

TO PRODUCE THE COIN FROM THE THUMB PALM TO THE TIPS OF THE FINGERS. Place the index finger under the coin and the second finger on top of the coin as in

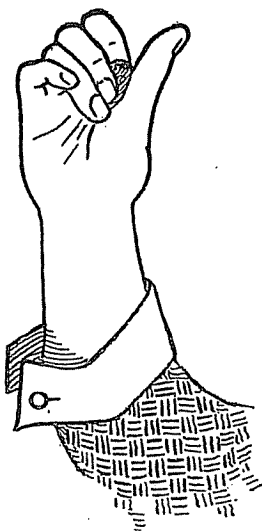


Fig. 13

Fig. 13, that is, actually pick it out of the thumb palm with the first and second fingers so that it will appear at the finger-tip as illustrated in Fig. 10.

TO BACK-FINGER-PALM THE COIN FROM THE PALM. With the coin in position, Fig. 3, bend the fingers in

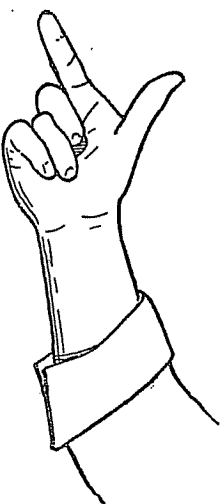


Fig. 14

so that the third finger grasps the rim of the coin (see Fig. 14) which is released by the palm; then turn it over, the second finger going under the coin so that the coin will be picked out of the palm and placed between the second and third fingers. Then the index finger takes the edge of the coin from in back of the two center fingers and index-finger-palms it as in Fig. 8.

This move is not as important as many of the other moves, but it is one of the finger manipulations that it is well to master, as it will oftentimes help you.

I—1

BACK-AND-FRONT-PALMING MORE THAN ONE COIN. By the time you have undertaken to learn the back and front palm you will think that I am presuming a lot when I say it is possible to back-and-front-palm more than one coin together. Personally I can do this very successfully with three coins without the least fear of detection. There are very few times when you will have occasion to exhibit such skill, but you will notice in the Miser's Dream, which is described later on, that this move is used with two or more coins, so I have illustrated the position and move in Fig. 15. This cut was made from actual photograph and demonstrates that the trick can be successfully

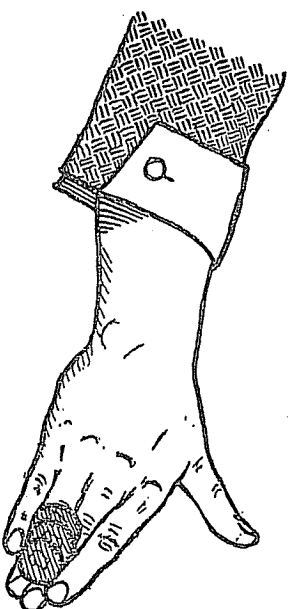


Fig. 15

performed, although I will advance the knowledge to you now that it may take more than a year of practice to accomplish this feat. I might mention here that practicing with coins does not require your undivided attention. For instance, I learned the back and front palm by fooling with the coin in my pocket as I was walking around attending to other things; so, unconsciously, you can be practicing with coins in this way and so learn the different moves.

VANISHING COIN FROM CLOSED HAND. This is a very beautiful little trick and never fails to astonish your audience.

I—2

It does not require as much skill as the back and front palm, but it will be necessary to try it in front of the mirror many times so that you are sure of the right moves and the various angles necessary to execute it without being seen by the audience. At first it will appear very crude and you are apt to think that it is not of much account and cannot be done; but I have performed this trick thousands of times before large audiences and even right in front of their eyes and I have repeated it many times without detection. I should certainly advise you to learn this trick and practice it until it becomes perfectly natural; then you can misdirect the attention of your audience in doing it and completely fool them. You will find it one of the best tricks in your repertoire of coin tricks.

