

DAI VERNONS  
INNER SECRETS OF  
CARD MAGIC

PART ONE

Compiled and Photographed

by

LEWIS GANSON

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## FOREWORD

Knowing that forewords are seldom read, I am making this one so brief that it will probably be noticed on that account.

First, I would like to thank Lewis Ganson for his wonderful patience and all the effort he has expended—both with the writing and the excellent photographs. Also, to say how fortunate I am as I consider him our greatest writer of magical methods. The fact that he is a fine performer himself lends to his descriptions complete understanding. They are clear, lucid and easily understood. He explains everything—you can't go wrong.

I should also like to thank Harry Stanley who has done so much for the art. He holds the reins and always arrives at his destination.

Regarding the card problems themselves. I have only to say (like the famous Vienna card conjuror, Hofzinsner), I consider cards the "Poetry of Magic". And please do not forget—remember, do **not** forget—**sleights** and **methods** are **merely the tools**. What you do with them is up to you. Present your effects in a manner that will elevate and do credit to a venerable art.

DAI VERNON.

## P R E F A C E

**Is Magic an Art?** Of course, in the right hands, even chimney-sweeping or bead-stringing can be arts. By simple logical extension, if all practitioners of a human activity were each an artist . . . which means having, beyond the gift of talent, unending love for that activity, as well as selfless devotion in time, thought and energy . . . then the whole of any such activity would be an Art indeed, beyond its intrinsic qualities.

Fortunately the history of magic has bred enough such men to thus qualify. And to the point. . . there is today one man who is the incarnation of all of these qualities, plus and plus, and to such a degree that I firmly believe that he alone could maintain the artistic basis of modern manipulative magic. Wrap permanent bandages on all our hands, divert our minds to stamp collecting, disband our magical societies, and still this one supreme exponent of our Art would speak for all of us, and better **than** any of us.

This book is made up of his work. Modernity in the great human skills and understandings often spring from, or is mostly inspired by at least, a single individual of unsurpassing insight and creativity: the twentieth century character of physics comes from Einstein, biological thought from Darwin, modern fiddle playing from Pagannini . . . well, we in conjuring, particularly in the poetry department called "close-up card magic", have our one and only DAI VERNON . . . and here he is!

CY ENDFIELD.

London, October, 1959.

## INTRODUCTION

FOR MANY YEARS the magical fraternity has eagerly awaited a book on card magic by Dai Vernon. No man has contributed more to the subject than this amazing magician, yet only a surprisingly small proportion of his creations have been published under his name. Dai Vernon is recognised as the world's greatest exponent of card magic and the inner circle of card experts concede that he is years ahead of his time in the knowledge he has acquired through research, experimentation and performance. Internationally he is referred to with admiration, esteem and affection as "The Professor".

When Dai Vernon came to England in 1958 to commence work on his book, a long list of items for inclusion had been compiled during lengthy correspondence. Our friend Faucett Ross had also sent descriptions of all the tricks he could remember having seen the Professor perform. In addition he supplied numerous letters from Dai Vernon to Charlie Miller and himself, in which Vernon tricks, moves and ideas were explained. Even before writing commenced it was obvious that the book was to be a big one, but after many weeks of work, notes and photographs had been taken of all the material listed—then Dai really got into his stride and if there had been no boat to catch we would still be writing.

Our original intention was that the book should be produced in one volume, but it soon became apparent that this would be too large a tome and we had to think again. Eventually it was decided to publish it in parts, each part being complete in itself but with varied contents.

Martin Gardner, in his Introduction to Bill Simon's book **Effective Card Magic** wrote, "A sleight created by Vernon may circulate from one card man to another for ten years or more before it finds its way into print. If and when it does, no one has the slightest notion where it originally came from". In compiling Dai Vernon's Book, claim could have been made to so much which has never been credited to him—but that was not his wish. Volumes could have been filled with Vernon originations, but that would have meant duplicating much which has already been written and now recognised as standard knowledge. It is Dai Vernon's opinion that any new book on this intriguing branch of magic should contain only material which has never been published before, or is little known. In addition, it was not his intention to confine

the contents to just his own creations, but to include sleights, moves and effects originated by his friends, which have given him so much pleasure to perform.

One might suppose that the work entailed in producing a book on card magic could be tedious and exacting—especially when it holds material selected by one so dedicated to the subject as Dai Vernon. Actually it will go down in my memory as one of the most enjoyable tasks ever undertaken, for although Dai treats his work seriously, he has a terrific sense of humour and an unrivalled knowledge of interesting historical facts. From start to finish the whole thing was fun. In writing the text we have tried to capture some of the atmosphere in which the book was compiled, in the hope that the reader too can find the same enjoyment in reading and learning the contents as we did in recording them.

This is Dai Vernon's book—in it he has revealed secrets for which the world of magic has been waiting. I consider it a great honour to have been entrusted with the pleasant task of bringing it into book form.

LEWIS GANSON.

## CHAPTER ONE

### TAKING THINGS EASY

THE PURPOSE OF this book is not to teach the elementary principles of card magic, but to provide the magical fraternity with explanations of tricks, sleights, moves and items of magical knowledge which have not previously been published, or are so little known that they warrant inclusion. It has been assumed, therefore, that the reader has at least a basic knowledge of card magic. However, newcomers too are welcomed, for if they will bear with the absence of explanations of standard card sleights, which can be found in many books on the subject, then they can share in the delights which follow.

Why not take a pack of cards and begin to enjoy Dai Vernon's card magic right away? Dismiss any fears about the material being too difficult as this has been taken care of by the Professor. For example, the four tricks in this chapter need no sleight of hand and there is very little for the performer to remember, yet the results produced are first class. Read the instructions carefully, study the methods of presentation, practice diligently, then their full worth will be appreciated.

#### EMOTIONAL REACTION

The basic effect of this trick is the location of a card, but the conditions under which it is found and the novel form of presentation employed, make a very strong item.

During his lecture tour of Europe in 1958, Dai Vernon performed this trick for his audiences, and although the method is based upon a well-known principle, it is so well hidden that the secret eluded even the most experienced magicians.

**PRESENTATION.** The theme for the patter is on human emotions, so commence by explaining to your audience that the effect they are about to witness depends upon the emotional reactions of a person who will assist you. Ask a gentleman to come forward and have him seated to your left.

State that the seat of emotions is the heart, therefore you are going to ask the assistant to carry out most operations with his left hand as, of course, the heart is nearer the left side of the body.

First have the pack shuffled by the assistant who then hands it to you so that you may demonstrate what is required. Explain that the assistant must spread the cards between his hands from left to right, with the faces of the cards towards him, and hold the cards in the same manner as he would a bridge hand. One of the cards seen is to be thought of, the pack broken at that position, and the chosen card and all



those above it held against his heart with the left hand (Figure 1). The remainder of the pack in his right hand is to be placed on the table.

As you spread the cards for the demonstration, secretly note the bottom card of the

face up pack (the top card when the pack is face down), break the pack anywhere and momentarily hold the left hand portion against your heart, then place the two portions of the pack together again in their original positions and hand the squared pack to the assistant. By this demonstration you have not only provided a logical reason for handling the pack (which has enabled a key card to be sighted secretly), but you have also ensured that the assistant understands exactly what is required.

He will now imitate your actions, and after noting a card will break the pack at that point and hold the left hand portion against his heart. Unknown to anyone, you know the top card of the packet he is holding and this is your key card. Have him place the remainder of the cards (in his right hand) face down on the table.

Ask another spectator to step forward and pick up the packet of cards from the table and shuffle them thoroughly. Tell him to replace the cards on the table, then to be very careful in cutting off a packet as the first assistant is going to return his cards at the point where the cut is made. Watch the operation intently, completely ignoring the first assistant for the moment. Actually the shuffling and cutting has little bearing on the trick, but by making this appear **important** you are distracting attention away from the packet held by the first assistant.

As the second assistant cuts off a packet of cards, instruct the first assistant to place his cards on top of those still on the table. Stress that



he must be careful not to let you catch a glimpse of the selected card, then say quietly, "Cut your cards to make certain". This is an aside and the majority of the audience will be unaware that anything has been said. They will be amused to see the first assistant cut his packet and will assume that he is being especially careful by making it quite impossible for you to ever find his card again. Actually, by cutting, he has placed his card next to, and above the key card and the trickery has been completed for you in a natural and unsuspecting manner.

Tell the second assistant to place his cut-off packet of cards on top of those on the table, making a sandwich of the packet which was held against the first assistant's heart. Request him to cut the cards and square the pack.

Thank the second assistant and dismiss him, then pick up the pack and ask the first assistant to hold your left wrist. State that you will endeavour to find the selected card by his emotional response alone. Tell him to try to check his emotions so that you are given no clue when his card is sighted. Spread the cards face up between your hands from left to right and look for the key card. The selected card will be the one immediately to the left of the key card. However, do not disclose it at once; play up the situation, saying that no matter how hard he tries to control his reactions you are still getting a response by the contact of his hand upon your wrist. Run the cards between your hands slowly three or four times, step away a few paces and turn the cards so that the faces cannot be seen by the assistant, then slowly withdraw the selected card and hold it high with its back towards the audience.

Ask the assistant to name his card then turn it face on to the audience for all to see.

Although the method is so simple, the form of presentation is interesting and entertaining. The ingenious way in which the key card is employed is so disarming that even the most observant and knowledgeable spectators are thrown completely off the scent.

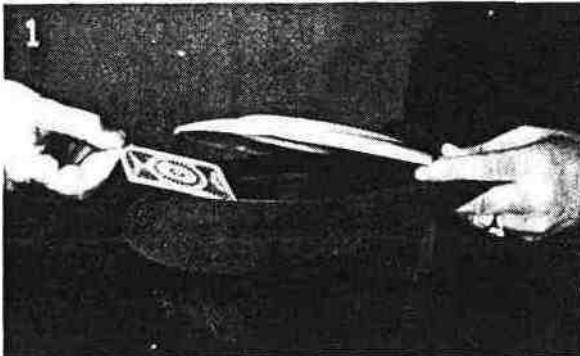
## COCKTAIL CARDS

In this effect the performer seems to have no opportunity for controlling the cards in any way as he does not appear to touch the pack, yet he is successful in locating three cards which were selected when the pack was in the care of a spectator. The novel manner in which the cards are mixed helps to make this an amusing and entertaining mystery.

**EFFECT.** A spectator shuffles the pack, cuts it into five packets, selects any one packet, then takes it to three members of the audience for each to select a card. The remainder of the cards in the packet are dropped into a hat which is then covered with either another hat or a dinner plate. The spectator shakes the hats like a cocktail shaker so that the cards are thoroughly mixed. Now the three selected cards are pushed into the bottom hat by the spectators who chose them, and the hats are given another good shaking before being returned to the performer.

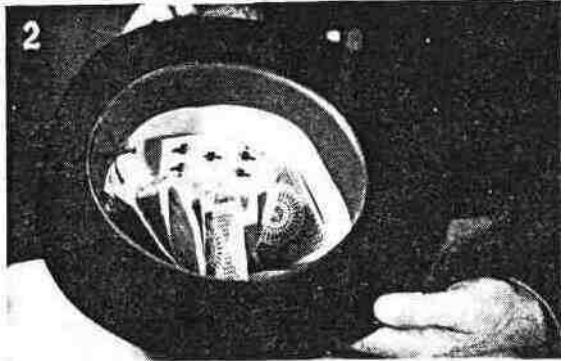
He reaches into the bottom hat and brings out the three selected cards.

**METHOD.** Shuffling the pack, cutting it into five packets on the table, choosing one packet and having three cards selected from it by members of the audience, is all done by a spectator—no trickery is involved. But now the performer takes the remainder of the packet from the spectator and as his hand dips into the hat to drop the cards, he gives them a strong bend. He then inverts a second hat (or a large dinner plate) over the first hat and demonstrates what he wants done by shaking them to thoroughly mix the cards.



The spectator continues the shaking and is then instructed to go to each spectator in turn, and by opening the hats (or hat and dinner plate) at the front, like an alligator's mouth, have the selected cards pushed into the bottom hat (Figure 1).

After receiving another good shaking from the spectator, the hats are returned to the performer who takes off the upper hat (or plate). Holding the hat containing the cards at just below eye level, he can see the only three cards which are not bent (Figure 2), re-



moves them, but keeps their backs to the audience. As the pack was originally cut into five packets, there are only about ten cards in the hat, so although they have been thoroughly mixed, there is little difficulty in finding the three straight cards.

