

# GILBERT REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. COIN TRICKS



# GILBERT COIN TRICKS FOR BOYS

DESIGNED TO TEACH COIN CONJURING TO  
BOYS IN A SIMPLE MANNER, AND TO  
PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT OF AN  
UNUSUAL CHARACTER



BY  
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YALE UNIVERSITY • 1909

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## Foreword

Weren't you interested the time you saw a magician perform in the theater? The way he made coins appear from his coat pockets—why, he even produced coins from the air—and then made them disappear was certainly marvelous. Everybody in the audience was spellbound by his tricks. You knew all the time that he wasn't taking real coins from the air, but you couldn't explain why or how it was possible for him to bring a coin into sight when a minute before his hands were positively empty. You noticed he kept talking all the time—telling a funny story perhaps, or directing your eyes to another part of the stage. He knew what he was doing all right. When it was necessary for him to make a difficult movement of his fingers, you were laughing at his jokes or looking at the back of the stage. Then what happened? In place of one coin which you saw in his hand previously, he had a dozen or more, and where they came from and how he could get them was a puzzle. It must be said of the magician that he is a clever person, but you can be just as clever as he is and do the same kind of sleight of hand tricks that he does—even give shows of your own and earn a good deal of spending money.

This book on coin tricks not only teaches you famous tricks of conjurers but furnishes you with a novel entertainment. With a little practice, you can soon earn a reputation among your friends as the fellow who can always give an entertainment for your club or church. It's the ability to do things of this kind that makes a boy popular among his friends.

Enter into this new kind of play—magic tricks—in the right spirit and you will have some mighty good times—real pleasure—the kind a boy likes.

Sincerely yours,



## COIN TRICKS

If my boy friends get as much pleasure out of practicing, learning, and exhibiting the coin tricks explained and illustrated in this book as I have had in learning and doing them, they can look forward to a great deal of pleasure and profit.

Well I remember when I was a boy the great difficulty I experienced and encountered in finding a suitable explanation that enabled me to learn how to do coin tricks or to find any one who, knowing how, was willing to instruct me. So in writing this book my main object is to describe and illustrate coin conjuring in a manner that will enable you to become adept in sleight of hand tricks with coins, and also in tricks with coins that require little practice. You will become a really successful entertainer and thereby be greatly admired by your friends.

The old adage a "Jack of all Trades" applies to most would-be magicians—they try something of everything. But the really great sleight of hand performers are the ones who have specialized in some one branch of conjuring. There are many, many magicians, but there is only one Nelson T. Downs, the King of Coins, and only one Howard Thurston, the King of Cards, and only one Houdini, the King of Handcuffs.

Specialization is the great thought in big business to-day. The man who makes a specialty of any profession has more chances to succeed than the fellow who tries to do a variety of things. By this I do not mean that you should not know how to do other tricks besides just coin tricks; but it is a whole lot better to be especially skilful in some one thing, and make that a specialty, rather than to try to master all the various arts of sleight of hand and be good in none.

For instance, the great Nelson T. Downs, although known as King of Coins, was very successful in card manipulation, but he made coin tricks his specialty. He mastered these until his performance of them was perfect and unexcelled.

I feel the importance of specialization in everything to-day so much that I have gone to great length to recommend that when you take up any one phase of conjuring you go quite thoroughly into that phase and become proficient in it before you tackle something else.

In writing this book I realize there are two classes of boys who will read it. Some of you are anxious to learn only a few simple tricks that do not require great skill or a tremendous amount of practice. Fortunately for this class of boys there are many simple tricks that can be learned and executed in a short time to the mystification of every one. So if you have not the determination or desire to be a really good sleight of hand performer you can console yourself by knowing in advance that there are many simple tricks that you can do that will mystify and amaze your audience and still require comparatively little practice.

Therefore, I have divided the tricks in this book into two classes:

1st. Sleight of hand tricks that require great patience, an immense amount of practice, and a determination to keep everlastingly at it until you become proficient.

2d. A series of tricks that require practically no skill and that any one can perform in a comparatively short time without a knowledge of conjuring.

If you include yourself in the first class you must make up your mind to "stick-to-it." You must have a tremendous amount of patience and then more patience, because the first tricks that I will describe to you in sleight of hand will appear almost impossible. Unless you see some one actually do these tricks you may even doubt whether it is possible to do

them; and you may think that you are not naturally qualified—that your hands are not adapted to coin conjuring. The truth of the matter is there is little or nothing in natural ability; some people call magicians "Inspired performers." There is no inspiration about it; it is pure perspiration and hard work and keeping everlastingly at it with incessant determination. Any one with two ordinary hands can learn these sleight of hand tricks if he is willing to persevere. I have seen this demonstrated by so many who had appeared extremely awkward at first that I am absolutely satisfied (and I have taught many hundreds of boys) that any one can become proficient in sleight of hand if he has patience and perseverance.

