

40 Vintage Life Hacks from 100 Years Ago

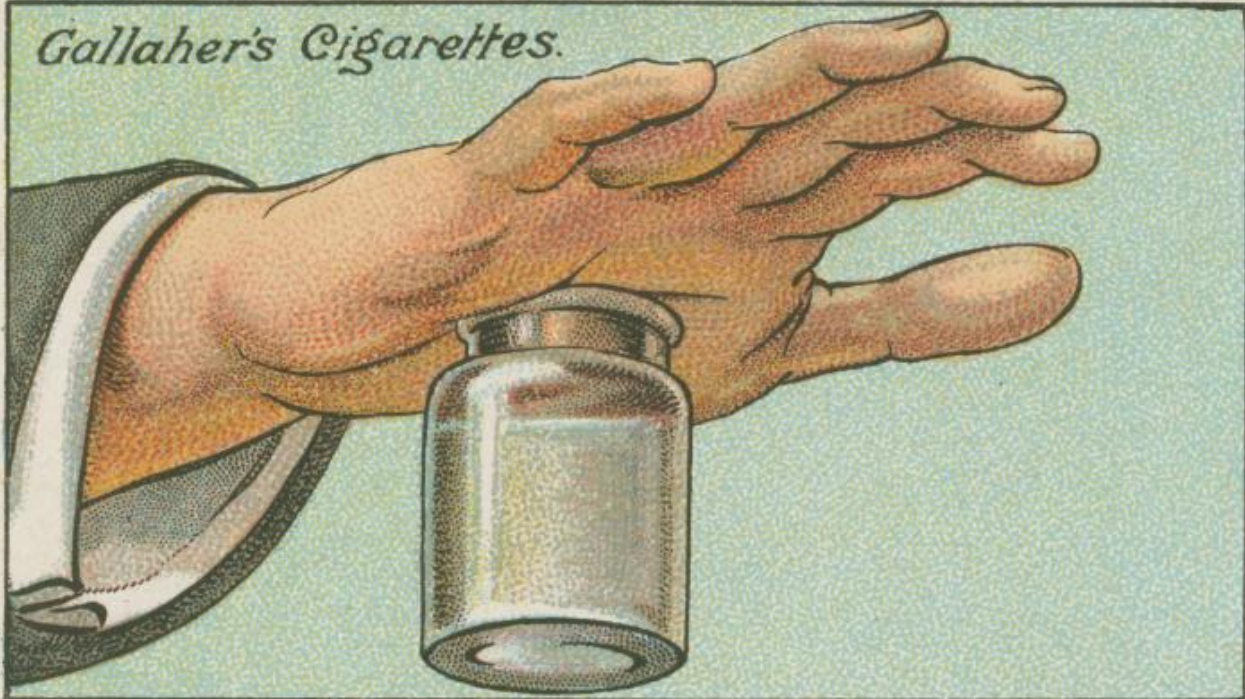
Back in the 1900s, cigarette manufactures used to insert stiffening cards into their paper cigarette packs to add strength and help them last longer. Along the way, someone had the bright idea of printing trivia, artwork and even famous people and athletes (Honus Wagner anyone?) onto the stiffening cards.

In the early 20th Century, Gallaher's Cigarettes printed a special series of 100 "How to do it" cards that included some truly useful and helpful tips for everyday situations and problems. The entire 100 card collection is part of the New York Public Library's *George Arents Collection* and was recently digitized.

Below you will find 40 of the Sifter's personal favorites. Visit the NYPL Digital Collections to see them all.

1. How to Extract a Splinter

Gallaher's Cigarettes.



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 20

HOW TO EXTRACT A SPLINTER.

A splinter embedded in the hand is often very painful to extract. A good way to accomplish this is to fill a wide-mouthed bottle with hot water nearly to the brim, and press affected part of hand tightly against mouth of bottle. The suction will pull down the flesh, and steam will soon draw out the splinter.

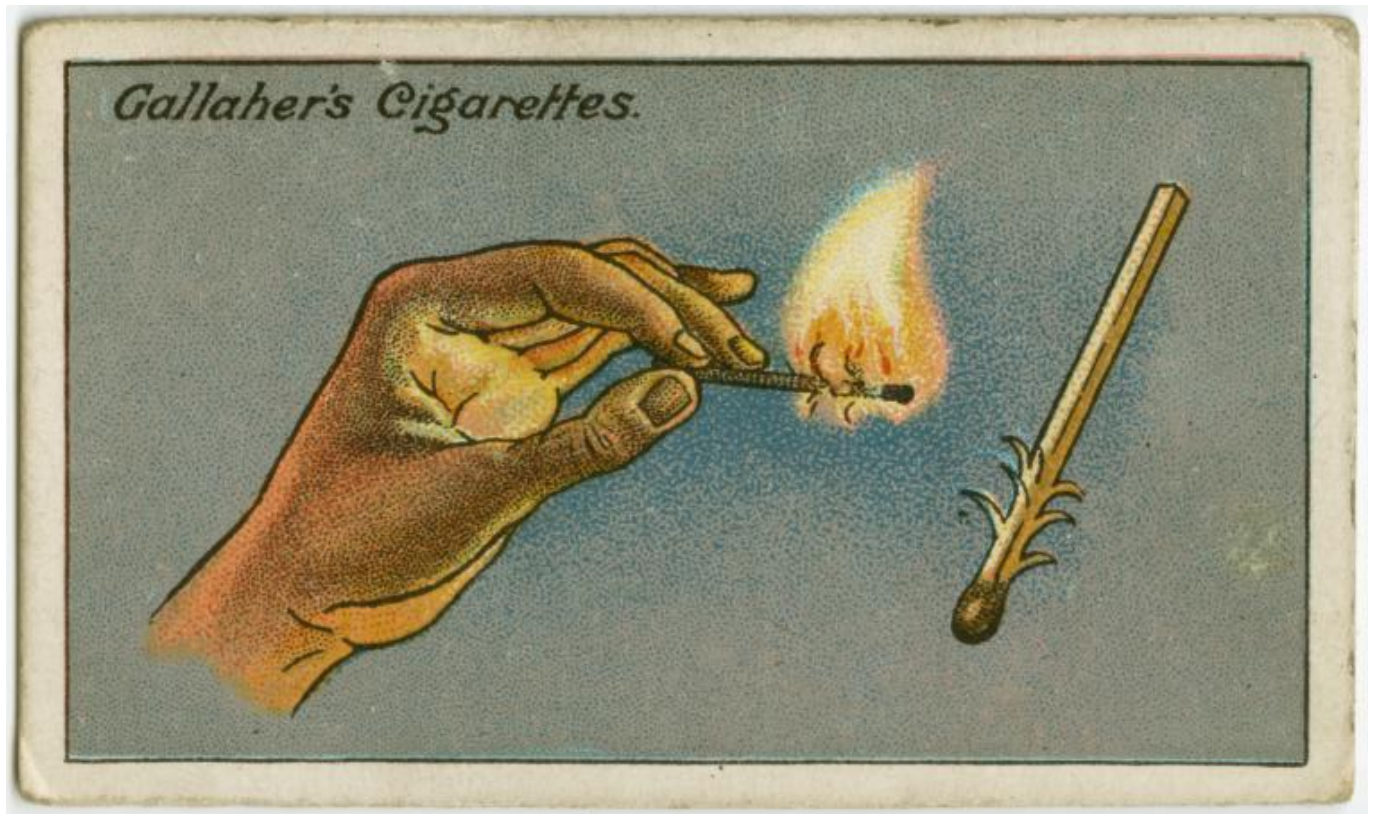
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2. How to Light a Match in the Wind



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 62

HOW TO LIGHT A MATCH IN THE WIND.

The familiar difficulty of lighting a match in a wind can be to a great extent overcome if thin shavings are first cut on the match towards its striking end, as shown in the picture. On lighting the match, the curled strips catch fire at once; the flame is stronger, and has a better chance."

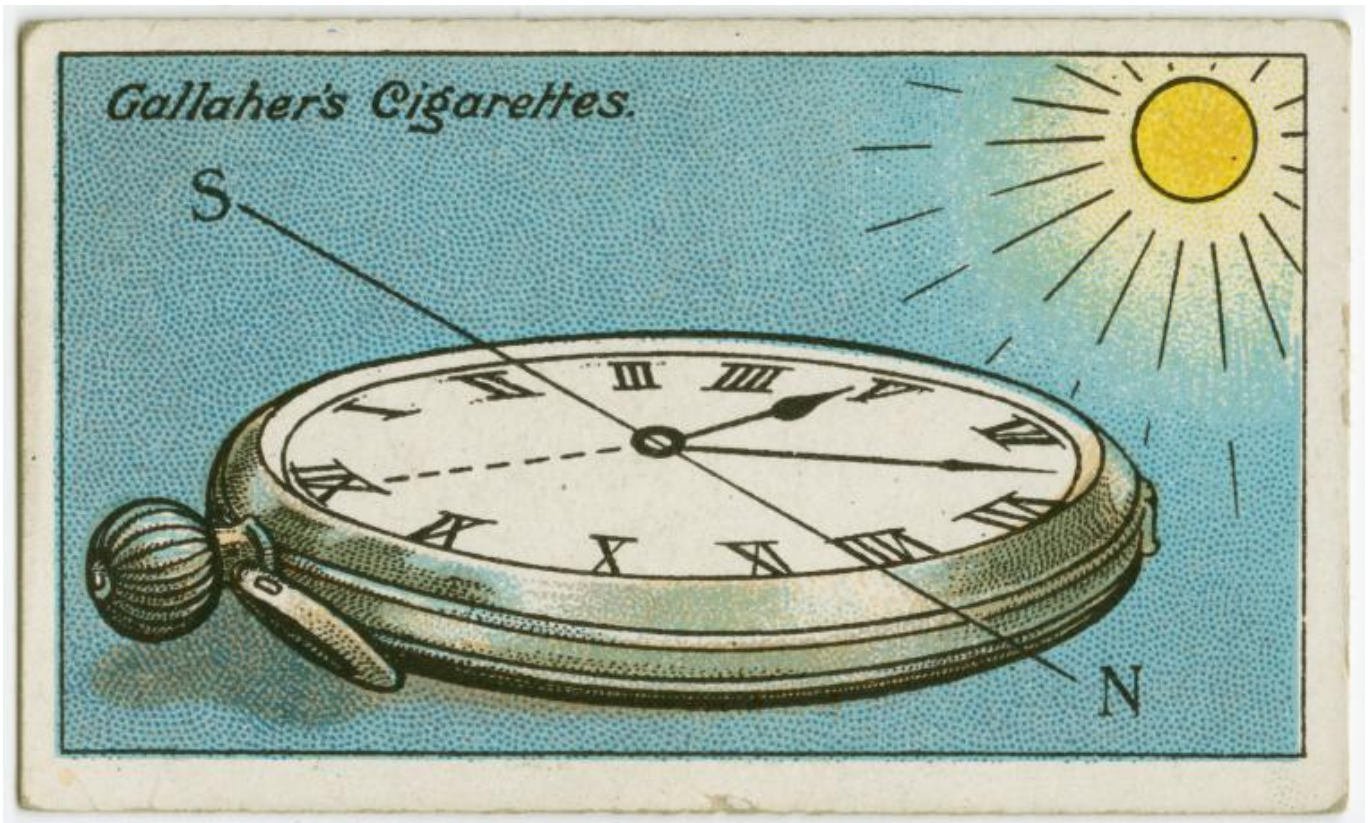
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3. How to Tell the Points of the Compass with a Watch



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 72

HOW TO TELL THE POINTS OF THE COMPASS WITH A WATCH.

To determine the points of the compass by means of your watch, point the hour hand at the sun and then lay a piece of wire, or a blade of grass crosswise between the hour hand and the figure twelve. The end of the wire between the twelve and the hour hand points due south.

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4. How To Treat Sprains



100 IN SET

How to do it

N^o 10 HOW TO TREAT SPRAINS.

Elevate the injured joint and wrap in cloths wrung out in cold water. The picture shows how to keep the cloths constantly wet without having to change them. A jug of water placed higher than injured limb, and a strip of linen with one end in the jug and the other end resting upon the wrapping of sprained joint, is all that is necessary. The water will pass from jug to compress by way of linen strip. Give a rubbing with oil or liniment as sprain gets better.

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5. How To Make a Fire Extinguisher



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 13

HOW TO MAKE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Dissolve one pound of salt and half a pound of sal-ammoniac in two quarts of water and bottle the liquor in thin glass bottles holding about a quart each. Should a fire break out, dash one or more of the bottles into the flames, and any serious outbreak will probably be averted.

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6. How To Carry a Heavy Jug



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 26

HOW TO CARRY A HEAVY JUG.

The picture gives a useful hint on carrying a heavy jug. The correct way to hold the jug is shown in the right-hand sketch. This prevents the weight from pulling the jug down and so spilling what it contains, as is likely to happen if carried the other way.

