THE MECHANISM OF MAGIC.

SECRETS OF MANY WONDERS AND MYSTERIES.

MAGIC, STAGE ILLUSIONS AND SCIENTIFIC DIVERSIONS, INCLUDING TRICK PHOTOGRAPHY. Compiled and edited by Albert A. Hopkins. With an Introduction by Henry Ridgely Evans. With Four Hundred Illustrations. Octavo, pp. xii, 558. Munn & Co.

This book will doubtless be a boon to those persons whose enjoyment of an entertainment of magic is always impaired by their inability to understand how the tricks are done. Alexander Herrmann used to say: "You don't want to know how I do my tricks; as soon as you know how I do them they will interest you no more." Doubtless he was right as to some people, but he was wrong as to others. This book is largely for the others. Yet to suppose that it serves no other purpose than the gratification of such overcurious persons would be a grave injustice to the breadth of Mr. Hopkins's range of study. The book has no such slender purpose as the mere furnishing of a key to the tricks of a sleight-of-hand performer. A hasty glance through it gives the bewildering impression that it holds between its covers the explanation of everything that one ever wondered about. It touches upon the production of ghosts, the surprising possibilities of mirrors, spiritualism, second sight, jugglery, fire-eating, sword-swallowing, ventriloquism, shadowgraphy, puppet shows, ancient and modern; Greek temple machinery, modern stage mechanism, electrical effects, the cyclorama, fireworks, automatic chess-players, mechanical toys and trick photography. These are only a tiny fraction of the subjects, selected almost at random. In short, the aim seems to have been to describe and explain everything mechanically odd, curious or astonishing from the beginning of history to the present time and in all lands. With a design of this size in hand it was inevitable that much should be related which had been related before, and so it happens that The Tribune, not to speak of other publications, has from time to time printed accounts of the Metropolitan Opera House stage, the revolving stage of the Court Theatre of Munich, the mechanism of the fire dance, the double auditorium of the Pleasure Palace, in this city, and the stage devices of "Siegfried," all of which are found in this volume. But most of the book will be new to the most of its readers.

The lifting of veils begins on the first page, for the introduction, which is by no means the least interesting part of the book, starts off with a reference to the rods which were cast down before Pharaoh and became serpents. The magician Robert Heller declared that he had seen this feat many times. The rods, he said, were serpents to begin with, and were hypnotized into the stiffened semblance of rods. They were then cast upon the ground and recalled to life and the power of squirming.

No doubt the most famous tricks of the modern world of magic are the East Indian "basket trick" and "mango trick." There are several ways of doing the basket trick, and Mr. Hopkins describes one of them, crediting the explanation to the famous magician Houdin, who studied the trick and did it himself. The experiment is too familiar to need extended description of its appearance to the spectators. A child is placed in a basket of just the size and shape to hold him and the basket is closed. The magician runs a sword through the basket and draws it out bloody. He opens the basket, and it is found to be empty, while the child reappears at a little distance in the crowd. It is not easy to make this trick perfectly clear without a diagram, but perhaps a notion of the principle of it can be conveyed. One side of the basket is double. After closing the basket the magician pretends to turn it over on its side. He really turns over only a part of it. The bottom and one thickness of the double side are left as they were, the other thickness becomes the bottom of the basket in its new position, what was the opposite side of this becomes the top, and the old bottom is left lying free upon the ground, with the child upon it, outside the basket. But this old bottom and the child upon it are now under the robe of the magician. While the magician is turning the basket back to its original position and running his sword through it the child escapes into the crowd. The blood on the sword is from a sponge in the basket.