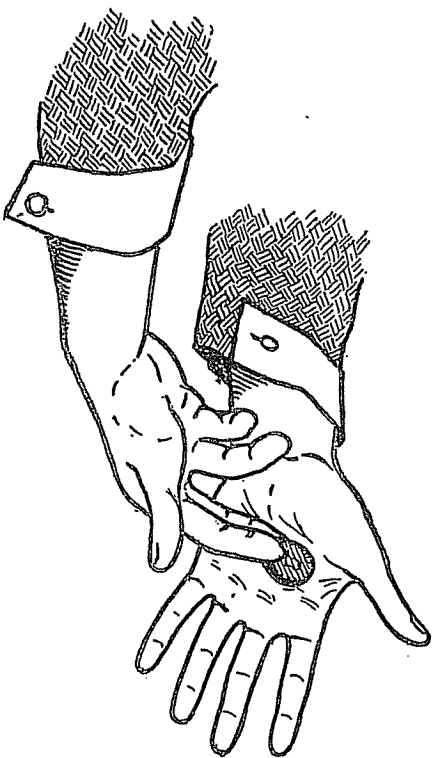


Fig. 16

The coin is held between the index finger and the second finger (see Fig. 10). It is now placed in the palm of the left hand (see Fig. 16). The effect of the trick is that the fingers of the left hand are closed over the coin and the two fingers that are holding

the coin are withdrawn from the palm, apparently without the coin, giving the audience the impression that the coin is still in the palm. Then the left hand is opened, and, much to the amazement of the audience, the coin has disappeared from it.

HOW IT IS DONE. In the act of closing the left hand and withdrawing the two fingers of the right hand the coin is withdrawn and held between the fingers. In withdrawing the coin, the two fingers holding the coin are slightly bent, and the back

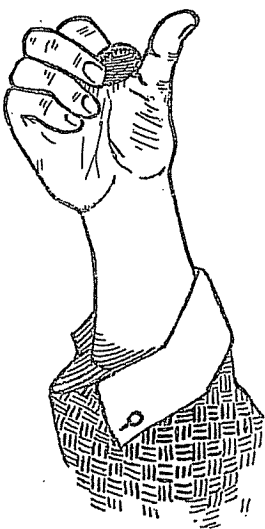


Fig. 17

of the right hand turned toward the audience so that as the coin is withdrawn quickly and deftly it is hidden from the audience by the back of the right hand. Then it is thumb-palmed (see Fig. 17). The right hand then assumes the position shown in Fig. 18 with the left hand just above it, apparently concealing and holding the coin, when in reality the coin is now inside the lower hand thumb-palmed. This movement of withdrawing the coin is one of very few quick moves ever necessary in coin manipulating.

The description given for this manipulation may not be clear in reading it; but by following the descriptions word for word, and by holding the coin and making the moves slowly, you will soon grasp the idea. After you have mastered the movements you are then ready to practice in front of the mirror, until it becomes a natural habit.

You are then ready to perform the trick after you have worked up a little talk that will help in misdirecting the audience. By misdirection I mean when you put the coin in the palm of your