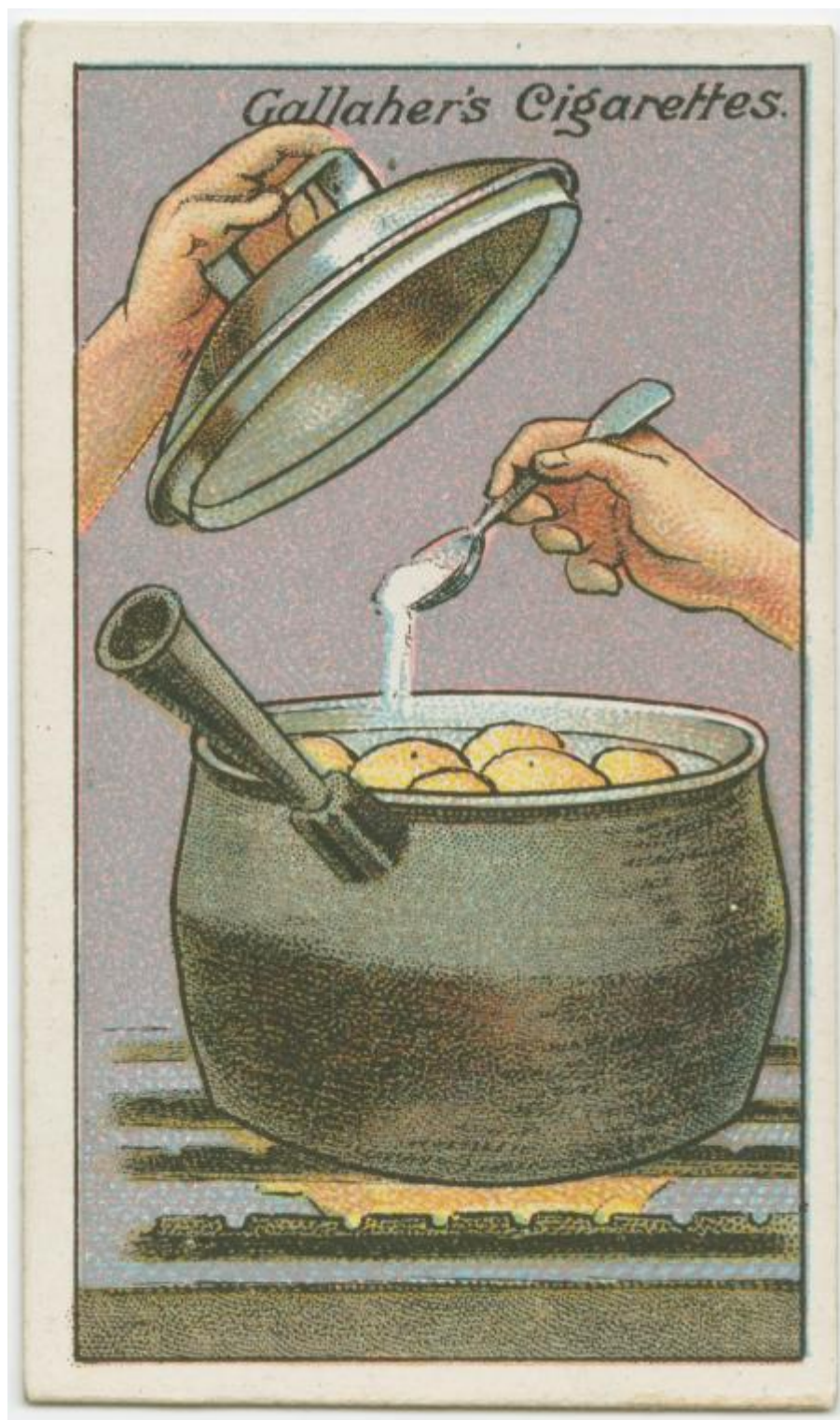
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7. A Hint When Boiling Potatoes



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 12

A HINT WHEN BOILING POTATOES.

To make potatoes dry and floury when cooked, add to water when boiling them a pinch of sugar as well as salt. When potatoes are done, water should be poured away and saucepan replaced over the fire for a short time, shaking the saucepan occasionally to ensure equal dryness of potatoes.

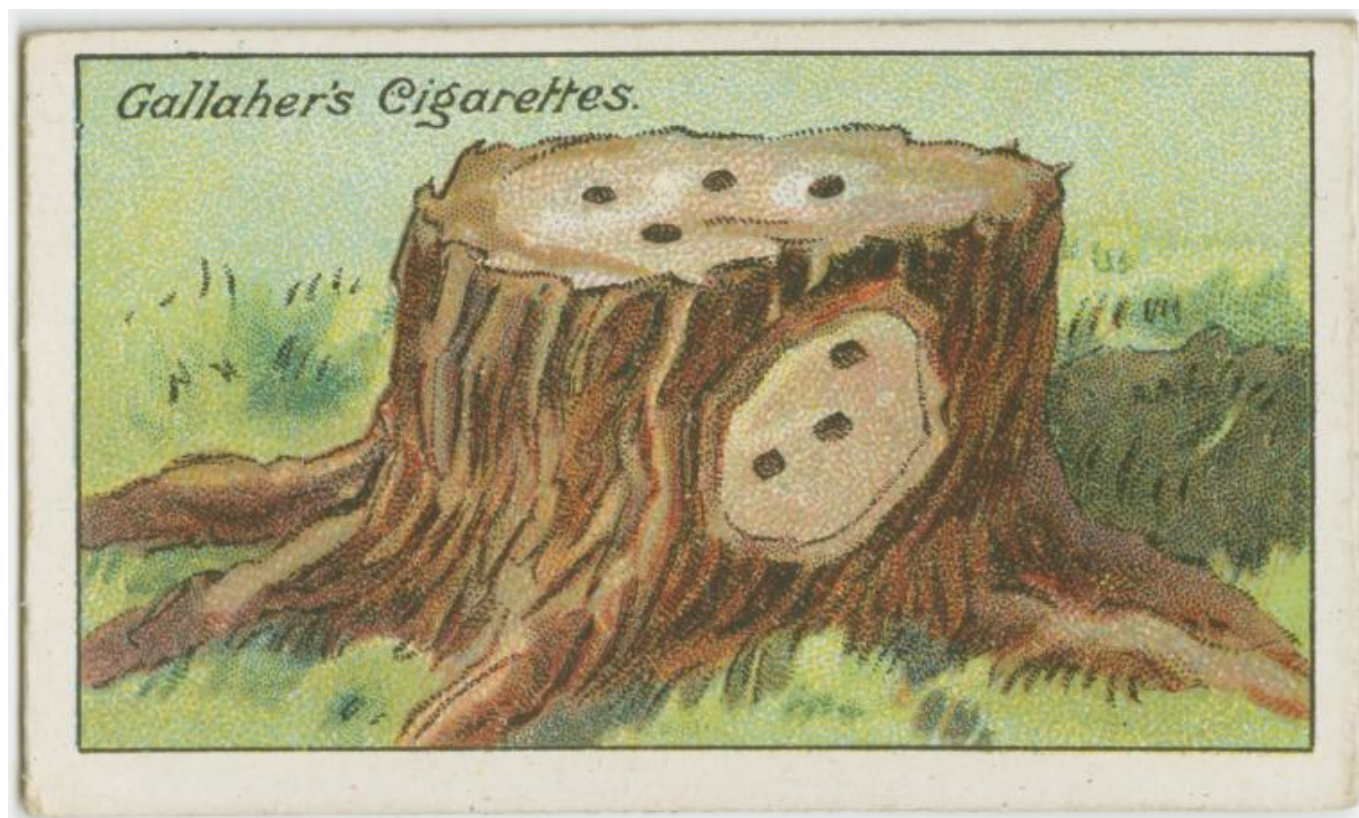
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8. How To Kill a Tree Stump



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 4

HOW TO KILL A TREE STUMP.

If a tree stump is not removed from the ground, it often starts sprouting, and strong undergrowth results. To prevent this, holes should be bored in top of stump, and a patch of bark cut from side and more holes bored there. A mixture of solignum and salt filled into these holes will soak through the tree stump and kill it.

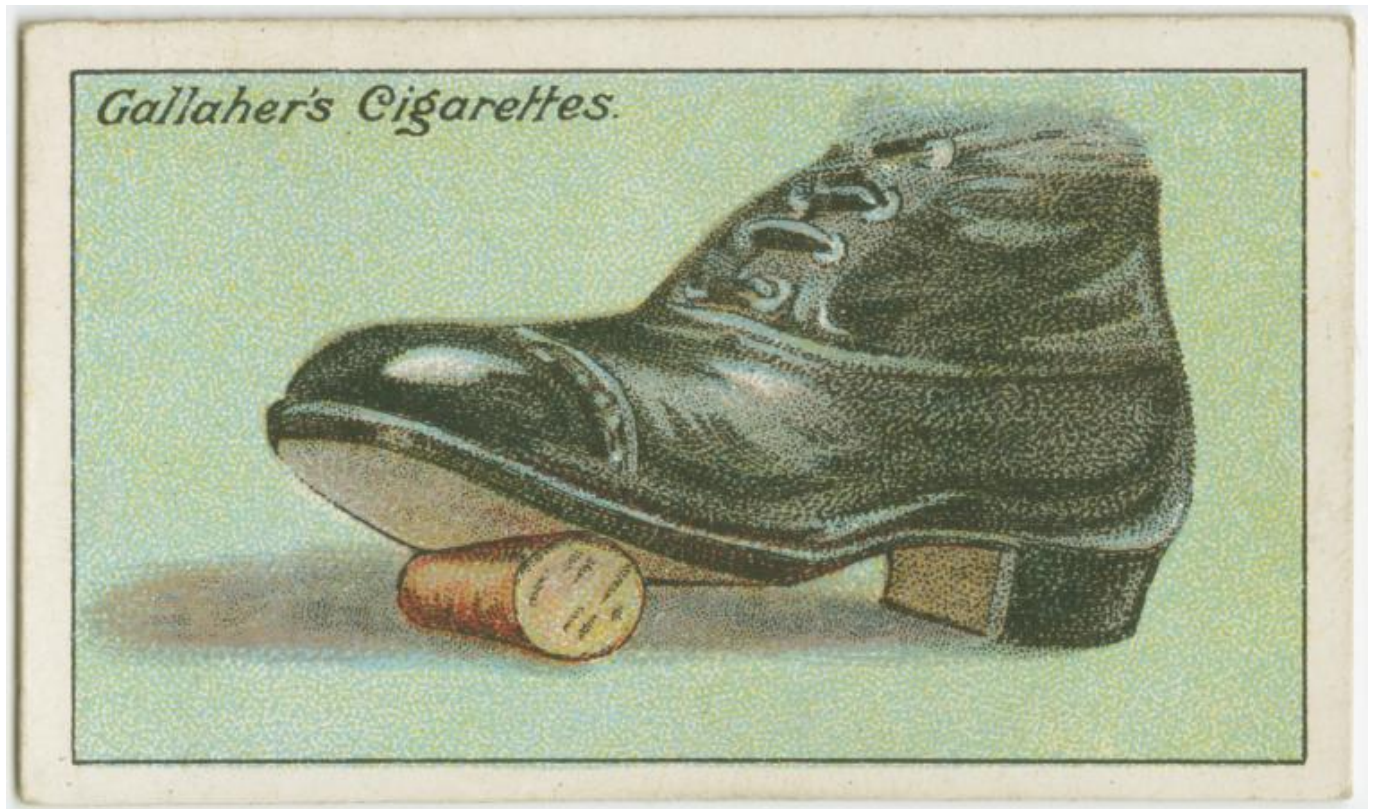
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9. How To Make Corks Fit



10.0 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 8

HOW TO MAKE CORKS FIT.

It may happen that the cork is slightly too large for the bottle you wish to fit. Do not pare cork down with a knife; a better method is shown in picture. Roll cork under sole of foot, exerting a steady pressure. This will be found to reduce size of cork without injuring the smooth surface.

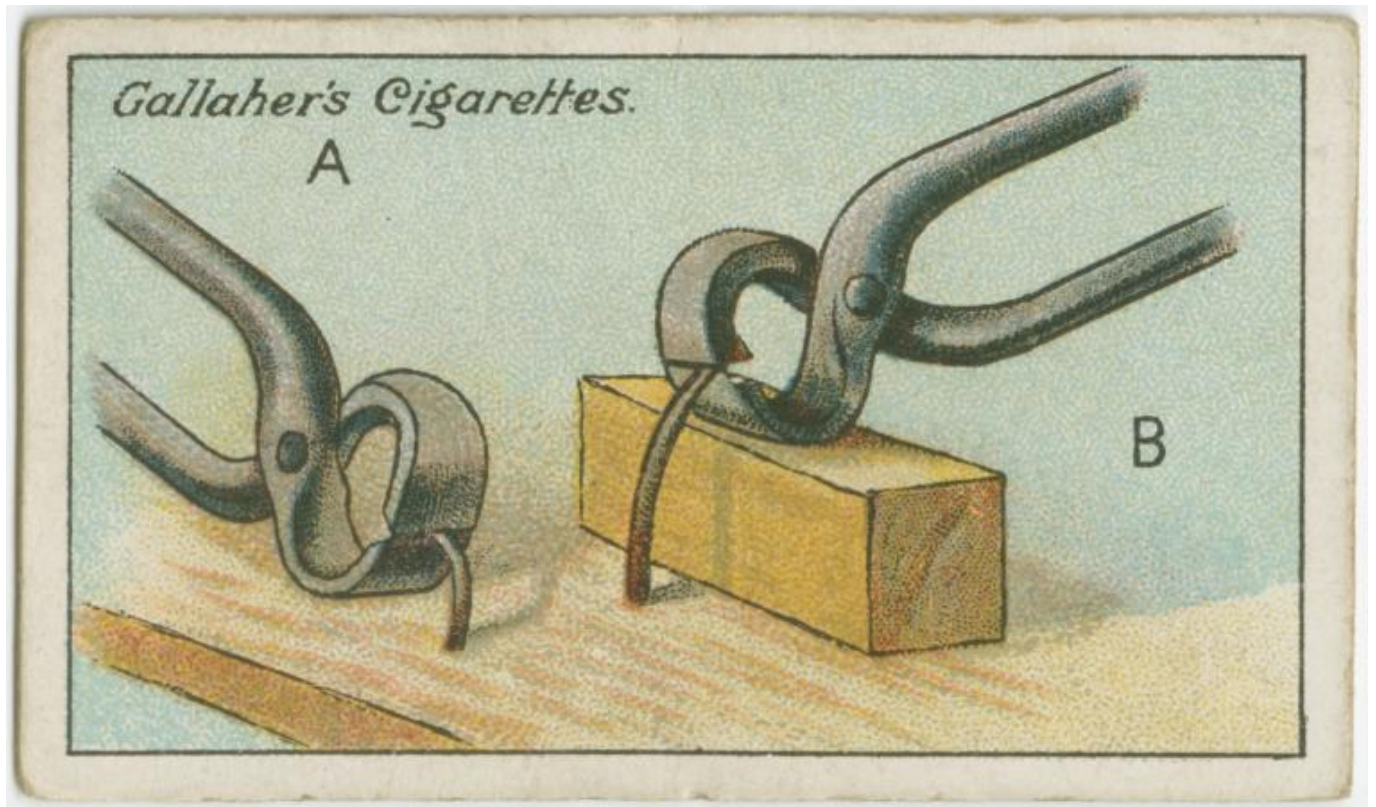
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10. How To Pull Out Long Nails



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 1

HOW TO PULL OUT LONG NAILS.

It is often rather difficult to pull out a long nail from wood into which it has been driven, for when drawn out a short distance as in A, there is no purchase from which to pull it further. If, however, a small block of wood be placed under the pincers, as in B, the nail can be pulled right out without difficulty.