**DO NOT NEGLECT YOUR SCHOOL WORK.** Remember that sleight of hand is only a hobby with which you are able to have some fun and to amuse your friends so that you will stand for leadership among boys. Do not get the silly idea into your head about becoming a showman, because the salaries paid professionals of this kind are very much exaggerated and the opportunities that there were at one time in the profession are not as alluring nowadays.

My advice to my good boy friends is that if you take up conjuring as a hobby you will never regret it; and it will stand you in good stead as well as give you an immense amount of fun. Never let it interfere with the bigger things in life and do not neglect your school work. This is a hobby with which you can amuse yourself after school, during the hours for fun.

**DO NOT BECOME A "MAGIC BUG."** It is all right to have a hobby, but do not let the hobby get the best of you. Have a good time out of it; earn some money if you can by giving shows and learn to appreciate the art, because you will find that it is an art. Do not let it turn your head.

**DO NOT EXPOSE.** By this I mean you will find a lot of friends who are extremely interested in knowing how these

tricks are done, for the sake of knowing, not that they want to learn anything about them, and as soon as you reveal your tricks to them, they lose all interest in your work. The great interest and satisfaction in doing sleight of hand of all kinds is in fooling people and as soon as they find out the secret you will find that they lose interest and in the long run you will be sorry that you have shown them how it is done. The success of the good conjurer is in keeping his secrets to himself.

**SEE GOOD MAGICIANS AND ADMIRE THEM.** Unfortunately it seems to be a habit with so many that become proficient in sleight of hand to think that there is not any one in the world quite as good as they are and to ridicule everybody, professional or amateur, and to underestimate their skill. Get into the habit of being a booster. Get out of the rut that most amateurs get into and have a good word to say for men who have spent their lives making a profession of conjuring. Learn to appreciate and admire good things. People will think more of you if you speak well of others and their work. Do not say that you know how a man does his tricks, that they are very simple and that he is not much good. Do not lower yourself to that kind of talk.

**PRACTICE.** Practice and practice until you do not need to think of what you are doing. Make the trick become a habit so that you can think of what you are saying and entertain your audience by misdirection. That is what makes the real successful performer. Do not try to do a trick until you are absolutely sure of it and have practiced it before a mirror; then try it before some of your own friends. Keep on doing the trick and let them criticise you until you are absolutely sure of yourself so that you do not have to concentrate your mind on the manipulation of your hands, and you can think of what you are saying.

Most of the successful professionals, I find, are those who do the comparatively simple tricks; but they are extremely entertaining and their line of patter is so interesting that the audience goes away with the impression that they are really wonderful conjurers.

**KNOW IN ADVANCE WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO SAY.** Do not try to give a magic entertainment if you have not some idea of what you are going to talk about. It is as important to learn the patter as it is to learn the trick, because you might become the best sleight of hand performer in the world, and yet if you cannot present the tricks attractively and interestingly your tricks will not show up well. A good many amateurs make the mistake of devoting all their time to learning the tricks and not any to becoming an entertainer.

For all coin palming probably the ordinary half-dollar is the most suitable sized coin to use, but unfortunately silver half-dollars are not plentiful and it is much more economical to use Mysto Coins, which are like the half-dollar in size, and are inexpensive. They will serve the same purpose as real coins in conjuring. You will find that you require a great many coins to do some tricks.

**FINGER PALMING.** See Fig. 1, which illustrates the finger palm, that is, holding the coin between the index and little finger, resting it on the other two. This position is important as you will see from the following description.

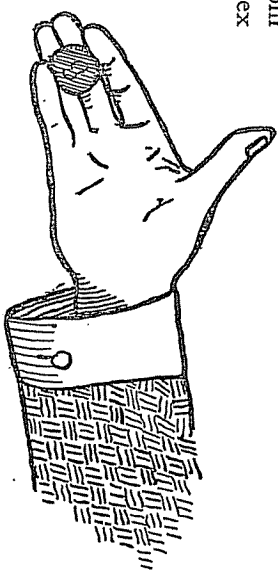


Fig. 1



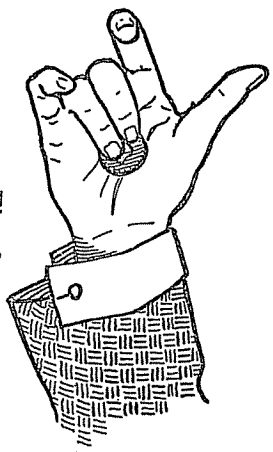


Fig. 2

**PALMING COIN.**  
(See Fig. 2.) With the second and third fingers place the coin into the palm of the hand, where, by the contraction of the thumb, the coin becomes palmed as shown in Fig. 3. With practice you can soon

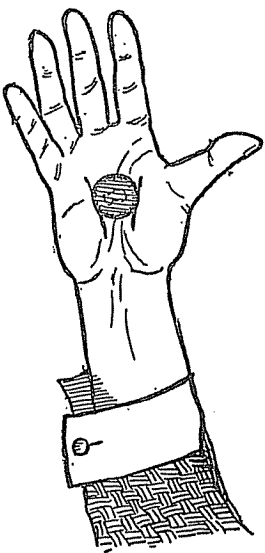


Fig. 3

learn to palm the coin in a perfectly natural manner without any one having the least suspicion that the coin is in the palm when the back of the hand is toward the audience.

