

FIGURE 34. The Slippery Ring Knot, sometimes called a Half Bow, is used when fastening a rope to a ring, or any other place where a knot is tied temporarily. It is not a trustworthy knot, for the rope will break in the knot when a great strain is brought to bear upon it. The knot is untied quickly by simply taking hold of the end of the rope and pulling. You will very often see this knot made when a small boat pulls up alongside a pier and the painter is made fast in a ring. The painter is the small rope that is usually found at the bow of a boat for making the boat fast to a dock.



Fig. 34

FIGURE 35. The Boat Knot is made exactly like a Marlinespike Hitch, and is used in tying a small boat to a stake. A toggle is usually put through the bight.

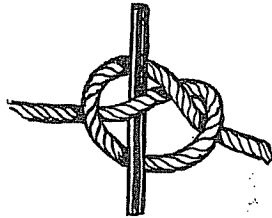


Fig. 35

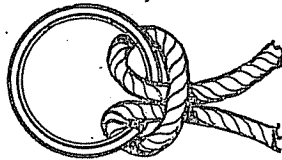


Fig. 36

FIGURE 36. The Lark Boat Knot or Toggled Ring Hitch differs from the Boat Knot shown in Fig. 35, in that a bight, instead of a single end of the rope, is put through the ring; bight brought back over the standing part and the toggle passed through the bight. It is used to fasten the bight of a rope around a ring, log, or wire drawn taut.

FIGURE 37. Is the Lark's Head or, as it is more commonly termed, a Ring Hitch. In making this hitch the bight or ends may be passed through the ring, but the ends of the rope must be passed through the bight. It is a common knot used for towing an object through the water.

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FIGURE 38. Shows the Lark's Head stoppered. It is an Overhand Knot made with the ends of the rope for the purpose of keeping the ends together.

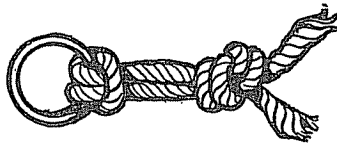


Fig. 38

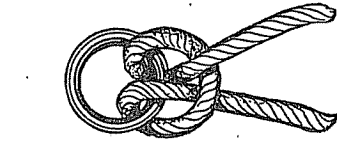


Fig. 39

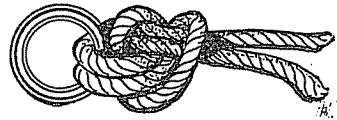


Fig. 40

FIGURE 39. The Lark's Head with crossed ends is simply two half hitches through the ring. If the standing part is taken in the bight and the end in the other and drawn apart, it will be found to be nothing more than a Builder's Knot.

FIGURE 40. The Double Lark's Head or Double Ring Hitch is made by first forming a bight and passing the ends of the rope through the ring and back down through the bight.

FIGURE 41. The Treble Lark's Head looks somewhat difficult to one uninitiated in the art of knot-tying, but will be found very easy to make. The photograph itself is sufficient to enable you to make this knot, but a description, at the same time observing the photograph, will probably aid you to make it a little quicker. The bight of a rope is first brought up through the ring; one of the ends of the rope is passed through the bight, up through the ring, and then down through its own bight. The same procedure is followed with the other end of the rope and the knot is formed.

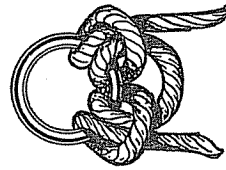


Fig. 41

The last six knots are all modifications of the Boat Knot shown in Fig. 35, and used for much the same purposes.

FIGURE 42. The Back-handed Sailor's Knot is made easily, and is used in any place where a hitch is needed. The rapidity with which it may be made makes it particularly desirable for general use, and will never draw up so taut that difficulty in untying is experienced.