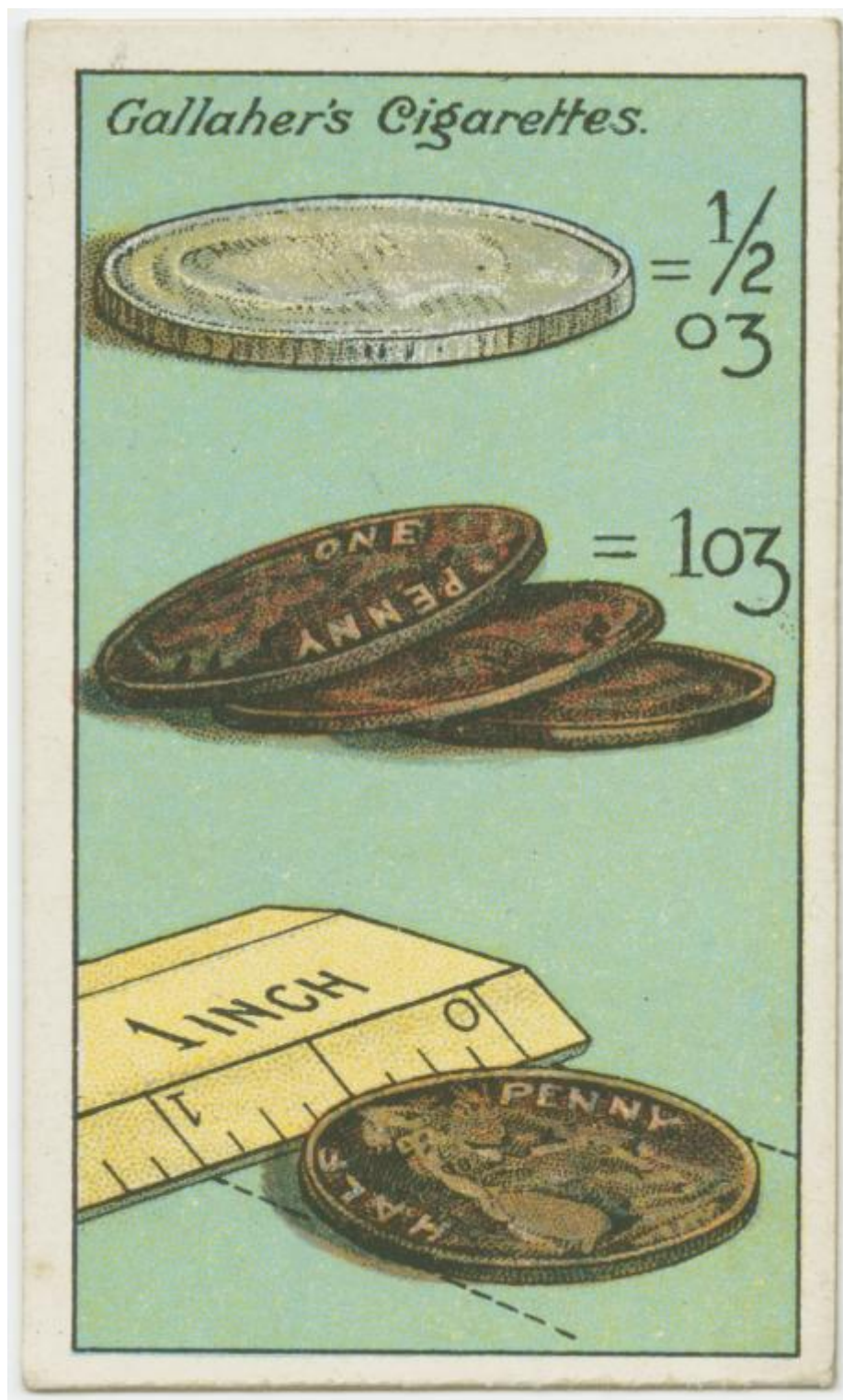
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11. How To Measure With Coins



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 30

HOW TO MEASURE WITH COINS.

It is sometimes useful to know that half-a-crown equals half an ounce in weight, and three pennies weigh one ounce. A half-penny measures one inch in diameter; half-crown an inch and a quarter, and a sixpence three-quarters of an inch in diameter.

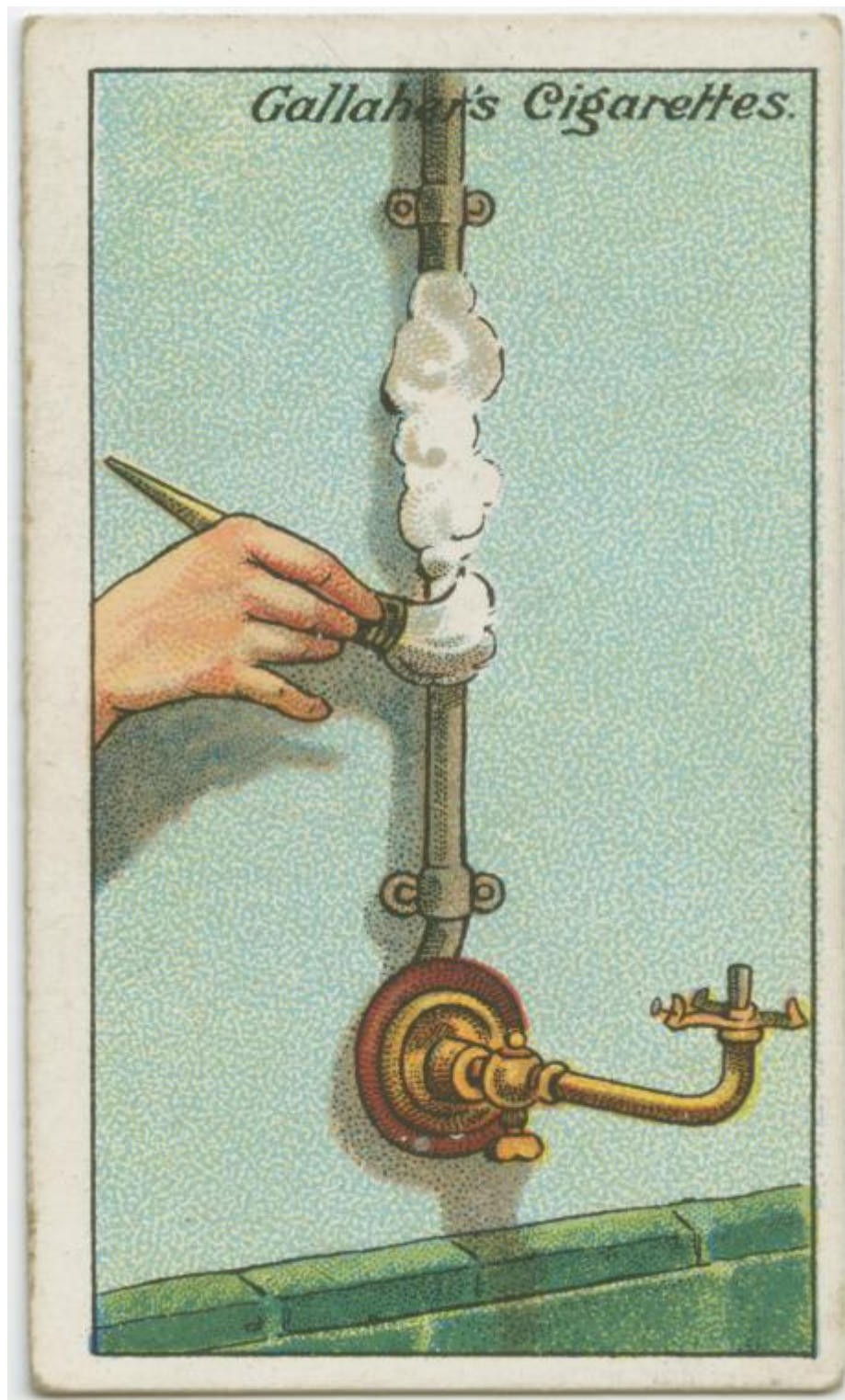
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12. How To Detect Escaping Gas



100 IN SET

How to do it

No 34

HOW TO DETECT ESCAPING GAS.

There is always a danger in trying to locate an escape of gas with a light. The method shown in the picture, however, is free from risk and quite reliable. Paint strong soap solution on the suspected length of pipe and the gas will then cause bubbles at the escaping point, which can be dealt with at once.

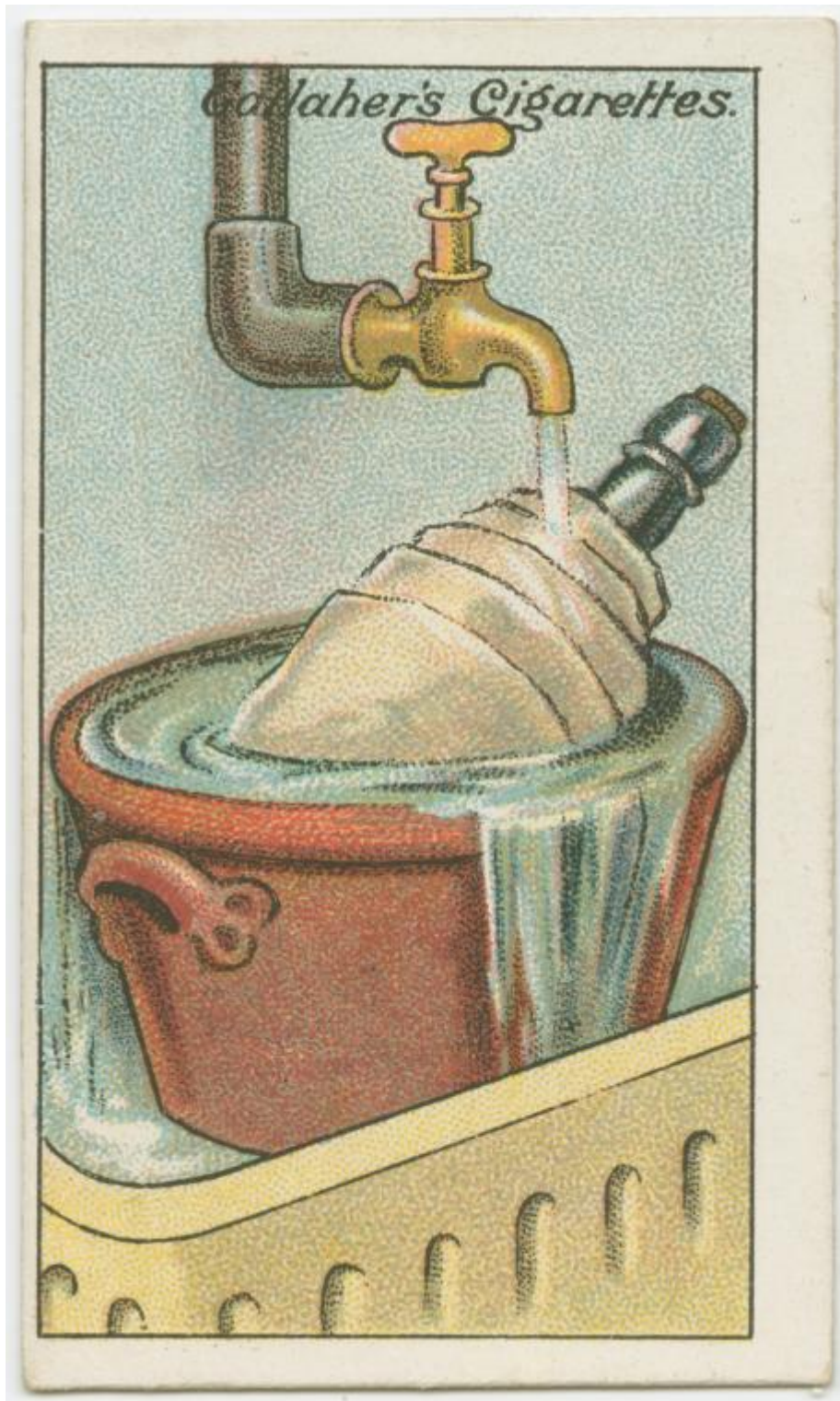
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13. How To Cool Wine with Ice



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 18

HOW TO COOL WINE WITHOUT ICE.

If no ice is available for cooling wine, a good method is to wrap the bottle in flannel and place it in a crock beneath the cold water tap. Allow the water to run over it, as shown in the picture, and in about ten minutes the wine will be thoroughly cool and ready for the table.

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14. When Boiling Cracked Eggs



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 60

WHEN BOILING CRACKED EGGS.

To boil cracked eggs as satisfactorily as though they were undamaged, a little vinegar should be added to the water. If this is done, it will be found that none of the contents will boil out.

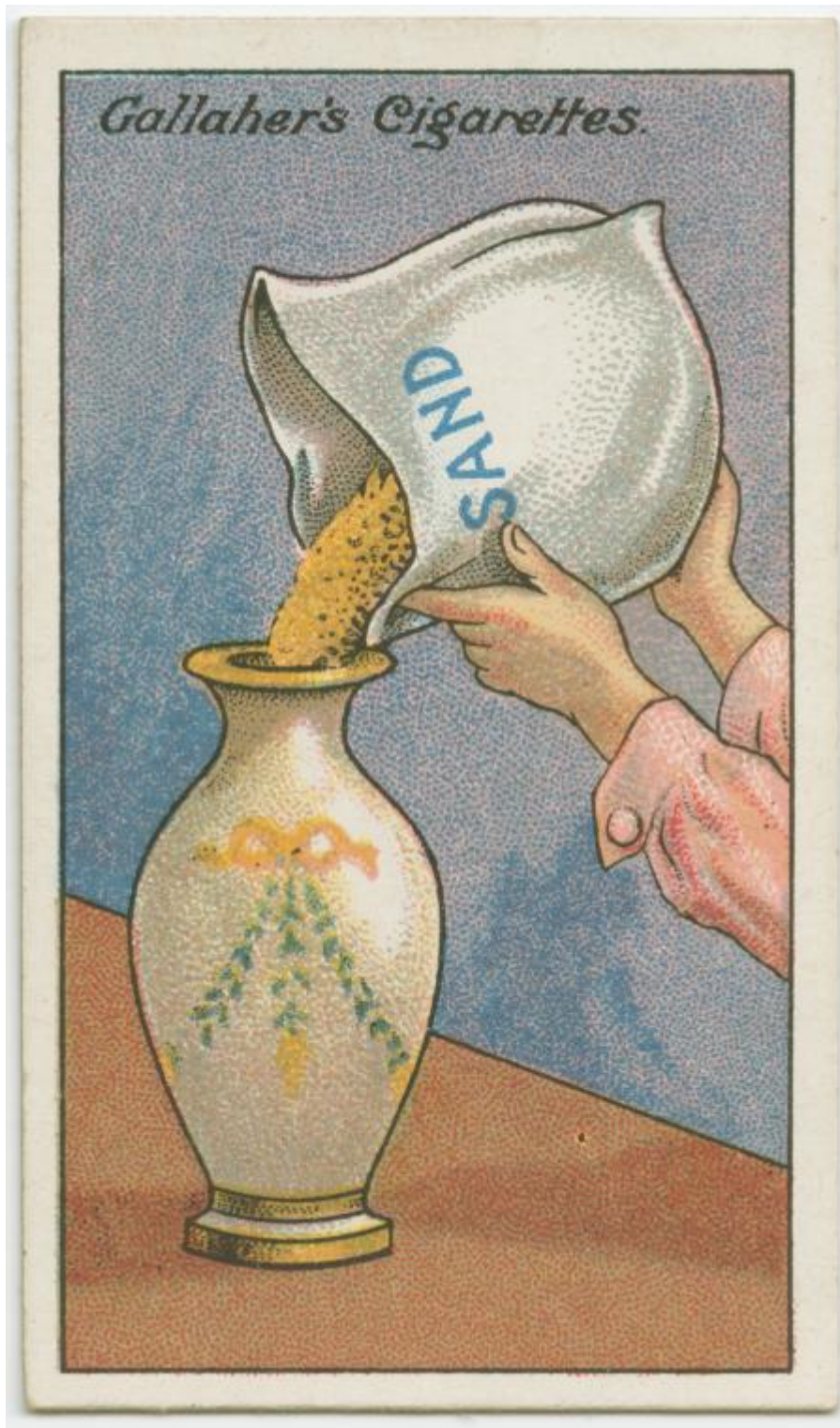
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15. How To Preserve Valuable Vases



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 39

HOW TO PRESERVE VALUABLE VASES.