**THE BACK AND FRONT PALM.** The next few moves are practically the basis of all successful sleight of hand coin manipulations, and unless you master this back and front palm that we are about to describe you will never become very proficient. Unfortunately, it is one of the most difficult sleight of hand maneuvers. With considerable practice each day I should say that it would take an ordinary person a full year to become thoroughly proficient in performing this maneuver. It takes a lot of courage to undertake so much practice in order to learn

one simple move, but you will find that it is the basis of most of the sleight of hand tricks with coins. Right here I will tell you that you will be well repaid for the work, because there are comparatively few amateurs, even good ones, that can do this front and back palm, perfectly.

At first you will think that it is almost impossible and you are apt to come to the conclusion that your hands are not adapted to do things of this kind, but after a few months of practice you will begin to get the knack of doing palming. It seems that we learn things of this kind by stages. You will practice for weeks and weeks and not seem to be accomplishing anything, and then all of a sudden you will discover that you are able to do it. I must tell you that it takes a lot of patience, and you cannot afford to become discouraged if you are going to learn this exceptionally clever manipulation.

Hold the coin in position shown in Fig. 4. Now contract the two center fingers and bring them through (see Fig. 5), revolving

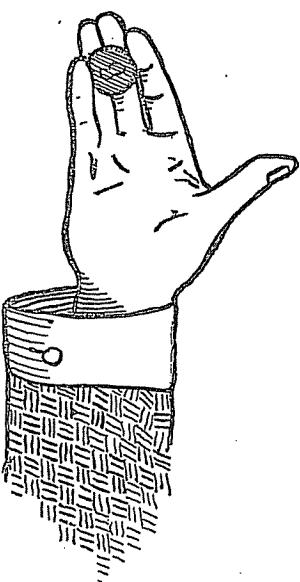


Fig. 4

the coin around the index finger and little finger, until they are shoved clear through and the coin assumes the position shown in Fig. 6, known as the Back Finger Palm.

Now, to bring the coin back to front finger palm, Fig. 1, simply reverse the operation. In order to conceal it from the audience

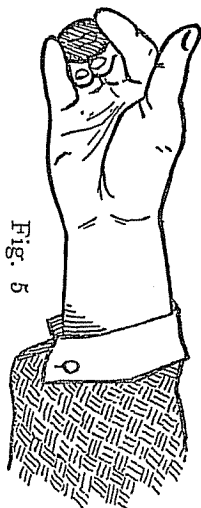


Fig. 5

after you have back-finger-palmed the coin as in Fig. 6, and to reverse the move, you turn the palm of the hand away from the audience and bring the back of the hand into view, as in Fig. 7.

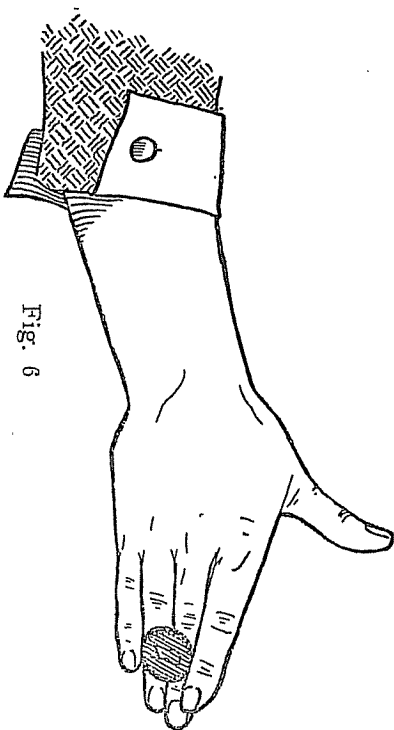


Fig. 6

After you have practiced this long enough so you can change the coin from front to back finger palm, you should go to a mirror and turn your hand back and forth with the coin in it so that the coin will not come into view. In other words, by watching the mirror you can learn the correct angles in turning the hand so that the coin will remain invisible.