Placing the hat on the table the performer holds the three cards, backs towards the audience, in a fan.

He now asks each of the three spectators to call out the name of his or her card, and as each card is named the performer turns it round in the fan to face the audience.

It is a simple matter to straighten the rest of the cards by collecting them together in the hat, then giving them a bend in the opposite direction before removing them.

## THE BENT CORNER PREDICTION

Here is a fine example of how a strong effect can be produced by simple means.

The effect will be apparent as we proceed and as no initial preparation is required, we can proceed with the explanation of the method of performance.

**PERFORMANCE.** From a shuffled pack remove any card and without showing its face, place it face down on the table.

Write a message on a piece of paper, beginning "The card at the number you select will be . . . ". Now raise the back edge of the card on the table so that only you can see its face, then fill in its name at the end of the message. Fold the paper and give it to someone to hold.

The excuse given for using the card is that it is your guide card which provides a number from which a certain result can be calculated. This is not too far from the truth!

Pick up the face down pack in the left hand, place it behind your back, then pick up the face down card in the right hand and place this also behind your back. Holding the card between your right first and second fingers at the inner right corner bend down the corner with the thumb. Push the card under the top card of the pack, fan off these two cards as one and for the sake of appearance, also fan off the next card then bring the pack forward. Figure 1 shows an exposed view of the pack at this stage, the bent corner of the important card can be seen under the top card. From the spectator's view it looks as if only the top two cards of the pack are fanned in readiness for counting.



Assume that the number is eleven.

Count the cards from the top of the pack, taking the first two cards as one as you count "one", then push the next card on top of the two cards as you count "two", and so on until you have counted eleven.

Push forward what appears to be the eleventh card for about half its length over the outer end of the pack then place the cards in a block from the right hand onto the pack. Deliberately bend down the **outer left** corner of the protruding card, then push it back into the pack.

Point to the message held by the spectator and say, "Remember, I wrote this message **before** you made your selection".

Take the pack by the outer end and turn it over, end for end, so that it comes face up and say, "To make sure that the order of the pack **is** not disturbed in any way, you may remember the bottom card if you wish". Turn the pack over **sideways** to bring it face down again.

All that remains is to have the message read out, then spread and count the cards slowly to the number stated. In our case the eleventh card will have the outer left corner bent down. This card is removed and turned over dramatically to reveal that the prediction is correct.

If the instructions are followed it will be found that the count reverses the order of the cards, which automatically brings the card with the secretly bent corner to the correct number. By turning over the pack end for end, then sideways, the bent corner comes to the outer left corner of the pack, while the corner of the card which was bent deliberately is out of sight at the inner end of the pack.

## COLOUR SEPARATION

This quick, straightforward effect creates a strong impression on the minds of the spectators. For this reason Dai Vernon likes to include it in his programme, immediately after some more lengthy card trick.

**EFFECT.** From a shuffled pack a spectator hands the performer any four red cards and any four black cards. These cards are shuffled together by both the performer and the spectator.

The performer places the packet behind his back and by the sense of touch alone, separates the red cards from the black.

**METHOD.** Ask someone to hand you any four red cards which you receive face up in your left hand in the dealing position. Now ask for four black cards and as these are being taken from the pack, take the red packet into your right hand, the right inner corner of the cards between the first and second fingers. By pressing down with the thumb, a slight downward bend is put into the corner of the cards. (Figure 1.)



Extend the left hand to receive the black cards then place them on top of the red cards in the right hand. Turn the packet face down so that the bend in the corner of the red cards is at the inner end, and give the packet a shuffle. Hand the packet to the spectator for shuffling, ensuring that it is taken so that, when shuffled, the bent corners will still be at the inner end where they will not be noticed.

After shuffling, take back the packet and hold it face down behind your back. Take each card separately and feel for a bent corner. If a straight card you bring it forward, face down, saying "That's not a colour", and place it to your right. If it has a bent corner you straighten it, then bring it forward, saying "That's a colour", and place it to your left.

Finally you will have a packet of four face down cards to **your** right and four to your left. Turn the packets over and spread them to show that you have separated the reds from the black.

A trial will convince you that the trick is much more effective in performance than it appears in print. The fact that only a few cards are used prevents the repetition becoming boring. To the spectators it appears quite impossible for the performer to separate the cards by touch alone, but of course, this is the true explanation.





## CHAPTER TWO

### A LITTLE THOUGHT REQUIRED

SOME OF THE best effects in card magic are produced by subtle moves and clever routining. The tricks in this chapter are in this category, so although there are things which must be remembered for the actions to be made in the correct sequence, there is really nothing which could be termed difficult.

#### REPEAT "DO AS I DO"

The "Do as I Do" theme is a popular one in card magic. Although the effect produced by Dai Vernon's method is basically the same as most other versions, his routine has two distinct advantages—the performer does not exchange packs with the spectator, and at the conclusion of the effect it can be repeated immediately, still without having to touch the spectator's pack, or having to know the position of any card in it.

Assume that a red backed pack and a blue backed pack are to be used. It is necessary to have a card from one pack in the other. If the packs are the performer's property, then obviously this can be arranged previously, otherwise it is a simple matter to slip a card from the bottom of one pack onto the bottom of the other when the packs are held face up, side by side. The pack containing the extra card is the one used by the performer, and again we will assume that this is the red backed pack containing the blue backed Six of Hearts. The only other requirement is that the three top cards of the pack are set up so that the top card (when the pack is face down) is the red backed Six of Hearts; the second card is an indifferent one and the third card is the blue backed Six of Hearts. In other words, if it has been necessary to slip a card from one pack to the other as described, then it is only necessary to spread the cards between the hands, sight the bottom (stranger) card of the face up pack, slip any card below it, then find the duplicate of the stranger card and slip this to the bottom.

To perform the effect, hand the blue backed pack to the spectator and ask him to shuffle and cut it. You false shuffle the red pack to leave the top three cards in position, then cut the pack, but hold a break above

the original top card. Now tell the spectator to run his face down pack between his hands, take out any card and place it face down on the table. Spread your cards to the break, place the next card (red backed Six of Hearts) face down on the table, then place the bottom half of the pack (in the left hand) on top of those in the right hand—the blue backed Six of Hearts is now second from top.

Pick up the red backed card from the table and place it on top of the spectator's blue pack, telling him to pick up his card and place it on top of your pack. Instruct the spectator to cut his pack, then spread his cards across the table. Appear to do likewise, but when you complete the cut, hold a break with the tip of the left little finger above the top card; transfer the break to the right thumb, then with the tips of the left fingers curled between the two halves, push the original top card to the right. When you spread the cards from left to right across the table, the unwanted blue backed card, placed on your pack by the spectator, will remain out of sight under the spread cards, but the back of the blue backed card stolen in the first place will be revealed.

The position now is that both the spectator and yourself have a card with a different coloured back showing near the centre of the two spread packs of cards. Take the precaution of pushing together all the cards to the right of the visible blue backed card in your spread. This appears as a neat way of separating the visible blue backed card, but it ensures that the other blue backed card is out of harms way. Ask the spectator to turn over the red backed card in his spread as you turn over the blue backed card in your spread. Both cards are the same.

As you have another blue backed card in your pack, the existence of which the spectator is unaware, by sighting the card and arranging a three card set-up on top of the pack as before, all is in readiness for the trick to be repeated.

## FOUR OF A KIND

This is a splendid effect brought about by very simple means. The theme is similar to the last trick, **but** only one pack is used.

A strong feature of the method is the excellent misdirection which is employed to cover the trickery.

**EFFECT.** A spectator cuts off about half of a shuffled pack, leaving the remainder of the cards in the performer's hands. Both spectator and performer shuffle their packets of cards, the shuffles being stopped at any time the spectator wishes. The **two** top cards of each packet are now exchanged, the spectator inserting the two cards handed to him by the performer, **face down** into his own packet which he has turned **face up**. The performer places the two cards from the spectator's packet, **face down** into his **face up** packet.

Both face up packets are spread across the table, then the two face down cards in each spread are removed and turned over. It is seen that the four cards are all of the same value.

**PREPARATION.** All that is necessary is to have, say, the four Queens reversed on the bottom of the pack.

**PRESENTATION.** Shuffle the pack without disturbing the four reversed cards, then hold the pack on your left palm and ask a spectator to cut off about half of the cards.

Tell the spectator to shuffle his cards and demonstrate your requirements by beginning an overhand shuffle with your own packet of cards. Actually shuffle off about half the cards so that there is about an equal number of cards in each hand. As the spectator begins to shuffle, move your right hand forward and turn it in a pointing gesture (Figure 1), forefinger extended at his packet and say, "Stop shuffling at any time you wish". Place the cards in your right hand on top of those in your left hand, but leave a step between the packets at the inner end. A trial will show you that by placing the right hand cards



onto the left hand cards, instead of completing the shuffle, automatically reverses the top packet which brings the four Queens to the top. The step in the packets should be about the width of the white border on the cards, and as it will only show at the inner end, is easy to conceal.

When the spectator has finished shuffling his packet, take off the two top cards (two Queens) from your own packet and place them face down on the table. Ask the spectator to do likewise with the two top cards from his packet.

Say, "Now, I want you to do exactly as I do", then place your right fingers under the **outer** edge of your packet and turn all the cards over, end for end, so that there is now a face up card showing. Take care to keep the step in the packet as the cards are turned. The right fingers cover the step in the outer edge of the packet as the cards are turned.

The spectator will follow your example and turn his packet face up.

Say, "I'll place your two cards . . . (press down with your right thumb on the step at the back of your packet and hold a break with the left little finger) . . . face down into my packet". With your right hand pick up the two cards placed on the table by the spectator, and without showing the faces, insert them into the lower half of your packet. Because these two cards are face down and are inserted into a bunch of face down cards, they are lost.

Tell the spectator to pick up the two remaining face down cards on the table and insert them (still face down) into his face up packet. As he looks down to insert the cards, reverse all the cards below the break in your packet, square the cards and place them on the table. Have the spectator also place his packet on the table.

Emphasise what has been done, then spread both packets across the

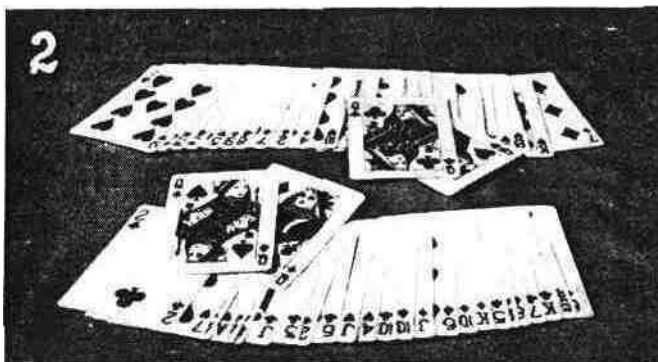


table. Obviously two face down cards will show in each face up spread. Slide these cards out of the spreads and turn them over. They are the four Queens (Figure 2).

An intriguing variation of this effect is to secretly find out the year of birth of a young lady and persuade her to act as your assistant. Assume the year is 1938, reverse an Ace, nine, three and eight on the bottom of the pack. Now proceed as explained and at the finish say, "Do these cards mean anything to you?". She will probably be perplexed and say, "What is extraordinary about them?" You say, "Well, these cards seem to have a peculiar meaning to me". Arrange them, 1, 9, 3, 8, and ask, "1938—an important year. Does it mean anything to you?". She will realise that you have discovered her year of birth.

Another variation of the trick is to borrow a coin and secretly switch it for one you have palmed. You know the date on the palmed coin and have reversed cards on the bottom of the pack to correspond with the date. When the four cards are disclosed they will mean nothing until you call attention to the date on the coin.

## MATCHING THE CARDS

Nate Leipzig was so impressed with this trick that he asked **Dai Vernon** to teach it to him, in order that it could be included in his **club** act. Leipzig performed the trick for many years with great success.

The effect is that a card, selected by a spectator, is placed face down on the table without its face being shown, then the performer endeavours to cut to the three other cards which match. He shows each card as it is found—three Eights—and places them face down on the table. When the spectator's card is turned it is found to be a King, so obviously a mistake has been made. However, when the three other cards are turned face up once more, they prove to be all Kings.

The following set-up of the Eights and Kings is necessary:—

On top of the pack is a King with an Eight immediately below it. In the centre of the pack are two Kings with an Eight immediately below them, and on the bottom of the pack is an Eight with a King immediately above it. This order is easy to remember because the Kings are always above the Eights. The fourth Eight is not used in the main trick, but Dai Vernon has an additional climax in which it is brought into play—see Note 2.