If the following precaution is taken, the danger of knocking over a valuable vase will not be so great. Partly fill the vase with sand, which, acting as a weight, keeps it upright and firm on its base. This idea is particularly useful in the case of vases which are inclined to be top heavy, owing to their having small bases

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16. How To Remove Sea Stains from Brown Shoes



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 50

HOW TO REMOVE SEA STAINS FROM BROWN SHOES

After a visit to the sea-side you may find that the salt water has stained your brown shoes. Such stains can be removed by washing the shoes over with a preparation composed of a piece of washing soda about the size of a chestnut dissolved in two table spoonfuls of hot milk. When dry, the shoes should be polished in the ordinary way, and the stains will be found to have disappeared.

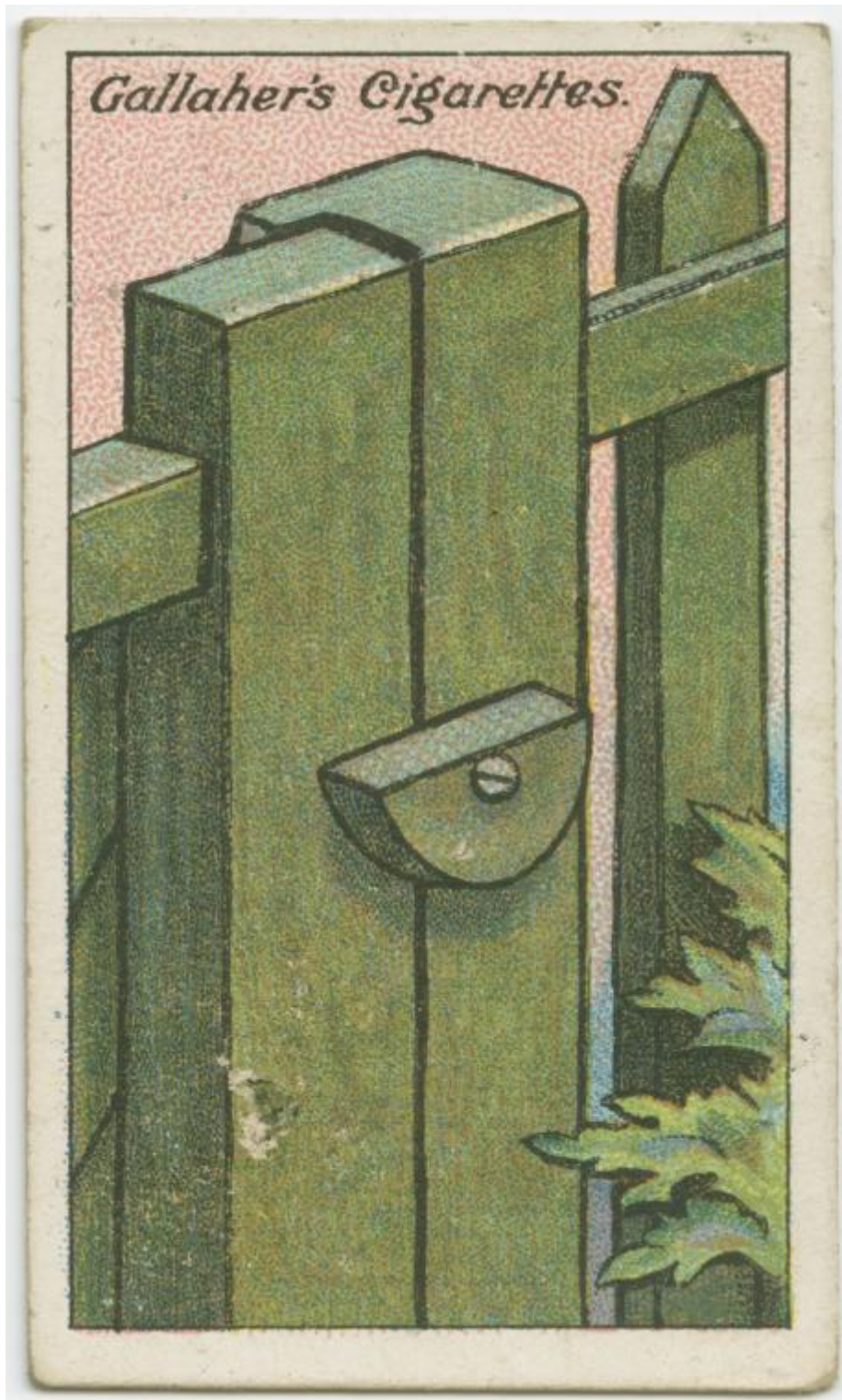
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17. How To Make a Simple Gate Latch



100 IN SET

How to do it

No 7

HOW TO MAKE A SIMPLE GATE LATCH

A loose gate latch of the ordinary shape generally allows gate to swing open. The picture gives shape of a latch which does away with this. When screwed to gate post, this latch will be found to swing in position to secure gate, as the greatest weight of latch is beneath screw pivot.

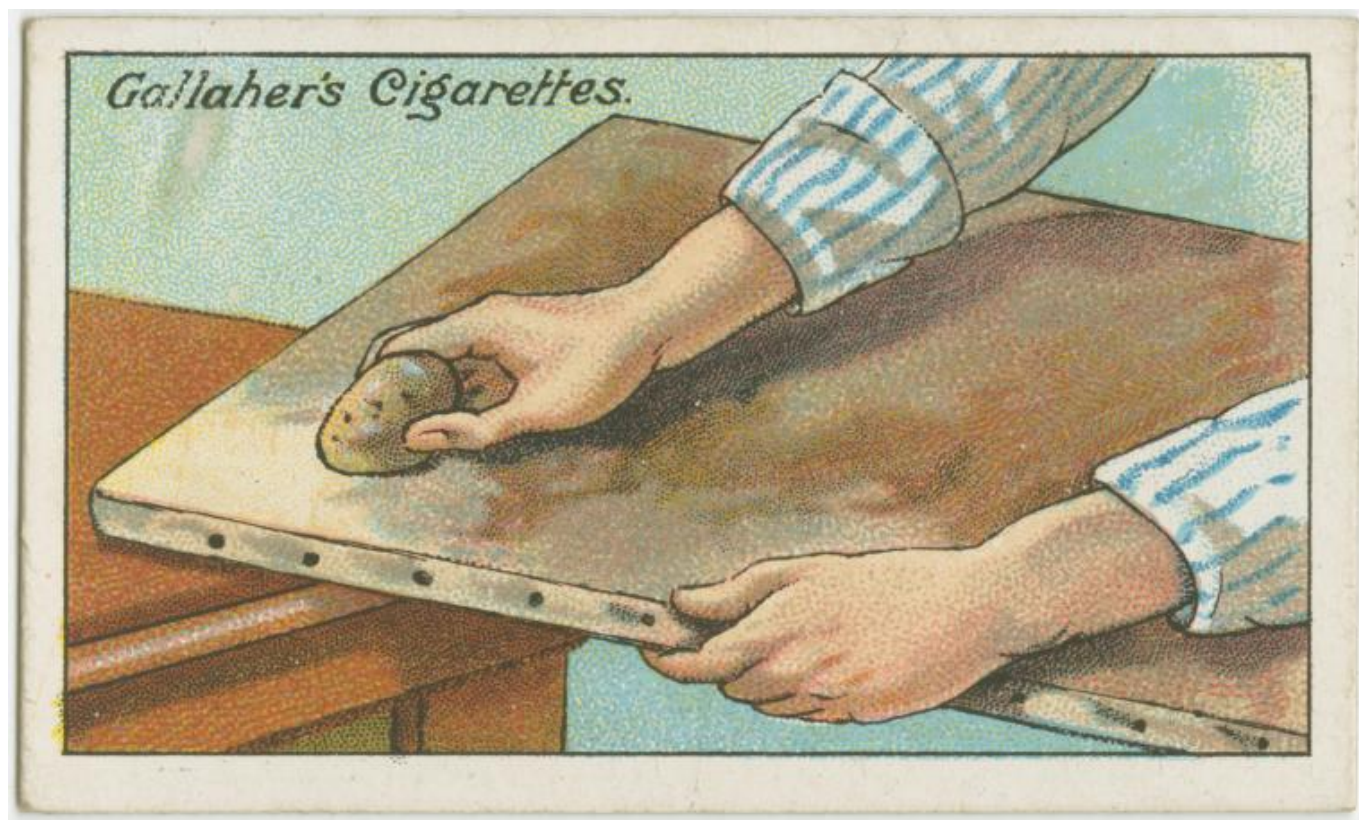
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18. How To Clean an Oil Painting



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 19

HOW TO CLEAN OIL PAINTING.

The picture shows a very effective method. Painting should first be well dusted and then rubbed gently with flat surface of a cut raw potato, the lather being wiped away with a soft rag. Dirty part of potato must constantly be pared off in order to keep clean the surface applied to picture. Finish off with a rub of pine linseed oil.

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19. How To Test Butter



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 17

HOW TO TEST BUTTER.

A good way of testing butter is shown in the picture. Rub a little of the suspected compound upon a piece of paper and set the paper alight. If it is pure butter, the odour will be dainty and agreeable, while the presence of Margarine is made known by an unpleasant tallowy smell.

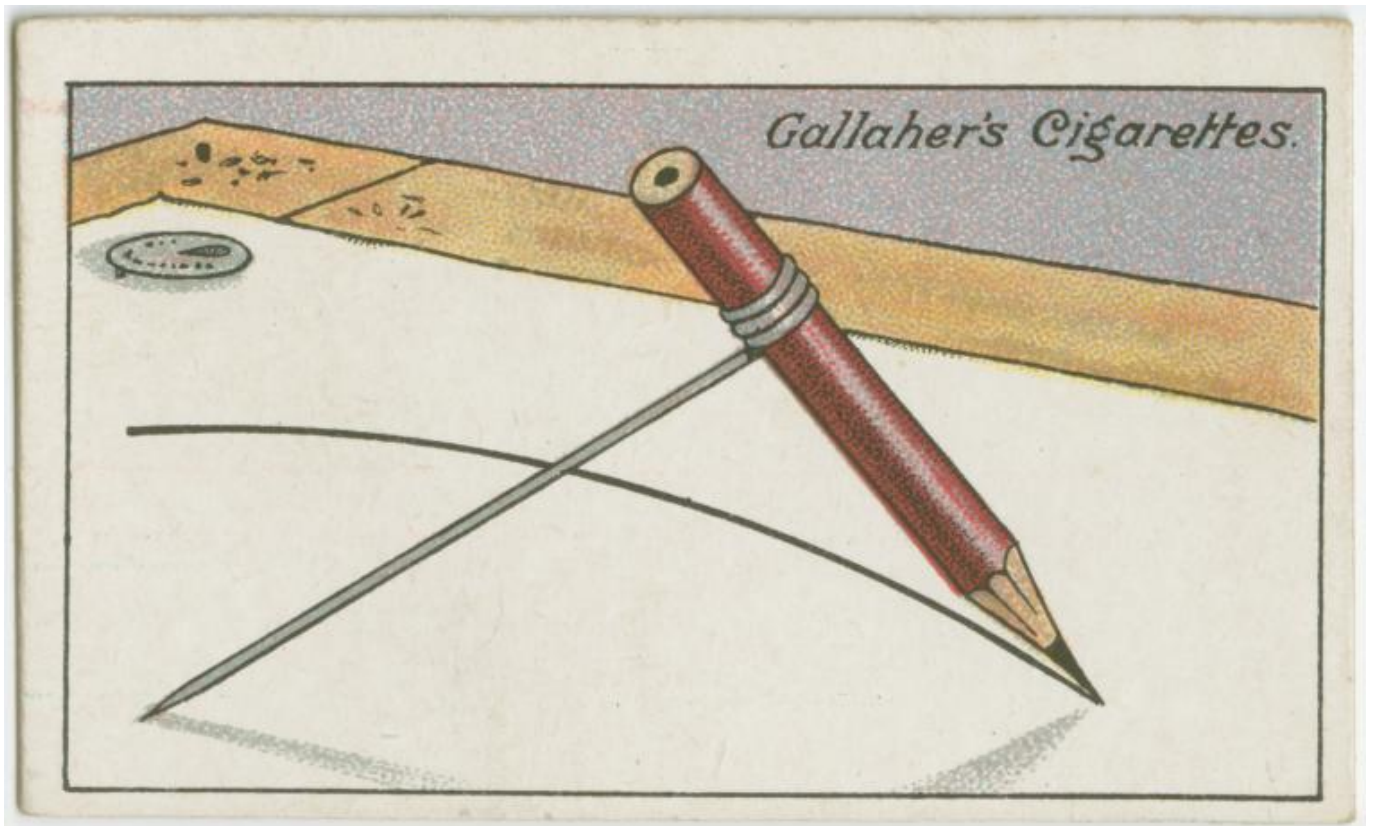
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20. How To Draw a Circle Without a Compass



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 35

HOW TO DRAW A CIRCLE WITHOUT COMPASSES.

