

THE  
**MAGIC BOOK;**

OR THE

WHOLE ART OF

**LEDGERDEMAIN!**

CONTAINING

INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO PERFORM TRICKS

WITH

**Dice, Cards, Cups, Balls, &c.**

BY THE

**Great Magician.**

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GLASGOW.

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1851

MILITARY INDIAN  
CLASSIC

SELECT INSTRUCTIONS

OF THE

REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY

AND

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# MAGIC BOOK.

*How to cut a Man's Head off, and put the Head into a plate a yard from his Body.*

THIS is a noble action if it be handled by a skilful hand. To show this feat of execution you must cause a board, a cloth, and a plate to be purposely made, and in each of them to be made holes fit for a body's neck: the board must be made of two planks, the longer and broader the better; there must be left within half a yard of the end of each plank, half a hole, so as both the planks being thrust together, there may remain two holes like the holes in a pair of stocks; there must be made likewise a hole in the cloth, a plate also must be set directly over or upon one of them, having a hole in the middle thereof, of the like quantity, and also a piece cut off the same as big as his neck, through which his head may

be conveyed into the middle of the plate, and then sitting or kneeling under the board, let the head only remain upon the board, in the frame, then to make the sight more dreadful, put a little brimstone into a chafing-dish of coals, setting it before the head of the boy, who must gasp two or three times so as the smoke may enter his nostrils and mouth, which is not unwholesome, and the head presently will appear stark dead, if the boy set his countenance accordingly; and if a little blood be sprinkled on his face the sight will be stranger. This is commonly with a boy instructed for that purpose, who being familiar and conversant with company, may be known as well by his face as by his apparel. In the other end of the table, where the like hole is made, another boy of the bigness of the known boy must be placed, having on his usual apparel: he must lean or lie upon the board, and must put his head under the board, through the side hole, so as the body shall seem to lie on the end of the board, and his head lie in a plate on the other end. There are other things which might be performed in this action, the more to astonish the beholders, which, because they require long descriptions, I omit; as to put about his neck a little dough kneaded with bullock's blood, which, being cold, will appear like dead flesh, and being

pricked with a sharp round hollow quill will bleed and seem very strange; and many rules are to be observed herein, as to have the tablecloth so long and so wide as it may almost reach the ground.—Note, suffer not the company to stay too long in the place.

*Dancing Egg.*

Three eggs are brought out, two of them are put on a table, and the third in a hat: a little cane is borrowed from one of the company, and it is shown about to convince the spectators that there is no preparation. It is then placed across the hat, the hat falls to the ground and the egg sticks to it as if glued, the orchestra then plays a piece of music, and the egg, as if it was sensible of the harmony, twists about the cane from one end to the other, and continues its motion till the music stops.

EXPLANATION.

The egg is fastened to a thread by a pin, which is put in lengthways, and the hole, which has been made to introduce the pin, is stopped with white wax. The other end of the thread is fastened to the breast of the

person who performs the trick, with a pin bent like a hook—the cane passing under the thread near to the egg serves for it to rest on—when the music begins, the performer pushes the cane from left to right, or from right to left; it then appears as if the egg ran along the cane, which it does not, being fastened to its thread, its centre of gravity remains always at the same distance from the hook that holds it; it is the cane which sliding along presents its different points to the surface of the egg.—N.B. To produce the illusion, and persuade the company that it is the egg which carries itself toward the different points of the cane, the performer turns a little on his heel, by this means the egg receives a motion which deceives the spectators, it remaining always at the same distance from the point to which it is fastened.

### *The Fascinated Bird.*

Take any bird, and lay it on a table; then wave a small feather over its eyes, and it will appear as dead, but taking the feather away, it will revive again. Let it lay hold of the stem part of the feather, and it will twist and turn like a parrot; you may likewise roll it about, on the table just as you please.