To perform the trick, secretly secure a break between the two Kings in the centre of the pack, holding it with the tip of the left little finger. Hand a table knife to a spectator and ask him to insert the blade at any point he wishes in the outer short end of the pack. To



make this easier for him, riffle the outer end of the pack with the right fingers. Ensure that the blade of the knife is inserted into the **bottom** half of the pack. Grip the blade between the right first and second fingers as in Figure 1, and move the right hand forward, sliding all the cards above the break off the pack and onto the blade of the knife. It appears as if the pack has been cut at the exact point where the blade was inserted. Do

not turn the right hand to show the face of the card above the blade.

Ask the spectator if he would like the card above or below where the blade was inserted. Whatever the choice it must be a King, so place the card face down on the table without showing its face. It is

desirable to place an object on the card to prevent the spectator glancing at it. In squaring the pack, secure a break between the Eight and King in the centre of the pack.

State that you will now demonstrate how to find the other three cards of the same value. Spread the cards between the hands until the break is reached, ensuring that the last three or four cards of the right hand packet are fanned out a little. Push the Eight to the right with the left thumb, then with the side of the fanned cards, flip the Eight over sideways to come face up on the left hand packet. The next action is to flip the Eight face down once more and secretly add the King above it from the bottom of the right hand packet. **Henry Christ** evolved the next subtle move which covers this action. Hold the left hand packet above the right hand packet, then with the left thumb push the Eight to the right to make it project over the right side of the packet. Bring the right hand packet up from underneath so that the left sides of the fanned bottom cards come under the right side of the projecting Eight and lift it, making it turn over to the left. The left thumb has been on the left side of the Eight to aid the turning. As the right hand packet is brought over the left hand, the left thumb clips the bottom card (the King) of those fanned on the bottom of the right hand packet, adding it above the Eight. Immediately push this card off onto the table with the left thumb—an Eight has been shown, named ("Eight of Spades"—or whatever it might be) and apparently thumbed off onto the table. Actually it is a King which goes down.

Square the pack, then make a false cut (any convincing method which leaves the cards in the same order). Double lift the two top cards to show an Eight, turn the cards face down again and thumb off the top card, face down, onto the table—another King. Make another false cut, turn the pack face up to show another Eight on the bottom, then perform the Glide so that the King goes down. If preferred, a one-handed Second Deal can be used to bring about the same result.

Place the pack on the table and say—"We have shown three Eights, two red and one black (or whatever has been shown) so this card (indicate the card forced in the beginning), should be the other black Eight". Turn up this card, smile and bow, then appear to realise that a grave mistake has been made. It is of great importance to convince the spectators that the climax has been a total failure. Look crestfallen, then brighten up and say, "I know what we'll do; we'll make all the cards change". Hold the card just shown in the right hand, face on to the spectators, then take it into the left hand. Pick up another card with the right hand, turning it dramatically to show it is a King;—place it also in the left hand. Continue until all four cards are widely fanned in the left hand, permitting as much as possible of the faces to be visible.

Note 1.

As each Eight(?) was found, Nate Leipzig dropped it face down onto the floor. By holding the card face down and parallel with the floor, it does not turn as it falls, even though dropped from a height. This is effective because it seems so casual.

Note. 2.

When Dai Vernon was playing at Billy Rose's fashionable Casino de Paris, he devised a startling climax for this trick. As only three Eights are shown, he had the fourth Eight concealed in his outer breast pocket. At the stage where the forced card is revealed, he would ask a spectator to turn it face up. He would act crestfallen, pick up the pack and spread it face up between his hands as if to discover where he had gone wrong. It was a simple matter to casually place the Eight from the centre of the pack to the bottom, making two eights on the bottom and one on top of the pack. After bringing the trick to a successful conclusion, he would then proceed to perform his now well-known "Travellers" (Stars of Magic Series), using the Eights.



## DAI VERNON'S COLOUR CHANGING PACK

Routines in which the backs of all the cards of a pack change colour are few and far between, so a description of Dai Vernon's excellent version of this entertaining effect will be particularly welcome.

Take a red backed pack containing the Joker and reverse this card in a position two or three cards from the bottom. An extra Joker with a **blue** back is added to the top of the pack which is placed in a blue card case, after the bottom card of the pack has been noted. Have the pack in a convenient pocket.

After performing a few tricks with a blue backed pack, return the cards to the case, taking care to ensure that the bottom card is the same as the one on the bottom of the red backed pack. It appears that the performance is over, but as the pack is placed in a pocket, seem to change your mind and offer to show one more trick. It is the other pack which is now brought into play, but as the case is identical to the one seen a moment before, and as the duplicate bottom card is in position when the pack is taken from the case, the spectators believe "they see the same blue backed pack.

Do not refer to the colour of the backs of the cards at this stage. Patter can be on the theme of printers' ink having the same peculiarities as litmus paper—a fact which you proceed to demonstrate. Turning the pack **face up** in the right hand, hold it in position for executing the Hindu Shuffle. Pull off the top five or six cards with the left hand, in the manner of the shuffle, and continue to do this two or three times, then say, "You may stop me at any time you wish and take the card stopped at". As this is said, turn the right hand packet (the blue back of the Joker will be seen again) and with it tap the left hand packet to indicate the card stopped at. Continue the shuffle until the spectator tells you to stop, place the card stopped at **face up** on the table, then continue to shuffle off three more packets in time with the patter, "You realise you could have stopped me here, here or here?". Each time you say "here", indicate the card on top of the left hand packet by tapping it with the right hand packet. Because you turn the right hand packet on each occasion, the blue back of the Joker is seen each time. There should be only four or five cards in the right hand the last time the packet is turned, and these should be dropped onto the face of the pack.

Spread the cards between your hands until you see the face of the blue backed Joker (this will be only four or five cards away from the face card of the pack), and hand it to a spectator, requesting him to thrust it, **face down**, anywhere in the pack which you fan **face up** between your hands. Ask him if he would like the card above or below

the Joker. Whichever card is chosen, take it from the pack and place it face up alongside the first card on the table. Take the fanned pack into the left hand (the blue back of the Joker is still showing), then pick up one of the cards from the table and insert it, face up, above the blue backed Joker. Swivel the card round in the pack—this is merely by-play, but it rubs the back of the selected card over the back of the Joker and is in keeping with the patter theme of printers' ink having the same peculiarities as litmus paper. Remove the card from the pack, turn it over slowly to reveal the red back, then place it face down on the table. Repeat the same procedure with the other selected card.

Square the pack and in doing so secure a break with the left little finger above the card **immediately above** the blue backed card. Transfer the break to the right thumb as the right hand is placed in position for cutting the face up pack. Instead of actually cutting with the right hand, take away approximately half of the cards below the break with the left hand and slide them onto the top of the pack, then cut to the break with the right hand and complete the cut. This brings the blue backed Joker to position **one below** the face card of the pack. Wave the pack over the two cards on the table, turn the pack face down then spread the cards between the hands, taking care not to spread the last few bottom cards for obvious reasons. All the cards will have red backs, but in the centre of the spread is a face up Joker (this is the red backed Joker, reversed before the trick commenced). Swivel this Joker round in the pack with the same by-play as you used to apparently cause the backs of the two selected cards to change colour. Remove the Joker and turn it over slowly to show that it too has a red back.

The climax has been reached and should you wish to end with a clean pack, then the blue backed card (second from the bottom) can be palmed out with the Side Slip, and left in a pocket as you reach in for a cigarette case, matches, etc.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HANGING BY A THREAD

THREAD HAS BEEN referred to as "the magician's friend" but most present day performers seem to have neglected the tricks which depend upon its use. Maybe this is because there is a fear of the thread breaking or being seen, yet with the very fine, strong thread which is now available these disadvantages can be eliminated. Much depends on the manner in which the thread is handled, and the tricks described in this chapter demonstrate the subtle methods which Dai Vernon employs.

A good thin, strong thread suitable for most occasions, is **Coats' Gossamer Thread**, made from "Terylene", polyester fibre. Although not the thinnest thread available, it is very strong and has a dull surface which does not reflect light. Used against dark clothing it is invisible from a few feet.

### THE RISING CARDS

The following effect is a little different to the one more often seen these days, in which chosen cards rise from the pack. In this version the pack is held in one hand and the cards rise out of the pack, and continue to rise until they reach the other hand, which is held well above the pack.

**PREPARATION.** Tie two or three knots, one over the other, in one end of a length of thread. Trim off the small end so that the knot is right at the end of the thread. Cover the knot with wax. The best method for doing this is to take a small piece of magician's wax and roll it in the shape of a tiny sausage. Fold this over the knot then press it round until the knot is completely embedded in the wax. Do not use much wax; the finished waxed knot should not be much larger than a pin head. In the photographs too much wax has been used—this has been done to ensure that it shows up clearly.

The other end of the thread is fastened to a centre fly button—conveniently situated to anchor the thread, and additionally suitable for our requirements as being the least likely place where it will be noticed. Until required the thread can hang down free, as it will not be in the way and cannot be seen against dark trousers. The length of the thread must be determined by trial, as it will differ for each individual performer.

**METHOD.** As the pack is being shuffled by a spectator, drop the right hand, grasp the thread and let it run through the first and second fingers until the wax is reached. Push the wax onto the centre of the right thumb-nail.

Take back the pack in the left hand and transfer it to the right hand. The next operations can be carried out quite naturally, even though the wax and thread are already in position. These operations consist of having three cards selected, noted and returned to the pack. Additionally, you secretly bring the chosen cards to the top of the pack, then false shuffle and leave one indifferent card above the three. While all this is done (with the wax in position), the hands should be held well away from the body, the length of thread being sufficient for it not to be taut. In practice it will be found that the right thumb-nail can always be kept out of sight, either behind the fingers, the pack, or by having the back of the right hand towards the audience.

Turn the pack face up and show that the bottom card is not one of those selected. Take off this card and bury it in the centre of the pack. Turn the pack back up, hold it in the left hand, tilt it up a little, then remove the top card with the right hand (thumb behind the top of the card). Insert this **card** into the top edge of the pack, tilting it still more to show the face of the card. Apparently span the pack, and the projecting card, from the back with the right thumb and second finger, the finger at the centre of the top edge of the projecting card and the thumb at the bottom edge of the pack. Actually the thumb moves up behind the pack, and as the projecting card is being pushed into the pack with the right second finger, the left thumb slides the wax off the right thumb-nail, and presses it onto the centre of the upper end of the top card of the pack. Figure 1 shows this clearly. Push the projecting card right into the pack and square it.

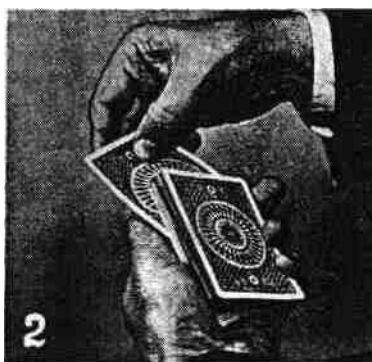


Hold the pack upright **and** loosely in the left hand, face of pack towards the audience, with the left little finger supporting the pack at the bottom short edge, the thumb at the centre of one long side and the tips of the first, second and third fingers at the opposite long side. Extend the left arm until the thread is taut. Let

the right hand relax fairly close to the body for the side of the forefinger to feel the thread. Move the forefinger under the thread so that it runs between the first and second fingers.

To make the first card rise, lift the right hand, moving it forwards and upwards smoothly and evenly. As the right hand moves up, the back card of the pack rises, keeping face on to the audience because the tips of the left fingers and thumb form a guide. The forward movement of the right hand also ensures that the card remains face on as it leaves the pack and travels upwards to the right hand, which is now well above and a little in advance of the pack. As the card reaches the right hand, close the fingers over onto the face of the card and bring the thumb behind. Riffle the left outer corner of the pack with the left thumb and insert the card into the top edge of the pack. As the riffling continues, dig the edge of the right thumb-nail into the wax and move the thumb to the left (Figure 2).

This will cause the wax to leave the card and remain on the edge of the thumb-nail. Should the wax be cold and fairly hard, there is a danger of an audible click as the wax leaves the card, but by riffling the corners of the cards this noise is covered.



Bring the right second finger to the top edge of the protruding card and the thumb behind to the bottom edge of the pack, apparently to span both card and pack, but move up the right thumb as before to enable the left thumb to push the wax onto the back card of the pack.

This card is made to rise in the same way as before, then the whole operation is repeated to cause the third chosen card to rise.