A favorite trick of one of the best American magicians, given at nearly all his performances, is the growing of a rose bush in a flower pot from an alleged seed. On the stage are two stands, with a flower pot on each. The pots are shown to be filled with sand. The magician exhibits a tall paper cone, open at both ends. He holds this for an instant over one of the pots and then removes it and shows that there is a green sprout in the sand. He puts the cone over the second pot, keeps it there a little longer, and then removes it, disclosing a bush abnormally full of roses. He places it again over the first pot and obtains a rosebush there also. The roses are cut off and distributed to the audience. The stands have long draperies, but they are cut away behind, where the audience cannot see, and there is a shelf attached to each stand some distance down. On each of these shelves is another cone containing a rosebush. The rosebush is a stem with roses tied to it, the stem itself being fixed to a circular lead base, made to fit into the top of one of the pots. When the magician covers the first pot with his empty cone he deftly drops through it a little piece of metal, painted green, and a moment later he shows this as the sprout. But as he removes the cone he slips it down behind the draped stand and over one of the other cones containing a rosebush. The bush is held inside its own cone by a string and a little hook, which hooks over the top edge. The magician picks up the two cones, one inside the other and the bush inside both, and places the whole over the second pot. He disengages the hook, lifts the cone off and discloses the bush in the pot. Again he brings the cones down behind the stand and over the third cone. He picks this up in the same manner as the other, goes to the first stand again and propagates a second rosebush. On lifting the three cones from this he shows them to the audience again and they appear as one empty cone.

This is interesting, and a great relief to those who have long marvelled at the trick, but it is not the mango trick. The mango trick is the production of a mango from seed placed in the ground before the eyes of the spectator and in a few minutes, with no use of cones or covers. An American magician who visited India a year or so ago says that he saw this famous trick, but the nearest approach to an explanation that he could offer was that the mango was actually produced, the soil being taken from anthills and being remarkably fertile from being impregnated with formic acid. Perhaps Mr. Hopkins did not care to try to explain the mango trick till he could offer something easier to believe than that. At any rate, he makes no reference to it, unless there be an implied reference in his remark that the stories of Indian tricks in general should be taken with a good deal of salt.

A simple and pretty little trick that almost anybody might do is the changing of a glass full of ink into an aquarium. The glass of ink is exhibited to the audience, then a handkerchief is placed over it and immediately removed, showing a glass of water with fish in it. Of course the water and the fish are there at first. The ink is perfectly represented by a piece of black rubber cloth, laid against the inside of the glass. A bit of thread is fastened to the cloth and hangs over the side of the glass away from the audience, with a little cork at the end of it. When the magician places the handkerchief over the glass he takes hold of the cork and brings away cork, thread and all, hidden in the handkerchief, leaving the water and the fish disclosed.

Speaking of ink, the illusion which Herrmann called "black art" has long been one of the most popular. Probably a large proportion of the spectators understand the principle on which it depends. The principle is that when the light is shining in your eyes you cannot see black objects against a black ground. So the magician has his whole stage hung with black and various objects on it covered with black, and then he turns on all the light in the house straight into the eyes of the audience. He can be seen, because he is dressed in white, and when any object is to be made to appear out of nothing the black cover is removed from it, and when it is to disappear the black cover is placed over it again. But to a good many spectators who understood all this it will still be news that there is an assistant on the stage all the time, perfectly invisible to the audience, because he is entirely covered with black.

Everybody has seen the exhibitions of so-called "second sight," which consist of a person sitting blindfolded on the stage and describing more or less closely things offered by persons in the audience for the purpose. And pretty nearly every one knows that the question asked by the magician among the audience conveys to the assistant on the stage what the answer must be. "What is this?" means one thing, and "Tell me what this is" means another, and so on. The game is to show how well it can be done. Yet those who remember Heller, the greatest magician, doubtless, ever seen in this country, shake their heads over this feat and say that when Heller did it he often asked the same question and got quite different answers, while often he asked no question at all and got complete answers. All this is explained in the article on "Mental Magic," contributed by Mr. Evans, the writer of the introduction. He quotes largely from an article in "The London Times," published after the death of Heller, by Fred Hunt, jr., who was his assistant for many years. Heller did ask the same question as the signal for different answers, but he asked a different question, too. He had eleven signals, numbered from 0 to 10, the signal being the first word of the sentence spoken, thus:

1 is Say or Speak.	7 is Please or Pray.
2 is Be, Look or Let.	8 is Are or Ain't.
3 is Can or Can't.	9 is Now.
4 is Do or Don't.	10 is Tell.
5 is Will or Won't.	0 is Hurry or Come.
6 is What.	

