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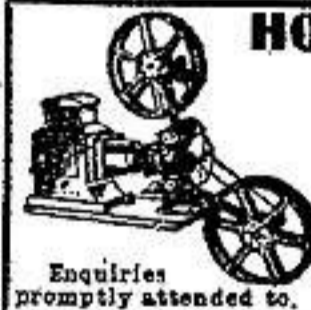
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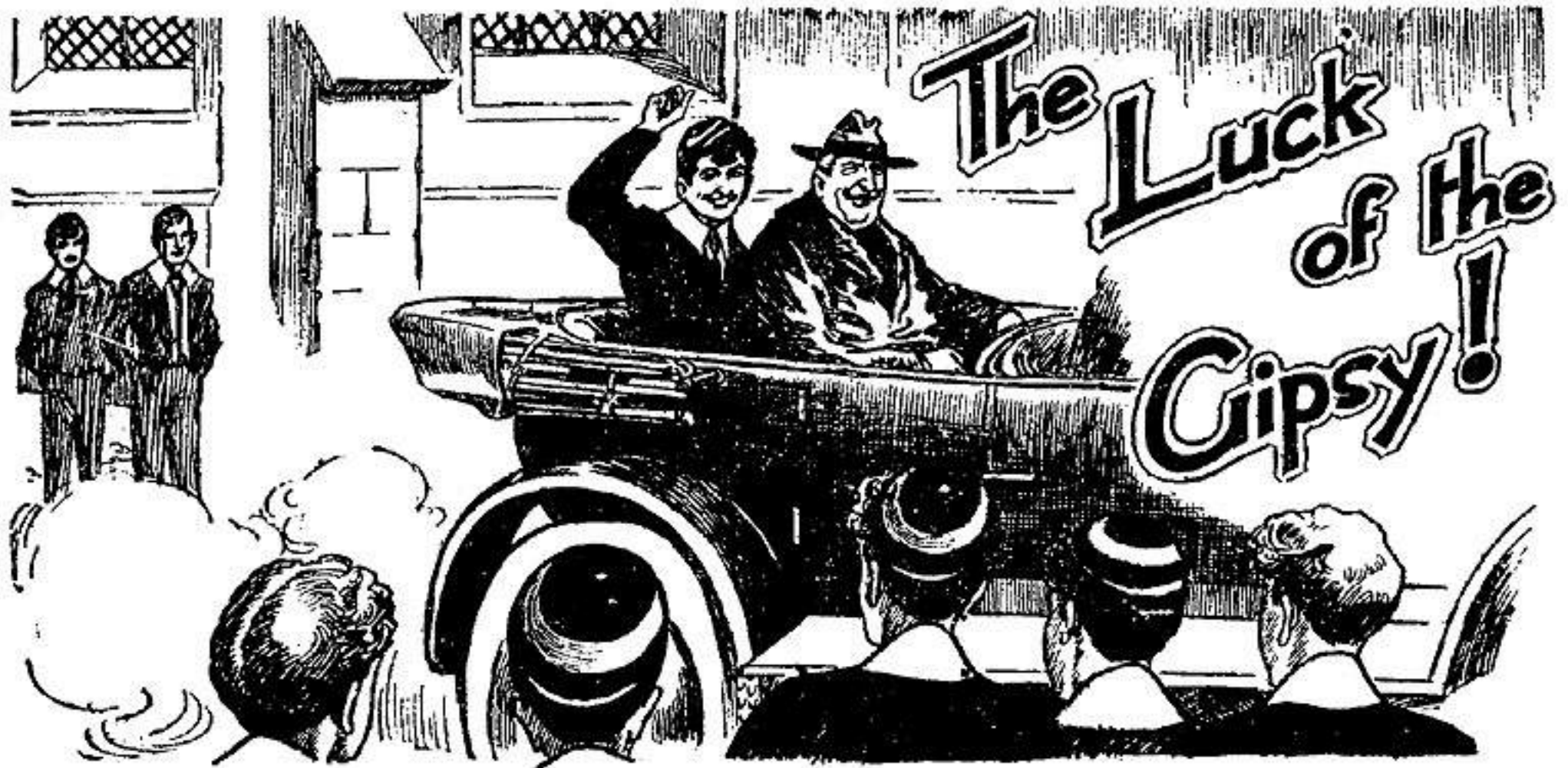
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A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. and Mick, the Gipsy, at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mick's Way!

"MICK!"
"Mickey!"
"Mick!"
Five voices shouted the name, but only the echoes answered from the thick woods.

Harry Wharton & Co. were exasperated.

They were looking for Mick, the gipsy schoolboy. A few minutes before, Mick had been in their company.

Now he had vanished.

They shouted his name as they stood on the footpath in Redclyffe Wood, and they were fairly certain that the gipsy schoolboy could hear them shouting, but no answer came from the truant.

"By Jove!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "I'd really like to punch his head!"

"I jolly well will when I see him again!" growled Johnny Bull.

And even the mild-mannered, even-tempered Hurree Janset Ram Singh declared wrathfully that the punchfulness should be terrific.

"It's really too bad!" said Harry Wharton crossly.

It was too bad, there was no doubt about that.

The wild ways of Mick, the gipsy, had landed him into a sea of troubles at Greyfriars, and the Famous Five of the Remove had agreed to keep an eye on him and see that he did not kick over the traces again.

It was not an easy task they had set themselves, for the call of the open air was almost irresistible to the gipsy schoolboy, and he gave little or no thought to roll-calls, or lock-ups, or, indeed, to any of the school laws that interfered with his freedom.

Honestly, Mick did his best, and tried to conform, but though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak.

On this especial afternoon the Famous Five had been over to Redclyffe to see the Ramblers play, and they had taken Mick with them. The autumn dusk was

falling as they walked home after the football match by lanes and footpaths.

And suddenly they missed Mick.

The gipsy schoolboy had glided away into the wood, heedless or forgetful of the fact that there was barely time to reach Greyfriars for calling-over.

"Mick!" roared Bob Cherry wrathfully. "You young rascal, come along! Do you hear?"

"He can hear us right enough!" snorted Johnny Bull. "He won't come. Let's get on."

"Oh, let him rip!" said Frank Nugent. "We don't want to get into a row for cutting call-over."

"The hearfulness is terrific, but the answerfulness is a boot on the other leg," remarked Hurree Singh. "Let us get on."

Harry Wharton hesitated.

He was exasperated by the wilfulness of the wayward gipsy, but he did not want to leave Mick out of gates to incur the wrath of his Form master when he turned up later at the school.

"Mick!" he shouted again.

But there was no answer, save the echo of his voice. His comrades were all looking impatient, and Harry Wharton gave it up at last.

"Oh, come on!" he said.

And the chums of the Remove resumed their way, leaving the elusive gipsy to his own devices.

"There'll be a row when he comes in," Harry Wharton remarked, as the juniors tramped on down the dusky footpath.

"Well, he's asking for it," said Johnny Bull. "Blessed if I have any patience with him. He was nearly sacked for breaking the rules, and it ought to have been a lesson to him."

"Queelchy will be ratty, and he's taking the roll this evening," remarked Nugent. "I wonder if it was a mistake, after all, for Mick to come to Greyfriars? He's a decent kid, in his way, but he's got the manners and customs of a giddy Red Indian."

"We've done our best," said Bob. "After all, we can't watch the kid like his blessed shadow every minute. He

will get licked, and I hope it will do him good."

"We've licked him for his own good," said Wharton, with a smile, "but I hardly think it's made much difference. Quelchy will be ratty over this, but I suppose it can't be helped."

It was close on lock-up when the Famous Five reached Greyfriars. Gosling, the porter, was about to close the gates. He grunted as the chums of the Remove arrived in time. Another couple of minutes and he would have had the satisfaction of shutting them out.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old bird!" said Bob Cherry, giving the old gentleman a playful poke in the ribs. "Watching for us at the gate like Sister Anne—what?"

"Ow!" gasped Gosling.

"Worrying over us in case we should be late, and you'd be bound to report us—what?" grinned Bob.

"Look 'ere, Master Cherry—"

"Can't, old top! You must get some new features before you ask anybody to do that!"

And the juniors walked on, leaving Mr. Gosling frowning darkly. But Gosling called after them:

"Old on, Master Wharton! Wasn't that there Mick with you?"

"That there Mick was with us," answered Wharton gravely.

"Ain't he come back with you?" demanded Gosling.

"Count!" suggested Bob Cherry. "You can count up to six, can't you, Gosling?"

Gosling snorted.

"Well, if he ain't come back he's late, and he's shut out," he said. "And Sir Hilton Popper is in the 'ouse to see him, too."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob.

"And wot I says is this 'ere—" went on Gosling.

"Bow-wow!"

The gates clanged, and the Famous Five walked on to the School House. They were feeling worried now. Mick's escapade had happened just at the wrong

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time, as was not uncommon with the wayward gipsy.

Sir Hilton Popper, who had befriended the waif and sent him to Greyfriars, was not a patient gentleman—quite the reverse. He was likely to be exceedingly annoyed by Mick's failure to return, since he had called at the school to see his protegee.

The Famous Five joined the crowd of fellows heading for Big Hall for roll-call. Billy Bunter joined them.

"I say, you fellows, old Popper's in Hall, along with Quelch. He's come to see the gipsy."

"Well, he won't see him this time!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Out of the gates?" asked Bunter, with a grin. "I say, Popper will be waxy. He looks waxy already."

Angel of the Fourth was passing, on his way to Hall, and he looked round quickly.

"The gipsy cutting lock-up again?" he asked, with a laugh.

"Mind your own bizney!" growled Bob Cherry.

Bob had no politeness to waste on Mick's enemy.

Angel laughed again and walked on. The chums of the Remove went into Hall, where they found their Form master, Mr. Quelch, prepared to take the roll.

The tall, angular figure of Sir Hilton Popper stood by his side. Sir Hilton, as a governor of the school, had a right to be present in Big Hall if he chose, though probably nobody was very pleased to see him there.

Mr. Quelch proceeded to call the names. When he came to the M's, and Mick was called, there was no "adsum" in reply.

"Mick!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

No answer.

Sir Hilton Popper knitted his grey brows, and glanced round the crowded Hall through his eyeglass.

"Why does not the boy answer to his name, Mr. Quelch?" he asked.

"Presumably because he is not present, Sir Hilton," answered the Remove master dryly.

"Not present? Is it not lock-up?"

"Certainly!"

"Upon my word," snorted Sir Hilton, "I really think—"

But Mr. Quelch was going on with the roll. He had no time, just then, to hear what Sir Hilton Popper really thought.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Free Sample for Aubrey!

HARRY WHARTON stayed in Hall after roll-call; Mr. Quelch had beckoned to him to remain.

As the fellows cleared off, the captain of the Remove obeyed a sign from his Form master, and came up to the dais, where the baronet and Mr. Quelch were standing.

Sir Hilton's eyeglass glittered at him. He had no reason to be annoyed with Wharton; but he looked cross. Sir Hilton was not a good-tempered gentleman; and he was annoyed with everything and everybody in general just then.

"I understand that Mick went with you this afternoon, Wharton, to see a football-match at Redclyffe," said Mr. Quelch.

"That is so, sir."

"Did he not return with you?"

"We walked back together, sir," said Harry. "But—but we lost him, somehow, on the footpath."

"You mean that he remained out of gates?"

"Well, yes, sir," said Harry reluctantly. "I—I dare say he forgot about calling-over."

"You mean, that he ignored calling-over," said Mr. Quelch quietly.

Wharton did not reply.

There was an angry snort from Sir Hilton Popper.

"Mr. Quelch, this is really outrageous!" he exclaimed. "I have come here to see this boy, and he is not present at a time when all Greyfriars boys are bound to be within gates."

"It is certainly serious, Sir Hilton."

"I have befriended this boy," said Sir Hilton. "He did me a service—a great service. In return, I have persuaded Dr. Locke to allow him to enter at Greyfriars—a step which has been much criticised. My old friend, Sir Philip Angel, has written to me on the subject, and pointed out how very unusual such a step is."

Mr. Quelch raised his brows.

"I should hardly have supposed that Sir Philip Angel was interested in the matter," he observed.

"As a member of the Governing Board, he is bound to be interested!" snapped Sir Hilton Popper. "It seems also that his son, who is in a junior Form here, has written to him on the subject."

Wharton set his lips.

Angel of the Fourth had been Mick's enemy ever since the gipsy waif had come to Greyfriars. It seemed that



Angel was seeking to drag his people into the affair.

"Sir Philip is coming here this afternoon to see the Head on the subject," resumed the baronet. "He has asked me to be present, and I am here for the purpose. It is absolutely essential for the boy, Mick, to be here. And he has chosen this very time to absent himself for some lawless prank."

"He did not know, sir—" began Wharton, anxious to put in a word for the hapless gipsy.

"Nonsense! He knew that he was bound to return to school for lock-up, I presume!" snapped Sir Hilton.

Wharton could not deny that.

"The boy is wild and wayward," said Mr. Quelch. "But certainly he is greatly improved since he came. Sir Hilton. Of course, he will be punished for playing truant on this occasion."

"That will not alter the fact that he is not present when his presence is absolutely required. I understand that he has been in almost incessant disgrace since he has been at the school. Possibly Sir Philip Angel is right, and I made a mistake in sending him here!" fumed the baronet. "I am really excessively annoyed, Mr. Quelch."

"No doubt," assented the Remove master.

Indeed, Sir Hilton looked it emphatically.

"Sir Philip Angel may arrive at any moment now," continued the baronet. "As he is to dine with me at Popper Court he will be unable to remain long. It follows that he will not be able to see the gipsy."

Mr. Quelch frowned with annoyance. It really was most unfortunate: two governors of the school desirous of seeing the waif of Greyfriars, and the waif absent for no reason excepting that the wandering spirit had seized on him again.

Sir Hilton's manner seemed to imply that Mr. Quelch was to blame somehow, as Mick's Form master. But he did not say so.

"I shall certainly cease to befriend this boy if he persists in acting in this lawless manner," said Sir Hilton. "I was under the impression that Greyfriars would teach him better ways."

"You set Greyfriars a difficult task, Sir Hilton," answered the Remove master tartly. "It is not easy to turn a gipsy vagrant into an orderly school-boy."

"He shall answer for it!" snapped Sir Hilton, annoyed by Mr. Quelch's tones. "I shall not say one word in his defence when Sir Philip interviews Dr. Locke on the subject. The boy has chosen to neglect his opportunities, and to throw aside all the advantages I tried to confer upon him. He must take the consequences. I shall support Sir Philip Angel in his representations to the Head."

"You will do as you think fit, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "But it is my duty to mention that the boy shows promise—"

"Of which his present conduct is a sample, I suppose—"

"Really, Sir Hilton—"

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

The Remove master made a hasty sign to Wharton to retire. The argument was growing acid; and a junior school-boy was not required as a witness. The captain of the Remove left Big Hall.

His chums were waiting for him on the other side of the arched doorway.

"Trouble for Mick?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Lots!"

"Well, he's asked for it."

"It's rotten, though," said Harry.

"After all, a fellow cuts call-over often enough, and takes lines or a licking. But it seems that old Popper is here specially to see him, because Angel's pater is coming down to see the Head about him."

"What the thump has Angel's pater to do with it?" demanded Nugent.

"Nothing; only he thinks he has," said Harry. "That cad Angel has been writing to him about Mick."

"The rotter!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"He said he would get the gipsy cleared out of Greyfriars, after Mick licked him in a scrap," said Johnny Bull. "I suppose that's the way he thinks he will do it—dragging his pater into it. Anybody know what Angel's pater is like?"

"If he's anything like Angel, he's a snob and a rotter!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"He's not much like Angel," said Nugent. "I've seen him—a rather stiff and dry old johnny, with a back like a poker, and a face like a graven image—hard as nails."

"Let's go and see Angel," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Blow Angel!"

"I mean, we can tell him that if his pater sets the Head against Mick, we'll jolly well rag him!"

"Oh, good!"

The Famous Five walked away to the Fourth Form passage. In Study No. 4, in the Fourth, they found Angel and Kenney of the Fourth at tea. Aubrey

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Angel raised his eyebrows as the juniors crowded in.

"I don't remember askin' you fags here," he remarked.

"Oh, no swank!" growled Bob Cherry. "We've just heard that you've written to your pater about Mick."

"Why not?" said Angel.

"Your pater's coming down to kick up a shindy."

Angel laughed.

"My pater's a gentleman," he said. "I've never seen him kick up a shindy. You're thinkin' of your own pater and his ways."

"You know what I mean!" exclaimed Bob angrily. "It's a dodge to get the gipsy kid turned out of the school."

"Quite so."

"You admit it?" exclaimed Wharton. Aubrey Angel yawned.

"Why not? It's a disgrace to the school to have a gipsy vagrant stuck here. I've explained to my father, and asked him to do anythin' he can to get the young rotter sent away."

"You cheeky cad!"

"Shut the door after you!" said Angel.

"Good-bye!" said Kenney.

The two Fourth-Formers grinned at the angry Removites across the well-spread tea-table. The Famous Five glared at them.

"It's a dirty trick!" said Johnny Bull.

"So glad to hear your opinion," drawled Angel.

"So pleased!" grinned Kenney.

"After all, Angel's governor isn't likely to be a silly snob and cad like Angel," remarked Nugent. "He won't take any notice of his rot; most likely."

"Looks as if he will, as he's comin' down to Greyfriars to-day about it!" smiled Angel. "You see, he's got a special down on gipsies. Hates the sight of them!"

"What rot!"

"A sneaking gipsy did him a bad turn a long time ago," explained Angel cheerfully. "He's never forgotten it. A gipsy to him is like a red rag to a bull. He's quite wild about it, I can tell you, and he's sure to pitch it strong to the Head. And if the Head won't take any notice, I fancy my pater's goin' to bring the matter up at the next meetin' of the governors."

"You awful rotter!" exclaimed Wharton. "What's that poor kid Mick done to you?"

"Well, he laid his low paws on me, for one thing," smiled Angel; "and I'm down on pushin' rabble, for another."

"And you think you'll get him sent away?"

"I think so," said Angel calmly.

"Well, you may and you may not," said Harry. "The governors have the power to decide, and I dare say your pater's got some influence with them. But I can tell you this, Angel. If you succeed in this dirty trick and Mick goes, we'll give you the ragging of your life!"

"Go hon!" said Angel.

"We mean it!"

"Thanks! Shut the door after you."

"And this is a sample!" roared Bob Cherry, quite losing his temper under Angel's calm, supercilious sneers.

He gripped the tea-table with both hands and up-ended it. Supercilious calmness was a distinguishing trait in Aubrey Angel, but it vanished all of a sudden as Bob up-ended the table.

A cascade of crockery, cakes, jam, and marmalade, bread-and-butter, scones,

and meringues shot over Angel of the Fourth, accompanied by a teapot full of hot tea, which lauded on his elegant waistcoat.

There was a fiendish yell from Aubrey.

"Oh! Ow! Yooooop!"

Crash, crash! Clatter! Crash!

"Yaroooh!"

Angel's chair went over backwards as he leaped up, smothered with butter and jam and streaming with tea.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Oh! Ah—groogh—oh—"

The Famous Five retreated from the study, yolling with merriment. They left Angel raging.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Angel's Pater!

MICK, the gipsy schoolboy, paused suddenly in a dusky, winding path in the deep woods and listened.

There was a footstep among the trees and a rustle of the ferns. A ragged cap and dirty, shabby velveteen jacket showed through the thickets, and Mick, catching his breath, dodged into cover.

From behind a tree he watched in silence. Down the winding path in the wood came a powerfully built gipsy, with a heavy, evil face, and a thick stick under his arm. It was Barenegro, the gipsy—the tyrant from whom Mick had fled, and who was still camped with

his gang on Courtfield Common, watching for a chance to recapture the runaway who had found a safe refuge at Greyfriars School.

Mick watched him breathlessly.

Why Barenegro, the gipsy, desired to recapture him, why he was so determined that the waif should not escape from his hands, was a mystery to Mick. That the ruffian hated him, he knew; his life with Barenegro had been one long record of brutality and ill-usage. In spite of his wretched, brutal surroundings, in spite of cruelty, some right instinct in the little waif had kept him straight, and his steady refusal to pilfer had brought upon him more and more brutality from his tyrant as he grew older.

That Barenegro hated him and desired to wreak savage wrath upon him, Mick understood. Yet it was strange that the gipsy should linger for weeks in the locality to recapture him. It was a problem Mick could not solve. Barenegro had some motive, but the gipsy schoolboy could not guess what it was. But he was aware of the fact, and he knew that if he encountered Barenegro he had a savage beating to expect, and a forced return to the gipsy camp.

And, irksome as Mick found the restricted life of a school, after his old habits, he shuddered at the thought of renewing the old life in the gipsy gang.

He scarcely breathed as Barenegro came slouching along the path, his sharp black eyes watchful and suspicious. One of the gipsy's pockets bulged, and



Bob Cherry gripped the tea-table with both hands and up-ended it. A cascade of crockery, cakes, jam, and marmalade shot over Angel of the Fourth—accompanied by a teapot full of hot tea. There was a yell from Angel. "Ow! Yow! Yooooop!" (See Chapter 2.)

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Mick guessed that it held poached rabbits.

Evidently Barendro did not suspect that the runaway was near at hand. He passed on, and Mick breathed more freely.

But the gipsy schoolboy did not move till every sound of Barendro's steps had died away in the distance.

Then he emerged from behind the tree, with a faint grin on his dark, handsome face.

He had had a narrow escape, and he knew it. More than once his reckless escapades had brought him into danger from his old tyrant. Within the walls of Greyfriars he was safe; outside the school precincts, the vindictive gipsy was watching for his chance.

But the peril passed from the gipsy schoolboy's mind. He strolled on carelessly through the darkening woods.

It was past lock-up at Greyfriars, but he did not heed, though he was still several miles from the school.

Since his last escapade, when he had lighted a camp-fire at night on the Sixth Form green, Mick had tried hard to keep within the rules. Harry Wharton & Co. had helped him very much.

But the gipsy had broken out again. The call of the woods was too strong for him.

In his happy-go-lucky way, Mick dismissed from his mind all consideration of the consequences till the time should come to face them. His early life had been too wild and irresponsible for the boy to learn the lesson of responsibility in so short a time.

Already there was a marked change in him, but he could not wholly change in a few weeks.

He sauntered on, enjoying the fresh fragrance of the woods, the solitude, the keenness of the open air, and the wind from the sea. He came out of the wood at last on the Redclyffe road.

In the woods the dusk was deepening, but on the road the sunset was still bright. Mick glanced at a motor-car that was halted by the roadside. A chauffeur was examining the engine with a set, anxious face, and in the car sat a stiff-looking old gentleman, with a white moustache and knitted grey brows. Mick, glancing carelessly at him, thought he had seldom seen so hard a face.

The old gentleman's glance fell on the boy by the roadside, and he stared at him. Mick was in Etons, with a school cap, but his dark, sunburnt face was noticeable at once. The man in the car stared at him fixedly.

Mick walked on. Without looking back, he noted that the old gentleman had leaned out of the car, and was staring after him with the same fixed gaze.

The chauffeur rose.

"I'm afraid it's no good, sir. I shall have to get help from a garage."

"Good gad!" said the gentleman in the car.

"It's the magneto, Sir Philip—"

"How long before we can get on?"

"Well, I shall have to walk back to Redclyffe—"

"Good gad! I am already expected at Greyfriars!" Sir Philip Angel looked at his watch. "Very good. It cannot be helped. I will walk to the school, Walters. That will be the quickest way now."

"It's a good many miles by the road, Sir Philip."

"I know this country well. I was a boy at Greyfriars forty years ago. There is a path through the wood." Sir Philip Angel stepped from the car. "Bring the car on to Popper Court, Walters; I am dining there."

Sir Philip Angel glanced up and down the road, and then walked towards the spot where a footpath entered the wood. As the old gentleman was about to enter the wood, Mick turned back.

He came up to Sir Philip and raised his cap.

"Excuse me, sir—" he began, with the best manners he had learned at Greyfriars.

Sir Philip peered at him in the dusk.

"What do you want, boy?"

"You are going through the wood, sir?"

"Yes."

"There's a gipsy in the wood—a rough fellow," said Mick respectfully. "I saw him a little while ago. He's none too good to rob you after dark, and knock you on the head, too. I—I thought I ought to warn you, sir!"

Sir Philip's brow darkened.

"A gipsy?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Thank you for the warning! Walters, give me my stick from the car."

Mick raised his cap again and walked on, the baronet staring after him with a strange interest in his face. At a little distance Mick stopped and looked back. With his stick under his arm Sir Philip had entered the footpath, and the trees had swallowed him up. The gipsy schoolboy hesitated.

Barendro was in the wood, and Mick knew what would happen if the ruffian came on the old gentleman—well dressed, evidently wealthy. A blow from the gipsy's cudgel and a robbery—Mick knew that it was certain if they met in the lonely recesses of the wood. He hesitated long, his old dread of Barendro strong upon him; but at last he turned back and entered the footpath. He opened his pocket-knife, and cut a stout stick in the thicket, and then, with his light, noiseless tread, he followed the baronet.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mick Takes a Hand!

BARENGRO, the gipsy, grinned evilly in the cover of the thickets. Luck had come the gipsy's way.

Through the dusk of the footpath a tall figure came in sight—a well-dressed man, following the footpath alone. Barendro's hand closed on his cudgel.

It was not the first time by many that Barendro had played the footpad. And this was a rich prize.

Sir Philip Angel had not forgotten the unknown boy's warning. But he was deep in thought as he walked through the dusky wood. The strange resemblance of Mick to his son, Aubrey Angel, had struck him, as it had struck all the fellows at Greyfriars. It had stirred old, buried recollections in the baronet's mind, and he was thinking of anything but danger as he followed the solitary footpath towards the Priardale road.

There was a sudden rustle in the underwood, and Barendro sprang out into the footpath.

His cudgel was lifted for a blow that was intended to knock the old gentleman down, and place him at the mercy of the thief. Barendro's methods as a footpad were not gentle.

But Sir Philip, taken by surprise as he was, was not quite caught napping. Mick's warning rushed back into his mind as he heard the rustle in the thicket, and he sprang back as the gipsy rushed on him.

His stick came up just in time to meet the blow of the cudgel, and ward it off. They crashed together with a terrific impact, and the stick was dashed from the baronet's hand.

"Good gad!" gasped Sir Philip.

In the dusk of the footpath the gipsy was little more than a shadow to him. He could not make out the man's face; he caught only the savage glitter of the black eyes that flashed at him. He saw the gipsy's arm rise for a second blow, and he was defenceless now. Quick as thought, and with an activity amazing in one of his years, the baronet leaped forward, and closed with the ruffian before he could strike.

The sudden rush sent Barendro whirling backwards, with Sir Philip's grasp on him, and they went to the ground, the baronet uppermost.

"Barn you!" panted Barendro.

For the moment Sir Philip Angel had the advantage. But the grasp of the powerful gipsy closed on him savagely, and the old gentleman almost crumpled up in it.

He was whirled over and dashed to the ground, and Barendro's sinewy knee was planted on him. The gipsy's savage hands gripped his throat.

"Now!" hissed Barendro.

A few moments more, and the hapless baronet would have been choked into insensibility.

But there was a quick footstep, and Mick came panting up. He had been near enough, as he followed Sir Philip, to see what happened, and he rushed on in time to save him.

Crash!

Mick's cudgel came down on Barendro's head.

There was a startled yell from the ruffian, and he half turned towards his assailant. Dazed as he was, even in the dusk he recognised him.

"Mick, you—"

Crash!

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Mick struck again with desperate strength. His life would have been worth nothing if Barengro's savage hands had fastened on him then.

Crash!

Barengro reeled away from the baronet, and collapsed into the grass. Mick had struck hard, and he was stunned by the third blow.

Sir Philip Angel sat up dazedly.

Mick did not heed him for a moment. He bent over Barengro, panting, watchful. But the ruffian was not shamming; he was completely insensible.

Mick breathed hard with relief.

He turned towards Sir Philip Angel, who was staggering to his feet, breathless, dazed, and spluttering for breath.

"Good gad!" gasped the baronet.

"Good gad! Oh!"

"All safe now, sir!" said Mick.

"Is the brute stunned?"

"Yes."

Sir Philip peered at him.

"Are you the boy who warned me on the Redclyffe road?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you come here?"

Mick chuckled.

"I follered, sir," he explained. "I knowed you'd never get through safe if you met him, so I follered on."

"Good gad! You have saved me from serious injury, and certainly from robbery," said Sir Philip. "You are a brave lad!"

"Orl right, sir!" said Mick. "I'm glad to give him a oner!"

"A—a what?"

"I've got a bit of my own back, sir," said Mick, with satisfaction. "He's walloped me often enough!"

"You know the man?"

"You bet!" said Mick. "Know him well, and he knows me. He thrashed me every day of my life when I was in the gipsy gang."

"Good gad!" said Sir Philip, staring at him. "I noticed on the road that your face was dark. You do not mean to tell me that you are a gipsy?"

"'Course I am!" said Mick.

"Oh!"

Sir Philip drew back a pace, and his expression became colder and harder. Mick did not observe it.

"I thought, from your clothing, that you were a schoolboy," said the baronet in an altered voice. "Did you come honestly by those clothes?"

Mick stared at him.

"Think I pinched 'em?" he asked. "I ain't a thief, if that's what you mean, though this here bloke has tried 'ard enough to make me one!"

"Good gad!" said Sir Philip.

The baronet leaned on a tree, breathing hard. In the grass Barengro, the gipsy, lay like a log.

"You'll be safe now, sir," said Mick, after a rather awkward pause. "He won't be able to get arter you before you're through the wood, if you get on."

He made a movement to go.

Sir Philip Angel's words had wounded him, though the baronet's suspicion was natural enough, in the circumstances.

"Stop!" exclaimed Sir Philip.

Mick turned back.

"You say you know this man?"

"'Course I do."

"Then your evidence will be needed. He cannot be taken into custody now, but I shall inform the police immediately of this outrage, and you will be able to help. Come with me."

"No fear!" said Mick.

"What?"

"He's been a brute to me," said Mick. "He'd kill me for what I've done now."



Sir Philip's stick came up just in time to meet the blow of the cudgel and ward it off. They crashed together with terrific impact, and the stick was dashed from the baronet's hand. "Good gad!" gasped Sir Philip. "Now——!" hissed Barengro. (See Chapter 4.)

But I ain't giving information agin him."

"What! Why not?" snapped Sir Philip.

"It ain't my way," said Mick. "I was in his gang, and I wouldn't 'and him over to the police if he cut the skin off me. A gipsy don't go back on his tribe."

"Nonsense!" snapped the baronet. "Come with me, my boy!"

Mick did not stir.

"You'd better get on, sir," he said. "He's hard hit, but he's tough: he will be ripe for mischief when he comes to. And he's beginning to move already."

"Very well. I will not force you, after what you have done for me, my boy," said Sir Philip, in a kinder tone. "I suppose you have your own idea of loyalty, and I will not make you do what you think wrong."

Mick grinned. It would not have been easy for Sir Philip to make the elusive gipsy accompany him, if he had wanted to do so. Mick would have been about as easy to catch as a weasel.

"You'd better get on, sir," said Mick: and with that he disappeared into the thickets.

Sir Philip stood for some moments, breathing hard. But the gipsy schoolboy's advice was too good not to be taken, and the ruffian on the ground was already showing signs of returning to consciousness. Sir Philip picked up his

stick, and strode on at a good pace by the footpath; and he was greatly relieved when he stepped out at last into the open road that ran from Friardale to Greyfriars.

Deep in the woods Mick was roaming at large, enjoying his freedom, under dusky trees and by shadowy woodland streams. For the time he was a gipsy again, and all thought of Greyfriars and its rules and regulations seemed to have vanished from his mind.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Startling News!

"HUI!"

The remark was not really intelligible. But it expressed the feelings of Sir Hilton

Popper, Baronet.

Sir Hilton's temper was far from good at the best of times. To-day everything seemed to unite to irritate him, and his temper was really very bad.

Mick, the gipsy, was still absent. But that was not all. Sir Philip Angel had not arrived at Greyfriars.

A gipsy waif might be excused for irresponsibility, not that Sir Hilton thought of excusing him. But a baronet of the United Kingdom certainly ought not to have failed to keep an appointment

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with another baronet of the United Kingdom. The inexplicable absence of Sir Philip Angel was more irritating to Sir Hilton than the absence of the gipsy schoolboy.

For it was drawing near seven-thirty, and at seven-thirty Sir Hilton was accustomed to dine at Popper Court. Sir Philip's interview with the Head should have been over by this time, and he should have been on the way to Popper Court with his fellow-baronet. Instead of which, Angel's father had not even arrived at Greyfriars.

Angel of the Fourth, who was on the look-out for his pater, was surprised and irritated. He had hoped that Mick's fate would be sealed at the coming interview, and he wondered angrily at his father's failure to keep the appointment. At every moment he expected to hear the Angel car on the drive. But it did not come.

Sir Hilton Popper had retired to the visitors' room like a lion to his lair. But at intervals of five or ten minutes he strode forth, fuming. Many fellows noticed him. In a short time, it was a standing joke among the juniors.

"Come and look at old Popper over the banisters," fellows in the Fourth and the Remove said to one another.

And they went and looked and grinned. Billy Bunter, being short-sighted, went a little too close to look. He peered at the baronet from the distance of a couple of yards, through his big spectacles, with a grin on his fat face. Unfortunately for the Owl of the Remove Sir Hilton noted and resented the grin, and boxed Bunter's ears.

The fat junior roared and retreated, no longer grinning. There was a thistle from the landing above.

Sir Hilton Popper went to the Head's house at last, and was admitted to see Dr. Locke again. He found the Head of Greyfriars just as puzzled as himself by Sir Philip's failure to arrive.

"Some accident on the road," suggested the headmaster.

"Huh!"

"There are many accidents to cars in these days," remarked Dr. Locke mildly.

"Huh!"

Dr. Locke coughed, and made no more suggestions.

"It is intensely annoying," said Sir Hilton. "I have barely time to drive home for dinner. Sir Philip was to dine with me. Really, a most annoying and disturbing state of affairs. The interview must, I suppose, be postponed; and it's not scarcely fair to you, Dr. Locke, to take up your time to-morrow."

The Head coughed again.

Sir Hilton Popper took up as much of his time as all the other governors of Greyfriars rolled together. He seldom seemed conscious of the fact that the Head's time was of value.

"It is useless for me to remain," said Sir Hilton, fortunately without noticing how the Head's face brightened at that remark. "Apparently Sir Philip Angel cannot keep his appointment. I am surprised that he had not allowed us to know in time. I shall return to Popper Court, Dr. Locke; and if Sir Philip should, by any chance, arrive, perhaps you will kindly tell him that I expect him to stay the night at the Court."

"Certainly, Sir Hilton."

And the irascible baronet took his leave, and rolled away in his car for Popper Court, fortunately arriving there with just time to change for dinner. Had Sir Hilton been late for dinner, it is almost impossible to surmise what might have happened.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him depart thankfully. Mick had not come in yet, and they were glad that the baronet was not waiting for him. In his present temper, Sir Hilton would certainly have dealt hardly with the reckless gipsy.

"Well, he's gone," said Bob Cherry. "I wonder if the other blighter—I mean, the other baronet—is coming, after all? He seems late."

"The lateness is terrific. The esteemed Angel seems annoyed," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Aubrey Angel was on the steps of the School House, staring into the dusky quad with knitted brows. He was puzzled and exasperated. Why had not his father come?

"Well, we've got to get off for prep," said Harry Wharton; and the Removites went up to the studies.

Angel continued to watch from the steps, letting prep slide, as he often did. The black sheep of the Fourth was a slacker as well as a blackguard.

Wharton and Nugent were at prep in Study No. 1, when the door was thrown open, and Billy Bunter's fat, excited face looked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Has he come in?" asked Wharton, looking up.

"Yes; and he looks a bit rumpled," grinned Bunter.

"Mick does?"

"Who's talking about Mick?" sniffed Bunter. "Angel's pater's come—"

"Blow Angel's pater!"

"No end of a row, though," said Bunter, with a chuckle. "I say, he's rumpled and dusty, and his collar's torn, and his hat dented. He's been scrapping."

"What?" roared Wharton.

"Scrapping with a gipsy!" howled Bunter excitedly. "It's true. I say, I heard him tell the Head and Quelch. A gipsy barged into him in the wood, and tried to rob him. He's got finger-marks on his neck—he has, really! I say, you fellows, do you think Mick got one of his gipsy pals to lay old Angel out?"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Well, old Angel was coming here to get Mick sacked," said Bunter. "Angel told me so; at least, I heard him tell some fellows. And Mick's out of gates, too. Looks to me as if it's a put-up job, what?"

"You silly owl!" roared Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent!"

"You fat chump!" exclaimed Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind to stomp you for suggesting such a thing!"

"I think it's jolly likely!" retorted Bunter. "I asked Angel of the Fourth, and he said it was likely enough. Mick's got a lot of ruffianly pals, and he's put one of them up to barging at Angel's pater. I think it's jolly likely."

"You've told Angel that silly rot?" exclaimed Harry.

"Well, I asked him," said Bunter. "He thinks it's likely enough. So do I. So does Skinner!"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

Vernon-Smith put his head into the study.

"No end of a rag downstairs," he said. "You fellows are missing the show. Jolly old baronet highly excited—looks

as if he's been in a fight on Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday. Spinning a yarn that he was attacked by a gipsy."

"I heard it!" exclaimed Bunter. "Don't you believe it, Smithy? Don't you believe Mick put one of his pals up to it?"

"Fathead! More likely he got screwed, and got into a scrap with some bargee!" answered the Bounder. "Ask Angel—he'd know!"

"So I will," said Bunter; and he rolled away to ask Aubrey Angel of the Fourth what he thought of the Bounder's suggestion.

There was a roar of laughter in Study No. 1. The Removites could guess what sort of a reception Bunter would get from Aubrey.

"Hasn't the gipsy kid come in yet, you fellows?" asked the Bounder.

"I think not," answered Wharton. "This is his study, so he would have come here."

Vernon-Smith looked at him curiously. "You don't think there's anything in Bunter's yarn?"

"What rot!"

"Well, I don't know," said the Bounder coolly. "Old Angel is no end of a big gun on the governing board, and he was coming here to do his best to get Mick sacked. Mick stays out of gates, and a gipsy bangs old Angel in the wood. I heard the old boy say that the ruffian rushed at him to knock him down with a big stick. There's only one gang of gipsies in this locality, and that's the gang that Mick belonged to before he came here."

"But he's run away from them, and he's on the worst of terms with them—at least, one of them!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Some of the others may be his friends, though, and willing to do him a good turn."

"It's impossible!" exclaimed Wharton. "You must be an ass to think of such a thing, Smithy! Mick would never dream—"

"Well, he's a queer beggar," said the Bounder. "Anyhow, I know that Angel is already putting the yarn about; that's where Bunter picked it up. It's jolly queer Mick being out at the time. But perhaps he'll turn out to have been in another quarter. You fellows know where he's gone?"

"He left us on the way home from Redclyffe," said Harry.

The Bounder whistled.

"In the wood?"

"Yes. What's the matter, if he did?"

"Only that's where Sir Philip Angel was attacked—in the wood, on the foot-path between the Redclyffe road and Friardale Lane," said Vernon-Smith. "Mick must have been pretty close to the spot, it seems."

Wharton gave him a startled look.

"It—it's impossible! Impossible!"

"I hope so, for Mick's sake," said the Bounder. "He's not a bad kid!"

And Smithy strolled away, leaving Wharton and Nugent looking at one another blankly.

"It's impossible!" said Harry again. "How could Mick have known anything about old Angel coming that way? I don't see how he came to be walking through the wood at all, and Mick couldn't have known. Anyhow, he's quite incapable—"

"I'm sure of it!" said Frank. "But—but—"

"But what?"

"Angel of the Fourth will use any stick to beat a dog. If he can make his father believe such a yarn—"

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“Anyhow, the Head wouldn’t!”
 “He might!” said Frank.
 “Oh, it’s rotten! That silly ass Mick, if only he’d come in with us!” exclaimed Harry. “He’s played into Angel’s hands by playing the goat. The young ass! I’m going down.”
 “What about prep?”
 “Oh, blow prep!”

Wharton was feeling too disturbed for prep. He went down with Nugent, and joined a buzzing crowd of Greyfriars fellows below. The attack on Sir Philip Angel was the one topic, and on all sides the chums of the Remove heard it debated whether Mick had had a hand in it.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Under Suspicion!

AUBREY ANGEL smiled—not a pleasant smile. Matters seemed to be working very smoothly for the cad of the Fourth. Nobody had been more surprised than Angel when his father arrived at Greyfriars, on foot, and in a somewhat ruffled and dishevelled state. A score of fellows—Angel among them—had heard Sir Philip explain to the Head how he had been attacked by a gipsy footpad in the wood. And into Angel’s keen, unscrupulous mind the thought came at once, that here was a new and powerful weapon against his enemy. But to do Angel justice, he suspected that what he suggested might be true. To his mind, it appeared probable enough that Mick, having by some underhand means learned of the baronet’s coming, had put up some old associate, some gipsy ruffian to attack him. Not that Angel cared much whether the suspicion was true or false. So long as it found credence, that was all he cared about.

It needed only the suggestion to come from Angel, and the possibility was discussed far and wide. Billy Bunter, indeed, carried it all over the House—cheerfully claiming it as his own suggestion. Skinner and Snoop and Stott, in the Remove, remarked that it was very likely; Kenney of the Fourth said that it was certain. Some of the fellows thought it very doubtful, others self-evident; all discussed it.

Unless Mick could prove a strong alibi afterwards, it was certain that a very disagreeable suspicion must attach to him. Angel smiled as he heard the fellows discussing it—many of them not even knowing that the suggestion had come from him in the first place.

Fellows like Harry Wharton & Co., who knew Mick intimately, were certain that he was incapable of an act of ruffianism, or of participating in one. But other fellows did not know him so well; but they knew that he was wild and wayward and untamed, and that he had been in more or less trouble ever since he had come to the school, owing to his wild ways.

Temple of the Fourth remarked that there really was no telling what such a fellow might or mightn’t do—and many agreed with Temple.

“Angel was rather a cad to bring his pater down on the kid,” said Cecil Reginald Temple. “But if the kid really put up a gipsy ruffian to banging Angel’s pater, the sooner he’s kicked out of Greyfriars, the better. It’s the giddy limit!”

“And it looks like it,” said Fry.
 “The fellow was on the spot, anyhow,” said Skinner of the Remove.

“I’ve had it from Bull that they lost him in Redclyffe Wood. He dodged them, and stayed behind in the very place.”

Temple whistled.
 “Looks bad,” he said. “Still, don’t give a dog a bad name and hang him. He may clear himself all right when he comes in.”

“Mayn’t come back at all after what he’s done!” said Kenney.

“We don’t know that he’s done anythin’ yet,” answered Temple. “Give the kid a chance, even if he is an outsider!”

Aubrey Angel listened to the discussion, and strolled away smiling. Billy Bunter met him in the passage.

“I say, Angel, old chap!”

“Hallo, Bunter!”

The dandy of the Fourth was unusually civil to Bunter. The tattler of the Lower School was useful to him now as a spreader of evil suspicions.

“I say, Angel, Smithy thinks that perhaps your pater wasn’t pitched into by a gipsy at all,” said Bunter.

“What?”

“How’s that?” exclaimed Skinner.

“Well, Smithy thinks that perhaps old Angel got squiffy, and had a scrap with a bargee, and spun this yarn to cover it up,” said the Owl of the Remove fatuously. “What do you think, Angel?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

There was a howl of laughter from the juniors. Aubrey Angel’s face was crimson with wrath.

“You fat idiot!” he yelled.

“Oh, really, Angel—”

“Go it, Bunter!” howled Fry of the Fourth. “This is rich! What else does Smithy think?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Well,” said Bunter, “he said—

Yaroooooooh!”

Angel had grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar. He proceeded to bang Bunter’s head on the wall, and

yells of anguish arose from William George Bunter.

“There, you fat dummy!” gasped Angel, and he strode away savagely, leaving Billy Bunter roaring.

Angel of the Fourth returned to his study. He was anxious to see his father, and hoped that the old gentleman would come there. But Sir Philip did not come. He had been shown to a guest’s room, on the Head’s side of the big baize doors that separated the School House from the Head’s House; and Angel surmised that he would dine with the Head, as certainly he had lost his dinner at Popper Court. Angel was anxious to see him before then, as undoubtedly the subject of Mick would come up after dinner, and he wished to instil his own miserable suspicion into his father’s mind first.

He went at last along the corridor, and passed the baize doors, and entered the Head’s House. There a servant showed him to Sir Philip’s room.

The baronet did not seem specially pleased to see him. Probably he was ready for his dinner; and the affair in the wood had certainly told on his nerves.

“You, Aubrey! I will see you later, my boy. I am dining with Dr. Locke,” he said. “I shall come to your study before I go on to Popper Court.”

“I—I was rather anxious, father. Were you hurt?” asked Angel.

Sir Philip’s hard face softened a little.

“My dear boy, of course! No; I am not hurt—only, naturally, rather upset. I have several bruises. Nothing serious—nothing serious.”

“It was a gipsy—”

“Yes. I did not see him clearly, in the dusk, but I know that it was a gipsy—a hulking ruffian—”

“Why did he set on you, father?”

“To rob me, of course.”

“You don’t think it was—was because—” Angel hesitated.



There was a quick footstep in the wood, and Mick came panting up. Crash! Mick’s cudgel came down on Barengro’s head. There was a startled yell from the ruffian, and, dazed as he was, he recognised his assailant. “Mick—you!” he panted. (See Chapter 4.)

His father turned from the dressing-table, to stare at him.

"Because what? What do you mean, Aubrey?"

"Because you were coming here to speak to the Head against the gipsy here," said Aubrey.

Sir Philip started violently.

"What—what? What did you say, Aubrey?"

"I couldn't help suspecting it, father. That gipsy fellow, Mick, is an out-and-out ruffian. He picked a row with me one day, and we fought; though I'm in a different Form, and he need not have come into contact with me at all, if he'd liked to keep clear. He breaks bounds at night—"

"You told me so in your letter. Is it proved?"

"It's proved, and he was nearly expelled for it a week ago. All the fellows know he's an utter savage. The Head will tell you, if you ask him, that he flogged the young brute last week, for breaking dormitory bounds after midnight."

"Good gad!"

"It's well known that he goes poaching—"

"Is it possible?"

"And very likely stealing," said Angel. "Nobody really knows what he does when he gets out at night. He's pally with a gang of gipsies camped near Courtfield—the only gipsies in the place. It must have been one of that gang who went for you—if it was a gipsy at all."

"I am certain that it was a gipsy."

"Well, I can't help thinking that he knew you were coming here, and put up one of his ruffianly friends to wait for you," said Angel.

"Good gad!"

Sir Philip stared at his son; he seemed to have forgotten all about dinner.

"But no one could have known that I should cross the wood by the foot-path," he said, at last. "The car broke down on the Redclyffe road, and it was only at the last moment that I decided to walk through the wood."

Angel's face fell a little. That information was rather a set-back to his theory of a plot. But he was silent only for a moment.

"They saw you go into the wood, and jumped at the chance," he said.

"It is possible," said Sir Philip. "But there is no reason to suppose that the boy Mick was on the spot, Aubrey, at all. Moreover, he would hardly know me by sight."

Again Angel felt that he had received a set-back. But Angel of the Fourth was a sticker—in evil, at least.

"I dare say he's seen your photograph in my study, father. And a picture of you was in the newspapers the other day, when you made a speech."

"That is true," said Sir Philip. "He may have known me. But surely the boy, at that time, was within gates here."

"Not at all." Angel smiled now. "He's not come in yet."

"Good gad!"

"He was out with some fellows this afternoon, and stayed out, refusing to come back with them in time for lock-up," said Angel. "And they left him behind in Redclyffe Wood."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure."

"Then, at the time I was attacked, he must have been somewhere near the spot?" exclaimed the baronet.

"No doubt at all about that, father. Of course, he stayed out to hobnob with some low associate," said Angel. "That's pretty certain. It looks to me as if he took his chance of getting the ruffian to knock you out. If they'd succeeded, you wouldn't have been able to come here and deal with him."

"Did this boy, Mick, know that I was coming here on his account to-day?" asked the baronet sternly.

"He must have; I'd told a good many fellows."

Sir Philip gnawed his lip.

"It looks very probable," he said; "very probable indeed! Good gad! And that is the character that has been admitted to Greyfriars—a boy capable of instigating a murderous attack upon a governor of the school. Good gad!"

At this point Sir Philip received a message that the Head was waiting dinner. Angel of the Fourth left him, with a cheery smile on his face. He had instilled the poison; and it only remained to see how it would work.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Too Late!

"THE niter ass!" growled Bob Cherry.

"The thumping duffer!" said Wharton.

Never had the recklessness of the gipsy schoolboy exasperated his friends so much as now. It was getting towards bedtime for the Remove, and Mick had not returned.

Message after message had come from the Head's house, as the chums of the Remove knew. Mr. Quelch, when he received the messages, could only send the answer that the truant had not yet returned to school.

Dinner was over in the Head's house—long over. Sir Philip Angel had telephoned a message to Popper Court, and Sir Hilton Popper was to send a car over for him. Now the car was snorting up the drive, and still Sir Philip Angel had not been able to interview the gipsy schoolboy, who was still out of gates.

A last message came from the Head's house, when the car from Popper Court stopped there at the door. Wharton and Bob Cherry, who were hanging on, watching for Mick to come in, saw Mr. Quelch receive the message, and noted the ominous knitting of his brows, and the gleam in his eyes, as he sent the inevitable reply. He could only reply that he could not send Mick to the Head's house, for the simple reason that the gipsy was not there to be sent.

Mr. Quelch was angry—deeply angry. And undoubtedly the Head was extremely angry when he received the Remove master's answer.

But their anger, compared with Sir Philip's, was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine.

Sir Philip did not fume and grunt, after the manner of Sir Hilton Popper, who was a demonstrative gentleman. Sir Philip was anything but demonstrative.

But his anger was a good deal deeper and stronger. It was betrayed by the grim compression of his lips and a momentary flash in his deep grey eyes.

"It is outrageous—beyond all bearing!" said the Head. "The boy is still out of gates."

"At nine o'clock!" said Sir Philip.

The Head glanced at the clock and nodded.

"And that is the boy I have come specially to Greyfriars to see," said the baronet. "I have come from London to see him, and I cannot see him, because he does not choose to be present. I have never heard of such treatment of a governor of the school by a Lower boy. It was unheard-of in my time at Greyfriars, Dr. Locke."

The Head bit his lip.

"It is equally unheard-of now," he answered. "No Greyfriars boy would dream of acting in such a manner, excepting this wayward lad."

"Doubtless he has his reasons for not returning," said Sir Philip. "I do not believe that it is mere waywardness."

"I am sure—"

"I cannot agree. I believe that the boy dare not face me, after what happened in Redclyffe Wood."

"But—"

"I was attacked there by a gipsy," said the baronet bitterly. "I do not believe that I came on this ruffian quite by chance. I am convinced that he was set on by the boy."

"Sir Philip!"

"I am convinced of it, sir; and I believe that this is the reason why this vagrant, Mick, does not return to the

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There was a howl of laughter from the juniors as Billy Bunter finished relating what Vernon-Smith had said. But Aubrey Angel gave a howl of wrath, and, darting forward, banged Billy Bunter's head against the wall. "There, you fat dummy!" gasped Angel. (See Chapter 6.)

school. After what he has done, he dare not!"

"I cannot believe——"

"He dare not return—at least, until I am gone," said Sir Philip, with concentrated anger. "I am sure of it. He was a party to the attack on me in the wood."

Dr. Locke shook his head.

"He is incapable of it, I am certain," he answered.

"And I am certain of the contrary. The gipsy made a savage attack on me, and had I not received help I should have been stunned and seriously injured. By the merest chance I was aided in the struggle by some lad who was apparently on personally bad terms with the ruffian who attacked me. But for that I should probably be lying in the wood at this moment."

"But——" said the Head.

"The boy was a party to it," asserted Sir Philip positively. "I refuse to entertain a doubt on the subject."

"If that should prove to be the case, Sir Philip, certainly he will not remain at Greyfriars. I can promise you that the investigation will be strict."

"And the conclusion certain, I hope. Now that Sir Hilton Popper has withdrawn his support from this vagrant, what reason can there be for keeping him in the school?"

"None, excepting the consideration of his future," said the Head. "He is wild and wayward, but has many excellent qualities. It was somewhat against my judgment that I admitted him here; but having held out hopes to the boy, it seems hard on him to dash them to the ground. If he is guilty, as you believe, of course there is no question of forgiveness for him. But I think he will be able to clear himself of that, and the matter remains one of truancy."

"Are the rules of the school to be set at naught, then, and the opinion of at least two of the governors to be disregarded?"

"Not in the least. Your opinion, Sir Philip, weighs very much with me," said the Head quietly. "But the decision

must rest with Sir Hilton Popper, who sent the boy here. If he shall decide definitely to remove him I have nothing to say."

Sir Philip rose.

"I think I can answer for Sir Hilton after I have spoken to him," he said. "The boy's present conduct will be sufficient. I am fairly sure that Sir Hilton will share my view that the boy Mick was concerned in the attack upon me. In any case, Dr. Locke, I am bound to say that if the boy remains here it will be my duty to raise the matter at the next meeting of the governing board. A gipsy at Greyfriars!" Sir Philip compressed his lips. "The greatest sorrow in my life, Dr. Locke, was caused by the villainy of a gipsy." He checked himself abruptly. "Greyfriars is no place for a gipsy vagrant. Let him go back to his own kind."

"It is hard on the boy. If you had seen him, I think you might have formed a more favourable opinion."

"Whose fault is it that I have not seen him?" said the baronet. "I did not desire to condemn him unseen and unheard. I made a special journey here from London to see him."

"It is true," said the Head.

"He must blame himself, though I do not think that an interview with the boy would have changed my opinion. I desired to be just, that is all."

A few minutes later Sir Philip Angel stepped into the car, and rolled away to Popper Court.

From a window in the School House, Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry watched his departure.

"Well, he's gone," said Harry.

"Without seeing Mick, after waiting for him!" said Bob, with a whistle. "That's enough to make any old gent waxy."

"Especially a governor of the school! I'm afraid Mick's done for himself here," said the captain of the Remove.

"Poor old Mick!"

The juniors went back to prep in a thoughtful mood. In the Remove passage groups of fellows were discussing

Mick, and the peculiar fact that two noble baronets, one after the other, had waited in vain for the gipsy schoolboy. The nerve of the gipsy in making two governors of the school wait on his convenience made most of the fellows chuckle; but most of them agreed that it meant the "long jump" for Mick.

It was close on bedtime when Billy Bunter rolled into the junior Common-room, and announced, with a grin:

"He's come!"

"Mick!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes."

And there was a rush of the juniors to see the returned wanderer.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Sentenced!

MICK stopped at the gates of Greyfriars.

He was tired, and he was a little apprehensive. After the feast came the reckoning.

He felt that he had "done it" now.

He thought of getting in over the wall; but he knew, of course, that he must have been missed, and his absence noted. So he stopped at the school gates and rang the bell.

Gosling came frowning out of his lodge, a good deal like a lion from his lair.

"Pretty goings hon!" said Gosling, as he admitted the gipsy schoolboy.

Mick grinned faintly.

"I s'pose I've been missed, old 'un?" he said.

"I s'pose you 'ave," said Gosling sarcastically; "and I s'pose you'll be missed for good arter this. Cut along with you, you young limb!"

Mick cut along to the School House.

A crowd of fellows stared at him when he came in.

"Here's the cheeky young sweep!" said Coker of the Fifth.

"Blessed if I thought he'd come back at all," said Kenny. "He's waited till Angel's pater was gone, anyhow."

"I say, you fellows, here he is! Let's ask him about it," squeaked Billy

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Bunter. "I say, Mick, did you put up one of your gipsy pals to biff Angel's pater?"

"Did you?" grinned Skinner.

Mick stared at them.

"What?" he exclaimed. "Is that there a joke?"

"That there isn't a joke," grinned Temple of the Fourth. "That there is jolly serious, my lad, as you'll find."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look 'ere—" began Mick.

"You awful young ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Why did you dodge us in the wood?"

"I—I wanted a run."

"And you've stayed out till nearly bedtime because you wanted a run!" exclaimed Wharton.

Mick hung his head.

"I know it was wrong," he said.

"But—but you've made me promise not to break dormitory bounds no more, and so—"

"A lot your promise is worth!" sneered Skinner.

Mick's eyes flashed.

"I ain't never broke a promise," he said.

"I'm sure of that," said Wharton.

"But it's jolly nearly as bad for you to stay out like this, Mick."

"I—I know!"

"Did you know Sir Hilton Popper was coming to see you?" asked Nugent. The gipsy schoolboy started.

"Course I didn't! Has he been here?"

"Has he?" chuckled Skinner. "Just a few!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He waited hours for you," chortled Billy Bunter. "He went off fuming and raging."

"Oh, my eye!" said Mick, in dismay.

"And Angel's pater, too!" said Johnny Bull.

"Blow Angel's pater!" said Mick independently. "I s'pose he didn't want to see me. Anyhow, I didn't want to see him."

"He's a member of the governing board," said Temple.

"What's that?"

"Oh gad!" exclaimed Cecil Reginald, quite overcome by that question.

The wail of Greyfriars did not even know so far of the existence of that august body, the governors of the school.

"You'll find out soon enough," said Skinner. "Angel senior will let you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who did you put up to biffing old Angel in the wood?" asked Kenney.

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Mick. "I don't know nothing about old Angel."

"You didn't know he was attacked by a gipsy in Redclyffe Wood?" asked Wharton, in relief.

"How should I know?"

"Well, I was sure you didn't," said Harry. "I don't suppose you even know Angel's father by sight, do you?"

"Course I don't!"

"I knew there was nothing in it," said Bob. "Only Angel's rotten malice, starting a yarn like that, as I said all along."

"That's got to be proved!" put in Aubrey Angel. "My father believes that that vagrant set the gipsy on him."

"Then your father's as big an ass as you are a cad!" retorted Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Quelch!" murmured Bob.

Mr. Quelch came out of his study.

His brow was grim as he fixed his eyes on the gipsy schoolboy.

"So you have returned, Mick?"

"Yes, sir," faltered Mick.

"Where have you been?"

"Only—only rambling, sir."

"I trust so," said Mr. Quelch dryly.

"Follow me!"

"Yessir."

The gipsy schoolboy followed his Form master to the Head's study. The crowd of juniors were left in a buzz till the prefects came along to clear them off to their dormitories. In the Remove dormitory the Lower Fourth went to bed without Mick. That hapless youth was "on the carpet" in the Head's study.

Mick was feeling extremely uneasy as he followed Mr. Quelch into the august presence of the Head.

He had acted wilfully, waywardly, and he was conscious of wrongdoing. Now he had to answer for it. He hoped that it would be nothing worse than a flogging.

Even a Head's flogging did not trouble the hardy gipsy very much. It was little enough after what he had been accustomed to receiving at the hands of Barengro, the gipsy, in the old days.

But the stern look on the Head's face warned Mick that the matter was more serious than he had supposed. Indeed, the fact that he was taken to the Head at all showed how serious it was.

A mere question of cutting lock-up and roll-call would have been dealt with by Mr. Quelch. But Mick so far could not guess what else there was to be dealt with.

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes on the gipsy schoolboy.

"You have remained out of gates until—hem!—nearly half-past nine," he said.

"Where have you been?"

"In the woods, sir."

"In Redclyffe Wood?"

"Yes."

"Did you meet any of your former associates there?"

Mick started.

"I—I saw Barengro, sir."

"On friendly terms?"

Mick suppressed a grin.

"No, sir, not at all, sir. I hit him on the head with a stick."

"Oh!" said the Head. "And then you—"

"After that I kept jolly clear of him, sir."

"Never mind Barengro," said the Head. "I am aware that that man is your enemy, and would not be likely to league with you for any purpose. Did you see any other gipsies?"

"No, sir."

"Did you know that Sir Philip Angel was coming to Greyfriars to-day?"

"No—yes, sir!" stammered Mick.

"Answer 'Yes' or 'No.'"

"I knowed because some feller said Angel had said so, sir, but I had forgot about it," said Mick. "It wasn't anything to do with me."

"Did you know that Sir Philip Angel was coming here to protest against your presence in the school?"

Mick winced and coloured.

"I believe I heard something of the kind, sir, but I thought it was only

Angel's gas. He's always gassing about his people and what they can do."

The Head coughed.