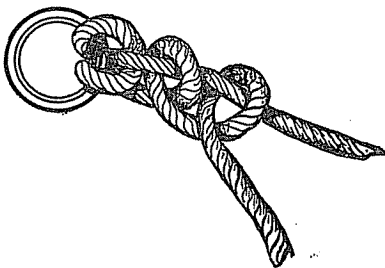


Fig. 42

FIGURE 43. This is another form of Sailor's Knot which is very often used and which possesses the distinct advantage of being quickly and easily made. This knot is very much used as a mooring knot, but when used as such there should not be a very stiff breeze blowing, for if a strain is placed upon the rope it will cause the two half hitches to draw up tightly together against the ring and it becomes very hard to untie. Usually necessitating the cutting of the rope just below the hitches. Very often this knot is toggled, but is not to be relied upon in a gale.

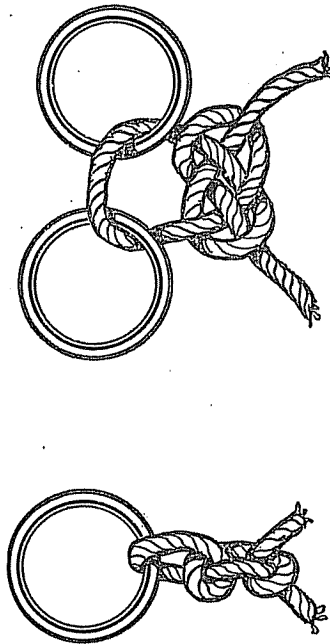


Fig. 43

FIGURE 44. The Gunner's Knot is used by artillerymen when hauling guns over a difficult country, where horses cannot be employed. It is used to advantage when drawing heavy weights, as a man can exert his entire strength to much greater advantage than by merely grasping the ropes with his hands.

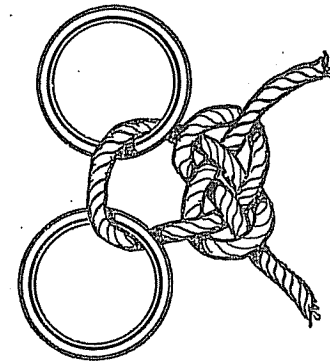


Fig. 44

FIGURE 45a. This is termed a Chain Knot, and is used for shortening a rope. Fig. 45b shows the beginning of the Chain Knot, and a repetition of this results in the shortening of the rope to the desired length.

FIGURE 46. The Twist Knot is another means of shortening a rope. This is a rather ornamental knot, and is used in shortening the ropes on a hammock.

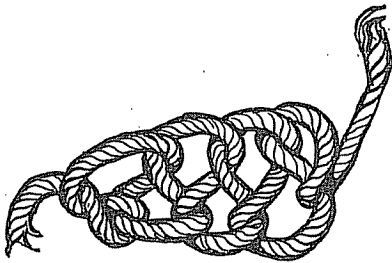


Fig. 45a

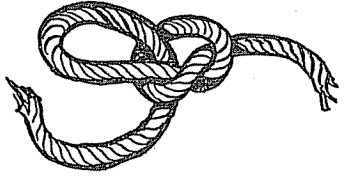


Fig. 45b

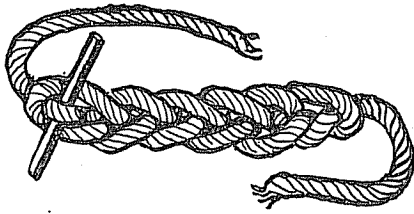


Fig. 46

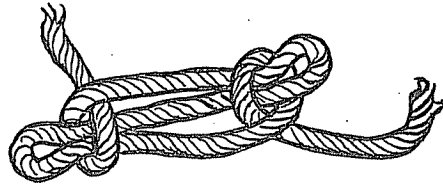


Fig. 47

FIGURE 47. A Sheepshank is a very common and old method of shortening a rope, and may be applied to any size rope. It never draws taut and can be quickly untied. In a very large stranded rope, a toggle is used in place of the hitch. The bight is brought down over the standing part and the toggle passed through. This method of tying the Sheepshank is used on board a vessel in shortening a boom line. This knot should be used in preference to a Chain Knot for shortening.

FIGURES 48

and 49. These are modifications of the Sheepshank shown in Fig. 47.