And then he had nineteen groups of articles which were likely to be offered to him by the audience. There were ten articles in each group. The first question which he asked told his sister, who sat on the stage, what group the article belonged to, and then he asked a second question to tell her what number it was in the group. For illustration, this was the seventh group.

1. Book.	6. Pamphlet.
2. Pocketbook.	7. Programme.
3. Needlebook.	8. Bill.
4. Paper.	9. Letter.
5. Newspaper.	10. Envelope.

Suppose that the article offered was a letter. Heller first asked "Do you know what this is?" That question told Miss Heller that the article belonged to the seventh group. Then he would say, according to the table of numbers: "Tell me what it is," or something else beginning with "Tell," and Miss Heller would then know that it was No. 9 in the seventh group. Numbers on watches or banknotes were read by the same table of numbers. There was a complete alphabet of questions, and there were numbered groups of colors, materials, countries, fabrics, etc. There was, besides, an electric telegraph system between a confederate in the audience and Miss Heller, and this accounted for her giving answers when no questions were asked. Once in Boston Miss Heller reeled off the following information about a coin that was shown to her brother by a person in the audience: "It is a large copper coin—a coin of Africa, I think. Yes, it is of Tripoli. The inscriptions on it are in Arabic; one side reads 'Coined at Tripoli,' the other side 'Sultan of two lands, Sultan of two seas, Sultan by inheritance, and the son of a Sultan.' The date is 1220 of the Hegira, or Mahometan year, which corresponds to 1805 of the Christian Era."

It is one thing to understand magic and it is quite another to practise it. The latter takes years of training, but a little of the former is useful to preserve faith in the constant operation of the laws of nature and unfaltering disbelief in the existence of anything extra-natural.

A STUBBORN FIRE DOWNTOWN.

IT WORKED ITS WAY UP AND DOWN AND DID CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE—POLICEMAN TAKEN FOR A BURGLAR.

A stubborn fire broke out at No. 313 Washington-st., early yesterday morning, and before it was put out it had damaged the building to the extent of $22,000. The cause of the fire is unknown. Smoke and flames were seen in the place when the stores in the street were being opened for the day. At first the blaze seemed to be confined to the second floor, which is occupied by the Eureka Fruit Cleaning Company, but by the time of the arrival of the firemen the flames had reached the ground floor, occupied by Lloyd J. Seaman, dealer in butter and eggs, and the fire was making headway in the upper stories. After two hours of hard fighting, the firemen put out the flames. Seaman's loss was about $2,000, that of the fruit company $15,000, and the stock of the commission store of Knight & Gouloch, adjoining, was damaged several thousand dollars by water. Many cellars of adjoining buildings were flooded by water.

While on the way to the fire, John J. Tobin, a fireman of Engine Company No. 27, had his shoulder dislocated by being thrown from a hosecart.

A fire occurred early yesterday on the first floor of No. 352 Canal-st., but was put out after it had done $200 damage. On the top floor slept an old watchman, who imagined burglars were trying to beat his bed-room door in when a policeman tried to awaken him, but he learned in time that the building was on fire and got to the street by means of a fire-escape.

COMPANY DRILLS TO BE RESUMED.

COLONEL APPLETON ISSUES AN ORDER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SEVENTH REGIMENT.

