

"MAGIC FLOWERS."*

A trick that has contributed much toward making one of our leading magicians such a favorite with the fair sex is one in which a bush filled with genuine rosebuds is caused to grow in a previously examined pot that contained nothing but a small quantity of white sand.

After the bush is produced, the flowers are cut and distributed to the ladies, and by many recipients of the magician's favors these buds are looked upon as a production of fairy land. For many years this trick has occupied a prominent position on the programme of the magician in question, and mystifies the audience as much to-day as ever; thus proving how well magicians keep their secrets from the public. The trick is not a difficult one by any means, yet, regardless of its simplicity and the ease with which it may be performed, the florist would find it anything but an economical method of raising roses, as a perusal of the following will show.

On the stage are seen two stands with metal feet, and with long, rich drapery trimmed with gold fringe. On each of the stands is a miniature stand on which are flower pots.

The magician passes the pots for inspection, then places them on the stands, and plants a few flower seeds in each pot. A large cone, open at both ends, is shown and can be carefully examined. One of the pots is covered for a moment with the cone, and on its removal a green sprig is seen protruding from the sand, the seed having sprouted, so the magician says. Now the second pot is covered for a moment with the cone, on the removal of which a large rosebush is seen in the pot, a mass of full-blown roses and buds. The first pot is again covered for a moment with the cone, and when uncovered a second rosebush is seen, equally as full of roses as the other. The cone is once again shown to be empty.

A small basket or tray is now brought forward, on which the roses and buds are placed as the performer cuts them from the bushes, after which they are distributed to the ladies.

The stands are not what they appear, as the drapery does not extend entirely around them, but quite a space at the back of the stands is open. There is a small shelf attached to the stand leg, near the bottom of the drapery. Three cones are used, of which the audience see but one.

The rosebushes are merely stumps to which are attached a base of sheet lead, cut of such a size as to fit nicely in the flower pots, resting on the sand. To the stump the genuine roses are attached by tying with thread. When the bushes are prepared they are suspended inside of cones, by means of a stout cord that is fastened to the stump by one end and to the other end of which is attached a small hook, which hook is slipped over the edge of the upper opening of the cone. When the bushes are placed in the cones, these cones are placed on the shelves at the back of the stands. Reference to the second engraving will make the arrangement of the shelf, back of stand and position of concealed cone plain to all. There is a variance in the size of the cones. The cone shown to the audience is slightly larger than the cone that is behind the first stand, and the cone behind the second stand is a fraction smaller than either of the others. Thus the cones will fit snugly one in the other, in the order named.

After the performer has shown the pots, planted the seed and placed the pots on the small stands, which are used to convince the spectators that there is no connection between the pot and the large stand, he shows the large cone, which is nicely decorated, and covers the top of the pot on the first stand, as he says, to shut out the light that the seed may germinate. Between the fingers of the hand holding the cone he has concealed a small metal shape, painted green, which he drops through the cone into the pot. In a moment he removes the cone from over the pot, and in a most natural manner passes it down behind the stand and over the concealed cone containing the rosebush, and carries this cone away inside of the larger one. At the same moment he picks up the flower pot and carries it down and shows the green sprout in the sand.

The performer now steps to the second stand and covers the flower pot on it with the cone. As soon as the pot is covered, he slips off the small hook supporting the rosebush, which drops into the pot. The weight of the lead base keeps it in position while the cones are being removed.

When the performer removes the cone—or cones, we should now say, as we have two now in place of one, although this fact is unknown to the audience—he



THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

passes it down behind the stand, over the concealed third cone, picking it up with the second rosebush inside. He now returns to the first stand, covers the pot, and, by slipping off the hook holding the rosebush in position and removing the cone or cones, properly, from the pot, shows the second rosebush. He now turns the large cone so the audience can see through it, and as the upper and lower edge of each cone is blackened, there is no danger of the inside cones being seen. The rear of the stand tops are something of a crescent shape to facilitate the passing of the large cone down behind the stand in a graceful manner.

The Oldest Inclined Plane Railway in the World.

The oldest inclined plane railway in America, and probably the oldest in the world, engaged in the transportation of passengers, is the Mount Pisgah plane, near Mauch Chunk, in the Lehigh Valley, Pa. One of the peculiarities of this place is that the ropes are not hitched to the passenger car, but to a special car or truck, known in the anthracite region by the name

frame that the wheels may be brought closer together, and thereby the gage reduced, or they may be spread for a wider gage, as the situation may require.

The barney does not stand on the same track as the passenger car, but on a track located within a sloping trench, and this track is considerably narrower than the track on the incline, and also on the ground level upon which the passenger car stands. At the point where the slope begins there is a switch, by means of which the wheels of the barney are adjusted to suit the gage of one or the other of the tracks upon which it is to enter.

When the barney descends into the trench to a depth where it disappears below the ground level, the passenger car is free to move back from the inclined plane. The purpose of this arrangement is to avoid the necessity of permanently hitching the rope to the passenger car, because this latter is not only to travel on this plane, but to continue its journey on two other planes, all of which, combined with several gravity inclines, constitute a circuit by which the tourist travels over three inclines and three intervening slight down grades.—Samuel Diescher, in Cassier's Magazine.

The Geographical Society's New Home.