Twist one end of a piece of wire round a pencil and leave the other end straight. Sharpen the point of the wire and use it like the point leg of a pair of compasses. The wire can be bent and the points of wire and pencil adjusted to make any size of circle.

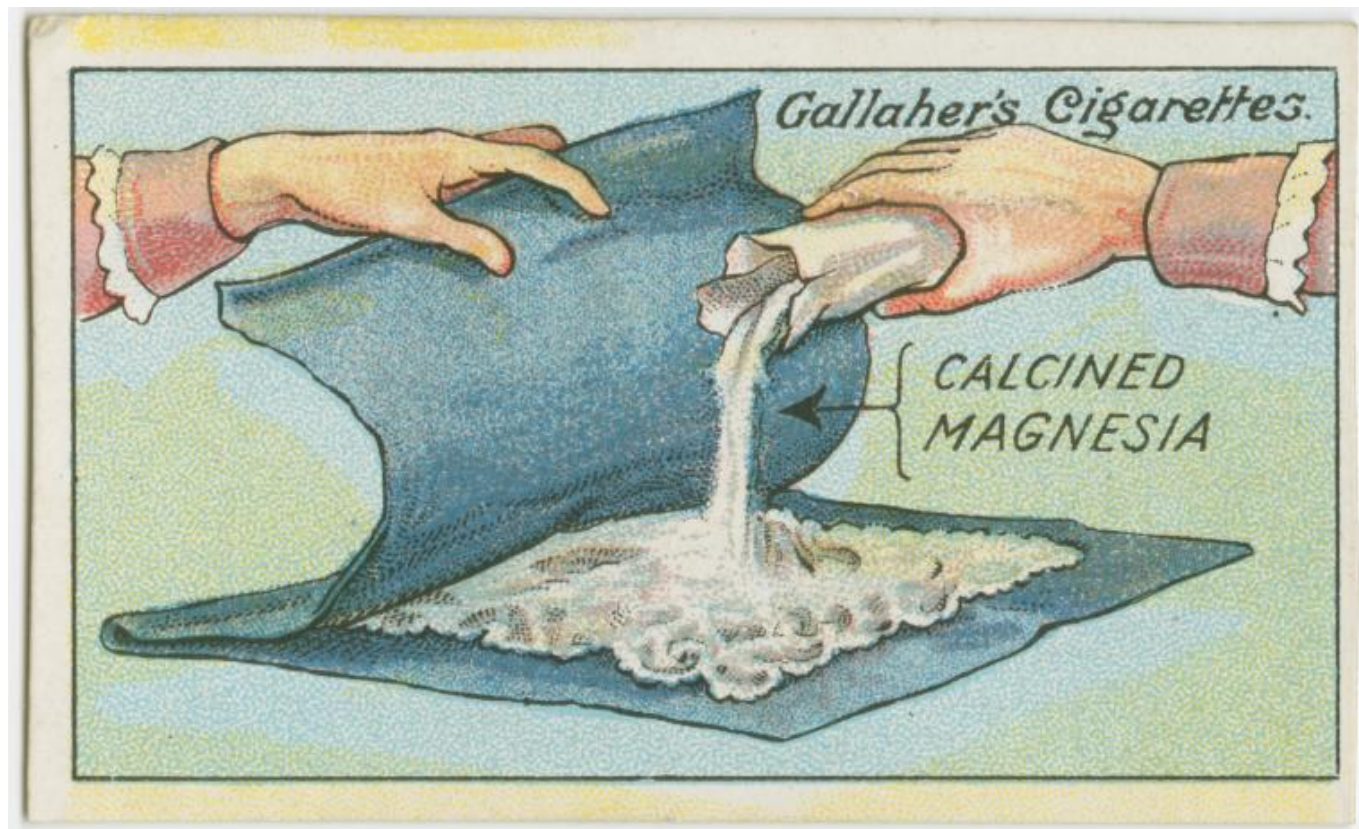
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21. How To Clean Real Lace



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 14

HOW TO CLEAN REAL LACE.

To clean real lace, lay the lace on a sheet of blue or white tissue paper, and well cover with powder of calcined magnesia. Cover with more paper and place under a weight for a few days. The lace will be found to be quite clean after shaking out the powder, and the most delicate texture remains uninjured.

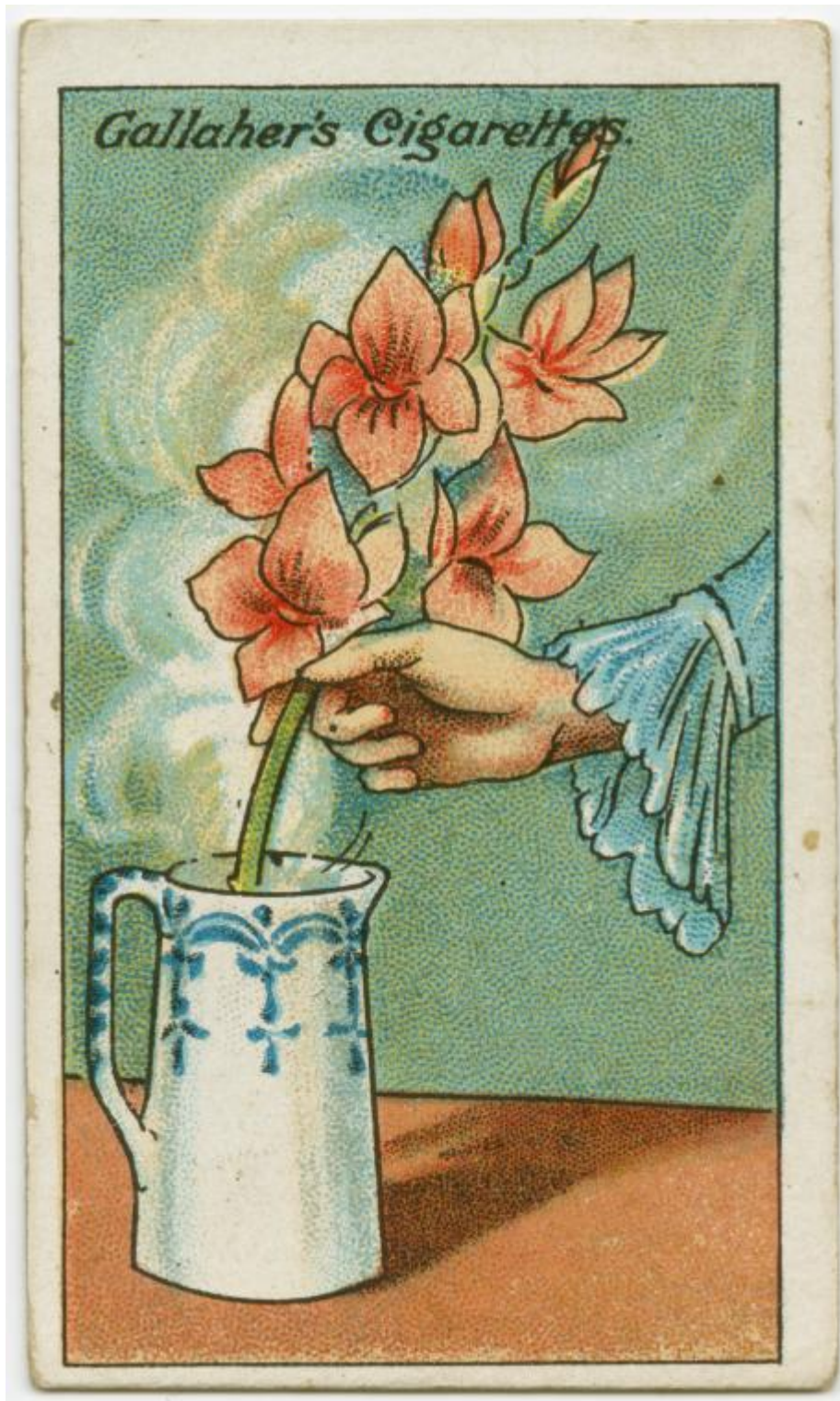
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22. How To Revive Cut Flowers



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 73

HOW TO REVIVE CUT FLOWERS.

To revive choice blooms that have faded during transit, plunge the stems into hot water, and allow them to remain until the water has cooled. By that time the flowers will have revived. The ends of the stems should then be cut off and the blossoms placed in cold water in the usual way.

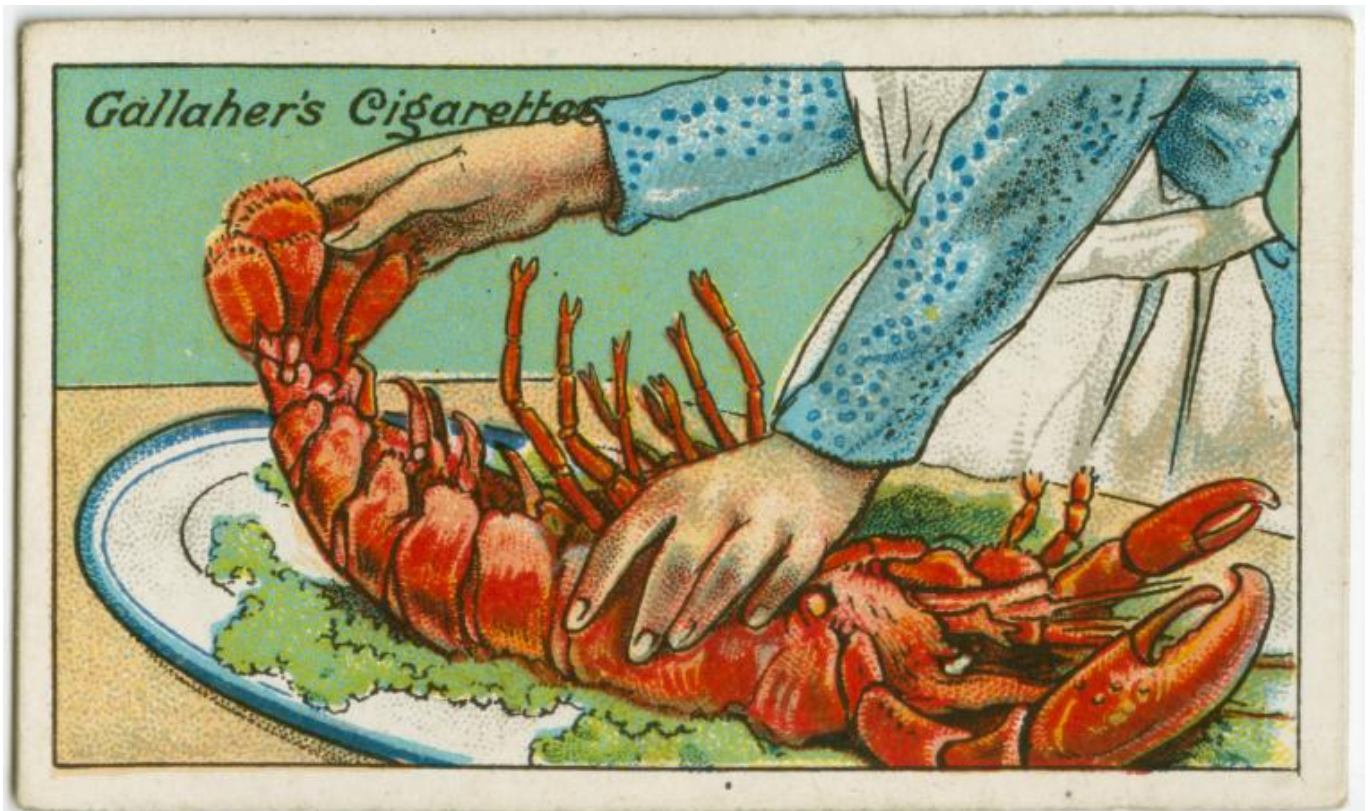
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23. How To Judge the Freshness of a Lobster



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 94

HOW TO JUDGE FRESHNESS OF A LOBSTER.

If, when buying a boiled lobster, you are in doubt as to its freshness, just pull back the tail, then suddenly release it; if the tail flies back with a snap, the lobster is quite fresh: but if it goes back slowly, you may be pretty sure the lobster has been boiled and kept for some days.

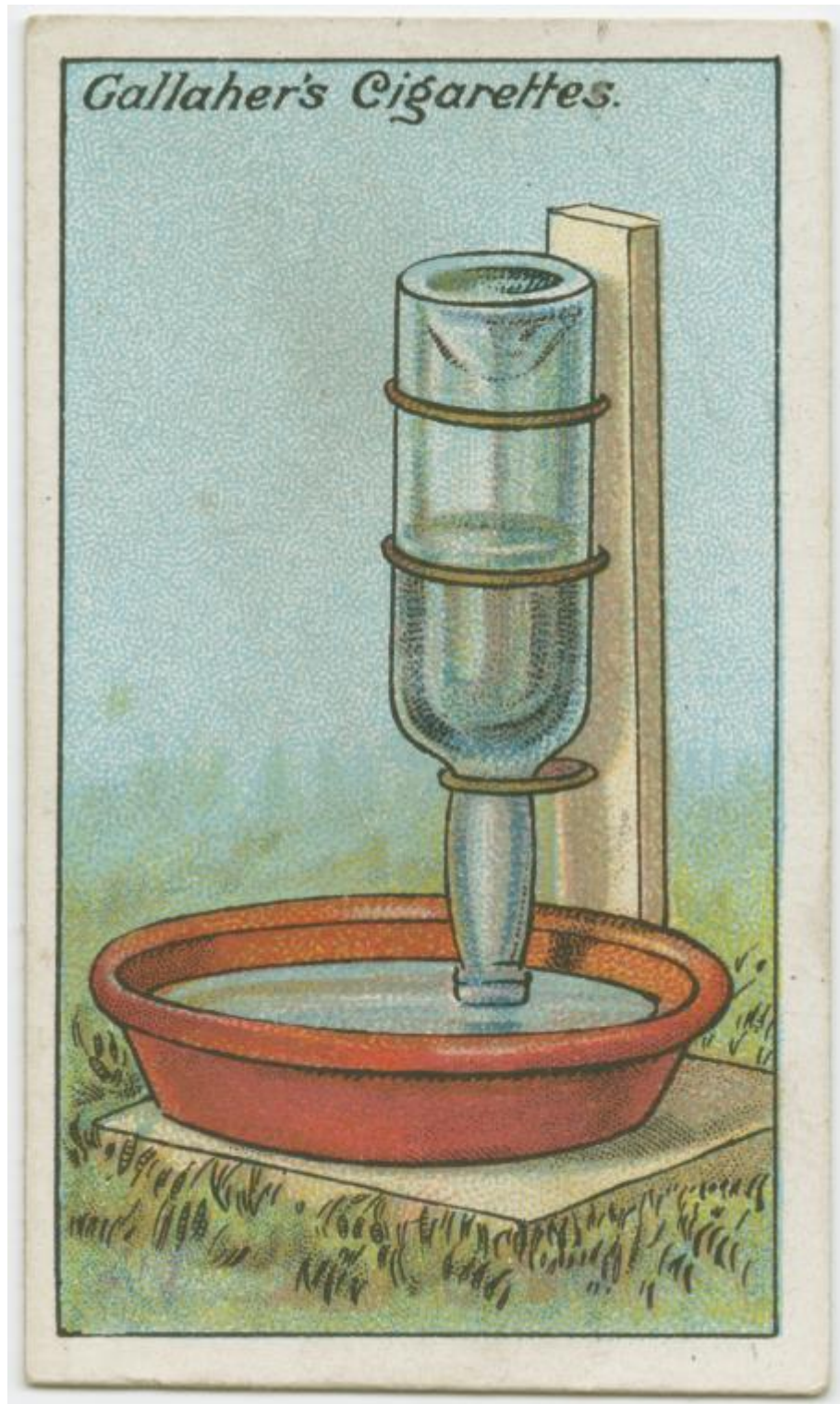
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24. How To Make a Water Fountain for Chicks



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 15

HOW TO MAKE WATER FOUNTAIN FOR CHICKS.