Colonel Appleton has issued an order to the members of the 7th Regiment, in which notice is given that company drills will be resumed on October 1, and will continue until April 1, 1898. He says:

The varied character of the work of the regiment during the last year furnished an opportunity to test the drill, discipline and general efficiency of the regiment, and the excellent and satisfactory results shown assure the commanding officer that the methods pursued during the last drill season are the most desirable by which to attain success, and he would therefore merely remind the captains that the average number of company drills during the season is but twenty-one, and that, in order to keep up a high standard of excellence, they must give strict attention to the school of the soldier and company, omitting no details, but give careful instruction in the duties of sentinels and in the extended order, laying great stress on prompt obedience to orders, steadiness in ranks and soldierly deportment on all occasions. The commanding officer again enjoins upon the captains the necessity of careful personal supervision of their recruits, and expects no man to be transferred to the ranks until the captain is satisfied that he is a qualified soldier.

It is with great pleasure that the commanding officer congratulates the regiment upon its brilliant work with the rifle at Creedmoor during the last season. The record of the regiment, as a whole, he believes, has never been equalled by any volunteer organization, particularly the firing in ranks; and he also desires to express his appreciation of the guard duty performed at camp, which, together with the excellent policing of the camp, as shown at the daily inspection by the good condition and cleanliness of the company streets, indicate careful instruction and attest to the zeal and pride of the enlisted men.

In regard to the advance made by the regiment since its reorganization in 1847, Colonel Appleton says:

On July 27, 1847, the number of this regiment was changed from 27 to 7, and at the inspection of the regiment, of eight companies and one troop, 370 officers and men answered to their names. Since that time the regiment has steadily progressed, and now numbers at annual inspection over one thousand officers and men, and during this period of fifty years there has been no backward step, nor has anything occurred to reflect upon the reputation of the organization as a military body.

The retirement is noticed of Captain James B. Dewson, First Lieutenant Arthur E. White and Second Lieutenant John J. White, jr.

Of Captain Dewson the order says:

Captain Dewson was for twenty-five years a member of the Board of Officers, and his counsel aided much in directing successfully the affairs of the regiment. His stalwart, soldierly figure will be missed from the head of the Seventh Company, for whose prosperity he was ever vigilant. He was endeared to the officers and members of the regiment by his stanch comradeship and by his upright and loyal character, and his retirement will be regretted by all who had the privilege of serving with him.

INJURED BY A BLAST IN FOURTH-AVE.

THE FOREMAN NEGLECTED TO WARN SOME MEN AND ONE WAS CAUGHT.

An explosion, caused by blasting for the Fourth-ave. underground trolley line, caused serious injury to one man yesterday, and several others narrowly escaped. The explosion occurred at Seventeenth-st. and Fourth-ave. A temporary bridge has been erected there for the crosstown cars, and the foreman in charge of the blasting operations forgot to warn some men who were shunting cars over the bridge. The explosion occurred just as the men were in the middle of the bridge. One of the flying rocks struck Joseph Brositer, aged forty-seven, of No. 64 Bayard-st., and fractured his right leg, and a smaller missile struck him on the head and inflicted a severe scalp wound. He was the only man hurt. The others, although badly shaken up, and covered from head to foot with dirt, escaped injury. Brositer was taken to the New-York Hospital in an ambulance. James Flynn, of 1,162 Second-ave. the foreman, was arrested, but was released on bail.

NEW BRIDGE CONTRACTS AWARDED.

The New East River Bridge Commission, at a meeting yesterday, announced that the contract for the construction of the New-York anchorage had been awarded to Shanley & Ryan, of No. 166 West One-hundred-and-twenty-second-st., New-York, the lowest bidders, for $750,770; and for the Brooklyn anchorage to the Degnan-McClain Construction Company, of No. 1 Broadway, New-York, for $723,578. The lowest bidder on the latter contract was J. J. O'Brien, who bid $689,319, but the contract was awarded to the Degnan-McClain Company on account of the prompt work they have been doing on the construction of the tower foundations. The difference in bids was $34,000.

At the meeting yesterday, the engineer, Mr. Buck, reported that the Brooklyn pier at South Sixth-st. was half done, and that work on other caissons was being completed with equal rapidity.

OPPONENTS OF THE UNDERGROUND PLAN.