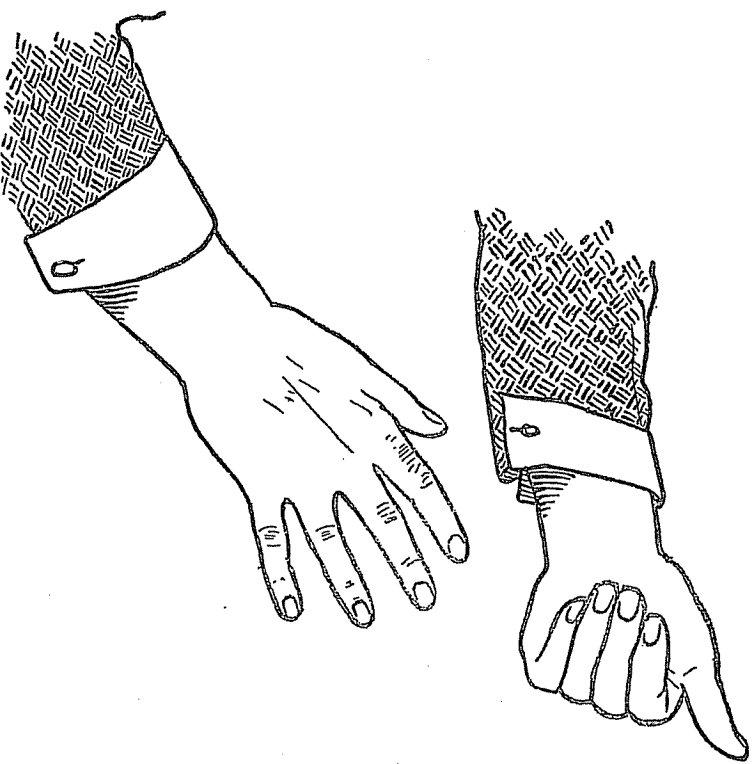


Fig. 18

hand keep your eyes intently fixed upon the left hand. Do not follow the moves of the right hand as you are withdrawing the coin because the audience will look where you look. That is one

of the secrets of all successful conjuring. It has been said of Hermann the Great, that wherever he looked the audience would look and that was the secret of his great misdirection. Good misdirection may all be summed up as meaning the natural way of doing the thing. It is not the quickness of the hand that deceives the eye; it is just the opposite. All the moves and manipulations, at least the majority of them, are done slowly, using the correct angles and keeping the audience's attention away from your sleight of hand moves, which can be done successfully if you keep your eyes in the direction you want the audience to look. If you follow with your own eyes the moves that you are executing, the audience will know every move that you are making. I therefore impress upon you here the great importance of practicing before the mirror and forming the habit of misdirection, that is, of looking in the same place where you want your audience to look. When you succeed in doing this you will be able to do things right under the eyes of your audience without detection. Very little has been said in most books on Conjuring about the importance of this factor, but it is the basis of all successful sleight of hand operations and of most mechanical tricks. It is for this reason more than any other that one man can take a mechanical trick and make a great success of it where another man would make a failure.

There is another thing I might mention, and that is Self-Confidence. You must have confidence in yourself to be able to fool your audience, or they will never be fooled. Know what you are going to do before you go before the audience so that you can devote your attention to what you are going to say. Do the trick in an intelligent and interesting way.

A PRETTY FINISH TO THE VANISHING COIN FROM CLOSED HAND. After vanishing the coin from the closed hand as described above, you may make it reappear in a very effective way by the following little maneuver.

We left the coin thumb-palmed in the right hand as in Fig. 18. Now after having opened the hand and having shown that the coin has disappeared, take the right hand and move it directly across the left hand, as in Fig. 19, which is the side view of the position, as the audience sees it. As you bring the right hand across the palm of the left hand you close the fingers of the hand and drop the coin into the palm, so that when the hand is opened the coin has reappeared.

This sounds comparatively simple; it is if you follow the moves closely, and it will make a very pretty little finish for the vanishing coin trick.

TO APPARENTLY PASS A NUMBER OF COINS FROM ONE HAND INTO THE OTHER AND THEN MAKE THEM INSTANTLY DISAPPEAR AND REAPPEAR SOMEWHERE ELSE. Palm a number of coins in your right-hand palm (see Fig. 20) and jingle them up and down in your palm visibly to the audience. Now turn the right side of the body toward the audience so that the coins that are palmed in the right hand are not visible. In other words, the back of the right hand is toward the audience. You then appear to drop the coins into the left hand, closing the hand just as you do it. The audience hears the jingle of the coins, they see the hand close, and they assume the coins were dropped into the left hand. You can then make them appear out of some one's pockets or out of your own trousers leg or anywhere you desire. The secret of the trick is that the coins are held in the right palm as in Fig. 20, and in dropping the coins you simply let them fall into the fingers of the right hand, at the same time closing the left hand, giving the impression that they dropped into that hand, as in Fig. 21. The coins, of course, really remain in the same hand, although they have dropped from the palm into the fingers, where they can be held in a natural position. Direct your eyes toward the left hand; the audience will look at that hand likewise.