"You were aware of the circumstances at least?"

"I s'pose so, sir, but I never thought about it. What does it matter, anyhow, whether I knowed?"

"Sir Philip Angel was attacked by a gipsy on his way here, and he believes that the man was set on by you."

"Oh, sir!"

"You deny it?"

"Course I do, sir!" exclaimed Mick indignantly. "Why, I've never seen him, and I wouldn't have hurt him. Why should I?"

The Head regarded him very keenly.

"It 'ain't fair for him to think such a thing, sir," said Mick. "He wouldn't think it about any other feller here."

"That is doubtless true," said the Head. "But you have chosen deliberately to break the rules of the school. Had you returned from Redclyffe with your companions at lock-up, no such suspicion could possibly attach to you."

"Oh, sir!"

"You tell me that you disregarded the laws of the school and the respect due to your Form master from a mere wilful desire to wander in the woods?" said the Head. "Possibly that is the case. Sir Philip's view is that you intentionally remained out of gates in order to concert the attack on him with a ruffianly gipsy."

"I—I never did, sir!" faltered Mick.

"I hope not. But you can see that your own conduct has laid you open to grave suspicion, and that your denial proves nothing," said the Head. "I hope—I almost believe—that you are innocent, but proof in the matter is impossible to obtain. All Sir Philip knows is that you deliberately remained out of gates near the spot where he was assailed at a time when he was coming here to speak against you, and that he had a narrow escape of receiving severe injuries. I do not concur in his opinion, but I cannot blame him for holding it."

Mick stood silent, overwhelmed with dismay.

"It also happens that your protector, Sir Hilton Popper, was here to see you this afternoon," continued the Head. "He left very much annoyed by your absence. He stated before he went that he would support Sir Philip Angel in his views owing to his displeasure at your conduct."

"Oh, sir!" said Mick.

Misfortunes never come singly, as the hapless gipsy realised now.

"This is not the first time, by many, that you have disregarded all law and order in the school, my boy," said the Head. "Possibly on this occasion your conduct has been no worse than on previous occasions. But you have laid yourself open to suspicion of having connived at a dastardly outrage upon a governor of the school. If I could pardon your lawlessness or visit it with a minor punishment in ordinary circumstances I cannot now do so."

"Oh, sir!" mumbled Mick.

"It will be necessary, therefore, for you to leave Greyfriars," said the Head.

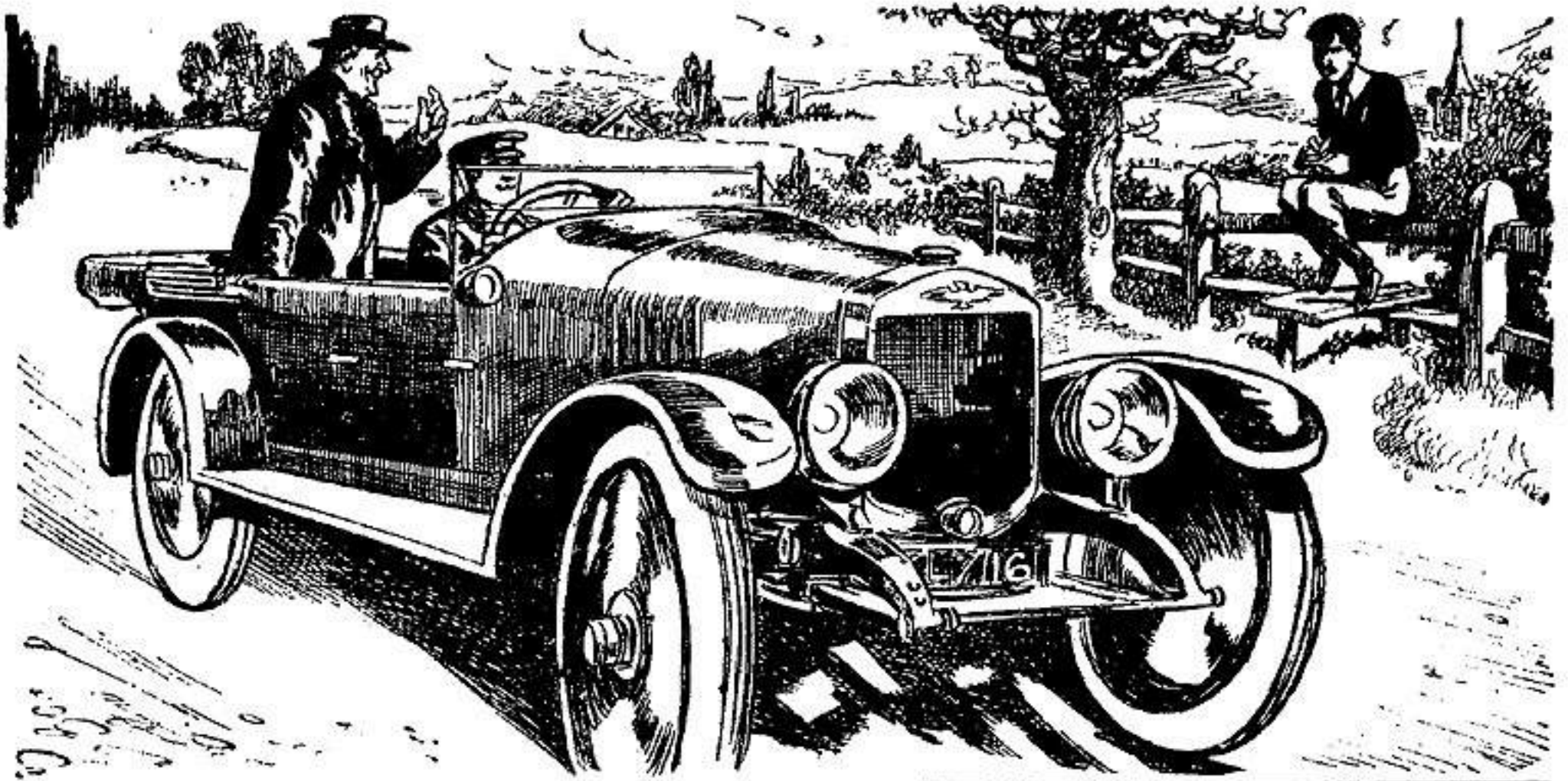
"I never had anything to do with it, sir! I never knowed—"

"I hope that you are speaking the truth. But the facts remain unaltered. Greyfriars is no place for you," said the Head. "I have forgiven you many times, and I believe you have honestly tried to amend your wild ways, but forgiveness this time is impossible. You will go to your dormitory now, my boy. To-morrow I shall inform you what

THERE'S MONEY IN IT!

See pages 14 & 15.

What about that MATCH FOOTBALL you wanted? You have—



The boy was sitting on a stile by the roadside, and Sir Philip called to the chauffeur to halt the car. "You remember me, boy?" said the baronet. "I have had no opportunity of thanking you for the aid you gave me yesterday." "That's alright sir," said Mick, with a grin. (See Chapter 10.)

arrangements have been made. I have no doubt that Sir Hilton Popper will make some provision for you—

The gipsy schoolboy raised his head proudly.

"I ain't asking nothing, sir! I don't want anything! If I ain't staying at Greyfriars, I don't ask anything else!"

"That matter will be decided by older heads than yours. For the present, go to your dormitory. I shall see you again to-morrow."

Mick left the Head's study in silence.

Dr. Locke sighed.

"Your opinion, Mr. Quelch?"

"I think Sir Philip Angel is wrong in supposing that Mick had anything to do with the attack upon him, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I admit that the circumstances look very suspicious, however."

"But the boy must leave."

"I fear so. Sir Hilton Popper is responsible for his coming here, and now he supports Sir Philip Angel's view, which is that the boy should go. I do not see any other way. Undoubtedly the boy's recklessness is answerable; he has only himself to blame."

That thought was also in Mick's mind as he made his way to the Remove dormitory.

Of any thought or intention of causing harm to Angel's father he was innocent, but he could see how the matter looked—at least, to the baronet, who was already deeply prejudiced against him.

That prejudice he might have removed had he seen the old gentleman personally. It was his own fault that he had not seen him.

The wild, wayward fit had seized on him, and he had yielded to it. His best friends had tried to restrain him, and he had not heeded them. The blame was his.

More than once he had been forgiven; every allowance had been made for his wild training. But there was a limit! What he had done this time was beyond the limit—though, truly, he had meant no harm.

He realised that all was over for him in the school. And, keenly as he had

felt the restrictions of Greyfriars life, he realised too that he had grown to love the place, and that it would be bitter to go.

But it was too late to think of that now.

He crept into his dormitory, and was glad to find that the buzz of talk had died away and that the Remove were asleep.

Silently he crept into his bed, but his eyes did not close. For long, long hours the gipsy schoolboy lay sleepless, with staring eyes watching the stars at the high windows, his heart heavy. It was near dawn when the waif of Greyfriars slept at last.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Good-bye to Greyfriars!

"I SAY, you fellows, he's here!"

Rising-bell was clanging out over Greyfriars. The Removites turned out of bed, save one. The gipsy schoolboy was still sleeping, unaroused by the clanging of the bell.

Billy Bunter jammed his spectacles on his fat little nose and grinned at the sleeper.

"Blessed slacker!" he remarked. "I say, you fellows, let's ask him if he's sacked!"

"No need to ask him!" grinned Skinner. "He's sacked right enough! Five to one on it in doughnuts!"

"No takers!" said the Bounder.

The most sporting member of the Remove was not likely to take Harold Skinner's offer. The whole form felt certain that it was what they called the "long jump" for the gipsy schoolboy, after the happenings of the preceding evening.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh shook the gipsy gently by the shoulder, and Mick's dark eyes opened.

"It is time for the turnoutfulness, my esteemed Mick," said the Nabob of Bhanipur gently.

"Thanks!" said Mick.

He turned out of bed.

"How did it go with the Head?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I'm going."

"Leaving Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"Sorry, old fellow!"

"The sorrowfulness is great!"

Mick's handsome face quivered.

"I blooming well asked for it!" he said. "The 'Ead was kind enough. Course, he couldn't look over it. I reckoned it would be a flogging. But somehow Angel's father got banged while I was out, and he thinks I had a hand in it. That does it?"

"We know you never had!" said Wharton.

"Gammon!" murmured Skinner.

Bob Cherry turned on him fiercely.

"What's that, Skinner?" he exclaimed. "What did you say?"

"I said it was a fine morning, dear boy!" drawled Skinner blandly; and Bob snorted and turned away.

Harry Wharton & Co. were sorry enough to hear the news, but they could not feel surprised. Either the wild gipsy had to conform to the laws of the school or go. And he had not conformed.

Another chance certainly would have been given him but for the miserable suspicion started by Angel of the Fourth. That, as Mick said, did it!

At breakfast that morning Mr. Quelch spoke to Mick in the presence of all the Form.

"You will not come in to lessons this morning, Mick. You will pack your box when the bell rings."

"Yessir."

"Dr. Locke is communicating with Sir Hilton Popper. He will let you know the result later."

"Yessir."

No more was said.

After breakfast Harry Wharton & Co. walked out into the quadrangle with Mick.

The gipsy schoolboy was the centre of attention now. Even Fifth and Sixth Formers took note of him.

It was generally believed in the

(Continued on page 16.)

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RULES AND CONDITIONS

which must be strictly adhered to.

- 1.—The First Prize of £100 in cash will be awarded to the competitor who sends in the correct or nearest correct solution of all eight sets of the pictures according to the Editor's official solution.
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- 3.—All the prizes will be awarded. If two or more competitors tie, however, the prize or prizes, or their value, will be divided, and the Editor reserves full rights in this respect.
- 4.—No solution may be sent in until all the sets of the pictures and the necessary coupon have been published. Full directions will then be given.
- 5.—The names under the pictures must be written in **INK**.
- 6.—Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.
- 7.—Entry to this competition is on the full understanding that the Editor's decision is final and legally binding throughout.

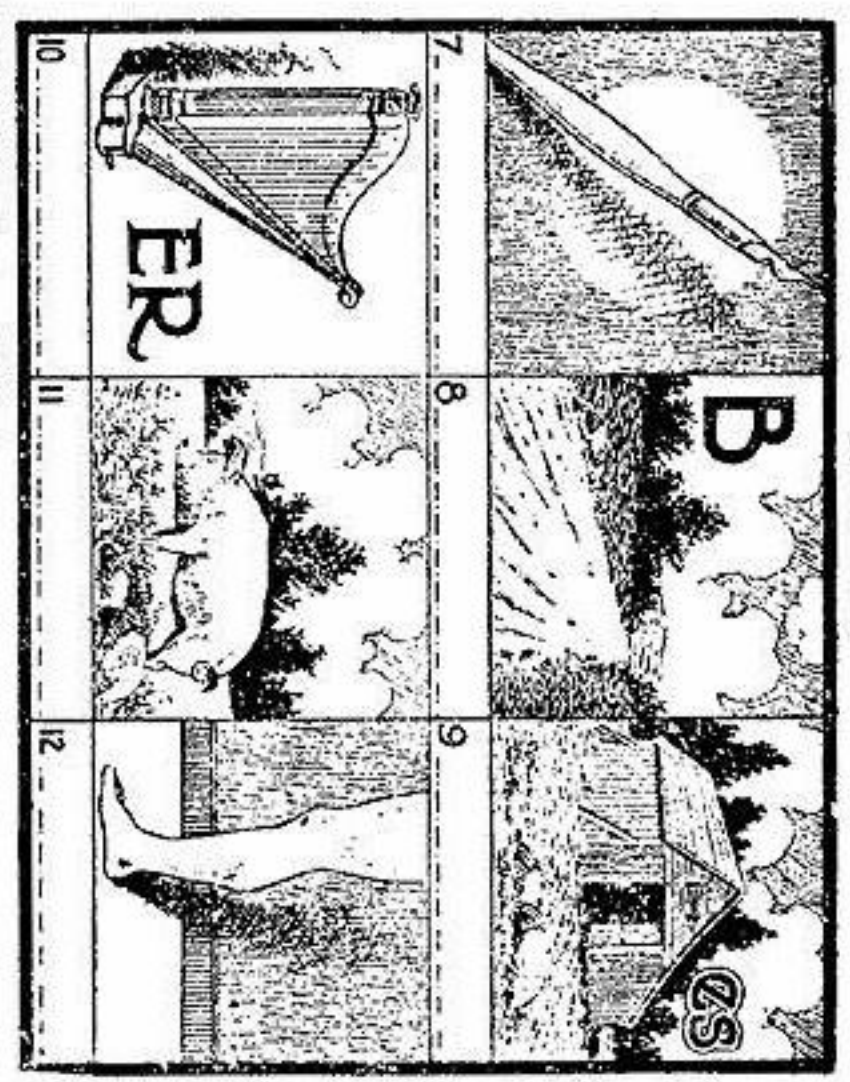
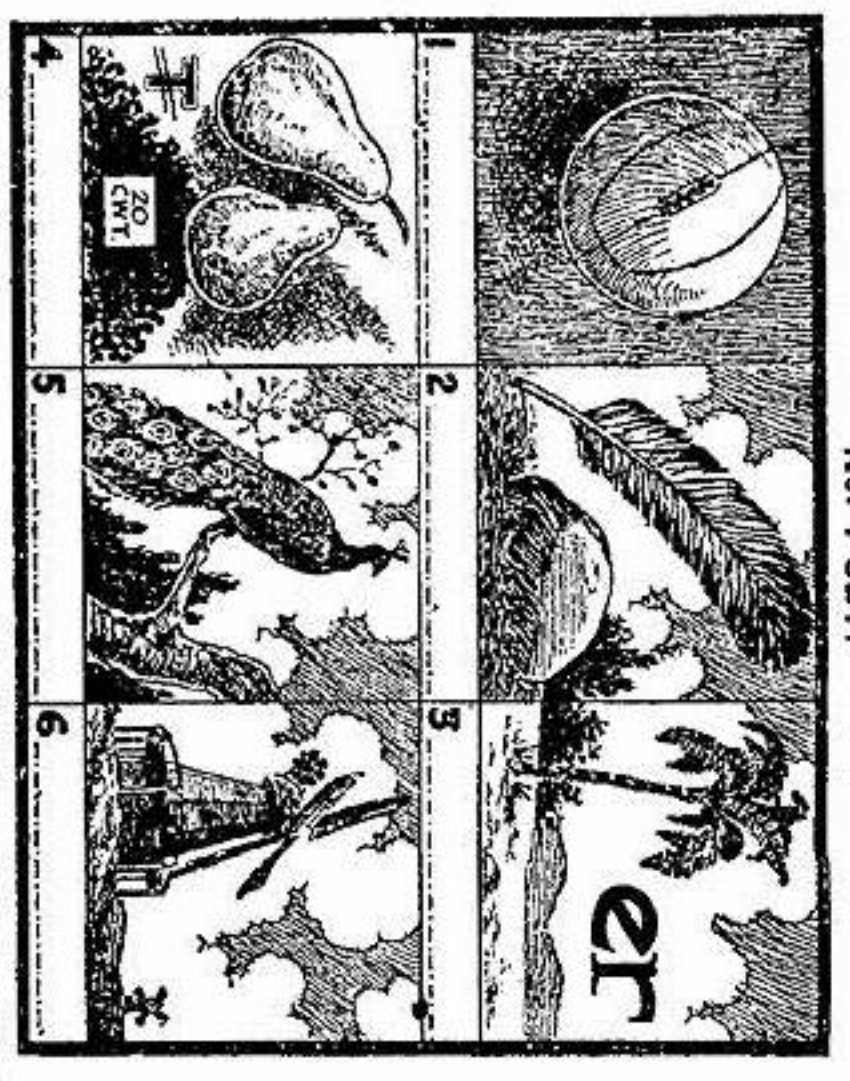
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

is to write **IN INK** in the allotted space under each of the puzzle-pictures the name of the footballer which you think the picture represents. Thus with No. 1, in the First Set, the picture clearly means **BALL**. In the same way you have to discover the names indicated by all the other pictures.

In all there will be **EIGHT SETS OF PICTURES**, so keep your solutions until the other sets appear. Look out for the fifth set of pictures next week.