### *Enchanted Cock.*

Bring a cock into a room, with both your hands close to his wings, and hold them tight; put him on a table, and point his beak down as straight as possible; then let any one draw a line, with a piece of chalk, directly from its beak, and all the noise you can possibly make will not disturb him, for some time, from the seeming lethargy, which that position you have laid him in has effected.

### *To make a Sixpence leap out of a pot.*

This is done by means of a long horse-hair, fastened to the rim of a sixpence, by a small hole driven through it. This feat should be done by night, with a candle placed between the spectators and operator, their eyes being thereby hindered from discerning the deception.

### *Dancing Egg.*

Boil an egg hard, and peel of a small piece of the shell at one end; then thrust in a quill filled with quicksilver, and sealed at each end. As long as the egg remains warm, it will not cease to dance about.

*The Card burnt, and afterwards found in a Watch.*

One of the company draws a chance card, and you ask for three watches from the spectators, which you fold up in separate pieces of paper in the form of dice boxes, which are laid on the table, and covered with a napkin — the card chosen is burnt, and the cinders put into a box — shortly after the box is opened, the ashes are not there. The three watches are put on a plate, and some one of the company chooses one, the same person opens the watch, and finds under the glass a piece of the burnt card: and in the watch-case, under the watch, is found a miniature card, resembling the one burnt.

**EXPLANATION.**

The card chosen is known by the arrangement we have explained. The watches are placed, well covered with paper, on a little trap: the trap is described in the cutting, tearing, and mending a handkerchief. When you have made known to the confederate the card which is chosen, he stretches his arm to the table to take one of the watches, and deposit there what is requisite; the watches must be covered with a napkin, which is supported



by bottles, or somewhat else, otherwise they hand of the confederate would be seen, or the napkin would be seen to move. As for the means employed to cause the ashes of the burnt card to disappear in the box, it consists in putting into the cover a piece of wood or paper which exactly fits it, and falls down to the bottom when the box is shut; this piece of wood or paper being of the same colour as the inside of the box, operates as a double bottom, and hides the ashes from the view of the deceived spectator, who at that minute is tempted to believe that the ashes are gone out to be combined afresh, and to produce the miniature card which is found in the watch.

*Magic Spoon.*

Put four ounces of bismuth into a crucible, and when in a state of complete fusion, throw in two ounces and a half of lead, and one ounce and a half of tin; these metals will combine, and form an alloy fusible in boiling water. Mould the alloy into bars, and take them to a silversmith to be made into tea-spoons. Place one of them in a saucer, at a tea-table, and the person who uses it will not be a little astonished to find it melt away as soon as he puts it into the hot tea.

*The Paper Oracle.*

Some amusement may be obtained among young people, by writing with common ink, a variety of questions, on different bits of paper, and adding a pertinent reply to each, written with nitro-muriat of gold. The collection is suffered to dry, and put aside till an opportunity offers for using them. When produced, the answers will be invisible; you desire different persons to select such questions, as they may fancy, and take them home with them; you then promise, that if they are placed near the fire during the night, answers will appear beneath the questions in the morning; and such will be fact, if the papers be put in any dry, warm situation.

*The Cut Lace joined.*

Conceal a piece of lace in your hand; then produce another piece of the same pattern; double the latter, and put the fold between your fore-finger and thumb, with the piece which you have concealed, doubled in the same manner; pull out a little of the latter, so as to make a loop, and desire one of the company to cut it asunder. If you have conveyed the concealed piece of lace,

so dexterously as to be undetected, with the other between your thumb and fore-finger, the spectators will, naturally enough, think you have really cut the latter; which you may seem to make whole again, while repeating some conjuring words, and putting away the two ends of the piece that is actually cut.

*How to suspend a Ring with a burnt thread.*

The thread having been previously soaked two, or three times in common salt and water, tie it to a ring not larger than a wedding-ring. When you apply the flame of a candle to it, though the thread burn to ashes, it will yet sustain the ring.

