish, Susan, that when you give baby a bath you would be careful to ascertain whether the water is at the proper temperature.

Susan—Oh, don't you worry about that, ma'am, I don't need no 'mometers. If the little one turns red, the water is too hot; if it turns blue, it's too cold, and that's all there is about it.

Some merchants appear to get along swimmingly, while others can scarcely keep themselves afloat.

It was the woman who saw the first snake, but since then the men have attended to that sort of thing.

In the spring the wheezy baby Light turns soiled of crop.

In the spring the last year's chicken Leaves its impress in the soup.

Rev. Sam Small is dangerously ill at his home at Atlanta, Ga. All his engagements have been cancelled.

Friday, called the "unlucky day," is from the Saxon Freydeg, or day of Freya. Freya was the Goddess of Marriage.

BLIND BRIDAL COUPLE.

Touching Story of a Man and Wife Who Never Saw Each Other.

Every pleasant evening, in that hour just before twilight which we all love to idle away with inconsequential thoughts and observations, there passes my window a couple that greatly interests me, says a writer in the Toledo Blade. The lady is but a young girl, it seems, and she has such a pretty face, so white and peaceful, with something of sadness in it, something of joy. She has great eyes that stare strangely at you, and at this are drooped, and the long, graceful eyelashes fall upon her cheeks. The man reminds me of one of the old Saxons. He is big and strong, and has the curly golden hair and the big blonde beard of that race of men. His companion hangs on his arm, and yet he seems to depend upon her as much as she on him, for they cling very closely indeed together, while he carefully picks their way out with a light cane. Both are blind. I inquired about them the other day. Neither ever saw the light of day. Neither can ever know how glorious the sunlight is, how prettily blend the beautiful hues of the flowers, how grand all nature looks. Neither ever saw the other! And yet they are a bridal pair. They only live in a world of darkness and in each other. They met long ago, became devotedly attached to each other, and were married. And so now every evening when the weather is fine they go out for a little stroll, and as they slowly, carefully walk past my window I think, "It is a sad and yet pretty sight—a bridal pair!"

A Millionaire in a Minute.

Instances are on record where toilers in gold mines and diamond fields, who, by one turn of a spade, a single movement of the hand, have been transformed from penniless laborers to millionaires. But they were not so lucky as is the consumptive who finds a means of restoration to health, who learns that the dread disease from which he suffers is not incurable. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery will cure consumption (which is lung scrofula), and nothing else will. For all diseases of the blood, such as blotches, pimples, eruptions, scrofulous sores and swellings, it is unequalled. It is guaranteed to cure in all cases of diseases for which it is recommended, or money paid for it will be promptly refunded.

In a Crowded Chicago Church. First Lady (indignantly)—Mamma! will you have the kindness to remove your foot from mine? Second Lady (with dignity)—I beg your pardon! I thought it was a cushion.

An Epigrammatic Statement. Is there anything in this world so vile as the peevish presence of potent tittle? We have it, we hate it, we all revile it. The noxious nuisance, as did Carlyle, But why bewail what soon is mended? Take P.P.P. and have it ended.

All praise the power of "Pierce's Pellets." Wise people buy and druggists sell it.

The Right Route. Matron—The road to a man's heart, my dear, lies through his stomach; the moral of which is, learn to cook. Daughter—In other words, mother, the way to learn to mash men is by first learning to mash potatoes.

The Delicacy of Woman. Like the lily once mistress of the field, woman often hangs her head and perishes, trusting to innocence and love to protect. Her eyes may grow dim, her cheeks pale before her lips will reveal the secret of her suffering. Appreciating this element in woman's nature, Dr. R. V. Pierce has prepared a remedy called "Favorite Prescription," adapted especially for the diseases and weaknesses peculiar to women, and placed the same on sale by druggists. Ask for "Favorite Prescription" and you can cure yourself without publicity, and without being subject to the examinations of surgeons. Full directions with each bottle. It is the only guaranteed cure. See guarantee on each bottle wrapper.

Descent and Ascent. Mr. Orlrite—Well, upon my word, all this talk about whom you are descended from tires me. Mr. Snobey—Don't agree with you. I think it most important. Orlrite—It's nothing of the sort. If people could show they had ascended instead of descended from their ancestors it might be something to be proud of.

If people only wanted to be happy, says a philosopher, it would be very easy; but they want to be happier than other people, and this is almost always difficult, because we imagine other people happier than they really are.

Two handsome young ladies ran away from their home in Lincoln, Nebraska, with a party of gypsies, consisting of two men and an old woman. The young ladies, no doubt, were fond of reading dime novels.

The directors of the Midland Fair have decided to give gold and silver medals for writing to the children of the public schools.

White lead is now made from the ore in a few hours. By the old process it took several months.

"Better late than never" is hardly a suitable motto for the man who travels much by rail.

Canadian artists who have been successful in getting pictures in the present exhibition of the Royal Academy are: Mr. F. A. Verrier, two; Mr. Homer Watson, one, and Mr. J. Fraser, one.

D. O. L. 22 80.

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