

THE AMBITIOUS CARD.

To place a card in different parts of the pack, and yet to make it always return to the top.

"SINCE I have taken to the study of prestidigitation, I have noticed a very curious fact, namely, that cards, like human beings, are extremely fond of positions of dignity. To them, the highest honour is to lie on the top of the pack, and when one of them has been chosen by a spectator, it considers that it has become very superior to its companions, and will persistently elbow them out of the way in order to get to the topmost place. If you like, I will give you a specimen of these little domestic dissensions among the cards.

"Madam, will you be kind enough to draw a card? With your *left* hand, please. Very good. What card have you taken? Oh! The queen of diamonds. Be kind enough to replace it yourself in the pack." (You make the pass.) "See, before I have time even to turn round, the card has got to the top of the pack." (Shew the queen of diamonds, which, in consequence of the pass, is now on the top.) "I again place it in the middle." (Pass it to the top by the *Voisin* method, described at page 2.) "Scarcely have I done so, when the card, with extraordinary agility, regains its place on the top of the pack."

Again shew the card, but, while still talking, "change" it (as described at page 3) for the top card, which you hold low so that its face cannot be seen.

"I replace the card a third time. Upon my word, this is too bad. The very moment I leave it, it flies to the top again." (Turn up the queen of diamonds, which was left by the "change" on the top.) "But you may fancy, perhaps, that I don't really put the card in the pack. If you will put it back yourself, madam, there can be no doubt on the subject."

So saying, you hold the queen of diamonds in your hand in

full view of the spectators, and advance towards the person to whom you speak. On your way, however, you again "change" this card for the top card, and offer this latter to the lady, who, having no reason to suspect the change which you have made,* places the card in the pack without looking at its face.

"You see, madam, the very moment you have let go of it, it has got back to its favourite position."

Show the card, and hand the pack for examination to prove that it does not contain more than one queen of diamonds. In fact, the better to satisfy the spectators on this point, it is as well, during the progress of the trick, to spread the pack two or three times before them.

The prestidigitateur Alberti has the credit of being the inventor of this trick, which is very effective, but demands a considerable amount of dexterity to perform it neatly.

THE TWO CARD-BOXES.

To cause two chosen cards to change places.

THE card boxes (Fig. 25) are two flat boxes exactly alike, and containing each a thin wooden slab which, according as the box is laid the one or the other side upwards,† falls into

* This is strictly true. The "change" in skilful hands is practically invisible.—TRANS.

† It should be mentioned that the boxes are polished *all over*, top and bottom, so that no difference is discernible, whichever side chances to be uppermost.—TRANS.