*A whimsical trick.*

Take salt-petre an ounce, cream of Tartar an ounce, sulphur half an ounce; beat them to powder singly, then mix them together, and put the powder in a paper in your pocket, you may then at any time you please, convey a grain into a pipe of tobacco, and when it takes fire it will give the report of a musket, but not break the pipe; or you may put as much as will lay upon your nail in any place, upon

little bits of paper, and setting fire to it, there will be the report of so many great guns, but it will not produce any bad effect.

*To tell a card thought of Blindfold.*

Take twenty-one cards, and lay them down in three rows, with their faces upward; (i.e.) when you have laid out three, begin again at the left hand, and lay one card upon the first, and so on to the right hand; then begin on the left hand again, and so go on until you have laid out the twenty-one cards in three heaps at the same time requesting any one to think of a card. When you have laid them out ask him which heap his card is in: then lay that heap in the middle between the other two. This done, lay them out again in three heaps as before, and again request him to notice where his noted card goes, and put that heap in the middle as before. Then taking up the cards with their backs toward you, take off the uppermost card, and reckon it one; take off another, which reckon two; and thus proceed till you come to the eleventh, which will invariably prove to be the card thought of. You must never lay out your cards less than three times, but as often above that number as you please. This trick may be done with-

out your seeing the cards at all, if you handle and count them carefully. To diversify the trick, you may use a different number of cards, but the number chosen must be divisible by three, and the middle card, after they have been thrice dealt as directed, will always be the one thought of; for instance, if done with fifteen cards, it must be the eighth, and so on; when the number is even, it must be the exact half; as if it be wenty-four, the card thought of will be the twelfth, &c.

*To write any name upon a Paper, and then burn it to ashes, yet afterwards it may be read plainly.*

Take a new clean pen that was never writ with, and dip in your own water as you do ink, then strip up your shirt sleeve above your wrist, and upon your arm write your name, or any mark, and then let it dry on your skin, and nothing will be seen, then put down your sleeve and button your wrist; do this privately, and it will cause some wonder; then take a piece of white paper and write your name, or the mark thereon with another pen of black ink (but let it be written as like the other as you can) then take the paper and burn it, and lay the ashes on a table, and

stripping up your sleeve, rub the ashes hard with your finger, where you had written with your water, then blow off the ashes, and the name or mark will plainly be read on your arm in black letters.

*The Sentinel Egg.*

Lay a looking-glass upon an even table; take a fresh egg, and shake it for some time, so that the yolk may be broken and mixed up with the white. You may then, with a steady hand, balance it on its point, and make it stand on the glass. This it would be impossible to do while the egg was in its natural state.

*How to blow a Sixpence out of another Man's hand.*

Take a sixpence, blow on it, and clap it presently into one of your spectator's hands, bidding him to hold it fast: then ask of him if he be sure he have it; then to be certain he will open his hand and look. Then say to him, "Nay, but if you let my breath go off, I cannot do it." Then take it out of his hand again, and blow on it, and, staring him in

the face, clap a piece of horn in his hand, and retain the sixpence, shutting his hand yourself. Bid him hold his hand down, and slip the teaster between one of his cuffs. Then take the stone you show feats with, and hold it unto his hand, saying, "By virtue hereof I will command the money to vanish you hold in your hand; vade, now see." When they have looked, then they will think it is changed by virtue of your stone. Then take the horn again; and seem to cast it from you, retaining it, and say, "Vade!" and anon say, "you have your money again." He then will begin to marvel, and say, "I have not;" say then to him again, "you have, and I am sure you have it; Is it not in your hand? If it be not there, turn down one of your sleeves, for it is in one I am sure:" where he finding it, will not a little wonder.

### *Mysterious Bottle.*

Pierce a few holes, with a glazier's diamond, in a common black bottle; place it in a vase or a jug of water, so that the neck only is above the surface. Then, with a funnel, fill the bottle, and cork it well, while it is in the jug or vase. Take it out, and notwithstanding the holes in the bottom, it will not leak;

wipe it dry, and give it to some person to uncork. The moment the cork is drawn to the party's astonishment, the water will begin to run out of the bottom of the bottle.