In the above description we have concentrated on the method only, as it was the intention to emphasise the detail into which Dai Vernon has delved, in order to provide a logical reason for every action. By careful thought and experimentation, he has made every stage in the trick easy to accomplish and certain in operation, giving that peace of mind to the performer which permits him to concentrate on effective presentation.

## THE PACK THAT CUTS ITSELF

This effect was originated by the late Al Baker, who showed the original method to Dai Vernon. Over the years Dai Vernon has altered it considerably, and has evolved an ingenious idea for making the necessary preparation in front of the spectators, without them being aware of what is being done.

When preparing this description of Dai Vernon's method, we toyed with the idea of re-titling the trick **The Honest Magician**, as the spectators are almost told what the performer does to bring about the effect. The performer's explanation seems so fantastic and humorous that it is not believed.

The effect is the same as Al Baker's trick in which a card is selected, returned to the pack which is then cut. The performer places the squared pack on his upturned palm, when the top half of the pack moves forward in a most uncanny fashion. It stops, then moves back over the pack but leaves one card protruding from the centre. This card is the one previously selected. The card and the pack can be taken immediately by a spectator as there is nothing suspicious to find.

**REQUIREMENTS.** About two feet of thread is required, but the exact length must be determined by each individual performer. One end of the thread is attached to a cigarette lighter, pipe or other fairly substantial object which can be placed in the outside pocket of the jacket on the left side. The other end of the thread hangs down outside the pocket. There is no knot in the free end of the thread, nor is any wax used.

One card of the pack has a tiny tear or cut, about one sixteenth of an inch in length, in the centre of one **long** side. If the pack to be used is your own, then the cut can be made with a razor blade before the performance. With a borrowed pack the tiny tear can be made as the cards are handled, before there is any question of a trick being performed. Let us assume that the torn card is the Queen of Diamonds.

**METHOD.** Hand the pack to be shuffled and as this is being done, feel for the thread with your left hand and clip it between the second and third fingers, so that it runs from the back to the front of the fingers. There should be about an inch of the free end of the thread protruding between, and to the front of the fingers.

Take back the shuffled pack with the right hand, then spread the cards, face up, between the hands. Tell the spectators that you always

use a certain card for this trick; find the Queen of Diamonds and remove it from the pack, but do not show the face. Place the pack down for a moment.

Holding the Queen of Diamonds (back to audience) in the left hand, say that your next requirement is a hair. Pretend to pluck one from your head with your right hand and hold the hand up as if to display the hair. Say that you propose to wrap the hair around the card. Lift the left hand which is

holding the card as in Figure 1, and with the right thumb and forefinger, pick up the projecting thread from behind the card. Actually wind the thread over the top long side of the card, into the slit and down to the middle of the back of the card—all in full view! Take the card into the right hand, the thumb and forefinger over the slit, which holds the thread in position. Pick up the pack in the left hand and position it, face down, across the fingers.



Slide the Queen of Diamonds, face down, under the front long side of the pack so that it becomes the bottom card. Now take the pack between the right thumb and forefinger, the thumb on the top card of the pack and the forefinger underneath the bottom card, over the slit. Extend the right hand in a gesture, until the thread is taut, then replace the pack on the left fingers, getting the thread between the left second and third fingers. The thread will now run from under the front long side of the pack, through the fingers and under the arm to the pocket—completely covered.

Fan the cards between your hands and have one selected. The Queen of Diamonds, being on the bottom of the pack, will not be taken but you say, "I hope you haven't got the one with the hair wound round it". Square the pack and position it across the fingers once more. Have the selected card noted, then take it back with the right hand and slide it under the front long side of the pack. Take the outer right corner of the pack between the right thumb and forefinger and hinge it up as in



Figure 2, for the bottom (selected) card to be seen, then hinge it down again. Ask the spectator to cut off a packet of cards from the top and place them on your left palm, alongside the bottom packet. Bring the left arm about six inches closer to your body to give a little slack in the thread, then complete the cut yourself.

Make sure that the position of the pack is such that the outer long side just covers the base of the fingers. Say, "From here on the hair **takes** over". Keep the hand still but twist the body slowly to the left which pulls on the thread. This causes an uncanny action to take place; the top portion of the pack moves to the finger-tips, stops, then moves back over the pack, but one card moves in the opposite direction



and remains protruding over the fingers (Figure 3). Extend the left hand forward towards the spectator. This pulls the thread free from the slit, and it falls and hangs free from the pocket out of sight. Tell the spectator to take the projecting card—it is the one previously selected—then hand him the pack. Everything can be examined.

Remember, the face of the Queen of Diamonds is never shown, and at the end this card is somewhere in the middle of the pack. Although it has a tiny slit in one side, the spectator has fifty-two cards in his hands and the only card which has been brought to his notice is the one selected. It is most unlikely that he will ever examine the Queen, but even if he does, there is little to be seen.

As a point of interest, some dealers market a trick pack with which a similar effect can be produced. Faucett Ross was the originator of this mechanical version of the trick.



## THE WALKING AND JUMPING CARD

In Al Baker's book *Magical Ways and Means*, he describes a favourite effect of his own, in which a selected card is returned to the pack which is then dropped into a hat. The selected card leaves the pack, slowly climbs over the side of the hat nearest the audience, and settles itself face upward on the brim. At the command "Jump", the card leaps from the brim of the hat to the table or floor.

Dai Vernon often uses this effect to produce the last of the three cards in the trick **Cocktail Cards** (Page 10.) His method of handling **is** based on Al Baker's, but is different in certain respects.

**REQUIREMENTS.** One end of a length of thread is attached to the centre fly button, and some wax is on the other end—exactly as described for **The Rising Cards**. Here again the length of thread must be determined by trial.

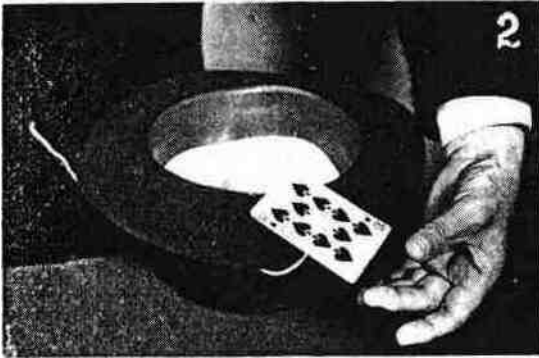
**METHOD.** It will be remembered that in the trick **Cocktail Cards**, three selected cards are found from amongst those which are in a hat.

To make the third card walk from the hat, hold the hat in the left hand whilst the first card is found, then before the right hand goes to the hat for the second card, clip the waxed end of the thread between the right first and second fingers. There is ample opportunity to attach the wax to the centre of the back of the **third** card under the pretext of finding the **second** card. In addition to fixing the wax to the card, adjust the position of the card so that it will be on top of the rest of the cards and face **upwards**.

After producing the second card, give the hat a half turn in transferring it from the left hand to the right. The thread will now run over the front brim, under the brim, and around one side of the crown, to the fly button.

Place the hat on the table and move back carefully to tauten the thread. The card will begin to move immediately the thread is taut. Now stand still, bend forward slowly and make magical passes with the hands over the hat. Bending the body causes the





card to rise slowly over the brim (Figure 1), topple face up, when because of the wax on the back, the card will totter on the brim. Reach out with the left hand and catch the card as it falls (Figure 2).

With practice it is possible to make the card jump into

the left hand, by bringing the right hand down on the back of the thread when the card and left hand are at the position seen in Figure 2.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### NOVEL KNOWLEDGE

SOME OF THE most valuable and fascinating things to know in magic are the clever ideas and ruses which are used to enable certain effects to be produced. Over the years Dai Vernon has carried out a continuous search for little known secrets, and in this chapter gives us five such items.

#### TO SHOW THE TOP CARD

A person who performs magic with cards is naturally expected to be able to handle the pack neatly. This does not mean that the performer should give the impression that he is a skilful manipulator, but that he should appear to be completely at ease with a pack in his hands. In addition to the competent manner in which the usual operations with cards are carried out, other neat actions can be included, which are pleasing to the eye, but which do not look like extravagant flourishes.

On occasions when it is necessary to call attention to the top card of the pack, Dai Vernon has a pretty way of turning the card over to show its value. The appearance is that he causes the card to make one complete revolution, twirling it between his thumb and forefinger, for the face to be seen before the card returns to its original position on the pack. Although the movement of the card is not arrested during the turn, there is sufficient time for its face to be seen.

To perform the turn, hold the pack face down in the dealer's position in the left hand. With the left thumb, push the top card to the right for the right thumb to go to the extreme edge of the right inner corner. The card is taken by the right hand with the top of the forefinger below and the outer side of the second finger above the corner. By lifting the card a little, and pushing to the left on the edge of the card with the right thumb, the card turns over in an anti-clockwise direction, so that when it is face up the second finger is on the back and the tip of the thumb on the face. Slip the tip of the first finger to the back, and continue to make the card turn until it is face down again on top of the pack. There should be no cessation of the turning movement—the card slowly makes one complete revolution, coming face down again on top of the pack.

It is an unpretentious and simple item but it adds a touch of artistry.

## THE GINSBURG POKE

This peculiar sounding title is the name given by some gamblers to a certain method of cutting the pack. Needless to say, there is trickery involved, as it ensures that a certain card is brought to the top. The operation is simplicity itself and the reader will be able to perform it successfully at the first attempt.

We will assume that a selected card has been returned to the pack and a break is held above the card by the tip of the left little finger; the pack being held face down in the left hand. All that is necessary is to place the tip of the extended right forefinger at the rear end of the pack (Figure 1), and push out a bunch of cards. This bunch will now protrude from the front of the pack, so reach over with the right hand, pull them clear of the pack and drop them on top. When positioning the forefinger to make the "poke", it is a simple matter to ensure that all the cards pushed out are immediately below the break, then the top card of the bunch will be the one previously selected.



If the performer prefixes the action with the remark, "I'll just give the pack the Ginsburg Poke", then it sounds quite amusing and takes away suspicion from the somewhat unorthodox procedure.

Dai Vernon often uses the Ginsburg Poke in the following effective manner:—

He holds a break above a known card—it can be the original top card which has been peeked before the pack was given an ordinary cut. He says, "I want you to give the pack the Ginsburg Poke, then look at and remember the bottom card". To demonstrate this unusual request he carries out the action, **but does not look at the bottom card**. However, to make his meaning clear, when he has pushed out the bunch of cards, he says, "Look at and remember the bottom card of the packet before you drop it on top of the pack, like this". He drops the packet on the pack and, of course, has now provided himself with a key card, because when the spectator makes the Ginsburg Poke and looks at the bottom card of the packet before dropping it on top of the pack, the card looked at is automatically placed next to the key card.

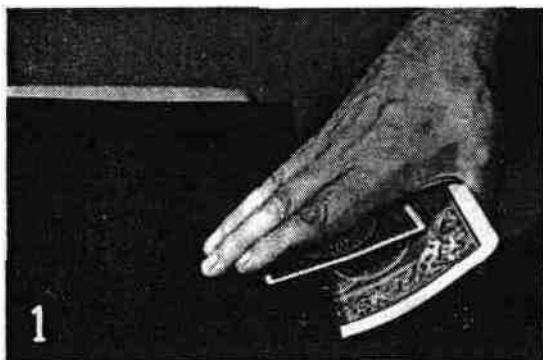
He can now terminate the trick in one of many ways, as he can always find the spectator's card.

By not looking at the bottom card of the bunch when he demonstrates what is required, he dispels any suspicion that a key card is the answer.

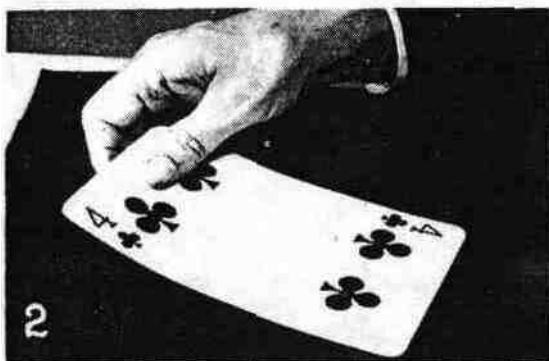
## JUMBO SURPRISE

This is a novel and surprising climax for a card trick, suitable for any occasion when there is a blotter or magazine on the table, under which a Jumbo card can be concealed. These days many magicians like to provide their own working surface, or close-up pad, on which to display their tricks, so it is a simple matter to have the Jumbo underneath. It should be face down, with one short edge flush with the rear of whatever is being used as a cover. The back of the cover must be projecting a **little** over the back of the table.