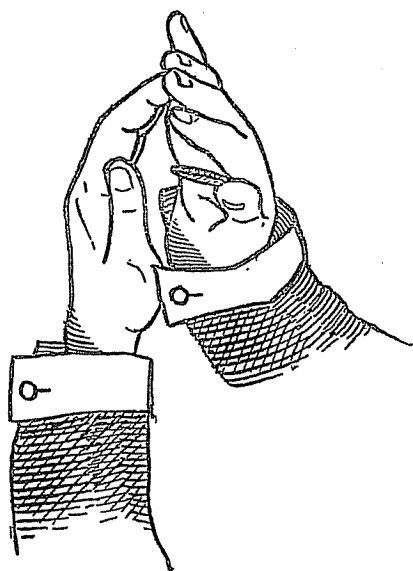


Fig. 19

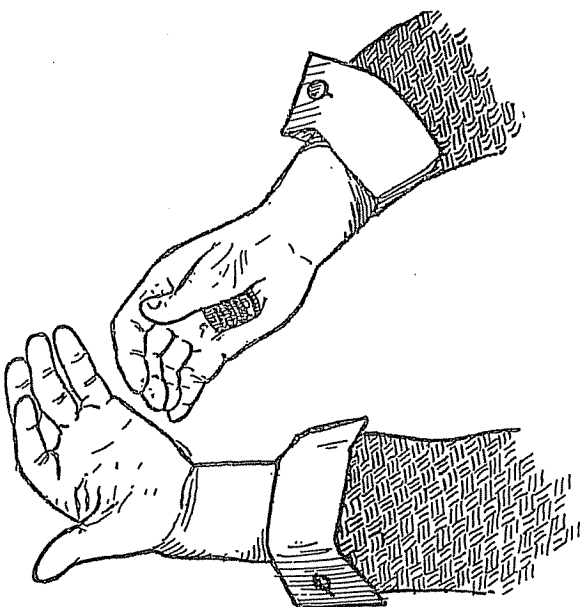


Fig. 20

The coins can then be brought from anywhere you wish with the right hand.

ANOTHER METHOD OF VANISHING COIN FROM A CLOSED HAND. Hold the coin in position as shown in Fig. 1. Then, apparently, take the coin out of the right hand; the

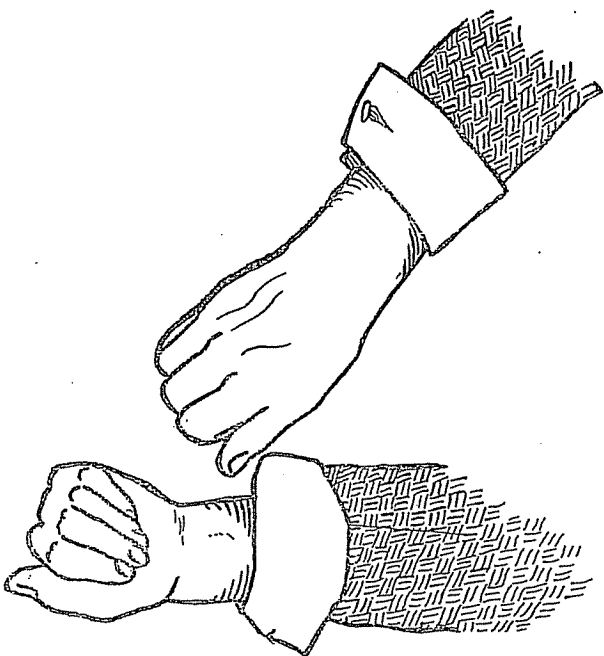


Fig. 21

finger-tips of the left hand close the left hand in so doing. What you really do is to back-finger-palm the coin instead of leaving it in the left hand. It can be reproduced from anywhere you desire. This is a pretty little move.