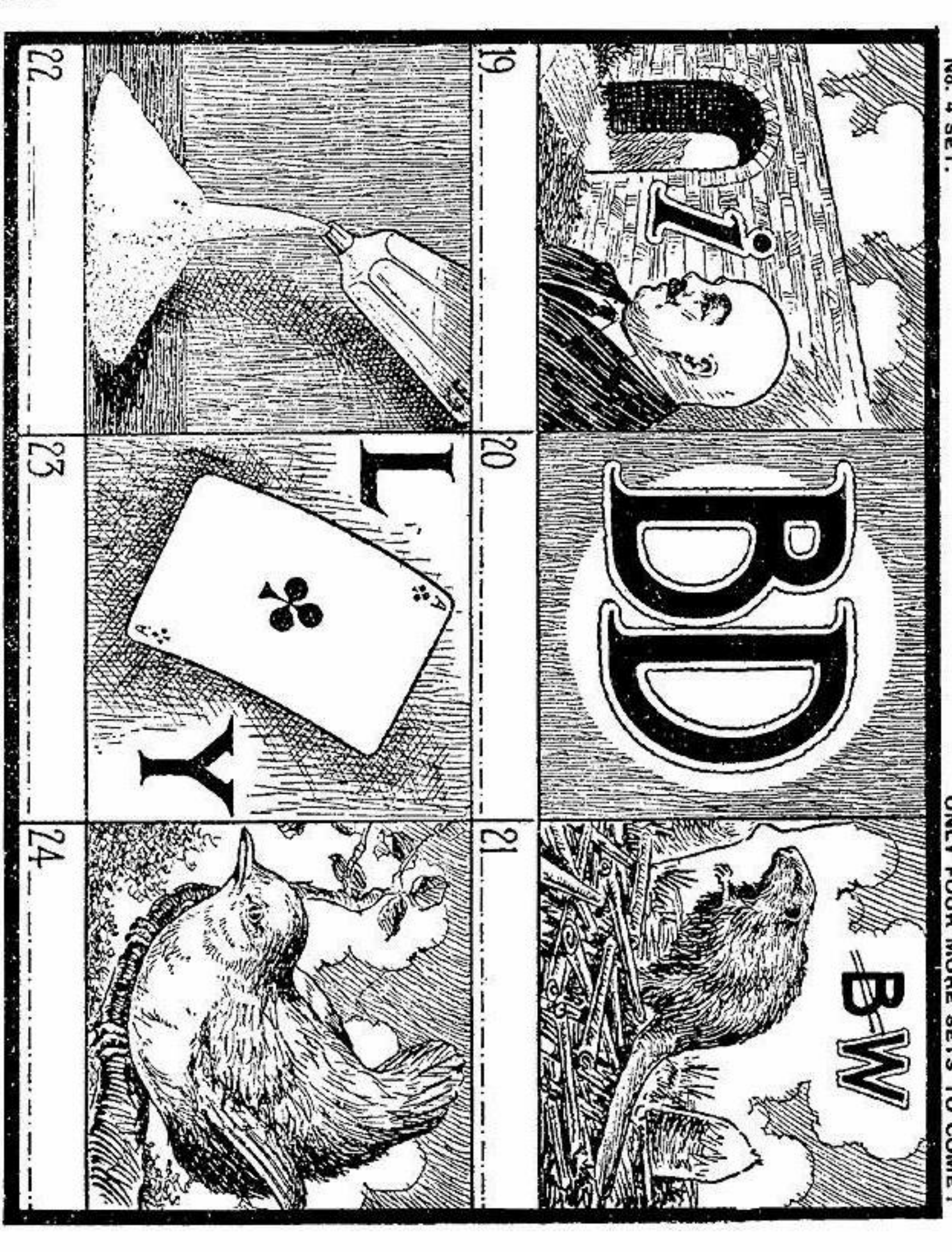
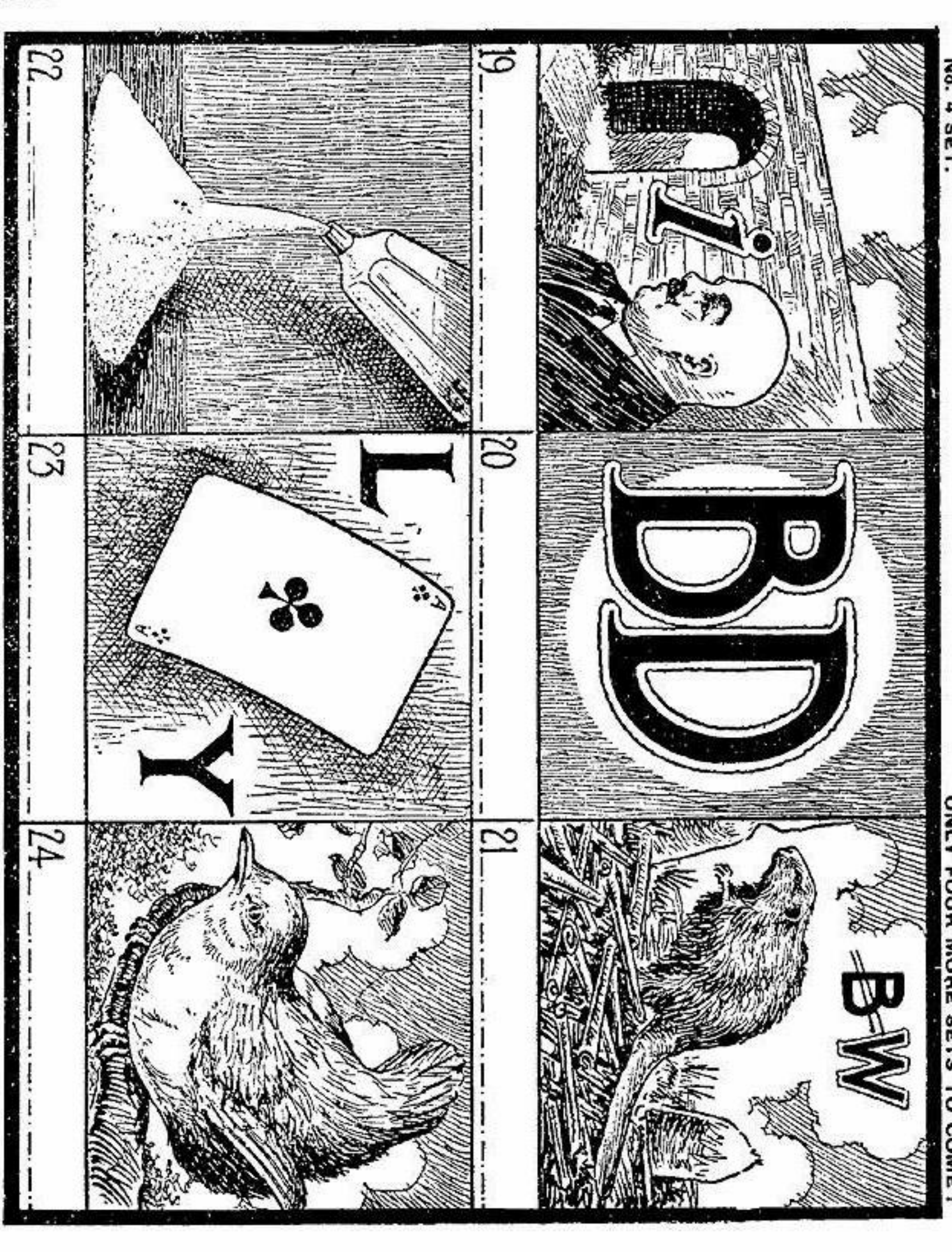
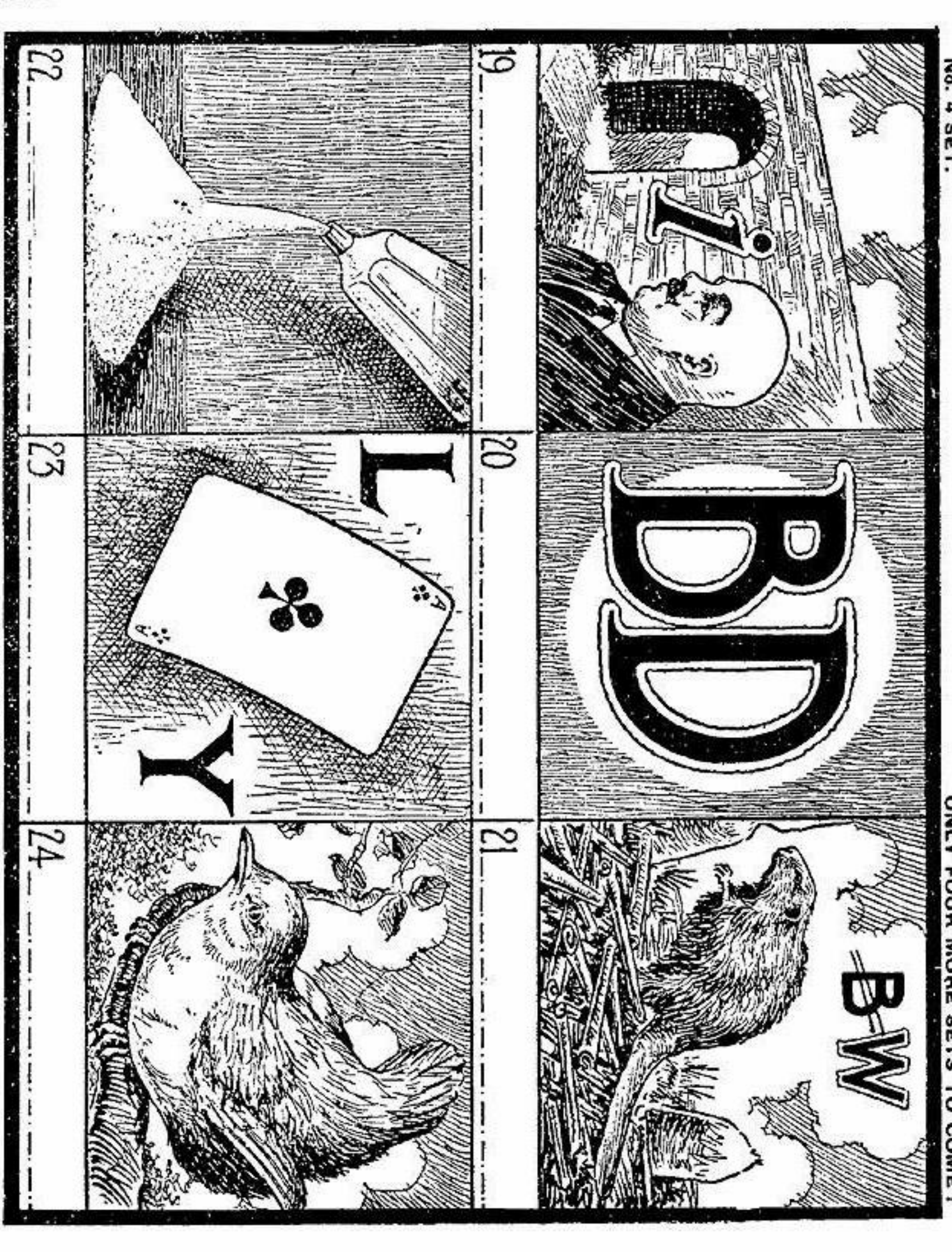
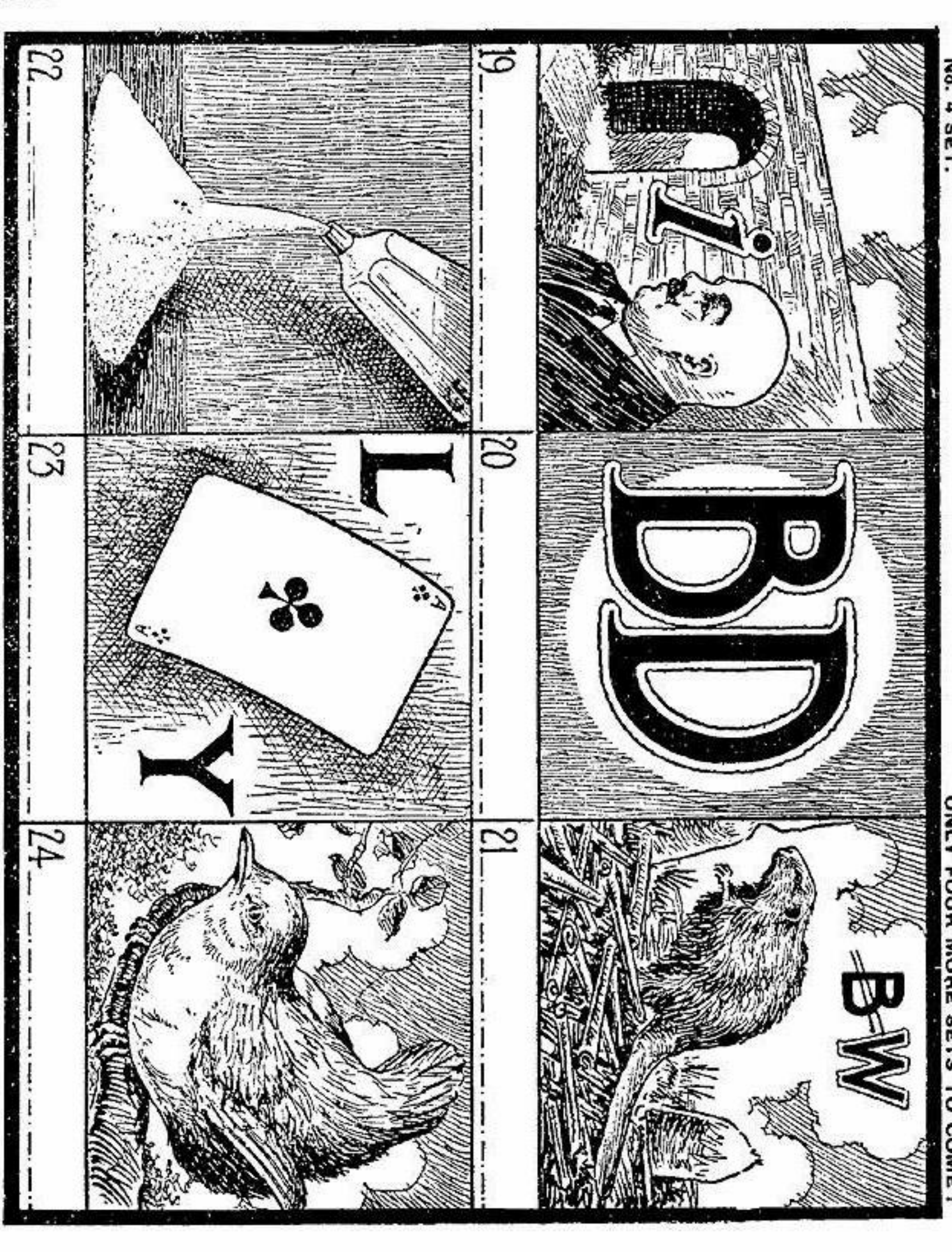
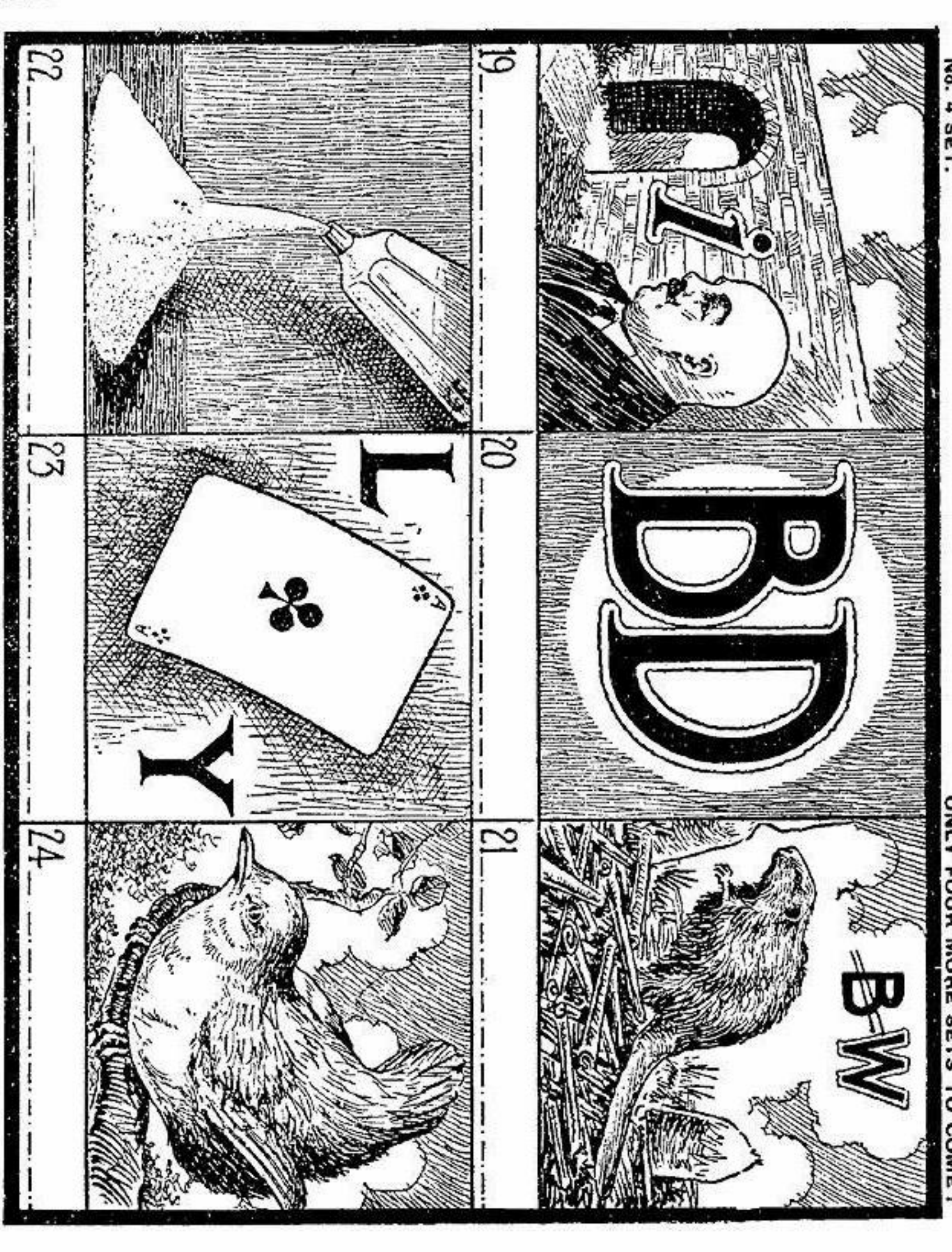
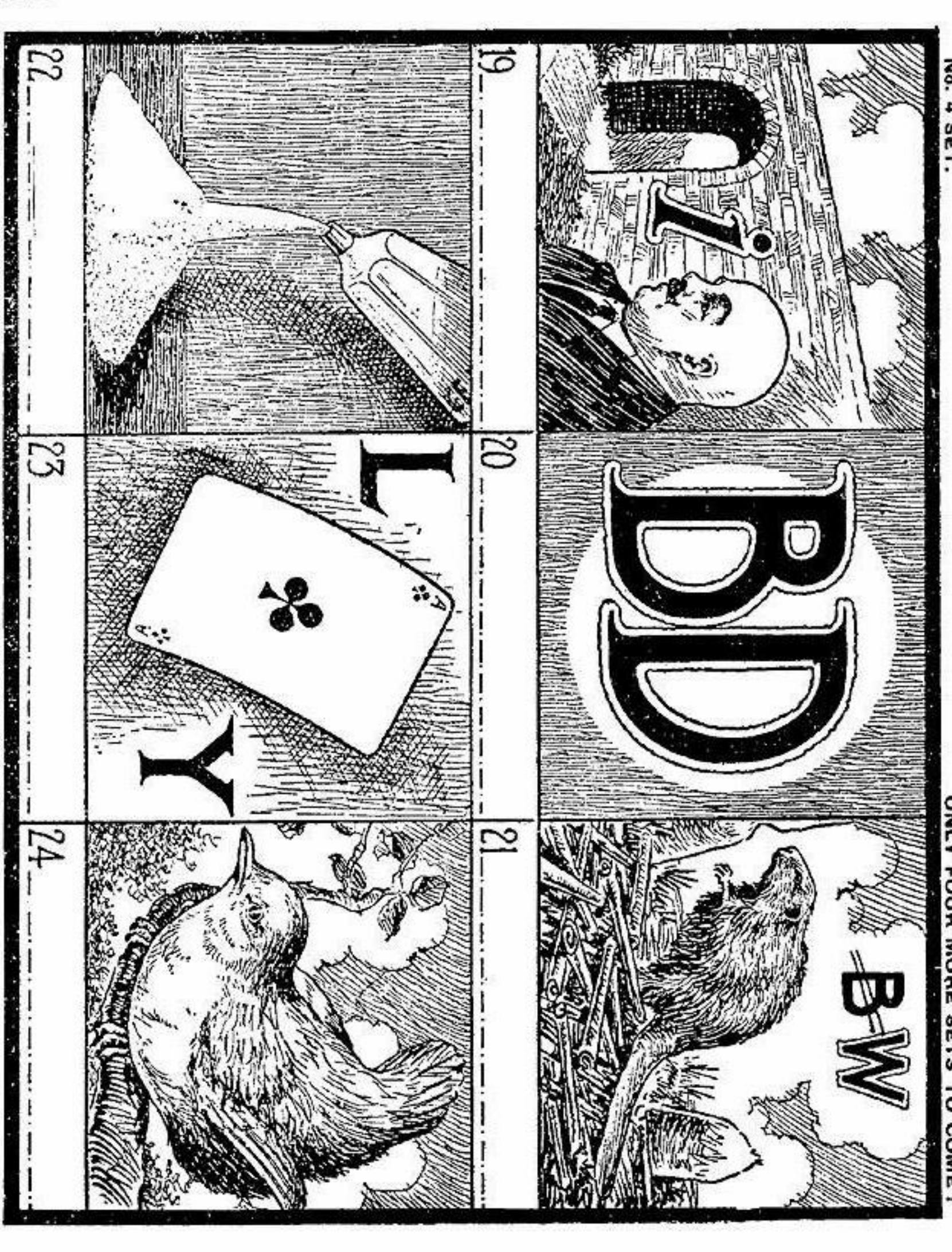
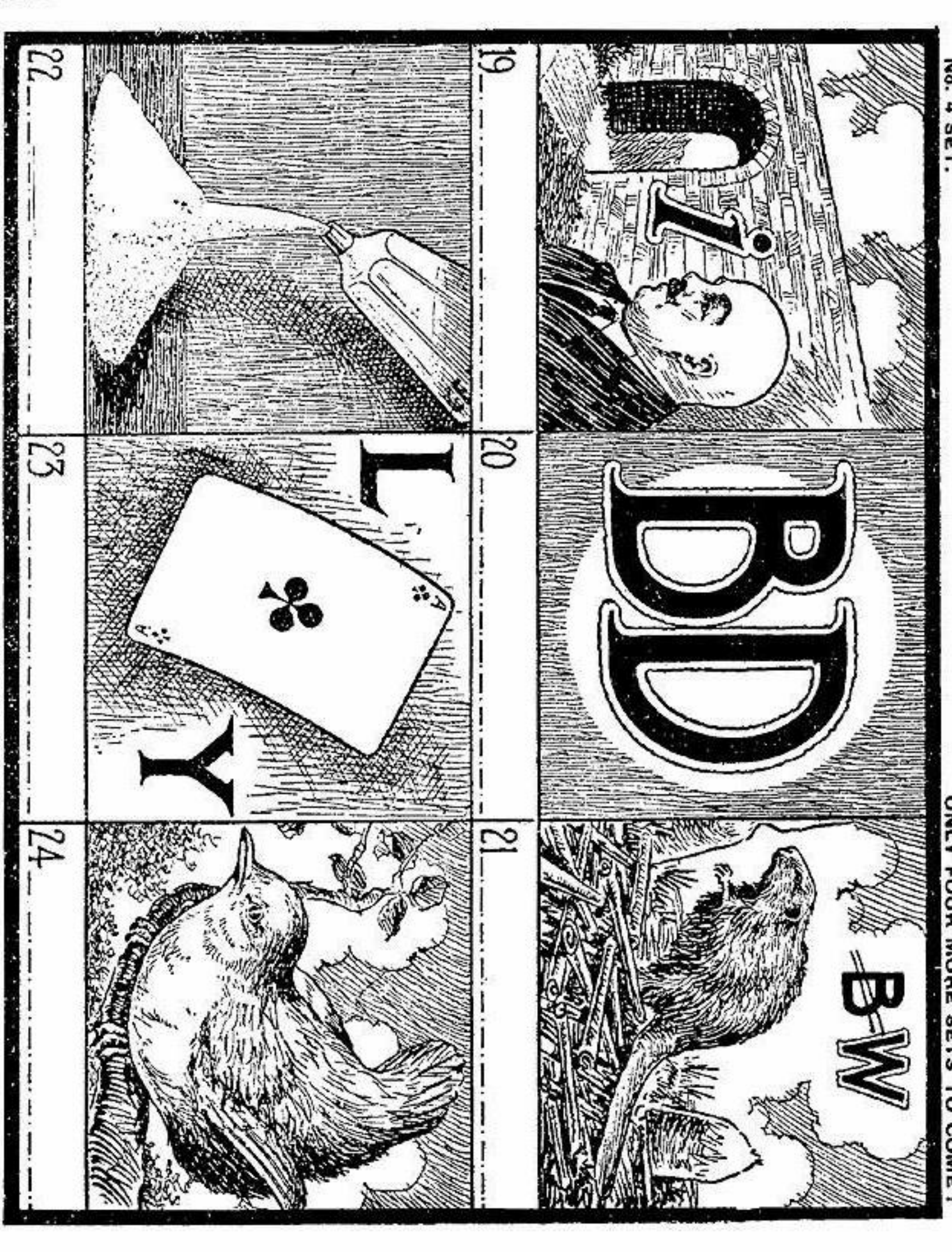
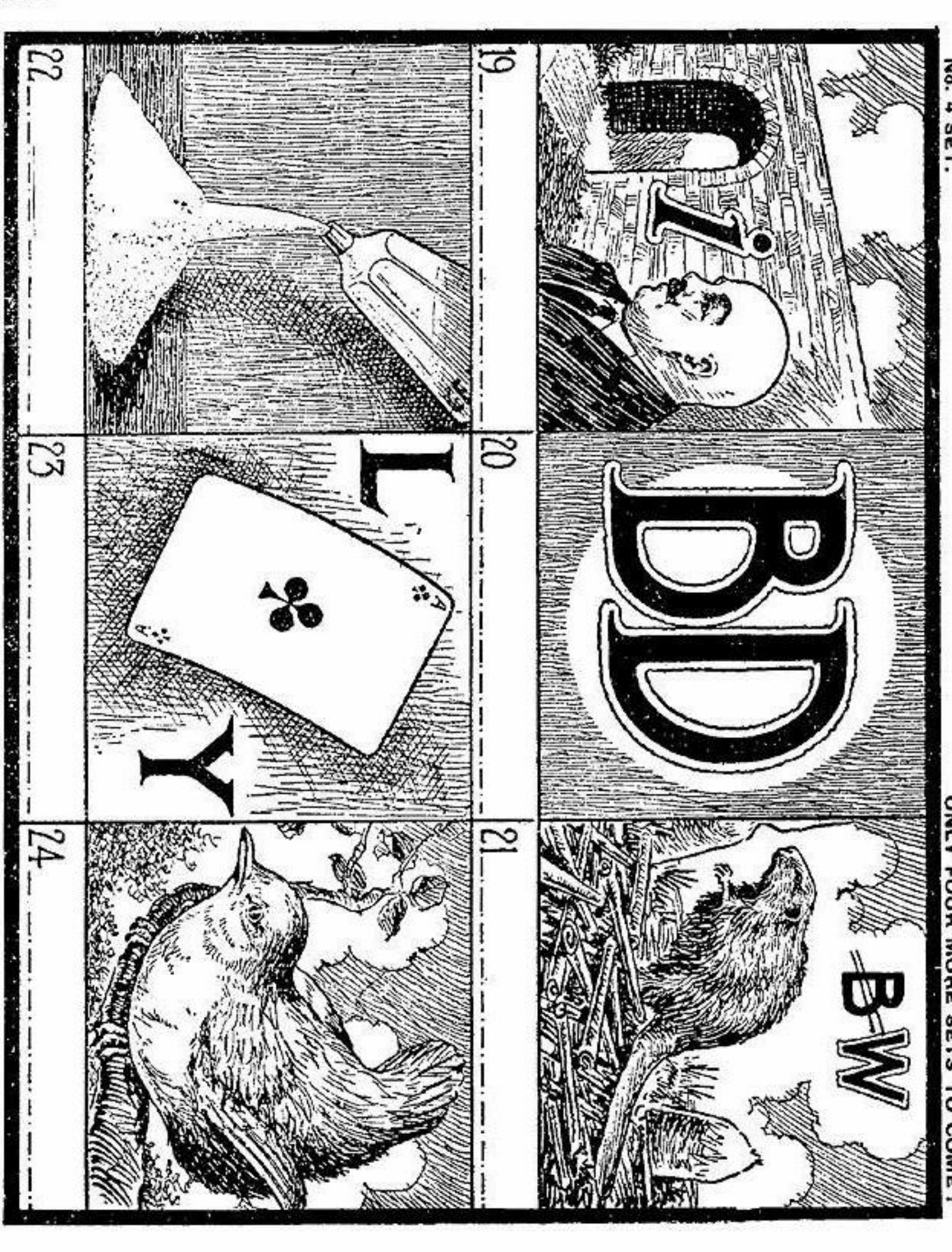
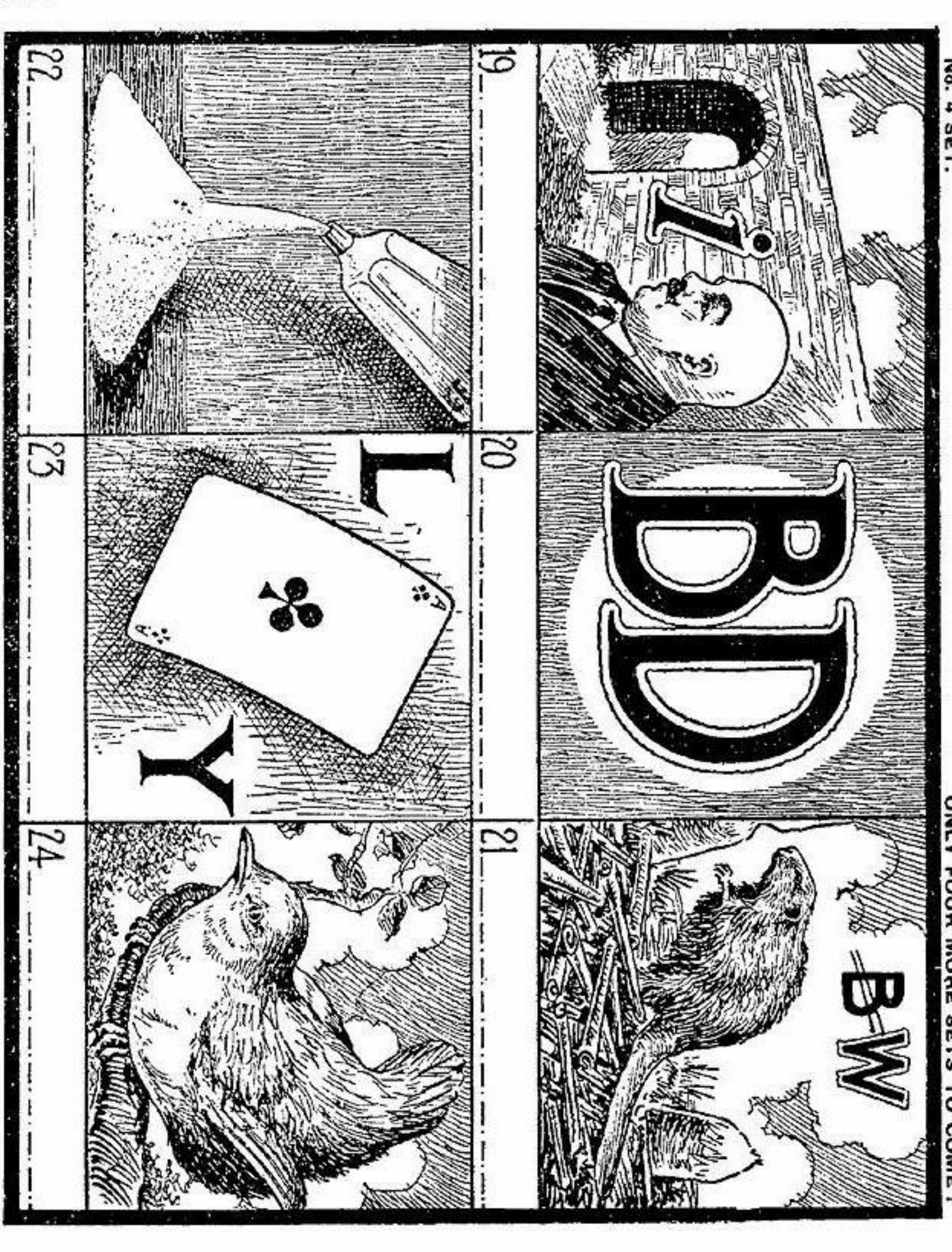
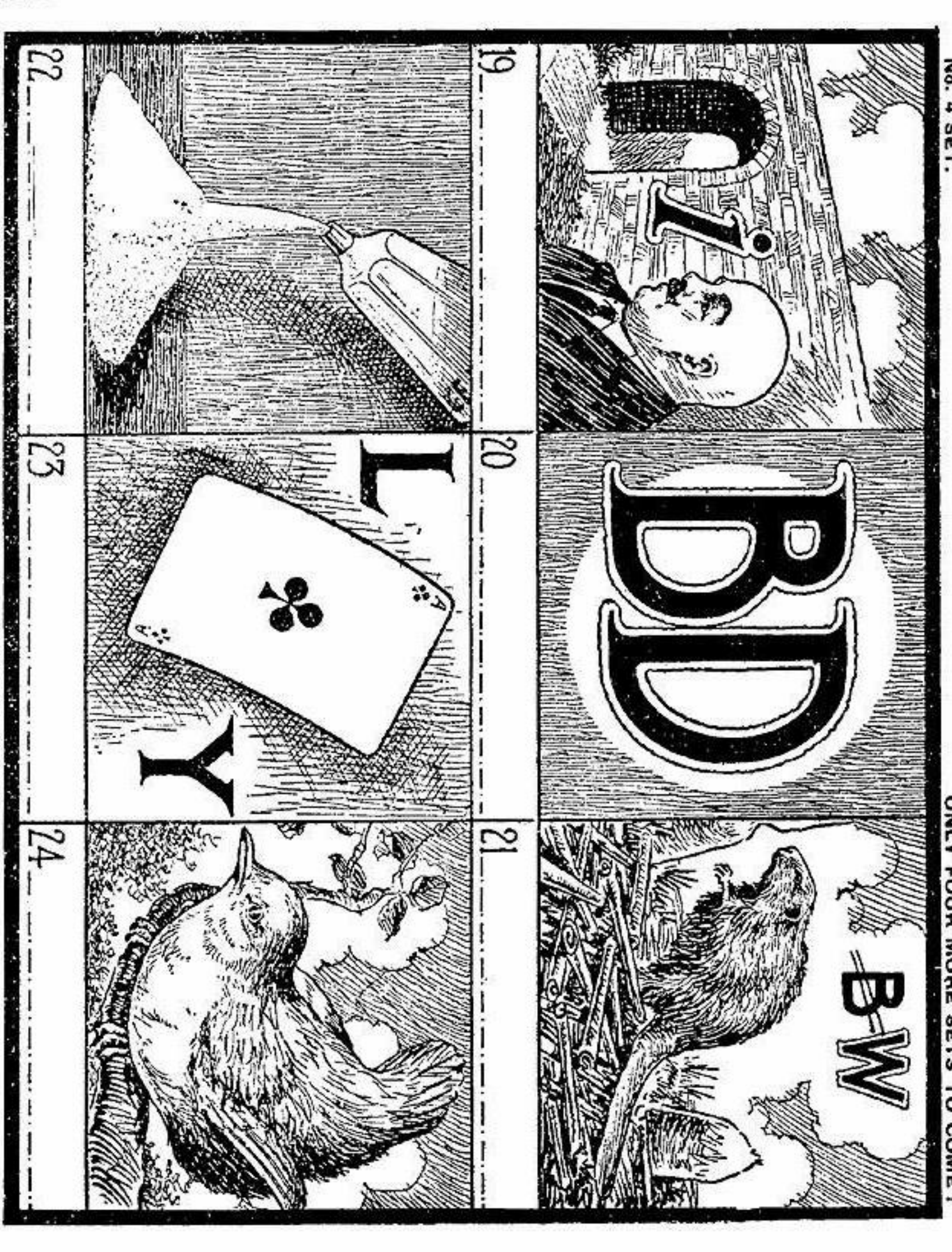
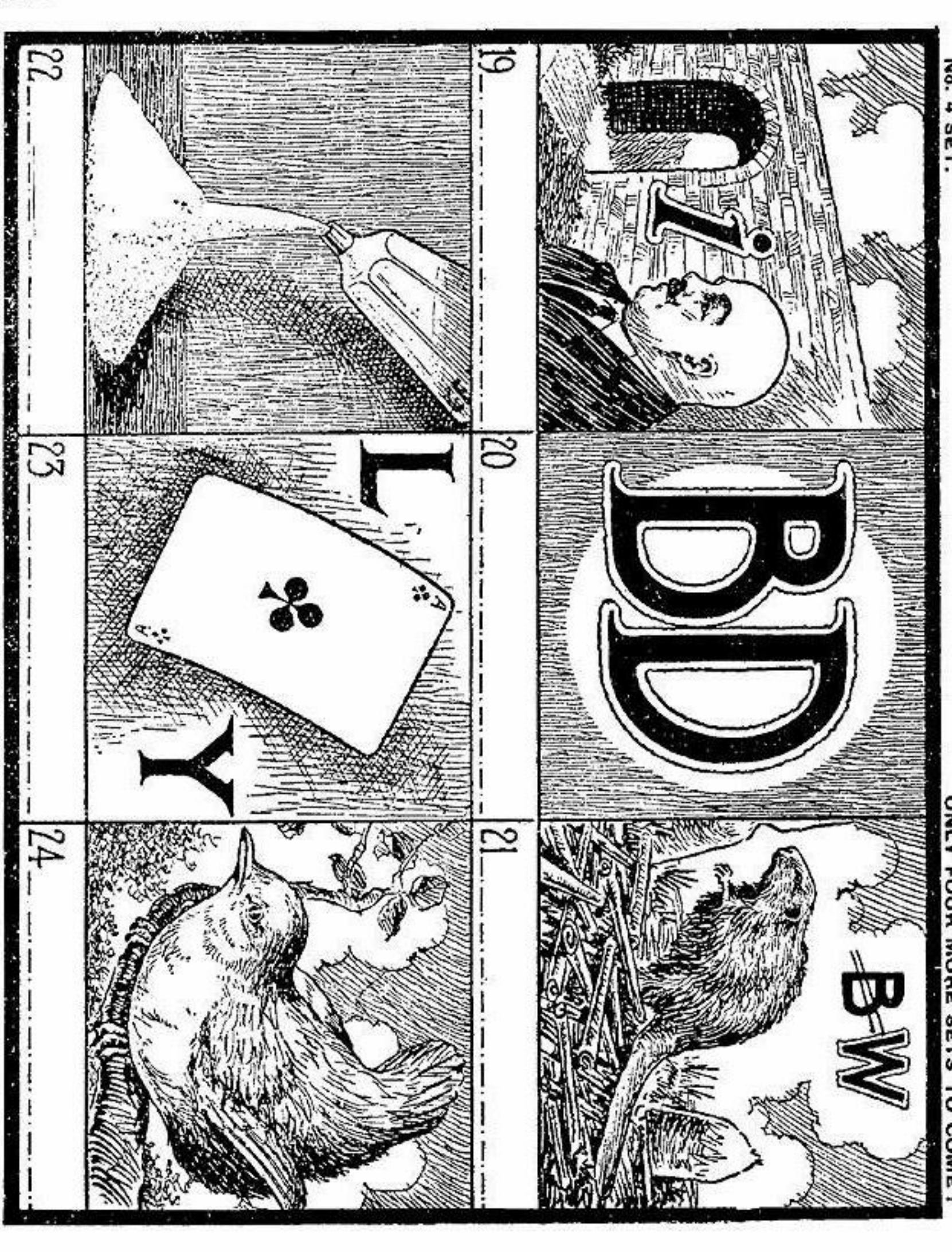
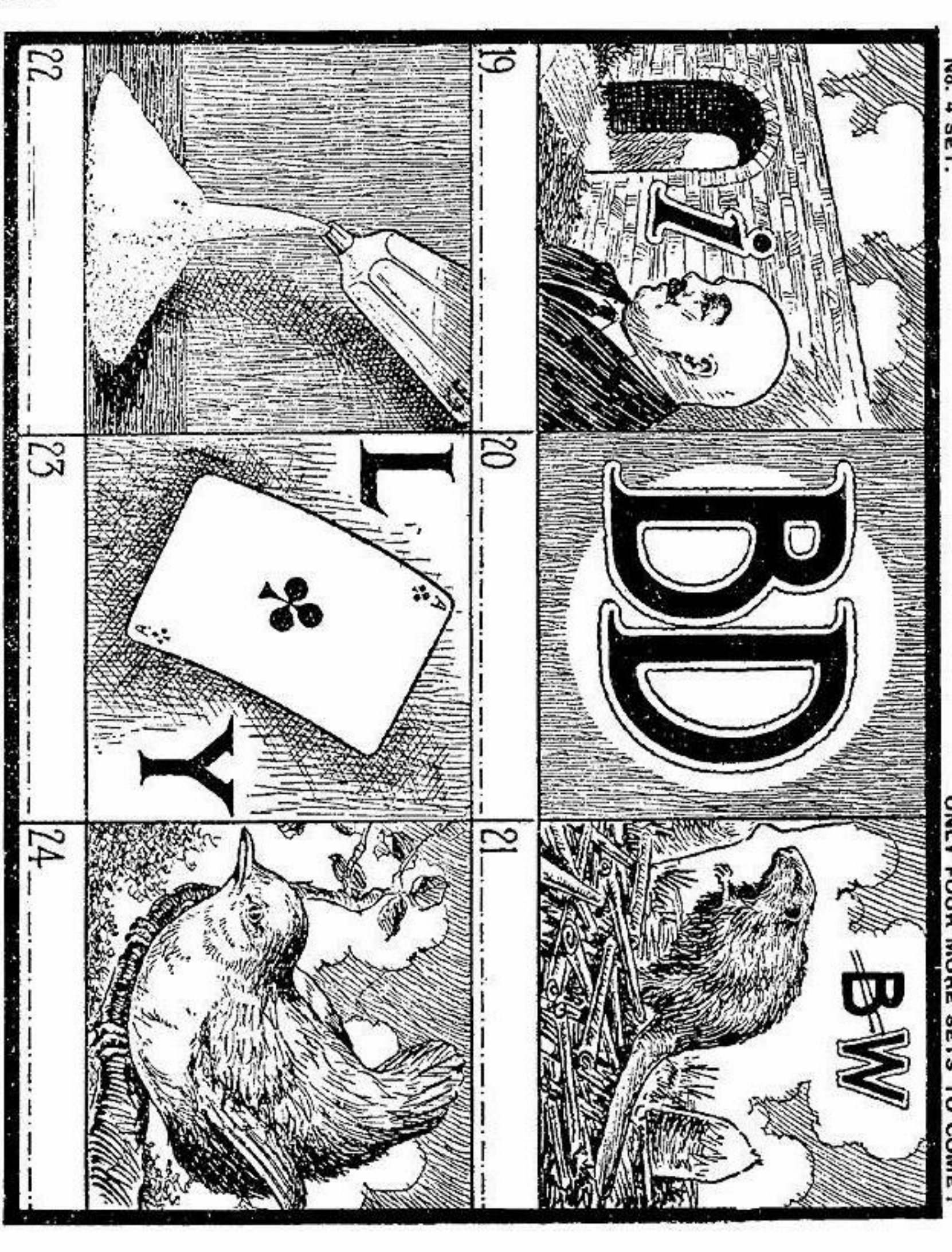
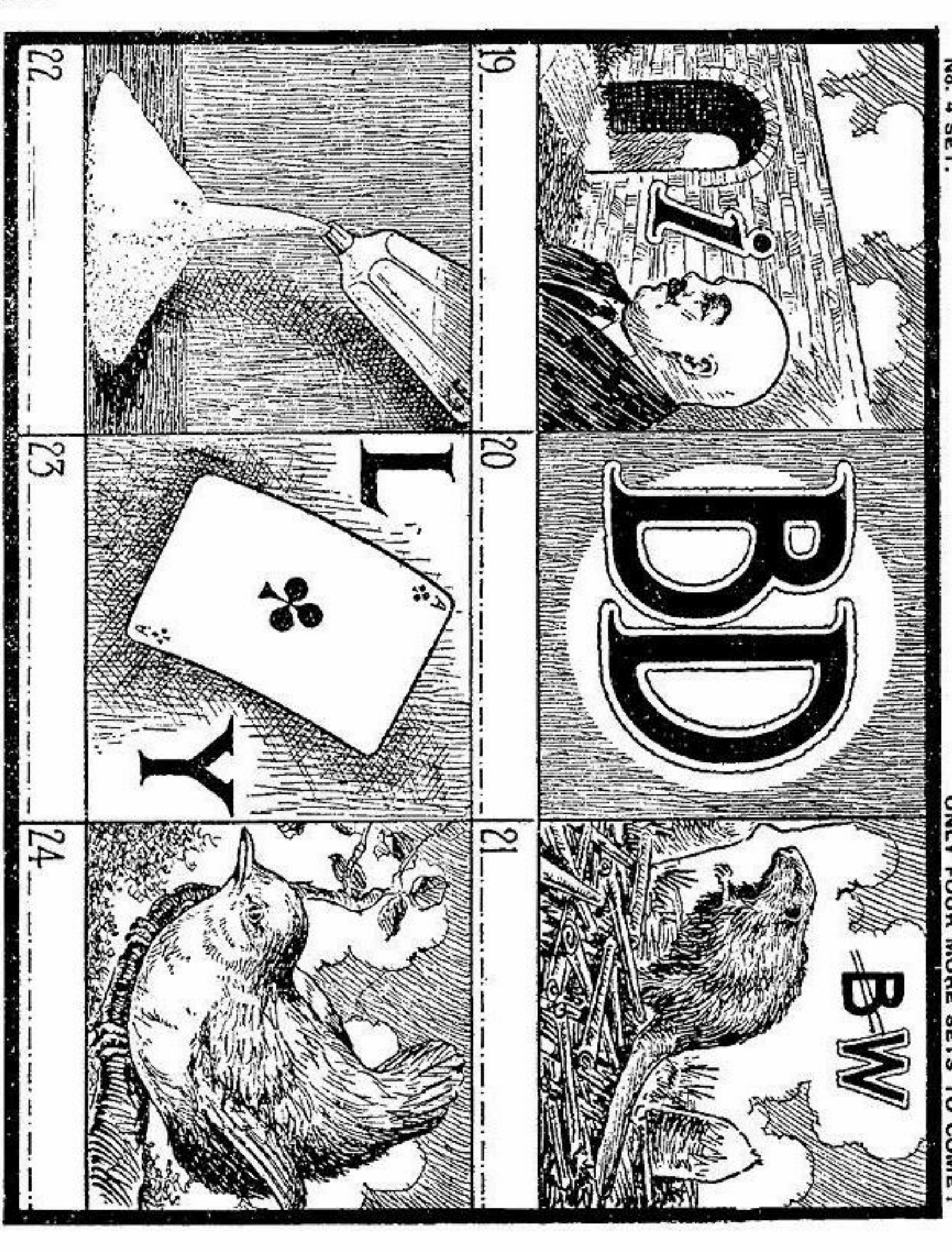
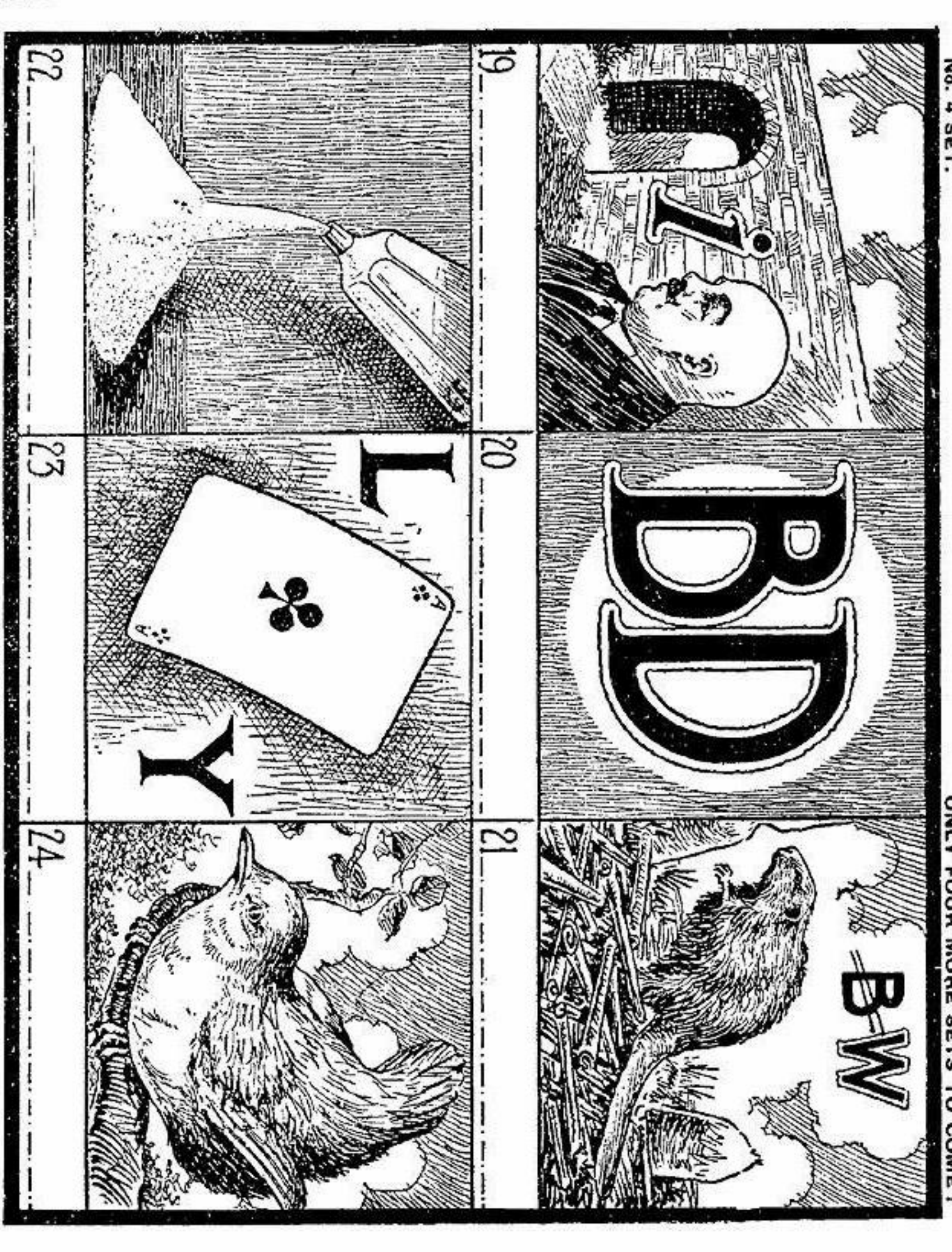
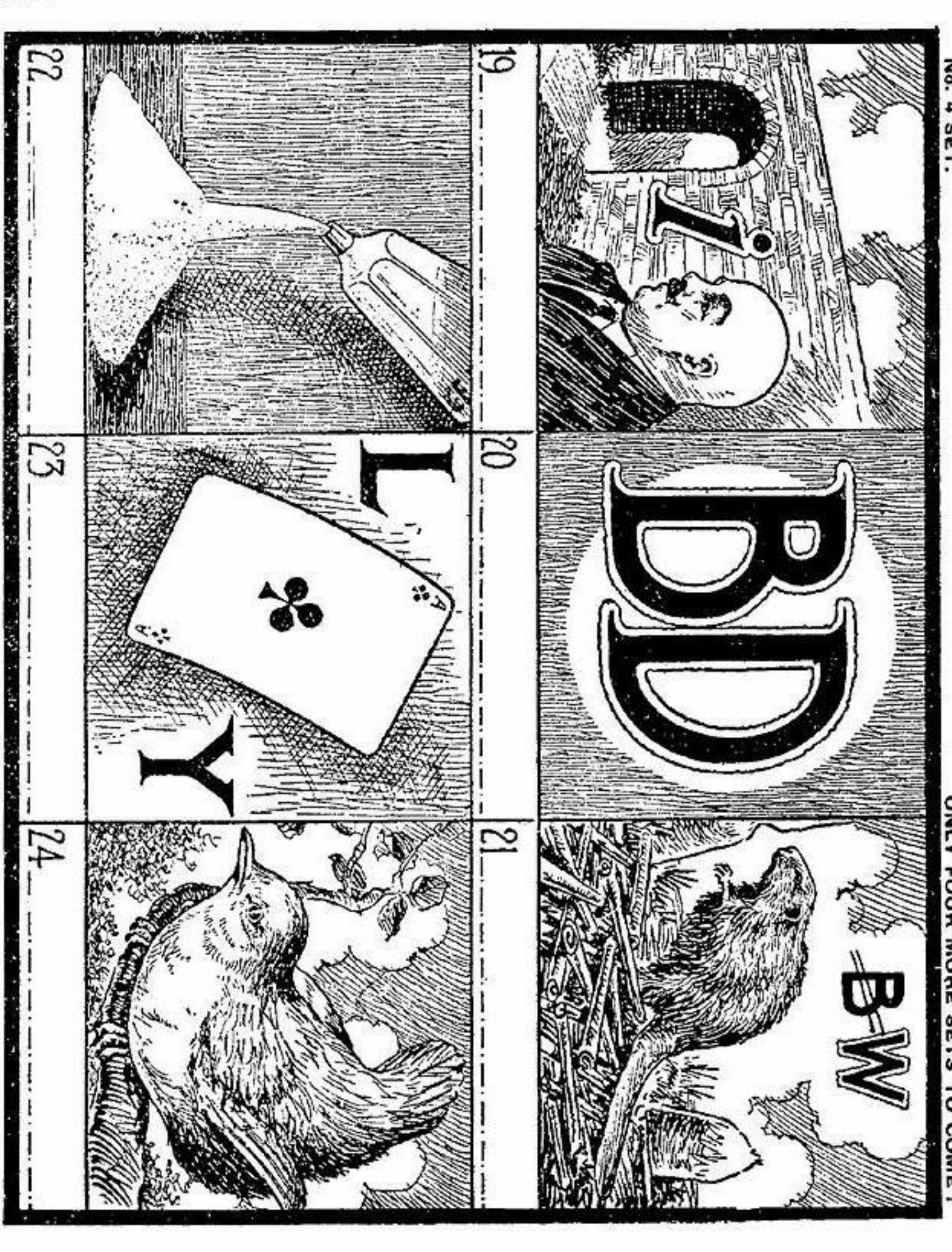
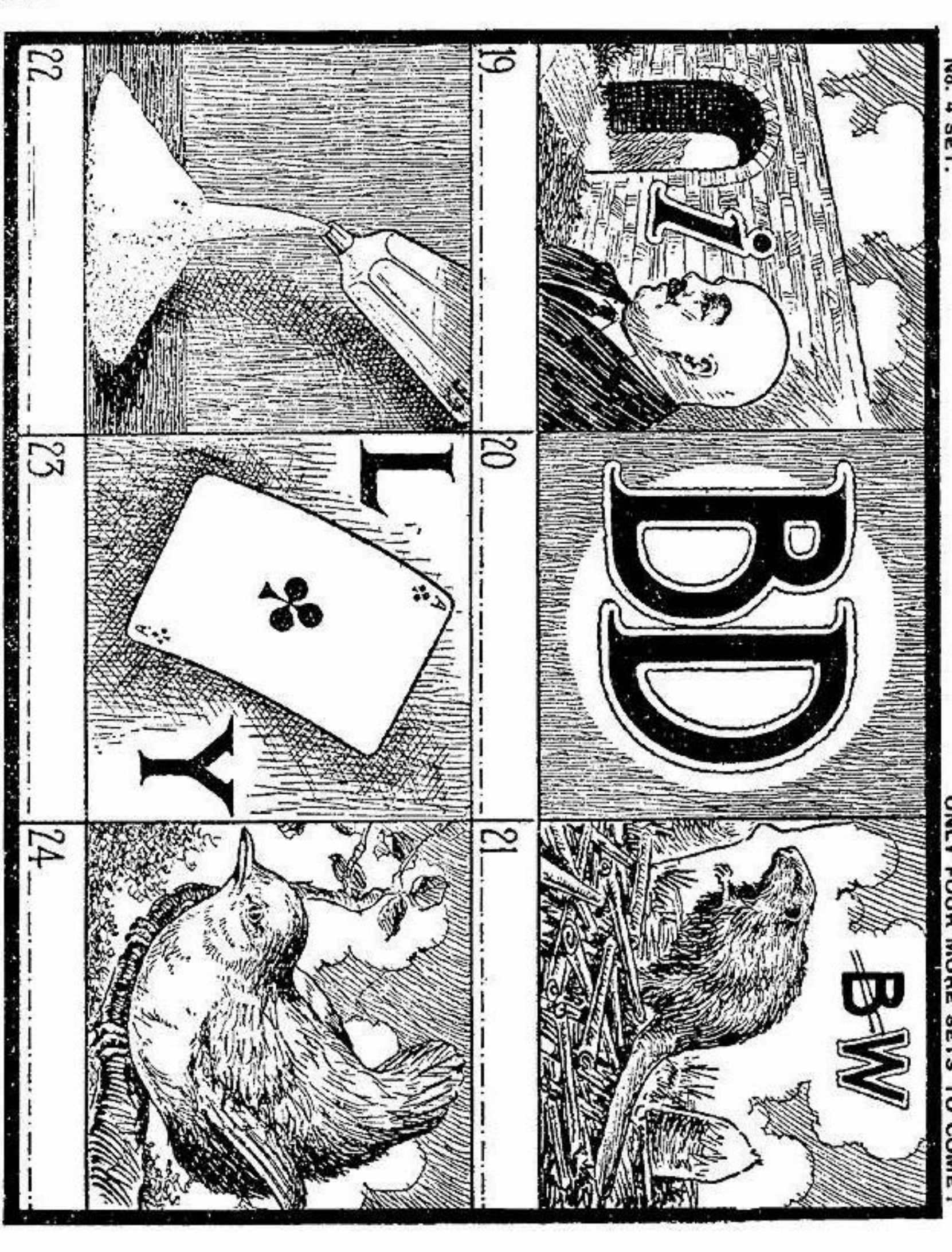
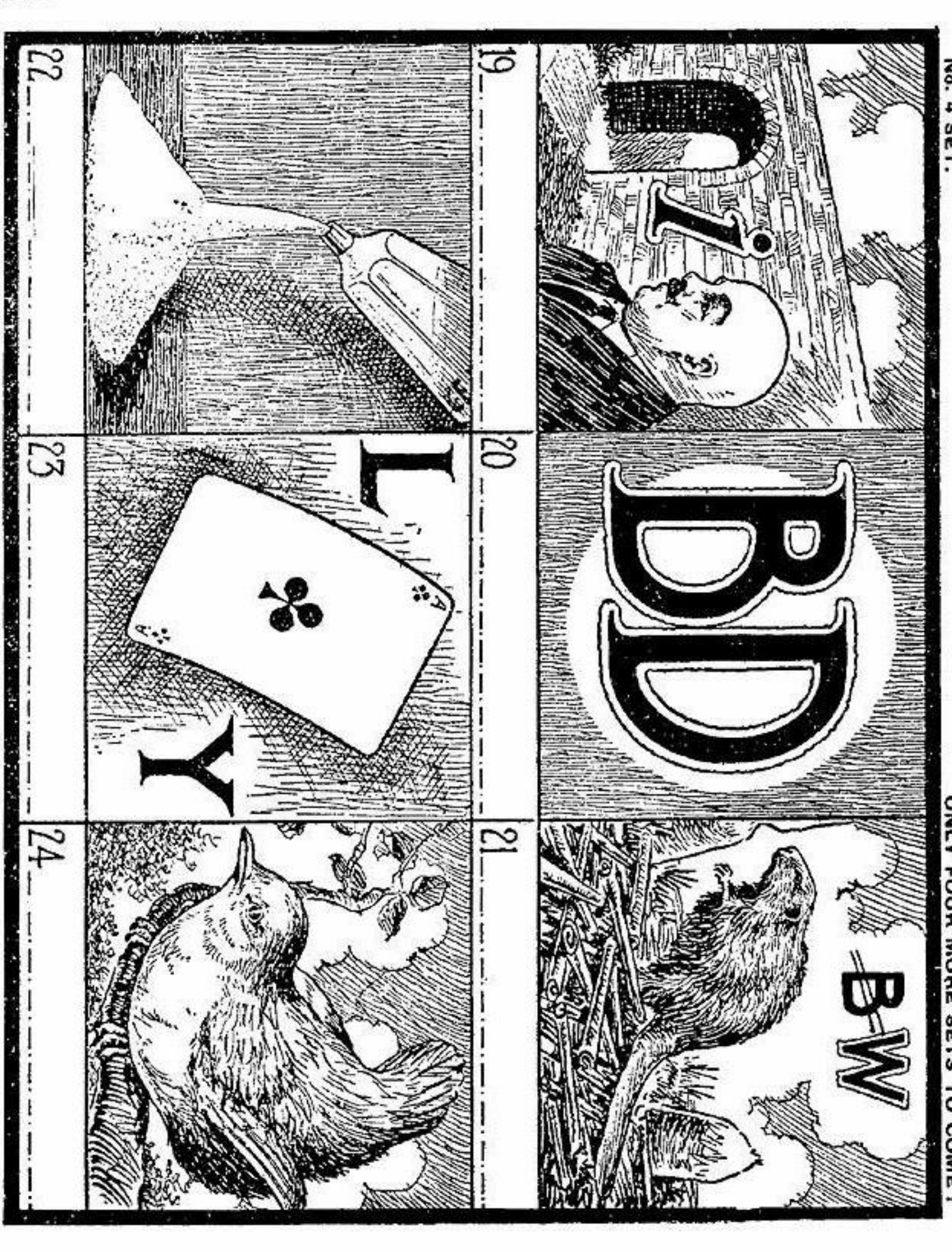
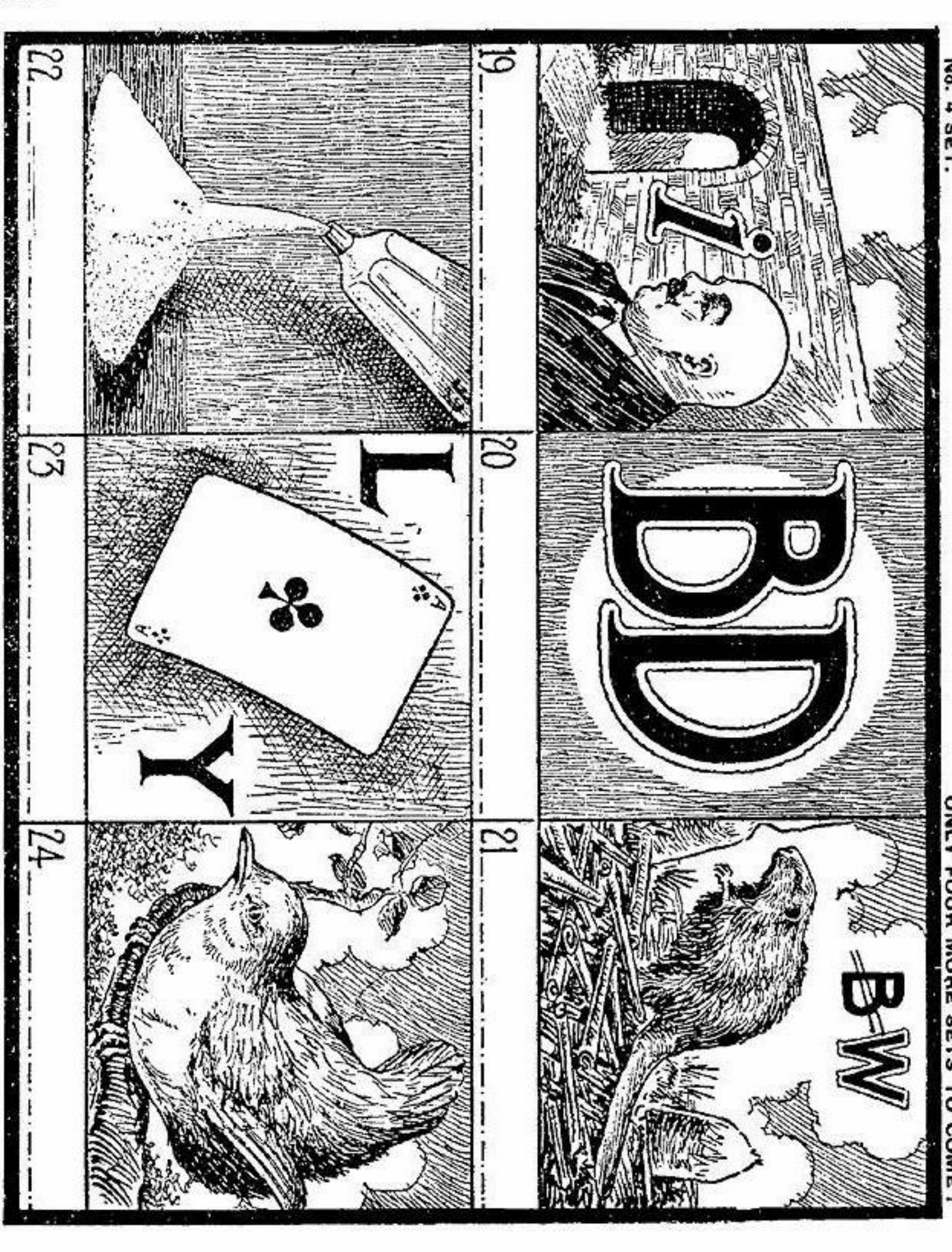
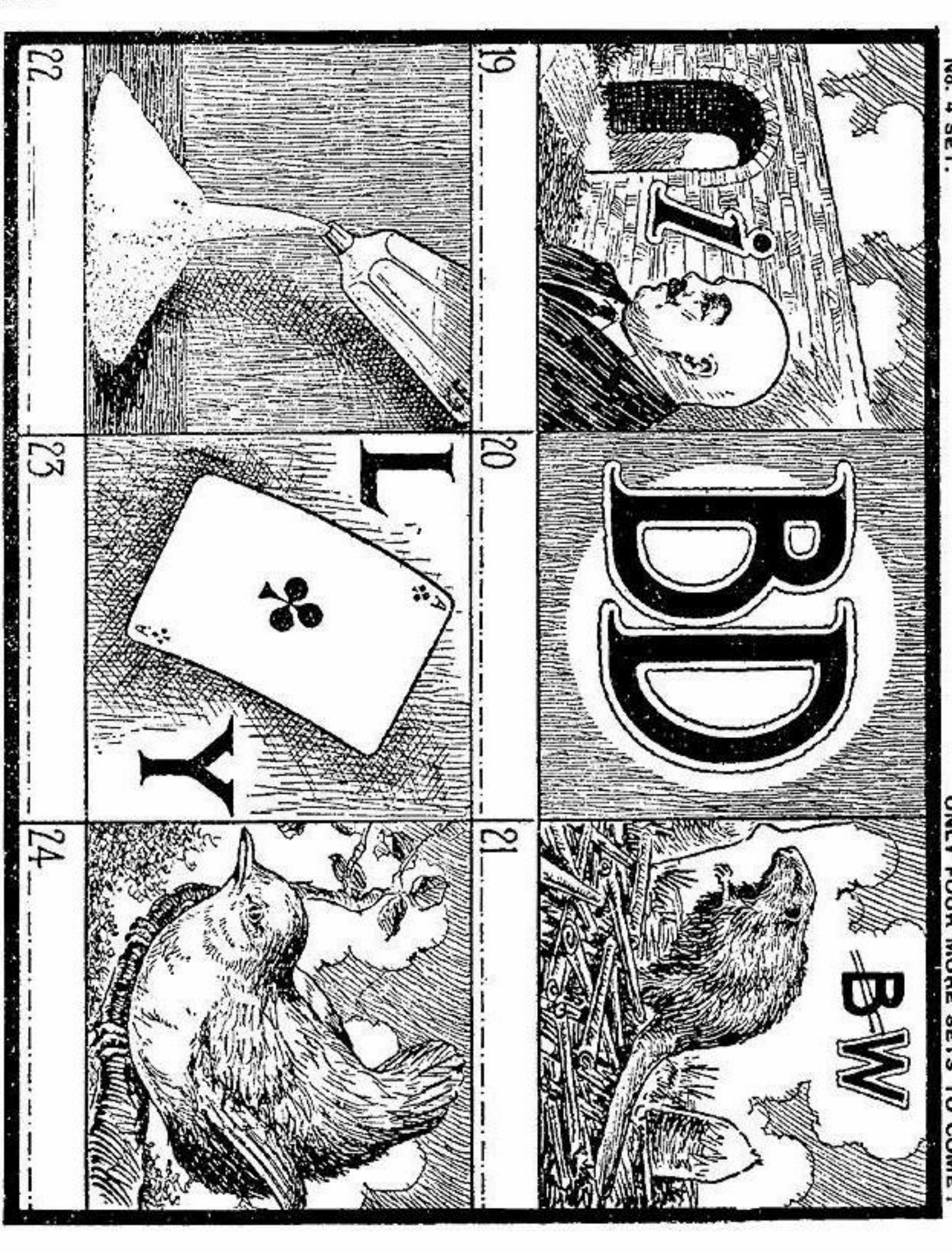
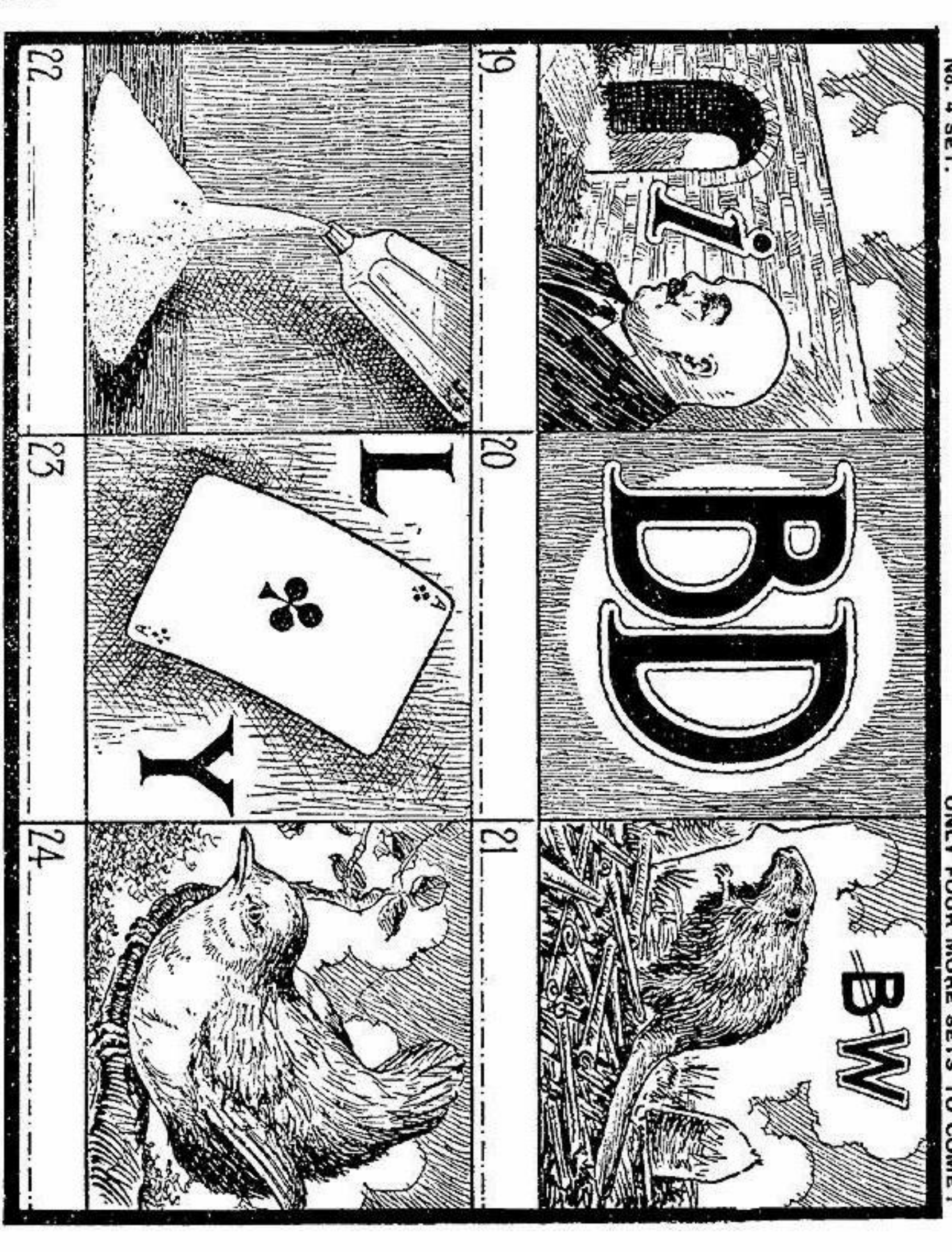