Fig. 48

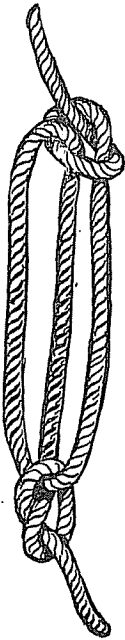


Fig. 49

FIGURE 50. Knot shortening is a method of taking up the slack in a rope, and can be made only when one end of the rope is free. The three parts are grasped with both hands near the center of the bights and an Overhand Knot is made. It is necessary to have small cordage, as this knot is used where the strain is not very great. It is used chiefly on yachts.

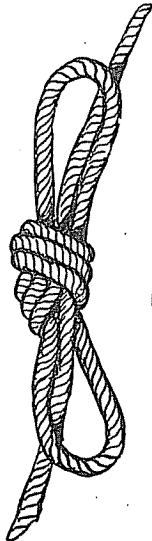


Fig. 50

FIGURE 51. This is termed a Single Pitcher Knot, but is more often called a "Tom Fool's Knot." It is used chiefly in slinging a shot used as a weight, or carrying a pitcher, the handle of which has been broken. This knot is also used as a trick or puzzle knot, and from this fact it derived the name "Tom Fool's Knot."

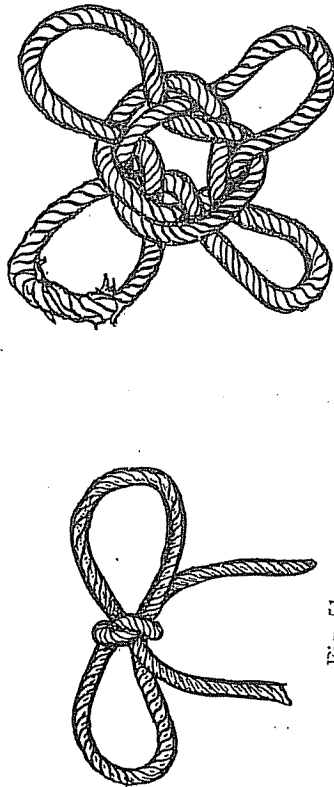


Fig. 51

FIGURE 52. Double Pitcher Knot used for much the same purposes as the Single Pitcher Knot.

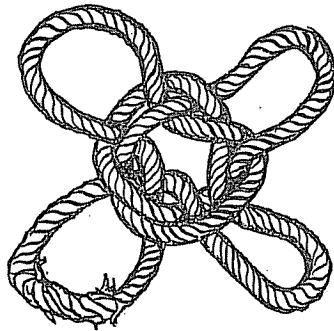


Fig. 52

FIGURE 53a. Can or Jar Sling, also used as barrel sling, is a ready way of slinging a barrel when discharging a cargo from the hold of a vessel or from a wagon. Fig. 53b shows starting of the sling.

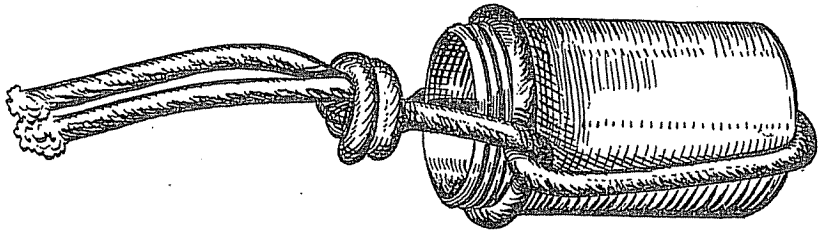


Fig. 53a

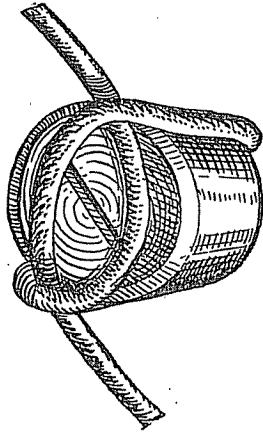


Fig. 53b

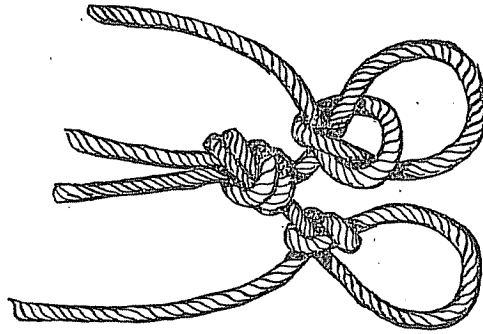


Fig. 54

FIGURE 54. This is termed the Davenport Brothers' Knot, because it was used by them in their Spiritualistic work. (See page 25.) This is a rather ingenious knot, and used particularly in tricks.