This completes the maneuver of the back and front palm, which, as I said in the beginning, is probably the most difficult maneuver to learn and requires a great deal of practice and

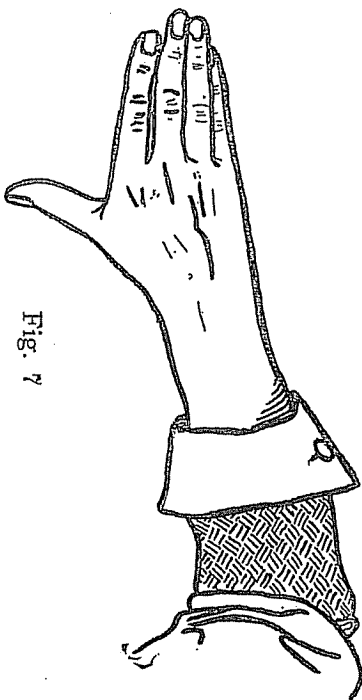


Fig. 7

patience; but, as you will see, it is the basis of all coin manipulation, and the other moves will come much easier to you after you have mastered this.

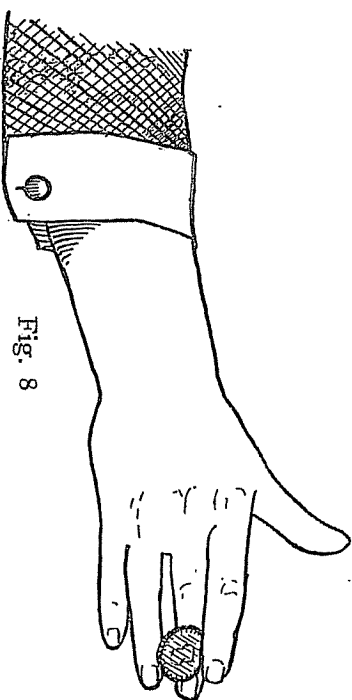


Fig. 8

**BACK INDEX FINGER PALM.** After you have the coin on the back of the hand, known as the Back Finger Palm, you can release the bottom part of the coin from the little finger so



that it is held between the index and the second fingers, Fig. 8. This is so that you can slightly open your fingers and gives the audience the impression that the coin is not being held on the back of the fingers.

**TO PRODUCE THE COIN AT THE TIP OF THE FINGERS.** This is a comparatively simple little move, but it requires some practice and is oftentimes desirable in doing tricks where you reach out into the air and apparently pluck half-dollars right from the atmosphere. For instance, let us assume that you have back-palmed the coin, Fig. 6, and then released the little finger. The coin is then in the position as shown in Fig. 8.

Now by grasping the bottom of the coin with the third finger and bending the fingers as in Fig. 9, you can revolve the coin around, forcing it out into the tips of the index and second fingers as in Fig. 10. It is quite difficult to describe this maneuver clearly, but with the coin in your hand and with practice you will soon master the idea and from the illustrations will understand the operation.



Fig. 9

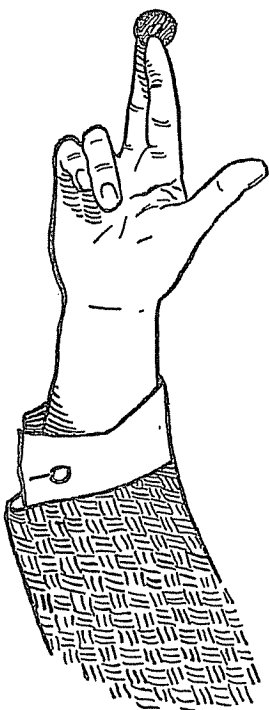


Fig. 10

**FRONT THUMB PALM.** Back-finger-palm the coin, Fig. 6. Then release the little finger so that the coin is raised to the back index finger palm, Fig. 8. Then bring the coin around as described in Fig. 9; next move the thumb down, grasping the coin,



Fig. 11

between the thumb and the index finger as in Fig. 11, and open up the hand so that the coin remains inside of the thumb as in Fig. 12. Although the front thumb palm move requires some practice, it can be mastered in a comparatively short time.

The object of this

maneuver is to transfer the coin from the back of the hand to the thumb palm, like the back and front change. When the coin is removed from the back of the hand, that is, the index finger palm, and converted to the thumb palm, the hand is turned over so that the back of the hand is facing the audience, as illustrated in Fig. 7.

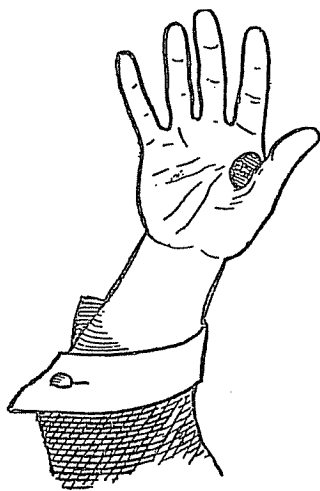


Fig. 12