

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

When I was asked to contribute to the already-popular *Magic And Its Practical Application* series of books, I was slightly daunted. Not by the amount of work involved – although my training in magic is largely from the academic side, I have always felt that I am as “practical” a magician as any village sorcerer with a stall in a busy market place – but by the very idea that I had been asked to write a book that must needs hold its head up next to the other volumes in this esteemed series. Would I be able to produce a work that dared to stand alongside *Putting Demons To Work At Home* by the mighty Al-Sahir of Tunis? Might my efforts stand comparison to Afonso of Madeira’s *From Lead To Legacy: The Alchemical Investor*? And how puny might my tome seem when set next to the jewel in magical literature’s crown that is Tam O’ The Glen’s *How Tae Pal Wi’ Boggarts*?

In fact, my first instinct when approached by Golem & Golem was to say no. It was not that the spirit was unwilling, nor that the flesh was weak: more that the eyes upon me were as myriad as those of ten score hydra (fourteen hundred, although estimates vary). Magic is one of those activities that few can practise themselves yet many have an opinion on. How often has a simple conjuror, practised only in the harmless arts of children’s party magic, been given pause by a tiny voice piping up from his audience, “I know how you did that”? And, in greater but no less similar wise, how many magicians of power, victorious in mortal combat with a vicious and venomous serpent, have had their moment of triumph ruined by some squire or priest saying, “I expect the serpent was in on it. They’ll meet in a tavern later and split the treasure”?

For the writer of a guide to practical magic is always under the fierce lens of criticism, a lens that brings unwelcome and unnecessary scrutiny.

But I am, and always have been, a devoted student of magic. True, my own discoveries are limited – a spell for curing excess hair here, a charm for removing excess hair there – but magic is everything to me. An opportunity to promote the majesty of magic was something I dare not pass up: especially seeing that, as an academic magician, I had always been a target for callous jeers of the “those who can, do: those who can’t, teach” variety. This was my chance not only to talk about the subject to which I had devoted my life, but also to “put my money where my mouth is” and show my mettle, as teacher, disciple and practitioner.

I said yes to my worthy publishers, and for two years sequestered myself in my library to research, collate and put together this slim volume of practical and, I hope, useful magic. Along the way, in amongst the spells and charms – some of daily application, others for occasions when extreme action is needed – I have interwoven essays, diversions and thoughts of my own (despite the protests of Messrs Golem & Golem, who bade me trim at least *some* of the entertaining side roads of my treatise) and I trust these will be as much of interest to the casual reader as the more immediately useful spells.

All that remains is for me to say thank you, dear reader, for purchasing *Spells For Daily Use: With Notes On The Theory And History Of Magic*. I hope you derive as much pleasure from reading as I did writing it. Use these spells wisely, and well: for they were put together *non immemor beneficii*, for you and you alone.

- Dr. Septimus Fosse, gent.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The publishers have seen fit to ask me to provide a few short words to this new edition of *Spells For Daily Use: With Notes On The Theory And History Of Magic* and I am happy to oblige, if only to clear up some small areas of ambiguity arising from the text. Firstly, the quote attributed to the great sorcerer Tybalt Eyre at the beginning of Chapter The Fourth was intended to be purely illustrative. Perhaps if it had been not printed so close to the instructions for the spell “To Make One’s Wife Or Husband Bearable” there would have been less confusion; for myself, I thought that Eyre’s phrase “pluck out one eye and the other yet remains” would have been recognised for what it was, as a poetic metaphor concerning the human spirit rather than a literal instruction. Both the publishers and I hope that the new layout will clear things up.

Secondly, and in similar vein, the account of the meeting of Saint Spiggon with the Blind Worm of Damascus was intended as a comic tale and nothing more; certainly not as a guide to how one should act in the presence of dragons. Saint Spiggon’s famous dance, in which he presented his nether parts, fore and aft, to the blind worm, resulted in nothing but harmless hilarity. That some of my readers took it as literal advice and deemed it wise to repeat this dance in the presence of dragons and other lethal reptiles is not something that can be laid at the feet of myself and my publishers. Not only was Spiggon a saint, and therefore presumed to be under divine guidance, but the Blind Worm of Damascus – well, the clue is in the name. Unable to be stirred into rage by the sight of a man’s nether parts, a Blind Worm will have a very different reaction to its sighted cousins. Again, the offending section of the book has been amended, and our thoughts are with the maimed.