Assume that in some trick a card has been forced and eventually revealed. This force card, which is the same value as the Jumbo,



tossed face down on the cover after being displayed. Seemingly as an after-thought you say, "I usually have trouble with this card". Quickly, place your thumb under the Jumbo and the fingers over the back of the ordinary card (Figure 1), pull backwards, then lever the cards over in a forward direction to bring the Jumbo face up (Figure 2). The action gives the appearance of turning over the ordinary card, which seems to become giant size. The ordinary card is hidden by the Jumbo.



The operation is done on the off-beat, as with the revelation of the ordinary card the trick appears to be over. Watch the spectator's eyes; immediately he looks up from the table, make the move.

## ELASTIC TOUCH

A wily old gambler who Dai Vernon met, divulged the following secret, after being coaxed for hours by the Professor who was searching for little known card secrets.

Take the smallest gauge rubber band and cut it up into the tiniest pieces you can manage, making just specks of rubber. Place a quantity of these particles in your pocket, where by a scratching movement with the nail of the forefinger, two or three particles will jam under the nail at any time they are needed.

Assume that a pack of cards is on the table and you wish to have them cut and the position restored afterwards; proceed as follows:— Seize the pack by the long sides, with the forefinger curled on top (Figure 1). Just press forward with the tip of the forefinger when two or three grains of rubber will adhere to the back of the top card where they will be unnoticed. When the pack is cut and the cut completed, you can always cut to the original top card. Additionally, if the cards are required to be dealt you will always know when you come to the card above the original top card, as the sliding movement of dealing produces a rocking which can be felt when the card is reached.



This method is far superior to the more familiar one in which salt is used, as the rubber clings to the cards. The smaller the particles of rubber, the better it works.

## TIME TO CHANGE

During a trip to Reno and Las Vegas, in his never ending search for new ideas with cards, Dai Vernon met a gambler who proved to be one of the best exponents of the use of a "holdout" in the game; one of those people one reads about but seldom encounters.

This gambler also had several card secrets of a most unusual type, but like the majority of the gambling fraternity, he shied away from magicians and simply refused to "tip". On further acquaintance, he became friendly, but even the Professor's persuasive powers could not get him to divulge his secrets. Dai Vernon offered to exchange ideas, and although the gambler was not interested in magical secrets he said, "I'll show you a thing or two if you can show me a good way to switch a palmed card from my left hand to my right with the proper 'shade'," 'shade' being an expressive word used by gamblers meaning cover created by misdirection. Dai showed him his move described in the Third Edition of Expert **Card Technique**. The gambler admitted that it was good for magicians, but as very few gamblers ever used the standard magician's palm, it was not what he required.

Dai Vernon went back to his hotel room to think and experiment, as he was determined to **solve** the problem and gain the gambler's confidence. He sat for hours trying to find a method for secretly transferring a card, held in the gambler's palm position, from his left hand into his right. There had to be some logical excuse for the hands to come together for the switch to be made, and this excuse had also to be linked with the secret disposal of the card. Hours passed and when Dai glanced towards the window, dawn was breaking. He looked at his watch to see the time, then realised that he had found the excuse for which he had been seeking. What could be more natural than a gambler, after hours of play, looking at his watch? Many people bring their hands together to do this, the right hand steadying the left as they glance down at the watch on their wrist. From here on it was a question of smoothing out the moves and later in the day Dai Vernon was able to show the gambler the results. He was delighted and kept his word by divulging the secrets which Dai Vernon coveted.

Here is the sequence of moves which Dai Vernon evolved, which by the addition of a line of patter, is useful for magicians.

Assume that a certain card is in the gambler's palm position in the left hand, and that the performer wishes to dispose of this card by secretly adding it to the top of the pack. To move the left hand to the pack on the table would be suspicious, so it is necessary to transfer the card secretly to the right hand, which has previously been empty.



To do this, bring the right hand over to the left and simultaneously lift the left hand. Grasp the left hand with the right, the right thumb and forefinger at the wrist and the other fingers over the outer side of the left hand (Figure 1—exposed view). Press on the inner index corner of the card with the left thumb, to bring the diagonally opposite index corner against the side of the right little finger. The right third finger is now adjacent to the end of the card. This position is seen in Figure 1. Viewed from above the hands are in a natural position, for the performer to be looking

at his wrist watch as he says, "This trick has taken about twenty-five seconds" (or whatever the estimated time might be). Draw the hands apart, sliding the card along the left fingers until the inner long side of the card can be engaged in the right thumb crotch, the thumb moving in to grip the side of the card (Figure 2 — exposed view). The card is now in the gambler's palm position in the right hand (Figure 2) which moves to the pack and secretly adds the card to the top in the action of picking up the pack.



Obviously it is essential for the switch to be made smoothly, as the hands slide apart. The performer should be looking down at the watch as the action starts, then should look up at the spectators as the right hand travels to the pack.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### COLOUR CHANGES

FOR A TRULY magical effect it would be difficult to find one to equal the colour change, or transformation of a card. Two of magic's greatest performers, Max Malini and Nate Leipzig, regarded it as one of the finest examples of visual magic, and were well known for the manner in which they could produce this effect.

In the past the usual reason for making the transformation was that the performer purposely produced the wrong card, then when his error had been pointed out, he caused the card to change into the correct one. In modern times it is more often exhibited as a quick effect, performed at a suitable moment, either just before the magician commences a card routine, or is added in the middle to give extra weight.

In most forms of the colour change, it is the face card of the pack which is transformed. The chief mistake made by many performers is the attention which they inadvertently cause to be focussed on the actions of the hand which is not holding the pack. As this hand is usually responsible for the trickery, in that it transfers a card, often from the back of the pack to the front, then any importance which these actions would seem to have must weaken the ultimate effect. If the action of the hand has the appearance of a natural gesture, and any suspicion is further dispelled by making it seemingly impossible for the hand to have any part in the change, then the major part of the problem has been overcome.

In this chapter Dai Vernon has selected several different methods for performing the colour change, some devised by his friends and others for which he is responsible. They are all excellent methods.

#### 1 — TENKAI'S COLOUR CHANGE

The starting position is that the pack is held **upright** in the **right** hand, the first and second finger tips at the right side of the face card, at a point about a third of the length of the card from the top. This means that the fingers are at right angles to the pack which is held face on to the spectators. The right thumb is behind the pack. To ensure that the pack is held in the correct position when practising, swivel it to the left—what was the bottom right hand corner should come into the crotch of the thumb. It will be seen that the exact holding position

depends upon the length of the performer's right thumb, so this must be found by each individual. Once it is known, then the pack can always be taken into position for performance, without having to swivel the pack to gauge the distance it should be held from the top.

Keeping the pack upright, take it to the left hand which grasps it at the top end, the left second and third fingers at the left long side, the forefinger at the centre of the top edge, and the thumb at the right long side, actually resting on and across the right thumb. Do not release the right hand grip.

Holding the right hand stationary, swivel the pack to the left by turning the left hand to the left. This brings what was the bottom right hand corner of the pack into the crotch of the right thumb—the pack is now in a horizontal position.

Press the entire length of the right thumb along the back of the rear card, then keeping the right fingers stationary, pull the right thumb to the right until the upper corner of the rear card clears the left thumb. Move the right hand forward and slightly upwards, causing the rear card to tilt over the upper long side of the pack. Notice in Figure 1 how the corner of this card is in the crotch of the right thumb; the opposite corner rests on the tip of the second finger, and the tip of the forefinger just clips the corner of the card. From the front the turning card is hidden by the right fingers, which have a relaxed appearance.



Move the right hand a little to the right (carrying the card with it), to permit a full but momentary view of the face card of the pack, then bring the right hand in front of the pack, allowing the stolen card to go flush onto the face card as the right fingers cover it completely. Leave the right hand in position, but curl the right fingers inwards across the face of the new card, the appearance being that you are crumbling the original face card (Figure 2)—the new card is seen as the fingers curl. Finally, remove the right hand completely, continuing the crumbling action as if rubbing the card to nothing.



## 2 — AL ALTMANN'S

### DOUBLE COLOUR CHANGE

An excellent feature of this method is that there need be no tell-tale movement of the right thumb as the back card of the pack is stolen by **the** right hand. In addition, the face card of the pack is caused to change twice.

Hold the pack horizontally in the left hand, the bottom long side resting on the tips of the second, third and little fingers, with the thumb at the centre of the top long side. The tip of the forefinger is at the centre of the left short edge. In this position the face card of the pack is towards the spectators.

Bring the palm of the right hand completely over the face card, covering it momentarily. As the tips of the right fingers cover the tip of the left forefinger, pull back the end of the rear card of the pack with the tip of the left forefinger. Without a pause, move the right hand sufficiently to the right, so that half the face card is visible. The right fingers should be curled and the heel of the hand around the right short edge of the pack. With the left forefinger push the rear card to the right, to bring the right short end in contact with the heel of the right hand. Continue pushing with the left forefinger until the rear card is almost clear of the pack, the right hand straightening sufficiently for the card to move. As this position is reached, turn the left hand a little to slightly elevate the left end of the pack. At this exact instant, the tip of the right little finger secures the **outer** lower corner of the rear card (Figure 1—rear view). Keeping the right hand still, move the left hand to the left, carrying the pack away from the right hand (and the card it secretly holds). Display the pack face on to the spectators, but secretly separate the top long side of the face card from the rest with the tip of the left thumb. This is simple if the left thumb pressure is relaxed and all but the face card are allowed to lean back a little against the forefinger (which is curled at the back of the pack), then the thumb pressure is exerted again. In this way a break of about a quarter of an inch is held between the top long side of the face card and the remainder of the pack.



Bring the right hand down over the pack from the top, completely covering the face card. Pick up the separated card flush on the back of the one already palmed, and without pausing, continue the downward movement of the right hand, wiping the thumb downwards across the new face card as it comes into view. After only a slight pause, bring up the right hand to cover the face card of the pack, and deposit **both** cards flush on the face of the pack, then move the right hand down again, wiping the thumb across yet another new face card.

With the proper timing this double change is most effective, the right thumb appearing to make the face card change, on two occasions, as it wipes across the face of the pack.

### 3 — DAI VERNON'S "PICKING OFF THE PIP"

The effect of this change is that the performer appears to pick off the centre pip of, say, the Three of Clubs with the thumb and forefinger of his right hand.

Have the Three of Clubs on the face, and the Two of Clubs on the back of the face up pack. Hold the pack in the left hand, almost in the dealer's position, the thumb along the left long side, the second, third and little fingers at the other long side and the tip of the forefinger resting about half an inch from the right outer corner of the back card.

Bring the right hand over the pack; grasp it with the right thumb along the inner short edge, the second, third and little fingers at the outer short edge and the forefinger curled on top. With the tip of the left forefinger, push the back card to the right until the left outer corner can be gripped by the tip of the right third finger. In this action the card pivots on the right thumb. The right outer corner of the card should come against the flesh just below the roots of right third and little fingers, and the inner index corner against the flesh at the base of the right thumb. This position can be seen in the view from underneath in Figure 1. The left hand is now removed, the card being gripped at the two index corners in the right hand, and bent away from and out of sight under the pack, which is also held by the right hand. All that the spectators should see is the right hand taking the pack from the left hand.

Place the pack back into the left hand, but as the left second, third and little fingers curl underneath, they go between the gripped card and the pack (Figure 1). Lift the right hand, carrying the gripped Two of



Clubs with it, and reach down towards the centre spot with the right forefinger and thumb. Figure 2 shows an exposed side view of this action. Bring the right hand over the pack, sliding the Two of Clubs onto the face of the Three of Clubs, the timing being that the Two goes into position, flush on the Three, as the tips of the right forefinger and thumb reach the centre spot, which they seem to pick off and drop daintily to the floor. This never fails to get a good reception.

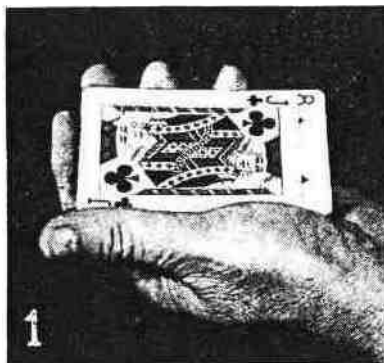


## 4 — ERDNASE PLUS VERNON

On page 151 of the 1934 edition of S. W. Erdnase' **The Expert at the Card Table**, under the title of **Transformations**, is a description of the first of eight methods for performing the colour change. Dai Vernon has developed his own method for handling this change, which is performed with the pack held flat. The change can be shown surrounded if necessary.