PART II

SPICES

Very often it will be found necessary to pass ropes through a block. They cannot be knotted, for the lump formed would not pass through the block. Instead of the knot, the ropes are joined by splicing them, that is, interweaving their strands. There are several kinds of splices, the most important being the short splice, long splice, eye splice, and the eye splice in the center of a rope. A description of how to make these splices is given, together with a photograph of the starting of them and the completed splice.

FIGURES 55a and 55b.

Short Splice. First unlay the two ends of ropes about four inches from the ends. Put the ends of the rope together (Fig. 55a), mating the strands and tucking the strand A under the strand B; then tucking the strand B under the strand C, and the strand C under the strand A, haul taut and the first tuck is completed. In making the second tuck, use the strand A, tucking it under the strand B, then tucking the strand B under the strand C, and the strand C under the strand A; haul taut and the second tuck is completed. Continue to make the third tuck in exactly the same manner. Reverse the rope in your hands and begin the first tuck with the opposite end by using the strand A'. Tuck it under the strand B'; tuck the strand B' under the strand C'; and under the strand C' the strand A', which completes the first tuck. Continue to make the second and third tucks in the same manner as on the

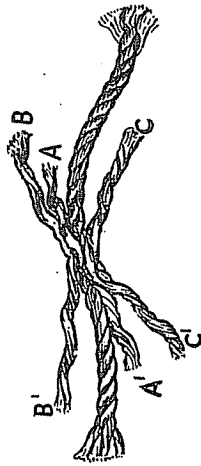


Fig. 55a

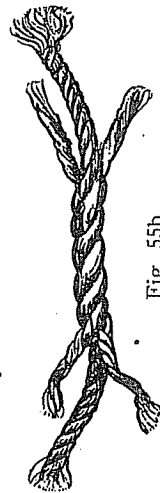


Fig. 55b

the strand C' under the strand A', which completes the first tuck. Continue to make the second and third tucks in the same manner as on the

opposite side of the rope, remembering to haul taut after each tuck. In order that the rope shall be the same shape as before splicing, the section of splicing should be rolled with a board or under foot, permitting your whole weight to bear on the rope at the splicing point.

FIGURES 56a and 56b. The Long Splice.

Unlay the two ends of the ropes for ten or twelve inches. Put the two ends of the ropes together, mating the strands; then unlay the strand A and lay up the strand B, until you are within two inches of the

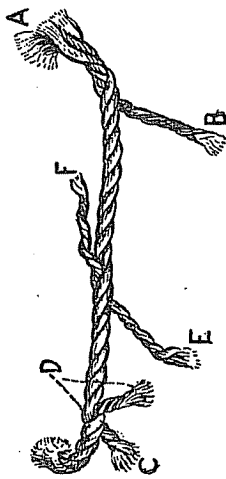


Fig. 56a

ends of the strands. Tie an Overhand Knot (see Fig. 1) with the two strands A and B (the knot should follow the lay of the rope) (Fig. 56a); then tuck the strand A under the strand B and the strand B under the strand C; then halve the ends of the strands A and B and tuck them again. Take from the center of the splice the strands C and D and unlay them

to within two inches of the end of the strand; then lay up the strand D to within two inches of the strand C and tie an Overhand Knot with the strands C and D. Tuck the strand C under the strand D, also the strand D under the strand E; halve both strands and tuck once again. Tie an Overhand Knot with the two remaining strands E and F and draw taut. Take the strand E, tuck it under the strand F and the strand F under the strand D; then halve the strands of E and F, and tuck them once again. Trim off the rough ends and the long splice is completed.



