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The Experiences of a Wizard.

(By CARL HERTZ.)

I became a conjurer chiefly because I was attracted by the art of deception from my earliest years. My parents had different views, and wished me to devote myself to business, with which intent they secured me a position in a store in San Francisco when I was about fifteen years of age. I devoted my time, however, in the store to playing weird tricks with umbrellas, hats, and various other goods that I had to show the customers, the cleverness of which did not at all appeal to my employers. At last the climax came one day when a lady came to try on a bonnet. She liked it well enough, but when she removed it from her head and found that it contained two kittens she gave vent to a scream and left the establishment—and so did I an hour later. I have been practising the art of deception ever since, professionally.

MY FIRST APPEARANCE.

I made my first appearance in London some years later with a trick that obtained immense popularity. I allude to the "canary trick," in which my assistant holds a cage containing a live canary. I throw a cloth over the cage for an instant, and when I remove it the bird has disappeared. Sometimes I make the cage vanish also. I performed this trick at Mr. Alfred de Rothschild's house when the King, then Prince of Wales, was present; there were also a number of well-known people among the audience. I remember one gentleman who held the cage on that occasion asked me afterwards if it really was a trick. "I don't mind a trick," he said, "but this looks like magic, and I don't like that." I assured him, however, that it was a pure and simple piece of deception, and that it had taken me close on five years to learn how to do it.

VICTIMISING "THE CLOTH."

In private life I have performed some of my tricks under rather amusing circumstances. I remember at one time I was staying at a hotel in Manchester when a clergyman was also a visitor. One morning, in the smoking-room, the reverend gentleman was present, and was declaiming against the evils of gambling. "Well," I remarked, "I dare say all you say is true enough, but may I ask why you carry two packs of cards in your pockets?" He at once declared that he never did such a thing, and that I was talking nonsense, but I insisted that he had two packs of cards in his pockets, and asked him to take them out. I shall never forget the look of astonishment in the poor clergyman's face when he put his hand into his tailcoat pocket and produced two packs of cards, and the shout of laughter that greeted their production. When it subsided I confessed that I had played a little trick on the clergyman, which accounted for the presence of the cards, but I am afraid there were some present who were inclined to think that the reverend gentleman was not all he pretended to be.

A BOGUS PRIEST

Talking of clergymen reminds me of a bogus one whom I met once, and whom, by the aid of a card trick, I was able to expose as a cheat and a swindler. This happened after I had finished a long tour in the East, and was returning from China to pay a visit to my native town of San Francisco. On the steamer was a Roman Catholic priest, but somehow he did not seem to me to be quite the genuine article. He was asked one night to take a hand in a game of poker, and after declaring that he rarely played cards, and that he understood nothing about them, consented to join the game. He held extraordinarily good cards throughout the evening, and won a good deal of money. The same thing happened the next night, and by then I had quite made up my mind that he was cheating, and determined to give him a lesson that he would remember.

AND HIS EXPOSURE.

I considered a little plan I had made up to some of the passengers, among whom I remember was Lord Ranfurly, and with their connivance I carried it out most successfully. I took a hand that night, and dealt the priest the four kings, to another player I dealt four queens, and to myself I dealt four aces. Then the fun began. The "priest" was,

of course, absolutely sure that he held the strongest hand, for the chance of four aces being out against him were very small. To cut a long story short he raised the betting to £400, and then put down his four kings, uttering a cry of triumph as he saw the four queens. When, however, I put down my four aces he nearly collapsed. He paid the money, which was handed to the captain of the ship, who subsequently returned it to the reverend gentleman, telling him how it had been won from him, and warning him not to try on any of his tricks again at the card table. The "priest" did not make his appearance any more in the card room, and I trust the lesson he received was not without some good effect.

EXPOSING A FEMALE IMPOSTOR.

The most curious place, by the way, in which I ever gave a performance was in a witness-box. This was in New York, when a lady named Debau was being prosecuted for having obtained large sums of money by trickery from a man named Marsh. It is contrary to etiquette for one conjurer to expose another, but in this particular instance I had no hesitation in doing so, for, in the first place, Miss Debau claimed to be a spiritualist and not a conjurer, and, in the next, she had been guilty of defrauding her victim, in the most heartless manner, of nearly all his money. My evidence consisted in showing that what Miss Debau claimed to have done by spiritualism was, in point of fact, done by trickery. She was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Before she was convicted she wrote me a letter vowing to devote the rest of her life to revenging herself on me in the most terrible manner, but I have, happily, never heard of her since.