Hold the pack face up in the left hand, the tip of the second finger at the right outer corner, the tips of the third and little fingers at the right long side, and the thumb along the opposite long side, the tip protruding past the outer short edge of the pack. The tip of the forefinger is at the centre of the outer short edge.

Bring the right hand flat over the face of the pack, the tip of the little finger at, and completely covering, the right outer corner—the tip of the right little finger touches the pad of the left second finger. In the action of placing the right hand flat on the pack, the top card is pushed forward about half an inch, the left forefinger relaxing but remaining in position at the outer short edge. Figure 1 shows the holding position with the right hand removed for clarity. Press the flesh of the right palm below the roots of the fingers onto the exposed portion of the second card at the inner end of the pack, and slide the right hand backwards, pulling the second card back with it and exposing the face card of the pack. The right hand must be moved back sufficiently for the outer end of the second card to clear the inner end of the face card. This right hand action must appear as if another glimpse is being given of the face card and to make it look natural the left fingers should be lifted a little.



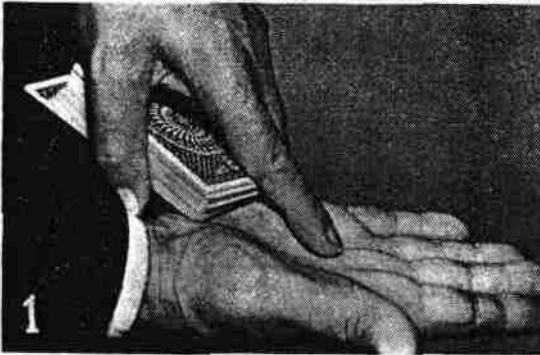
Move the right hand forward again to cover the face card, and in doing so, slide the second card over the surface of the face card. Immediately the right hand gives complete cover, push both cards flush with the pack with the tip of the left forefinger. Lift the right hand slowly and importantly to reveal the transformation.

## 5 — DAI VERNON'S "NO PALM" COLOUR CHANGE

Although the title "No Palm" is a misnomer, the handling of this method would seem to preclude the possibility of palming, as the empty right palm is seen immediately prior to it covering the pack in the colour change action.

The first essential is for a card to be stolen by the right hand and any suitable method can be adopted—for example, as in Al **Altmann's** Change.

Now hold the pack flat and face up in the left hand, in exactly the same position as for Dai Vernon's handling of the method described by Erdnase (see 4, page 49). Bring the right hand flat on top of the pack, depositing the palmed card, but positioning it so that it is jogged back about half an inch. Begin to turn over both hands together to the right, and when they are about half way over, turn the right hand faster



than the left and draw the tip of the extended left forefinger inwards along the right palm in a pointing gesture, until it reaches the centre (Figure 1). The pack is now upside down in the left hand, the jogged card well covered. Reverse the actions to bring the hands back to their original position,

the right above the left, but press on the projecting end of the card with the heel of the right hand, causing the card to spring to the right palm. (Figure 2). Without a pause, lift the right hand to again show the face card of the pack, then bring the hand down over the pack, the palmed card going flush on top.



Lift the right hand slowly and importantly to reveal the **new** face card.

## 6 — DAI VERNON'S PINCH COLOUR CHANGE

Hold the pack in the dealer's position in the left hand, securing a break under the top two cards with the tip of the left little finger. Bring the right hand over the pack, the thumb along the inner short edge, the tip of the little finger actually resting on the outer right corner, gripping the aligned corners of the top two cards, which are easily separated from the rest of the pack due to the break. Stretch the left thumb as far as possible across the face of the top card and allow the tip of the left third finger to feel the edge of the underside of the second card. With a pinching movement between the left thumb and third finger, pivot the second card a little on the tip of the right little finger until the left inner corner of this card comes against the tip of the right thumb, which should be about half an inch from the left inner corner. Still retaining the grip on the second card and the rest of the pack with the right hand, alter the position of the left hand, pinching the centre of the left long side of the pack between the tips of the left thumb and forefinger. Notice in Figure 1 how the pack is gripped right at the edge by the left thumb and forefinger—the photograph also gives a clear view of the position of the right hand on the pack.



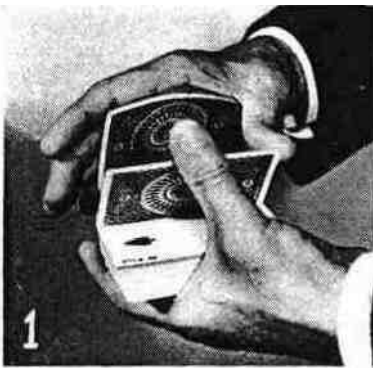
Still keeping the tip of the right little finger on the right outer corner of the second card, lower the right hand flat on the pack. The projecting inner left corner of the second card (formerly held by the ball of the right thumb) will now be in contact with the flesh just below the crotch of the thumb. Holding the right hand absolutely flat, slide it to the right until the gripped second card is completely clear of the pack. Slide the right hand to the left, bringing the gripped card over the face of the original top card, when by a slight upward curl of the tip of the left thumb, the gripped card can be lined up flush with the pack. Slide the flat right hand to the right once more to reveal the new face card (Figure 2).



## 7 — DAI VERNON'S FRENCH DROP COLOUR CHANGE

This is an amusing little *item*, as although the basic effect is a colour change, this is treated as unimportant, stress being laid on the disappearance of a card which has apparently been rather clumsily palmed by the right hand.

Secretly palm a card in the right hand—the method for stealing it can be chosen from the changes already described. Hold the pack face up, in the dealer's position in the left hand. Bring the ball of the left thumb to the centre of the left long side of the top card and tilt the card upwards (like opening a book). The holding position will now be similar to the preliminary position for making the Charlier Pass. Let the action be obvious, but ensure that the face of the tilted card is towards the spectators to obscure the face of the second card.



Move the right hand over the face of the tilted card, as if to palm it, but as the hand covers the card (Figure 1—rear view), let the palmed card go flush with it, then release **both** cards to fall onto the pack. There must be no perceptible movement of the left thumb as the cards are released. Now move the right hand away, the fingers curled stiffly, giving a dead appearance to the hand—as if a clumsy palm had been made. The vacant space between the left thumb and pack, and the indifferent card on the face of the pack, give emphasis to the apparent

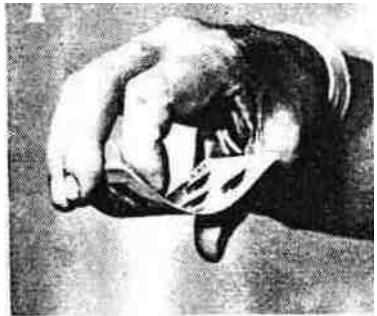
fact that the card has been palmed.

Look down at the right hand, show surprise, then turn the hand to reveal the empty palm. Immediately look down at the floor as if searching for the card which you seem to think you have dropped.

## 8 — BOB HUMMER'S VISUAL CHANGE

Bob Hummer has contributed many ingenious things to magic. Although perhaps he is better known for his tricks of a mathematical nature, he has also devised some excellent manipulative moves. His method for the transformation of a card is entirely different to the more orthodox forms of the colour change, as the pack itself has no part in the operation, the card changing as it is held face on to the spectators, between the tips of the fingers and thumb.

The main trickery depends upon two cards being held back to back (or a double faced card can be used). The card(s) are held vertically in the right hand, the ball of the thumb at the centre of the bottom short edge and the top joints of all fingers along the top short edge. In this manner the full face of a card is shown. Figure 3 shows the holding position, which is identical before and after the change-takes place. As the fingers and thumb exert a slight pressure, the card is slightly curved outwards towards the spectators.



To make the change, turn the hand downwards to obscure the face of the card,—a side view is seen at Figure 1. Curl the fingers almost into a fist, the tips of the fingers pressing on the face of the card causing it to bend in the opposite direction; that is, instead of curving outwards, it curves inwards. Reach out with the second and third fingers and seize the short edge of the card held by the thumb. Notice in Figure 2 how the forefinger has ducked down behind the edge seized by the second and third fingers. With the second and third finger tips in front, and the back





of the curled forefinger behind, begin to straighten the fingers which will cause the card to revolve in the loose fist. The edge formerly held by the fingers will come into position on the ball of the thumb. At the same time as these actions are completed, the hand is lifted to show the new face of the card. The whole operation takes but a fraction of a second, the appearance being that by a down and up flick of the wrist, the card is transformed.

An alternative is to hold the card(s) by the sides instead of the ends. This makes the transformation easier to perform and is the method preferred by Dai Vernon.

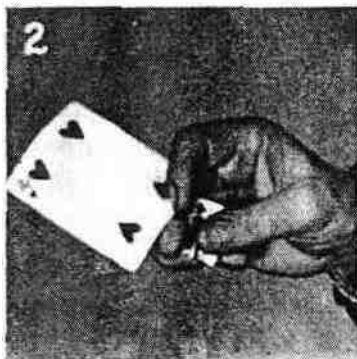
## 9 — CLIFF GREEN'S VISUAL CHANGE

Here again we have a clever method for bringing about a startling change without using the pack.

The starting position is that one card is secretly back palmed, the visible card being displayed in the same hand, held just above the lower index corner by the left thumb in front and the tips of the second and third fingers behind. Figure 1 shows an exposed view in which the face of the back palmed card is seen. The card which will be visible to the audience is at an angle to the fingers.



To make the change, release the grip of the little finger on the back palmed card, curl the second and third fingers inwards and extend the little finger until the lower corner of the visible card (opposite the index corner) can be gripped by the inner side of the little finger, against the side of the third finger. With the thumb, push on the index corner, causing the card to buckle until the index corner comes adjacent to the third finger. Lift the second and third fingers over the corner of the card so that it can be gripped between the second and third fingers (Figure 2). Immediately reach over the backs of the fingers and onto the face of the other card with the right thumb and pull the card over and onto the front of the fingers, straightening the fingers as the card is brought to the front. In the back view shown at Figure 3, the final position of the cards can be seen. Notice how the original card is now back-palmed in an unorthodox fashion, being curled along the third finger.



With practice, the moves can be performed quickly, and should be accompanied by an upward and backward tossing action of the hand to provide cover as the cards change positions.

Cliff **Green** performs a triple change by the same method—with slight variation.



## CHAPTER SIX

### DEXTEROUS DECEPTION

SO FAR THE reader's dexterity has not been over-taxed, but here is something which does take a good deal of practice to master. However, the photographs of Dai Vernon's hands performing the moves will be a great help, and the reader has the incentive of knowing that when it can be performed, then he has acquired one of the most spectacular methods of producing cards ever evolved.

The effect is that the performer brings his hands (with fingers open) in front of his body and interlocks his fingers. The backs of both hands can be seen, then as the hands are slowly turned, the empty palms are brought towards the audience. Again the hands are turned to show the backs, but when the palms are brought to the front once more the full face of a card is seen filling the hands. This card flutters to the stage, then the backs and fronts of the hands are again shown before another card is seen filling the hands. The production of cards continues until six or seven cards have fallen to the stage. The climax comes when the hands are parted and yet another card makes its appearance, this time rising between the extended forefingers.

Anyone who has seen Dai Vernon produce cards in this manner will have been delighted with the effect, for it seems quite impossible for there to be any cards concealed in his hands. Here is the method:—

#### PRODUCTION OF CARDS WITH FINGERS INTERLOCKED

Probably **Cliff Green** was the first person to produce cards from his hands, held with the fingers interlocked. He developed a method for producing cards in this manner, from a suggestion made by Dai Vernon, when they were discussing one of **Arnold De Biere's** moves with a billiard ball. In this first method the hands were not turned during the production; the cards appeared above the hands which had their backs towards the audience, and held with the fingers interlocked.

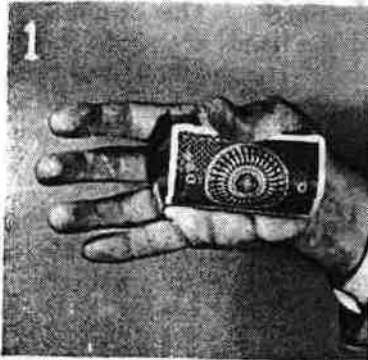
**Tenkai**, with his flair for improvement, made important alterations, then Dai Vernon evolved moves for commencing the production, provided an effective climax, and added certain touches which made the production more angle-proof.