The Supreme Court's Rapid Transit Inquiry Commission yesterday continued its investigation and heard opponents of the Rapid Transit Commission's underground railway plan. Those who spoke against the scheme were Lawson N. Fuller, T. L. De Vinne and William H. Morrill.

The hearing will go on Monday next.

A RECEIVER ASKED FOR A TOWN.

Chattanooga, Tenn., Sept. 29.—A number of residents and property-owners made application in the Chancery Court here to-day for a receiver for the town of Lookout Mountain. The applicants charge insolvency, mismanagement and fraud on the part of the officials. No election for town officers has been held in eight years.

A NEGRO MADE DEAN OF A LAW SCHOOL.

Atlanta, Ga., Sept. 29 (Special).—Charles H. J. Taylor, the negro who was Register of Deeds at Washington under President Cleveland, has been chosen dean of the Law School of Morris Brown College. He arrived here from Washington yesterday, and a reception was given to him at Big Bethel Church last night. Nearly all the prominent negroes of the city were present, and speech-making and music were the order of the evening. Mr. Taylor will resume his law practice in Atlanta. "I will have sole supervision of the law department of Morris Brown," he said. "I am arranging a course of lectures to be delivered by prominent local lawyers and will add many new features to the curriculum of the school. My prime object is to create a friendly feeling between the two races and to educate my people up to a proper standard and make them feel their position among the men of the day."

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Law Schools.

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ACADEMY MOUNT ST. URSULA, BEDFORD PARK, N. Y., on the Harlem Railroad, near St. John's College, Fordham, opposite Bronx Park. This new boarding and day school for young ladies and little girls, in charge of the Ursulines, is equipped with all modern improvements. The surroundings are healthy and attractive. The scholastic year begins on the second Wednesday in September. For terms address the Mother Superior. N. B.—A special class for young ladies who wish to prepare themselves for teaching in primary or grammar schools in the State of New-York will be opened in September.

ANNIE BROWN'S Boarding and Day School for Girls. 711, 713, 715, 717 FIFTH AVENUE. Primary, preparatory, academic and MUSICAL departments. Preparation for college. Special courses. Reopens October 1. Mrs. Frances Fisher Wood, Resident Principal.

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MISS M. D. HUGER, 137 FIFTH AVENUE. Boarding and Day School for Girls.

MISS M. ROCHOW'S SELECT SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN, 228 230 West 45th-st. (formerly 870 9th-ave.). Reopens Monday, Oct. 4.

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BERKELEY SCHOOL, 18 TO 24 WEST 44TH STREET. New pupils will present themselves Monday, Sept. 27th; regular work will begin Sept. 28th. Competitive examination for vacant Berkeley scholarship $300—open to sons of teachers, clergymen, and army and navy officers—September 28th. Two vacancies for boarders, and two in out of course class for rapid work. The Headmaster will be at the school building daily after September 15th.

BARNARD SCHOOL (FOR BOYS), 117 and 119 West 125th-st., N. Y. C.—Reopens Sept. 23. Twelfth Year. College Preparatory, Intermediate and Primary Departments. Limited number of boarding pupils. Catalogue. WM. L. HAZEN, A. B., LL. B., Head Master.

124TH YEAR. COLUMBIA GRAMMAR SCHOOL, 34 AND 36 EAST 51ST ST. REOPENS TUESDAY, SEPT. 28TH. Boys are prepared for all Departments of Columbia, Princeton, Yale and Harvard, for Law and Medical Schools and Business. Primary Department, Gymnasium. The Headmaster will confer with parents on and after Tuesday, Sept. 14, at the School. Catalogues on application. B. H. CAMPBELL, A. M., Headmaster.

CHAPIN COLLEGIATE SCHOOL. English, Classical and Primary Dept's, Gymnasium. HENRY BARTON CHAPIN, D. D., Ph. D., Principal. 78th year opens Sept. 22. 721 Madison Ave. (64th St.)

