

POLAND WATER



INTERIOR VIEW OF NEW SPRING HOUSE.

The famous **Poland Spring** is located under the glass case, which may be seen in the picture above, behind the bronze framed glass partition.

Interior finish of **Spring House** is Italian Marble.

Hiram Ricker & Sons, South Poland, Maine

SECRETS OF THE MYSTIC ART



SPEAKING of sleight of hand, said a guest at The Inn the other evening, there is a little shop in New York, the headquarters of magic in America that's well worth a visit, for about everything imaginable connected with the mystic art is to be found here, and even India itself, famous the world over, frequently calls upon the proprietor for apparatus.

Most interesting of all are the relics of famous magicians. There is, for instance, the vanishing cage of Buatier de Kolta, which Mrs. de Kolta presented to the proprietor after the death of the conjurer. Sleight of hand men declare that de Kolta was the greatest prestidigitator that ever lived. He never used a trick invented by any other person, and he is said to have invented more tricks which have been copied by other performers than any other man. This vanishing cage was a favorite. It was simply a bird cage, containing a live canary, which he held out in plain view of the audience. Then the whole thing disappeared. That was all there was to it, but it was most mysterious. The cage was collapsible and disappeared up De Kolta's sleeve. The art consisted in making it disappear invisibly and without hurting the canary.

De Kolta made this cage with his own hands. Most prestidigitators have been expert mechanics. Many of them have originally been watchmakers or optical instrument manufacturers. The next most prolific sources of supply have been the professions of chemistry and medicine.

A souvenir of "Alexander the Great" Hermann shows the pleasure which that prince of the art took in his own hocus pocus. This was too small a trick to use on the stage, and he invented it merely to amuse his friends in his own home. It is a little cabinet of ebony, inlaid with mother of pearl, containing thirty-two small drawers, just the size of a playing card, all numbered. The observer was asked to choose one of the thirty-two cards and to name the drawer in which he would have it appear. The card always appeared in the right drawer. The conjurer's art lay in compelling the selection of the right card. The drawers had false bottoms and springs, and a card like that selected had been previously concealed in all of them, waiting for a deft pressure to bring it to light in the drawer selected.

Visitors to the proprietor of this little shop of magic sometimes sit down unawares upon a plain, old fashioned sofa which they are surprised to learn was once the throne of a high priestess of the occult, Miss Haidie Heller, in her famous second sight act with Robert Heller. This trick awakened wide interest thirty years ago. It was most mysterious and inexplicable and puzzled even those who knew that it was a trick. Miss Heller sat upon the sofa blindfolded and with her back to the

audience. Heller, in the audience, borrowed objects from spectators, and Miss Heller described them sometimes. Not a word was spoken by Heller, nor could she see him to get her cue by his gestures. The apparatus did it all. The sofa was wired for an electric battery. A confederate sat in the audience, his chair connected with the battery, the electric push button under the seat. A code was arranged by which Miss Heller knew exactly what to say. The performance was rendered more mysterious by Heller talking to her in part of the tests. Some people supposed, of course, that he was giving her the cue with his questions. But when the same results were obtained in silence the suspicious were also mystified.

Apparatus is an elastic term when used in connection with legerdemain. Some pieces of apparatus can be concealed between two fingers. Others fill boxes ten feet long. The earlier magicians used cumbersome apparatus. Frikell, a Finn, born in 1818, who was knighted by the King of Denmark and received diamond rings and the like from most of the sovereigns of Europe, revolutionized the art. He used no apparatus at all. This tendency prevailed for many years, but at the present time the tendency toward big, showy effects and gorgeous stage settings is bringing in the use of more complicated apparatus than ever. A first class magician now travels with a railroad car full of apparatus. Fifteen thousand dollars is not an unusual sum to pay for staging a first class magician's show nowadays. It is a mechanical age. Present day prestidigitators in no way excel the old fellows in pure legerdemain, but a flood of mechanical inventions have come to help them, and all the conjurers have to do is to manipulate these skillfully and gracefully. Their task is no easier, however, for it is a sharper and more skeptical age than the earlier men played to, and one used to mechanism of all kinds.

The little shop carries a thousand different kinds of apparatus in stock. Then there are thousands of others which it is called upon to make, some of them very old. Every day some book or leaf out of a book will arrive from Kalamazoo or Calcutta, with a letter stating that the writer wants to do the trick described, and wants the apparatus for it constructed. Some of these tricks were invented centuries ago. The great present day inventions in the art are illusions and levitation, both of which require elaborate devices. Harry Keller's levitation act, in which the body of a man rose slowly into midair and remained suspended there while the hypnotizer fanned him, required a complicated machine behind the scenes to work it.

De Kolta's illusion, in which every object on the stage appeared and disappeared in a seemingly unaccountable manner, ending with the decapitation of a woman whose head thereupon danced uncannily through the air without any

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