In its present form the flourish can be performed almost surrounded, without an unwanted glimpse of cards being given, the only inadmissible view being from over the performer's shoulder. The cover is so good that when Dai Vernon appeared on the Dutch Television Network, the critical lenses of three television cameras, positioned at different angles, did not disclose the secret even though the hands were televised in close-up.

### Starting Position:

Six to eight cards are a sufficient number to be produced, as the flourish is more effective if performed fairly slowly.

Dai Vernon has the cards in his right hand, faces of the cards away from his palm, with the exception of the card furthest from the palm, which is face to face with the other cards. Figure 1 shows the initial holding position, the bottom long side of the packet of cards being against the palm in line with the third finger, and the centre of the upper long side of the packet at the very base of the thumb. The thumb pressure causes the cards to be bridged outwards away from the palm, the springy nature of the cards keeping them in position. Notice how the cards are well back towards the wrist so that the fingers may be slightly apart in a relaxed position.



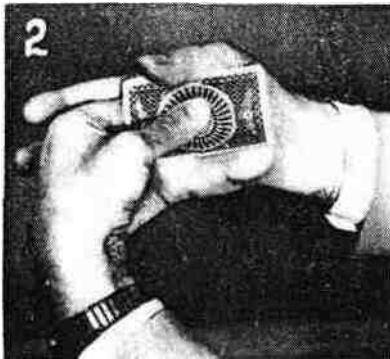
### Interlocking the fingers :

The photographs at Figures 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11 show a view over the performer's shoulder.

The hands are brought together, fingers and thumbs interlocked, then separated again. For a second time the hands are brought together; the first finger of the right hand must go between the first and second finger of the left hand, with all other fingers interlocked and the tips of the thumbs touching at the rear. The fingers are now pulled slightly part way out, then pushed together again, but the left forefinger ducks down between the right hand and the cards, so that this finger together with the left thumb, grasps the cards (Figure 2), pulls them

to the left and lifts them to line up the top long side of the packet with the right forefinger and edge of the palm adjacent to the right forefinger. Actually the whole length of the right forefinger and the adjacent edge of the palm, will be on the upper long side of the packet.

At this point the cards are still gripped by the left thumb and forefinger, and the left thumb bends the cards over the left forefinger for the right thumb to position itself so that the bottom right corner of the



packet can be pushed into the crotch of the right thumb. Additionally, the left bottom corner of the packet is pushed into the crotch of the left thumb (Figure 3). With the cards in this position the arms can be moved from side to side, enabling the audience to see all of the backs of the interlocked fingers (Figure 4).

### Showing the hands :

To show the inside of the hands, the right thumb pushes upwards on the lower long side of the packet, which releases the corners clipped by the left thumb. The left thumb revolves around the bottom long side of the packet and comes up in front of the right thumb. By sliding the thumbs together, the left end of the packet is made to slide across



the back of the left hand (Figure 5).. The hands turn to bring the palms towards the audience who see the fronts of the interlocked fingers and the empty palms (Figure 6). The position of the left forefinger and thumb conceals the peculiar position of the cards. The movements are reversed to bring the backs of the fingers towards the audience once more, and it is while the backs of the fingers are towards the audience that the first card is brought into position ready for production.



#### The production:

To produce a card the left first finger exerts a backward pressure on the cards, then moves downwards with an inward twisting motion, causing the card against the length of the finger to leave the rest of the cards, when it is momentarily steadied by the left first finger and thumb (Figure 7), then as it is brought down a little more, it is held with the side of the right little finger at the centre of one long side and the right thumb at the centre of the other long side. The card is now right in the palms and the hands are turn-



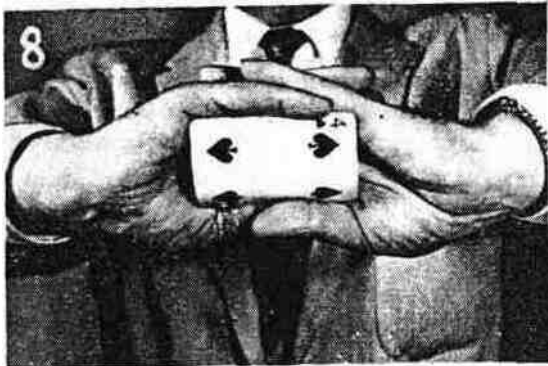
ed to show the full face of the card (Figure 8).

After a slight pause, the card is projected forward by pushing it with the left forefinger, and falls to the stage, leaving the empty hands

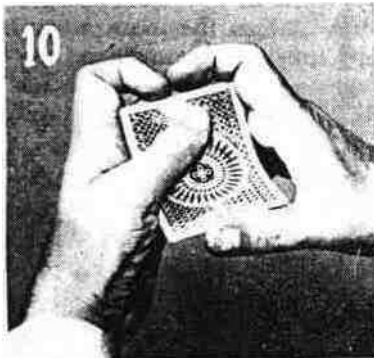
showing as in Figure 6. The actions are repeated until all the cards, except the last one, are produced.

**Production of the last card :**

It will be remembered that this last card was reversed, and if produced in the same way as the others, would appear with its back towards the audience. However, Dai Vernon commences with the card reversed as he has devised a novel and spectacular method for producing the last card.

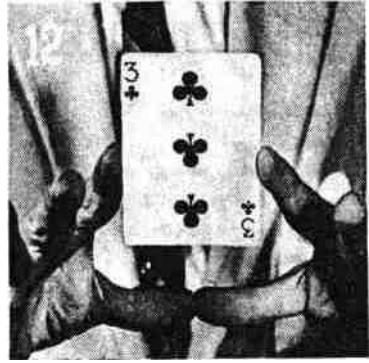
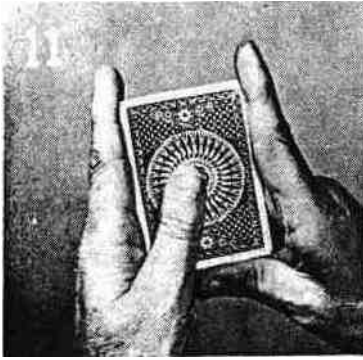


The hands are pulled apart until the fingers are no longer interlocked, but are still interspaced, side by side. The tip of the right forefinger pulls on the left upper corner of the card, the card itself being pivoted between the tip of the left forefinger and the pad of the left thumb (Figure 9). As the card is coming upright, the right thumb



sneaks over the long side (Figure 8), to the face of the card and slides down to the end. The ball of the right thumb goes to the centre of the bottom edge and pushes upwards to bend the card slightly (Figure 10). Now the two forefingers are extended upwards, one along each long side of the card, whilst the concealed left thumb is extended diagonally across the back of the card (Figure 11). The right thumb pushes upwards on the bottom edge of the card, causing it to rise between the extended

forefingers—the left thumb tip joins **the** right thumb tip on the bottom edge of the card as the card travels upwards.



When the card has risen so that about two-thirds of its length is above the forefingers, the card is levered outwards, the hands parting so that the card is held by the tips of the forefingers only, the palms of the hands being towards the audience, with the thumbs at right angles to the fingers. The tips of the thumbs are together. Figure 12 shows the final position in which the card is displayed—after a pause, allow the card to flutter to the stage.

One of the main advantages of this method over any published previously, is that during the production of the cards with the fingers interlocked, the cards themselves are curled at the back of the hands and do not protrude. This allows far greater freedom of movement without the danger of the cards being seen.

The performer who wishes to conclude a back and front palm routine with the production of cards whilst the fingers are interlocked, will find little difficulty in transferring the cards from the usual front palm position to the curled position along the right palm, when the hands are brought together and fingers interlocked.

## BOB HUMMER'S VARIATION

The clever magician **Bob Hummer**, has altered the method of interlocking the fingers, so that no portion of the cards can inadvertently show (even under the closest scrutiny) when the palms of the hands are towards the audience.

To interlock the fingers, the right first finger goes between the first and second fingers of the left hand as in the previous method, but the second and third fingers of the right hand go between the second and **little** fingers of the left hand.

With the fingers interlocked in this new fashion (and the cards in position), looking down from above you will see the right first finger, left second finger, right second and third fingers together, left little finger, then the right little finger (Figure 13). When the hands are turned so that the palms are towards the audience, the view of the inside will show the left first and third fingers across the right palm (Figure 14).

It is most important that the interlocked fingers are pushed together firmly. From here on the actual mechanics of the production are exactly the same as already described.







## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE NOTIS STOP TRICK

THE LATE **Senor Notis** was undoubtedly one of Argentina's foremost card experts. One of his specialities was juggling with three spinning playing cards, in the same manner as a juggler would perform with balls. He devised many clever card tricks and his method for the "Stop" trick is excellent. Dai Vernon visited him on several occasions and they became firm friends. The method for the "Stop" trick was shown to Dai Vernon during one of these visits, after he had complimented Senor Notis on its performance in his Cabaret act.

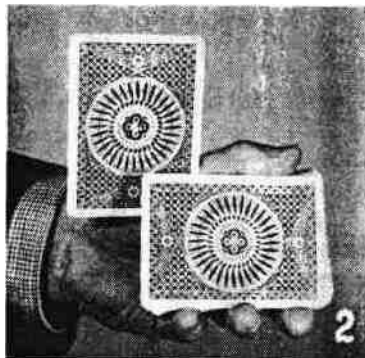
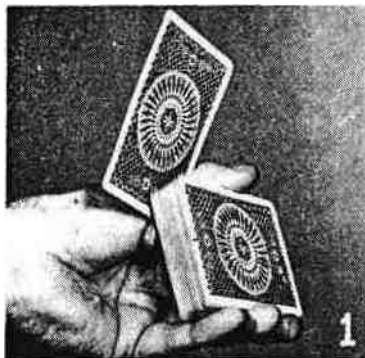
In this version a selected card is shuffled back into the pack which the performer then holds in his left hand, with the back of the pack towards the audience. Cards are levered upright from the pack, and at any time a spectator may call "Stop". The card which is standing upright when "Stop" is called proves to be the previously selected card.

**PERFORMANCE:** Allow a free choice of a card but when it is returned to the pack, secretly bring it to the position second from bottom. Hold the pack horizontally in the left hand, the second, third and little fingers at the bottom long side and the thumb at the centre of the top long side—the backs of the cards must be towards the audience. It is necessary for the pack to be held deep in the fingers and thumb, to bring the top right hand corner of the back card into firm contact with the flesh at the base of the thumb.

Place the tip of the left forefinger against the centre of the left short edge of the pack and separate the end of the back card from the rest by pulling it backwards. Push to the right with the forefinger, causing the back card to slide to the right and protrude at the right end of the pack. Continue pushing, bringing the tip of the bent forefinger right against the flesh at the base of the thumb. Because the corner of the back card is in firm contact with the base of the thumb, it will swivel on this pivot and come upright. Figure 1 shows a side view of the action of the left forefinger, and Figure 2 the view the audience sees as the card comes upright.

Use this as a demonstration for what you are about to do saying, "I will push cards from the back of the pack in this manner and anytime you wish, you may call 'Stop' ". Bring the right hand to the top of the upright card and take it at the centre of the top short edge between the thumb and forefinger. Swivel the card in a downward arc to the right,

then as it comes in line with the rest of the pack, lever the card forward and to the left so that it is brought face out onto the pack.



Repeat the actions to bring the next card upright, but on **this** occasion separate **two** cards with the tip of the left forefinger. It will be found that the cards will remain in perfect alignment as they **are** brought upright. If, say, three cards should be separated accidentally it does not matter, as they will still remain in perfect alignment and appear as one card, providing there is no space between them (that is, that their whole surfaces are together). The selected card will **now** be the back card of the upright pair.

Should the spectator not say "Stop", then proceed as before, swivelling the pair of cards together in a downward arc to the right. As they come in line with the pack, push them in behind the pack **for** about an inch; push the back card (or cards) with the right thumb



(Figure 3—exposed view) so that it goes behind the pack. In the same continuous action, lever over the front card to bring it **face out** onto the pack (Figure 4).

By carrying out the moves described it will be seen that the selected card is always the back card of those swivelled upright, so that at any time the spectator decides to call "Stop", this card can be shown by proceeding as before, but instead of pushing it to the back of the pack, the cards are kept in alignment and levered over together onto the pack.

An added help for secretly pushing the selected card to the back of the pack if "Stop" is not called, can be provided by the left forefinger. After this finger has brought the two (or more) cards upright, it moves back to the left short edge of the pack, then as the right thumb pushes the back card (or cards) behind the pack, the left forefinger pushes on the end of the pack and slides it to the right. In this way the move becomes a combination of the back card being pushed under the pack which slides in the opposite direction to cover it. In addition, the move itself is covered by levering the front card, face out, onto the front of the pack.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### MEXICAN TRICKERY

IN MEXICO DAI VERNON met a gambler who had retired with a fortune and who, in consequence, was more susceptible to the Professor's powers of persuasion than if he had still been following his vocation. The Mexican confessed that he had made use of "Strippers" in his work and eventually divulged his methods.

