

DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Monday, December 14, 1885.

A CONJUROR AT HOME.

TRICKS OF LEGERDEMAIN.

(Continued.)

According to a certainty the cards upon which two persons have thrown a glance for the shortest possible space of time, it must be allowed one of the most remarkable and puzzling achievements of the conjuror's art, and may be termed the crowning feat. I do not assert that it was by this process, Herr Hermann, as you called him, that he made his two guinea thought of, but if not thus I can conceive no other method by which he made them known to him, unless, indeed, he were veritable witchcraft.

Some ten or fifteen minutes had passed, and the conversation was about to elapse into generalities, when our host rose from his seat, and taking the cards from the table, went to the other end of the room, and asked you to ask your opinion of a trick which, he said, you have often seen—your opinion as to how I do it. Will you oblige me by taking a card?

"Would you allow me to suggest the unopened pack of cards?" inquired friend Skeptic with an air of wisdom. "Oh, certainly," answered Herr Hermann, "open the untouched pack yourself, and then give it to me." Skeptic removed the envelope from the new pack, and scrutinized the cards carefully. "The eyes of the company were now fixed on the pack, and no one spoke. Skeptic having satisfied himself that the cards had undergone no preparation," handed them to the conjuror. "Take a card," said the latter. It was done. "Now take the pack in your own hands, put the card back and shuffle." Skeptic did as he was told, and handed the pack to the conjuror. "I would like to see you do that," said Herr Hermann, "to tell you the card you drew?" "Rather!" ejaculated Skeptic. "What if I were to do more, and make you draw again the same card?" "I should like to lay ten pounds to a half crown of that." "Keep your money my friend, I don't want to rob you; give me the cards." He took the cards from Skeptic, and shuffling them, said: "This time when you draw the card do not let any one see it, nor say what it is until I ask you. I must do my tricks after my own fashion. Draw!"

He drew. "Now place the card on the table, back upward, and cover it with your hand, holding it tightly." Skeptic did as he was desired. "Now, sir, is not that card the one which you drew first?" "Certainly not!" exclaimed Skeptic, loudly and triumphantly. "Indeed!" cried Hermann, "there must be some mistake." Of course there is, rejoined the guest, "but it was your mistake!" and he laughed with much glee. "Are you sure?" "Positively." "Name the cards." "I drew the Queen of Spades first, and this under my hand is the Nine of Diamonds." "Let me look at it." Skeptic took away his hand, turned the card and beheld—the Queen of Spades. An explosion of laughter at Skeptic's expense was followed by a volley of cheers for this wonderful clever feat of sleight of hand, if indeed it was so, for I was utterly at a loss at the time—and am now when I think of it—to account for the manner in which it was accomplished.

Many of the tricks were exhibited in the course of the evening, but those related above are decidedly the newest and best, although some of the others would have made a common conjuror's fortune. Several times Herr Hermann held out a pack of cards, and named beforehand the card any of us would draw, in spite of our efforts to foil him, and this without failing in any one instance. Of course, "passing a card" is one of the commonest tricks in card-jugglery; but to "pass a card" and name it beforehand, and "pass" it on a company so "cunning" of fence, and so wary as ours, was a very different matter.

Better than "passing the card" with such magical dexterity—which we know is achieved by rapidly and neatness of fingering—was the trick with the pear, which indeed was as inconceivable as anything shown that evening. One of the party was asked by the conjuror to take a pear from the table and mark it, then to cut a slice from it, to eat the slice, and hand the pear to Herr Hermann. This was done, and the pear given to the conjuror, who, taking it in his hand, threw it up toward the ceiling, caught it as it fell, and returned it sound and whole to the gentleman, who declared that it was the same pear he had marked, and from which he had cut the slice.

COULDN'T GET THE RIGHT FLOP.

In the year 1842, during the Millerite excitement in the usually quiet town of Durham, old "Aunt Sally," who would "weigh well high on to two hundred pounds," "go up," and one evening in meeting, in the midst of a warm season of exhortation, she arose and said: "Oh, brethren and sisters, bless the Lord, I'll soon get away from this wicked world; I'm going to meet the Lord in a few days. My faith is powerful strong! So strong," continued the old lady, extending her arms like a "goose on the wing," that it does seem as if I could fly right away now and meet the Lord in the air."

The minister, who was as great an enthusiast on "going up" as the old lady, encouraged her by exclaiming: "Try, sister, try! Perhaps you can fly, if your faith is only strong enough."

"Well, I can," she exclaimed, "I know I can, and I will!"

She was standing near a window, which was raised because of the oppressive heat—for it was summer. With her handkerchief in one hand and her fan in the other she mounted the seat and thence to the top of the pew, and gave a leap into the air with a flying motion of her arms, expecting to ascend heavenward. But the law of gravitation was too much for both her faith and the gravity of the audience. Down she came with an enormous and not very anguished grunt, shaking the whole house with the concussion. She arose, folded her wings, and with great meekness sneaked back into her seat, evidently disappointed.

The next evening some of the young folks asked her:

"Aunt Sally, why didn't you fly last night, when you tried so hard?"

"I couldn't get the right flop," was the meek and conclusive reply.

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