We will not attempt to describe in this book the innumerable moves and methods of presenting various tricks with coins,

because with the descriptions we have already given you will be able to learn the fundamental manipulations that are the basis of all combinations in coin conjuring, and from these you can work up many beautiful combinations that suit your fancy.

We will, however, describe to you a series of maneuvers that Nelson T. Downs used in his wonderful and successful act which he calls the "Miser's Dream." This will illustrate what can be done with the movements that we have just described. This trick is still done as a vaudeville act, and has delighted and fooled and amazed audiences all over the world.

THE MISER'S DREAM. Before beginning your performance, place or conceal thirty to forty coins about you as follows: Deposit about fifteen in your right-hand trousers pocket; twenty more in the rim of a Derby or silk hat (see Fig. 22), placing

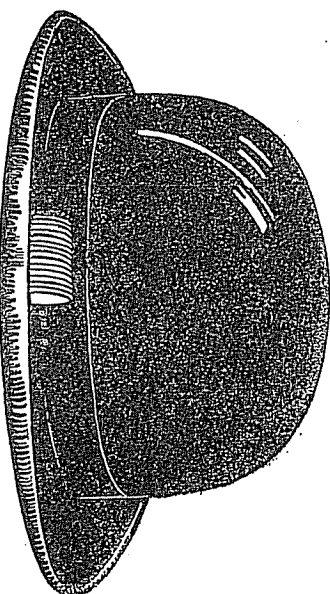


Fig. 22

the hat so that the coins are not visible to the audience. The originator of the trick, Mr. Nelson T. Downs, personally went into the audience and borrowed a hat; then palming his coins from his vest pocket he, in the act of showing the hat to be empty, placed them in the rim of the hat quickly and unseen by the audience.

Personally, I do not believe this is essential to the success of the act because it requires considerable stage presence and a high degree of the art of misdirection in order to place the coins successfully in the rim of the hat unnoticed, although it can be done with sufficient practice. Mr. Downs was never discovered in making this change. Some performers prefer to tie the coins with a thread to facilitate handling them, as the thread can be broken when you are ready to use them. The hat now rests on the table, and it is hardly necessary to say that care must be used in picking it up. Before picking up the hat you make a few introductory statements, and end up by saying that you will turn up your sleeves to show that there is no deception about your ability to actually produce money from the air. The hat is now

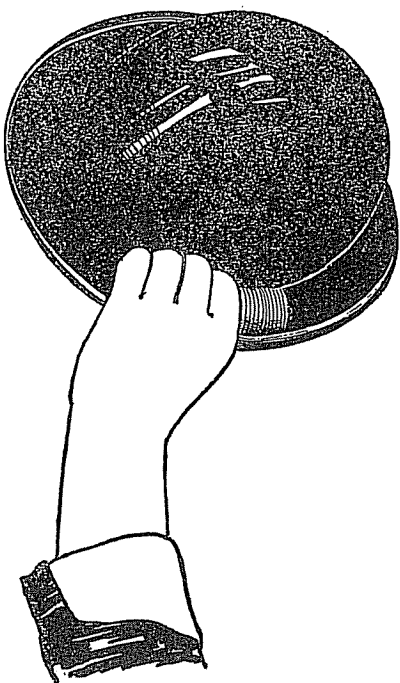


Fig. 23

removed from the table, picking it up with the left hand (see Fig. 23); care must be used to cover the coins and keep them in place with the fingers of the left hand. Now the right hand is opened and shown to be entirely empty, front and back, and

the hat is now changed to the right hand. Let me say right here that this change requires considerable practice and must be carefully and yet casually done. Try to keep your eyes fixed on the audience, thereby assisting in the misdirection of your audience.