Thirdly, and most seriously, keen-eyed readers will notice that, for the first time since the introduction of the printing press, the publishers of this book have changed their printers. No longer will the venerable – some say too venerable – firm of August Temple & Sons be responsible for the production of Messrs Golem & Golem’s books. This was partly out of respect for the difficulties caused by working with small type, partly out of consideration for Master Temple’s (and his sons’) advanced age, and partly because of the accidental errors in the

measurements for one or two of the spells and charms in this book. Personally speaking, I would have thought it obvious that the instruction “add 222 drops of mercury” in the instructions for “A Simple Charm Ag’st The Catarrh” was inaccurate, not to mention extremely time-consuming, but perhaps I am too close to the text. Equally, the spell “A Curse Ag’st A Spurning Lover” was not, I readily admit, improved by the erroneous substitution of “drown” for “down” in its exhortation: “To succeed, you must only make them down.” We can thank the Lord that so many spurned lovers are also strong swimmers: those who were not put into wells, at least. My apologies to those readers who, following the instructions as printed in “A Charm To Set A Curse On A Witch” entirely literally, did not take the sixteen-times repetition of the phrase “and then cut your arm and let blood flow” as the misprint it was, and as a consequence let sixteen times more blood than was necessary. Apart from the physical injury this would have engendered, the amount of cutting and bleeding would also, naturally, have unbalanced the charm and rendered it ineffective.

NB: I have inserted several new spells, many of which I have yet to try for myself. I wish us all good fortune in our experiments!

- Dr. Septimus Fosse, gent.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

This third edition of *Magic And Its Practical Application* differs from the last in one regard only: the omission of the new spells inserted into that edition by myself, as an attempt to offer a sop to new readers. In doing so, I acted in a manner perhaps too hurried, not even stopping to test these new invocations. I now acknowledge this to be a grave mistake. If truth be told, in my haste to add fresh content, I simply reached for the nearest volume on my bookshelf, tore out six pages, and had the copyist add the spells at the last minute. If I had taken but a few more moments to glean the nature of the work I was including, I would have seen that the spells I had now added were not from one of my common *livres de sorcellerie*, but from *Old Dickon’s Grimoire*, arguably the most malevolent collection of spells and curses ever compiled. Merely touching the binding of this foul tome with their bare hands can cause boils and fever, and actually reading it has sent many sorcerers mad. Indeed, legend has it that, upon delivering the manuscript, Old Dickon vanished through a burning hole in the floor of his publishers’ office that had not been there before, and was never seen again.

My own publisher - in the singular, for while one Master Golem remains hale and hearty, the other now lies gibbering in a cell - wishes to reassure any

surviving readers that this new edition contains none of Old Dickon's spells. It was not easy to remove the spells from the book, as they are ill disposed to tampering, and able to generate protective charms of their own, only some of which are not lethal. Our thanks go to our brave typesetters, of which not a few now know the literal meaning of the phrase "printer's devil."

The plagues, wars and unrest that beset our land will fade, as troubles caused by enchantment do: but the reputation of both myself and Golem & Golem remains sullied: I hope only that this new edition will go some way to redressing the damage caused. As to the booksellers, customers, and innocent bystanders who lost eyes, limbs and family members when attempting to parse these new spells, I offer only my sincerest apologies. Indeed, I can do no other: an attempt to reverse the spell that had turned Master Golem into a heap of weeping flesh fit only for the insane asylum had severe and lasting consequences for myself. I am now, not to put too fine a point on it, more amphibian than man, and it is taking all my strength and determination just to dip this quill in the inkwell, let alone write these words. It remains only to ask the readers of this revised edition to bear in mind that this latest iteration of *Spells For Daily Use* was compiled and revised under extremely difficult circumstances and to beg their understanding of whatever small errors they may find. In short, please enjoy this book in its new, and final edition: I doubt there will be another.

- Dr. Septimus Fosse, gent.