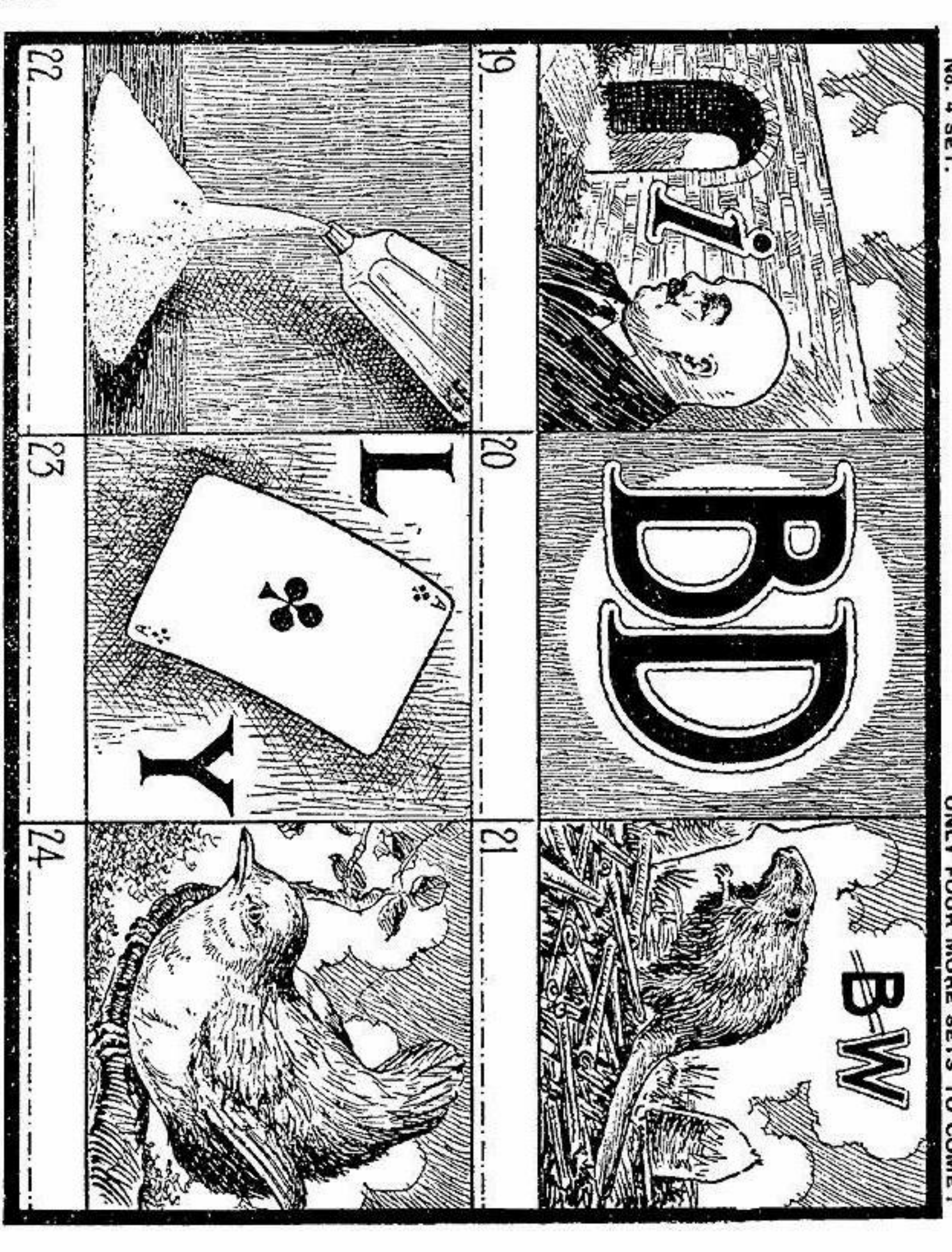
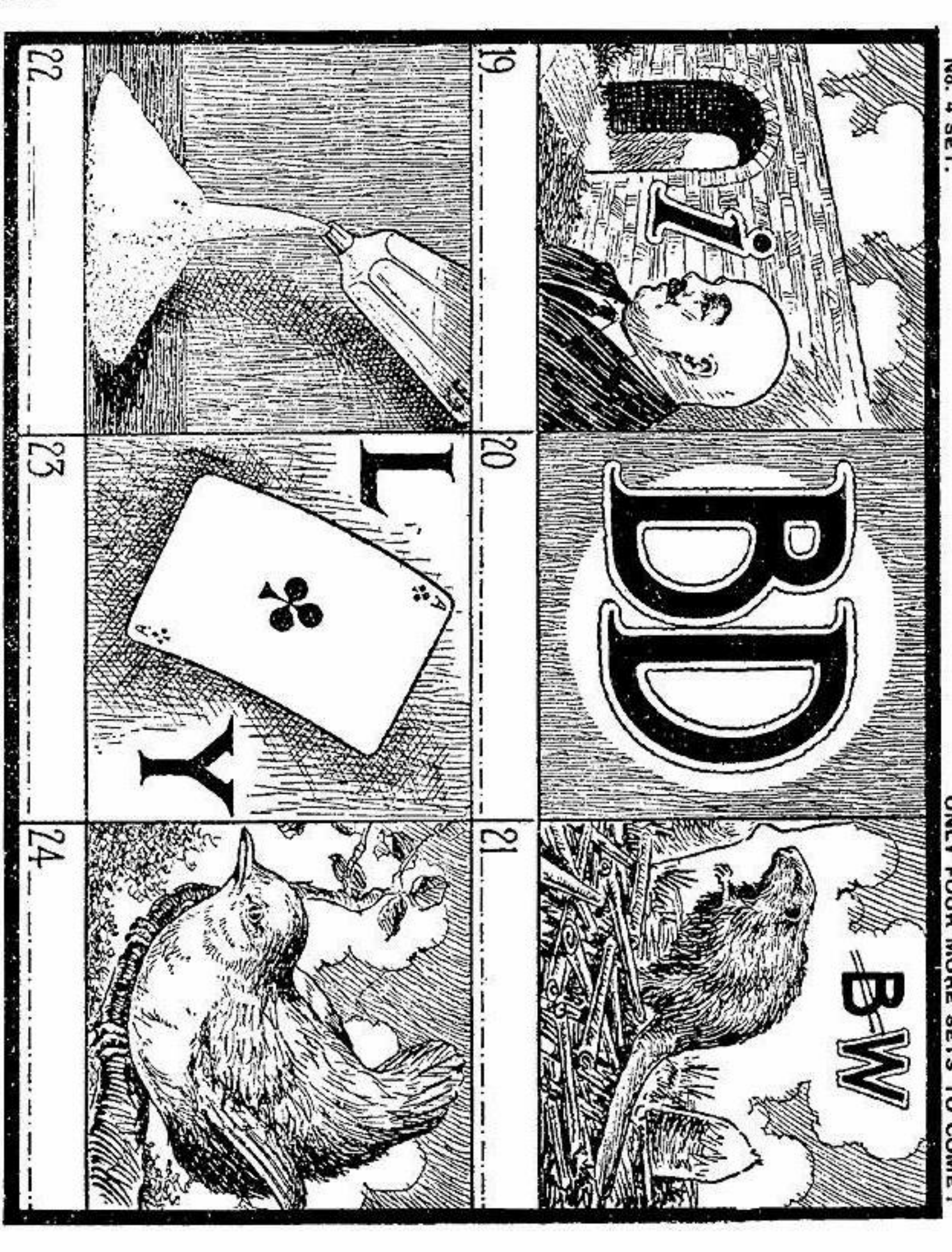
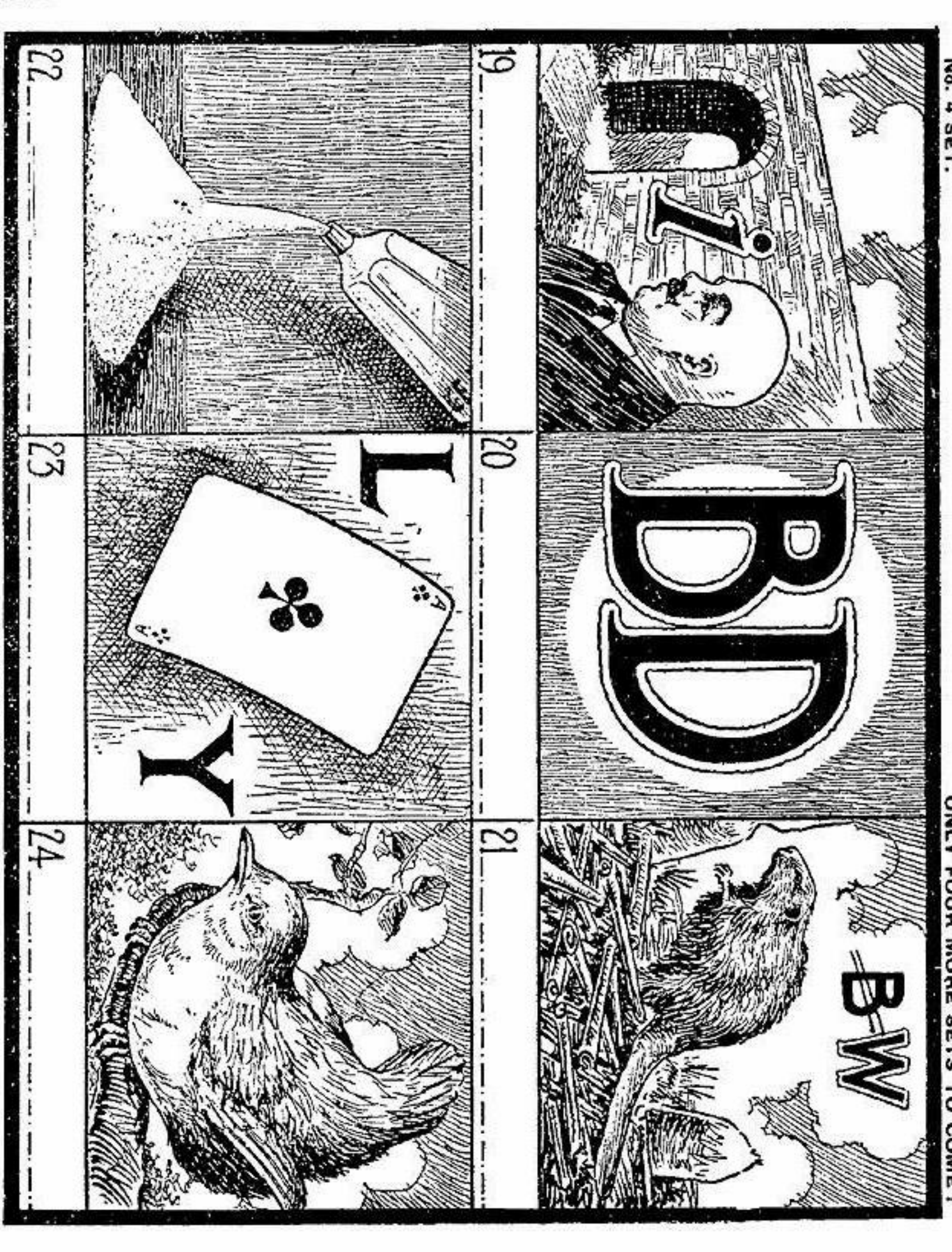
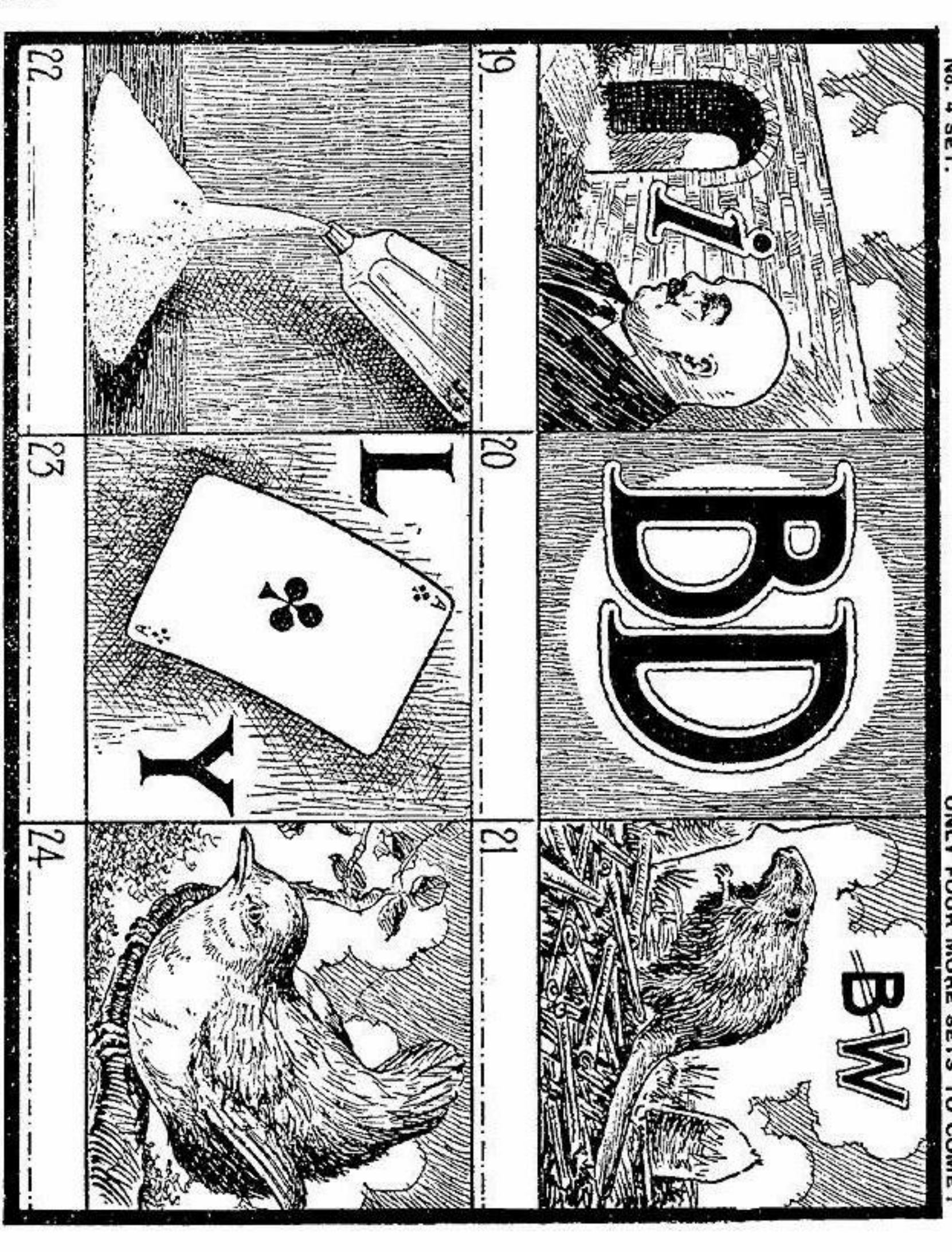
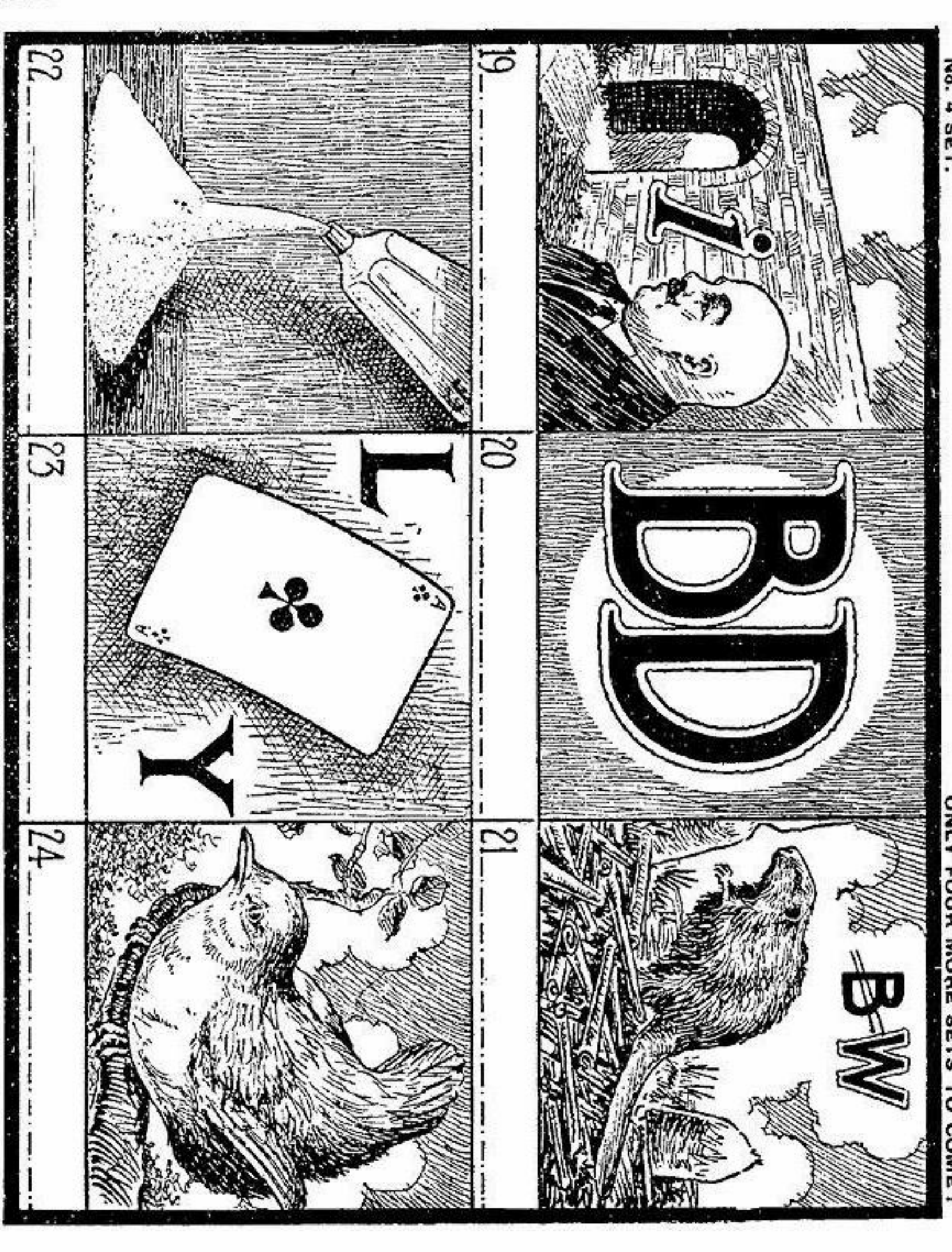
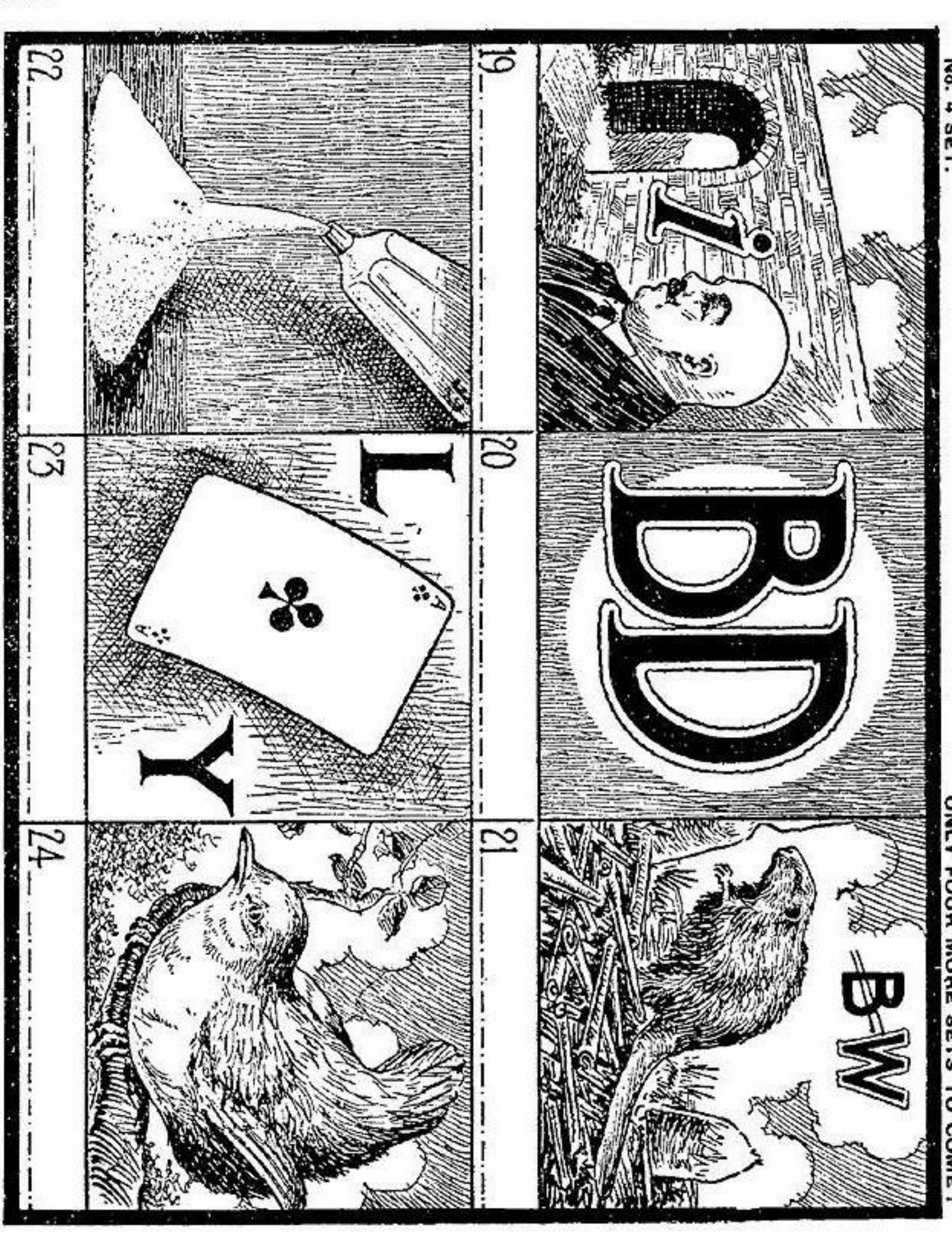
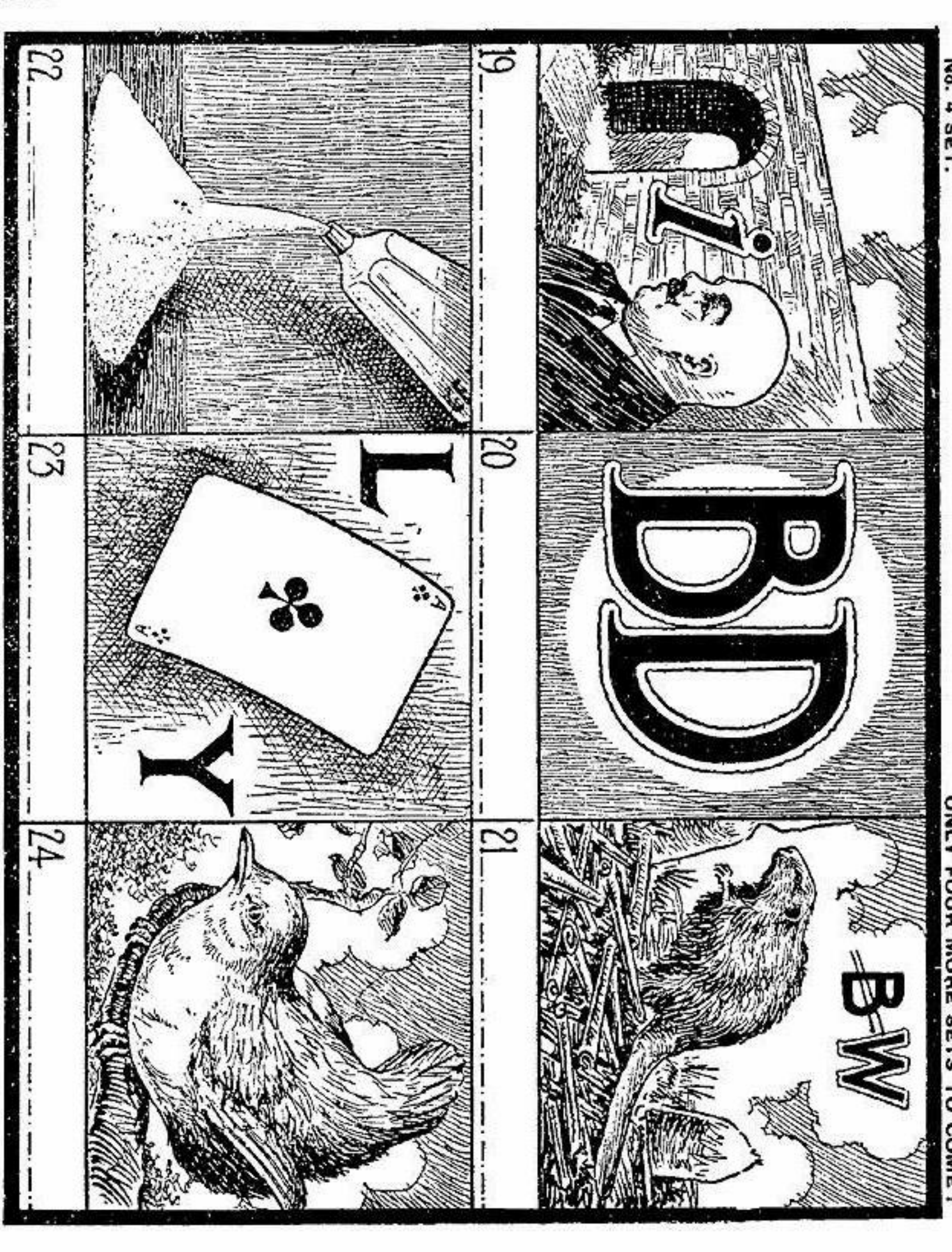
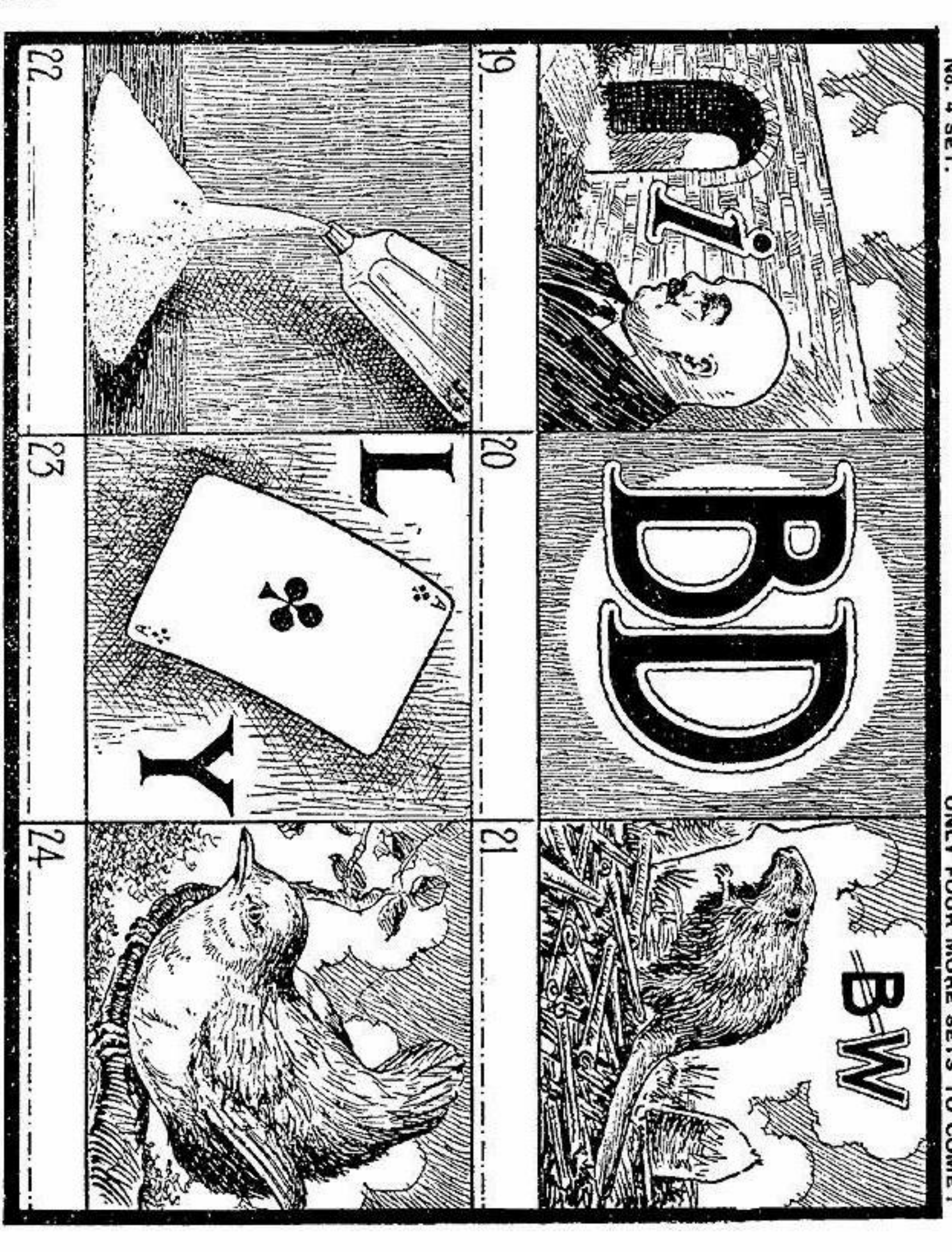
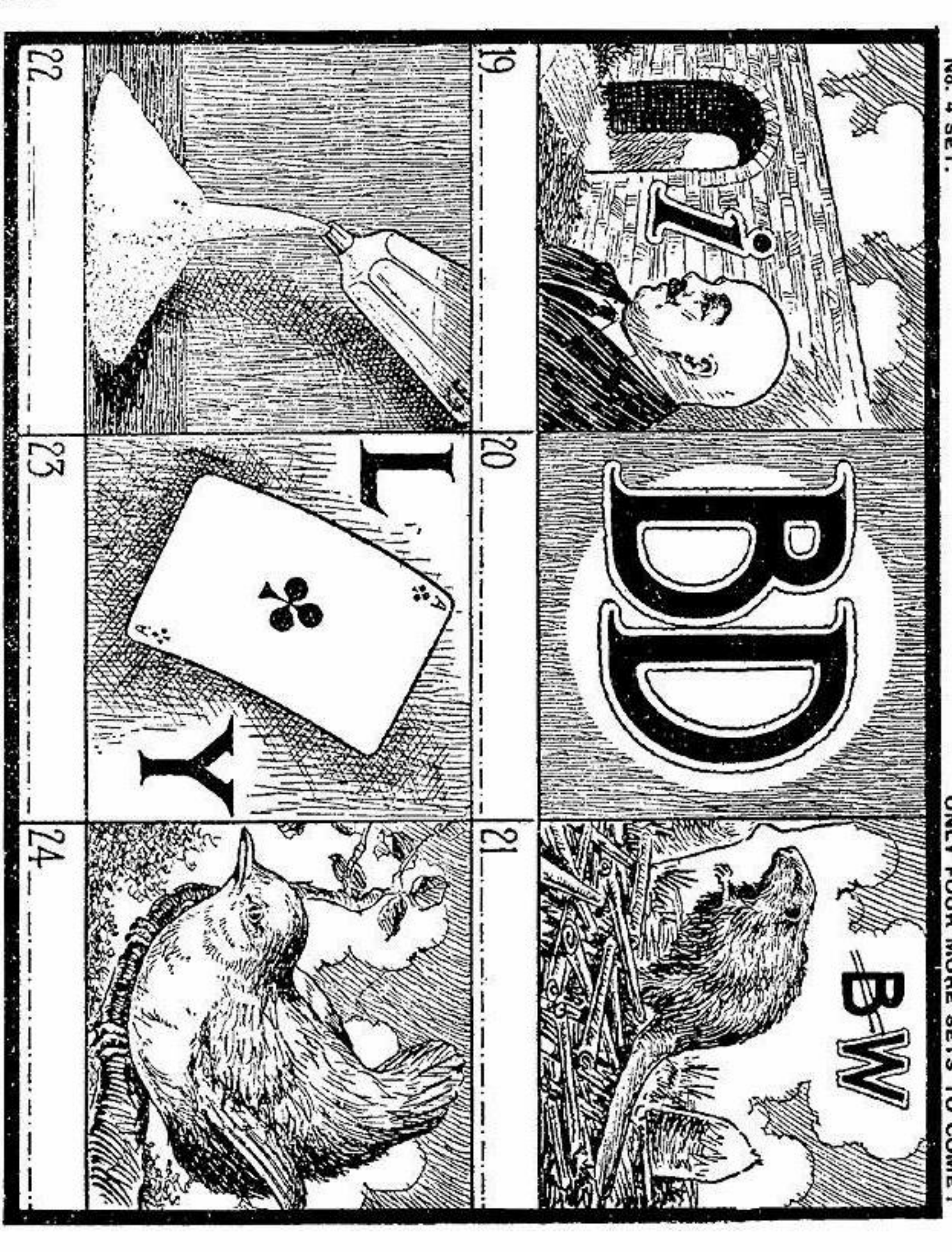
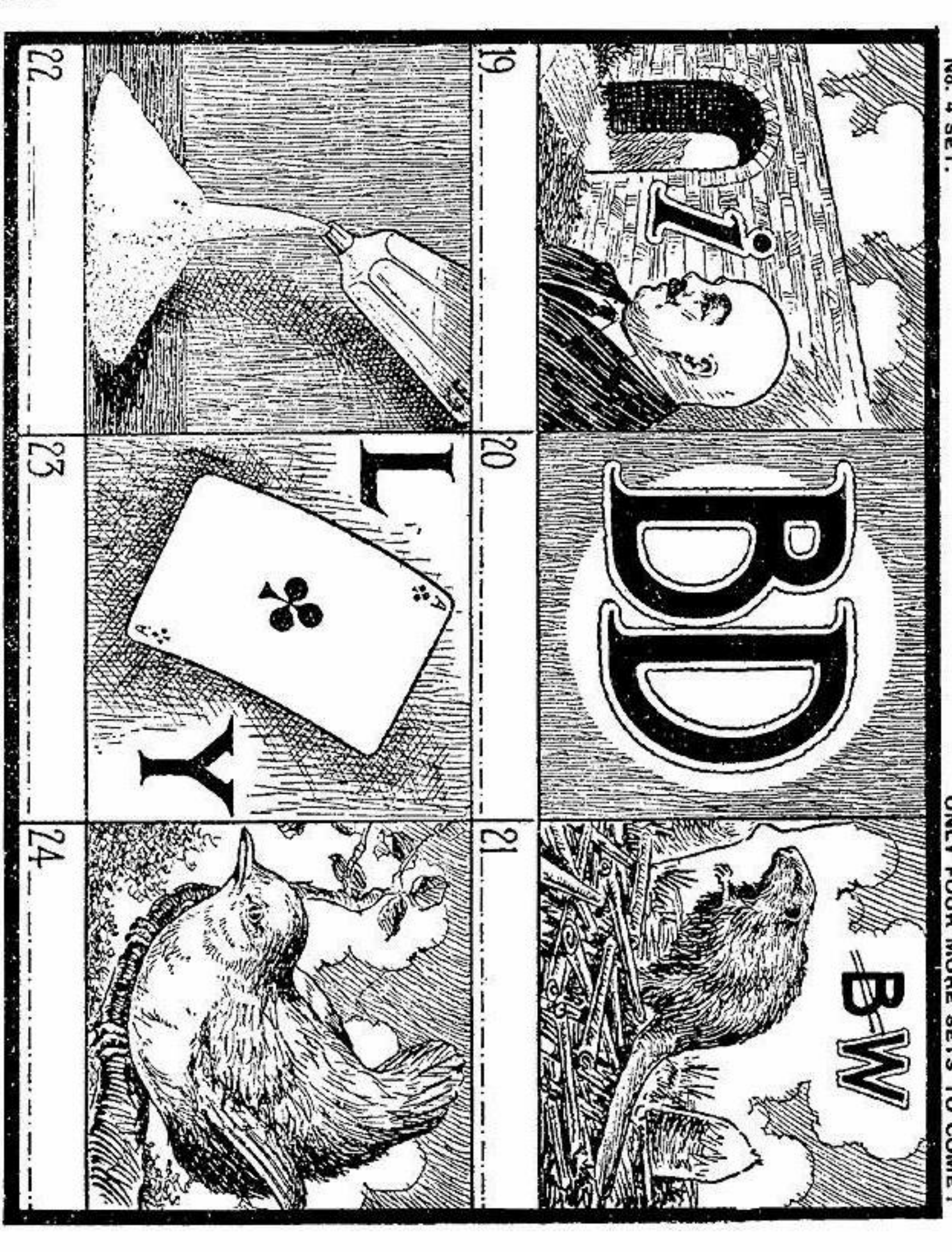
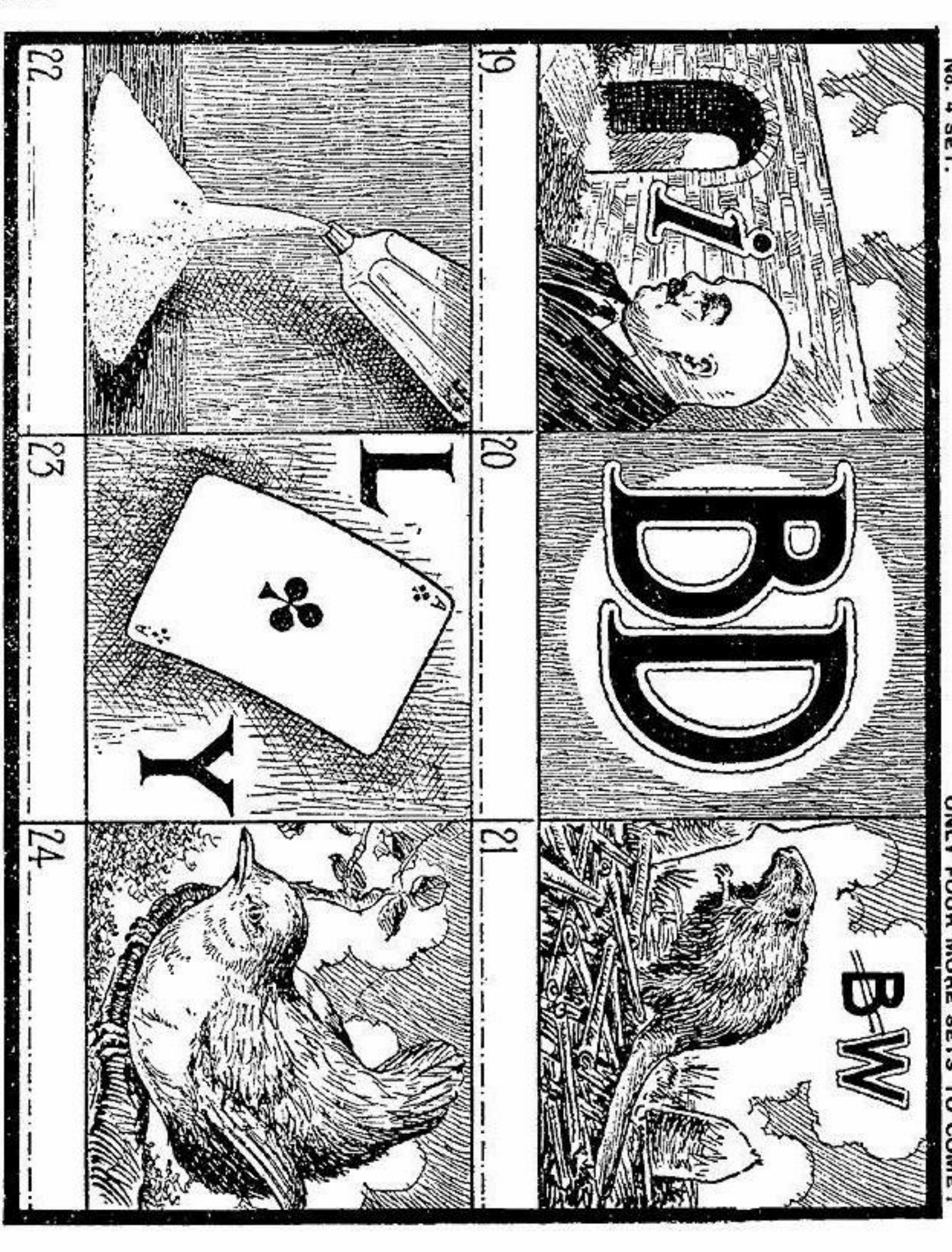
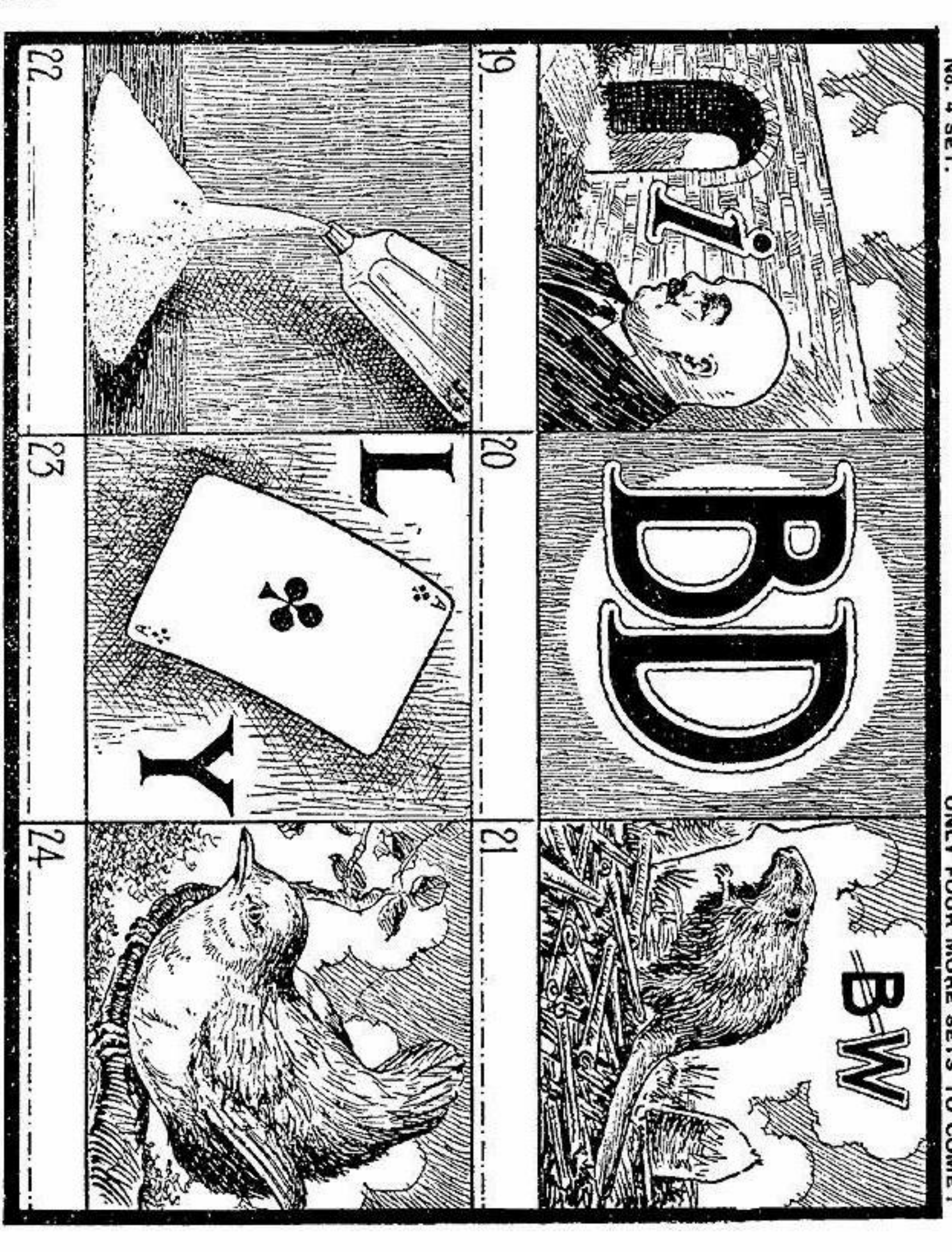
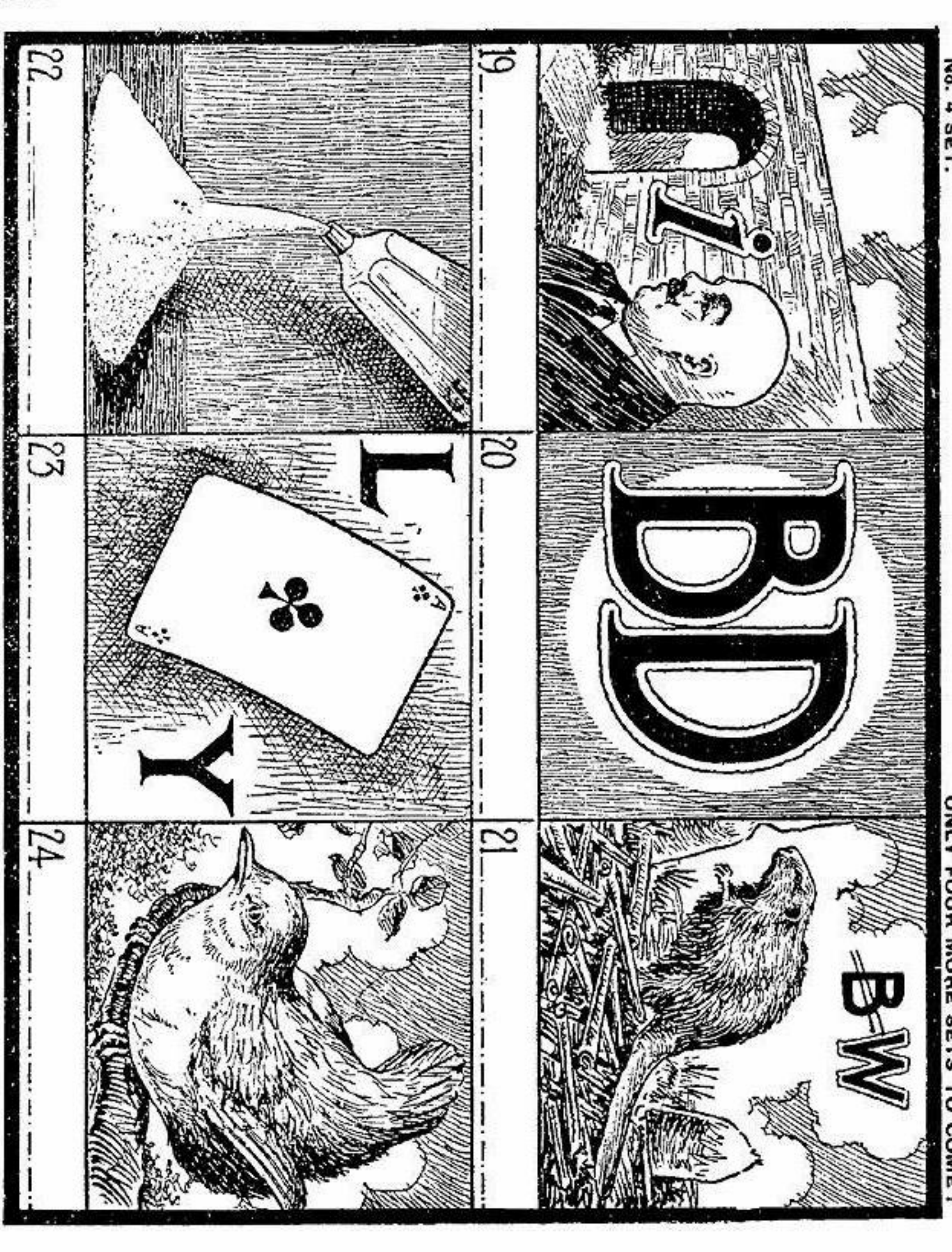
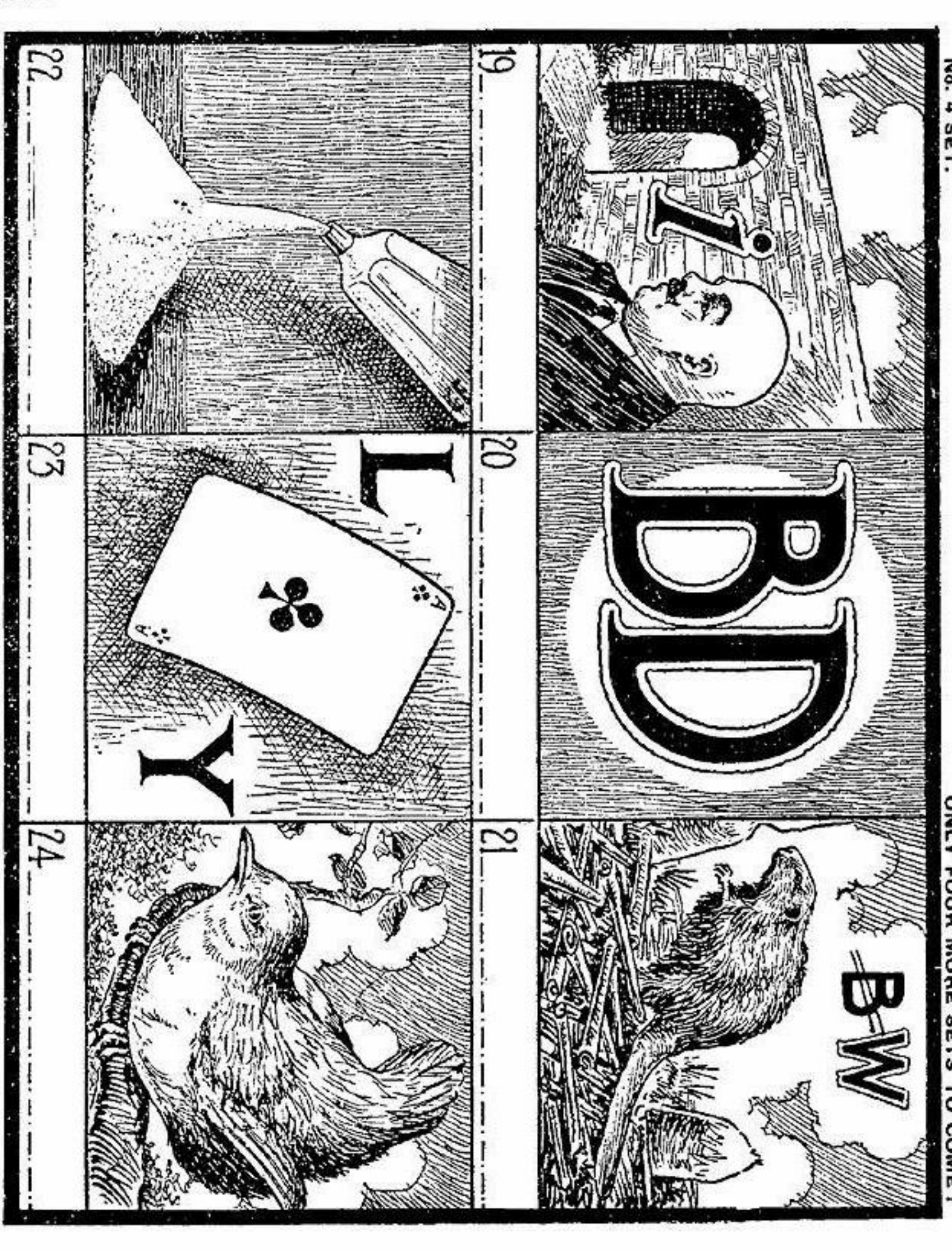
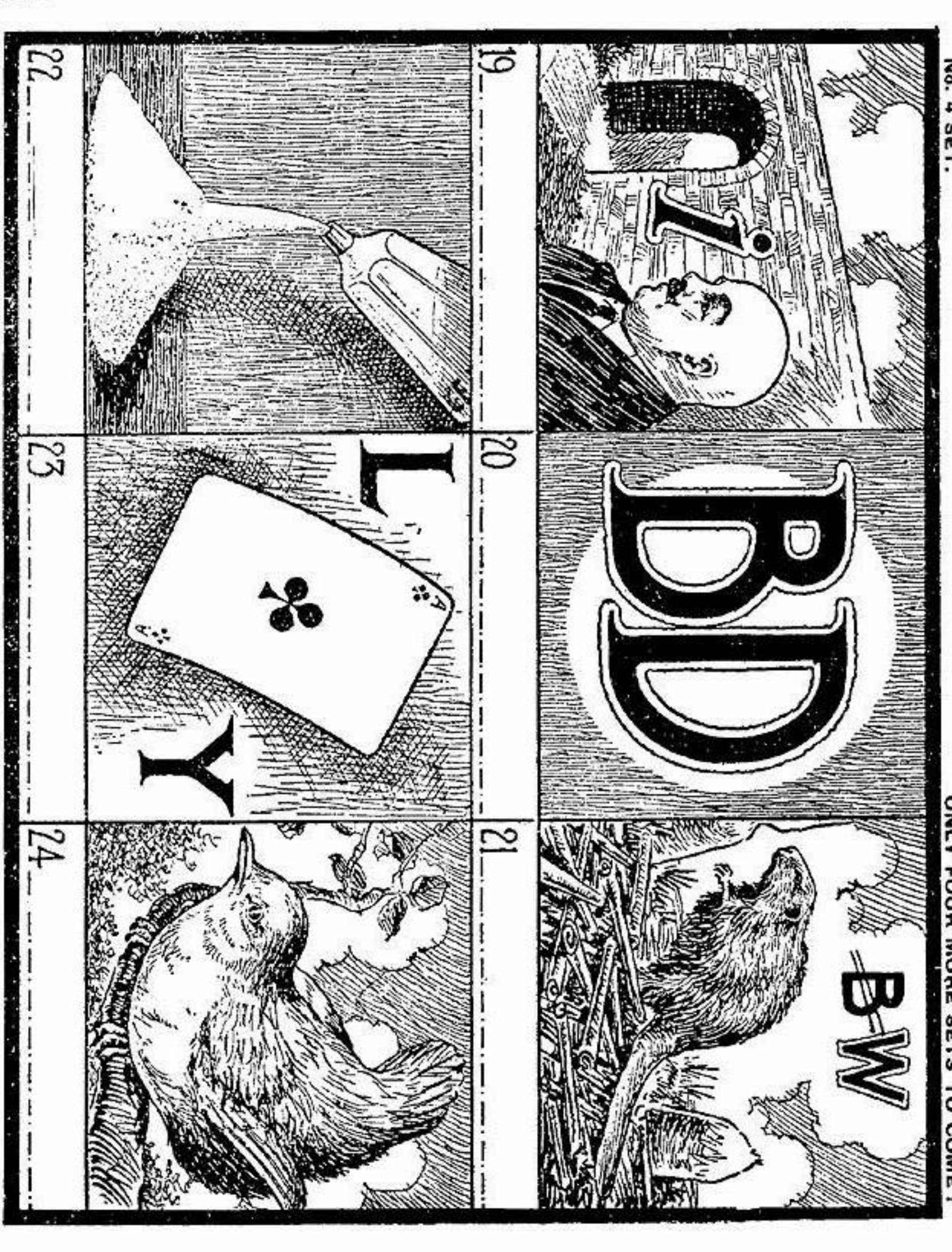
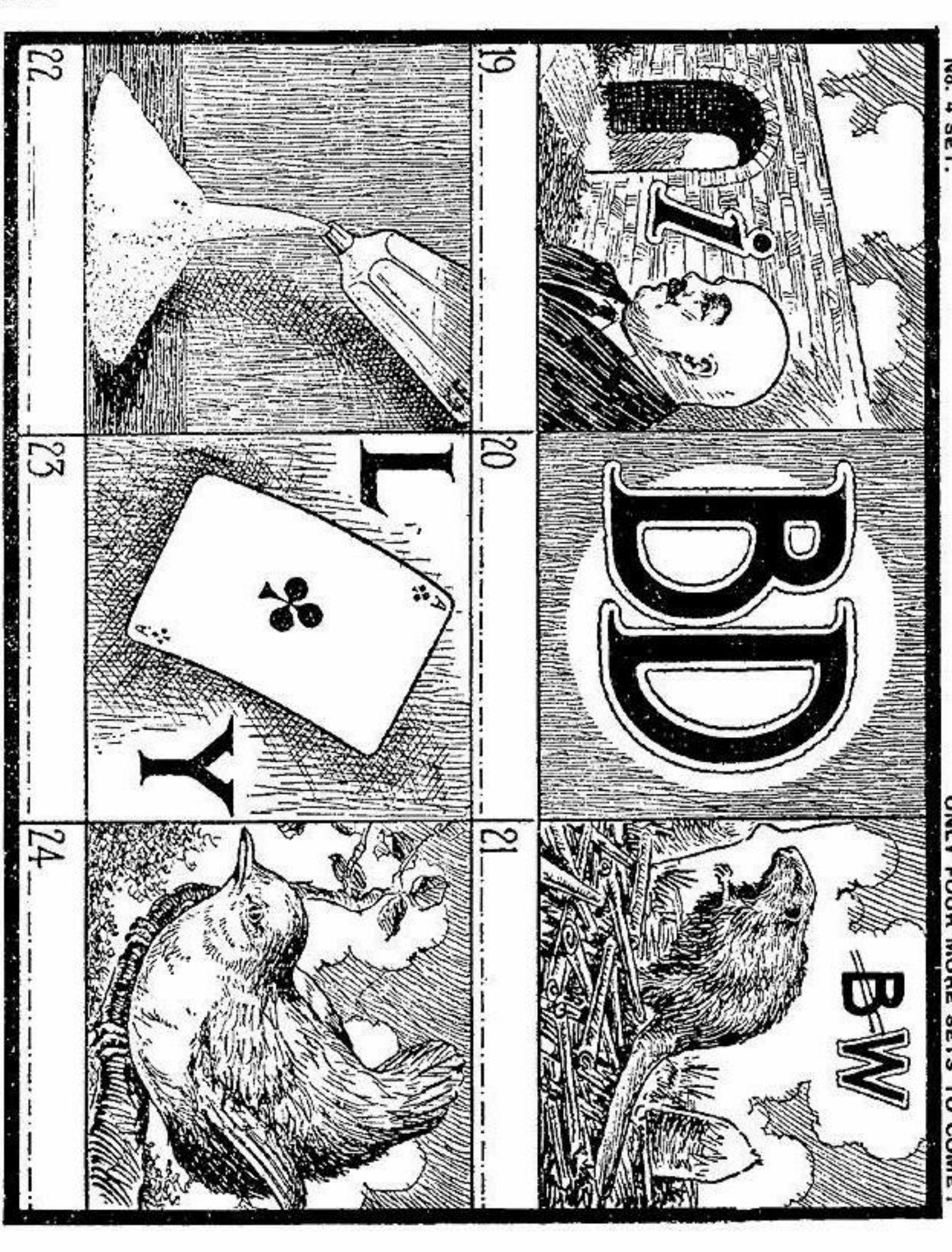
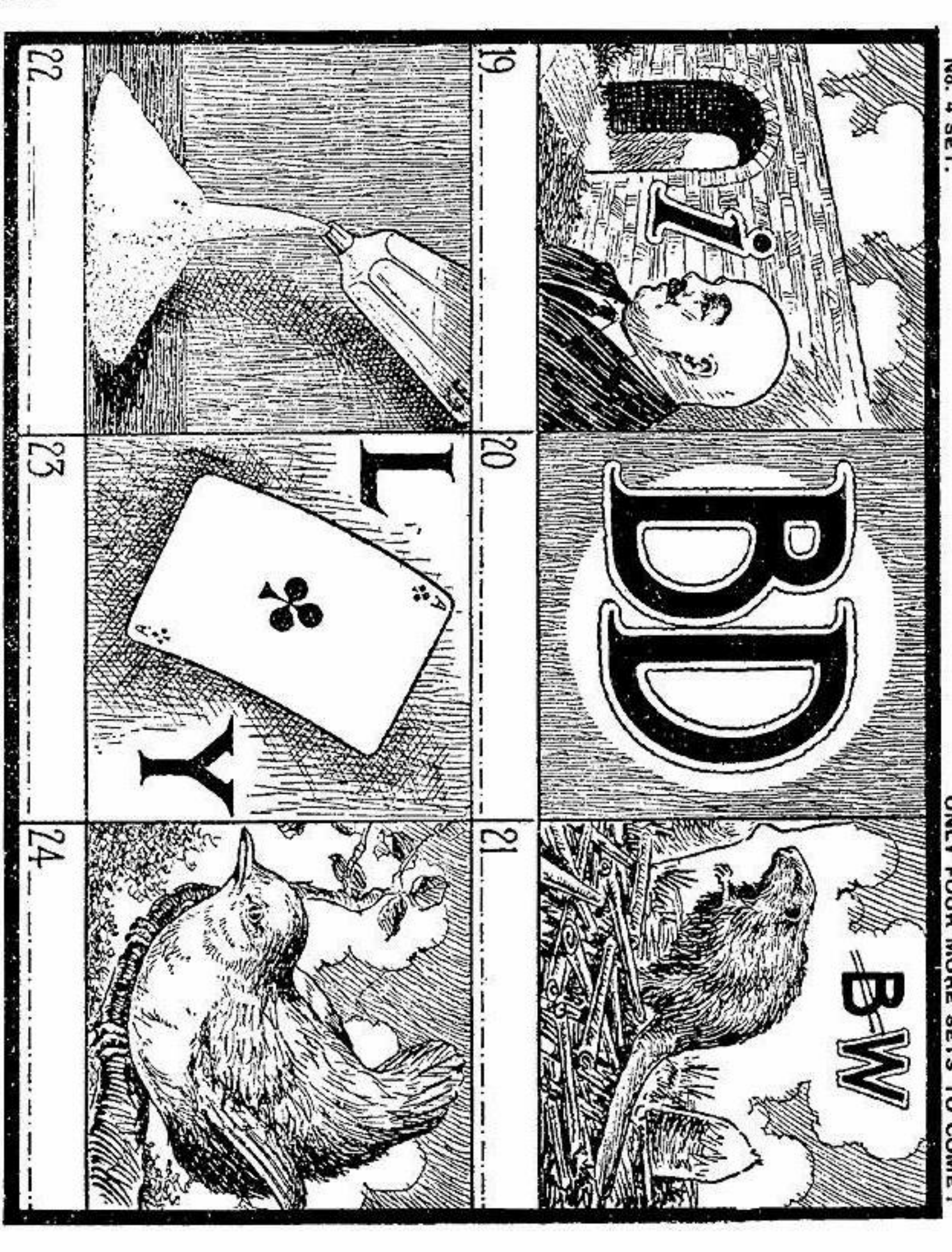
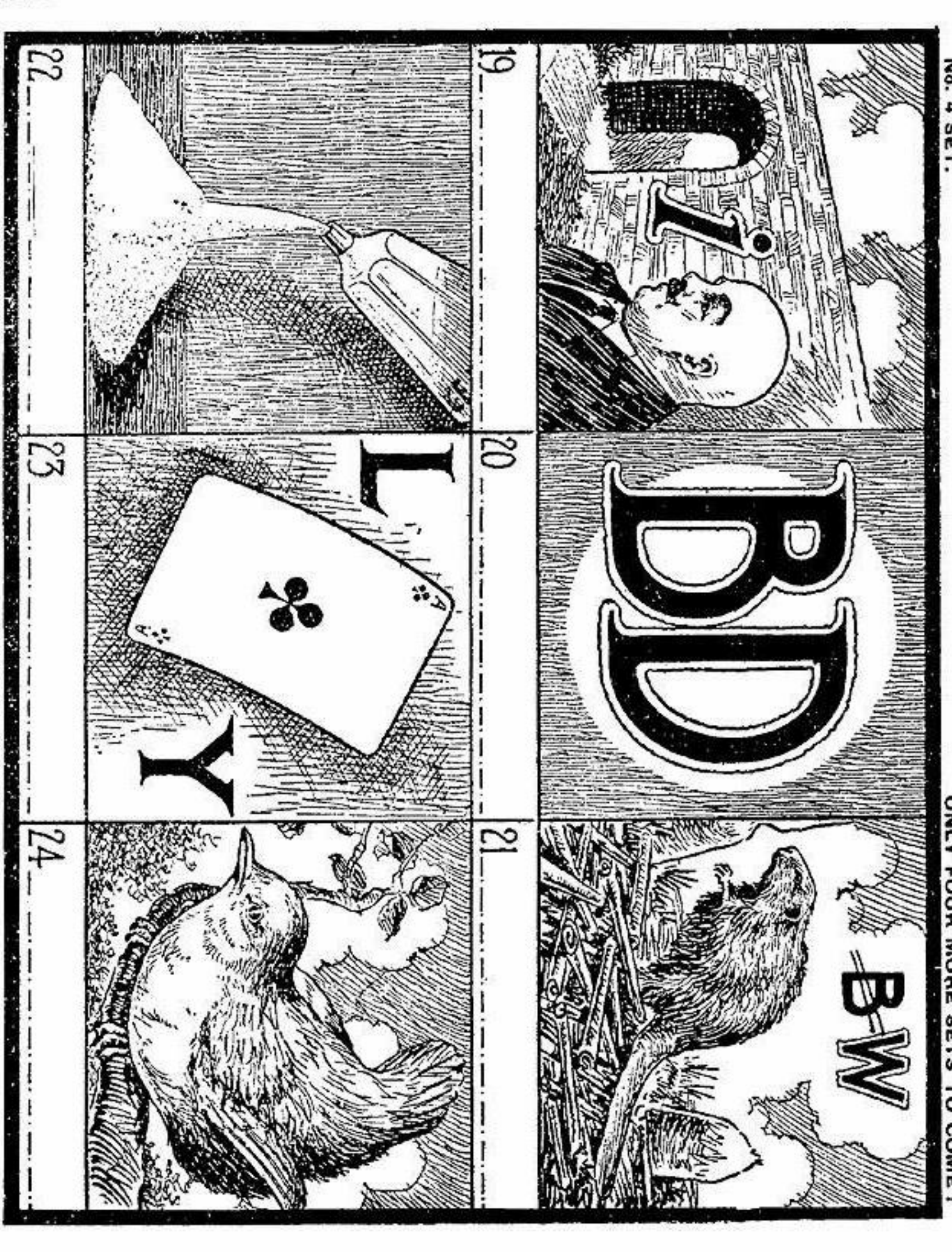
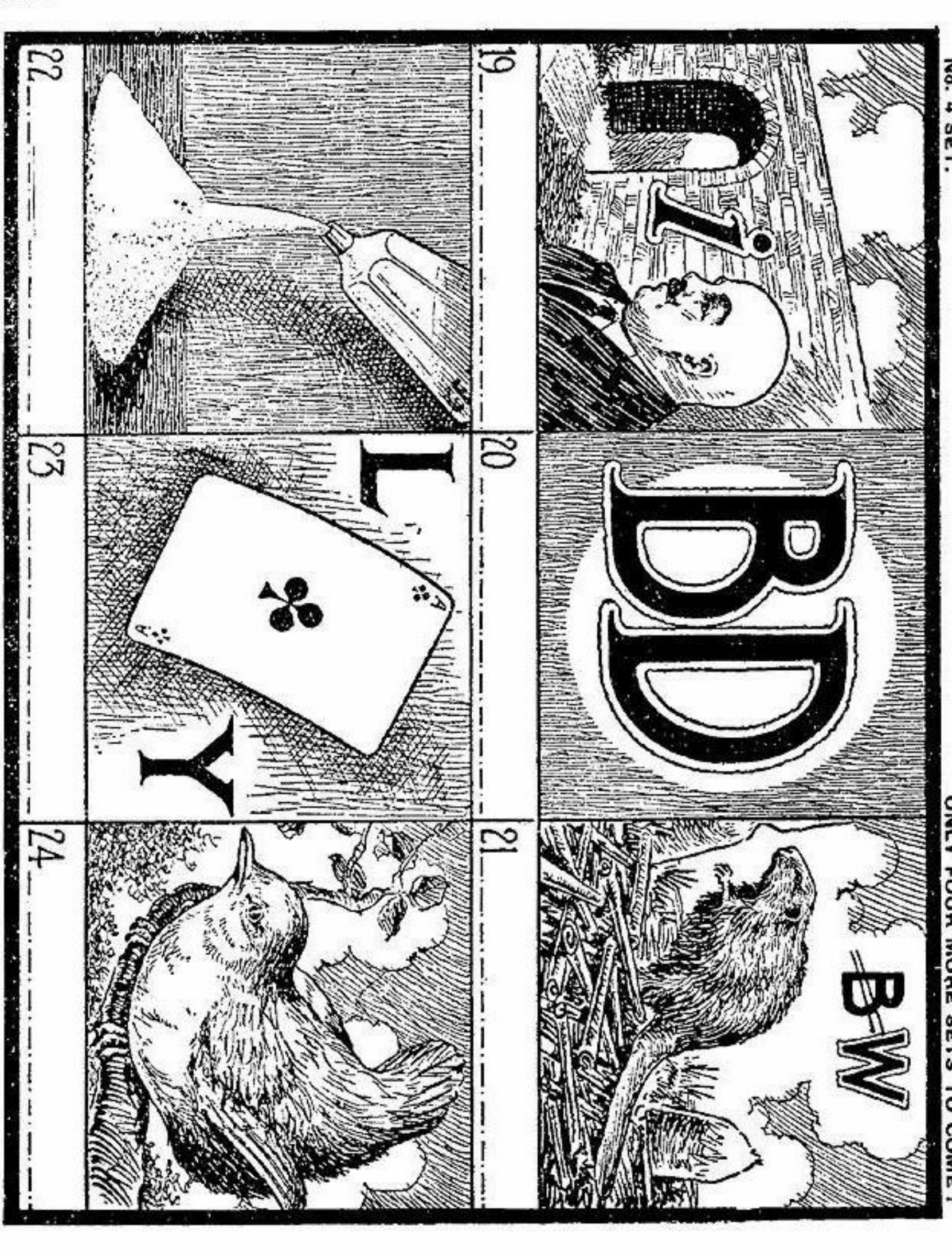
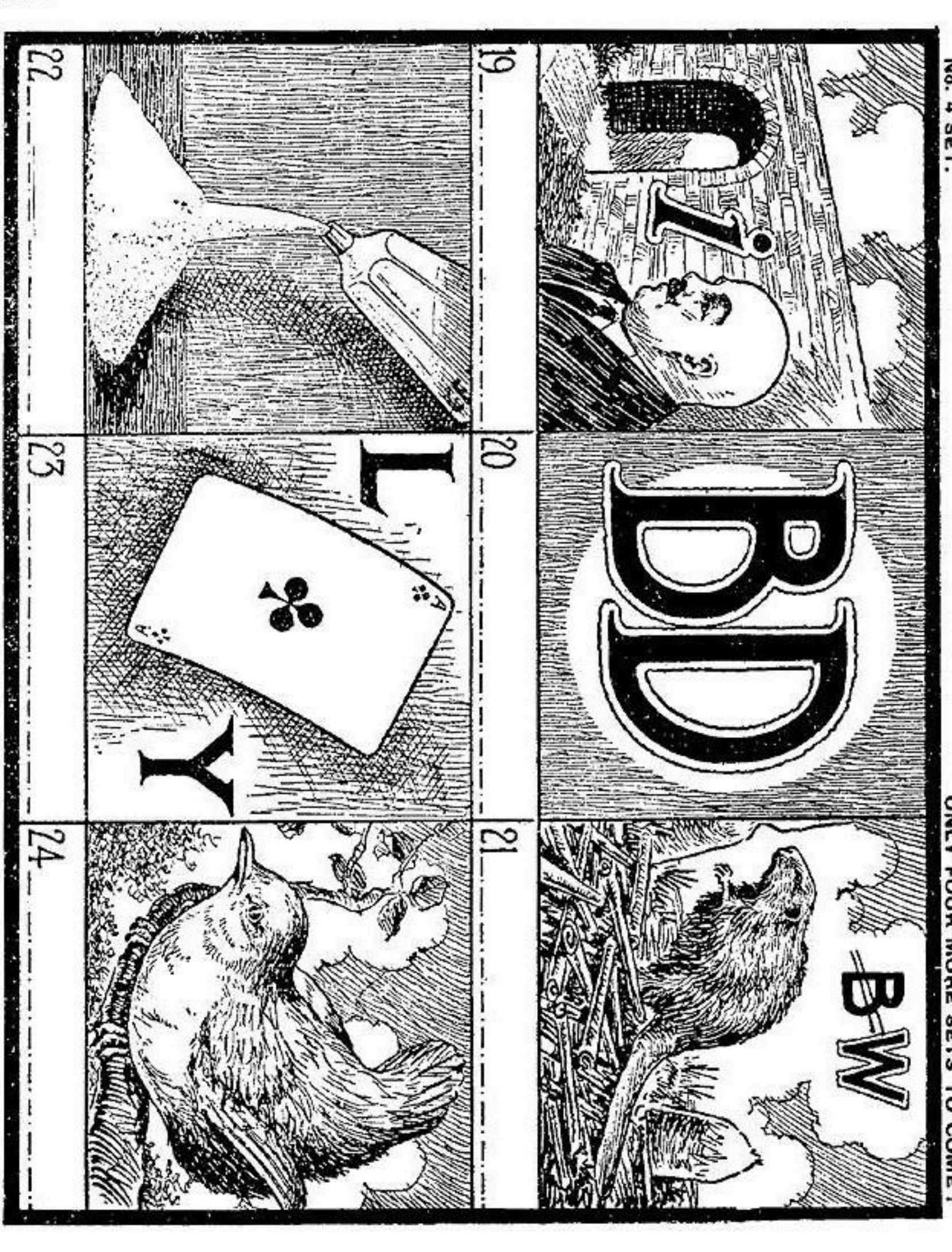