Fig. 56b

FIGURES 57a and 57b. Splicing Eye in End of Rope. Splicing an eye

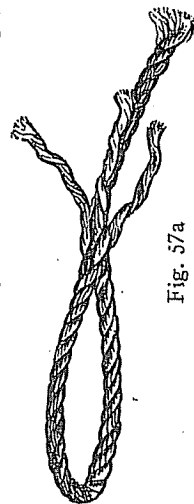


Fig. 57a

at the end of a rope is made by unlaying four inches of the end of a rope, bringing the end of the rope up to the standing part, and forming an eye.

Take the middle strand of rope and pass it under the first lay. The next lay will be passed over the top of the next lay and under the next. Turn the rope completely over in your hand, bringing the third strand of the rope to the right and under the last lay of rope. This completes the first tuck. Continue to make two more tucks exactly like the first, and this completes the eye splice.



Fig. 57b

rope completely over in your hand, bringing the third strand of the rope to the right and under the last lay of rope. This completes the first tuck. Continue to make two more tucks exactly like the first, and this completes the eye splice.

FIGURE 58. Very often it is desired to make an eye splice in the center of a rope, not using either end or cutting the rope. Place both hands on the rope at the point where it is desired to make the splice. Draw



Fig. 58

the hands several inches apart; then push the rope together against the lays until the ends are formed, measuring about three inches in length. Bring the ends up against the standing part, which will form an eye. Take the center strand and tuck it under the first lay; then take the upper strand and pass it over the top of the next lay and under the following lay. Turn the rope completely over in the hands. Take the third strand and bring it to the right and tuck it under the third lay. This completes one tuck. Make two more tucks in the same manner, thus completing the eye splice.

PART III

ROPE-TYING

HISTORY. An explanation or description of the most famous Rope-Tying Tricks in the world would not be complete without a history of the Davenport Brothers, who originated the first rope-tying experiments.

Although they were the originators of this form of conjuring, which they called Spiritualism, it is doubtful if any rope-tying magicians, conjurers, or spiritualists have ever performed equal to the Davenport Brothers. There is no doubt that their work was surely the greatest mystery of that nature that was ever exhibited before the public.

The Davenports for thirteen years in Europe and America augmented the faith in Spiritualism. There were two brothers, Ira Erastus and William Henry Davenport. They were born in Buffalo, N.Y., one in 1839 and the other in 1841. It is said that their father really invented the Rope-Tying Tricks that afterwards made them famous. He got the idea from the Indian jugglers of the West. Even in childhood the boys gained considerable reputation because of stories telling of ghastly phenomena attending their childhood. From the very start of their exhibitions, in which they were advertised as Spiritualists, they created a furore which traveled to all parts of the world. When the Civil War broke out here, they went to England. Their fame had reached there before them; and they created a tremendous sensation. This was followed by another successful tour in France and other countries of the world. Thirteen years went by before they were finally exposed and the truth brought to light.

The trick, as performed by the Davenports, was as follows. In their light séance they used a cabinet. (See Fig. 59.) Three doors on the cabinet were hinged and the center door had a little window in the upper part. Inside the cabinet were various instruments, such as a violin, guitar, bells, tambourines, etc. A committee was chosen from the audience and the hands of the Spiritualists were securely tied behind their backs and their legs fastened together. In this way they were tied into the cabinet and to the cross rails with strong ropes. The side doors were now closed; then the center door, and hardly was the center door closed when the hand of one of the mediums could be seen coming through the little

window. Following this, in a comparatively short time, the doors were again opened and the so-called mediums came out with the ropes in their hands all untied. They claimed this was accomplished by spiritualistic power.