A simple water fountain, ensuring a supply of fresh water for the chickens, can be made from a pint wine bottle, supported by wire loops to a wooden upright as shown, the bottle being held inverted over an earthenware pan, with mouth of bottle about half an inch above bottom of pan.

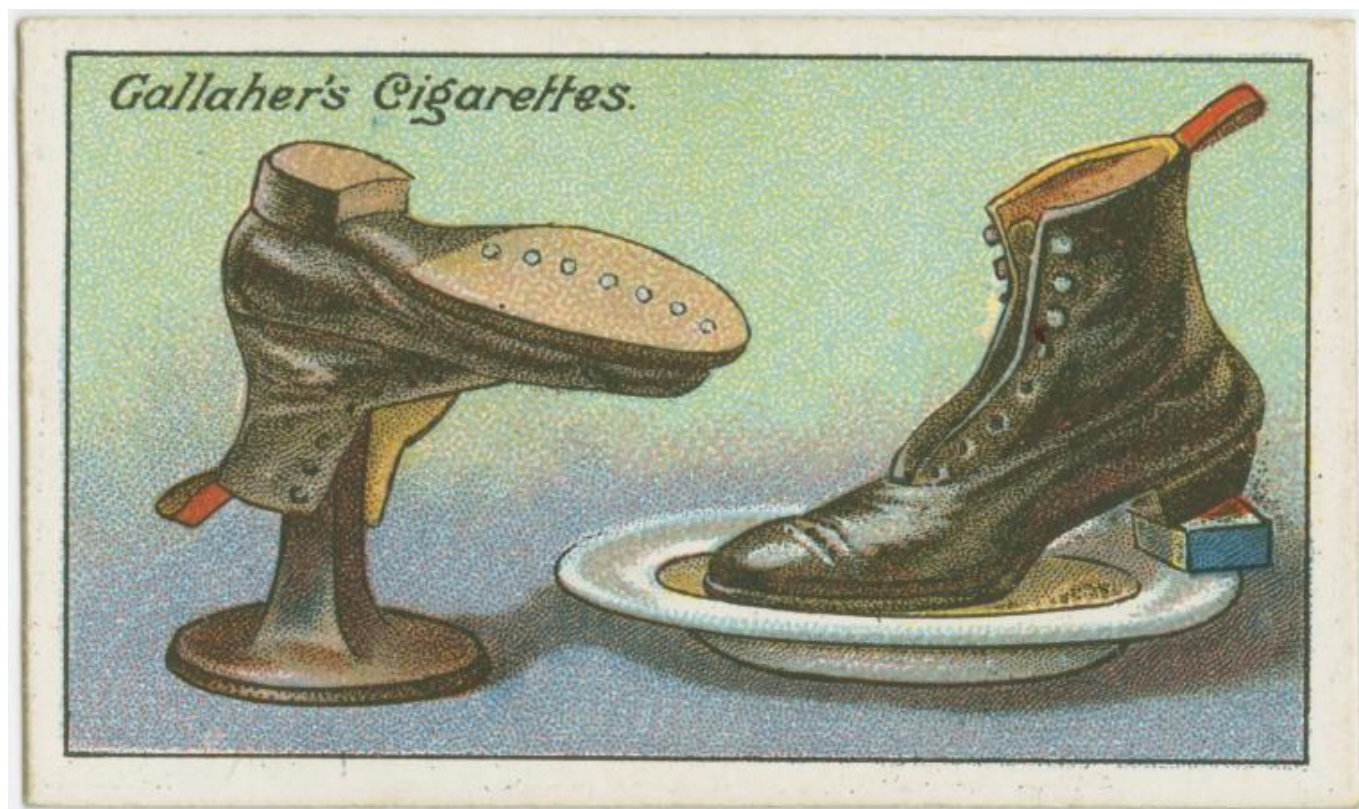
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25. How To Treat Squeaky Boots



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 21

HOW TO TREAT SQUEAKY BOOTS.

When new boots make a squeaking noise, a good remedy is to drive several brads in the centre of the sole. Another method is to place the sole in a dish or plate containing oil, the heel being propped up in order to immerse the whole of the sole, and the boot left until the oil has thoroughly soaked into the leather.

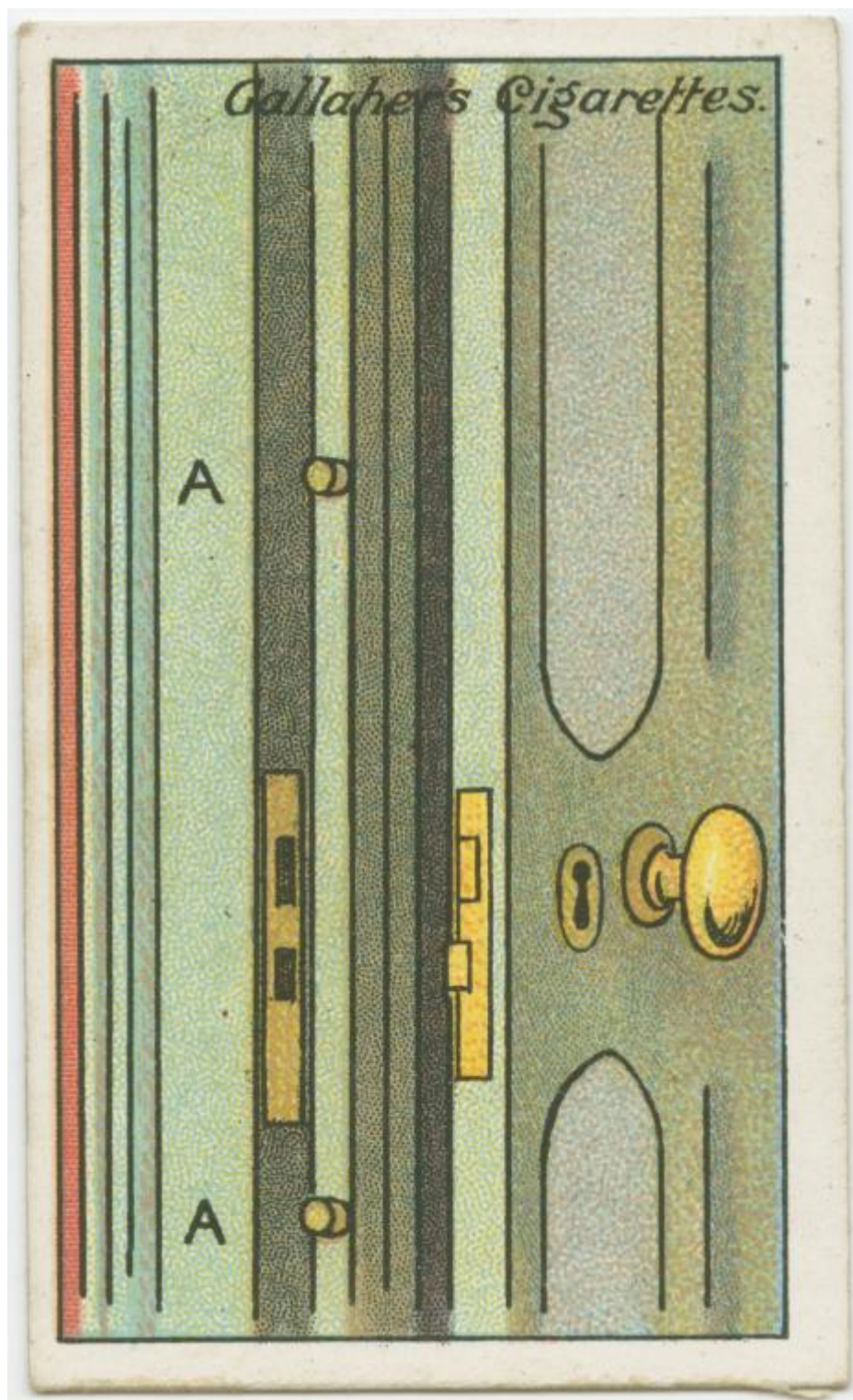
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26. How To Adjust a Door



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 16

HOW TO ADJUST A DOOR.

The annoyance of a door rattling in windy weather can be done away with by glueing pieces of cork, A.A., in crack between door and beading of doorway. The corks must be slightly thicker than the crack, and door should be shut on them until glue sets. The elasticity of cork holds door and effectually stops rattling noise.

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27. How To Cut New Bread Into Thin Slices



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 32

HOW TO CUT NEW BREAD INTO THIN SLICES.

The difficulty of cutting new bread into thin slices can readily be overcome by the following expedient. Plunge the bread knife into hot water and when thoroughly hot wipe quickly. It will be found that the heated knife will cut soft, yielding new bread into the thinnest slices.

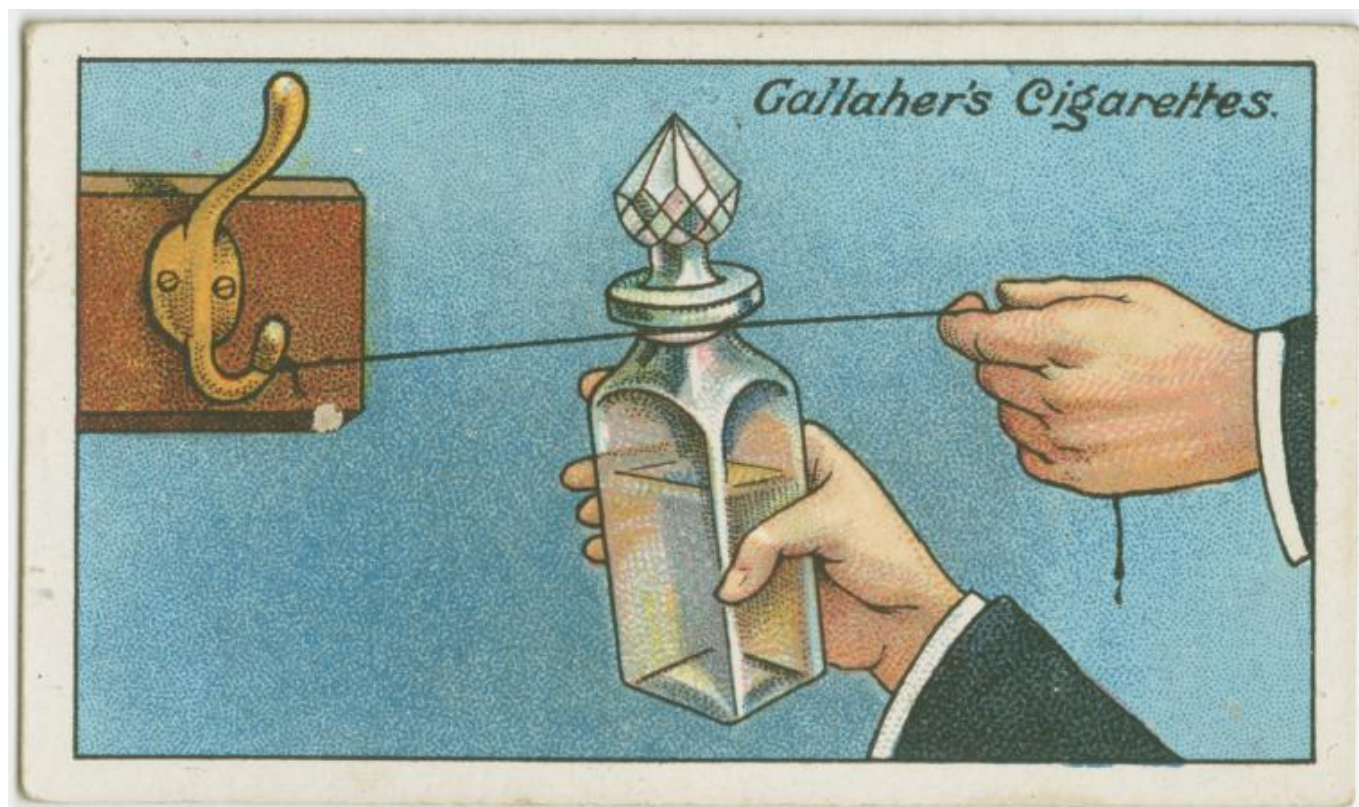
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28. How To Remove a Stuck Glass Stopper



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 40

HOW TO REMOVE GLASS STOPPER FROM BOTTLE

There are several ways of overcoming the difficulty of loosening a glass stopper that is tightly fixed in a bottle, the method shown in the picture being one of the best. Tie a piece of strong string to a firm support, twist it round the neck of the bottle outside the stopper and then quickly rub the bottle to and fro till the neck is hot. This causes the glass to expand, leaving the stopper loose.