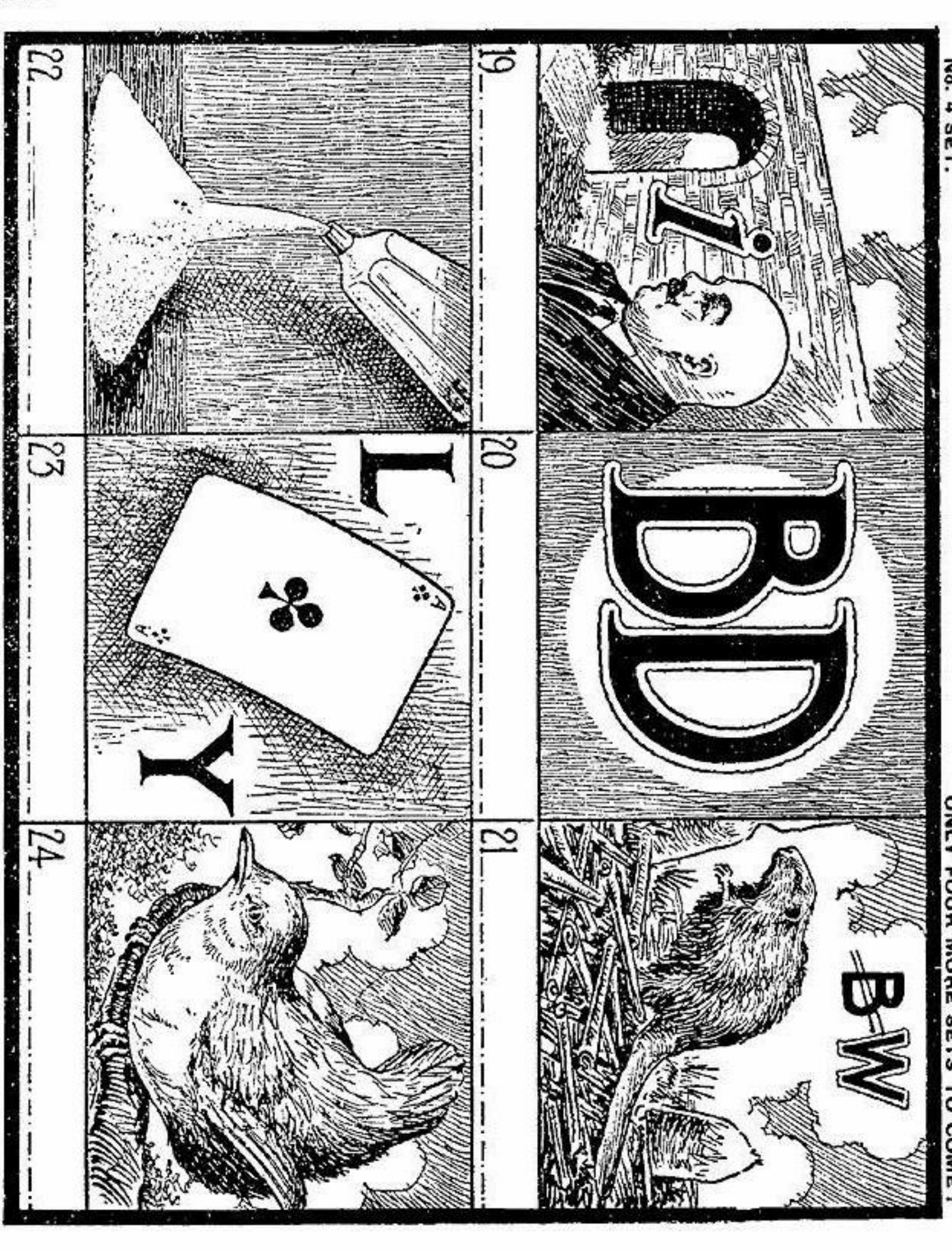
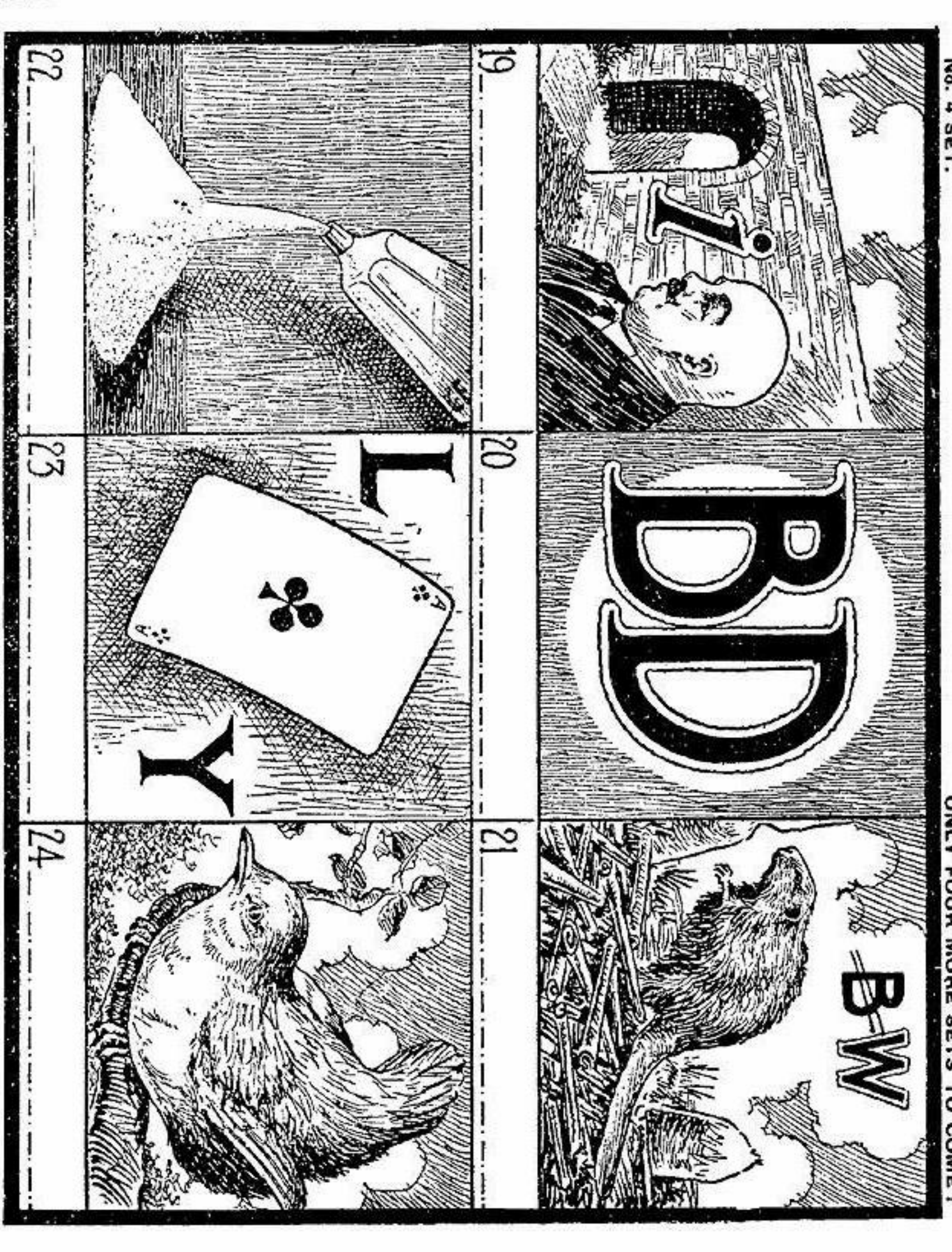
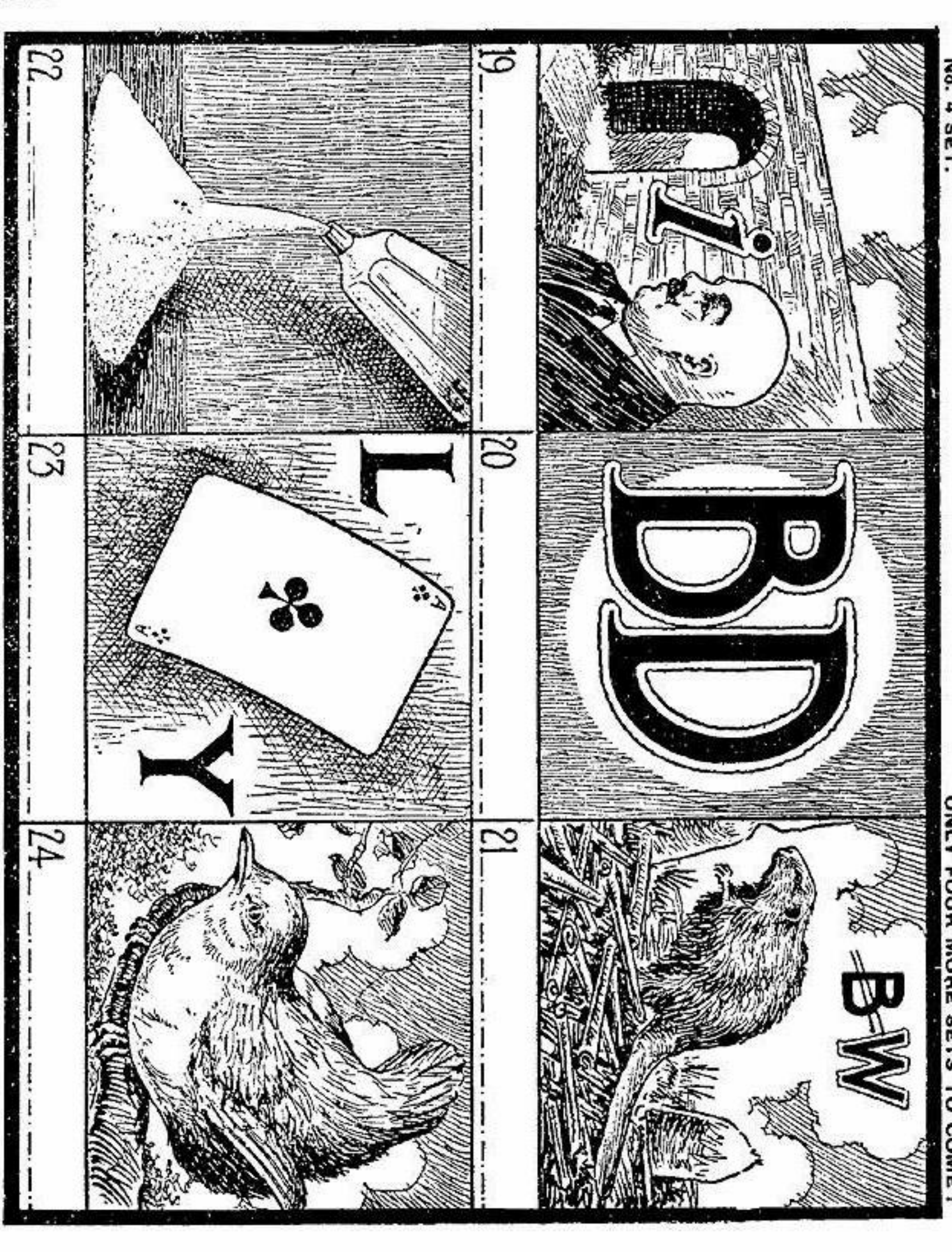
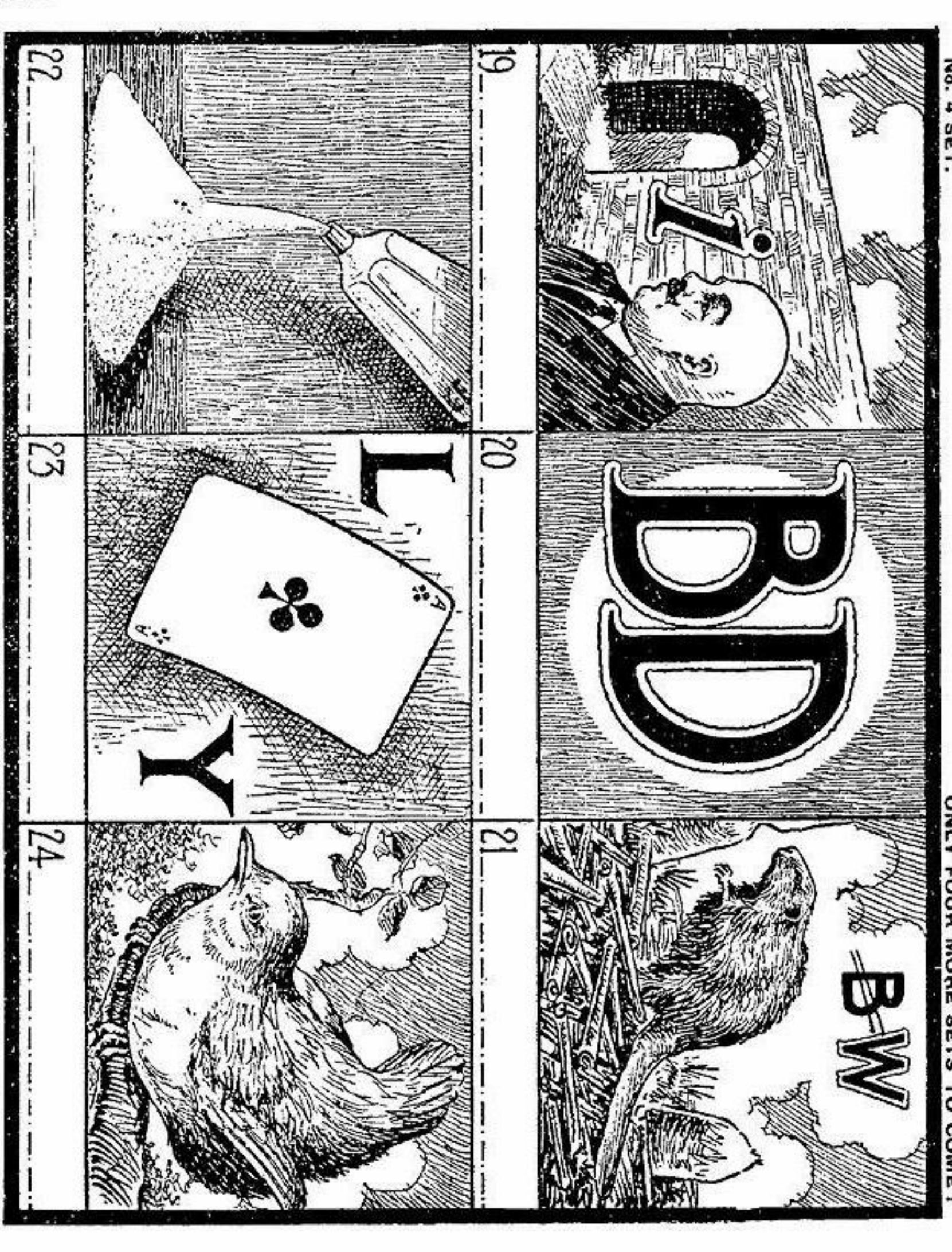
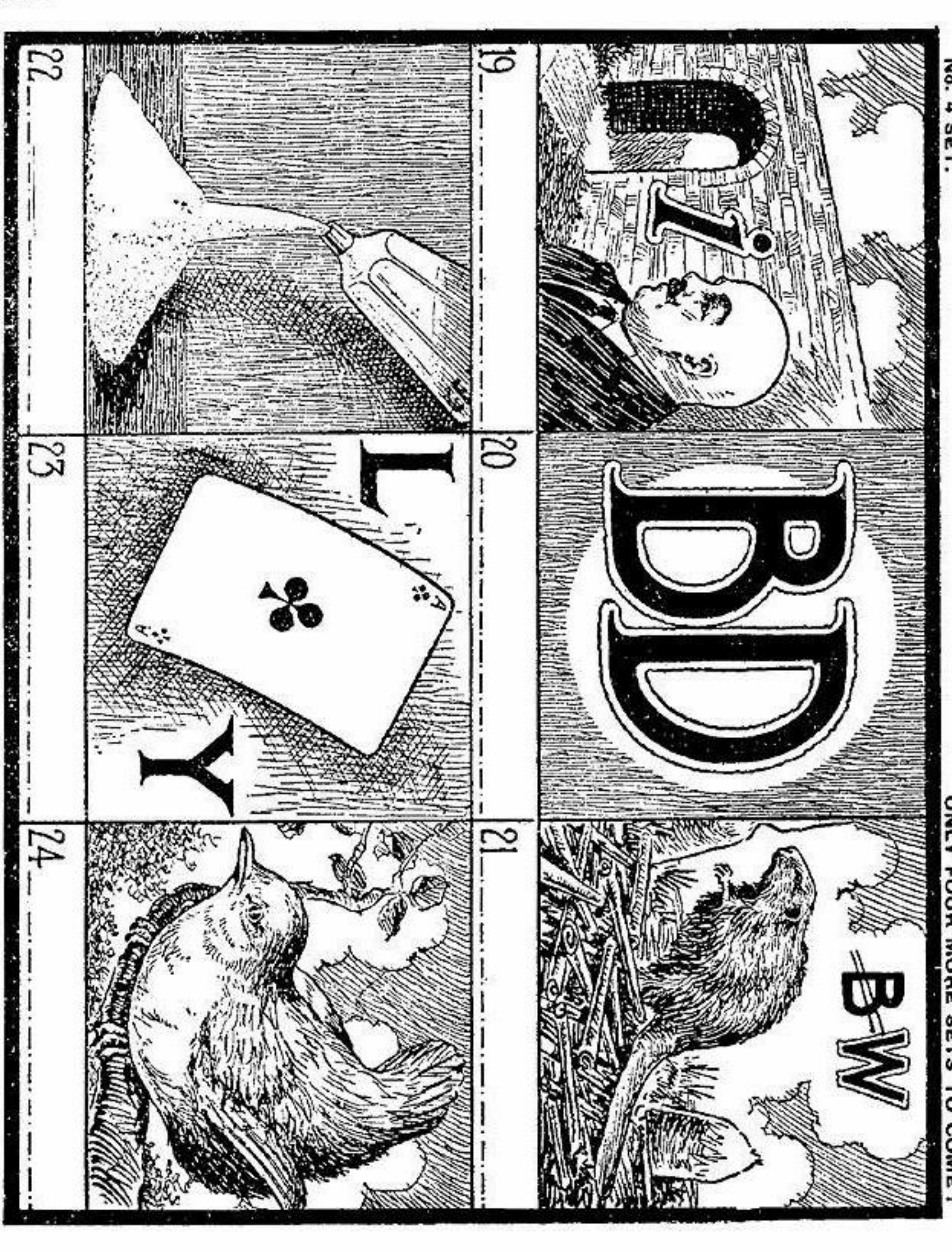
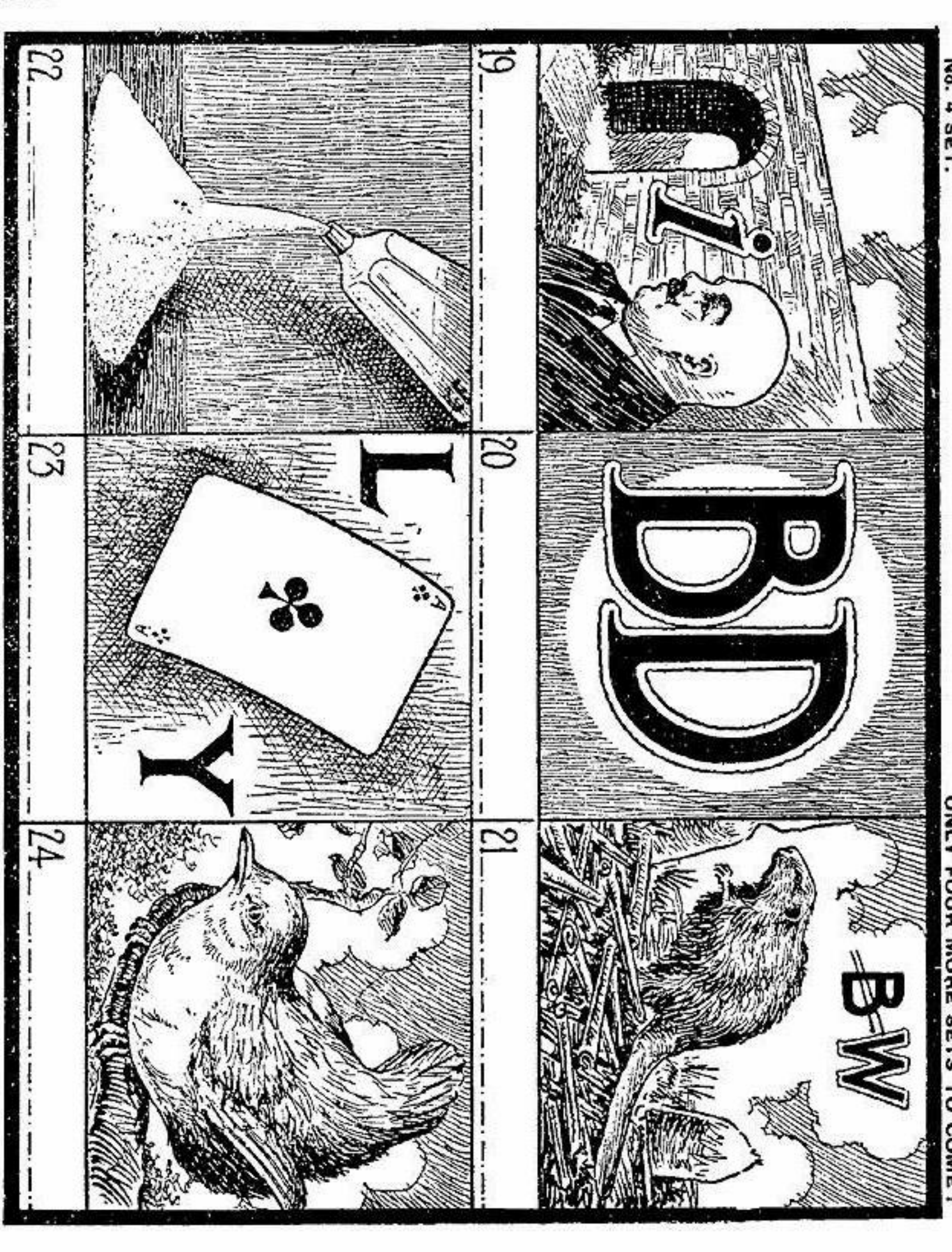
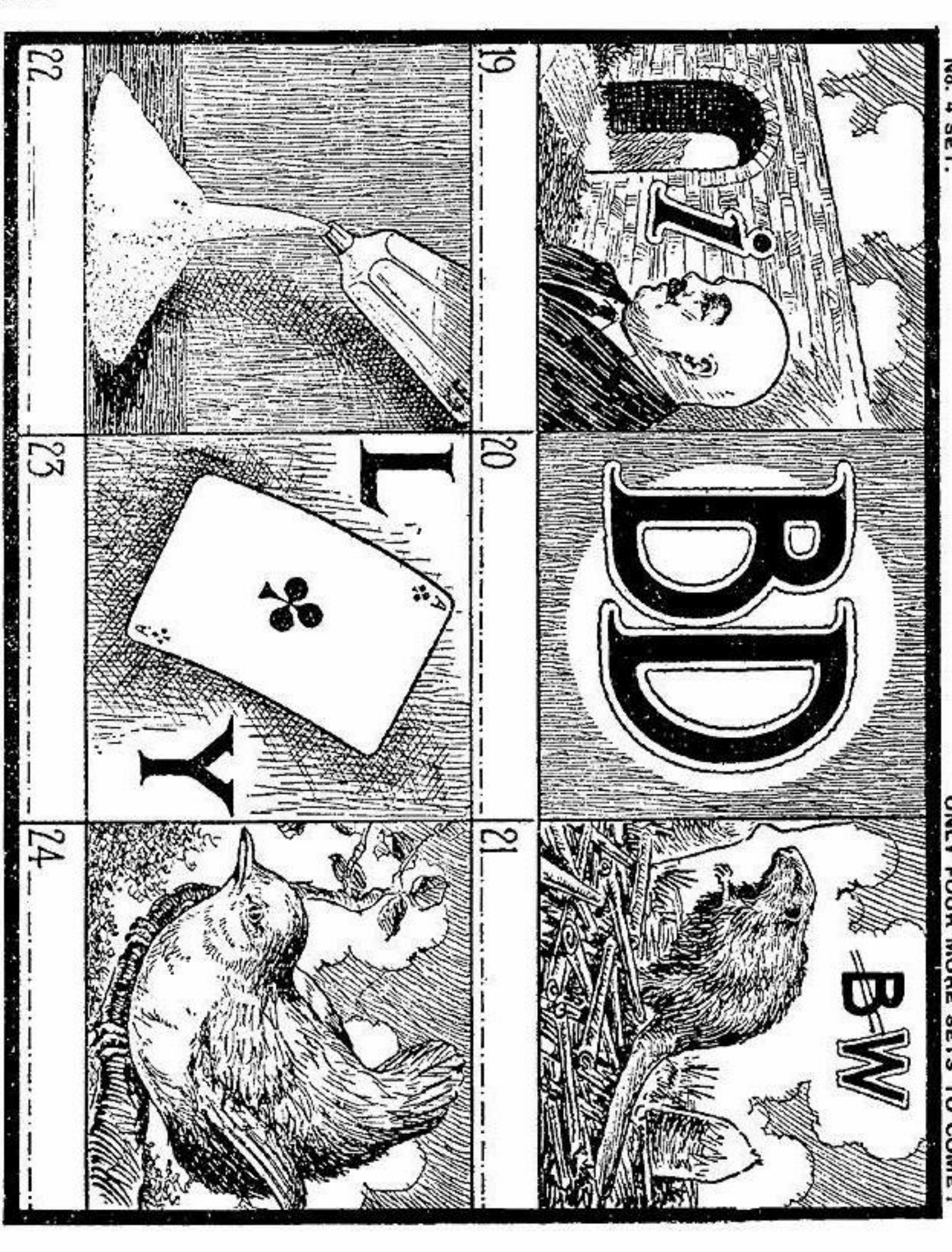
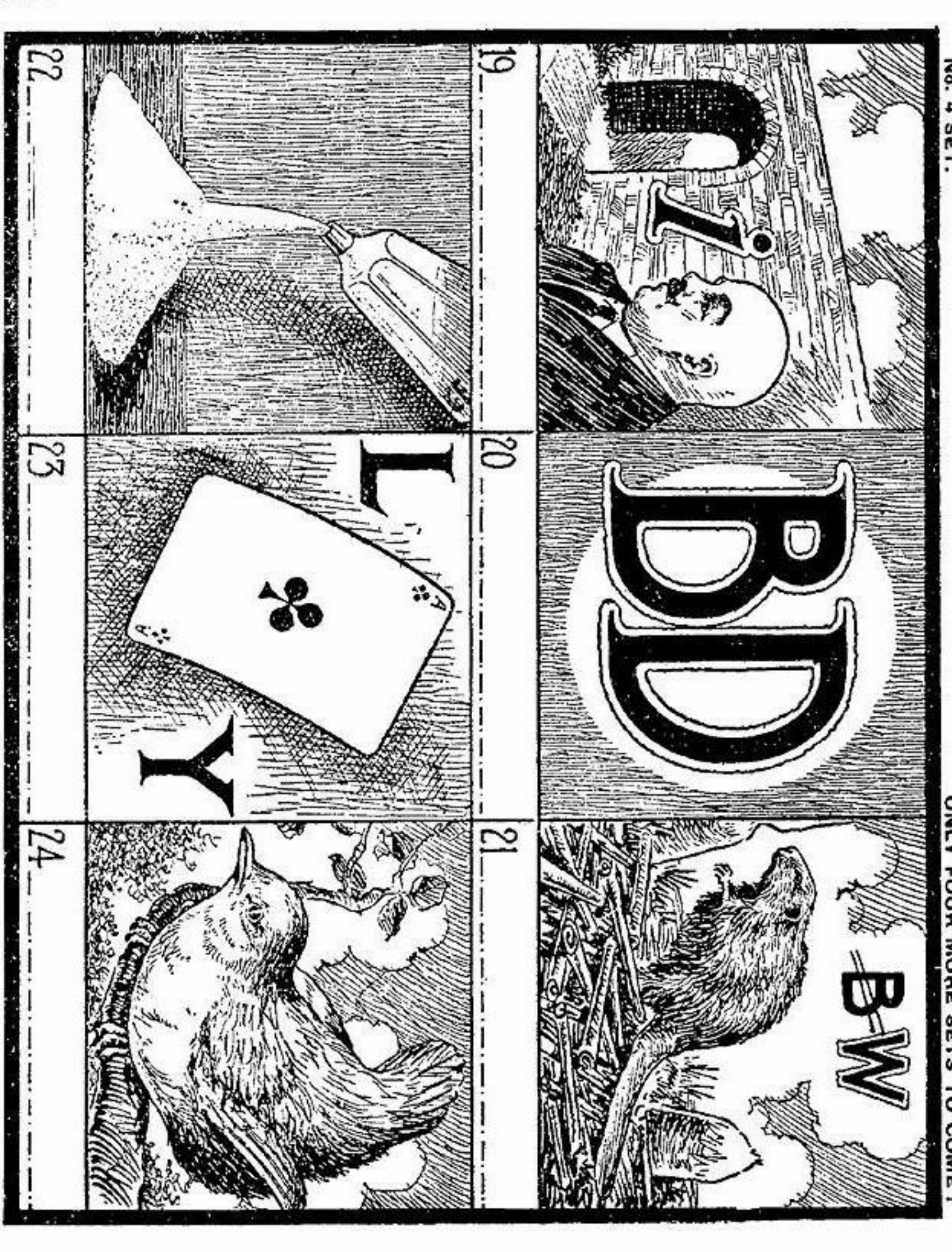
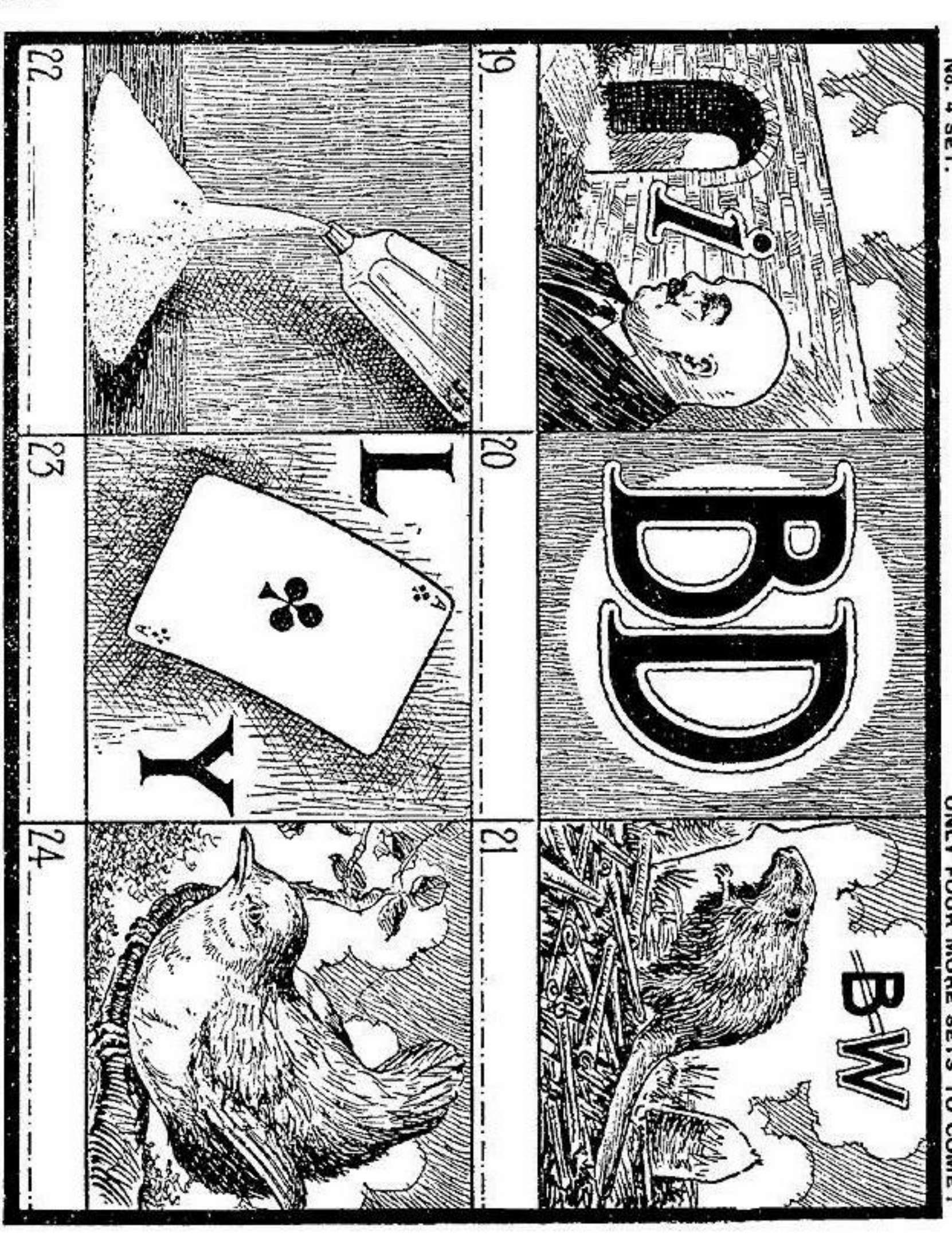
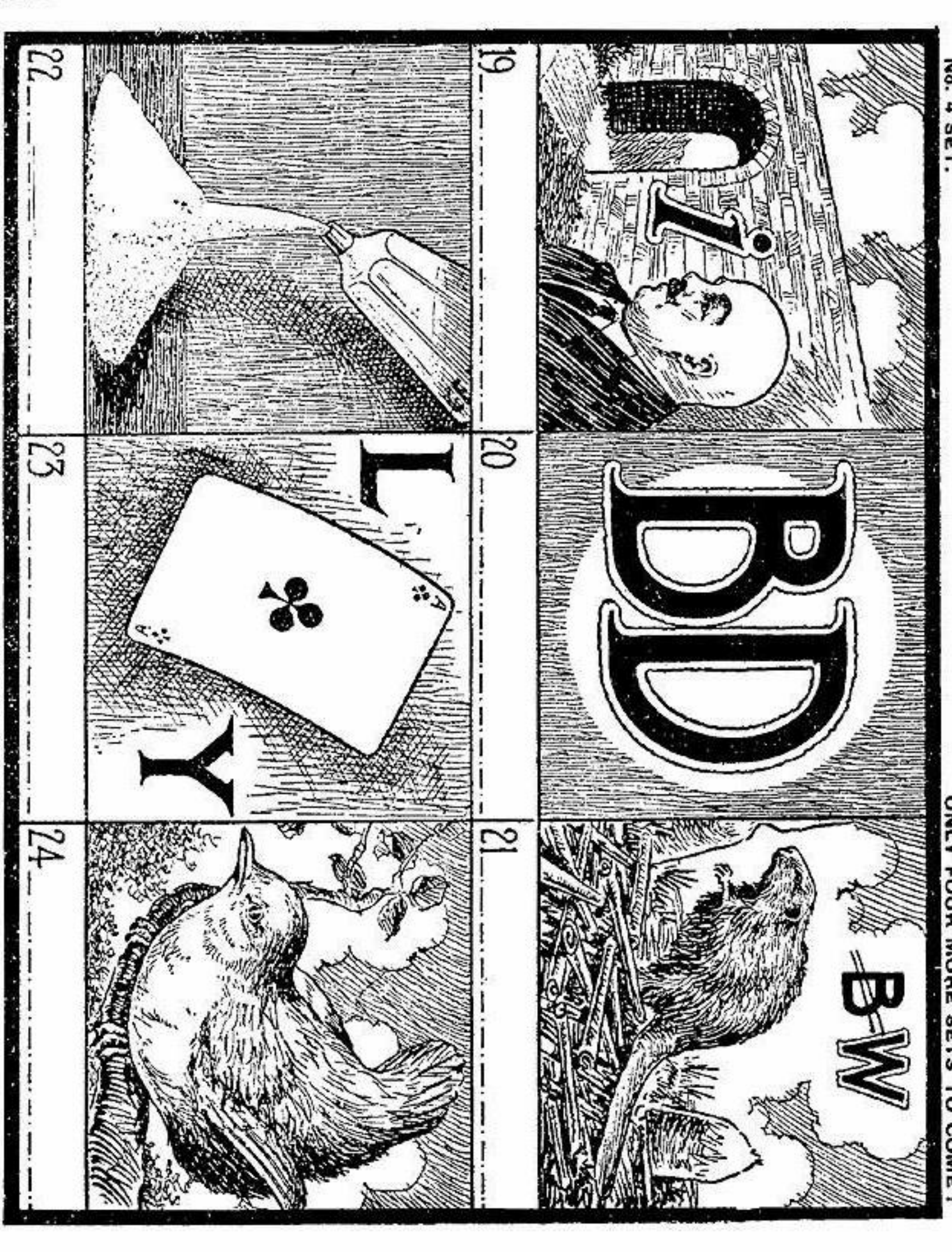
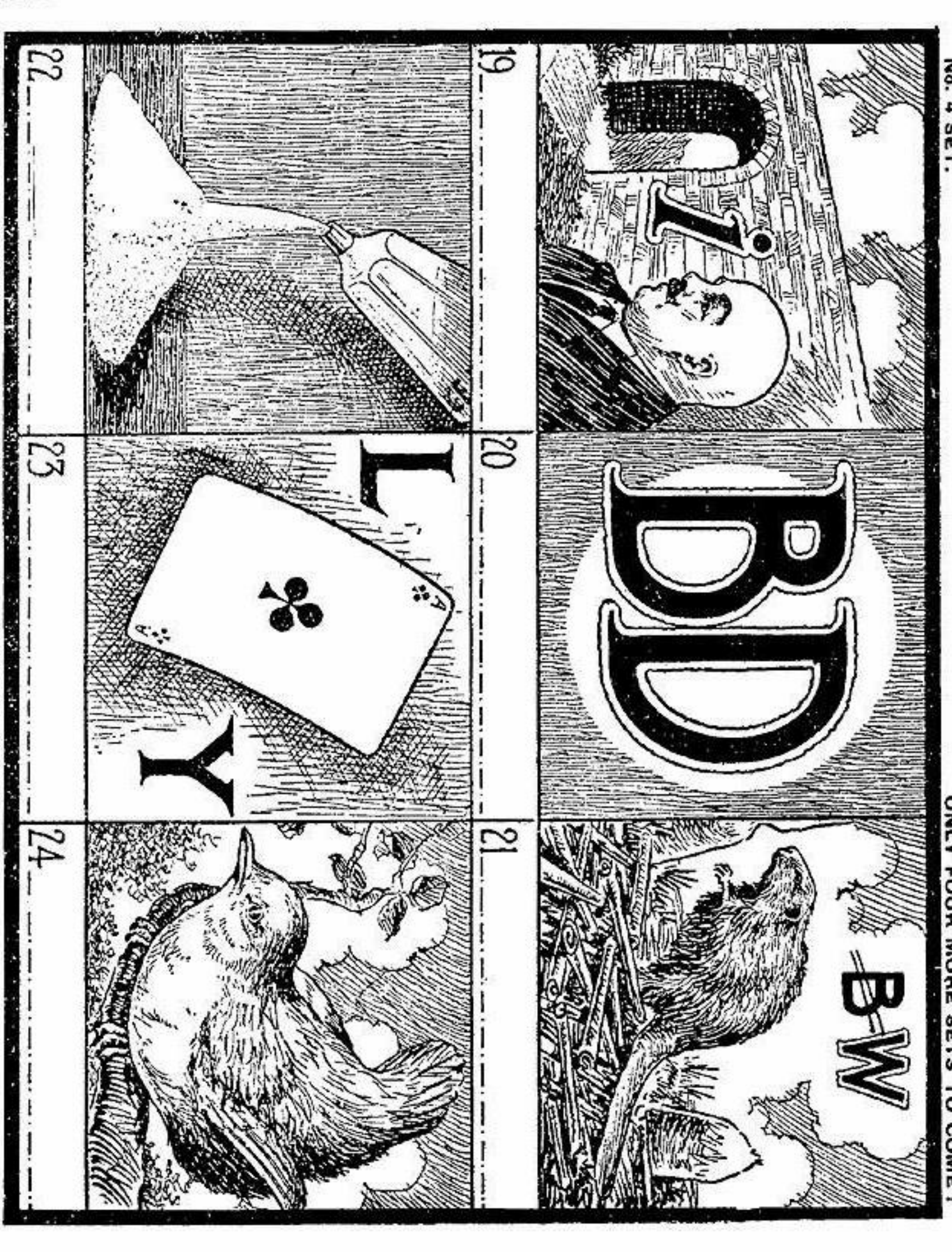
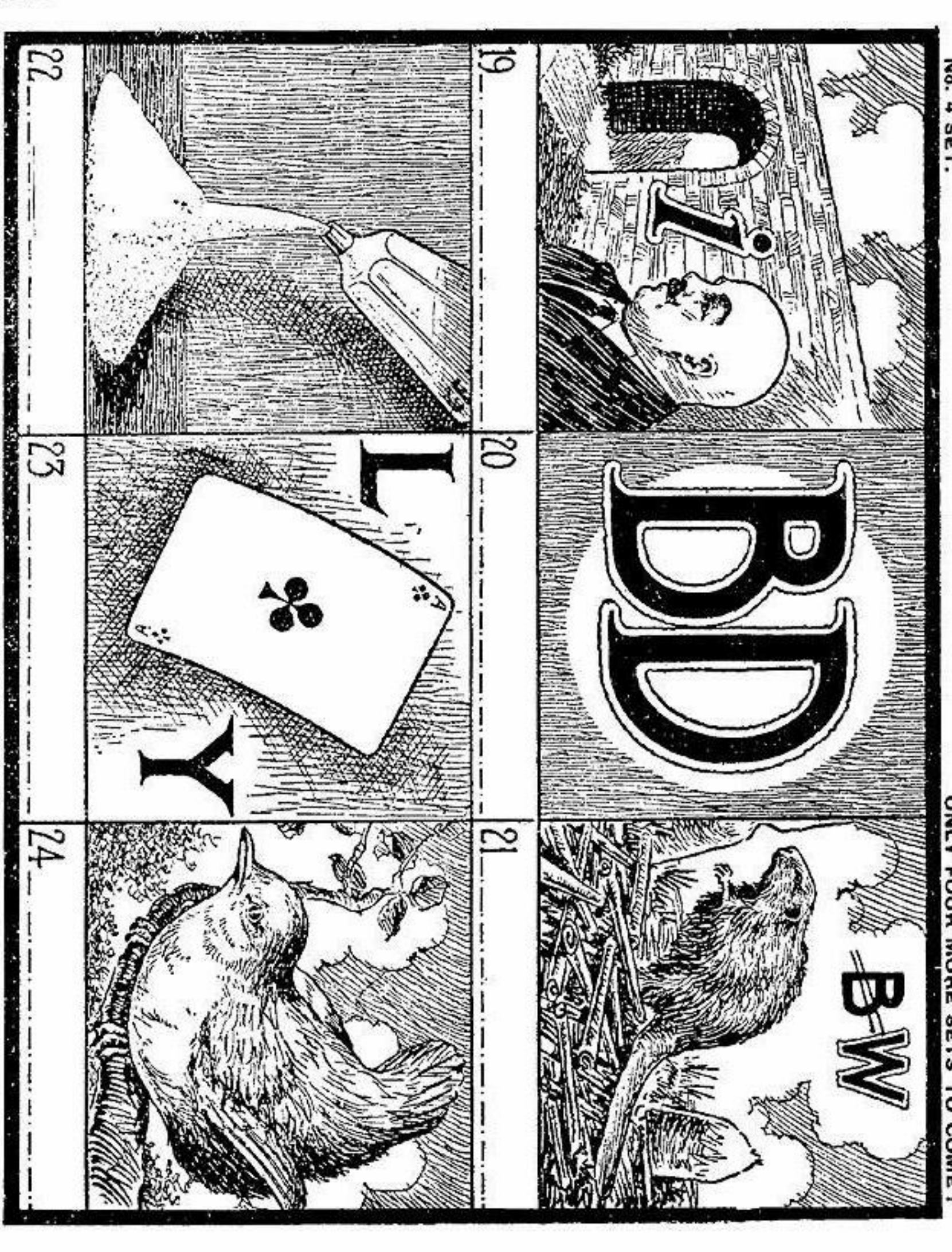
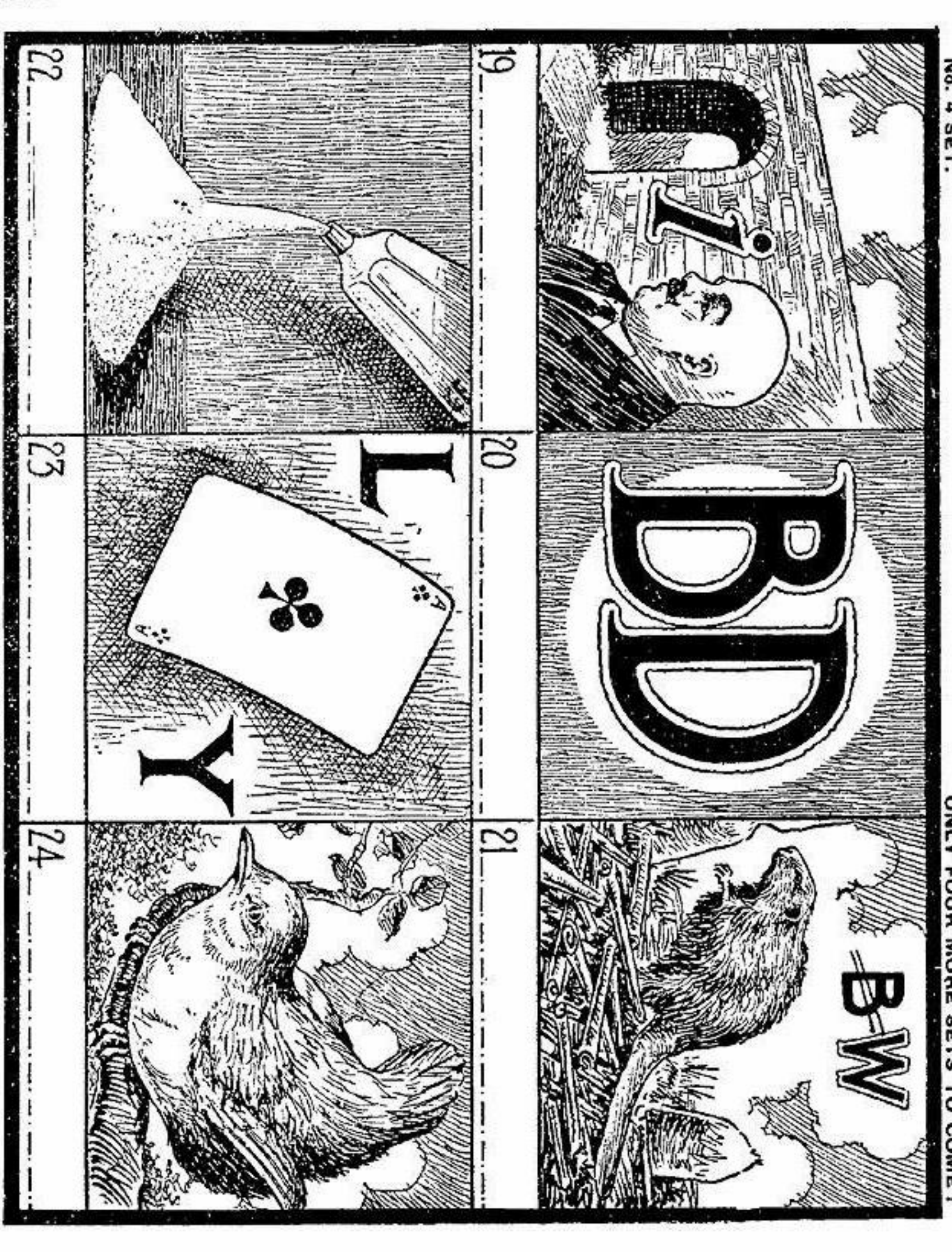
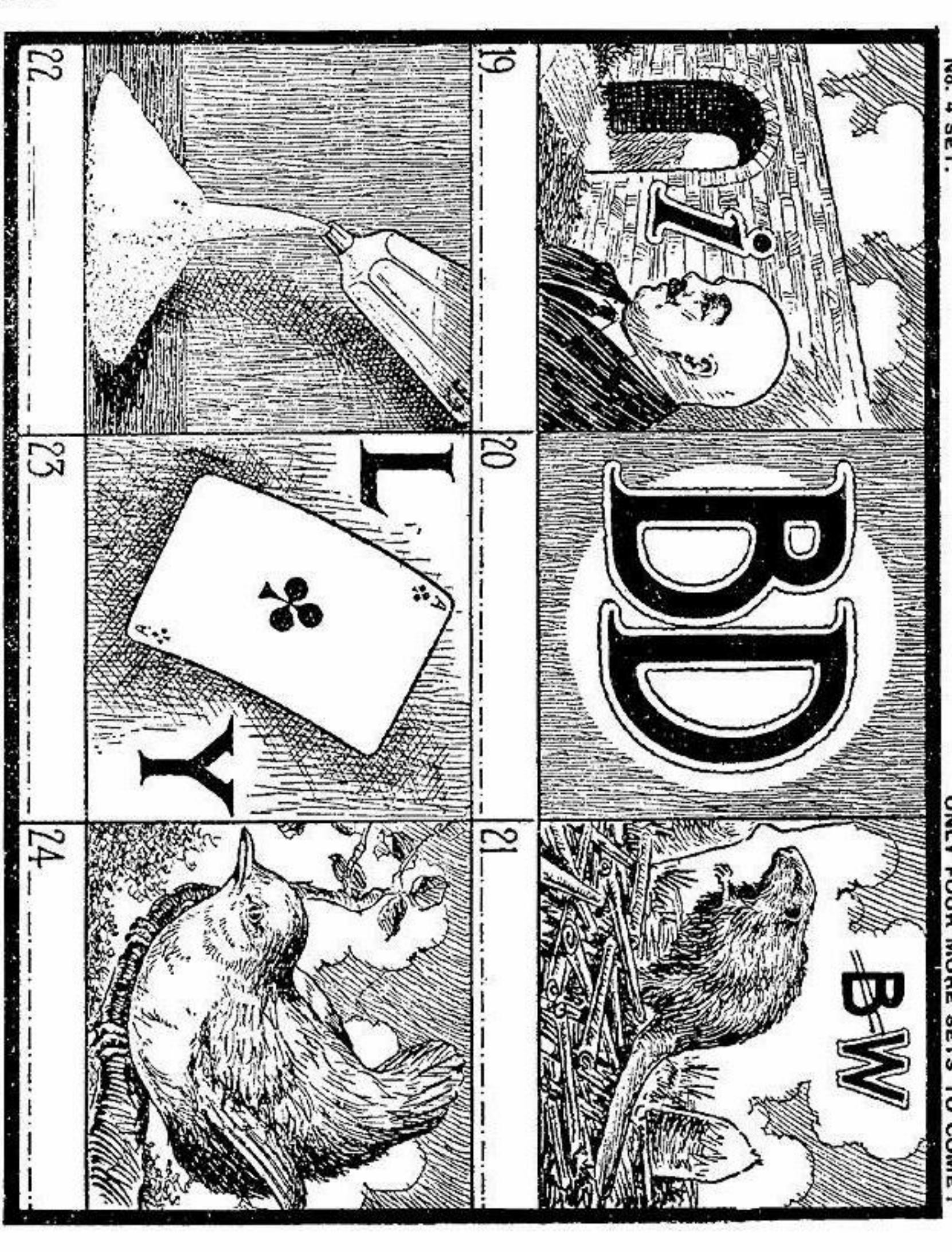
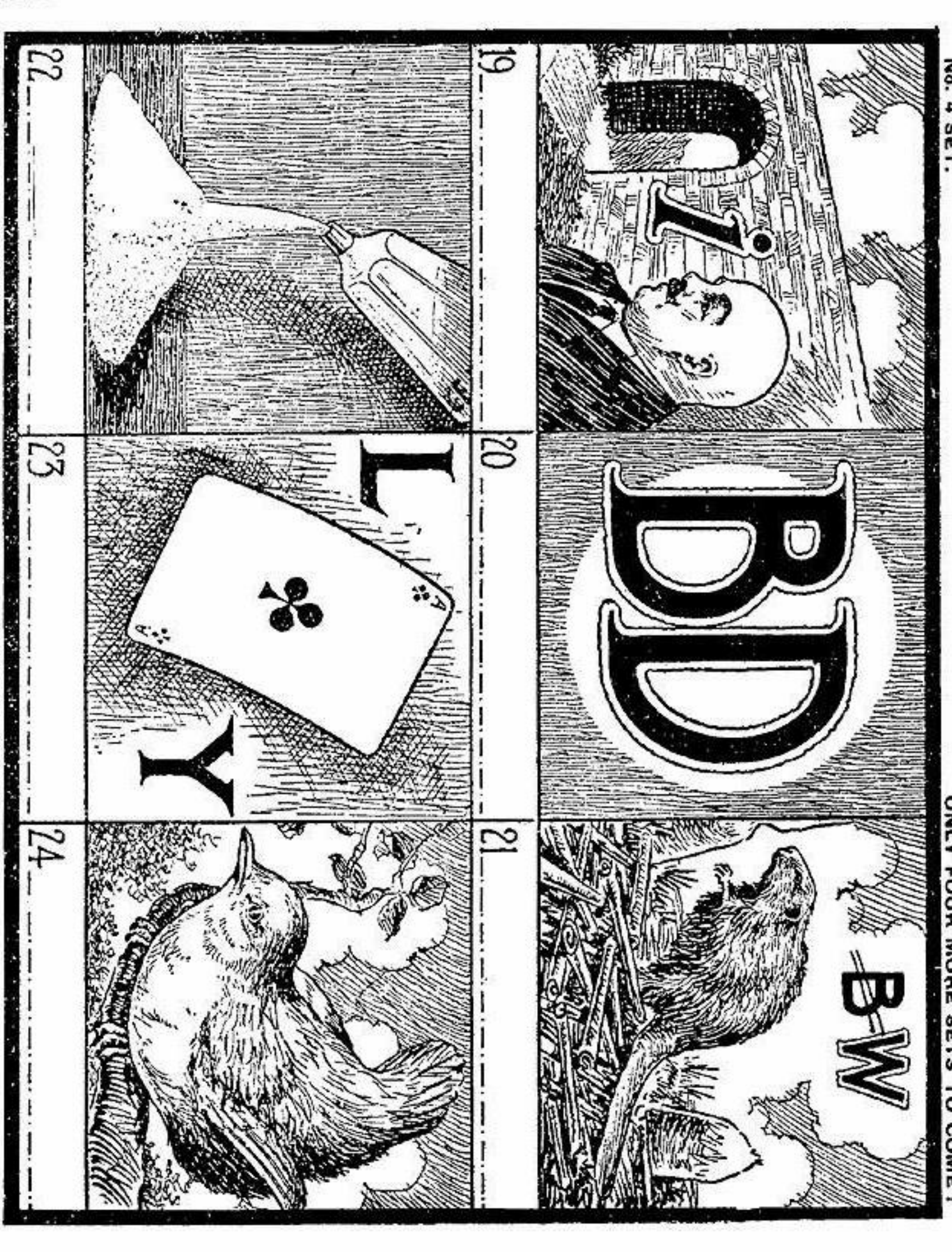
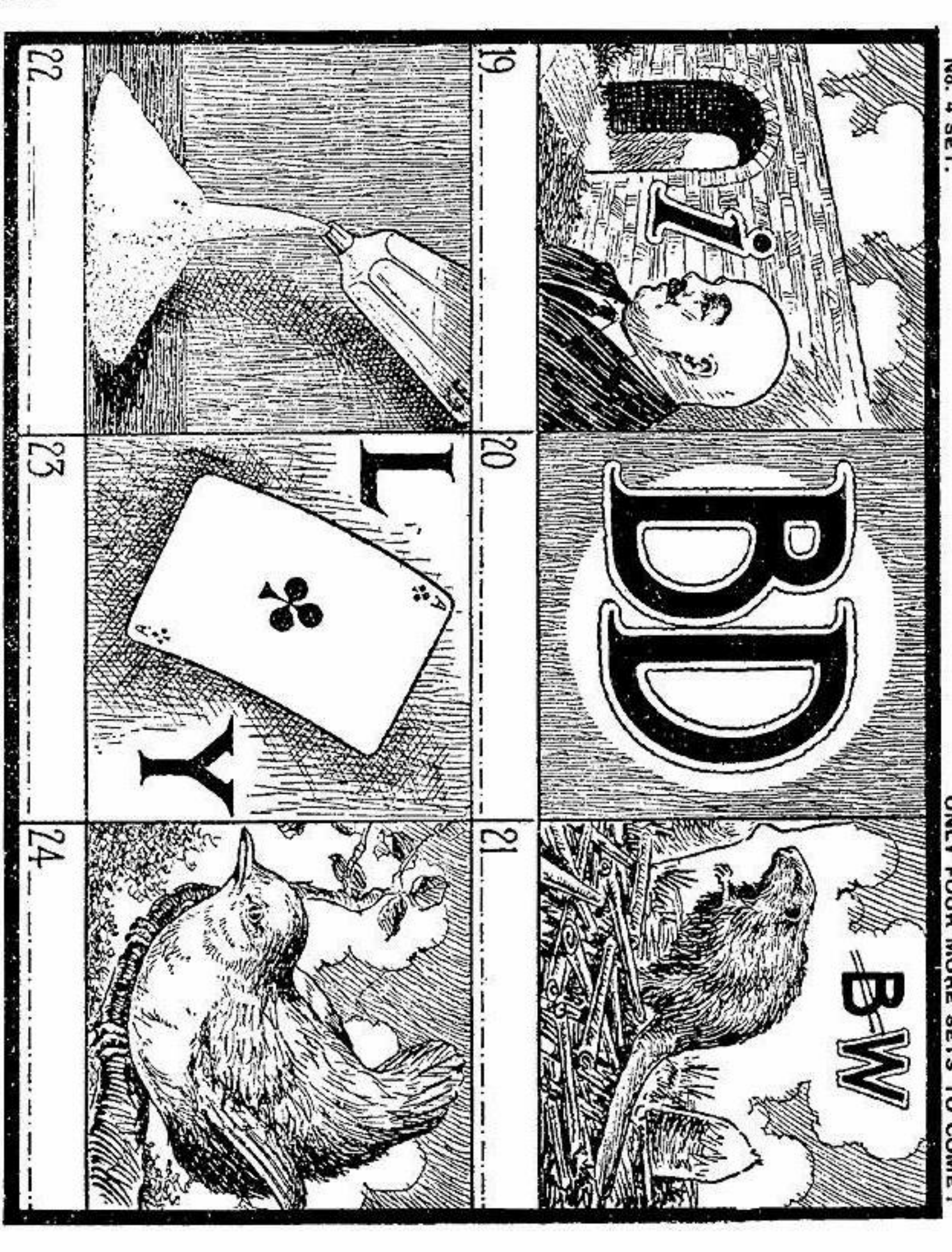
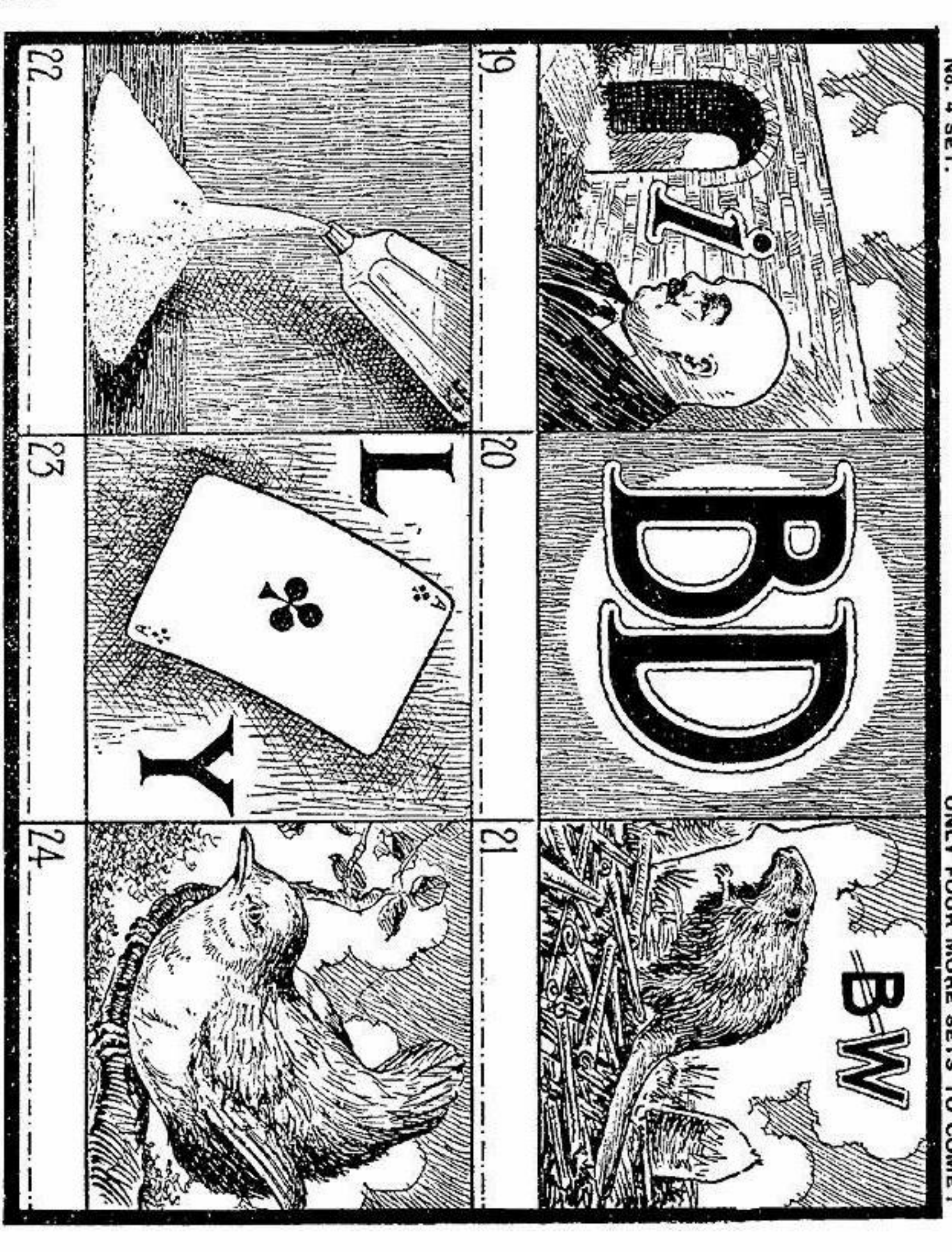
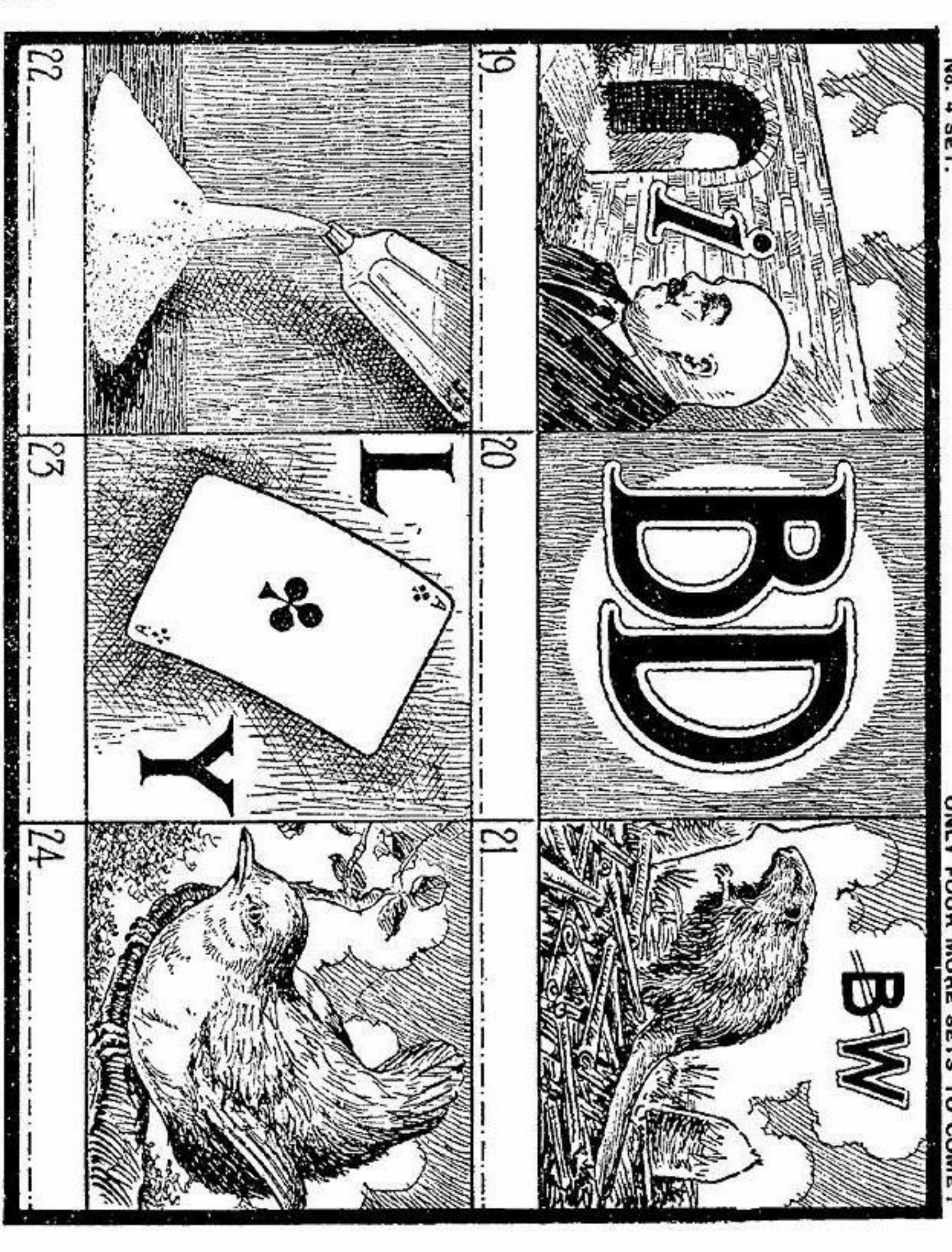
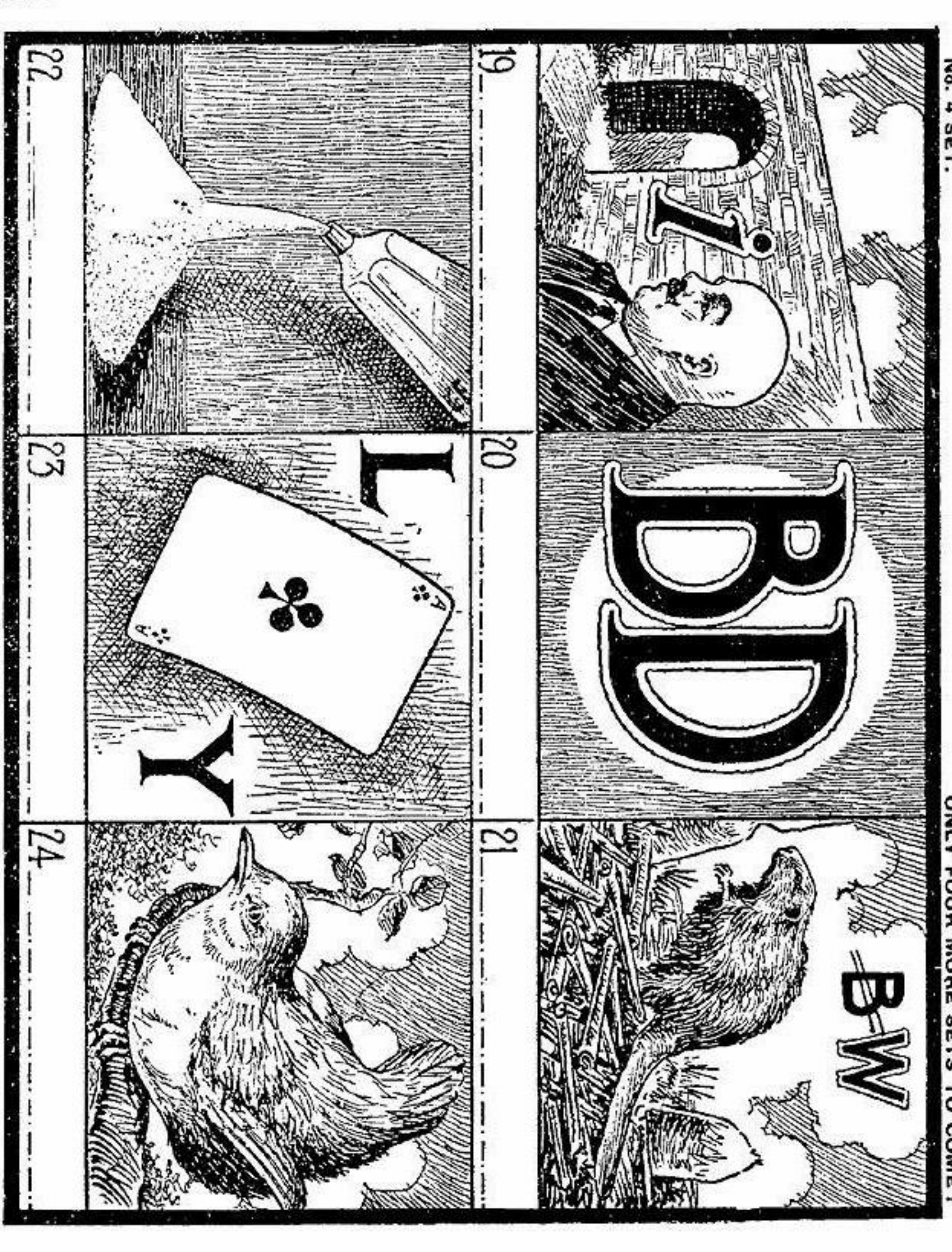