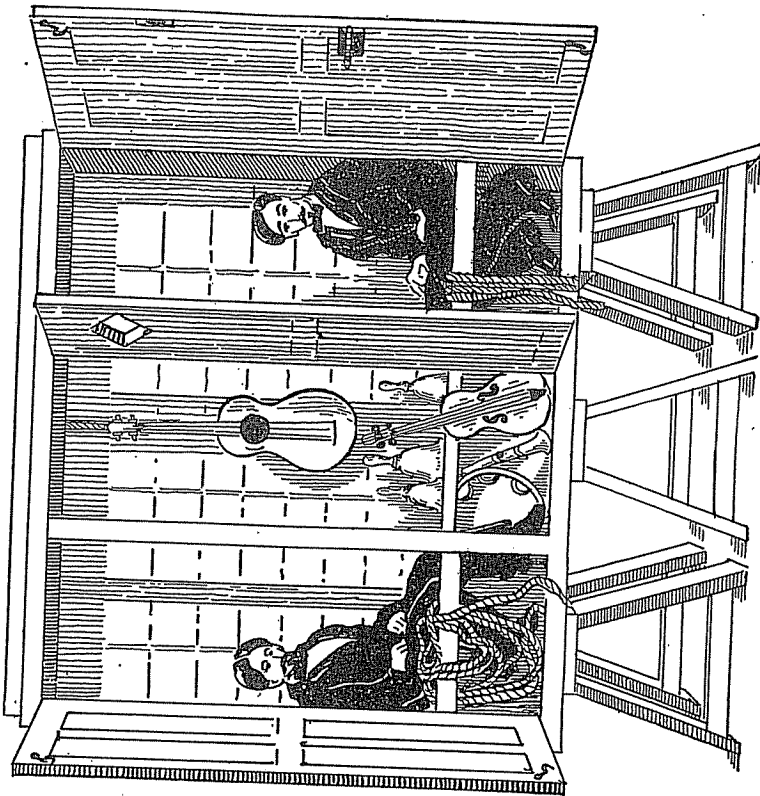


Fig. 59

Next, the Davenport Brothers went into the cabinet, this time taking the ropes with them, and the doors were then closed. When they made a signal the doors were opened by the committee and, lo and behold, they were again tied as securely as they were in the beginning. The committee

was then asked to seal the knots so that if they were tampered with it could easily be noticed. The doors were again closed and almost instantly hands were thrust out of the aperture; bells began to ring; music played; and it became a regular pandemonium; rapping noises were heard on the ceiling and sides of the cabinet. Then there was a pause in which not a sound was heard. Next, a bare arm came through the aperture in the center door ringing a bell. At a signal the committee was called to open the doors, and to the profound bewilderment of the audience, the mediums were found securely tied and the seals intact.

EXPOSE. The rope used by the Davenports, which is, in fact, the most suitable rope for all rope-tying tricks, was a soft cotton rope. This is preferable because it is smooth and slips over another easily; it also has a tendency to "give." One of the things that made it so easy for the Davenport Brothers to accomplish these apparently impossible feats, and the thing that makes it possible for any performer to repeat them, is the fact that when an amateur comes upon the stage to tie up a performer or professionals, like the Davenport Brothers, it is no easy task to accomplish it in such a short time. It is almost impossible to securely tie any one in the time allowed. Again, when a person comes upon the stage, he becomes frustrated and nervous; he does not know how to proceed, and is very apt to do just about as the performer wants him to do. If the performer finds himself getting into a dangerous hole or a difficult position, he simply lets out a groan, and the committee out of courtesy eases up a little bit and changes the tie. Just this little easing up means inches to the performer when he begins to release himself. In addition to this a muscular man, such as either of the Davenports, can set his muscles, so that when the rope is released it will give his hands more play. By persistent practice the muscles become hard when contracted and soft when released. Performers acquire the habit of pressing their thumbs in the palms of their hands, and by the suppleness of their wrist and fingers practically reduce the size of the hand, so that when released the hand is no larger than the wrist. Any amateur with comparatively little practice will see how simple it is to release himself from a cabinet when tied in this way.