### Money Box.

A piece of money, or a ring, is put into a box, in the presence of a person who holds it; the operator stands at a distance, and bids him shake the box gently, and the piece is heard to rattle inside; he is desired again to shake it, and then it is not heard to rattle; the third time it is again heard, but the fourth time it is gone, and is found in the shoe of one of the company.

The box must be made on purpose, in such a manner that in shaking it gently up and down, the piece within is heard; on the contrary, shaking it hard, horizontally, a little spring, which falls on the piece, prevents it from being heard, which makes you imagine it is not within. He who performs the trick, then touches the box, under pretence of showing how to shake it, and although it is locked, he easily gets out the piece by means of a secret opening, availing himself of that minute to put in a false piece, and to leave the box with the same person, whom he causes



to believe that the piece is or is not within, according to the manner the box is shaken; at length, the original piece is found in the shoe of one of the company, either by means of the person being in confederacy, and having a similar piece, or by sending another to slip it on the floor, in this last case, it is found on the floor, and the person fixed on is persuaded that it fell from his shoe, as he was taking it off.

### *Handkerchief Hearth.*

Cover the metal case of a watch with part of a handkerchief, single only; bring the ends to that side where the glass is, and hold the handkerchief by them there, so as to stretch it tightly over the metal. You may then place a red hot coal, or a piece of lighted paper, upon that part of the handkerchief which is so strained over the metal without burning it; the caloric merely passing through the handkerchief to fix in the metal.

### *Knotted thread.*

Considerable amusement, not unmixed with wonder, may be occasioned among a party of

ladies, by a clever performance of this trick. It is most frequently performed by a female, but the effect of it is considerably increased when it is displayed by a boy. A piece of calico, muslin, or linen, is taken in the left hand, a needle is threaded in the presence of the spectators, and the usual, or even a double or treble knot made at the extremity of one of the ends of it. The operator commences his work by drawing the needle and the thread in it quite through the linen, notwithstanding the knot, and continues to make several stiches in like manner successively.

The mode of performing this seeming wonder, is as follows; a bit of thread, about a quarter of a yard long, is turned once round the top of the middle finger of the right hand, upon which a thimble is then placed to keep it secure. This must be done privately, and the thread kept concealed, while the needle is threaded with a bit of thread of a similar length. The thread in the needle must have one of its ends drawn up nearly close, and be concealed between the fore finger and thumb; the other should hang down nearly as long, and by the side of the thread which is fastened under the thimble, so that these two may appear to be the two ends of the thread. The end of the piece that is fastened under the thimble is then knotted, and the performer

begins to sew, by moving his hand quickly after he has taken up the stitch. It will appear as though he actually passed the knotted thread through the cloth.

*How to break a Staff upon two Glasses of Water.*

Place the Glasses (being full of Water) upon two joint stools, or such like, equidistant from the ground, and distant one from another the length of the staff; then place the end of the staff upon the edges of the two glasses, so that they be sharp; this done, with all the force you can, with another staff, strike the staff which lies on the glasses in the midst, and it will break without breaking the glasses, or spilling the water.

*To shuffle Cards in such a Manner as always to keep one certain Card at the Bottom.*