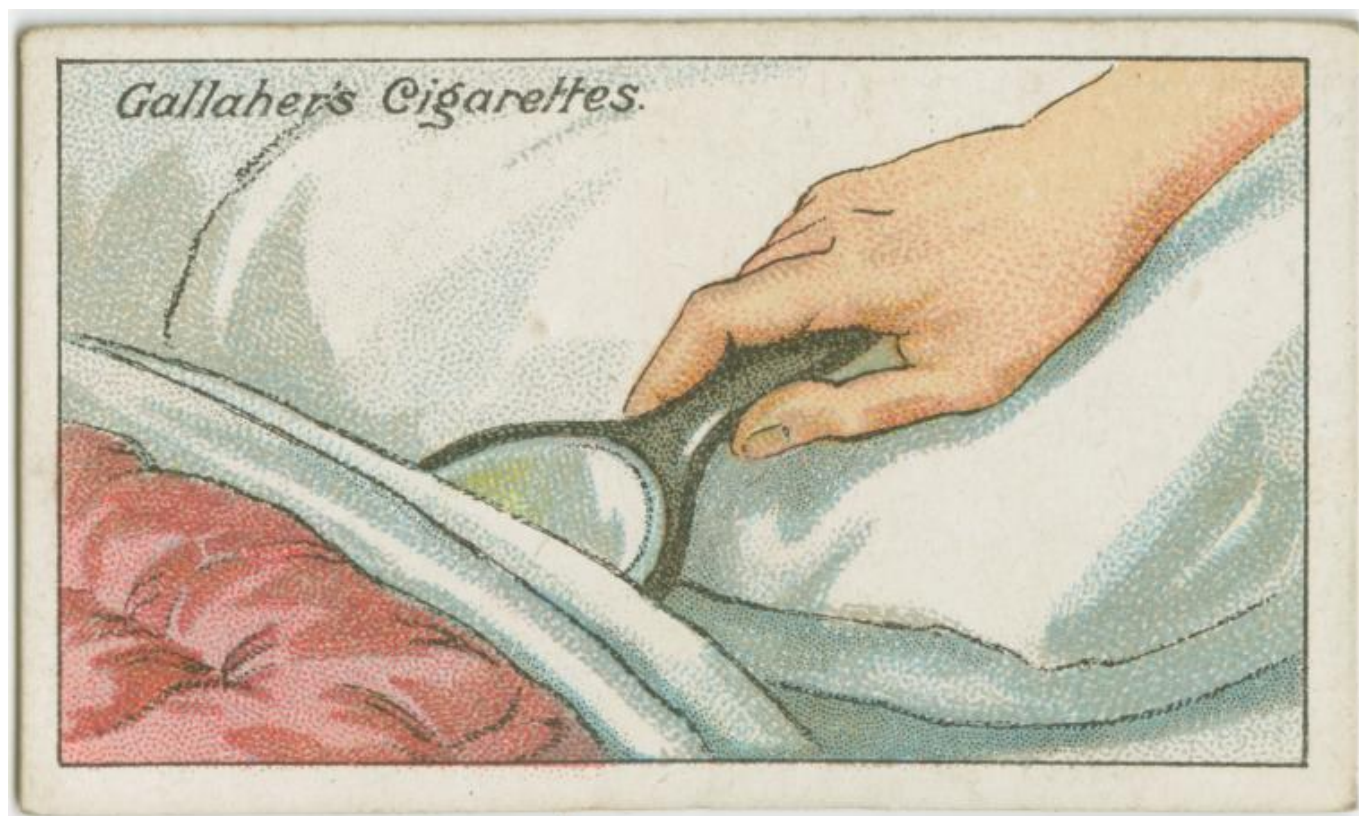
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29. How To Detect Dampness in Beds



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 2

HOW TO DETECT DAMPNESS IN BEDS.

In order to detect dampness in a strange bed and so be warned of the danger, a small hand-mirror should be slipped between the sheets and left for a few minutes. Any mistiness or blurred appearance of the mirror's surface when withdrawn is an indication of dampness, and the bed should not be slept in.

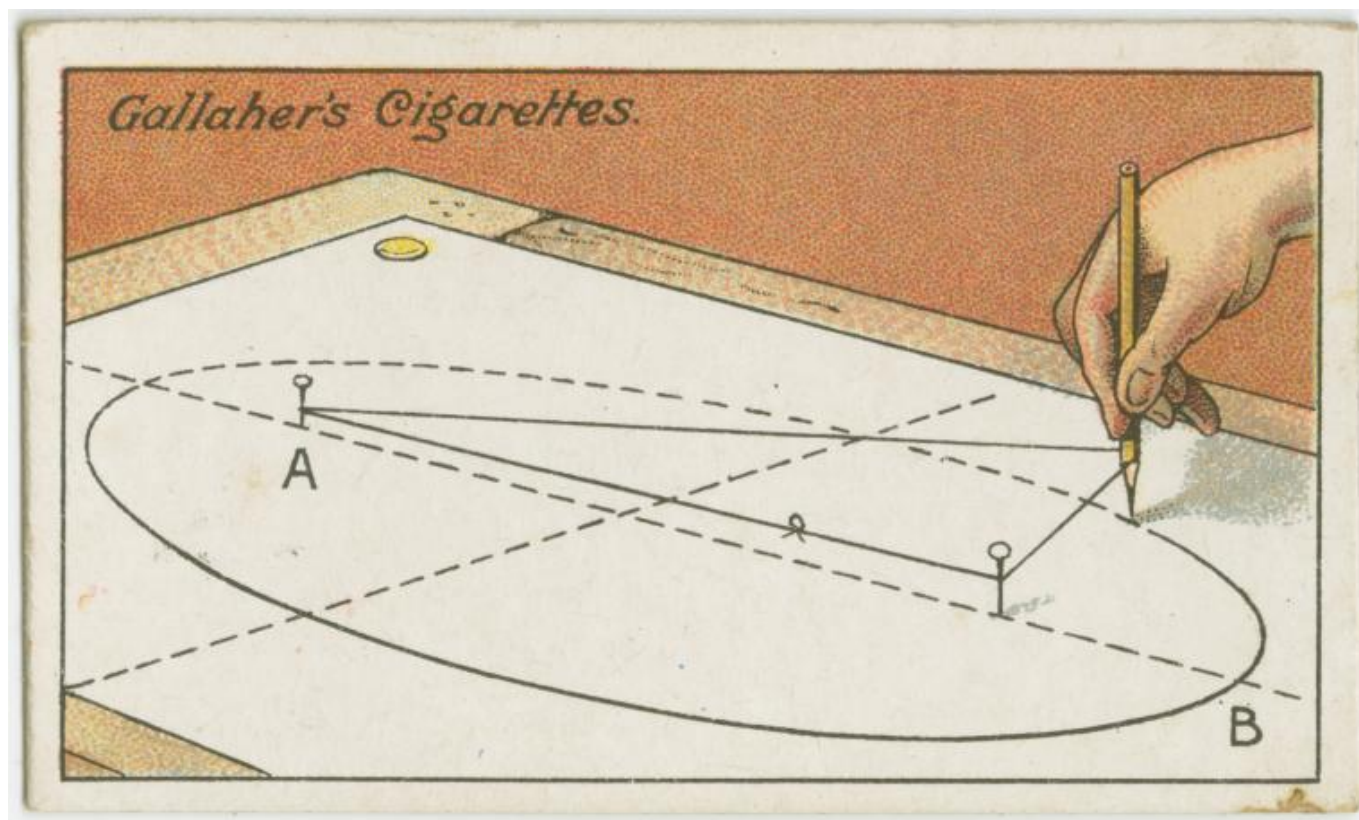
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30. How To Draw an Ellipse with String



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 37

HOW TO DRAW AN ELLIPSE WITH STRING.

Size of ellipse having been determined, focuses are found by measuring off the short diameter (or width of ellipse) from ends of long diameter (or length of ellipse). Two pins should be fixed, and string or thread looped round, as shown in picture. Length of loop should be from A to B.

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31. How To Pick Up Broken Glass



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 49

HOW TO PICK UP BROKEN GLASS.

To pick up broken glass quickly and cleanly a soft damp cloth will be found to be most effective, for it takes up all the small splinters. The best plan is to use an old piece of rag that can be thrown away with the glass.

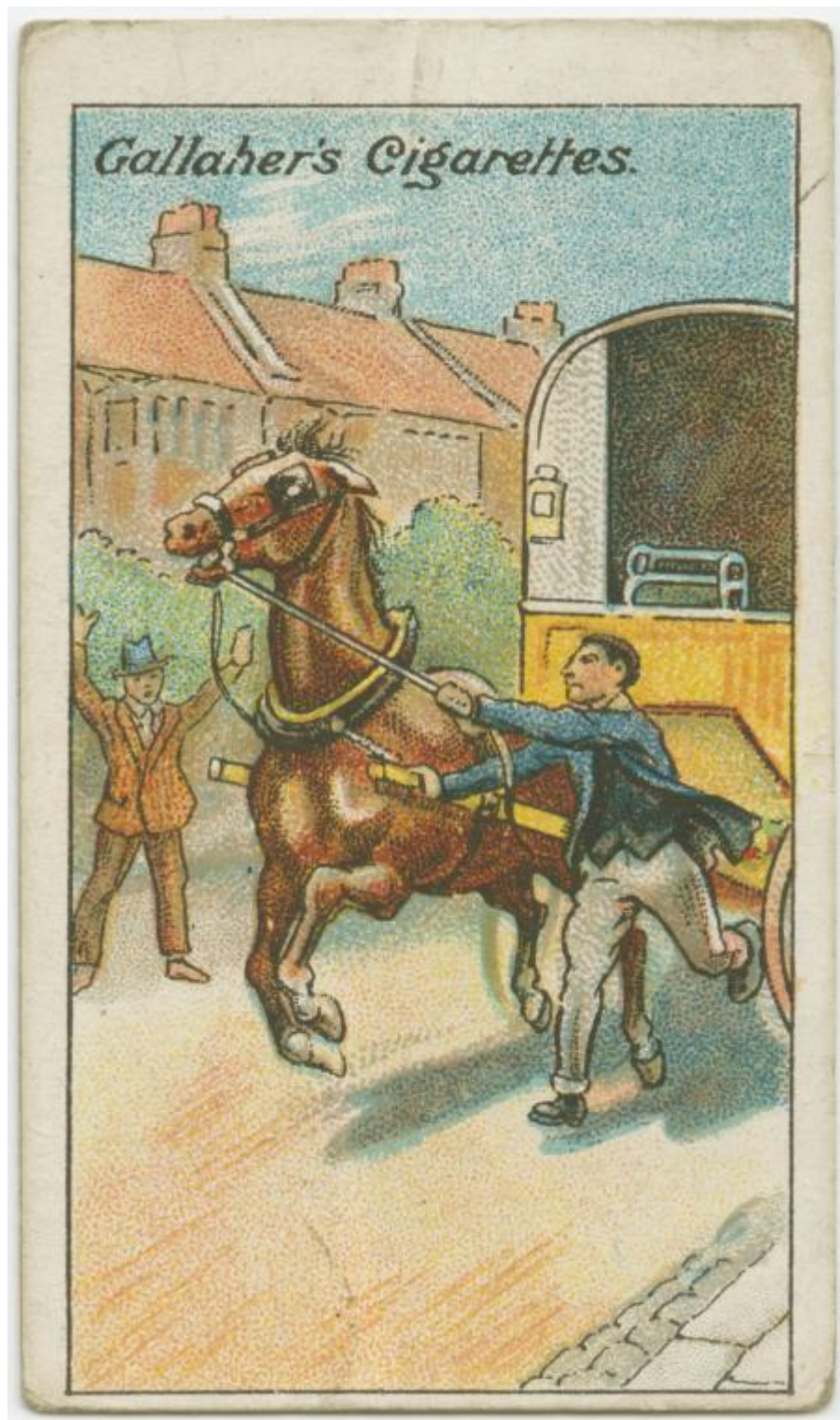
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32. How To Stop a Runaway Horse



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 99

HOW TO STOP A RUNAWAY HORSE.

Never rush in front of the horse. Run along beside, and with the hand nearest grip the shaft and keep the body clear by the stiffened arm. Then with the free hand, catch the reins and pull the horse to a standstill. Do not jump about, wave arms or shout. It frightens the horse.

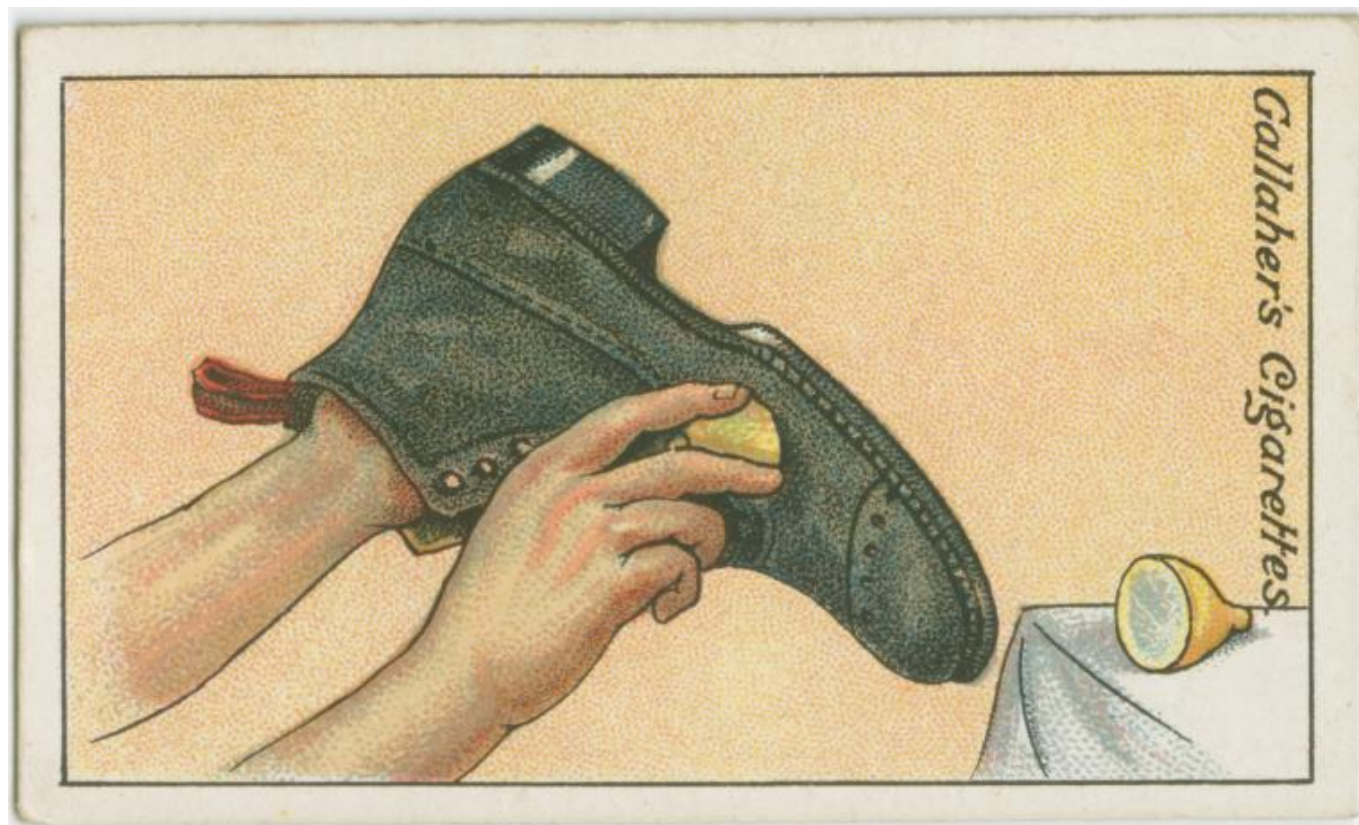
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33. How To Clean New Boots



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 31

HOW TO CLEAN NEW BOOTS.