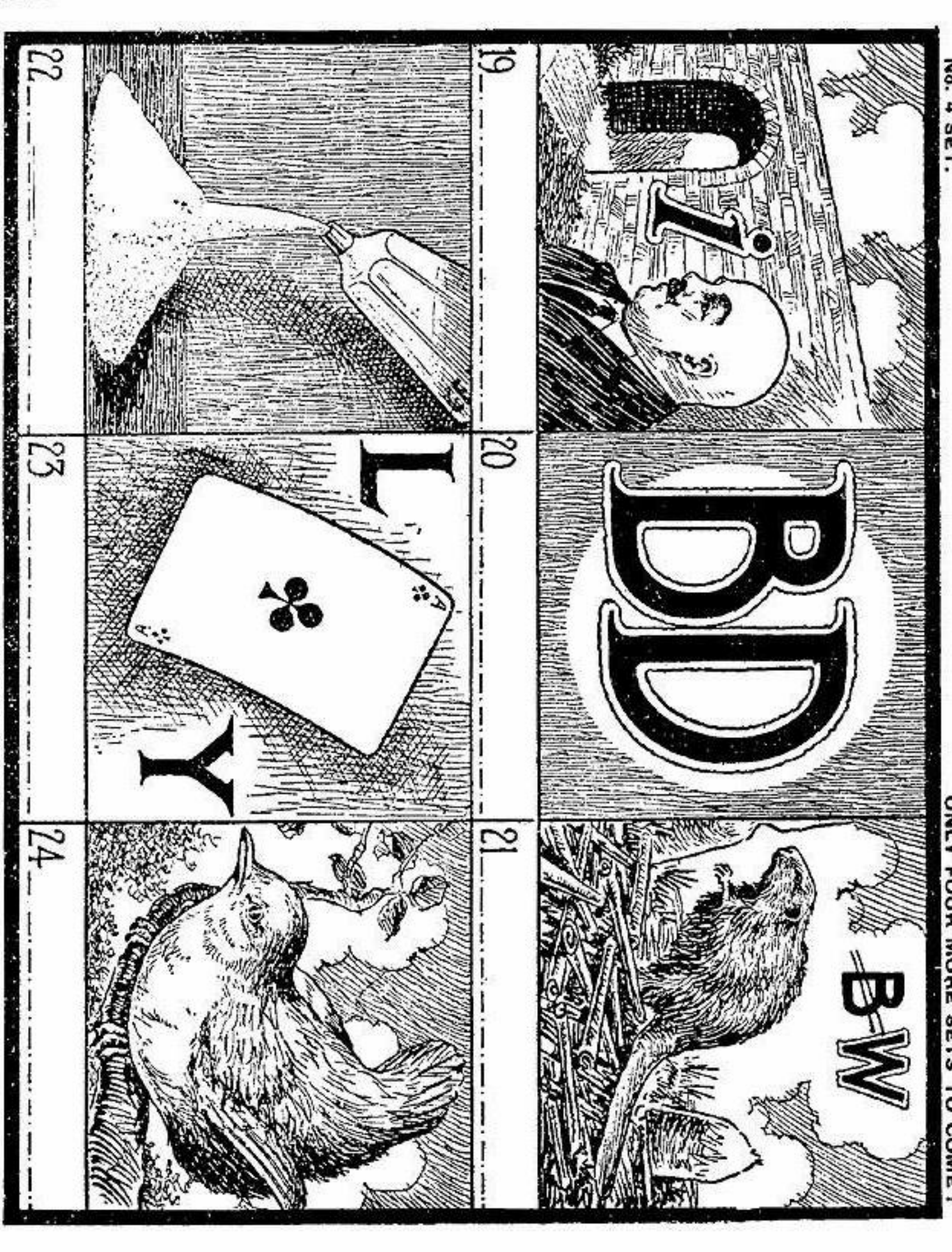
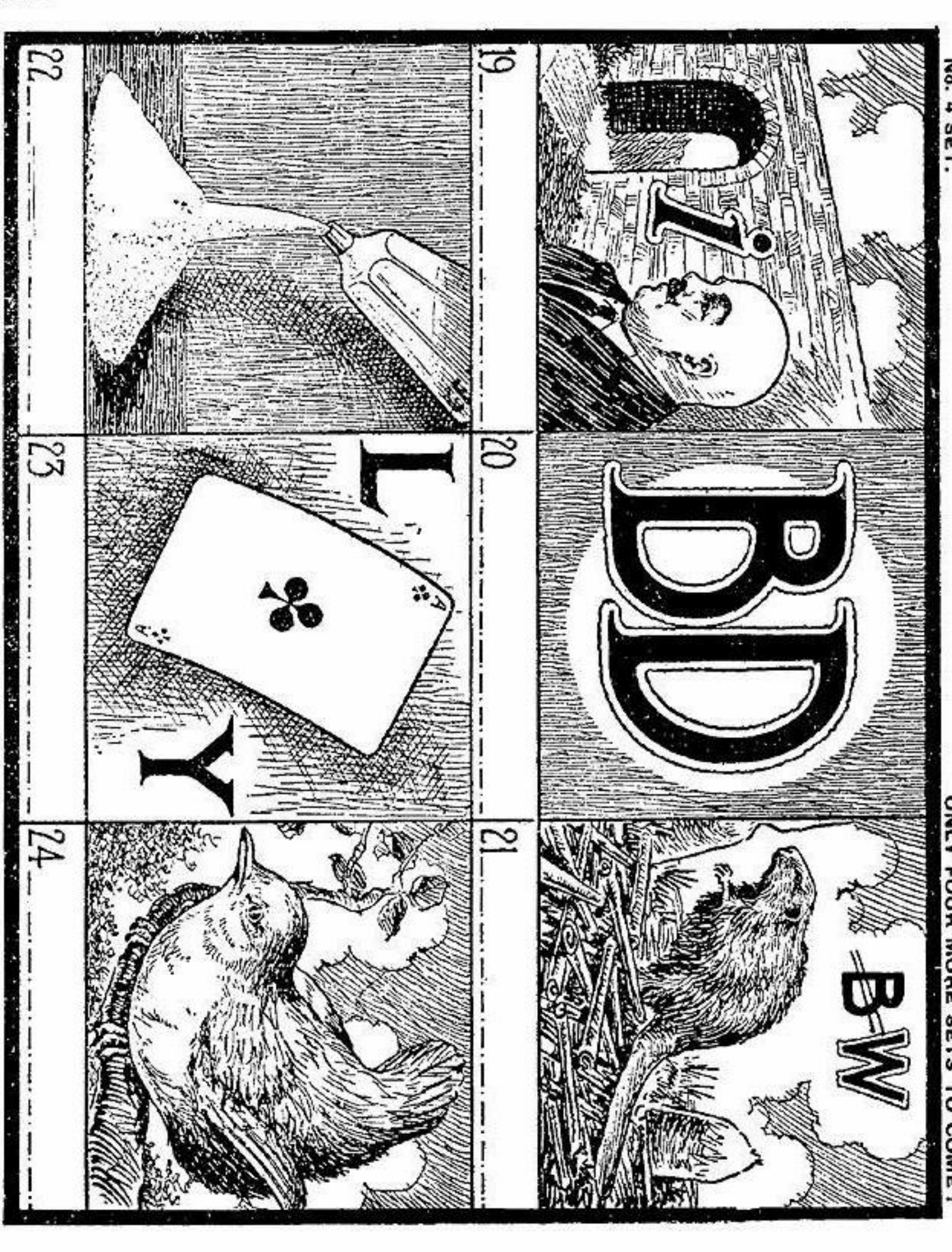
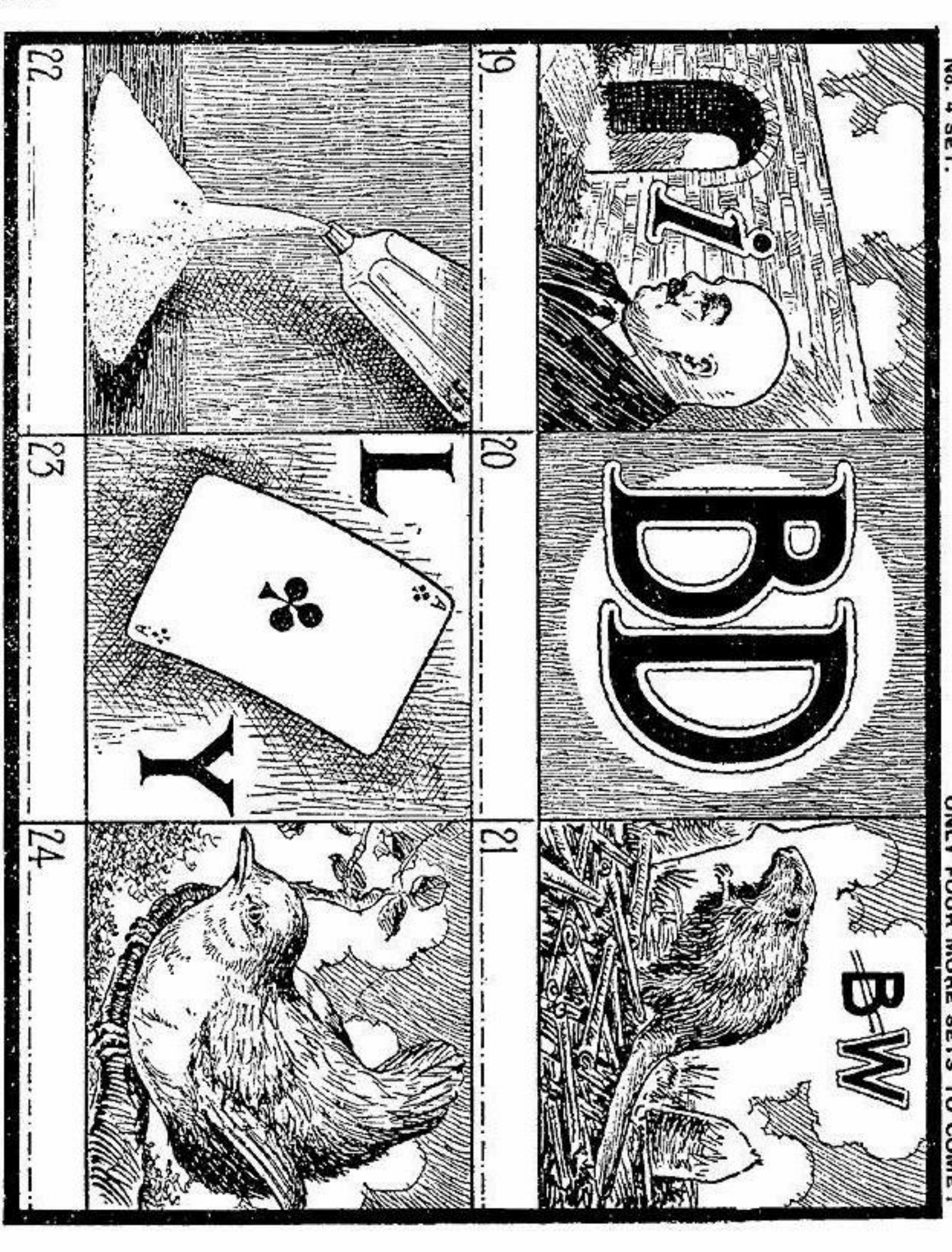
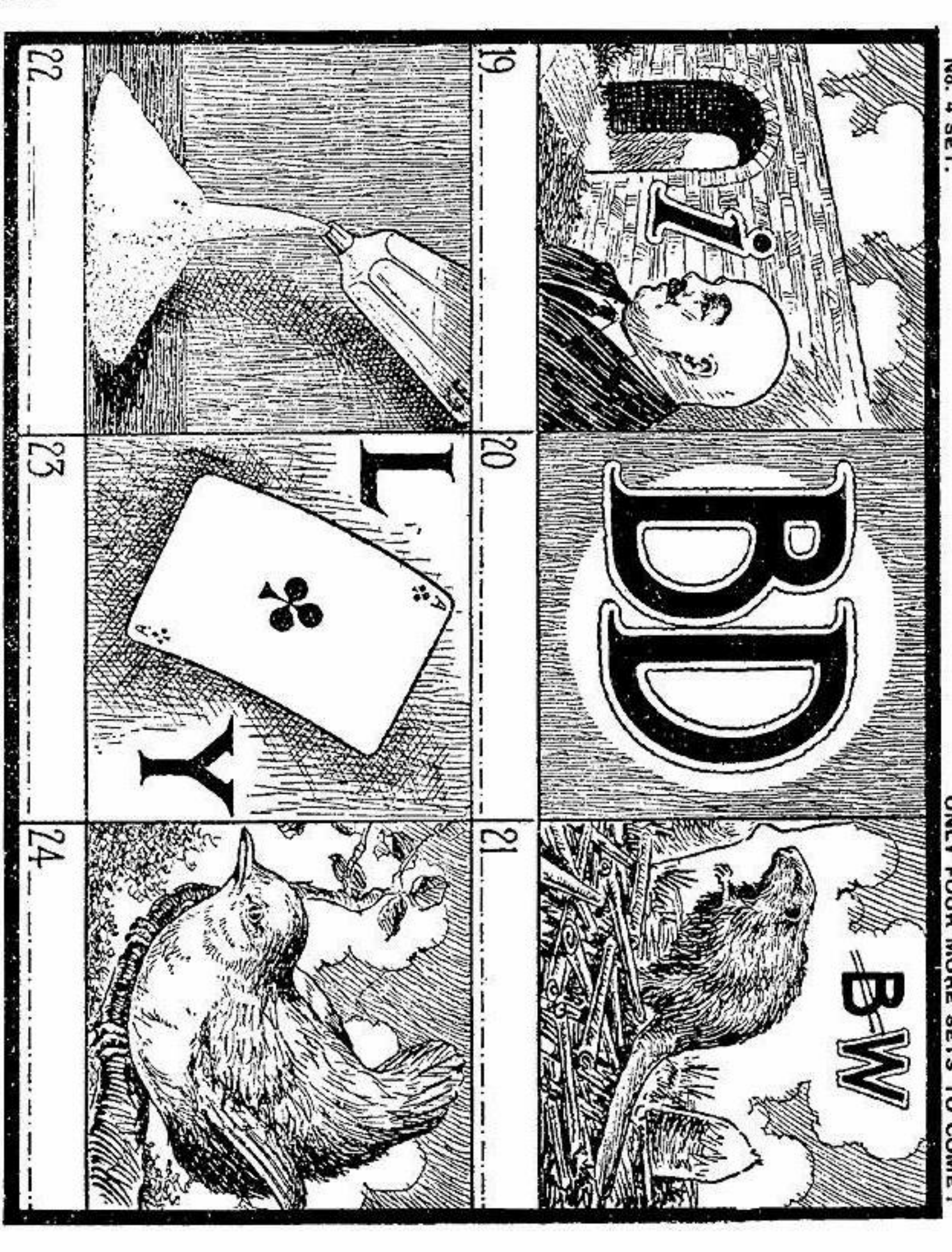
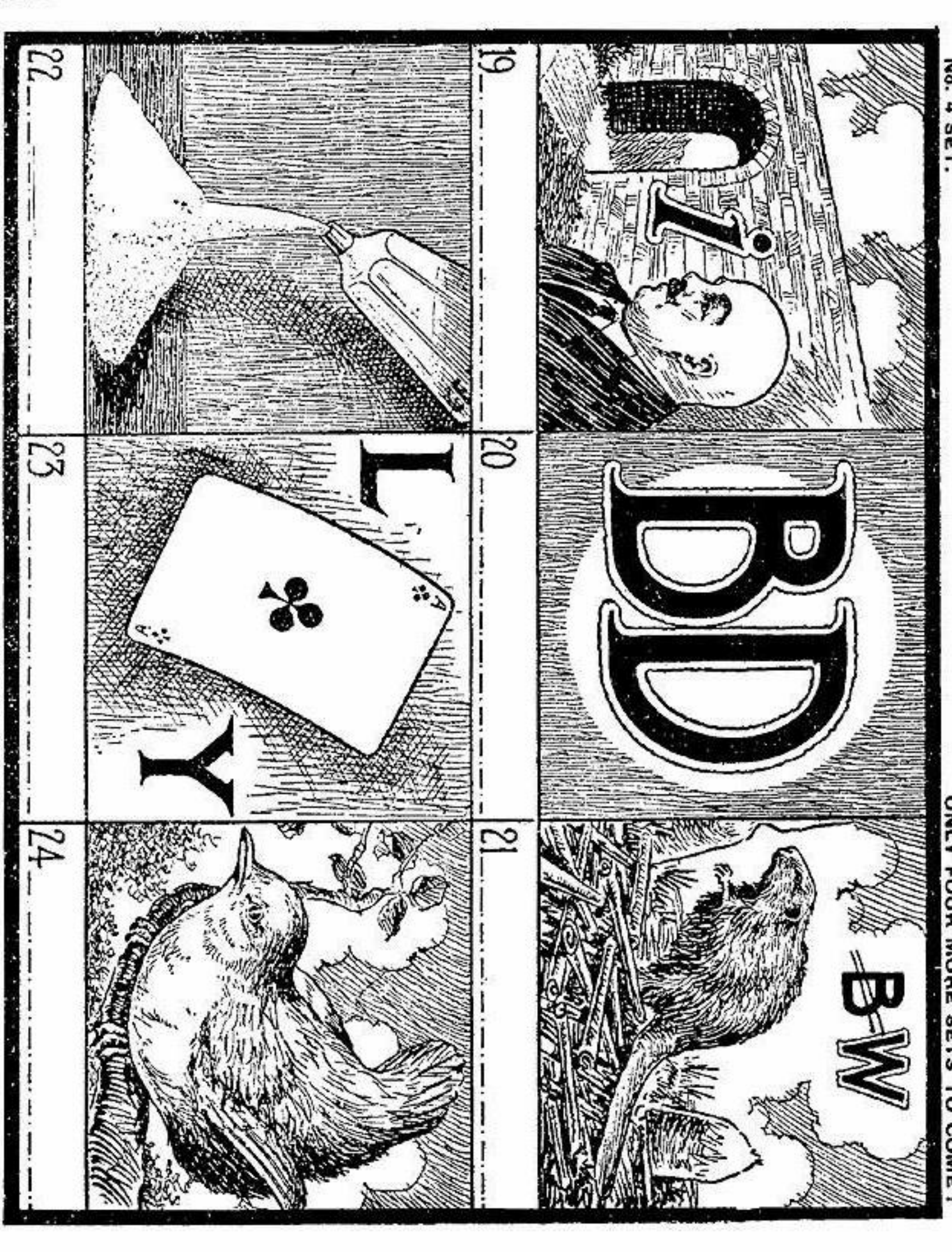
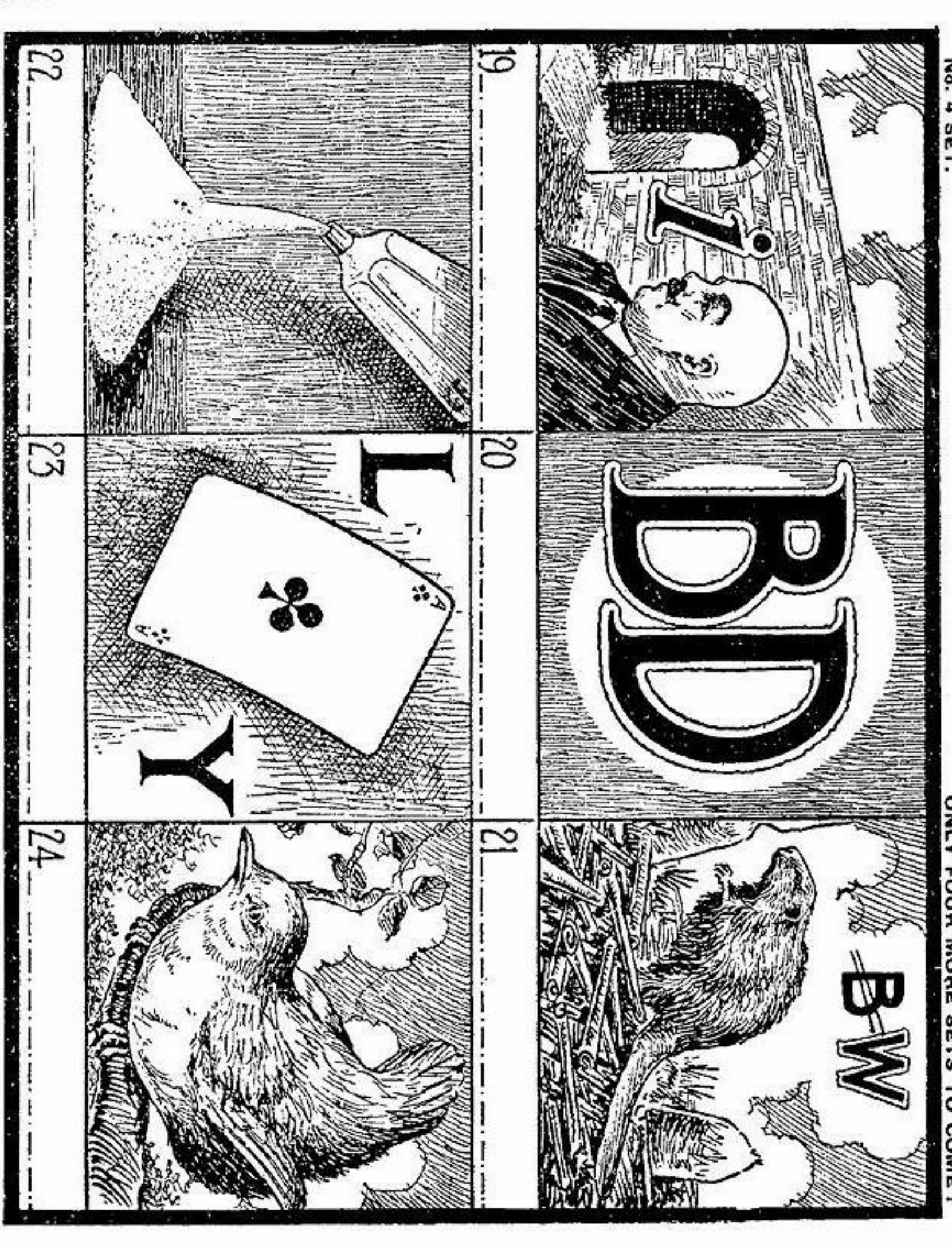
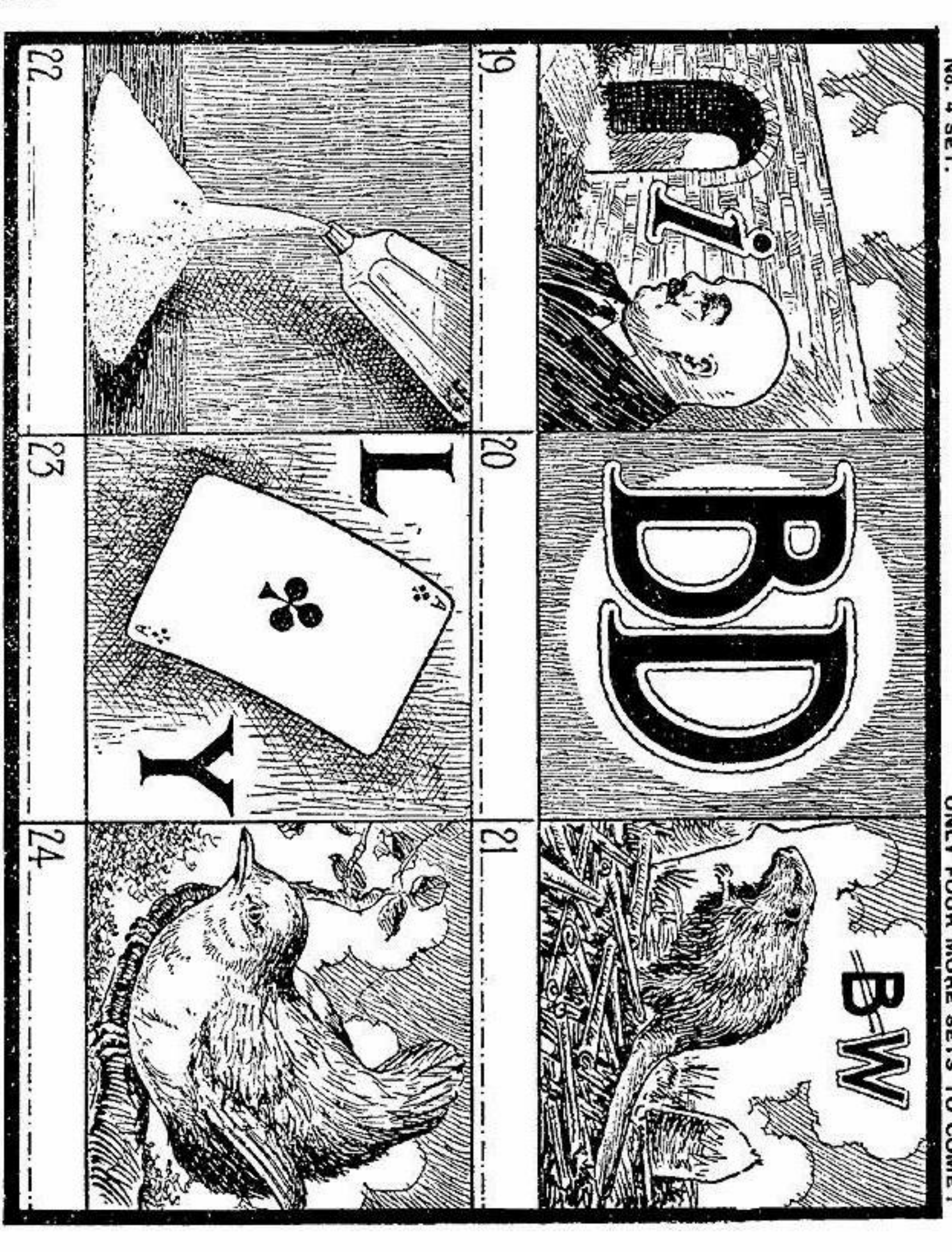
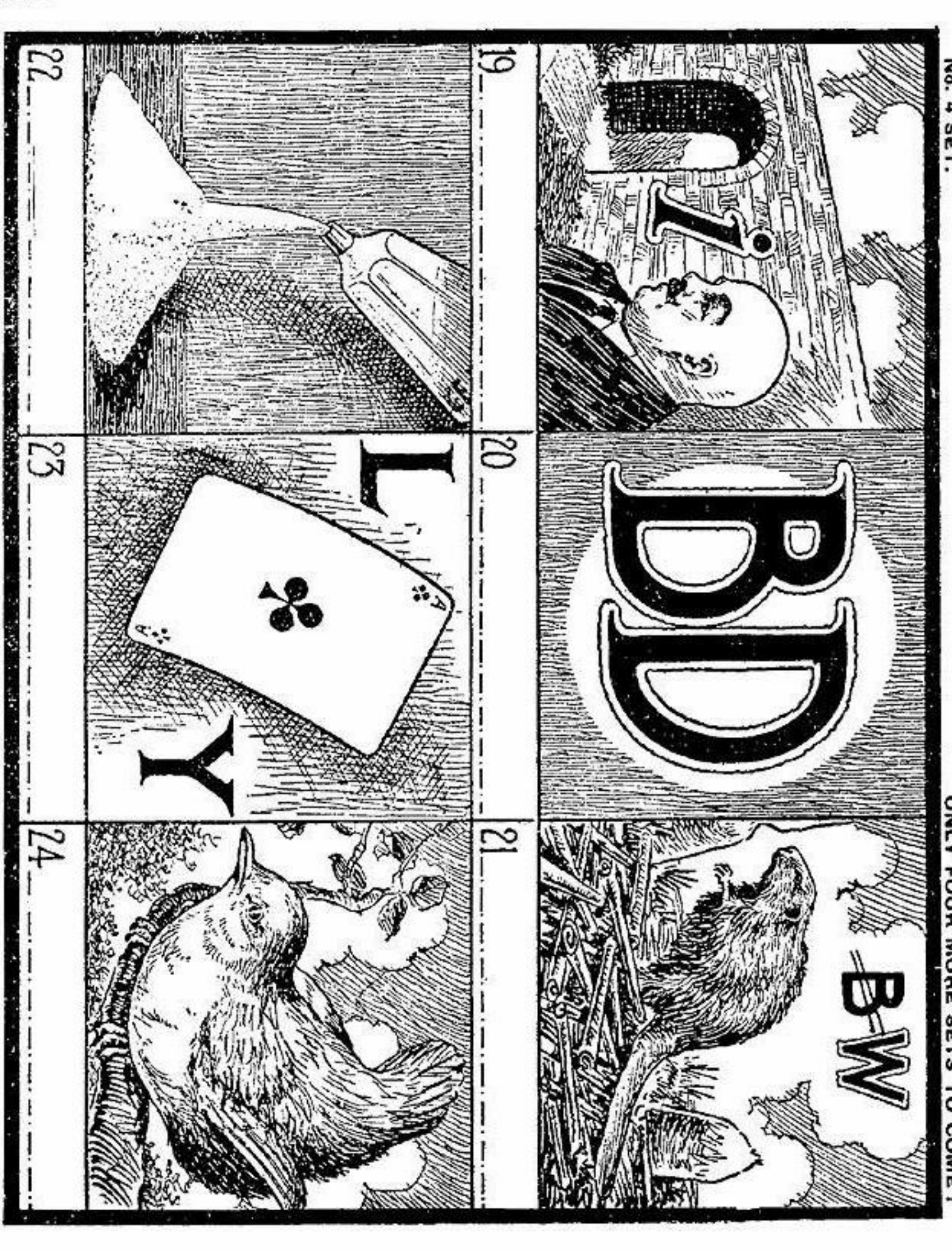
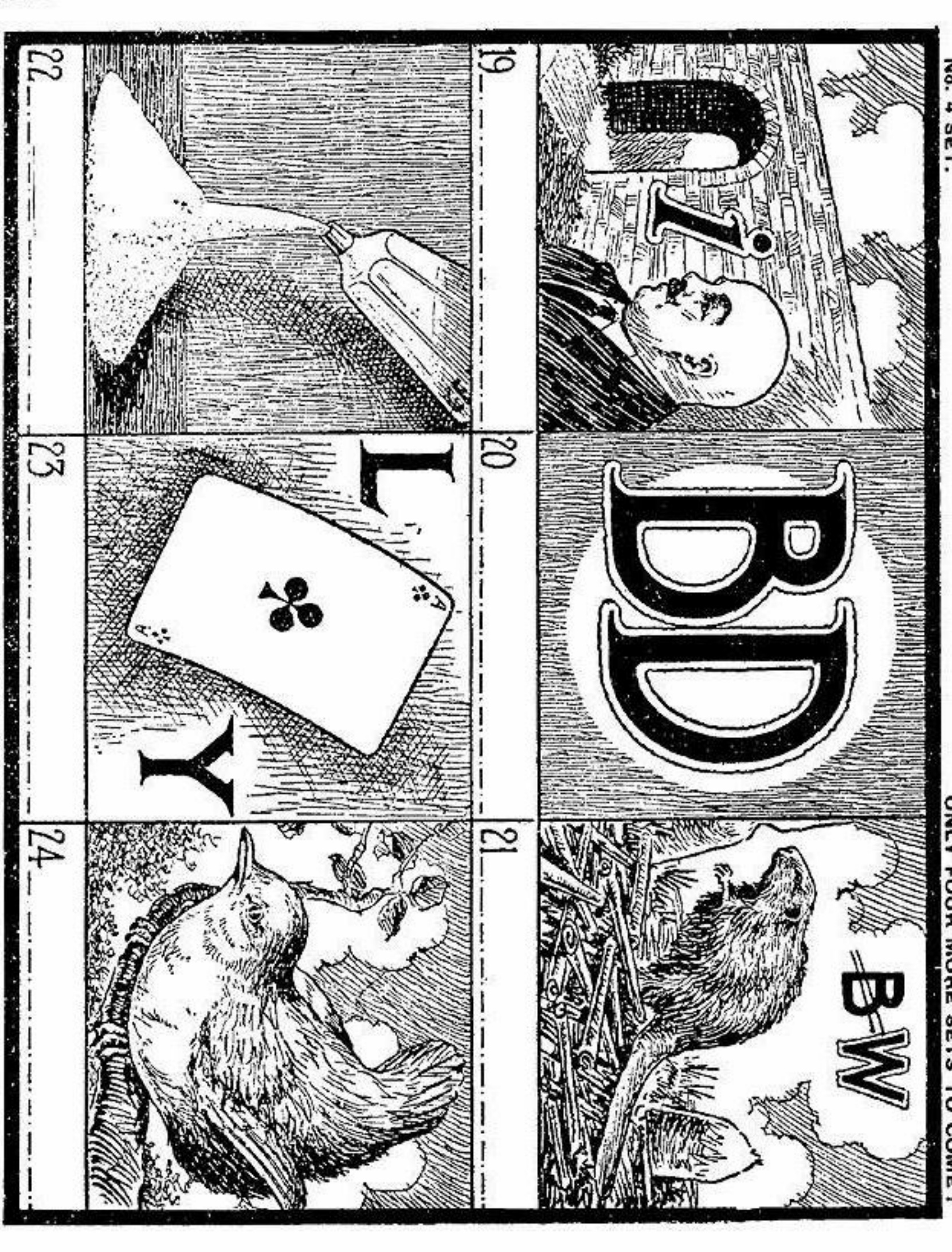
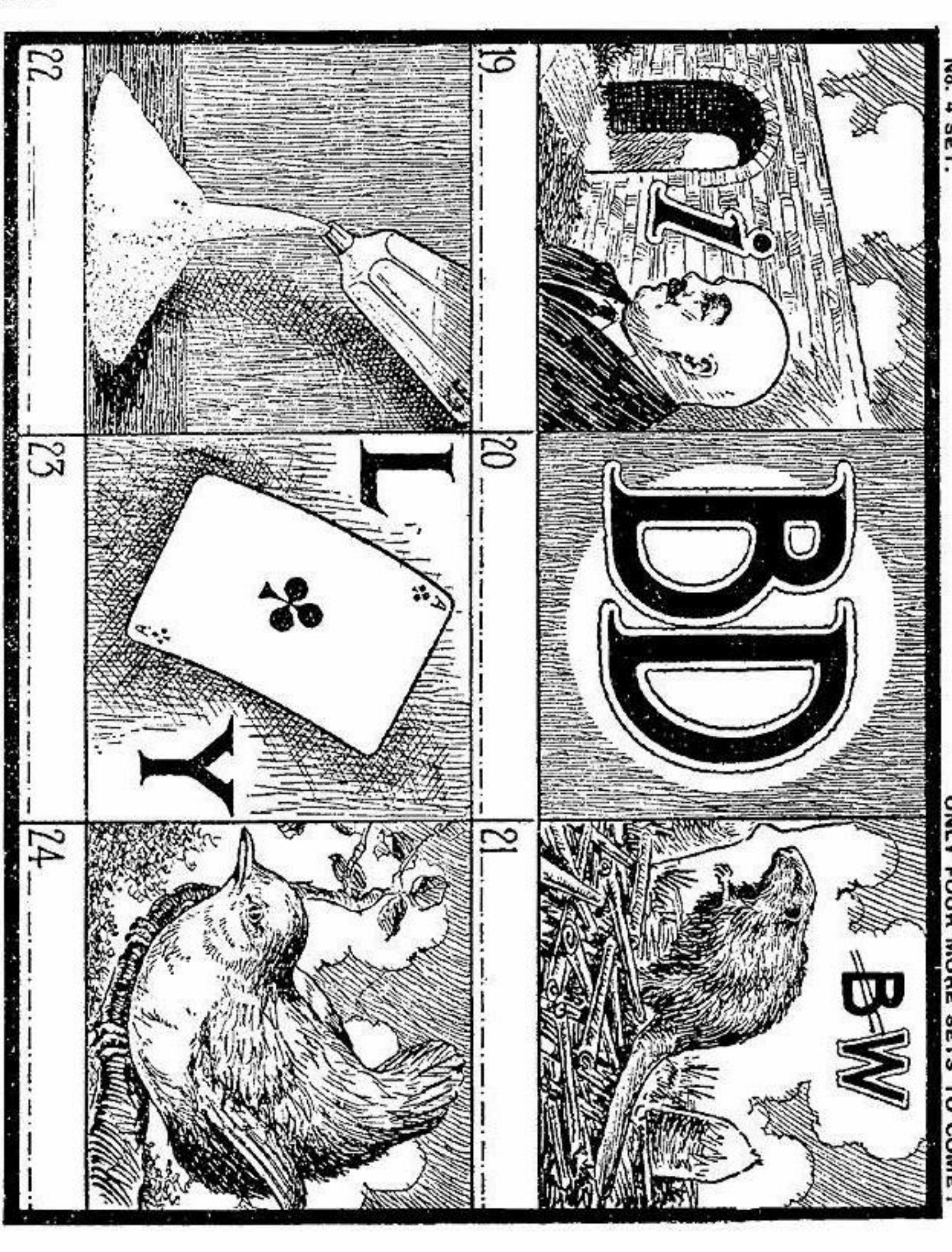
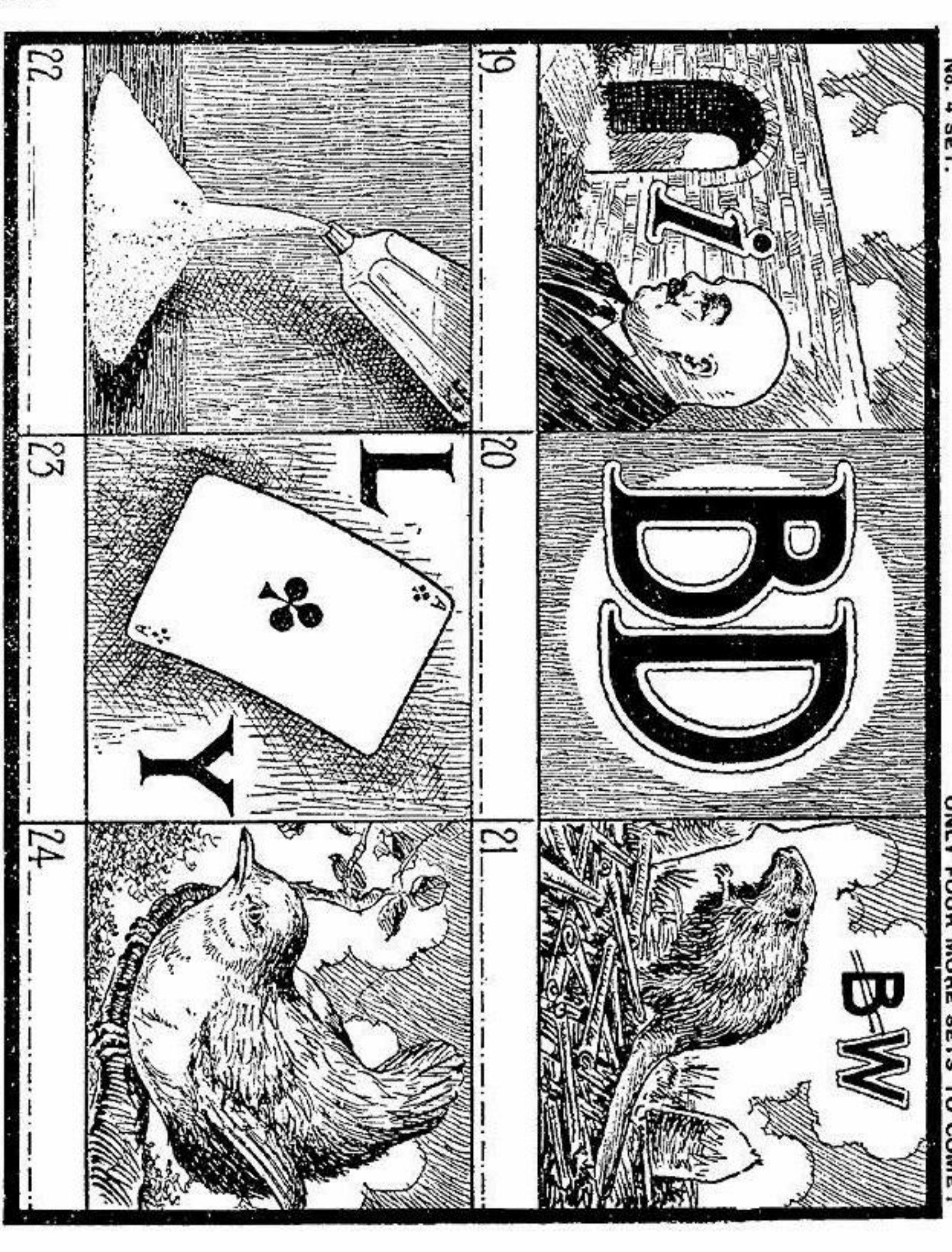
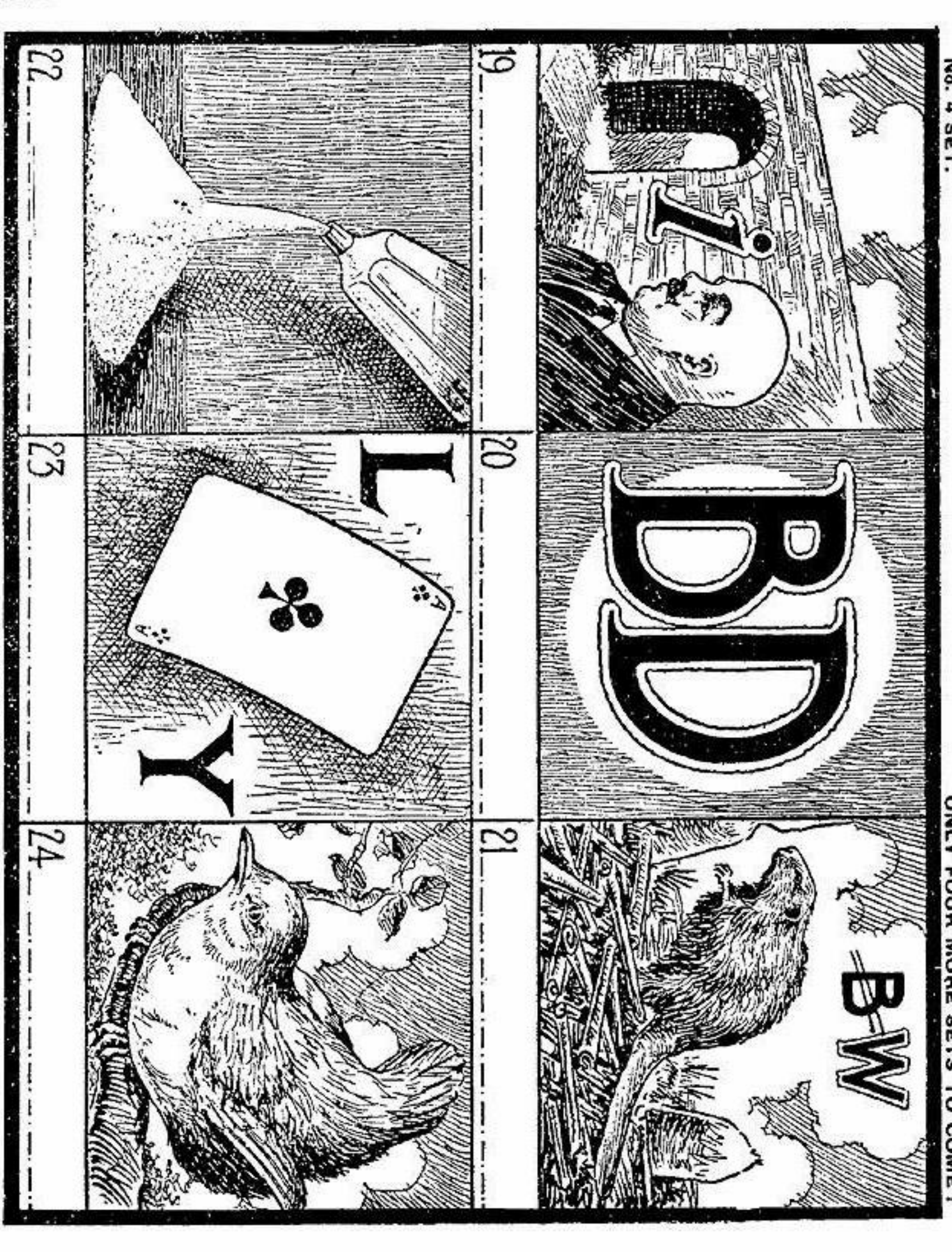
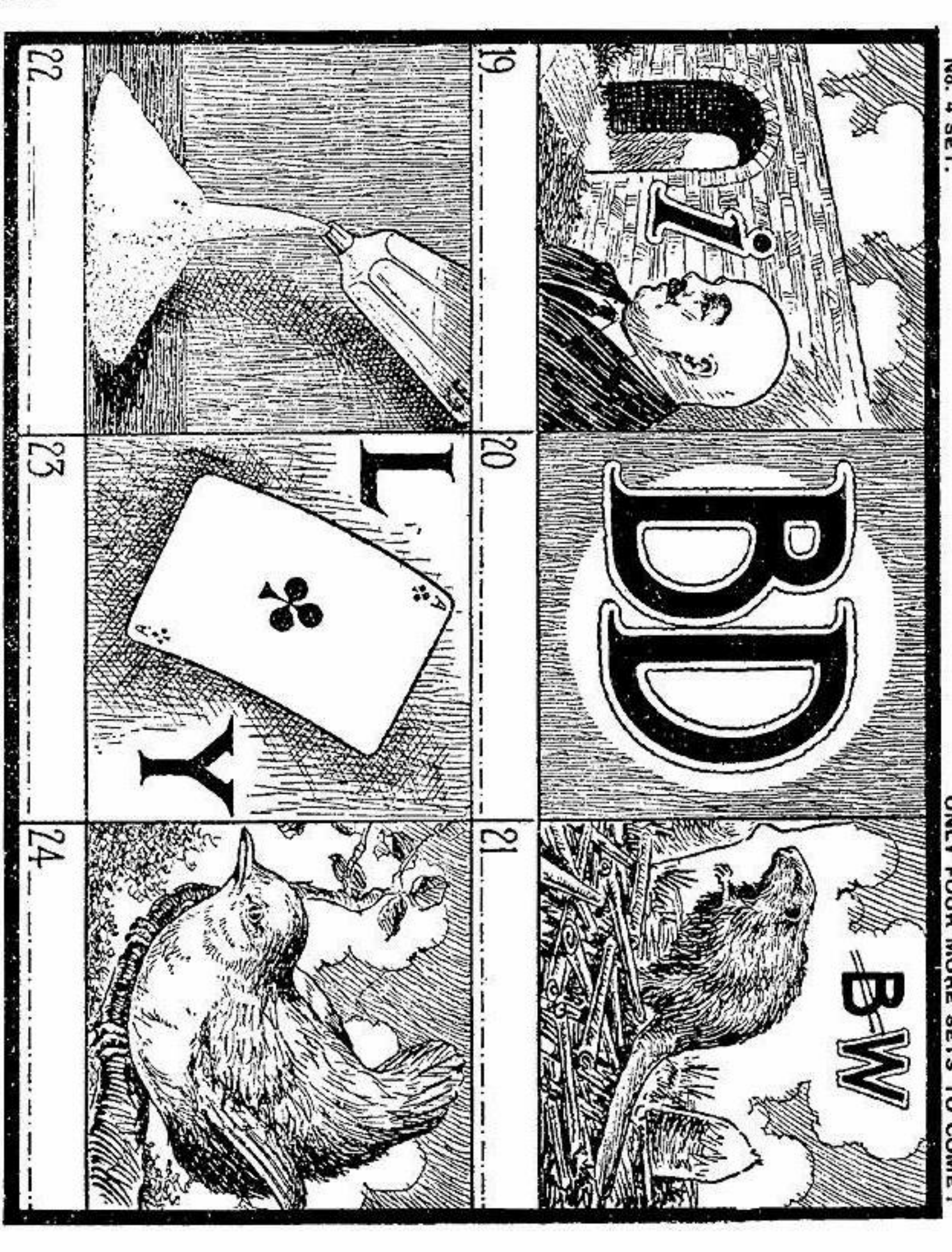
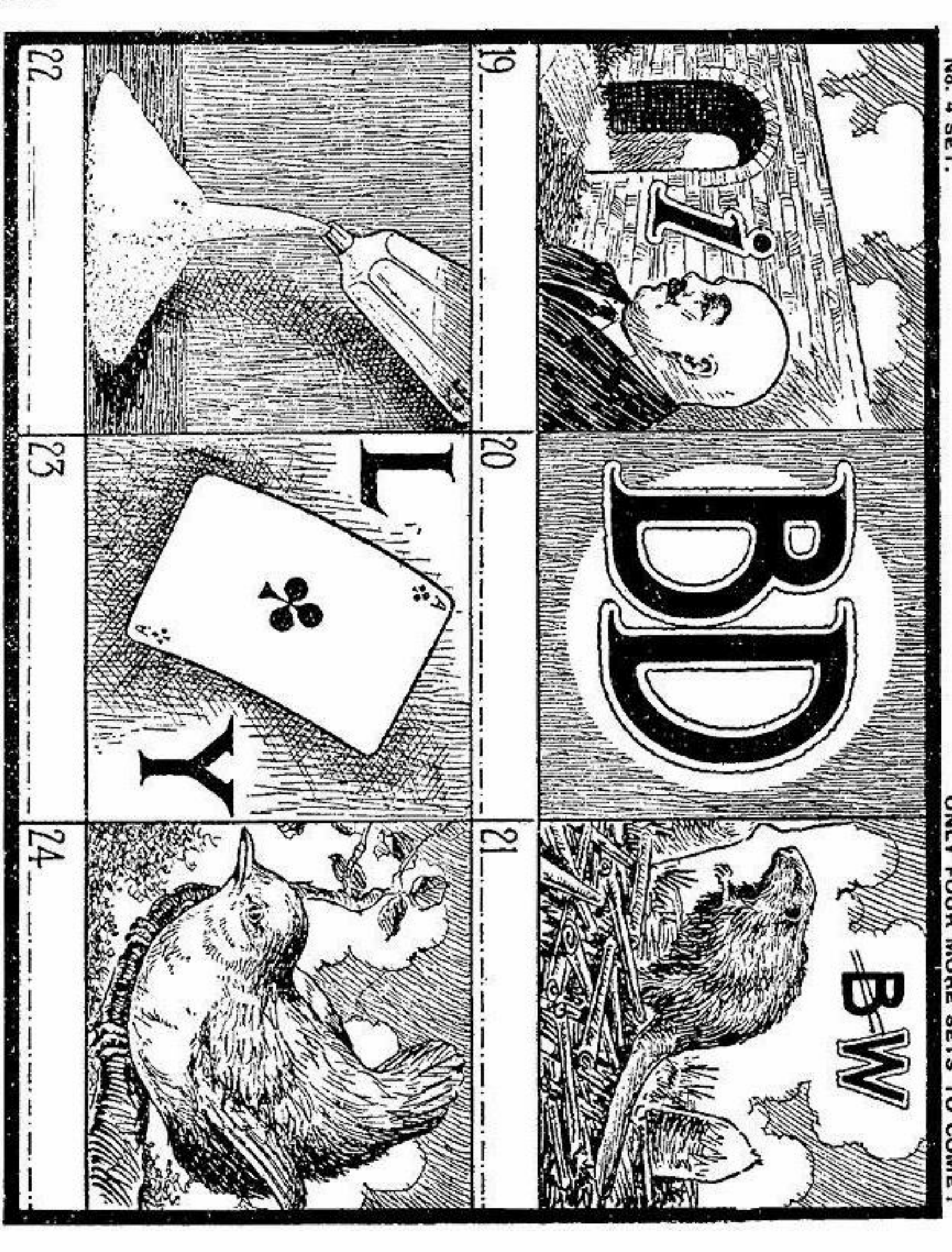
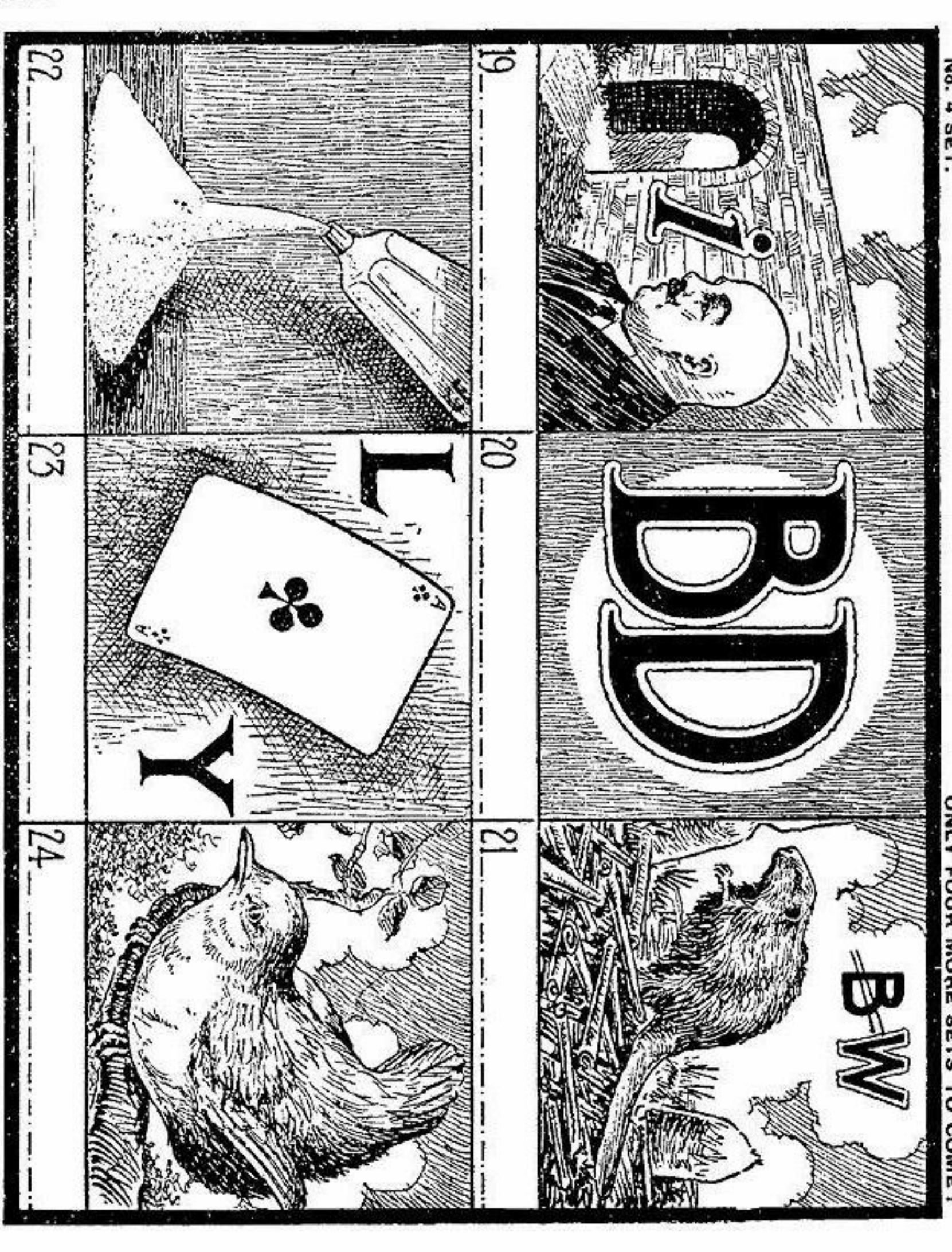
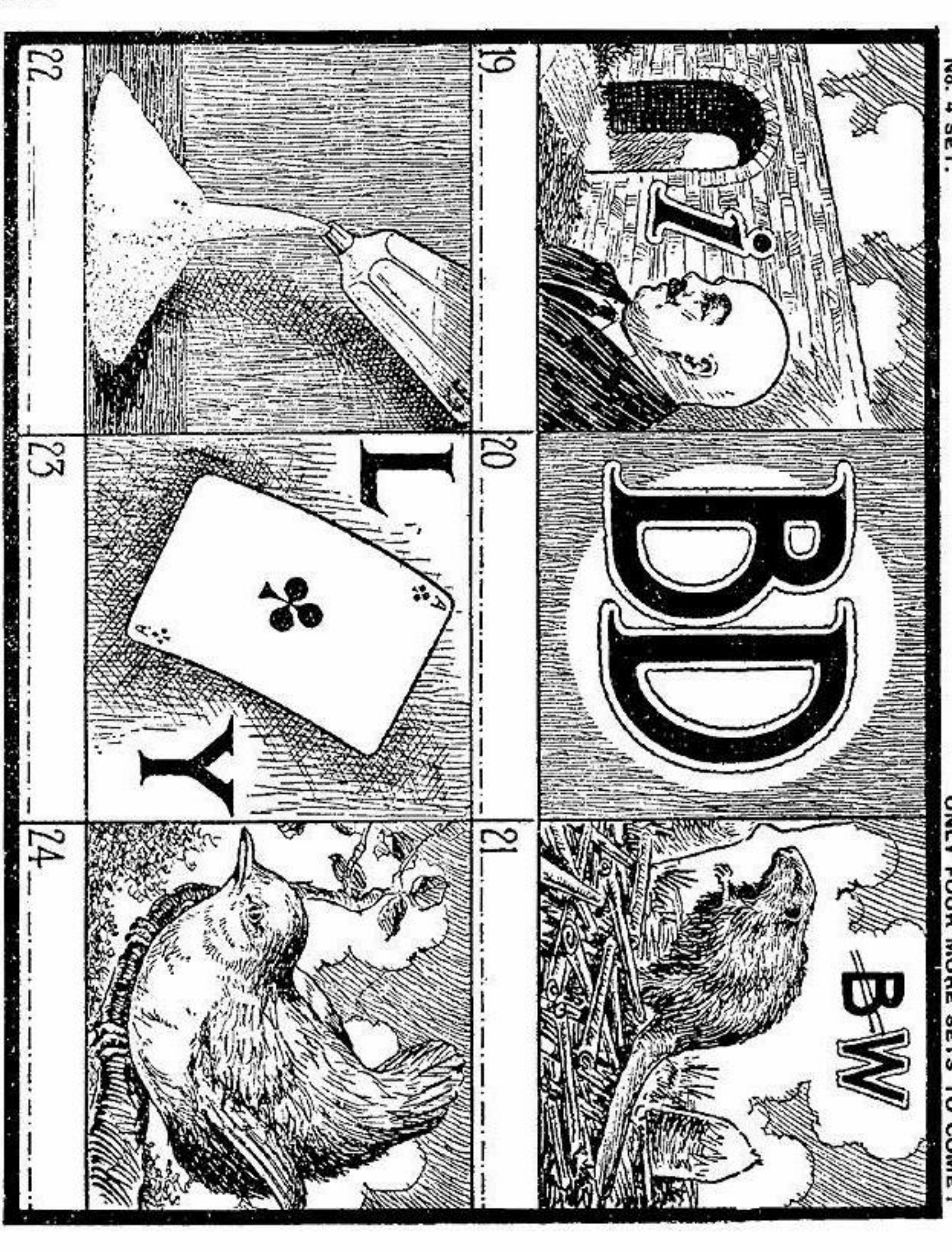
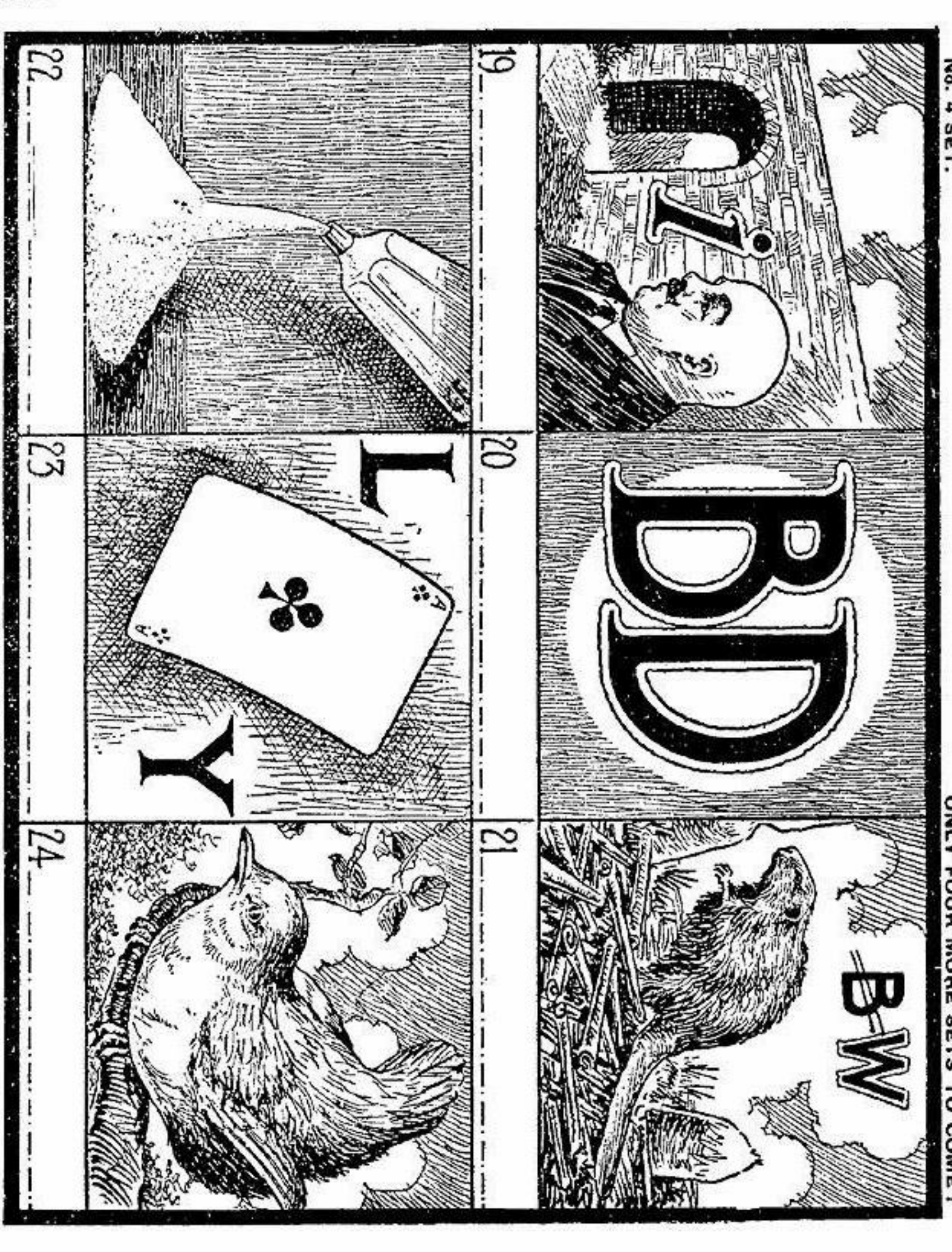
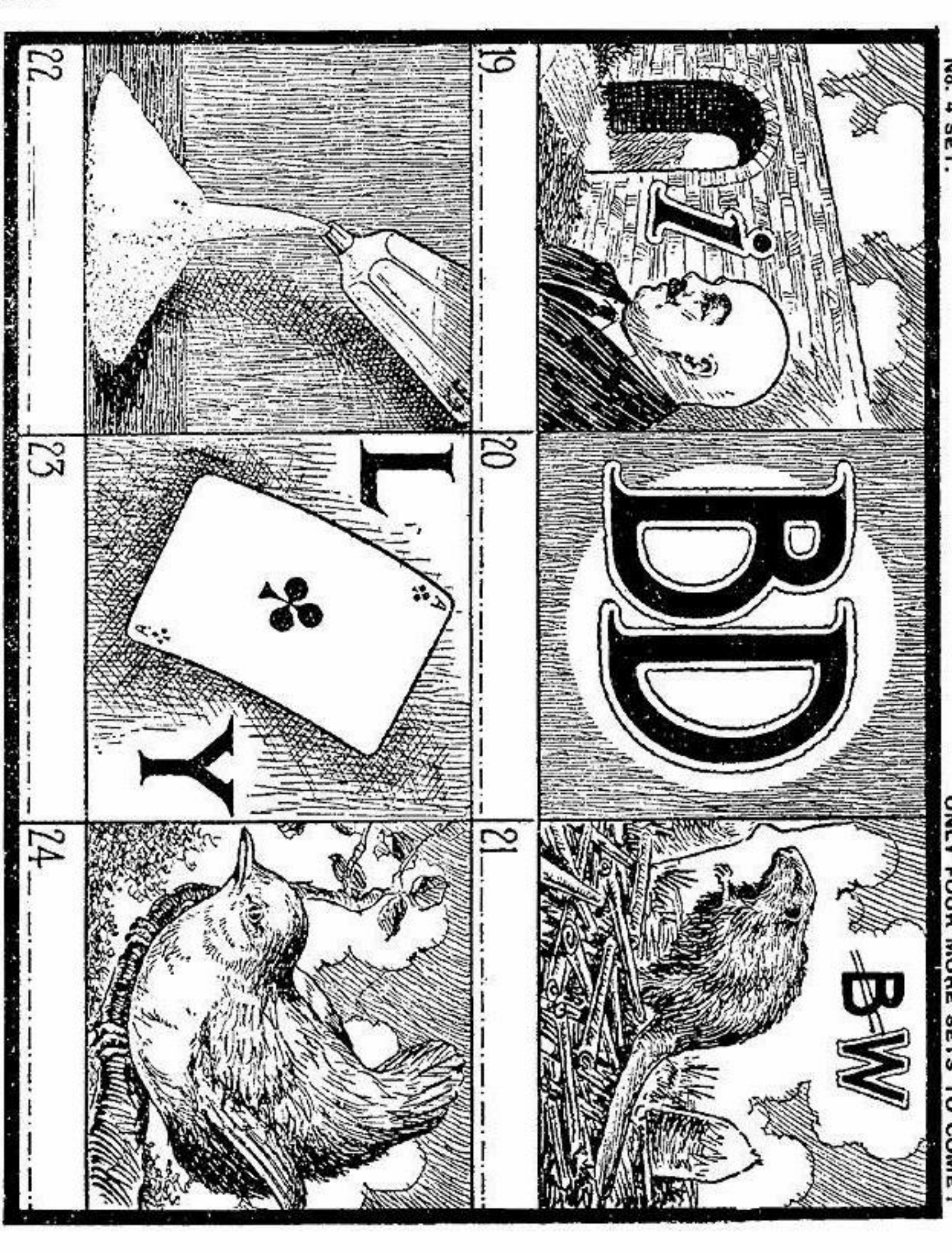
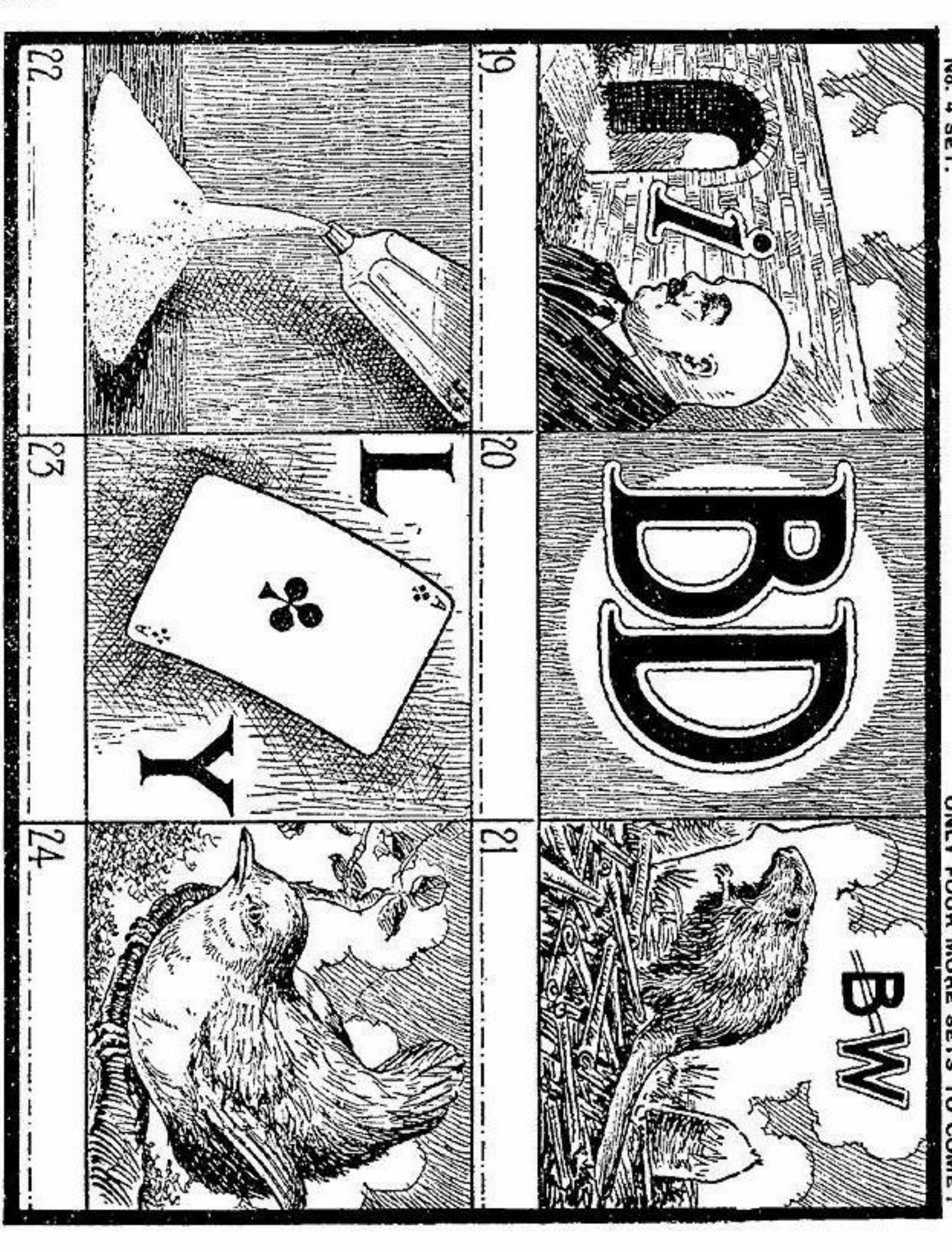
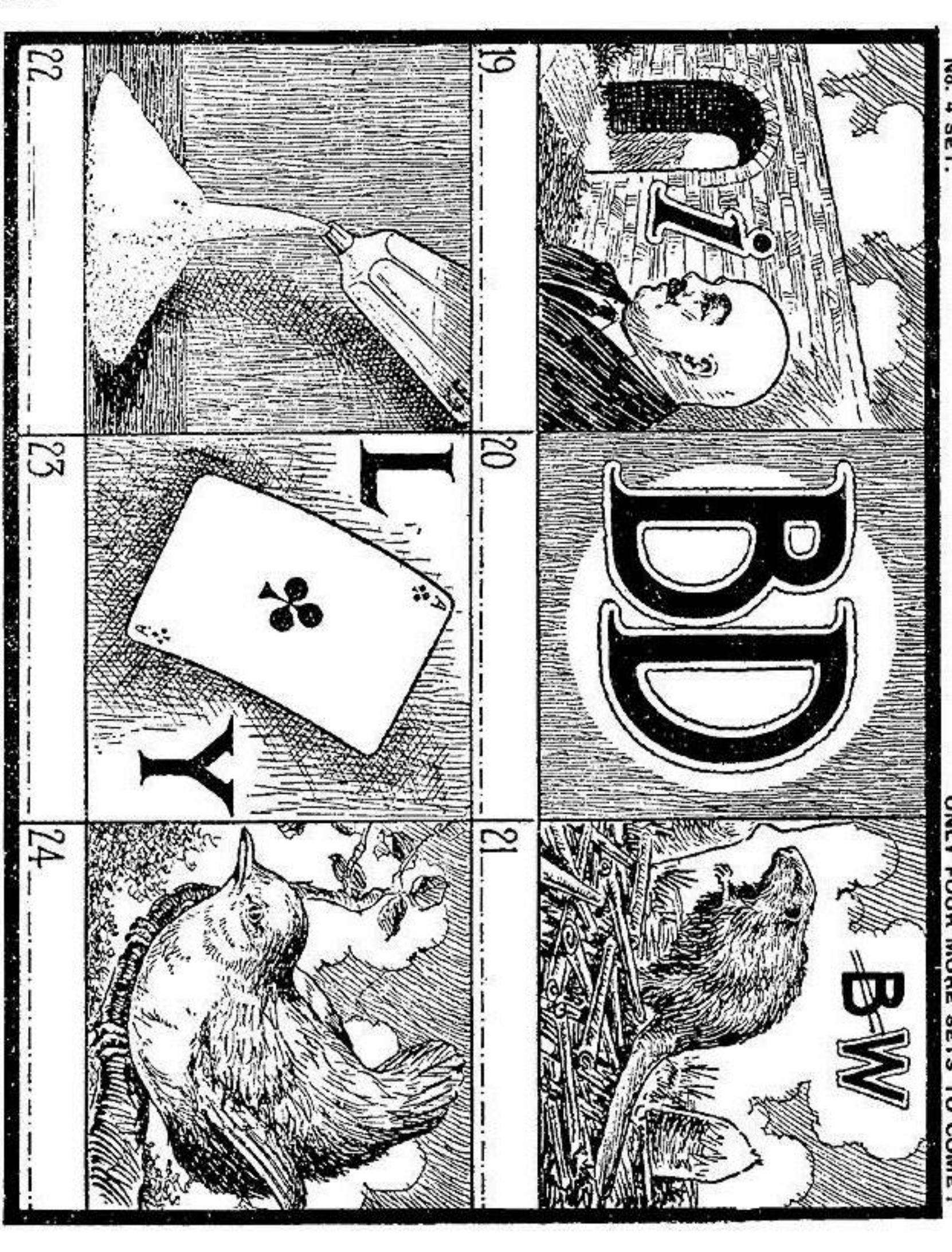