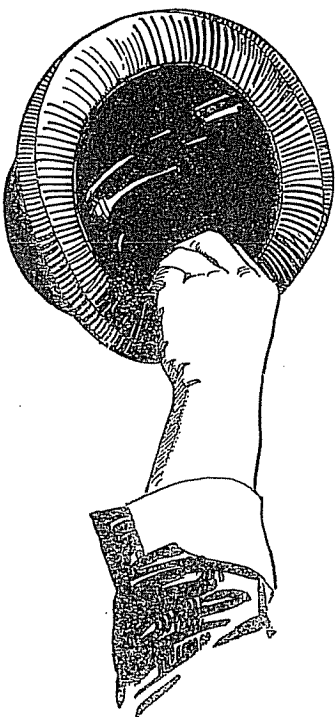


Fig. 24

The inside of the hat can also be shown to be empty. In showing the inside of the hat and turning the hat around in this way very little difficulty will be experienced in transferring coins from the rim of the hat to the inside of the hat, where they are held by the finger of the left hand against the sweat-band, as illustrated. (See Fig. 24.) This transfer is accomplished the last time you turn the hat around to show that it is empty. In the last turn you hold it in a position to catch the shower of coins that is now to follow. Now the right hand is again shown to be empty. You reach up into the air and pretend to pluck a coin from the air. Then pretend to drop it into the hat. What deceives the audience is that they actually hear the dropping of the coin. What you really do in the act of pretending to drop the coin into the hat from the right hand is to release one of the coins that you are holding between the fingers of the left

hand and the rim of the hat, which is holding the twenty coins, unknown to the audience. The dropping of the coin makes the noise, and the audience gets the impression that you have picked the coin from the air and thrown it into the hat.

Once again you reach into the air, and reaching a little higher this time you again pretend to pick out another coin, likewise pretending to drop it into the hat. As you do so palm from the bottom of the hat one of the coins, which you back-palm by means of the front and back palm, and show your right hand front and back. Now you are ready to proceed with the act, relying upon your sleight of hand to fool the audience. You then look around the room to find a spot that suits you to produce more coins, and, reaching up, produce at the tips of the fingers a coin, which you throw into the hat (apparently). What you do is to palm the coin and, returning again to your front and back palming, continue in your trick of picking coins out of the air.

You can vary your method of sleight of hand with different moves and maneuvers, and as you proceed with the trick you will have two or three coins in the hat dropped from the left hand. As you drop the coin in it clicks on the others, making a noise that thoroughly mystifies your audience. After some practice, instead of taking one coin from the hat, you can do as Mr. Downs did. He palmed two coins out of the hat in the very beginning, back-palmed them both, and produced one which he actually dropped into the hat and then back-palmed the other without going near the hat. In this way he deceived his audience entirely. This requires quite a little practice and need not be included in the trick; but it is one of the little things that you can add to the trick that will amaze and fool the audience further. As you proceed, naturally you show your hand empty, front and back. Due to the front and back palm, the audience thinks you are plucking coins from the air.

There are many little side-plays that can be brought about that will make the trick effective and amusing and please your audience immensely. You may add any little effects to suit your own fancy, but we are describing only a few here to give you an idea of how effectively this Miser's Dream fantasy can be carried out.

One of the pretty effects is to hold the coin as in Fig. 1 and apparently throw it up in the air. What you really do is to back-palm it. Then you look up into the air and reach out with the hat, letting one of the coins drop from the fingers of left hand into the hat, and the audience thinks you actually got the coin from the air. This is a pretty little illusion.