The real secret and success of the Davenport Brothers' act depended upon the scientific knot which they made. There are really two adaptations of this knot. The first one is called the Slip Knot and the second the real Davenport Knot. (See Figs. 14 and 54.) They are both ingenious. These knots were used by the performers when they went into the cabinet after the rope had been examined by the committee or audience, and the doors

of the cabinet closed. But, they had concealed in their clothing a rope of the same length and same kind prepared and adjusted as will be described later. It was with these adjusted ropes that they were able to tie themselves almost instantly, of course, concealing the other rope in place of the one they had concealed in their clothing. The doors were then opened and the seals were placed on the knots. After an explanation of these knots, you will find that even though they were sealed it does not interfere with the slipping of the rope, sufficiently at least, to allow the performer to release his hands to perform the various manifestations, and to permit him to replace the ropes without interfering with the seals.

Another clever device that was used for fooling the audience was that of covering the hands with flour. This was done to convey the idea to the audience that the flour being on their hands when examined and being still there when they came out of the cabinet, meant that they could not have untied the rope themselves. Naturally, this truth was convincing, because the audience could not conceive how the Davenport could untie the rope without removing the flour from their hands. A very curious member of the committee one day placed a handful of snuff on the performer's hands when they were going into the cabinet and later on when they came out it was replaced with flour, which will be readily understood by the reader as meaning that the Davenports simply removed the flour from their hands and placing them into a secret pocket in their clothing covered them again with more flour before coming out of the cabinet.

An exposé of the Davenport Brothers was made by Herman the Great, who wrote the following for the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*: "The Davenports for thirteen years in Europe and America augmented the faith in Spiritualism, but unfortunately for them they came to Ithaca, N. Y., where Cornell University is situated. The students, having a scientific trend of mind, provided themselves before attending the performance with pyrotechnic balls containing phosphorus, so made as to ignite suddenly with a bright light. During the dark séance, when the Davenports were supposed to be bound hand and foot within the closet and when the guitars were apparently floating in the air, the students struck their lights; whereupon the spirits were found to be no other than the Davenports themselves, dodging about the stage brandishing guitars and playing tunes and waving at the same time tall poles, surmounted by phosphorescent spook pictures."

THE INGENIOUS SLIP KNOT. By careful study of the sketch (see Fig. 54), and with a piece of rope in your hand, you will be able to make this knot and see how easy it will be to release your wrists from the slip knots. The ends of the rope are slipped through the hole in the back of the seat where the performer sits in the cabinet. The wrists are slipped through the slip knots and the legs are tied with the ends of the rope in any manner desired.

Now all that is necessary to do is to lift up the feet; this will give a little slack at the ends of the rope, and they in turn will release the slip knots. No other explanation is necessary if you will take a piece of cotton rope and try the trick.

THE DAVENPORT KNOT. To make this knot, two cotton ropes about twelve feet long are all that is necessary. First, make an ordinary overhand knot (see Fig. 8), only, run two ends of the rope through the knot twice so it will increase the size of the knot and make it more difficult to untangle the secret.

The next move is to make two running knots. (See Fig. 14.) These two running knots should be close to the overhand rosette knot. The knotted end of the rope is laid on the seat of the chair, that is, if the performer is to do the trick on a chair, or is passed through the holes in the cabinet if the trick is to be performed in a cabinet. The rope is then passed down in back of the chair or back of the seat; the ends of the rope being passed around and around the legs in any complicated manner that would convince the committee that it was securely tied. When the performer seats himself on the chair or in the cabinet, he throws the knotted end from under him and puts his arms over the back of the chair; passes his left hand down through one rope and his right hand up through the other. He now turns his right hand until the palm is down and touching the left palm, which hangs down, thereby tightening the rope around the left wrist and causing a slack in the right. The wrists, naturally, appear to be bound securely. To release himself, all that the performer has to do is to reverse what he has just done; that is, to bring the right hand up again and so continue until the hands can be withdrawn instantly, just as they were when put into the rope. This requires patience and practice. When the hands are in the rope, by straining on the legs or pushing them out a little the rope is given slack. It looks to the audience as though it is physically impossible for the performer to release himself. The seals may be attached without any fear of breaking them, because the rope slips without interfering with the seal.

ANNA EVA FAY. Another of the famous spiritualistic mediums was the renowned Anna Eva Fay. She, like the Davenport Brothers, was an adept in the spirit tie. Although she never created the sensation the Davenport Brothers did, she became very famous in America. The trick we describe below, next to the Davenport tie, is probably as famous as any spirit-tying trick yet discovered.

