

A FEAT OF CONJURING.

The Popular Coffee Trick and How It is Performed.

METHODS OF THE MAGICIAN.

Changing White Paper into Milk, Blue Paper into Mocha and Bran into Cut Sugar is Comparatively Easy When You Have Been Shown the Way.

A trick always popular with the professional conjurer is that known as the "coffee trick," though some high-falutin title, as, for instance, "Marabout Mocha," is better for a program. It has the advantage, too, of not conveying any idea of what the trick is to be. The trick is as suitable for the drawing room as for the stage, and an amateur with a little practice may do it easily. Remember, with a little practice, for, like everything in conjuring, not only a little but sometimes a great deal of practice is necessary if the performer desires to do his tricks with ease and skill and so as to bewilder his audience.

When about to present this trick the performer has on a table three wooden boxes, a large goblet shaped glass jar and two German silver "shakers" or cups, such as are used in mixing lemon juice, ice, etc., for a glass of lemonade. In one of the boxes is a quantity of bran, in another some pieces of chopped up white paper and in the third a similar lot of blue paper. These, with two pieces of black velvet, each about nine inches square, and a paper cylinder, are all that appear to be used in the trick. Picking up one shaker, the performer fills it with white paper and immediately pours it back into the box. Again he dips the shaker into the box and, with a shoveling motion, fills it and stands it on a table so that every one may see it. The other shaker he fills in the same way, but with the blue paper. Finally the glass jar is filled with bran and stood on a table by itself. Over one shaker is spread one of the velvet squares and on top of it is placed a small, round metal plate. The other shaker is covered with the second velvet square, but without any metal plate.

"Remember," says the performer, "this cup is filled with white paper and that one with blue," and, pulling the velvet piece off one cup, he pours from it into a small pitcher about a pint of milk—"The milk of human kindness as extracted from the daily press." Removing the metal plate and the velvet from the second cup, he pours from it into the first cup "steaming Mocha coffee; no grounds for complaint." Picking up the paper cylinder, he drops it over the upper part of the glass jar, and, lifting it up almost immediately, it is found that the bran is gone and the jar is filled with lump sugar.

It is a showy trick which is generally followed by applause, that sweetest of music to a performer. Here is the explanation:

In each box of paper is a duplicate shaker, one filled with milk, the other with coffee. Fitted into the mouth of each shaker is a shallow metal saucer, the edges flaring out so as to rest on the mouth of the cup. At one point on the edge of each saucer is soldered a semicircle of stiff wire about the size of a dime, so that the performer may easily grasp it. On each saucer is glued some bits of the paper with which the shaker is supposed to be filled. These shakers stand upright in the box in such position that the wire piece of the saucer will be toward the performer when he is ready to remove the velvet cover. As he shovels the paper into the shaker he leaves that one in the box, grasps the other filled with milk or coffee and brings it out, some of the loose bits of paper clinging round the top. These he brushes off carelessly and in doing so, when necessary, adjusts the staker so that the wire finger piece will be in the proper position. In covering the shakers the performer takes hold of the velvet covers so that the thumb and the third and fourth fingers are under the cover, and with these he catches hold of the projecting finger piece, lifts up the saucers and draws them off, dropping them instantly into a padded box or bag fastened at the back of the table.

As a glass jar is transparent, it follows that a mere saucer of bran in its mouth would do, so resort is had to another device. A hollow shape of tin, slightly tapering, that fits loosely in the jar is used. The larger end, which is the top, is closed while the bottom is open. From the top is a fine stiff wire passing from one side to the other. It describes a small bow that serves as a handle to lift out the shape. Bran is glued over the outside of the shape, and some loose bran is spread over the top. The shape is filled with lump sugar, placed inside a second jar and stood inside the box of bran. When the first jar is put into the box, ostensibly to be filled, the performer exchanges it for the second. This he takes out and shows it apparently filled with bran. It is covered with the paper cylinder, which goes on loosely, and in removing this the performer slips one finger under the wire handle, lifts out the shape, and the sugar falls into the jar. As the shape is taken out the performer's hand passes carelessly over the box of bran, into which the shape is dropped. At almost the same moment the paper is crumpled up and tossed into the audience. The trick is so neatly done and is so simple that he must be a bungler, indeed, who cannot do it even a clever audience.