It has, by the way, often amused me when performing at private houses to observe how many people there are who think that by standing close to a conjurer they will be able to see how he does his tricks. Of course, it is impossible if a conjurer knows his business properly for a person to discover how a trick is done, no matter how close he may stand to the conjurer. I did a number of card tricks for a gentleman once who stood a foot or two from me the whole time. Afterwards, when I showed him how some of these were done, he was amazed. "One would certainly never guess the way they are done by watching you," he said. "Well," I replied, "if you could do that the trick wouldn't be worth doing."

TRICK THIEVES.

What the average person does not understand is that the conjurer's art is to deceive. If you can see how a trick is done by watching a conjurer he must either do it very badly, or it must be a very poor trick. Of course, a professional conjurer can often see how a trick is done by watching the performance closely, and, nowadays, it is extremely hard to guard against one's tricks being stolen. Numbers of tricks that have taken me years to learn have been copied by others, and then they are, of course, no use to me any longer. However, I have a fair number in my repertoire which have defied all the efforts of the trick thieves so far, and I am continually working out new ones to replace those that will probably sooner or later be discovered by the people who have not the ability to devise any original tricks for themselves. Stealing tricks, I may remark, is a regular business. I know of one man who makes, or was making some years ago, a thousand a year by stealing tricks and selling them to third-rate conjurers. For some tricks he would get as much as £20, which, probably, cost the inventor three or four hundred pounds to learn.

"Unions of wide spread bodies should not be consummated in small areas without consultation with the authorities in wider spheres. But if the whole Church, say, in Australia and Canada, were happy enough to come to agreement with the authorities of a denomination in such an extended area perhaps independent action might be justified."—The Primato at the Anglican General Synod.

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Dogs in the Home.

ARE THEY "UNHYGIENIC"?

A civil "war" is likely to rage in London over the long-haired pet dog, which has been condemned as "unhygienic" by certain veterinary surgeons and others. Dog-lovers are dividing themselves into two camps—the "ants," who would entirely banish the long-haired dog from London; and the "pro's," who say that the long-haired dog is perfectly harmless, and shall do exactly as it likes.

Lady Paget, the well-known exhibitor of Pomeranians, was seen by a reporter. She took up the cudgels for the long-haired dog very determinedly.

"I can see no objection to long-haired dogs," she said. "They do not catch colds easily, and they are just as clean as the smooth-haired dog."

"Pomeranians, for instance, are most affectionate and intelligent animals, and as for their coats harbouring germs, it is impossible if they are well brushed."

Lady Paget sent for some of her dogs and four beautiful little Pomeranians came jumping into the room, their coats as glossy as silk.

"Would any doctor be hard-hearted enough to banish these little animals from London?" concluded Lady Paget.

Lady Sibyl Grant, the eldest daughter of Lord Rosebery, whose Irish wolfhounds are famous, was also seen.

"I certainly believe that keeping a dog in the house is a bad habit," she said. "It is a habit, however, which I for one am quite unable to give up. My dog does not climb upon the furniture, because he weighs over 10st. Let me introduce him."

A huge Irish wolfhound, almost as tall as a donkey, walked into the room. "I wonder whether anybody would dare to say he is unhygienic?" asked his owner.

"Personally, I think that both long-haired and smooth-haired dogs are equally liable to catch germs in their coats if there are any about."

"The practice of continually fondling a dog should certainly be avoided, because it is exceedingly tiresome for the dog."

Sunday-school teacher—"Children, we are all made of dust."

Irrepressible Willie—"And is bigger made of coal dust?"

NORTHERN STEAM SHIP COMPANY, LIMITED.

Weather and other circumstances permitting, the Company's steamers will leave as under:—

- For Russell. CLANSMAN. Every Monday, at 7 p.m.
- For Russell, Whangara, and Mangonui. CLANSMAN. Every Wednesday, at 5.30 p.m. No Cargo for Russell.
- For Awani, Waiharara, Honehono, Whangara, and Mangonui. APANUI. Every Monday, at 2 p.m. No Cargo Whangara and Mangonui.
- For Whangarua, Helena Bay, Tutukaka, and Whanauaki. PARROA. Monday, 29th Dec., 1 p.m.
- For Great Barrier. WAIOTAHU. Every Wednesday, midnight.
- For Waiheke and Coromandel. LEAVE AUCKLAND. DAPHNE. Every 2 & 4 Thurs. For one LEAVE COROMANDEL, VIA WAIKANAHI DAPHNE. Every Wed and Fri., Earl.

