The Swami’s Cane

• A cane or broomstick

THE TRICK: While the magician is out of the room, the boys and girls pick a word for him to guess. When the magician returns, his assistant stands in front of him and taps out with his “Swami’s cane” (an old cane or broomstick said to have magical powers) an apparently meaningless pattern. As he taps, the assistant makes encouraging comments. Suddenly the magician looks up from deep contemplation and says, "The cane tells me the magical word is—" and then tells the correct word.

THE SECRET: Every vowel in the word is given by taps with the cane: one tap for A, two for E, three for I, four for O, five for U. Consonants, however, are given by the first letter of the first word in every sentence spoken by the assistant. Suppose the secret word is "music." The assistant might use the following signals:

"My feeling is that it may be difficult to communicate today." The letter M is thus given. Five taps of the cane for the letter U. "Somehow, I think you feel the cane talking." There's the letter S. Three taps of the cane indicates the letter I. "Come now, I'm sure you're getting it," for the letter C.