For an explanation of the Anna Eva Fay performance, we are indebted to Henry Ridgely Evans. In his book, "The Spirit World Unmasked," Mr. Evans says: "In the center of the Fay cabinet, a plain curtained affair, is a post firmly screwed to the stage. The medium permits a committee of two from the audience to tie her to this post, and to seal the bandages about her wrists with court-plaster. They then seat her upon a small stool in front of the stanchion; the musical instruments are placed on her lap, and the curtains of the cabinet closed. Immediately, the evidences of spirit power begin; the bell is jingled, the tambourine thumped, and the sound of a horn heard, simultaneously.

"The Fay method of tying is designed especially to facilitate the medium's actions. Cotton bandages are used and members of the committee are invited to sew the knots through and through. Each wrist is tied with a bandage about an inch and a half wide by a half-yard in length; and the medium then clasps her hands behind her, so that her wrists are about six inches apart. The committee now proceeds to tie the ends of the bandages firmly together; and, after this is accomplished, the dangling pieces of the bandages are clipped off. It is true the medium is firmly bound by this process. It would be physically impossible for her to release herself without disturbing the sewing and the seals; but it is not intended for her to release herself at all, as the method pursued is altogether different from the old species of rope-tying. The medium being seated on a stool in front of the stanchion, facing the audience, and all being secure, the committee is requested to pass another bandage about the short ligature between the lady's wrists; to tie it in double square knots and to secure this firmly to a ring in the post of the cabinet. Her neck is likewise secured to the post by cotton bandages and her feet fastened together with a cord. The end of this cord passes out of the cabinet, and is held by one of the committee.

"The peculiar manner of holding the hands, described above, enables the medium to secure for her use between her hands a ligature of knotted cloth some six inches long. The central bandage, usually tied in four or five double knots, gives her about two inches play between the middle of the

cotton handcuffs and the ring in the post, to which it is secured. The ring is two and a half inches and the staple which holds it to the stanchion is a half-inch in diameter. The left hand of the medium gives six additional inches and allows the bandage on her wrist to slip readily along her slender arm nearly half-way to the elbow. 'All of which,' says John W. Truesdall, who was the first to expose Miss Fay's spirit pretensions, 'gives the spirits a clear leeway of not less than twenty inches from the stanchion.'

THE SECRET. "The moment the curtain is closed, the medium, under spirit influence, spreads her hands as far apart as possible; an act which stretches the knotted ligature so that the bandage about it will easily slip from the center to either wrist. Then throwing her lithe form by a quick movement to the left, so that her hips will pass the stanchion without moving her feet from the floor, the spirits are able, through the medium, to reach whatever may have been placed upon her lap."

There is probably no subject in the Magic Art which appeals to all audiences as much as feats in rope-tying. One reason for this immense amount of interest is, that certain of the world-famed Spiritualists have claimed that they possess some supernatural power, and by the aid of the spirits were able to perform certain impossible feats, such as escaping from secure knots and carrying on spiritualistic manifestations without, apparently, tampering with the knots in any way whatsoever.

It is not the object of this book to advocate devoting an entire evening's entertainment in magic to rope-tying tricks alone. This may be done if the performer so desires, and if the tricks are properly presented. They will hold the interest of the audience for the entire evening. We would recommend, if you are interested in other feats of magic, dividing the evening's entertainment between rope-tying tricks and such other tricks as, Gilbert's Coin Tricks, Card Tricks, Chemical Magic, Handkerchief Tricks, etc.

PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS. The first thing to bear in mind, if you want to be a successful entertainer in magic, is, to overcome self-consciousness, and to be absolutely sure of what you are going to do and how you are going about it. This, accomplished only by a reasonable amount of practice, will enable you to overcome fear in getting up and in performing before a crowd, whether it be a gathering of your family or a big audience.

As a teacher of magic once said, "You must develop your nerve."
DON'TS. Observance of the following suggestions will prove of the greatest benefit to you in giving your performance.