The coffee may be served to the audience.—St. Nicholas.

AN ODD EXPERIMENT.

It Explains How Cyclones Drive Straws Through Tree Trunks.

If a needle is shoved into a cork until just the tip end shows on the opposite side and the needle is then broken off so that the upper end is flush with or hidden under the top surface on the cork an interesting thing may be shown, known as the increase of pressure. If this cork be now placed needle point down on a copper cent or other small coin a light blow on top of the cork with a hammer will drive the needle through the copper. The explanation is as follows:

Everything has its limits of resistance, and we may define this in terms to the square inch that will overcome it. Take a ten pound weight and place it on a surface of two square inches; the pressure is evidently five pounds to the square inch. Now take away one of the square inches, and there is just as evidently a pressure of ten pounds to the square inch. Decrease this surface to the dimensions of a needle point and put a five pound blow on the needle head. The pressure to the square inch at the point is tremendous. So, of course, it can be forced through almost anything, provided the needle is kept from breaking. For this purpose the cork is supplied, which keeps the needle from starting to bend, having for this purpose what might be called an infinitely inclined plane or straight line.

This phenomenon explains several things of frequent occurrence. Cyclones sometimes drive straws through trees three and four feet thick. The compressed air round the straw keeps it from bending, and the enormous force driving it forces it through.

Of course in the case of the needle and, in fact, any pointed instrument gradually getting larger from the point the advantage of the inclined plane is made use of in countering the motion. As it takes much less force to roll a barrel up an inclined plank into a door than to lift it directly from the ground to the door, so we can separate two things or two parts of the same thing easier with a pointed instrument (which is the same thing as a round wedge) than with an instrument of the same size all the way.—St. Louis Republic.

INSECT RESISTANCE.

No Such Thing as Any Animal Having More Than One Life.

All animals have the power to recover from injury occasioned by shock—from being stunned insects are in no sense an exception to this, and most of them possess what has been called tenacity of life to a remarkable degree. A butterfly will sail away with a pin through its body, an ant will go floundering around after being cut in two, and all insects will quickly recover from a blow, even if such may dent or break their external coverings. In such cases the inside parts are mostly out of use for a short time, somewhat similar to the case of your arm when you have struck the "funny bone" or to your foot when it is "asleep." But after a few moments' rest the wasp can again resume its actions.

A wasp is well armored. Its exterior covering is hard and almost unyielding. When it is struck a severe blow the soft, delicate inner parts yield to the impact; the nerves and muscular tissues cannot operate in unison, and the insect may be said to have been rendered unconscious as well as incapable, for the "mind" actions depend upon its entire nervous system.

But there is no such thing as an animal's having more than one life. When crushed, dismembered, poisoned or smothered beyond recovery, when its vital organs are injured so that they cannot again resume their regular uses, an insect will die—not in appearance, but really so. And this may result from the wearing out of its active vital organism, which may be called old age, after sometimes only a few days or weeks of life. Its one life has then been terminated beyond any doubt.—St. Nicholas.

Very Considerate.

A marriage advertisement is published in a Zurich paper by "a rich Swiss philosopher" who wants a wife who must fulfill the following conditions: She must be beautiful in body, face and mind and possess beautiful teeth and hair of her own and not bought articles. Besides German, she must have a knowledge of English and French, be a musician and have an irreproachable reputation. "Other faults," the philosopher of forty years states, "will be overlooked."

Not Guilty.

It was 4 a. m., and Bilkins crept softly into the house and removed his shoes, but as he tiptoed up the stairs one of the treads gave a loud creak. "Is that you, John?" demanded Mrs. Bilkins from above.

"No, my love," replied Bilkins; "it's the stairs."—Illustrated Bits.

Investigation.

"Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives." "Possibly," answered Miss Cayenne. "But that isn't the fault of the ladies who get together with their knitting in our hotel."—Washington Star.

Unfair.

Farmer (at the grindstone)—Well, why don't yer turn? City Nephew—Nix! Ye don't fool me ag'in. Whenever I turn ye go and bear down with the ax.—Life.

Cuts Them.

Wiggs—How mighty exclusive Uppish is getting of late. Biggs—Exclusive! Why, he refuses even to meet his bills.—Exchange.