New boots are sometimes very difficult to polish. A successful method is to rub the boots over with half a lemon, allow them to dry, after which they will easily polish, although occasionally it may be found necessary to repeat the application of the lemon juice

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34. How To Remove a Tight Ring from the Finger



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 22

HOW TO REMOVE A TIGHT RING FROM THE FINGER.

To remove a tight ring from the finger without pain or trouble, the finger should be first well lathered with soap. It will then be found that, unless the joints are swollen the ring can easily be taken off. If, however, the finger and joints are much swollen, a visit to the jeweller is advisable.

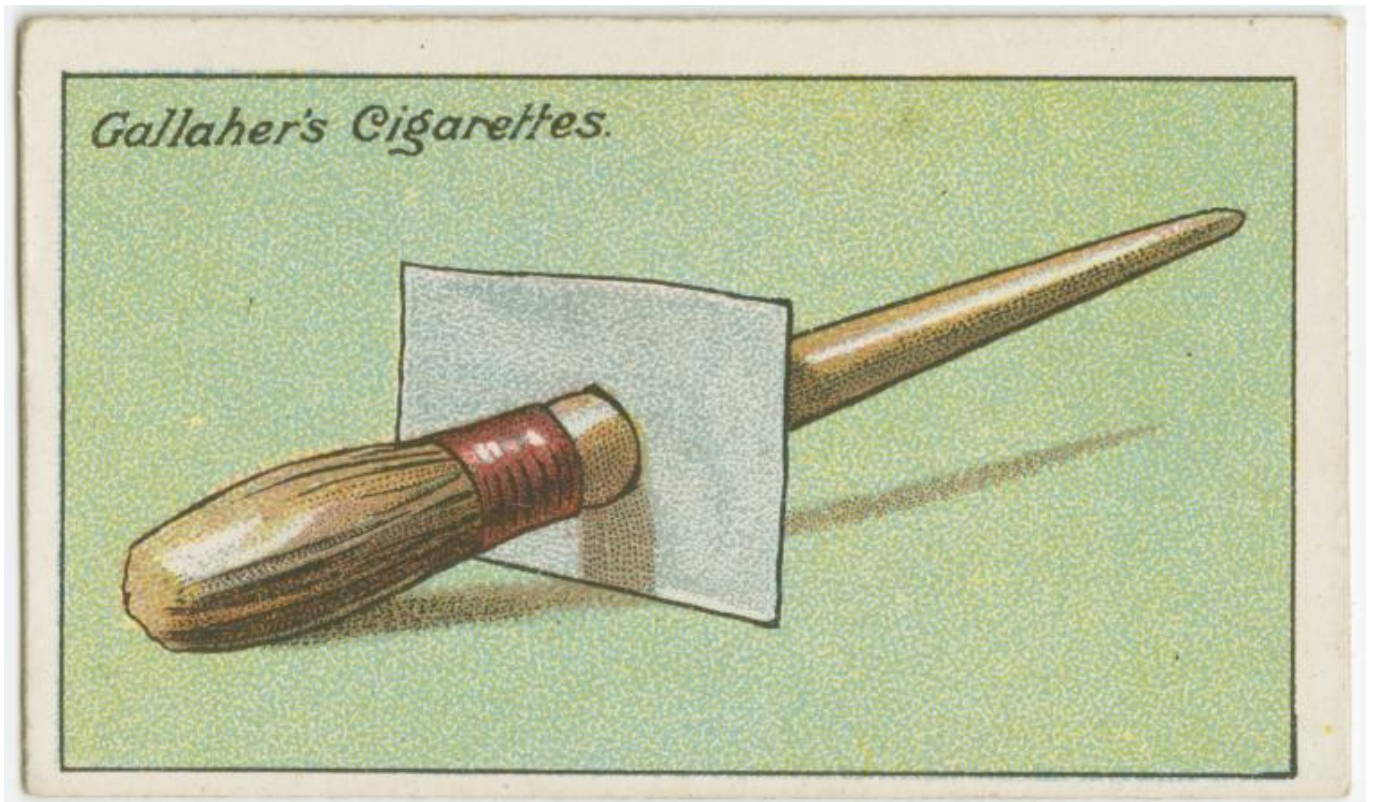
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35. How To Keep a Paint Brush Handle Clean



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 36

HOW TO KEEP A PAINT BRUSH HANDLE CLEAN.

To do away with the annoyance of a wet and sticky brush handle, which is so unpleasant to the amateur painter, get a piece of card or tin and make a hole in it through which the handle can be forced, as shown in the picture. This prevents the paint from running down.

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36. How To Take Ink Stains Out a Handkerchief



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 47

HOW TO TAKE INK STAINS OUT OF A HANDKERCHIEF.

A fine linen handkerchief which has had the misfortune to become stained with ink can be restored to its original spotlessness. When the accident occurs, the handkerchief should at once be plunged into milk. After soaking for some time it will be found that the ink stains have disappeared.

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37. How To Fit a Large Candle



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 65

TO FIT A LARGE CANDLE.

If a candle is too thick to fit the candlestick, don't pare the end, but get a bowl of hot water and hold the end of the candle in it until the wax softens. If the candle is now pressed into the candlestick, it will fit firmly.

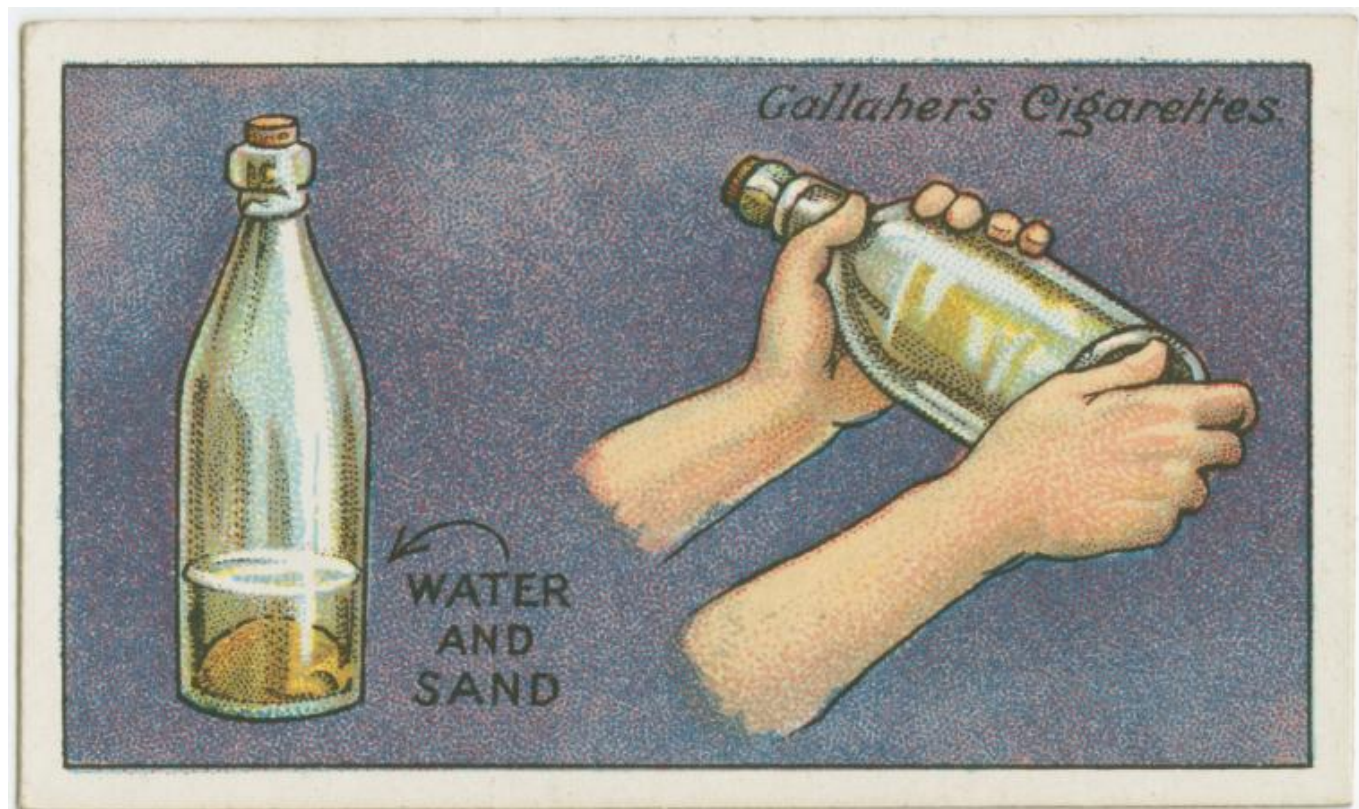
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38. How To Clean Bottles



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 27

HOW TO CLEAN BOTTLES.

To clean the interior
of bottles, a little sand
and water should be well
shaken about inside them.
This will have the effect
of cleansing every part,
and the bottles can then
be washed out and dried.

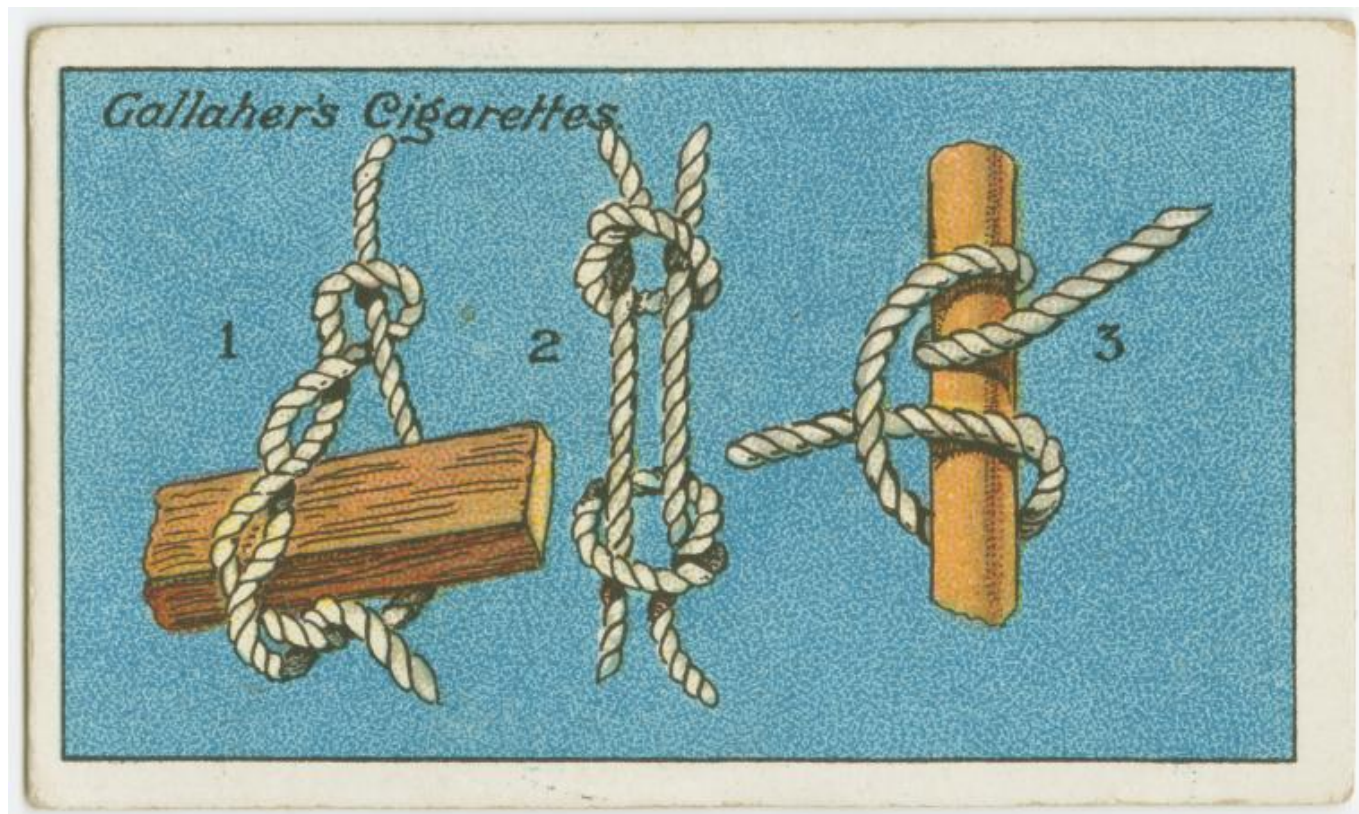
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39. Three Useful Knots



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 98

THREE USEFUL KNOTS.

No. 1 is the Timber Hitch, which is especially useful in lifting all kinds of heavy work, such as huge beams, etc.

No. 2, the Fisherman's Knot, shows a good method of joining two ropes tightly together.

No. 3 is the famous Clove Hitch, which becomes tighter the harder it is pulled.

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40. How To Separate Glass Tumblers



100 IN SET

How to do it

Nº 61

TO SEPARATE GLASS TUMBLERS.

When two glass tumblers stick together there is a danger of breakage in trying to separate them. The simplest and most effective method of releasing the glasses is to put cold water in the upper one and place the lower one in warm water. They will be found to separate at once.

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