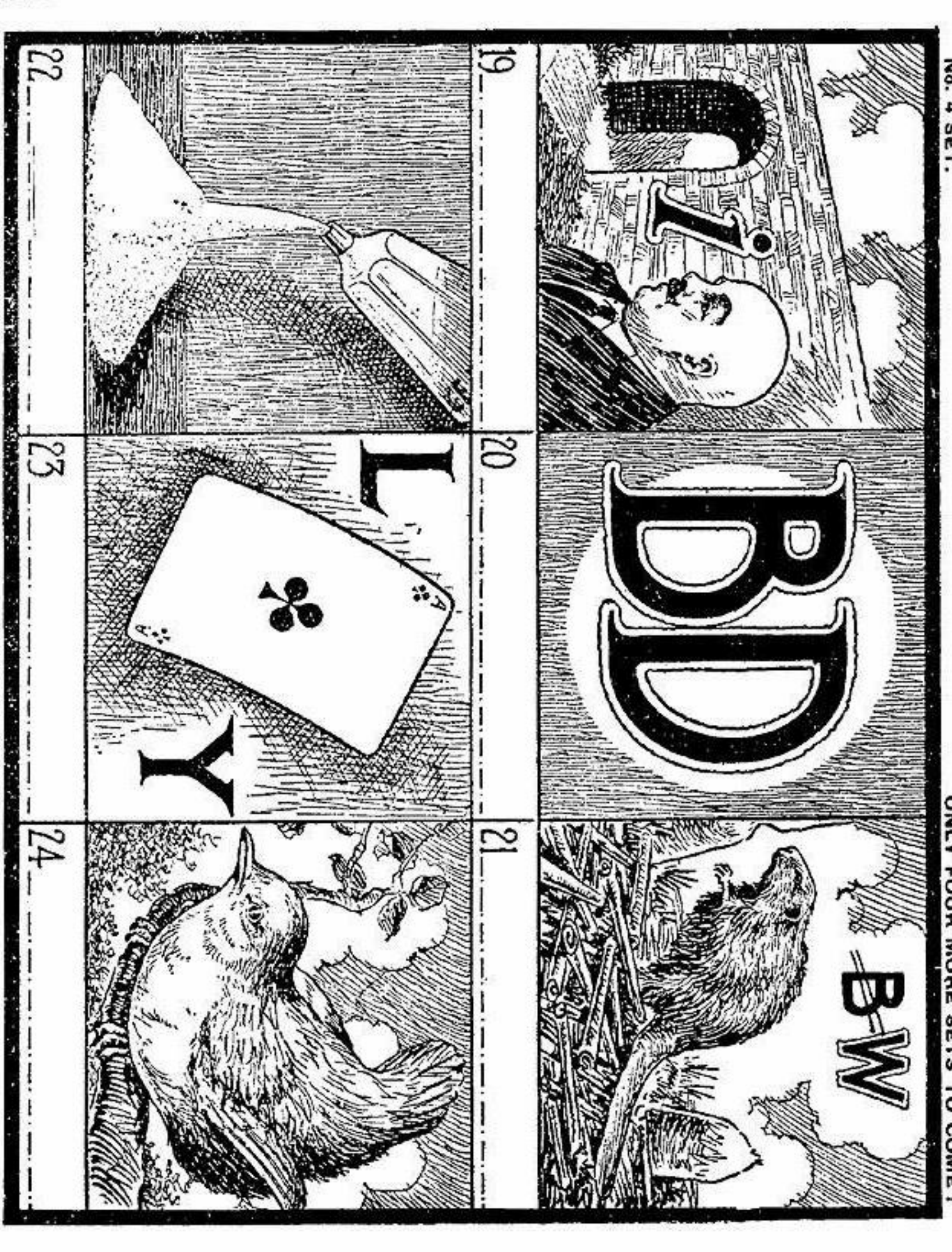
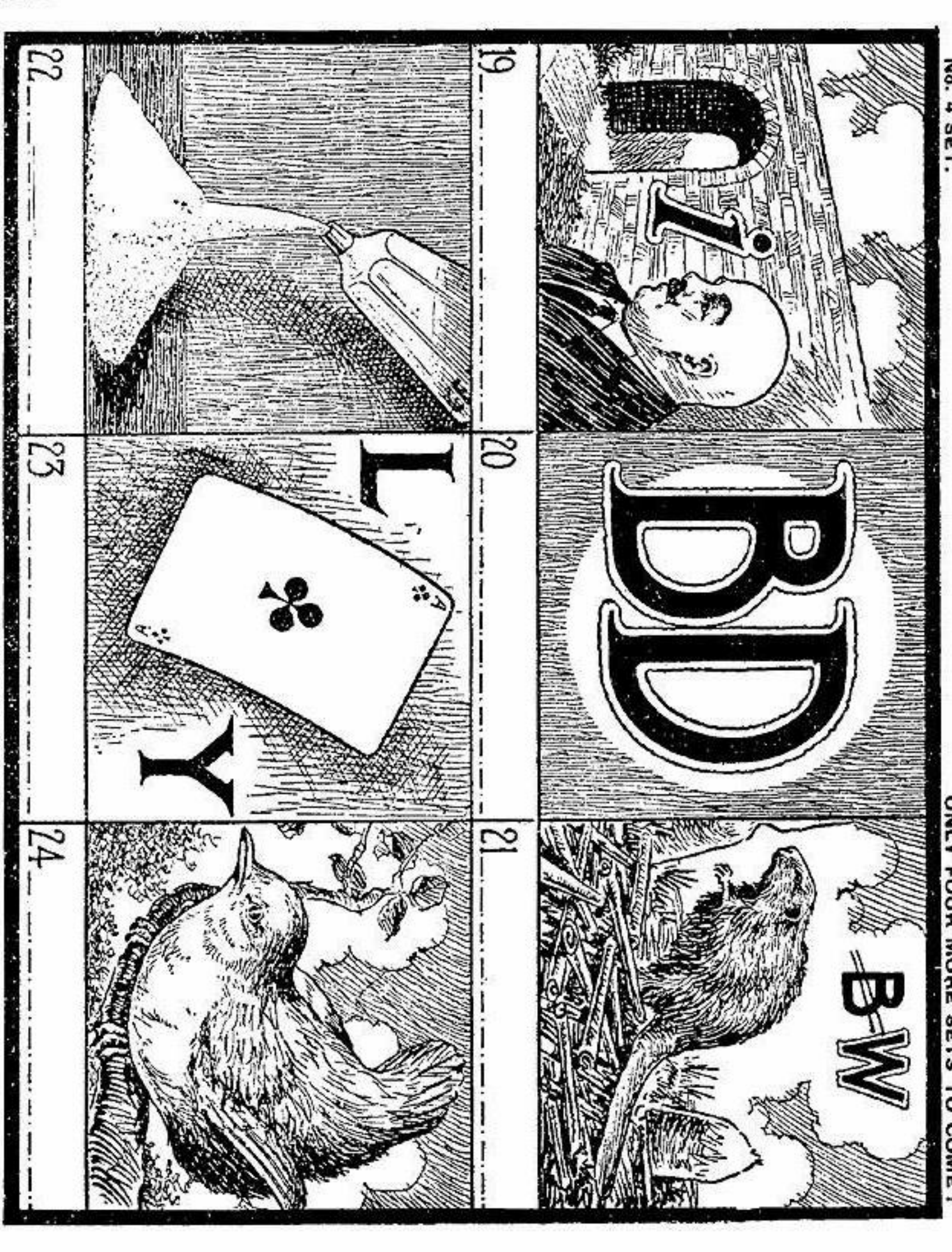
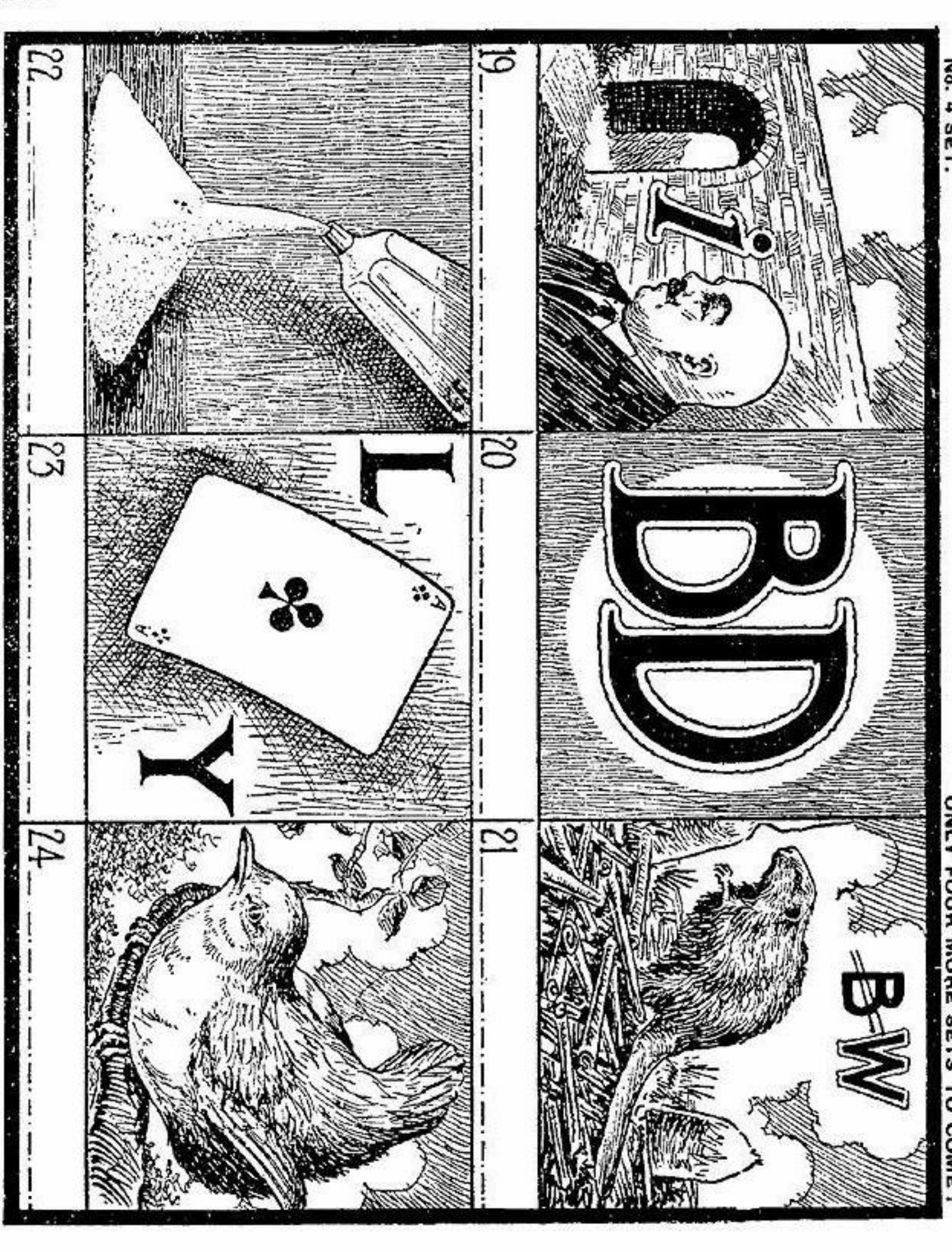
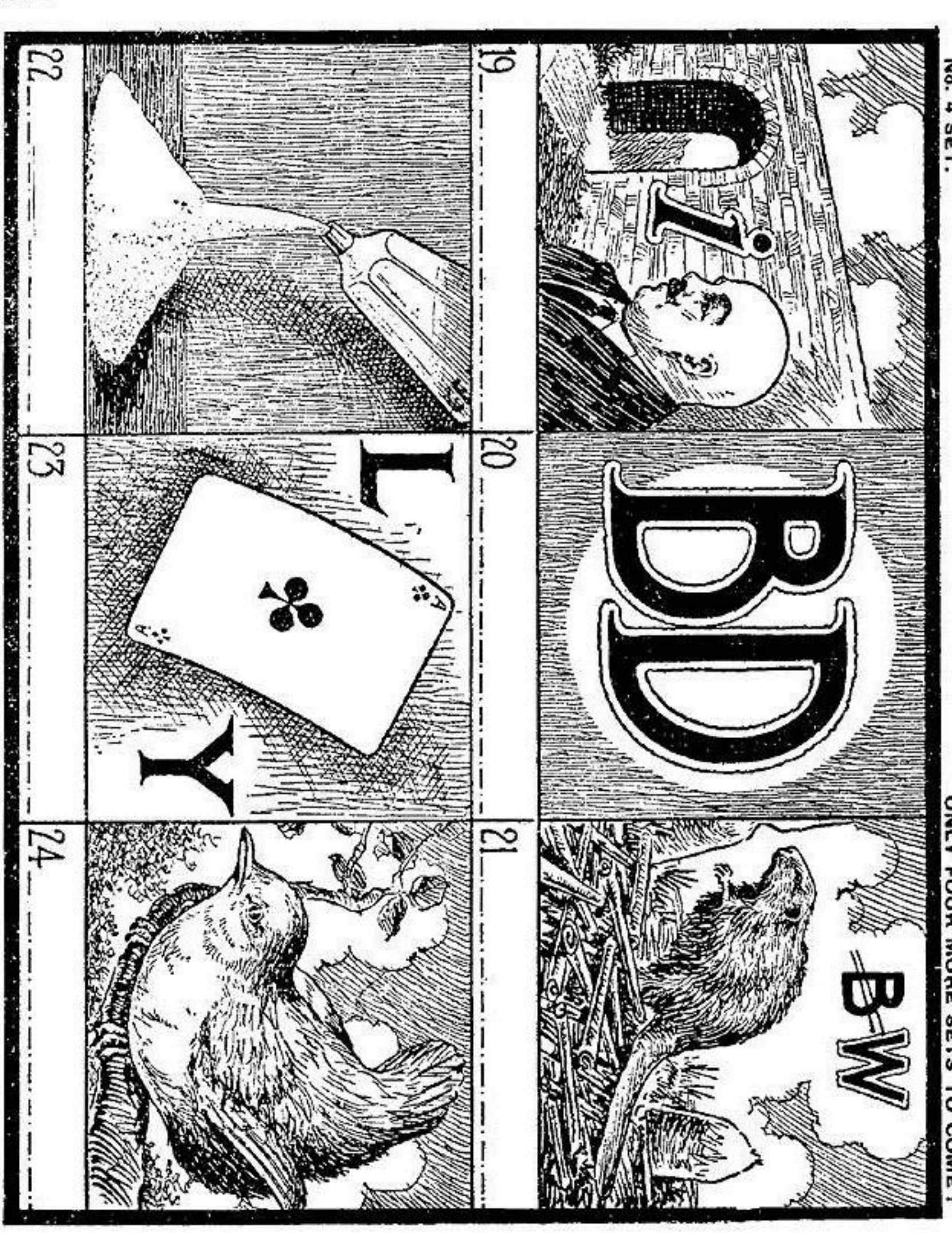
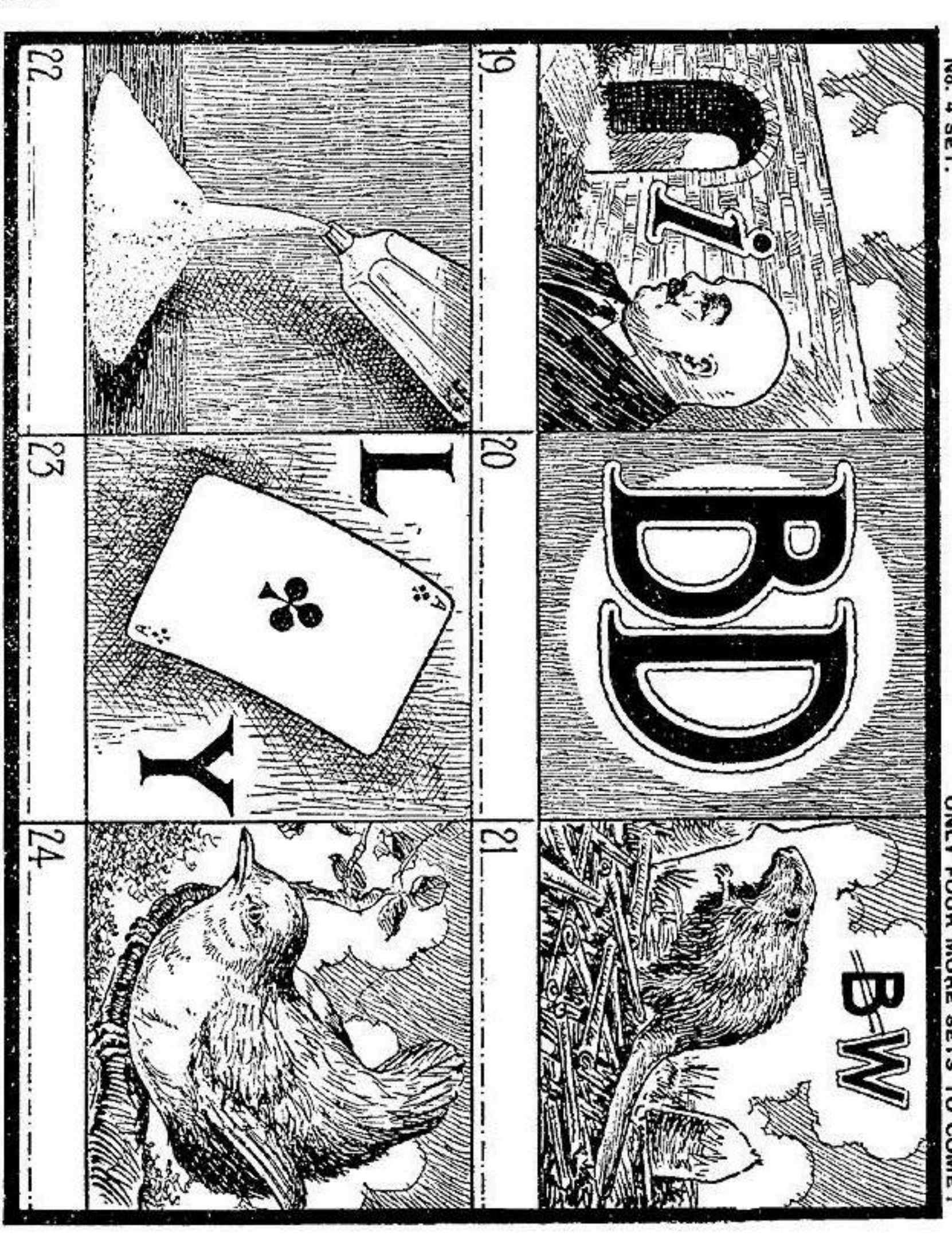
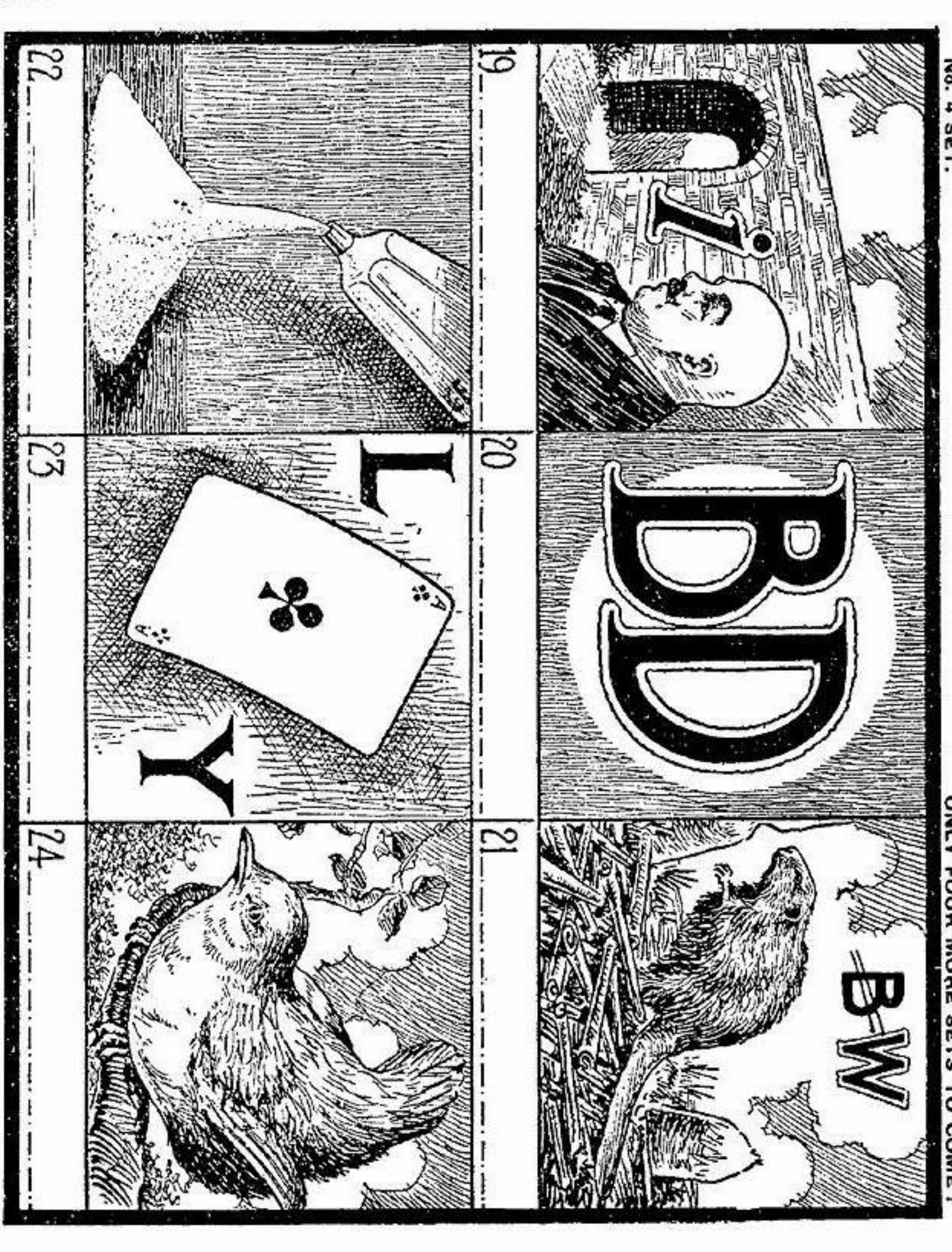
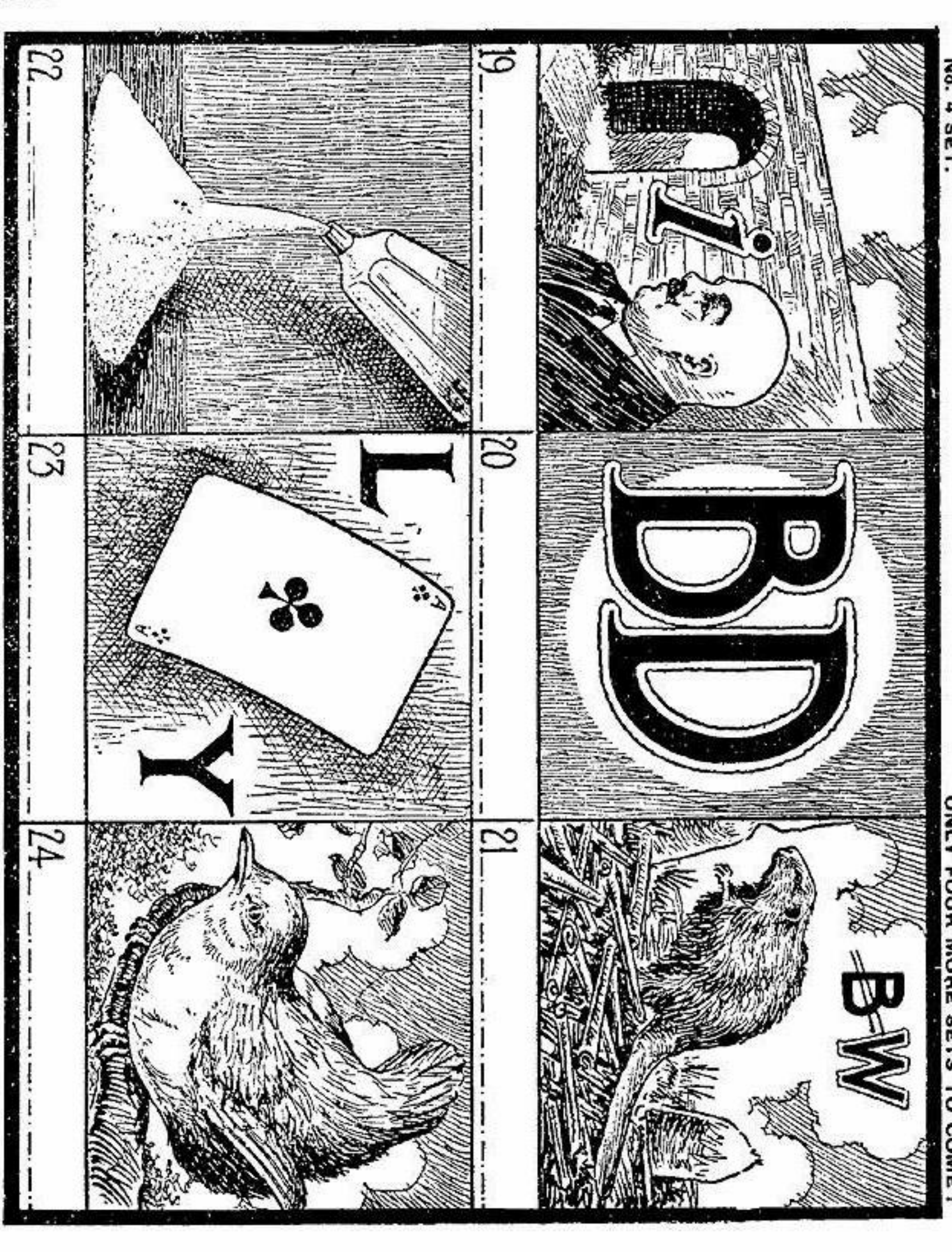
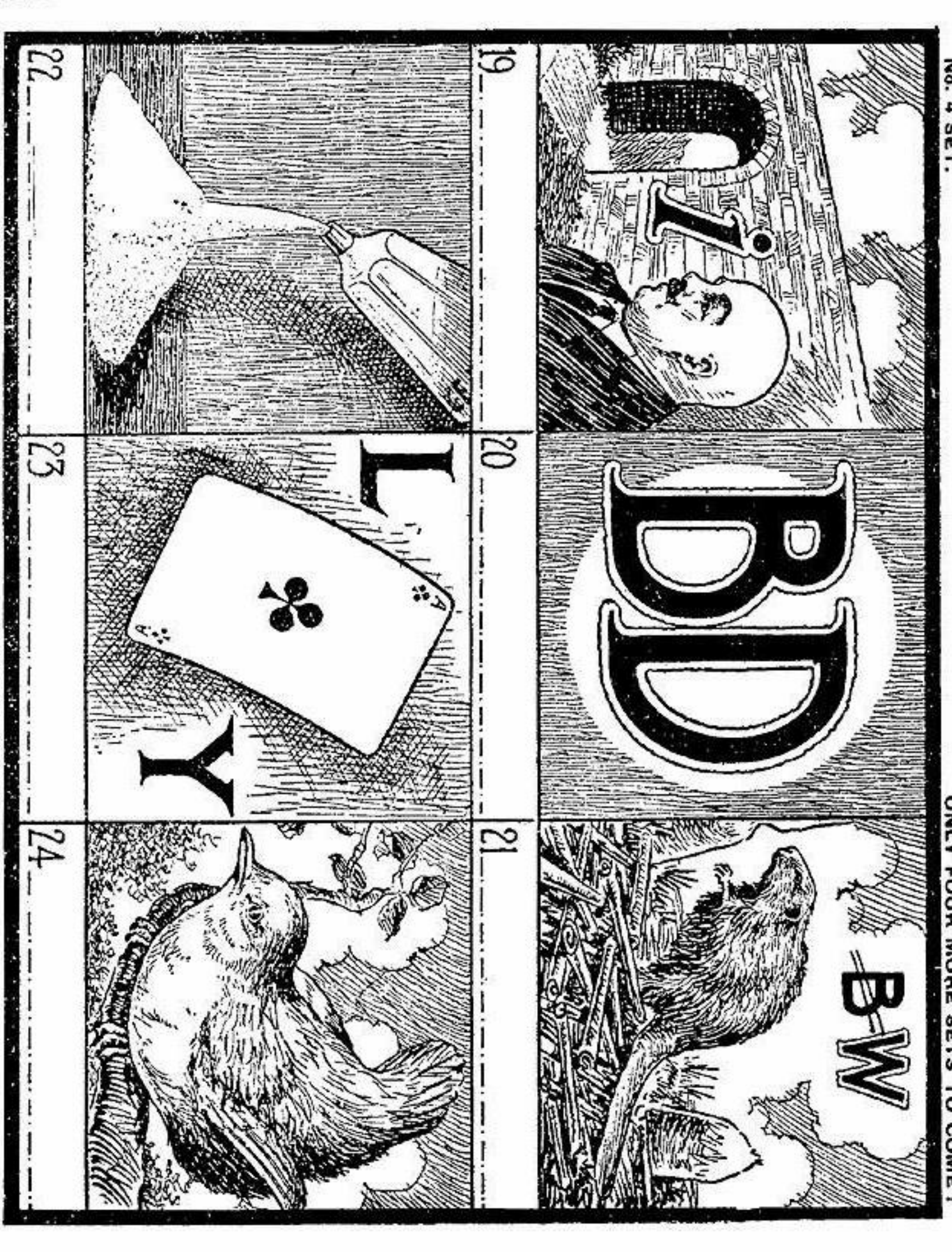
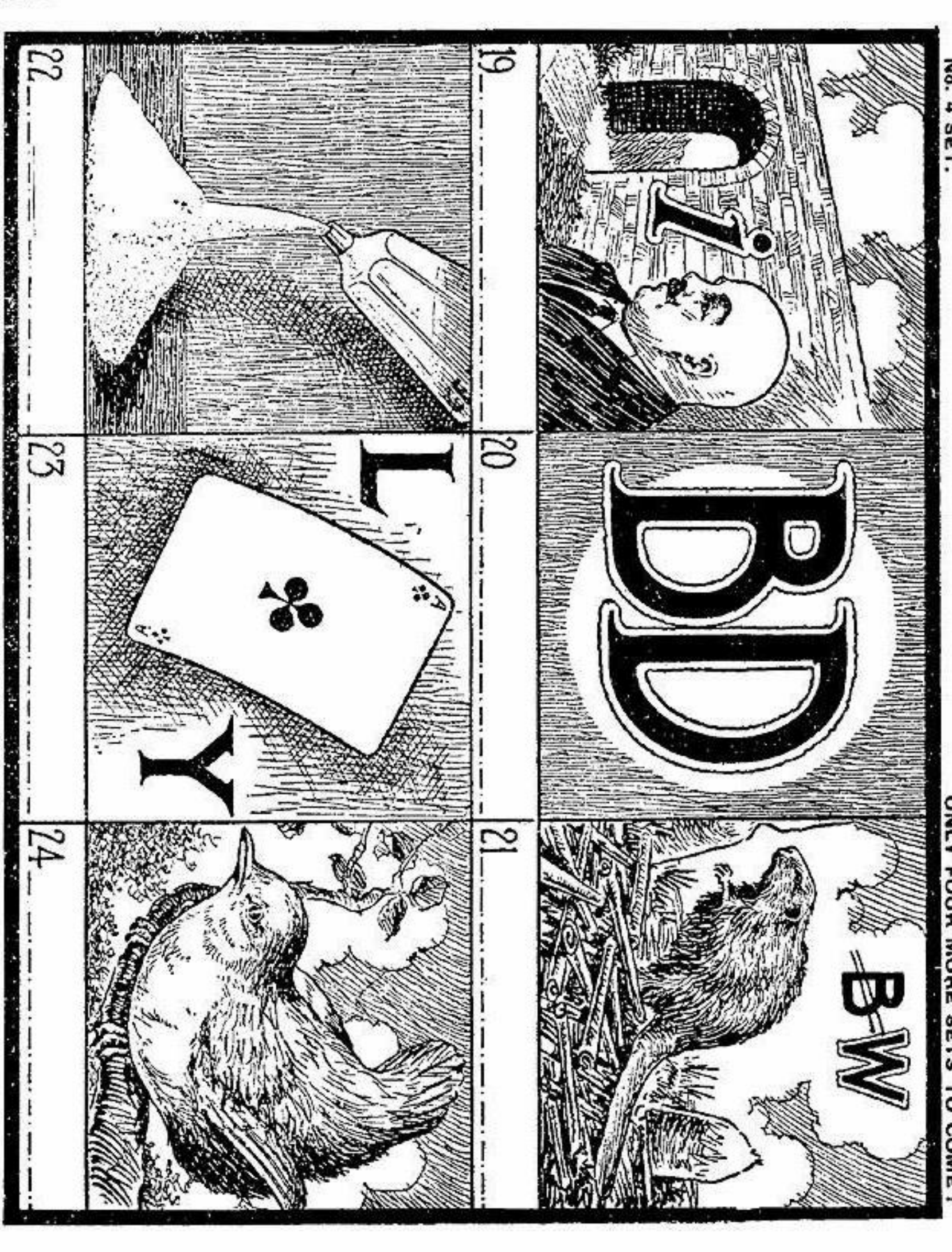
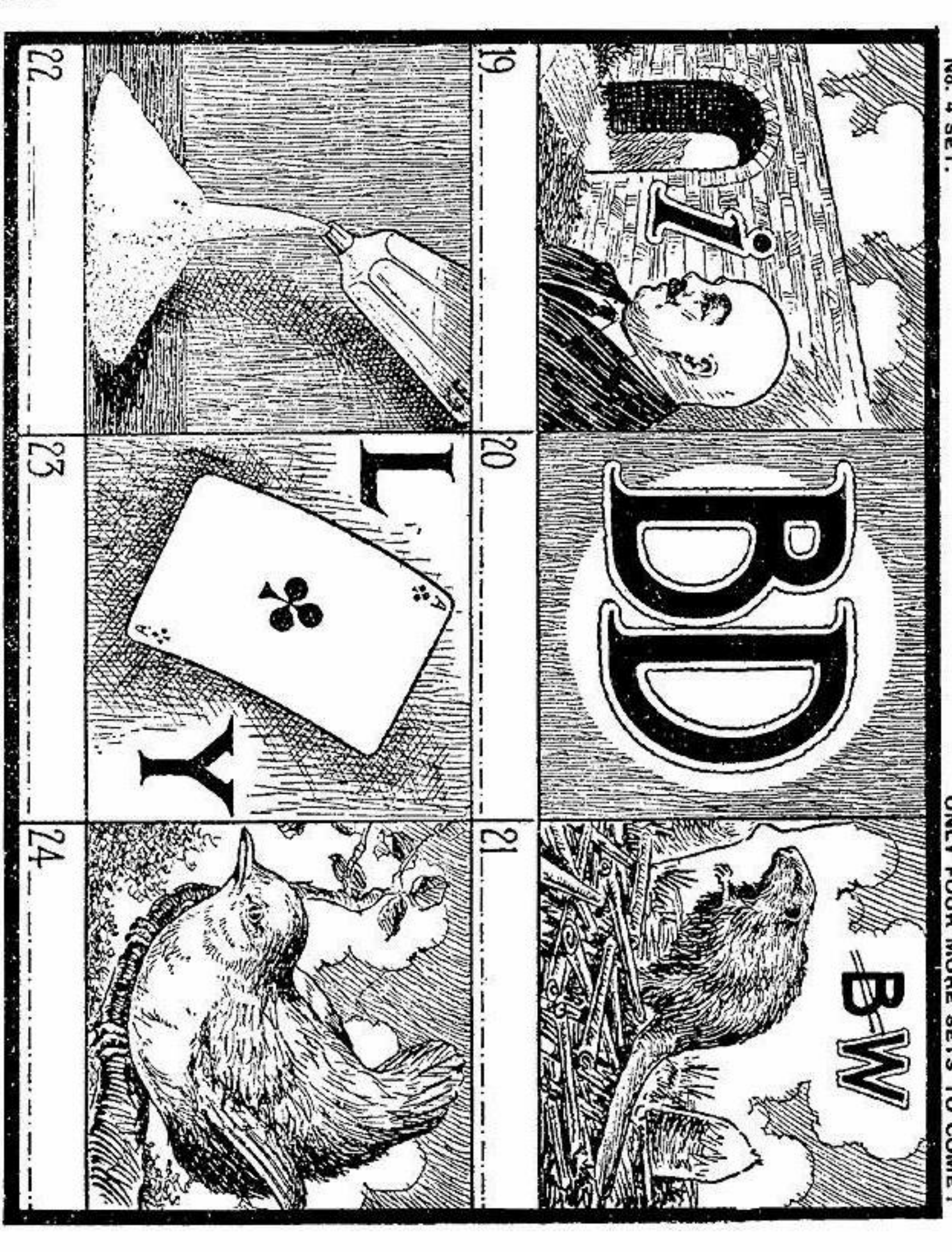
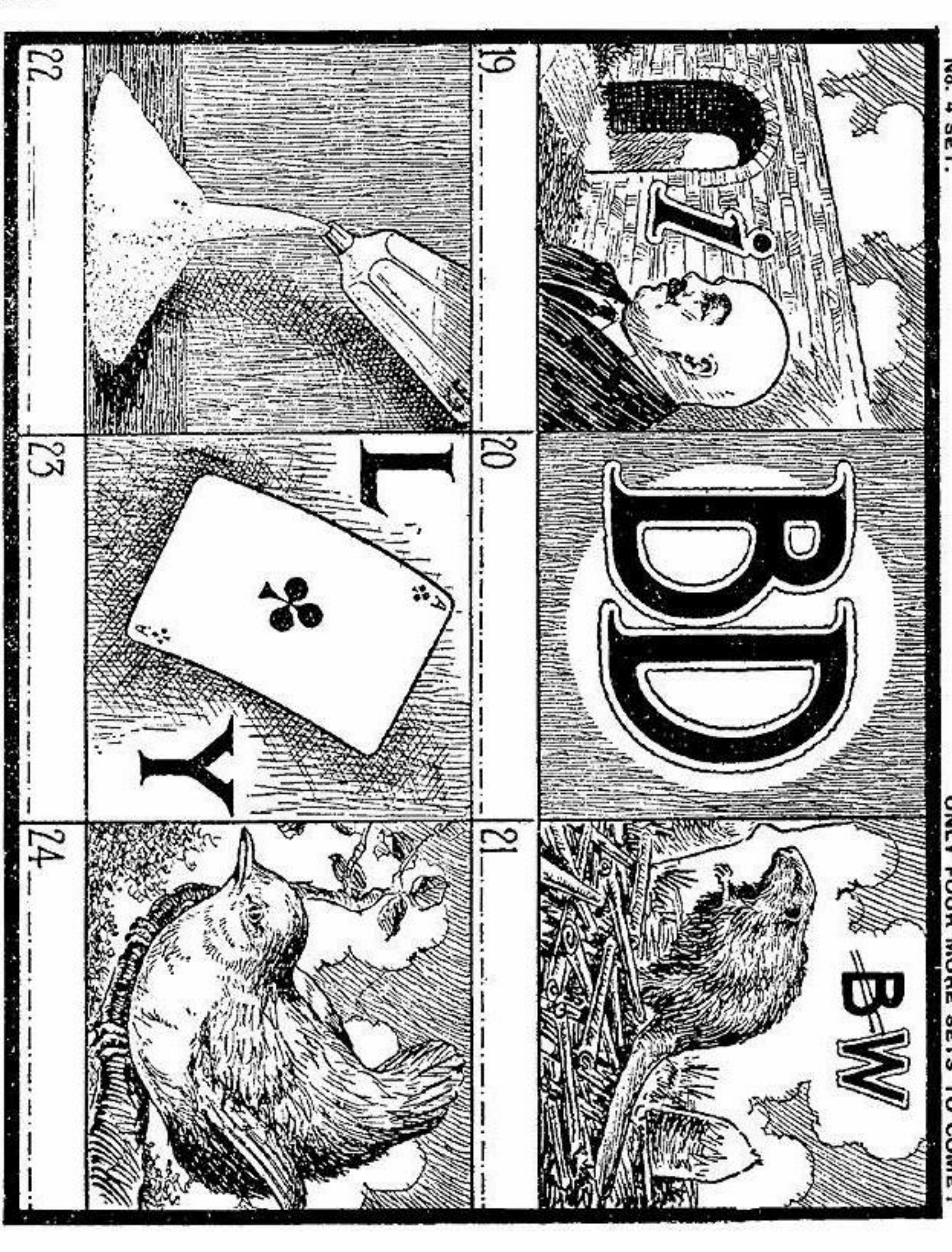
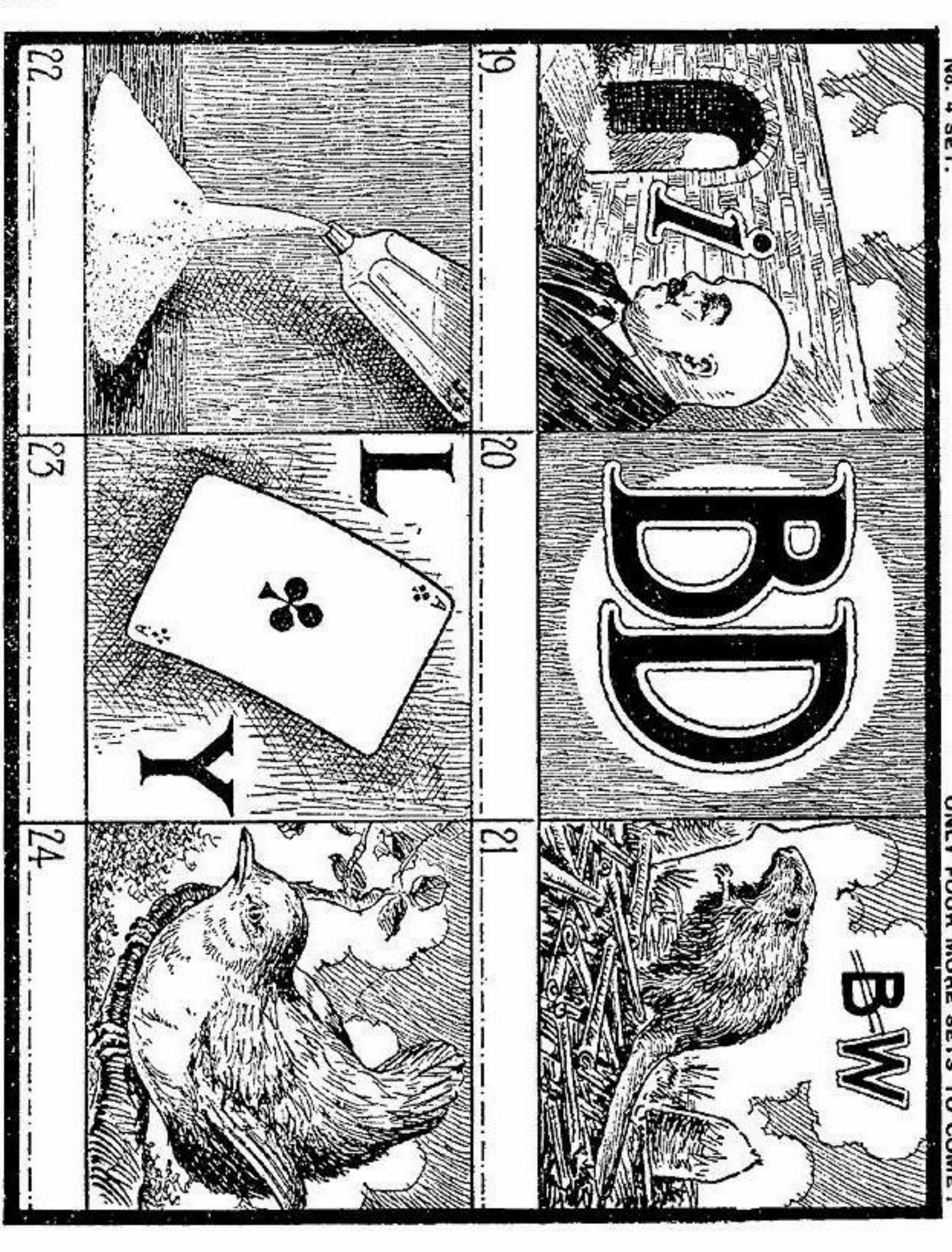
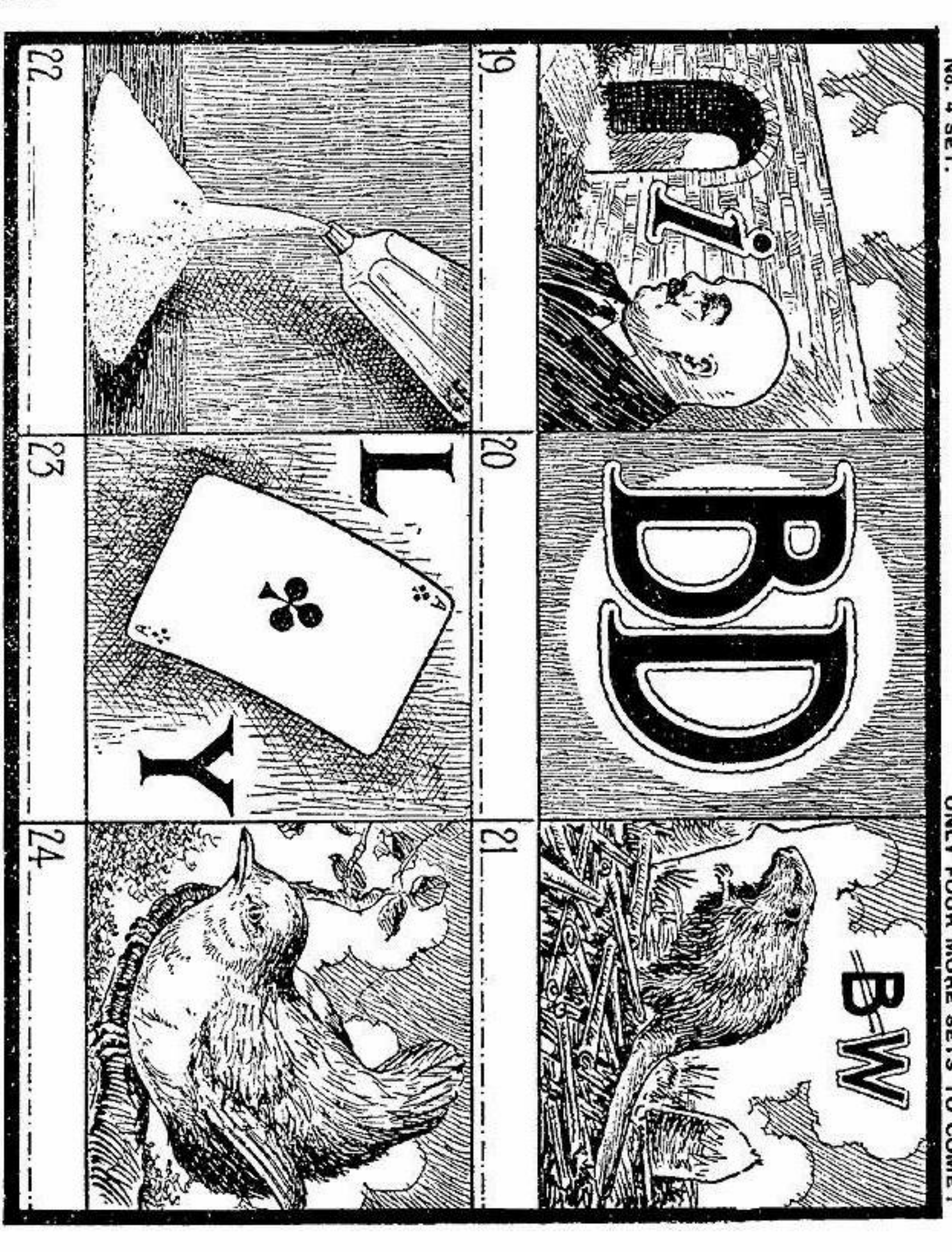
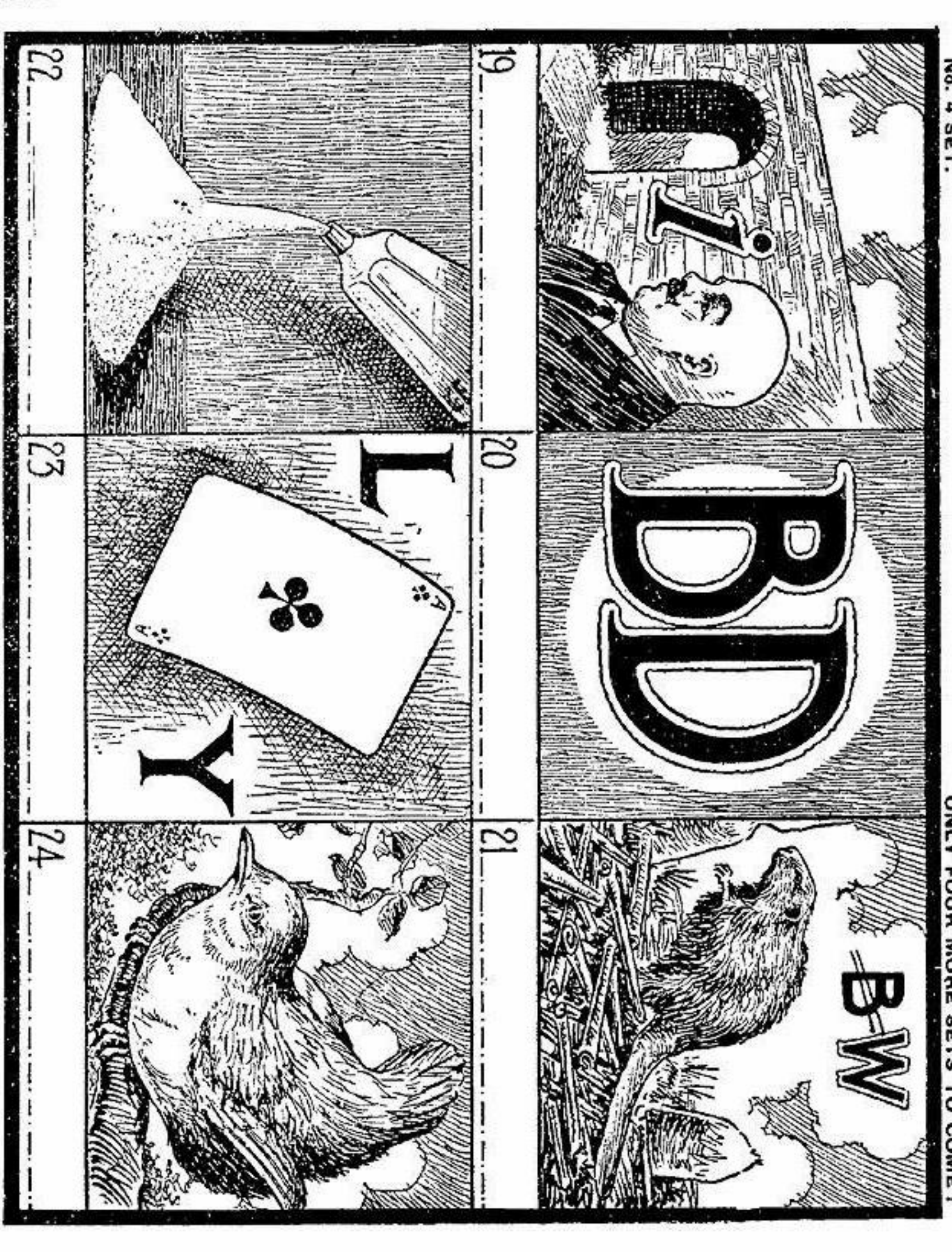
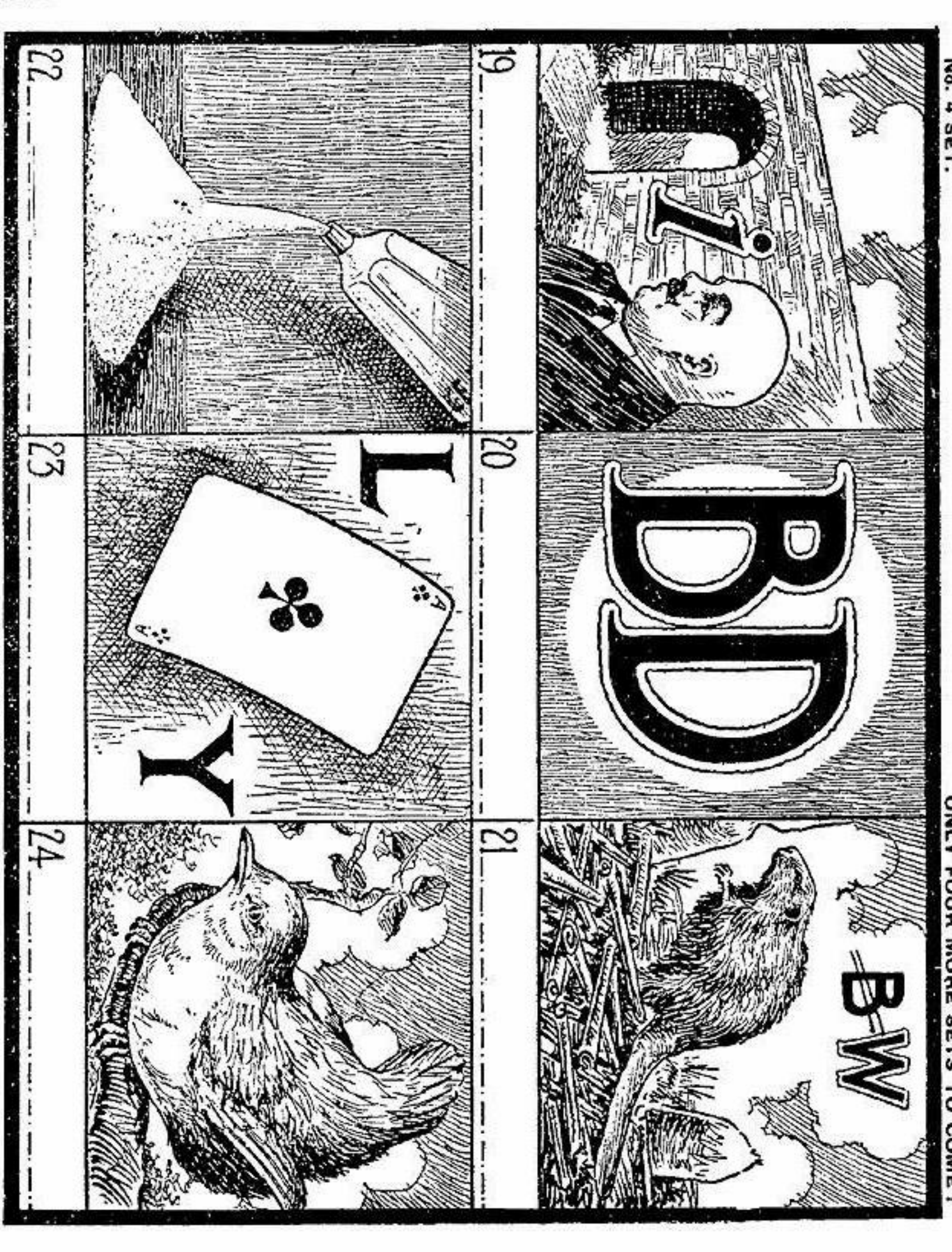
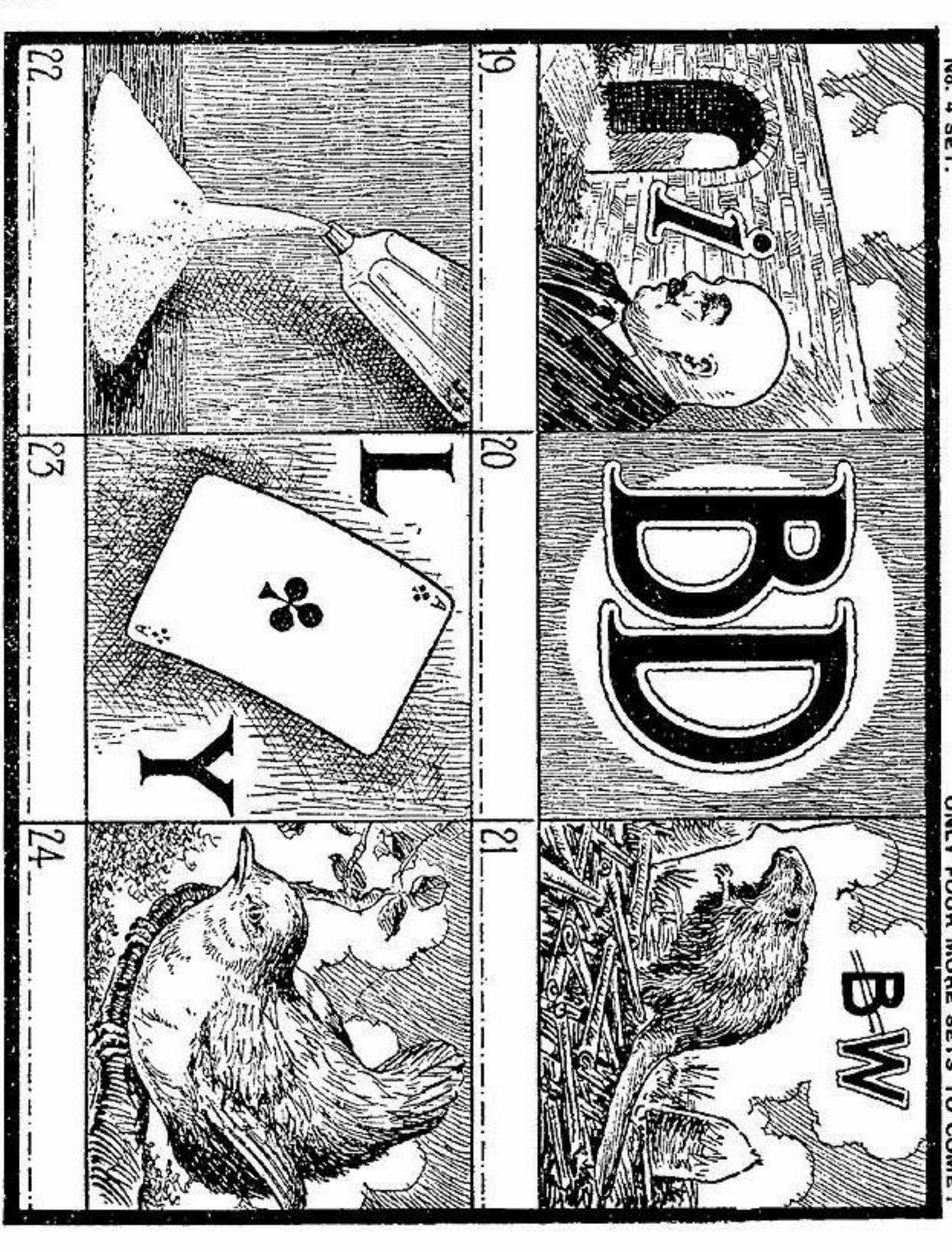
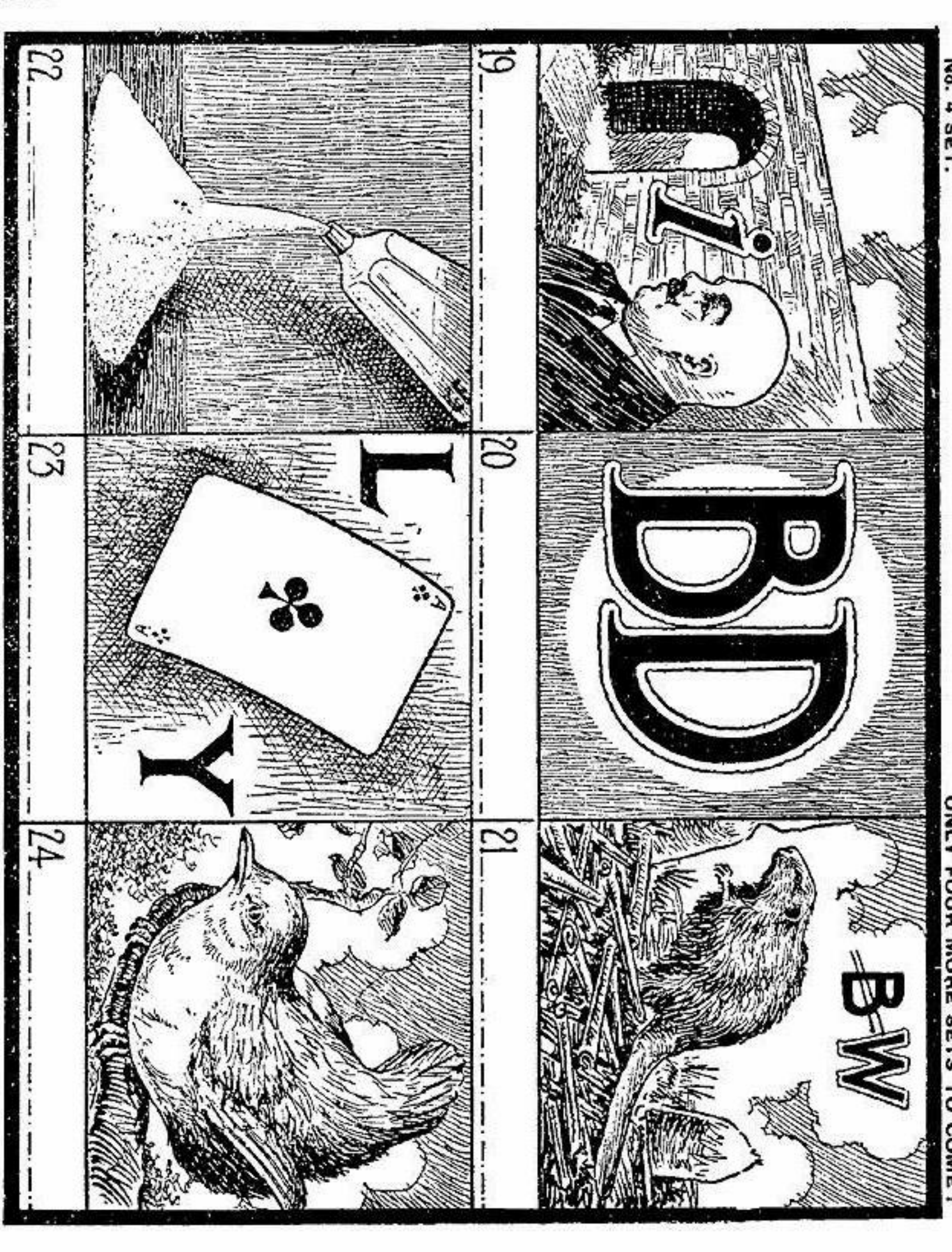
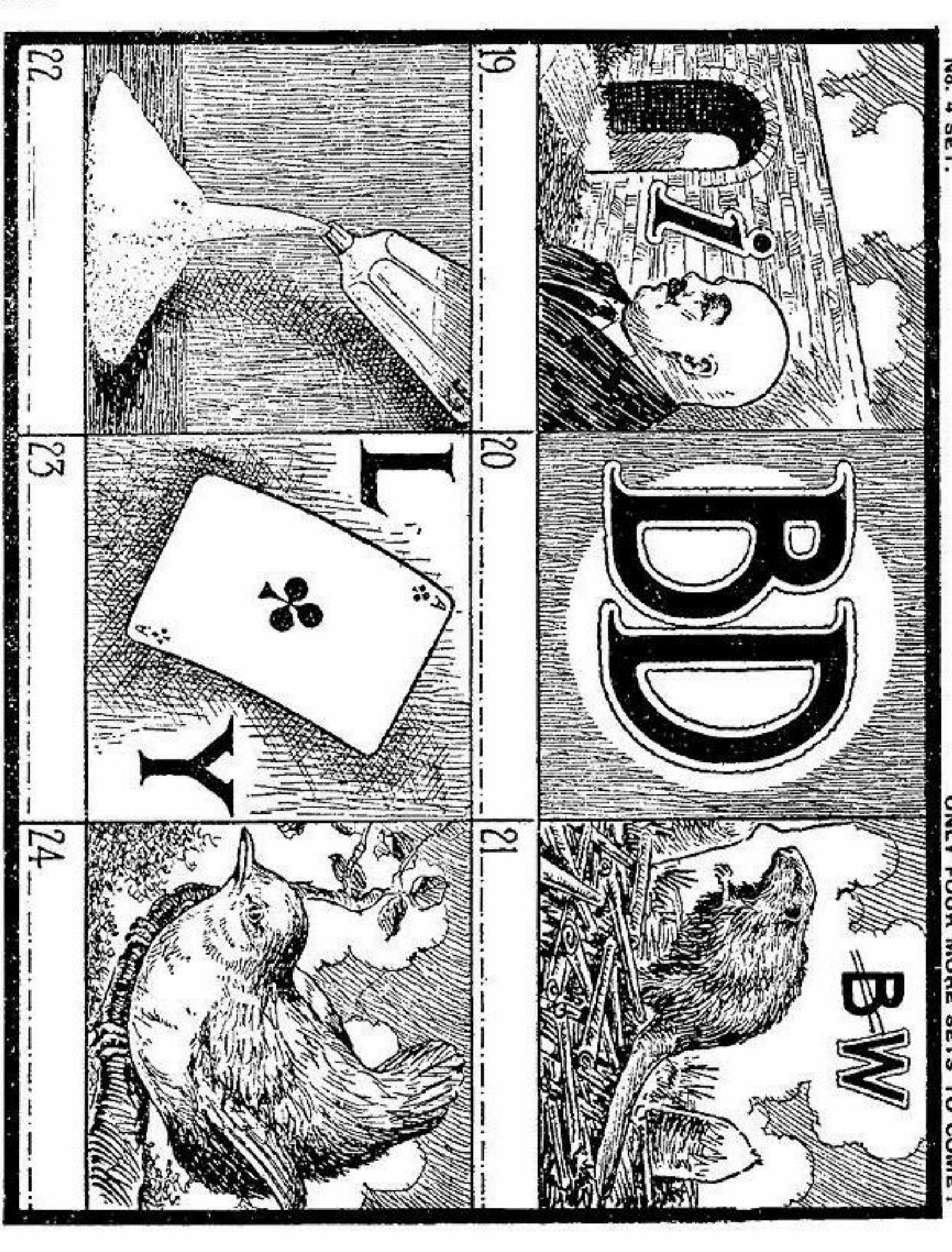
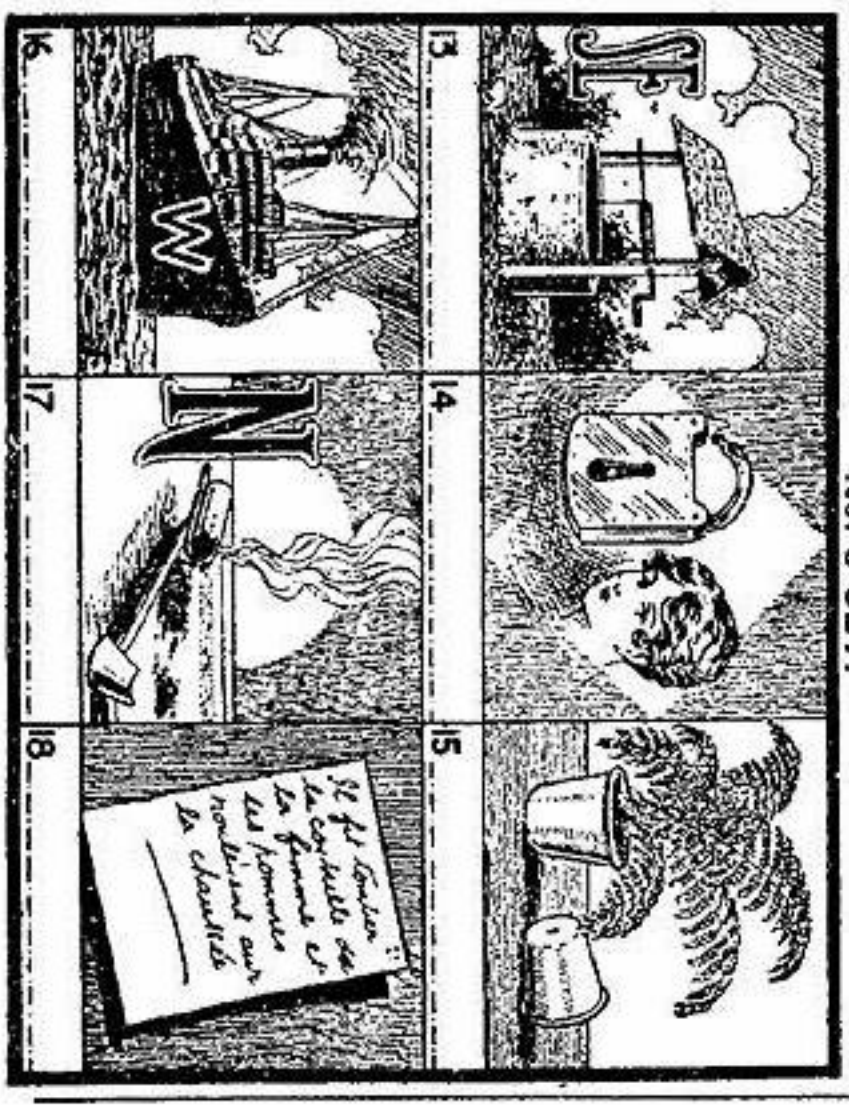
DO NOT SEND YOUR ENTRIES YET.