A COLONIAL HUSTLER.

Colonel Samuel Sloper Was a Jack of All Trades.

It is necessary that the pioneer be a man of infinite resource, who can do for himself or his neighbors every necessary task. Such a man was Colonel Samuel Sloper, one of the early settlers of Bradford, Mass., whose astonishing versatility is recorded by S. G. Wood in "Taverns and Turpikes of Bradford."

Colonel Sloper, among other things kept something of a stable and pastured horses and stock. For the excellent reward of 3 shillings the owner in 1788 moved the family of David Knox by means of "témme and boy." Now and then he turned his hand to odd jobs. He carried and mended John Wallow Wood's flax one season for 17 lbs.

He seems to have made shoes and garments for his family and for his neighbors. For Enos Leonard's young son, who was found out to him, he did on this wise: "Cupping your son's shoes, 1-3." "One bottle green coat trimmed and made for Moses, 1 shilling." He made several shirts at a frock for the Martin Leonard company.

The number of things which this veteran and "dabster" did make in a touching list. He was success in ordinary to the parish of Bradford and this long before he had accumulated an army experience. Veterinary too he was. His journals are peppered over with charges for the treatment of young horses. In the account of Elliphalet Thompson in the year 1772, along with a "Tying Pan" and "Pr Sizers," is the charge, "To Settle your boys' ribs, twelve shillings." James Simont in 1785 became indebted to "Setting your knee and Dressings," 4 and 3 shillings respectively.

NEVER OPENING FLOWERS.

A Large Number of Plants Bear Cleistogamous Blossoms.

The never opening flower, or as botanists call it, cleistogamy, is well illustrated by the case of the common sweet violet. The familiar purple, sweet scented blossom, which to most people is the violet flower, rarely ever produces any seed. But altogether unseen by most people it produces a number of minute, scentless and colorless flowers which never open.

These are self fertilized and produce abundant seed. The word cleistogamous expresses the fact that the fertilization takes place without the opening of the flower and hence without the agency of insects. Such never opening flowers occur in a large number of plants, sometimes along with blossoms of the ordinary sort and sometimes without them. It is a disputed point, however, whether there is any plant which in all circumstances will produce nothing but cleistogamous flowers.

There are nevertheless a number which normally produce nothing else. As regards fertility, the seeds produced by the cleistogamous flowers are never inferior to those of the ordinary blossoms. In some cases they are superior and in others they are the only seed produced by the plant.

It has been found that the amount of cleistogamy varies with the height of the plants. The shortest bear cleistogamous flowers only, and those a little taller have a few small open flowers in addition to the closed ones. The tallest plants have larger open flowers, with only a few cleistogamous.—Botanical Gazette.

Gold In Ancient Rome.

William Jacob in his "History of the Precious Metals" estimates from the accounts given by the Roman writers that in the reign of Augustus, the first of the emperors, when Rome was at the height of its power, the amount of gold in the Roman empire was nearly \$2,000,000,000. This vast treasure had been gathered chiefly by conquest from various nations of Europe, Asia and Africa. There had been extensive mines in Spain and in the Atlas mountains of north Africa, but their gold in the wealth of kings and of cities in Asia and Egypt had been despoiled and carried away to enrich the conquerors.

Our First Money.

The first United States money was made in 1786, but instead of bearing the faces of leading statesmen it bore only the face of Liberty. Some few coins were stamped with the face of Washington and are highly valued by collectors. The first coins struck by the United States mint were some half dimes in 1792. The first United States dimes were struck in France from old silver family plate furnished by Washington and were known as "Marche Washington dimes" from the fact that the Liberty dime was adapted to that of the president's wife.—New York American.

Over the Mark.

"Does he aim at realism in the stories he writes?" "He may aim at it, but he doesn't hit within a million miles of it." "How's that?" "The hero of his last story is a spendthrift Scotchman."—Houston Post.

A Conscientious Declaration.

Drummer—Will you be mine? All my life I will worship you from February until April and from August until December. The rest of the time I am on the road.—Fliegende Blätter.

Always a Way.

"She is reputed to be a cold beauty. Did you win her heart with orchids?" "No, I sent some very fine imported mousges to her dog."—Pittsburg Post.

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