The performer in the above example would say to the spectator, "You have a total of fourteen cards in your pocket, five of which are black and nine of which are red." The spectator checks this by taking the cards from his pocket and counting them. Again the performer is correct. A fitting climax to a great trick.

90. MIRASKILL

An unusual and streamlined card trick created by the Canadian magician Stewart James-with a few subterfuges added by the author.

PRESENTATION AND EFFECT

The performer hands a spectator a deck of cards and asks him to shuffle it. While the deck is being shuffled, the performer produces a pencil and paper and asks the spectator, "What is your favorite color, red or black?" Regardless of what color the spectator names, the performer writes a message on a piece of paper, taking precautions that the spectator does not see the writing. He then folds the paper up with the writing hidden on the inside, and places it on the table to one side.

The performer now says, "I have written a prediction on that piece of paper, which I believe will prove to be correct. Well, let us get on with the trick. You have shuffled the deck and called out the color red." (Assuming the spectator called red.)

The performer continues instructing the spectator, "Place the deck face down in your left hand, deal two cards at a time from the top of the deck, and turn both of them face up as you deal them. If the two dealt cards are red (the color you called) put them on the table face up in front of you. If the two dealt cards are two blacks, place them face up in front of me. If the two dealt cards are of opposite colors, one red and one black, place them in a third pile which we shall call the discard pile.'"

The spectator is told to do as directed above until the entire deck of cards is exhausted. In other words, the spectator continues dealing the cards off the top of the deck in pairs and putting them in their correct piles until the entire deck has been dealt into three piles.

When the entire deck has been dealt, the performer asks the spectator to unfold the paper and read the written prophecy.

It reads, "Your pile has four cards more than my pile.'"

The performer's and the spectators' cards are counted and the prediction is shown to be correct.

The performer starts putting some cards back into the card case, then, as if a thought has just come to him, he removes the cards from the card case and has a second spectator shuffle and do exactly as the first spectator did.

The performer asks the second spectator's favorite color. He calls black (for example) and the performer writes a second prophecy. At the completion of the trick, the prophecy is read and it reads, "Your pile has two cards less than my pile." The cards are counted and the prediction is correct again.

The performer puts the deck into his right-hand coat pocket without the card case. Then, seeing the card case on the table, he removes the cards from his coat pocket and places them into the card case and leaves it on the table while the spectators discuss the trick.

The performer then decides to do the trick once again. The performer requests a spectator to remove the deck from the card case and shuffle the cards, remarking at this time, "I am going to write the prediction without asking the spectator which color he prefers."' The performer writes down the prediction and puts it to one side, and informs the spectator that he can put the red or the black cards before himself, whichever he prefers.

The deal is completed in the same manner as the two previous deals.

The prophecy is read and it says, "Your pile contains the same number of cards as my pile."'

"And that, my friends," says the performer, "proves that I'm one hundred per cent correct in my prediction."'

THE SECRET

The trick practically works itself. It is based on the mathematical principle that regardless of how much the cards are shuffled, if the entire deck of fifty-two cards is used, and the cards are dealt into three piles-as described in Presentation and Effect-the black and red piles must have the same number of cards.

Therefore, to do the trick successfully, before starting the trick the performer secretly removes four black cards. Two of these cards he places inside the card case, and the other two he places inside the right-hand coat pocket of his (the performer's) coat. The card case is then placed into the same pocket.

In other words, the performer has forty-eight cards in the deck when he does the trick the first time. At the completion of the trick the first time, the performer takes the card case out of his coat pocket and puts a few cards back into it. Then, when he changes his mind and decides to do the trick for the second time, he takes all the cards from the card case, including the two extra black cards (we are supposing the performer removed four black cards before the start of the trick). He leaves the card case on the table, and pushes it to one side.

After having done the trick the second time, the performer places the entire deck into his right-hand coat pocket. He now notices that the card case is still on the table. He takes the deck out of his coat pocket, plus the other two black cards (which were placed there ·before the start of the trick), and places the entire deck into the card case and leaves it on the table.

Later on when the performer decides to do the trick for the third time, the spectator is told to take the deck out of the case himself. Naturally all fifty-two cards are there now.

The prophecy works regardless of which color the spectator selects.

Should he call for black, the "short color" (short meaning four black cards were taken from the deck), the performer writes, "Your pile has four cards less than my pile."

Should the spectator call for red, "the long color" (because deck contains more reds than blacks), the performer writes, "Your pile has four cards more than my pile."

Naturally, when two cards are missing, 2 will be the key number.

And when the entire deck is employed, the performer writes, "Your pile contains the same number of cards as my pile."'