COLUMBIA INSTITUTE. Reopens at 270 West 72d-st., cor. West End-ave., on Wednesday, Sept. 29. Thorough collegiate preparation. Intermediate and primary departments. Optional military drill, gymnasium, hot lunches and playground. EDWIN FOWLER, A. B., M. D., Principal.

COLLEGE PREPARATION; Regents' examinations; backward pupils a specialty; lessons private or in class, 50c.; languages, classics, mathematics. PROF. CHASE, 157 West 49th Street.

COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE OF DR. J. SACHS. SCHOOL FOR BOYS, 28 WEST 55TH-ST., REOPENS WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 22, 1897. THOROUGH PREPARATION FOR ALL COLLEGES. SPECIAL COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT.

COLLEGIATE SCHOOL. Founded 1633. Boys prepared for College, Scientific School and for business. Primary department. Well-equipped gymnasium. Reopens September 28. L. C. Mygatt, L. H. D., Head Master. 241 243 WEST SEVENTY-SEVENTH STREET.

DR. E. D. LYON'S SCHOOL, 576 Fifth Avenue, will open Sept. 20th. Thorough preparation for the best colleges and scientific schools or for business. Number limited to 25. Primary department.

DR. CALLISEN'S SCHOOL, 132 WEST 71ST STREET. A select school for a limited number of boys. Primary department. 30th year begins October 4th.

DRISLER SCHOOL, 9 EAST 40TH-ST. FRANK DRISLER, A. M., Principal. A select school for a limited number of pupils. Students prepared for all colleges. Circulars on application. Reopens Sept. 20.

FRANCIS B. ALLEN'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS. REOPENS SEPT. 20. Catalogue on request. 315 Madison-ave.

HALSEY COLLEGIATE SCHOOL, 24 W. 40th. St. PRESCOTT B. VAIL, A. M., PH. D., Principal. Thirty-third year begins Sept. 27th.

HAMILTON INSTITUTE, 45 WEST 81ST ST., MANHATTAN SQUARE, N. Y. Thorough preparation for college and business. New building. Chemical and physical laboratory. Reading-room. Gymnasium. Shower baths. Limited classes in Primary and Junior Departments. Illustrated catalogue. Reopens Sept. 30. N. ARCHIBALD SHAW, JR., Prin.

IRVING SCHOOL.—L. D. RAY.— 54 WEST 84TH ST., will resume work September 30th. A thorough school for boys from eight to eighteen. Sanitary building, with modern equipment. Dr. Ray can now be seen daily from 9 to 12.

J. H. MORSE'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS, 423 MADISON AVENUE, N. Y., Will reopen Sept. 29. Careful training for boys from eight to eighteen. The principal at home after September 16.

MISS CARRIER'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS, 52 East 57th st. Reopens Oct. 4th. Manual training. Afternoon Outing Class.

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THE CUTLER SCHOOL, 20 East 50th Street. This School Reopens Monday, October 4th. Mr. Cutler or the Registrar will be at the School House after September 14th. From nine till one.

THE WILSON & KELLOGG SCHOOL, No. 622 Fifth-ave. (near 50th St.). Prepares for the leading Universities, Science Schools, Business. Graduates at present in Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Princeton, Williams, Dartmouth, School of Mines, Sheffield Scientific, Princeton Scientific. Instruction break, exact correct. Gymnasium, Athletic Field, Laboratory, Art Room, Hot Lunch. Certificates of Character required. 21st year begins Sept. 20. Departments: Preparatory, $100 to $150; Junior, $200; Middle, $250; Senior, $300.

THE BOVEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR BOYS.—Will reopen Oct. 4. No. 4 East 40th-st. Manual training under the personal instruction of Mr. Pierce, of Pratt Institute.

THE OXFORD SCHOOL, 177 WEST 79TH STREET. WILL REOPEN ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 4TH. Mr. Prosor will be at the office daily after September 13th from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M.

MISS KETCHUM'S CLASS FOR YOUNG BOYS. 331 Madison Avenue. Re-opens Oct. 11th. Principals at class rooms from 9 to 5 P. M., Saturdays excepted.

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