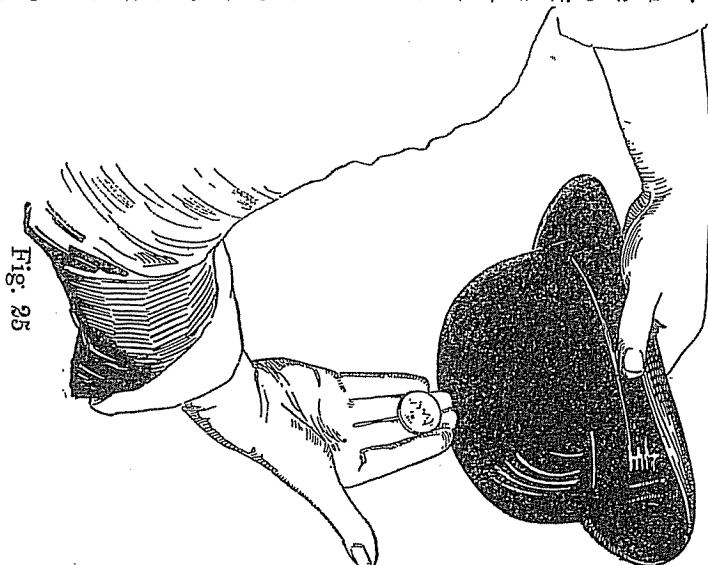


Fig. 25

Another effective sleight is to take the coin between the fingers and apparently push the coin right through the hat. (See Fig. 25.) What you do is to drop one of the coins held by the fingers of left hand into the hat and back-palm the coin, placing it in position (see Fig. 26) where it can be readily

back-palmed. Show your hand front and back to be empty, indicating that the coin actually passed through the hat.

Possibly by this time you have exhausted your supply of coins held under the fingers of left hand in the hat, and it will be necessary for you to obtain more of them. You could not possibly do any better than by using the method of Mr. Downs himself when he gave the audience the impression that he heard some one remark that he was getting the coins from his pocket. He remarks, "Did I hear some one say that I have the coins concealed in my pocket?"

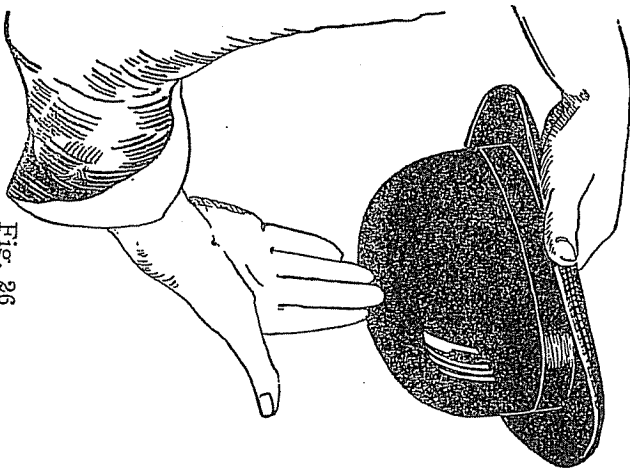


Fig. 26

Which pocket?"

Some one may say "the right." He immediately plunges his hand down into his pocket and pulls it inside out, showing it to be empty. Then he puts his hand into the left-hand pocket, palms the coins, and pulls the pocket inside out, keeping the back of his hand toward the audience and pushing the pocket in again. Then he takes the hat, which is now in the right hand, back into the left hand, securing and concealing in this way the second load of coins. He now remarks that he does not approach his body at any time during the performance of this trick. You can then proceed to pluck coins from the air again.

Remember that sometimes the most difficult things you do are not nearly as effective as the simple little manipulations and side-plays you make. The originator of this trick when he secured his second load deposited them into the rim of the hat again, and, placing the hat on the table, showed his hands to be empty. He then picked up the hat again and continued with his performance in this way. These details are not essential, but we think it well to explain how they are done by the most successful coin-manipulator the world has ever known, and one whom I hope my readers may have the opportunity to see, because I know you will enjoy him as I have, and more so now that you know how some of the things are done.