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Train Whangarei	S.S. Coromandel to Wharf	Leaves
Goods	Par	Mangonui, Parua
retired till Train		Bay.
2nd-9.15 a.m.	1 p.m.	10 a.m. 1 p.m.
4th-9.15 a.m.	11 a.m.	10 a.m. 11 a.m.
7th-11.45 a.m.	2 p.m.	1 p.m. 10 a.m.
9th-11.45 a.m.	3.45 p.m.	2 p.m. 4 p.m.
11th-11.45 a.m.	8 a.m.	10 a.m. 11 a.m.
14th-Sp. day.	9.30 a.m.	8 a.m. 10 a.m.
16th-9.15 a.m.	11 a.m.	9 a.m. 11 a.m.
18th-9.15 a.m.	11.45 a.m.	10 a.m. Noon.
21st-9.15 a.m.	1 p.m.	11 a.m. 10 a.m.
23rd-11.45 a.m.	3 p.m.	1 p.m. 3 p.m.
24th-No cargo.	2 p.m.	No str. 2 p.m.
26th-11.45 a.m.	9.30 a.m.	8 a.m. 10 a.m.
28th-9.15 a.m.	11 a.m.	8 a.m. 11 a.m.
31st-No cargo.	11 a.m.	No str. 11 a.m.

\*Goods outward by steamers leaving on following dates, viz: 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, 29th, and 30th, most leave at country stations by afternoon train previous day.

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1 0 0	10 0 0	National	1 0 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Australia	115 0 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Union of Australia	57 0 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	New South Wales	60 0 0
		INSURANCE—	
2 0 0	10 0 0	New Zealand, Limited	3 16 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	South British	2 16 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Standard	1 3 0
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		COAL—	
1 0 0	10 0 0	Hikurangi	1 1 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Northern Coal Co., Ltd.	0 13 0
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1 0 0	10 0 0	Westport	6 5 0
		GAS—	
1 0 0	10 0 0	Auckland (10/- paid)	1 6 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Auckland	15 5 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Nairnchurch	10 5 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Fairfield	1 1 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Gisborne	2 11 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Hamilton	2 10 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Napier	2 0 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	New Plymouth	2 7 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Tairāhiti	2 0 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Wellington	1 8 4 8
1 0 0	10 0 0	Palmerston North	1 5 0
		SHIPPING—	
1 0 0	10 0 0	Union Steamship	1 14 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	New Zealand Shipping	7 2 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Northern S.S. Co.	0 12 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Devonport Ferry	0 2 0
		WOOLLEN—	
1 0 0	10 0 0	Kaipoi	5 0 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Mangai	2 18 0
		TIMBER—	
1 13 0	10 0 0	K.T. Co.	1 13 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Leyland & Co.	0 14 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Leyland & Co.	1 2 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Mountain King Co.	1 3 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Parker-Lamb	1 5 6
		MEAT	
7 10 0	10 0 0	Canterbury	10 18 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Christchurch	2 12 6
1 0 0	10 0 0	Wellington Meat Ex.	4 0 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Georg	4 15 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Georg	1 17 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Georg	2 14 0
1 0 0	10 0 0	Georg	10 7 6
		MISCELLANEOUS—	
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All colonials repudiate with scorn and derision any suggestion to give them preference.—Mr. Will Crooks.

We find that every year there are a number of pupil teachers who are admitted to the Training College, where they are trained for a couple of years, at the end of which time they are presumed to be efficient teachers. In many instances, when the two years' of training have elapsed these young teachers are found to be averse to taking country positions. They therefore ask to be excused from country service, saying, in some cases, that they want to go on with their studies and take a University degree. The Board has, therefore, resolved that it cannot be made a convenience for the obtaining of a University degree.—Mr. C. J. Parr, Chairman of the Auckland Board of Education.

The Opposition leaders have been saying "Let us treat with our colonies." My reply to that is "Why with the colonies alone?" A tradesman does not put a notice outside his shop, "I trade only with relations." If the colonies want assistance we are bound to help them, and they are bound to help us to the last drop of their blood, but business is business.—Mr. Lloyd George (Chancellor of the Exchequer).