The two items with which we will deal in this chapter have been closely guarded secrets, and it was Dai Vernon's intention that they should remain so until the publication of this book. One of the items which we have called **Sure Fire Showdown**, was shown in confidence to a few card enthusiasts and the secret leaked out sooner than intended. We will deal with this first, as it makes a splendid trick for magicians who like to include something with a gambling flavour.

#### SURE FIRE SHOWDOWN

This was used originally as a challenge, the gambler stating that he was willing to play a single hand of "Showdown" (that is, two Poker hands are dealt from a shuffled pack) with one opponent, and letting his opponent deal, would bet on his own unknown hand.

The secret is that nine cards in the pack could be stripped out when the pack was cut. These cards were, three Nines, three Fives and three Jacks. The other Nine, Five and Jack were not in the pack.

After the opponent had shuffled the pack, the gambler would cut, his method being that as his right hand cut the lower portion to the top, his second finger stripped out any of the necessary cards in the original top half. Another strip-out collected any necessary cards remaining in the new top half, and these too were dropped on top.

Now when the opponent dealt, the gambler was sure to get five of the nine cards, the other hand consisting of four of the original nine and one indifferent card. Whatever the indifferent card happened to be, it could not add to the value of the hand, and the gambler always won when the hands were shown.

An interesting presentation for magicians is to have the nine cards stated (they need not be "strippers" in this instance) and one other card. The indifferent card should have a pencil dot, or some other secret distinguishing mark, on the back at each non-index corner.

After the ten cards have been shuffled by the opponent, the performer spreads them face down on the table and says, "You shuffled these cards yourself—I cannot know the order, but I wager that the cards you deal to me will be the winning hand".

By glancing at the backs of the cards the performer sees the marked card. If it is at an **even** number, counting from the top when the cards are squared, the opponent must lose when he deals. Should it be at an **odd** number, take the top card and scoop up the spread cards with it, so taking the top card to the bottom and bringing the marked card to an even number from the top.

## BATHROOM STRIPPERS

Many magicians who acquire this book will first search the pages to find this secret, as it has become somewhat of a legend. The title has intrigued card enthusiasts ever since Dai Vernon let it be known that perfect "Strippers" could be made quickly with the aid of something which is obtainable in any bathroom!

The method is the one used by the Mexican gambler, who had to be prepared to equip himself with a pack of stripped cards at any time a game was imminent. He had to retire to a place where he could be on his own for a few minutes, so his obvious choice was the bathroom. Actually the establishments he frequented rarely had anything remotely resembling such a place, so we must confess that we have been over-polite with the title. However, the dilapidated lavatory was almost certain to have a broken window, and this is what he needed in addition to privacy—for with a piece of broken glass he was quickly able to turn any ordinary pack into "Strippers".

So if the reader wishes to make his own "Strippers" in the Mexican manner, the first essential is a piece of glass with a jagged edge.

Take about one third of the pack and press one long side down firmly on a table or other flat surface. Bevel the cards to the left and rub the glass along half the length of the upper long sides; bevel the cards to the right and rub the glass along the same surface, then repeat the process with the cards held upright. Now shuffle the cards, hold them upright on the table again and treat the same surface once more. Treat each third of the pack in the same way, assemble the pack, shuffle the cards and rub the glass along the same half of the long sides. Any roughening of the edges of the cards can be smoothed away with the polished surface of the glass.

A knack has to be acquired to treat the cards quickly and to obtain the necessary finish, but packs prepared in this manner have passed close scrutiny by experienced card players.

## CHAPTER NINE

### MIRACLES TAKE A LITTLE LONGER

Now a chapter for the card enthusiast who enjoys having something difficult to tackle, for without doubt, the next three items present a challenge.

#### THE CHINESE SECOND DEAL

THIS METHOD OF second dealing has created a considerable amount of interest amongst top flight card men since Dai Vernon heard of its existence from a Chicago gambler. This gambler said that he had met a Chinaman who could deal seconds in a certain type of one handed deal which is sometimes used by players of **Black Jack** and **Stud Poker**.

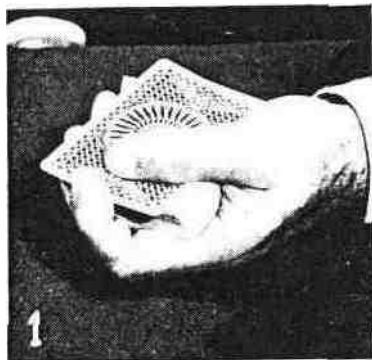
The fair method of dealing with one hand in this manner is to push the top card forward slightly with the thumb, so that it projects over the front short end of the pack, then pull downwards on the projecting end with the tip of the forefinger, causing the top card to flip straight over, end for end, until clipped face up, held by the index finger, against the face of the pack, then it is allowed to fall face up on the table. It would seem an impossibility to duplicate these moves for secretly dealing the second card.

Dai told the story to Jack McMillen who was very interested, but like other card men, dubious of the possibility. Sometime later, Dai received a special delivery letter from Jack McMillen, stating that he had found a Chinaman in San Francisco who could perform this second deal, but who was not prepared to divulge the secret. However, after watching him in play, Jack McMillen was convinced that he had been dealing seconds and had noticed an interesting feature which could be the clue to the method. He had seen that on occasions, the end of the second card had projected slightly over the end of the pack for a fleeting moment. With this slender clue as a basis, Dai Vernon and the late **Dr. Jacob Daley** experimented, and after a while, both could perform the second deal, but neither would claim to have completely mastered the technique at that time.

For those readers who like to experiment, we give a description of the fair method of dealing and also the theory of the second deal.

## THE DEAL

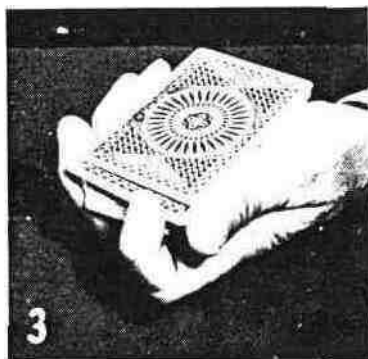
The photograph at Figure 1 shows the holding position of the pack, the left thumb having pushed the top card forward over the front end of the pack, to enable the tip of the forefinger to pull down-



wards on the edge of the card to make it turn over, end for end. -It is usual to hold the card a moment, face up, the end pressed against the underside of the pack (Figure 2), before allowing it to fall face up on the table.

## THE SECOND DEAL

The theory is that the hand tips up for a fraction of a second to cover the action of the left thumb, which pulls back the top card, pushes the second card **forward** and simultaneously brings the top card forward again. This is difficult to do cleanly and a certain knack has to be acquired. The tips of the second, third and little fingers





press on the right long edge of the top card to hold that edge firm, then the right forefinger reaches up, the tip is placed on the projecting end of the second card (Figure 3), and pulls downwards. The second card bends until the pressure it exerts causes the top card to lift at the left long side (Figure 4) to allow the second card to snap out from under it. Because pressure is exerted on the long side of the top card by the little finger, it snaps back into place.

When the knack is acquired, the top and second cards transpose in a truly uncanny manner. The second card appears to rise through the top one.

If one has fairly moist fingers, it is not even necessary to push the second card forward with the left thumb. The left index finger can perform the entire operation of pulling forward and downward, causing the card to snap over. Of course, the top card must be first pulled backward by the thumb and forward again as the second is dealt.

It should not be used as a continuous deal. A game like Black Jack (Twenty-one), is ideal for its use, and it also could be used on occasions when playing Stud Poker.

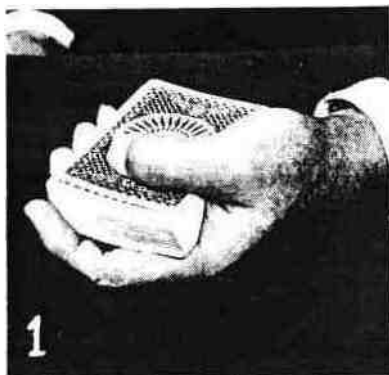
Note — In a recent letter from Dai Vernon he writes, "I am quite pleased with the deal and have used it quite effectively in several tricks, using it once only.

The secret is to press down on the projecting card as near the **left** corner as possible—about an inch from the corner. The left thumb moves out of the way to the left and the card flips over instantaneously."

## THE SHOOTING SINGLE HANDED DEAL

In the Vernon Club (the name is coincidental) outside Chicago, **there** is a Black Jack dealer who has an unusual method of dealing cards with one hand. Without any tossing or throwing action whatsoever, he spins the cards from the top of the pack with such accuracy and force, that he can propel a card the full length of a Black Jack table, and make it come to rest under a small coin placed at the other end of the table.

Dai Vernon watched this done on many occasions with keen delight and asked the dealer if he could explain the knack. He claimed that he had been dealing this way since he was a boy of eleven and used to deal in a gambling establishment run by his father. In those days he was so small that he had to stand on a box to deal on the table. He made no secret of the method he used, but it was obvious that a good deal of practice is necessary before the knack can be acquired.



The holding position for the pack is the perfectly normal one for dealing. *The* top card is pulled back by the left thumb which is bent at the top joint (Figure 1) A good deal of downward pressure is exerted by the thumb which causes the outer right corner of the pack to be bent up a little against the forefinger. When the left thumb snaps forward to propel the top card, the bent-up corner of the pack causes the card to lift. The top card shoots from the pack with a twisting movement, which together

with the lift, gives it even flight in a flat arc.

**Note**—In a recent letter Dai Vernon writes: "I have facility with this. The knack is to **twist** the thumb or **roll** it counter-clockwise before pressing it against the top card. Once the 'feel' of this is learned the cards really spin off in fine fashion."

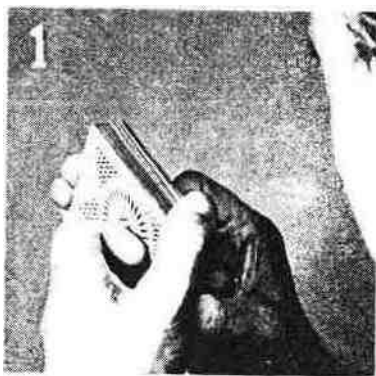
## LOOK UP

When Dai Vernon first visited New York in 1915 it was this particular trick which gained for him recognition by all the "greats" of the day. He had remarkable success with it. Of course, in those days, no one even attempted such a stunt, and any known methods for producing a thought of card were pretty crude.

Dai Vernon discovered a certain principle which is particularly interesting to the card enthusiast who loves to delve into the unusual aspects of card magic.

Knowledge of this principle allows a performer to discover a card which a spectator has merely thought of when running the cards, face up, between his own hands. It depends upon the fact that a spectator, in running the cards from hand to hand, will push over cards almost singly until he has thought of one of the cards, then will either close the pack or run the next cards quickly and casually.

Let us suppose that a pack has been shuffled by a spectator who is then asked to run the face-up cards between his hands and think of one card. Almost always he will carry out the actions described above. On receiving the squared pack, the performer holds it up to eye level and sights along the uppermost long side as in Figure 1. Although the pack has been squared by the spectator, very little importance has been placed on the squaring action, and very slight projections will be seen at one end of the long side of the pack. These projections were caused when the spectator ran the cards almost singly from his left hand into his right. The sides of the cards went into the crotch of his right thumb and had no firm, even surface against which they could become squared. Accordingly, when the pack is handed back to the performer, unless a careful and deliberate squaring action has been carried out, tiny projections will remain. The projection furthest from the face of the pack will either be the thought of card, or one close to it. By cutting to this projection and noting, say, the projecting card and two each side, then the performer will have a fair chance of being able to conclude the trick to give a remarkable effect.



Should projections not be seen on the first long side, then turn over the pack and sight along the other long side. A trial will show that even if one end of the pack is squared, projections will remain at the other end. It takes quite a deliberate action to completely square the pack.

It is important that the performer squares up the pack at the short edges, which seemingly squares the pack, but which also helps to make the projections more pronounced.

Obviously a risk is being taken with tricks of this nature and one must not expect success right away, but with experience the chance of failure becomes less and less. Dai Vernon demonstrated this principle to the clever Dutch magician, **Fred Kaps**, who has since had wonderful results.