TRICKS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE SO MUCH SLEIGHT OF HAND. As I stated in the beginning of the book, unfortunately for the real artist there are many stunts that require comparatively little sleight of hand that will be appreciated just as much by an audience as one that would require a great deal of practice. I suggest a combination of both as being more effective than trying to depend upon your sleight of hand entirely, even though you are really proficient.

LOOP COIN. The first of these tricks that I am going to describe, and one that I consider the most effective, is the coin that is arranged with a catgut loop. (See Fig. 27.) The catgut is arranged so that when it is hung over the thumb it rests in the palm as in the figure. Now with this loop coin a great many varieties of moves and maneuvers can be carried out that will give the audience the impression that you are a real coin-manipulator, and you will get



Fig. 27

credit for more skill than you actually possess. The catgut is invisible at a short distance.

You can appear to be palming the coin in the palm of the hand, as illustrated, and to be closing your fingers over the coin.

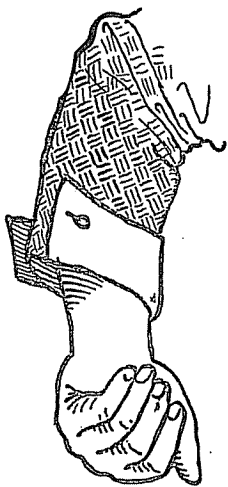


Fig. 28

hand facing the audience so that the coin has disappeared when the hand is opened.

Now change the right side of the body, which was toward the audience, to the back of the stage and bring your left side forward, at the same time turning your hand so that the back of the

In the act of doing so make a little upward swing of the hand (see Fig. 28) and the coin can be thrown out from under the finger onto the back of the hand (as in position, Fig. 29), the palm of the

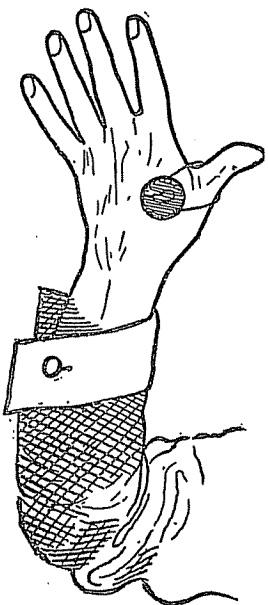


Fig. 29

hand faces the people. Let the coin swing around the base of the thumb, where it goes back into its original position in the palm of the hand, but still invisible to the audience. The fingers can

then be closed over the coin and your body reversed; the coin thrown to the back of the hand, as in the first move, and the hand shown to be entirely empty with the fingers open.

By just reversing the first move, starting with the coin on back of the hand, by moving it upward, and by swinging the coin forward under cover of the closed fingers back into the palm of the hand, the hand can be opened and the coin reproduced.

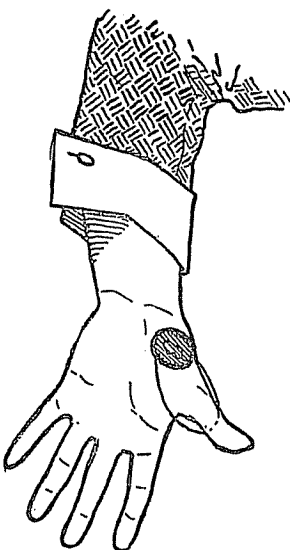


Fig. 30

Although this may not be classed as a sleight of hand move, it requires considerable practice to do it neatly. It is one of the most effective tricks that has ever been performed, I believe, and it has never failed to interest an audience. This trick has mystified more people than some of the more difficult ones. The fact that the fingers are spread wide apart and the hand shown front and back to be empty, makes the trick quite mystifying, and will always please your audience.

Any number of additional effects can be produced to suit your own fancy. I have simply given the fundamental moves. You will have the pleasure of working out many combinations that will fit into the performance and will prove to be very effective.