A person with a hard hand and stiff joints should never think of playing deception with the cards, as clumsy fingers will not do. In showing tricks with cards, the principal point consists in shuffling them nimbly, and yet keeping one certain card either at the bottom

or in some known place of the pack, four or five cards from the bottom; for by this you may seem to work wonders; since it is easy for you to see, or take notice of a card; which, though you are perceived to do, it will not be suspected if you shuffle them well together afterwards, by the method here to be taught, which is this: in shuffling, let the bottom card be always kept a little before, or, which is best, a little behind all the rest of the cards; put it a little beyond the rest before, right over your fore finger, or else, which is the best, a little behind the rest, so as the little finger of the left hand may slip up, and meet with it at first; shuffle as thick as you can, and at last throw upon the board the bottom card, with as many more as you would preserve for any purpose, a little before or a little behind the rest; and be sure to let your fore finger, (if the pack be laid before) or your little finger, (if the pack be laid behind) always creep up to meet with the bottom card, and when you feel it, you may there hold it, till you have shuffled over again, which being done, the card which was first at the bottom: will come there again; thus you may shuffle them before their faces, and yet leave your noted card at the bottom; you must try to be perfect in this mode of shuffling, and having once obtained it, you may do almost what

you please ; for whatever pack you make, though it is ten, twelve, or twenty cards, you may still keep it next the bottom, and shuffle them often to please the curious.

*To call for any Card in the Pack.*

This trick, which requires very little practice to perform, is done in the following manner. Having privately seen a card, put it at the bottom of the pack, then shuffle the cards till it comes to the bottom again, then put the cards behind you ; and say here I call for naming the bottom card which you have seen, and as you hold them behind you, turn the top card with the face upwards, then hold forth the cards, and as you hold them you may see what the next card is ; then put the cards behind you again, and take the top card, and put at the bottom, with its face downwards, and turn the next card with its face upwards, and whilst you are doing this, say, here I call for, naming the card, you saw last ; then hold forth the cards again, showing the bottom card which will be that you call for ; then put the cards behind you again and proceed in the same manner as you did before ; you may by this method go through them all, and call for all the cards in the pack,

to the admiration of the beholders, who will be surprised how you could find them out when you hold them behind you.

*How to lift a Bottle with a Straw.*

Take a straw, and having bent the thicker end of it in a sharp angle, put this curved end into the bottle, so that the bent part may rest against its side; you may then take the other end and lift up the bottle by it, without breaking the straw, and this will be the more readily accomplished as the angular part of the straw approaches nearer to that which comes out of the bottle. It is necessary, in order to succeed in this feat, to be particularly careful in choosing a stout straw, which is neither broken nor bruised; if it have been previously bent or damaged, it is unfit for the purpose of performing this trick, as it will be too weak in the part so bent, or damaged, to support the bottle.

*The Golden Head, which, leaping and dancing in a Glass, answers different Questions.*

To show that this head is not connected with any other object, you put some crown

pieces at the bottom of a glass, and a covering over all; this however does not prevent the head, which you affirm to be of solid gold, from dancing in the glass to answer by numbers, and yes or no, to questions proposed to it; at the same time, a bunch of rings, to another glass, at a little distance, as if by sympathy, performs the same motions. In the room of the first head, which is shown round to the company, you take a second from the table, where the experiment is to be performed. This second head is attached to a silken thread which passes through the partition into the hands of the confederate; this thread, instead of leaning on the brim of the glass, where the cover would prevent it from sliding, passes through a small well-polished nick to give it easy play and prevent it from breaking.—N. B. The crown pieces, which you put in the bottom of the glass, under pretext of preventing any communication between the golden head, and the machinery, which may be suspected to be hid in the table, are not useless, for they serve as ballast, and prevent the glass from yielding to the motion occasioned by drawing the thread.

*The Wonderful Dye.*

Dissolve indigo in diluted sulphuric acid, and add to it an equal quantity of solution of

carbonate of potass. If a piece of white cloth be dipped in this mixture it will be changed to blue; yellow cloth, in the same mixture, may be changed to green; red to purple; and blue litmus paper to be turned to red.

*To find the Points cast on two Dice.*

For this trick, cast both the dice, and then mark how many points appear at the top; then let him take up one of them (no matter which), and see what number is at the bottom, and add all together; then let him cast the dice again, and add the points cast to the former sum; let the dice stand, bring seven with you, and then add the points which appear at the top of the dice, and you will find so many were cast in the whole



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