There are many of the cultured residents of New York who are not aware of the scope and functions of the American Geographical Society, yet for half a century its practical enterprise and scientific influences have been felt in all lands and seas of the world. Its officers and the men who have had its assistance and hospitality include some of the most illustrious names in the modern history of discovery, from Humboldt to Stanley, and now this society is about to enter upon a new era with a fund for a plot and building which reaches nearly \$400,000. A decision is soon to be reached as to a site, and the form of structure will be determined upon. It is considered desirable that ex-Chief Justice C. P. Daly, who has been president of the Society for thirty-three years, shall preside over the completed structure. The money for the site was largely amassed through his efforts. Like many societies, it started with a humble beginning in the old University building in Washington Square, its founder being William H. Coventry Waddell. Its first president was the historian George Bancroft. The encouragement of the Society was soon sought by explorers like Dr. Hayes, Du Chaillu, Dr. Kane and Captain Hall. Dr. Francis Hawkes succeeded Mr. Bancroft as president, who was followed in turn by Henry Grinnell, who defrayed the expenses of Dr. Hayes to the Arctic regions. The Society was on the point of dissolution when Judge Daly was elected president and Peter Cooper was induced to give the Society space in Cooper Institute for a meeting room and a library. The present house of the Society, 11 West Twenty-ninth Street, was bought in 1875. Since then, by bequests, by surplus revenues above expenses and by the acquisition of the Union Home and School property on the North River, the Society's assets can be placed at \$400,000.

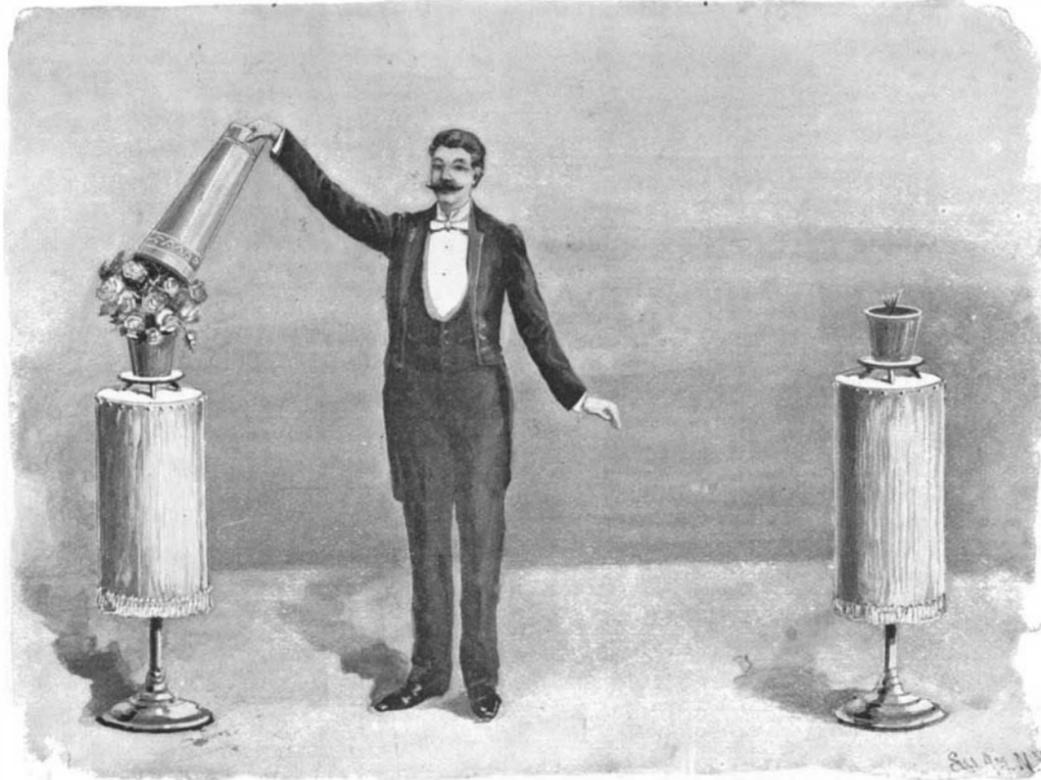
The collections in the Geographical Society's house are most interesting and include a large map which was spread before the commissions which signed the treaty of peace between the Colonies and Great Britain in 1783 at Ghent.

The new structure will probably include an auditorium with a seating capacity of 800. This part of the structure will be below the street level. Above on the next floor will be the library with ample accommodation for charts, maps, curios and other collections. Above will be the classified rooms set apart for maps and charts. On the top floor suitable provision for club, dining and other social features will be made.

A Cable to Iceland.

At its last session, the Icelandic Parliament decided to accept the offer of the Great Northern Telegraph Company in Copenhagen to lay a submarine cable to Iceland from the north of Scotland via the Farøe Islands. The

Icelandic Parliament grants an annual subsidy of 35,000 kroner for twenty years. The Danish government has promised ample financial help and active cooperation in the scheme. It is estimated that the cable can be laid early next summer in six weeks. The great trading and fishing industries of Iceland will undoubtedly be benefited by the cable, and meteorologists are looking forward to it with delight.



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“barney.” This truck acts as a pusher against the passenger car. It is on the lower side of the car, and thus, when the hoisting machinery is brought into action, the barney is pulled up, and in turn pushes the car ahead. There is a peculiar arrangement on this barney that should be mentioned, namely, instead of two axles, it has four half axles, each with a wheel mounted on it, and these axles are so attached to the truck

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