To help you still further there is a list containing the names of prominent footballers to choose from on page 2. This



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THE LUCK OF THE GIPSY!

(Continued from page 13.)

school that the "young barbarian," as Coker had named him, had had a hand in the attack on Sir Philip Angel. His denial carried no weight.

The Famous Five of the Remove believed in the gipsy, but hardly any other fellow did. Even Peter Todd and Squiff had their doubts. Mick was so wild in his ways that they felt there really was no telling what lawless ideas might have come into his head. And he had known—or, at least, might have known—that Sir Philip was coming to the school to get him "bunked." That supplied the motive, and a powerful one.

A good many fellows asked Mick whether he "did it" or whether one of his gipsy pals "did it," and Mick answered so angrily and savagely that they left him quite convinced of his guilt. He even called Coker of the Fifth a silly idiot, and after that Coker would have believed him guilty if he had been charged with homicide.

Mick left the Famous Five and slipped away into the Cloisters, to be by himself and escape the unpleasant notoriety that had fallen upon him. Harry Wharton & Co. went to punt a footer about till classes. Meanwhile, the Head was on the telephone, speaking to Sir Hilton at Popper Court.

Sir Hilton was not in a good temper that morning, and it was clear that he had fully imbibed Sir Philip Angel's views.

"I decline to stand the boy's friend any longer!" he told the Head in a rasping voice. "I gave him a chance—a wonderful chance for a boy of his station! He has repaid me with lawless recklessness and ingratitude, and finally by instigating a personal attack upon my friend Sir Philip Angel!"

"That cannot be proved——"

"Sir Philip is convinced of it."

"The boy denies it," said the Head.

Snort, over the wires.

"Naturally, the boy would deny it. He does not wish to be sent to prison. I presume that you do not desire to retain him in the school, Dr. Locke?"

"No; I think he had better go. He is not suited to Greyfriars. You will remember that I said as much when you requested me to take him here, Sir Hilton."

Another snort.

"But I am concerned for the boy's future. I have already told him he is to leave."

"Very good!"

"As you have taken charge of him, Sir Hilton, in recompense for a service he rendered you, I desire to know your further wishes. Am I to send him to Popper Court?"

"Certainly not!" snapped the baronet.

"Then where——" began the Head, with some asperity.

"I will let you know. At present my guest, Sir Philip Angel, is still with me; he does not leave until ten o'clock. Later in the day I will send a servant to fetch the boy away. Doubtless I can get him placed in employment on some farm. Personally, after his ingratitude, I decline to have anything further to do with him."

"Very well; he shall await your messenger."

And the Head rang off.

It was clear that the waif of Greyfriars had little more to expect from his

protector. Possibly Sir Hilton had already begun to consider that he had overpaid the service the gipsy had rendered him in pulling him out of the river. At all events, in return for his protection, he had expected implicit obedience and subservience; instead of which the gipsy schoolboy had been utterly reckless and uncontrolled. Sir Hilton had an excellent pretext for shaking off an obligation he wished he had never undertaken; and there was no doubt that he intended to avail himself of it.

Dr. Locke sent for Mick, and after some delay the gipsy schoolboy arrived. He listened in silence to what the Head had to tell him.

"You will be in readiness to leave as soon as you are sent for," the Head concluded. "Have you packed your box?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Then do so at once."

"Yessir!"

Mick left the Head with that, and the kind old gentleman sighed as he looked after him. He had hoped that the gipsy schoolboy's coming to Greyfriars would have turned out better than this.

The bell was ringing, and Mick met the Removites as they came in to classes. The Famous Five stopped to speak to him. They could say little that was of comfort; but at least they could say that they were sorry to lose him.

"I dare say we shall see you again before you go," added Harry Wharton. "Break's in an hour and a half."

Mick smiled faintly.

"I'm going before break," he answered. "I ain't waiting 'ere for Sir Hilton Popper to send his servant for me. I'm going."

"But——" began Wharton anxiously.

"He's fed up with me, and I don't wonder," said Mick wearily. "He was good to me, and meant well by me, and I ain't done as I ought. I couldn't help it, but I know it well enough. I can look after myself, and I'm not going to be a burden on him or anybody. I've got to keep clear of Barengro, but I can join on to some other gipsy crowd sooner or later. That's what I'm going to do."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob.

Mr. Quelch came along the Form-room passage, and the Famous Five had to follow the rest of the Form into their room. Mick went out into the quad again. He did not trouble about packing his box. He could not take the box with him when he went, dropping over the school wall and scuttling away "on his own"; neither did he desire to take anything that had been given him by the benefactor who had now abandoned him.

In the quad he came on Angel of the Fourth.

Angel smiled.

"So you're going?" he said.

Mick nodded.

"Good!"

"You're glad I'm goin', Master Angel?" asked Mick, gazing wistfully at the handsome Fourth-Former who so strangely resembled him in feature.

"Jolly glad!" said Angel.

"It's your doin', as much as anything," said Mick.

"Quite so."

"I dunno why you hated me so," said Mick patiently. "I never hated you, Master Angel. I'd have give anything to be your friend."

Angel's lip curled scornfully.

"I don't look for friends among gipsy vagrants," he said, with a sneer. "Go back to where you belong, and a good riddance to you!"

And Aubrey Angel turned his back on

the gipsy, and walked away to the Fourth Form room, quite contented with the way matters had turned out, and without a pang of compassion for the hapless waif upon whom his vengeance had fallen so heavily.

Mick walked away with a heavy heart. The kind friendship of Harry Wharton & Co. had cheered him; but Angel's bitter words left a cloud upon his brow, and a weight upon his spirits. It was bitter enough, that the last words he heard at Greyfriars were the gibing words of an enemy.

He was almost relieved when he dropped from the school wall into the road, and turned his back on Greyfriars. In the fresh, keen, autumn morning he tramped away, on the London road, and Greyfriars fell farther and farther behind him, passing out of his life for ever!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Luck Turns!

SIR PHILIP ANGEL sat upright in his car, with a start.

The baronet had been leaning back on the cushions, with a thoughtful brow, while the car ate up the miles. He had left Popper Court, in full accord with Sir Hilton Popper now. His mission at Greyfriars had been wholly successful. The gipsy outcast had been turned out of the school; his old school was no longer contaminated by the presence of the wretched vagrant. Sir Hilton's exasperation with his protege, and perhaps his desire to get rid of a burden, had made him assent completely to the views of his fellow-governor. Mick was turned out; and with that outcome of the affair, Sir Philip was satisfied, and his interest in the matter ceased.

He was thinking of his own affairs in London, from which he had been torn away to deal with this affair of a gipsy at Greyfriars, now. But suddenly he started and sat up, at the sight of a boyish figure on the road ahead.

The boy was sitting on a stile by the roadside, eating bread and cheese. His dusty boots and trousers showed that he had tramped a good distance. His dark, handsome, gipsy-like face contrasted with the school Etons he was clad in. Sir Philip Angel knew him at a glance, as the lad who had helped him in the struggle with the gipsy in Redclyffe Wood.

He signalled to the chauffeur to halt the car.

The baronet was interested in the lad. It was not only the fact that Mick had rescued him from the ruffian in the wood. It was his strange resemblance to Sir Philip's own son, Aubrey, that chiefly roused his interest; a resemblance that was still more striking, now that Sir Philip saw him in broad daylight.

The car stopped, and Sir Philip stepped out. He walked over towards the stile.

Mick looked up and recognised him. He did not know the old gentleman's name; but Sir Philip was a man not easily forgotten. The gipsy schoolboy touched his hat respectfully.

"You remember me, boy?" asked the baronet, with a smile.

"Yessir!"

"I have had no opportunity of thanking you for the aid you gave me yesterday."

"That's orlright, sir. I was glad of the chance to give that bloke a oner," said Mick, with a grin. "I told you so, sir."

"The Gipsy Millionaire!"—that is the next Greyfriars story!

"Yes, yes," said Sir Philip. "But you acted very bravely, and your help just then meant a very great deal to me. I have thought about you several times; but it did not seem likely that I should ever see you again. You are dressed like a schoolboy. Do you belong to any school?"

"Not now, sir," said Mick, his face clouding.

"Is not that a Greyfriars cap you are wearing?"

"Yessir!"

Sir Philip frowned.

The boy had been brave, and had helped him bravely in a tight corner. But he was a gipsy, and Sir Philip's prejudice against all members of the gipsy tribes was strong. He had not the slightest doubt that this wretched waif had stolen the clothes he was wearing.

He was tempted to step back into the car, and leave the boy to his own devices. After all, what did the wretched vagrant matter to so great a personage as Sir Philip Angel, Baronet, and Member of the House of Commons?

But the arresting likeness of the boy to his own son held him to the spot.

"This will not do," he said, after a pause. "Something must be done for you, my boy. What kind of work can you do?"

"Keitching rabbits," said Mick, with a grin.

"What! Do you mean poaching?" exclaimed Sir Philip, in horror.

"That's what they calls it."

"Good gad!"

There was another pause.

"But you would be willing to do honest work, surely!" said the baronet, at last. "A lad of your courage should not be an idler. I can easily help you to obtain a good situation, and I am prepared to stand your friend if you prove honest and industrious. Come, come!"

"I'm going back to the gipsies," said Mick.

"That is no life for you or any boy," said Sir Philip severely. "You had much better accept my offer. Come, I cannot delay now; I am expected in town. Get into the car, and I will speak to you further."

Mick shook his head.

He had had enough of the patronage of a benefactor after his experience with Sir Hilton Popper.

"Thank you, sir, but there's nothing doing," he said. "I don't ask you for nothing for what I did."

"Perhaps you do not quite know what you are refusing," said the baronet, with a slight smile. "I am able to help you very considerably if you prove worthy of it."

"I ain't worthy of it, sir," said Mick frankly. "I expect you'd soon get fed up, like the other bloke!"

"The—the what! Oh, I—I understand! You mean that someone has taken you in hand before?"

"Yessir, a very kind old gent, though a bit crusty. I ain't going to trouble him any more, and I ain't going to trouble you, sir, whoever you are. I dessay you mean kindly, but there ain't anything in it."

"You do not know who I am, of course!" said the baronet. "My name is Angel, Sir Philip Angel."

"Wot!"

Mick nearly fell backwards off the stile.

Sir Philip looked at him.

"You know my name?" he asked.

"Well, rather!" gasped Mick. "Oh, lor'! Then it was Angel's father that I 'elped in the wood, and they've kicked

me out because they thought I had a hand in setting the gipsy on him! Oh, lor'!"

Sir Philip Angel stared at the boy blankly.

"You know my son!" he exclaimed.

"Course, I know Angel of the Fourth! Leastways, by sight," added Mick. "He wouldn't touch me with a barge-pole!"

"In Heaven's name, who are you?" exclaimed the baronet, a glimmering of the truth dawning on his mind. "Is it possible—is it barely possible—that you are the boy called Mick?"

"I'm Mick!"

"Good gad!" gasped Sir Philip.

Sir Philip Angel stepped back a pace or two in his amazement, and stood staring at the gipsy schoolboy.

Mick!

Greyfriars I should have recognised you at once, and should have known that, so far from being a participator in the outrage, you were the lad who so gallantly came to my help! If I had seen you—"

"It was my fault, sir," said Mick. "I kicked over the traces, like I've done before; and I've got it in the neck this time. It serves me right, I dessay."

"Then—then you are the boy whom Sir Hilton Popper took in charge, and sent to Greyfriars?" exclaimed the baronet, still bewildered.

"Yes, sir! He's done with me now, and it's my own fault!" said Mick, with a sigh.

"Sir Hilton Popper believed, as I believed, that the boy Mick was concerned in the outrage in the wood;"



"I desire you to be friends," said Sir Philip. "I shall be jolly glad if you will, Master Angel," said Mick humbly, and he held out his hand frankly. Angel breathed hard, but he shook hands with the gipsy schoolboy. (See Chapter 11.)

The thought of it had never even crossed his mind. And, on his side, it had not occurred to Mick that it was Angel's father whom he had helped in the struggle with Barengro.

"Good gad!" repeated Sir Philip blankly.

This was the gipsy schoolboy—this was the boy he had suspected—after his son had instilled the poison into his mind—of being a party to the savage attack made on him in Redclyffe Wood! Mick—the boy who had come to his rescue, and saved him from the ferocity of the gipsy footpad!

"Good gad!" he said again. "And I thought—I believed— It was your own fault, boy! If I had seen you at

said Sir Philip. "He will not believe so when he knows the facts. Boy, you have done yourself wrong, and done me wrong! How could I guess that the gipsy boy whom I was determined to send away from the school was the boy who had helped me against the attack of a savage ruffian? If you had returned to the school before I left—"

Mick was silent.

He was thinking he had had a severe enough warning to cure him of his lawless habits; if only he had been still a Greyfriars fellow. But the warning came too late. Greyfriars and he were far asunder now.

"This chance meeting is a fortunate one," went on Sir Philip Angel. "But

—Where does the money come from? You must not miss this story!

for this I should never have dreamed of the truth of the matter. Now get into my car!"

"But, sir—"

"Walters, drive to Greyfriars School!"

"Greyfriars, sir!" exclaimed Mick.

"I am taking you back to your school, boy!"

"But—but—" gasped Mick. "The Head's turned me out, sir, and—and I bolted, sir, so as not to be took away by Sir Hilton Popper's servant."

"I am glad you did, since it has led to this meeting. Get into the car!"

"But I ain't a Greyfriars fellow now, sir!"

"You are!" said Sir Philip.

And Mick, with his brain in a whirl, stepped into the car, and the baronet sat down beside him. It seemed like a dream to the gipsy schoolboy as the car raced along, and the familiar grey old walls and ivied tower rose into view again; the old school that he had learned to love, and to which he had believed that he had bidden an eternal farewell. The gipsy schoolboy's luck had turned at last!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Clouds Roll By!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were coming out of the School House in the morning break. It was Bob Cherry who sighted Sir Philip Angel's car on the drive, with the old baronet and—amazing to behold—Mick the gipsy seated in it.

Bob could scarcely believe his eyes for a moment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he gasped. "Mick again!"

"Mick!" exclaimed Wharton.

"The Mickfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Is this an esteemed and ridiculous miracle?"

"Well, my hat!" said Johnny Bull.

The Famous Five stared blankly. Sir Philip Angel had come to Greyfriars the previous day to drive out the gipsy, and he had succeeded. Now he had returned, bringing the gipsy outcast with him in his car! What it could possibly mean was a mystery to the chums of the Remove.

Mick grinned and waved his hand, in the distance, to the Famous Five.

Obviously the gipsy schoolboy was in the best of spirits.

"Well, it beats me!" said Nugent, with a whistle.

"Hollow!" said Bob.

"What does this mean, you fellows?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Ask us another!" said Harry Wharton. "I give this one up."

"There's jolly old Angel," murmured Bob Cherry. "Look! Seems sort of pleased and overjoyed, doesn't he?"

The chums of the Remove grinned as they glanced at Aubrey Angel.

The dandy of the Fourth was standing as if rooted to the ground, staring at the car and its occupants as they glided on towards the Head's house.

It was already rumoured in Greyfriars that the gipsy schoolboy had bolted, instead of waiting to be sent for by Sir Hilton Popper. Angel wondered for a moment whether his father had found the boy on the roads, and "rounded him up," as it were, bringing him back to Greyfriars for safe custody. But the kind expression on Sir Philip's face—his manner to the gipsy boy who was seated beside him—banished that possibility. Plainly enough, Mick was in the

baronet's good graces; though by what amazing miracle the change had been brought about was as deep a mystery to Aubrey Angel as to Harry Wharton & Co.

But certainly Angel was not pleased. His eyes glittered as he stared at the scene, and he clenched his hands so hard that his nails dug into his palms.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Enjoying life, Angel?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, Mick's come back!" yelled Billy Bunter, rolling up to the Famous Five. "I've just seen—"

"Ancient!" grinned Bob. "We saw him first, Bunt! You're late with the jolly old news for once."

"Perhaps he's brought him back to send him to chokey!" suggested Bunter brightly.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!"

"They're going into the Head's house," said Harry.

"Jolly old wonders will never cease," said Bob. "If things have turned out all right for Mick, I'm jolly glad. But it beats me hollow!"

Dr. Locke had left the Sixth Form room, and gone to his house, when Sir Philip Angel was announced.

The Head suppressed a sigh; he had hoped that he was done with both the baronets for a time, at least. He almost jumped when Sir Philip came into his presence, accompanied by Mick of the Remove.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"You must excuse my taking up your time in this way, Dr. Locke," said the baronet courteously. "I have made a discovery that I am sure you will be glad to hear. It concerns this boy."

"Indeed," said the Head blankly.

"It was my belief that he was concerned with the gipsy in the attack on me in Redclyffe Wood—"

"You are aware that I never shared that—"

"Quite so; and now I have discovered my mistake," said Sir Philip Angel. "I think I mentioned to you that a lad I had never seen before came to my help when I was attacked—"

"I believe so; but—"

"This is the lad!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"So far from being a party to the attack he rescued me from it, and saved me from serious injury, Dr. Locke."

"Bless my soul!" said the amazed Head. "Sir Philip, the boy has suffered very great injustice, if that is the case."

"Unconsciously, I did him injustice," said Sir Philip Angel. "Had I seen him before I left Greyfriars yesterday, no such mistake could have been made. So far, he himself is to blame; and such a lesson in the folly of lawless conduct will, I am sure, not be lost on him. The suspicion against the boy falls to the ground, Dr. Locke, now that the truth is known. On that suspicion he was excluded from Greyfriars. May I ask that now he is cleared you may take a lenient view of his disregard of authority, and allow him to return?"

"Most certainly," said the Head.

"But I must tell you that Sir Hilton Popper has washed his hands of the boy, and will no longer be responsible for his expenses here."

"That, I fear, is partly my fault; but if Sir Hilton declines to be responsible further, the responsibility is mine," said Sir Philip. "I am not, I hope, ungrateful. I have done this boy wrong, and desire to repair it."

The Head smiled genially.

"I am very glad to hear you say so,

Sir Philip. I was reluctant to see the boy thrown on the world again; he has found it hitherto a hard world, I fear. I had no choice, in the circumstances. I welcome him back to Greyfriars."

"Oh, sir!" said Mick.

"Your service to Sir Philip shall excuse your truancy yesterday, my boy," said the Head. "But if it should occur again—"

"You trust me, sir," said Mick earnestly. "I've had my lesson, sir, and I ain't playing the fool again. You trust me."

"I shall trust you," said the Head.

Ten minutes later, Angel of the Fourth received a message that his father desired to see him in the visitors' room in the School House. The dandy of the Fourth obeyed the summons at once, in a state of wonder and rage and chagrin.

"Aubrey," said the baronet gravely. "Both of us have done this boy an injustice—"

"The fellow who set a gipsy ruffian on you, father!"

"The boy who rescued me from the gipsy ruffian!" said Sir Philip.

Angel fairly staggered.

"What?" he breathed.

His father proceeded quietly to explain. Angel listened, with his brain in a whirl.

This, then, was the outcome of his scheming! He had brought his father into the affair, to crush his enemy, and after his apparent success, this was the outcome. Bitter rage and malice swelled Angel's heart almost to bursting.

He hardly heard the baronet's voice as Sir Philip went on. But his father's last words caught his ear.

"This boy must be your friend, Aubrey."

Angel breathed hard.

"My—my friend!"

"He risked a great deal to save your father from terrible injury. Does that count for nothing with you, Aubrey?"

"Yes—yes, of course!"

"I desire you to be friends. You will try to please me in this, Aubrey?"

"Oh, yes—yes, father!" panted Angel.

"I'll be jolly glad if you will, Master Angel," said Mick humbly. "I always wanted to be your friend, and now your father wants it—" He held out his hand frankly.

Angel breathed hard; but he shook hands with the gipsy schoolboy. He muttered something, he hardly knew what. When Sir Philip Angel rolled away in his car he was under the impression that he left his son on the best of terms with the gipsy schoolboy. He did not know Aubrey Angel so well as the Greyfriars fellows knew him.

Harry Wharton & Co. received Mick with open arms. Almost all the Remove welcomed him, when they knew all. There was a terrific spread in Study No. 1 that evening to celebrate the return of the lost sheep to the fold, as Bob Cherry put it. Mick looked round the study with a glowing face.

"This here is all right!" he said. "It's splendid to be with you fellows again! And I'm friends with Angel, too. That's ripping!"

"Topping!" said Bob Cherry, without adding his opinion as to the worth of Mick's friendship with Angel. Mick was likely to find that out soon enough for himself.

THE END.

(Now you have finished this week's story of Mick, turn first to page 27 and then get busy on pages 14-15!)

The end of all Mick's troubles—related next week!

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE FEATHERS



This is the concluding instalment of our popular serial. In view of the fact that it has made such an immense appeal to my readers, I have arranged for a new serial, introducing Ferrers Locke, to start next week.

Ferrers Locke, in the great story which starts next week, finds an extremely interesting and intricate mystery surrounding certain players in the football world. The Story is by HEDLEY SCOTT, who, though a newcomer to these pages, has earned a reputation to be envied.

The End of the Fight!

PRESENTLY Jack Drake came into the little compartment, and crossed to where his governor was seated.

"I don't know whether it's worth while or not, governor," he said, "but I've been talking to Captain Barlowe, and he is rather inclined to think that one of those fellows who was guard on the prison-barge seems mighty anxious to talk. If you'll come along with me I'll point him out."

Jack and Locke left the compartment, and Boris settled himself in his seat, watching the burly figure in the other corner. Red Mask was lying outstretched on the heap of blankets. His hands had been released from their bonds, but he was wearing heavy ankle-irons, the chain of which was attached to a stout staple in the wall.

After his angry outburst, the huge ruffian had settled into a sullen silence, rousing himself only when his share of the food was brought to him, now and again. He lay quite still, one brawny arm thrown over his head, but Boris was taking no chances with his prisoner. A rifle lay across his knee, and from time to time he turned his head to look at the huge shape.

A long half-hour passed; then Ferrers Locke appeared again, accompanied by Barlowe.

"I want to speak to you, Boris," the detective said. "Captain Barlowe will take your place now."

Red Mask, lying still, listened eagerly. He heard Boris leave the apartment and Barlowe take up position on the narrow seat. The huge ruffian was lying on his side, his back towards his guard, and under cover of the darkness—for the compartment was only lighted by a solitary oil-lamp—Red Mask was at work.

He had managed to draw a pad of paper from his breast-pocket, and, with the pad pressed on the floor, he was carefully writing a message. He had just completed that task when Barlowe came on duty.

Under the very eyes of his captors Red Mask was planning a desperate move.

He had heard Boris mention the name of the town, Tomsk, and had seen the lighted station glimmer for a moment as the train flashed past. Red Mask knew that somewhere about midnight they would stop at another of the halting-places he had chosen—Kovesk. They would halt there for water and food, and the driver and fireman would be changed again.

One of Red Mask's tools was at this particular station—a man he could rely on absolutely. Very cautiously the burly prisoner detached the sheet of paper from the pad and folded it into a thick wedge. Then from his finger he drew his heavy gold signet-ring and thrust the paper through it.

Barlowe, on his narrow seat, was beside the window of the luggage compartment, and the glass had been lowered, allowing the cool night air to rush into the confined space.

Red Mask shifted his position slightly, turning over on his back, stretching his limbs in a well-assumed weariness, finally dragging himself stiffly to a sitting position, propping himself up against the panelling.

There was a pannikin half-filled with water by his side; he reached for it, draining it. Barlowe had swung round at the first movement from the huge prisoner, and he watched him now, steadily, the rifle ready across his knees.

Neither of them spoke, but Barlowe could see the rage-filled eyes flickering towards him now and again. Once Jack Drake came into the compartment and whispered something to the English officer. What he said did not reach Red Mask's ears, but he saw the face of Barlowe suddenly light up, and a quiet chuckle sounded.

"Don't you worry about me, sonny," the captain said. "I'm content to sit here all night. You get on with the good work."

Drake went off again, and another long wait began; then once more the pace of the train began to slacken, and Red Mask

knew that the opportunity he had been waiting for was drawing near.

Again he shifted his position slightly, shuffling further down the panel, still retaining his seated pose. There was a shriek as the engine-whistle sounded, and Barlowe, leaning forward, looked out of the window. He could see the dim lights of the station drawing nearer, and the high outlines of the water-tank beyond them.

A solitary light flashed past, and the heat of the engine gradually slackened; then the roof of the station appeared, and, with a grinding of wheels and the creaking of couplings, the train halted.

Red Mask, gripping the cylinder of paper between his long fingers, waited his chance. He saw Barlowe turn away from the window, and in doing so his head was down for a moment.

That was Red Mask's opportunity. A quick, sure throw saw the ring of paper flash out through the open window and drop on to the dark platform. When Barlowe turned again to seat himself Red Mask was lying back with his arms folded, a smile on his evil face.

Barlowe could hear voices from the upper end of the platform; then two tired figures passed the window, vanishing behind the roofed sheds. The retiring engine-driver and fireman had gone, leaving the new ones to take their places.

A quarter of an hour later the train moved off once more, and Boris entered the compartment, with a steaming cup of coffee and another supply of food for Barlowe and the prisoner.

"Only one other stop before we reach Irkutsk now, Barlowe," the Russian reported. "Better make a good meal while you're at it."

He had handed Red Mask his portion, and the broad-shouldered prisoner lifted the coffee to his lips.

"One more halt—eh?" he repeated stolidly. "So you flatter yourselves that you're winning through, you fools!"

Boris laughed.

"We do not flatter ourselves, my dear Count Heinrich," he returned. "All we

Coming next week—"Special Shooting Number" of our Supplement!

are doing is taking advantage of your most excellent arrangements. We have no desire to improve on them. You Germans were always great at transport work. It was a pity for you that war could not be won by that alone."

Red Mask glared at him.

"You will pay for that remark, my friend," he returned harshly. "You can crow now, but your time is to come!"

Boris had left the panel open, and, leaning forward, Red Mask could see the lighted interior of the saloon, with its rows of seats and occupants. They were all his victims, his enemies, and his small eyes narrowed as he looked.

"They may turn on you, Boris, when they find that the plans of your friend Locke fail at the eleventh hour; and I shall still be able to watch them as they march off to the mines."

Barlowe made an angry gesture, but Boris caught his arm.

"Let him rave," the Russian returned. "They are only the windy words of a baffled rogue. I've got something better to talk to you about presently, when you are relieved."

Half an hour later one of the other prisoners came and took Barlowe's place on guard over Red Mask, and Boris led the captain to the seats where Locke and Jack Drake were waiting for them.

In one corner of the seat was a bearded, grubby-looking fellow, dressed in the same uniform that the prison-barge guard had worn. He touched his shabby cap as Boris and his companion seated themselves opposite.

"This man has opened up to us a means of escape," Boris explained. "It appears that his brother is an engine-driver, and two days before we left Perm a huge goods train set off for Irkutsk laden with grain."

His eyes smouldered for a moment as he looked across at Locke and the others.

"My unfortunate countrymen are being starved just now," Boris went on; "but it appears that we have grain to export, although we have not enough to

feed our own brothers. In any case, if this man speaks the truth, that grain-train should be somewhere near Irkutsk now. It will go round by the lakes, and is bound for Vladivostok, where the grain vessels await its arrival. If we can manage to overtake it before nightfall we shall have found a way of getting through Irkutsk. There will be room for all of us hidden among the grain-bags, and no one will dare to search."

He laughed grimly.

"They will not send the train through the main line station at Irkutsk. They dare not let my countrymen know that we can sell grain."

He nodded across to the shabby ex-guard.

"You are sure you have made no mistake about this?" he said.

"I swear it!" the man returned grimly. "My brother himself told me of his duty. He knew that we also were bound for Irkutsk, and I hope to see my brother there."

"Your hope may be fulfilled," Boris replied dryly; "but that will depend on yourself."

And so it came about that at dawn the next day eager eyes were searching the railway-line ahead for the first sign of the long goods train. At noon another halt was made for food and fuel. Boris, who was on guard over Red Mask at the time, noted the quick impatience of the man. It seemed as though Red Mask was listening for something—waiting for something to happen, and as the train began to move off again he heard the deep voice rap out an oath.

What had happened to that fool at Kovesk? Had he received the message? Why didn't he carry out the orders it contained?

Late in the afternoon a grey fog arose and spread across the low-lying Steppes land, blotting out the dismal scene. They rumbled through another station, and this time Red Mask saw the name of it. It was a small town, not more than forty miles from Irkutsk. Within the

next hour they would be within sight of the lakes.

The train gave a sudden lurch, then steadied itself. Like a flash the truth came to Red Mask. He remembered now that a branch line ran to the left of the main track just below that particular station. If his judgment was correct the train was now heading for the east side of the lakes, and would cross the swing-bridge, and would run into the great garrison camp, where the Soviet soldiers who guarded the frontier had their headquarters.

Another man had taken up the duty of guard, one of the released prisoners, a pallid, tired-eyed man, who fingered the rifle nervously as he sat in the corner.

Red Mask had wrapped a blanket round the lower portion of his body, and now, under the covering, he reached for the ankle-irons. He had taken a short stump of a key from his belt, and now he went to work, and at last the heavy bonds were removed from his feet.

The train was drumming on at half-speed through the mist, and finally it plunged into a deep cutting. In the gloom Red Mask drew his legs under him and waited for a moment; then, with a tiger-like leap, he made his attack.

The din and clatter of the engine pulsing through the cutting drowned the startled sentry's cry of fear. Red Mask drove his fist hard against the lean face, and the man sprawled unconscious over the seat.

Darting to the panel, the burly ruffian listened for a moment. All was still beyond, and, leaping to the door again, he swung it open, and, gripping at the top of the carriage, drew himself up on to the roof. A kick of his foot saw the door of the luggage-compartment shut again; then, on his hands and knees, the huge rogue crawled along the swaying roof until he reached the other end. The gap between the engine tender and



The fireman swung round, grabbing the long-handled shovel. But Red Mask, leaping forward, hurled him aside. "Drop that, you dog!" he broke out. "I am Count Heinrich!" (See page 26.)

Our great new serial starts next week!



With his powerful hands gripping the shimmering lever, Red Mask stood spellbound and helpless. The engine smashed through the wooden barrier, and with a headlong plunge went roaring down into the dark waters of the lake below. (See this page.)

the saloon lay beneath him. Swinging over, Red Mask let himself down by the footholds until he was level with the couplings.

Thanks to the steep gradient, the coach was swaying loosely, the couplings dangling, and after one or two abortive attempts Red Mask succeeded in loosening them. Then the air brake was tackled, and a firm twist saw it drop apart.

Red Mask, clatching at the top of the tender, swayed there for a moment, then, dragging himself over the heap of coal, the begrimed figure dropped at last on to the footplate, between the startled driver and his assistant.

The fireman swung round, grabbing the long-handled shovel, but Red Mask, leaping forward, hurled him aside.

"Drop that, you dog!" he broke out. "I am Count Heinrich, and you are acting under my orders!"

He drew aside his coat, revealing a badge, and the startled glances of the engine-driver and fireman indicated that they recognised that sign of authority.

"Speed—more speed!" Red Mask roared. "We will go ahead, and there will be a merry welcome waiting for our passengers when they follow! Quick—quick! More speed!"

It was only then that the driver and his assistant saw what had happened. Already a gap had leaped between the engine and the solitary coach. Red Mask, pushing the driver aside, leaned for the throttle, opening it wide, and the great engine sprang forward.

They swung round a bend, and the coach vanished for a moment. Faster and faster the engine sped, on down the line, Red Mask in command now. He was peering through the window into the fog-lined track, and for five long minutes he drove the engine at headlong speed; then a solitary signal-box flashed into view for a moment and vanished. The

engine rattled and drummed over the points, and from the fireman crouching over the heap of coals there came a yell—a yell of fear.

He lunged forward, trying to grip Red Mask by the hand, and a torrent of frightened words broke from his lips, but Red Mask did not pay any attention to him. He was visualising the end of that journey when he would run the engine into the barracks and send out a horde of soldiers to recapture those victims of his, lurching along behind him in the swaying coach.

"Master—master!"

"Get away, you fool!"

A back-handed blow sent the fireman reeling across the footplate. He clutched at the edge of the steel side, missed his grip, then went headlong out of the cab, to roll down the embankment.

For another minute the engine drove on, then through the mist Red Mask saw the tall, spidery arms of the bridge crossing the narrow part of the lake, and then, but not until then, did he realise the meaning of that wild warning.

The bridge was up! It had been swung aloft, and the signal-box had indicated that fact. Red Mask's orders had been obeyed, but he had not acted to the command of the signal.

With his powerful hands gripping the shimmering lever, Red Mask stood spellbound and helpless. The engine tore on, clearing the last few yards of track, smashed through the wooden barrier, and with a headlong plunge went roaring down into the dark waters of the lake below.

It was Jack Drake who discovered what had happened. As the coach tore out of the cutting the youngster leaned out of the door of the saloon and looked ahead.

There was no sign of the engine, and

his startled cry brought Ferrers Locke and Boris to his side.

"The engine's gone, gov'nor—the engine's gone!" he cried. "It's broken away!"

For a moment they stared at each other, the saloon rocking and swaying as it ran on down the slope. Then Boris, turning round suddenly, leaped at the panel and flung it open.

"There's an emergency brake here! Come on, quick! Help me!"

They darted into the narrow apartment, and Boris stumbled over the prostrate figure of the armed sentry. Then he and Jack Drake grabbed at the brake-wheel set in the back of the compartment and began to turn it. The grind of the brakes sounded, and half-way down the slope the long saloon was brought to a halt.

"That was Red Mask's work," Jack Drake said to Boris. "Look, he has gone!"

The youngster darted to the heap of blankets, and tossed them over. The heavy irons fell to the floor, and beside them lay a pad of notepaper. Jack picked up the pad, and, entering the lighted saloon, he held it up to the light.

Red Mask had written his message in a heavy hand, and on the sheet was the clear imprint of the words of his message. It was a command to stop or deviate the train, and prevent it from reaching Irkutsk.

By this time the rest of the passengers had flocked around Locke, and it was the bearded guard who gave them the clue.

"We have been turned from the main track, master," he said. "I could not understand at first, but this line we are on now leads us to the soldiers' barracks just beyond the lakes, and we are not far from the siding where my brother's

(Continued on page 26.)

Turn to pages 14-15, and get busy!

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

Supplement No. 148. HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR Week ending November 10th, 1923.



"If you think," I said, tapping the editor's chest with a bony forefinger, "that I'm going to do any interviewing—impertinent or otherwise—on Guy Fawkes' Day, you're making a colossal blunder! To-day should be observed as a holiday. We must lay down the pen for the firework. We must exchange the notebook for a mask. We must banish work from our minds—"

"And go to press with an entirely blank Supplement, I suppose?" said the editor sarcastically. "Do you imagine the printers will wait our pleasure? Do you think we can possibly excuse ourselves on the grounds that it's Guy Fawkes' Day? The work of the world must go on. The printing machines must continue to operate. The editor must continue to edit. The interviewer must continue to interview."

"You speak," I said, "with an air of finality."

"And, what's more, I mean what I say. I'll have no slacking on my staff. You will oblige me by interviewing Micky Desmond without delay."

"What! Interview that mad Irishman?"
"He's a jolly sight saner than you are. I often wish I had him for a special representative, instead of a person of feeble intellect, like yourself!"

"Hush!" I said. "You must not speak like that! If you insult me, I might get slightly annoyed—almost angry, in fact. And then I should be compelled to—er—bluff your editorial boko!"

The editor pointed to the door.

"Travel!" he said curtly. "And let me have your article first thing in the morning."

I went off in search of Micky Desmond. But I found him not. One of his study-mates informed me that Micky was very busy making preparations for the Guy Fawkes revels.

I wasn't going to sniff all over the school for Desmond, like a bloodhound. I went along to my own quarters, and ate a leisurely tea. Then I perused the "Boys' Friend," and got so absorbed in the school yarn that the afternoon merged into evening before I was aware of it.

On going out into the Close I found that dusk had fallen.

The darkness, however, was relieved by the glare of lighted torches.

There was to be a torchlight procession to the football ground, and I joined in.

I was present at the lighting of the bonfire, and I looked on with interest and enjoyment whilst a number of effigies were fed to the flames.

It was at this stage that I bumped into Micky Desmond. He was dragging an effigy of Mr. Pussyfoot towards the bonfire.

"Faith, an' this is the best guy of the lot!" said Micky. "Just you watch it scorch and shrivel!"

The effigy was hurled to the flames, which

toyed with their grotesque plaything for a time, and then began to consume it in earnest.

"This is great fun!" I said. "Wish I could get hold of a guy of some sort."

"I'll tell you where you'll find one," said Micky Desmond.

"An effigy?"

"Yes. There's one in Prout's study. It's an effigy of Prout himself. Go and fetch it, and we'll watch it burn!"

FIREWORKS!

By Dick Penfold.

A crate of fireworks I should buy,
If only I possessed the "dibs,"
Rockets that soar into the sky,
And squibs!

Alas! I have no hidden hoard
Of silver jingling in my pockets;
So ratherine-wheels I can't afford,
Nor rockets!

Bob Cherry's bought a lovely lot
Of ripping rockets, in their sticks;
For Bob a heap of cash has got—
I've nix!

I love to see the firework show,
And watch the starlights spurt and
sputter;
But I am "broke"; and words of woe
I mutter!

I love to see the bonfire blaze,
And watch the rockets rise and fall;
But I can only stand and gaze,
'That's all.

Fireworks are fused by Tubb (young
toad!)
And Dicky Nugent (little elf!)
But I have nothing to explode
Myself!

But if our Editor so great
The moment he this poem handles,
Pays me a quid, I'll buy a crate
Of Roman Candles!

I dashed away towards the building, completely forgetting my duties as the special representative of the "Greyfriars Herald."

"An effigy to burn! And an effigy of old Prout at that!" I chortled joyously. "How ripping!"

When I came in sight of the building, I glanced up at the lighted window of Mr. Prout's study.

There, sure enough, leaning against the inner window-sill, was the guy.

Even at that distance it bore a remarkable resemblance to Prout, and I could not help admiring the skill of the fellow who had fashioned it.

I entered the building, raced up the stairs three at a time, and dashed along the corridor. Then I threw open the door of Prout's study, and entered.

Yes, there was the effigy, propped up against the window-sill.

With a whoop of delight I rushed towards it, and grasped it by the middle.

Then, to my horror, the thing became animated with life. It wriggled, it struggled, it uttered a shout of protest.

"Oh crumbs!" I gasped. "It isn't an effigy at all! It's Prout himself!"

In a flash it dawned upon me what had happened.

Micky Desmond, in his Irish way, had been pulling my leg. He had given me to understand that there was a guy in Prout's study. So there was—but the guy happened to be Prout himself!

"Boy! Misguided young hooligan! How dare you hurl yourself upon me in that aggressive manner!" raved Prout. "How dare you perpetrate a wanton and savage attack upon a Form-master!"

I let go of Prout as if he had been red-hot.

"Sorry, sir—awfully sorry!" I stammered.

"Your sorrow," said Prout, "leaves me unmoved! Never have I been treated with such indignity! I am outraged and annoyed beyond measure!"

Prout certainly looked it.

"I—I mistook you for an effigy, sir," I muttered.

It was the most unfortunate remark I could have made.

"What!" roared Prout. "Do I bear any resemblance—even the slightest resemblance—to an effigy—a grotesque guy?"

"Nunno, sir! I—I—"

Prout picked up a cane.

"Hold out your hand!" he thundered.

"Strictly speaking, I should place this matter in the hands of your own Form-master, for him to deal with. But I cannot contain myself—I cannot allow your richly-merited punishment to be deferred."

I gingerly extended my hand, and the cane bit into my palm.

After setting up a new record for the high jump, I held out my other hand, and received another stinging cut. Then the performance was repeated, and I crawled out of Prout's study feeling like a limp rag.

Slowly and painfully, I wended my way to the football ground.

Micky Desmond greeted me with a grin.

"Hallo!" he said cheerfully. "Where's the effigy?"

"You—you—" I spluttered.

And then, furious beyond measure, I shot out my left.

Which reminds me of a good conundrum.

What is the difference between the special representative of the "Greyfriars Herald" and Mr. Prout when he went rabbit-shooting the other day?

Answer: One shot out his left, and the other left out his shot!

THE END.

Don't miss a line of "A Marked Man!"—next Monday's new—



By **DICK RUSSELL.**

HURREE SINGH! You will recite the first verse of Gray's Elegy, which the class has been learning."

Mr. Quelch rapped out the command, and his gimlet eyes were fixed upon Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"With pleasure, honoured sahib," murmured the dusky junior. And he rose to his feet and started to recite:

"The curfew tollfully tolls the knell of parting dayfulness,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the leaffulness;
The ploughman homeward plodfully plods his weary wayfulness,
And leaves the world to darkness and to mefulness."

"Ha, ha, ha!" There was a loud titter from the class. Hurree Singh's embellishments of the

English language were always amusing. The native teachers of Bengal had taught Inky his English, and they had much to answer for.

"Silence!" Mr. Quelch's voice resembled the boom of thunder. "I must ask you, Hurree Singh, to learn the actual words of the poet—not to introduce frills and embellishments of your own!"

Hurree Singh sat down, looking rather crestfallen. And then Mr. Quelch called on Skinner to recite the first verse of the famous Elegy. Skinner knew it all right, but he was a gabbler. He left out small words here and there, as if he couldn't be bothered with them.

"Curfew tolls knell parting day,
Lowing herd winds slowly lea;
Ploughman homeward plods weary way,
Leaves world darkness and me."

Mr. Quelch gave a snort. "You are a gabbler, Skinner!" he thundered. "Sit down and learn that verse afresh."

Skinner sat down, and as he did so he was nudged in the ribs by little Wan Lung.

"Got a matchee?" murmured the Chinese junior.

"Eh?" gasped Skinner. "What d'you want a match for?"

"Me wakee things up a bit by letting off fireworks," whispered Wan Lung. "Poetry lesson too tame—savvy?"

Skinner grinned, and surreptitiously passed a box of matches under the desk.

Wun Lung drew a Chinese cracker from his pocket, and coolly proceeded to ignite it.

Alonzo Todd was in the act of reciting the line:

"And all the air a solemn stillness holds,"

Crack, crack, crack! Sizz-z-z-z! Bang! Phut!

The suddenness of the explosion caused quite a flutter in the Form-room. Mr. Quelch tried to lower the record for the high-jump. He cannoned wildly into the blackboard, and brought down the whole box of tricks.

Fresh crackers were ignited, and they leapt and bounded across the Form-room floor. The room was in an uproar, and it took Mr. Quelch at least ten minutes to restore order out of chaos.

The audacious Wun Lung was promptly pounced upon, and given three cuts on each hand. But he didn't mind in the least. He had accomplished his ambition of livening up the lesson!

EDITORIAL!

By **Harry Wharton.**

ONCE again the festive Guy Fawkes celebrations are here, and the sound of the firework is heard in the land.

Centuries have passed since Guido Fawkes made his memorable attempt to blow up the King and all his Ministers. The plot failed; and it was Guy himself who received a "blowing-up" at the finish.

At Greyfriars we always hold high revel on the evening of "the Fifth." A huge bonfire is lighted on the football-ground; there are torchlight processions; and the spluttering of squibs and the screaming of rockets are heard on every hand. It is a gala night, and we all enjoy ourselves up to the hilt.

Here is our Special Guy Fawkes Number, red-hot from the pens of our contributors. Many of you, when you read our comical articles, will emulate the fireworks, and fairly "explode." At least, I hope you will, for "Laugh and grow fat" is an excellent maxim.

My Editorial is short and sweet this week. I must make way for the merry nonsense of Tom Brown!

HARRY WHARTON.

HOW I FARED ON "THE FIFTH!"

A few thrilling experiences.

BOB CHERRY:
I had the time of my life on Bonfire Night. I made a guy resembling Loder of the Sixth. It was almost lifelike, and the fellows simply roared when we carried it to the bonfire. Loder roared, too—but not with merriment! He didn't recognise us, because we wore hideous masks, and he fairly danced with fury! We fed the effigy to the flames, and it was consumed amid thunders of applause!

ALONZO TODD:
I let off one squib on Bonfire Night, and then had to retire from the proceedings, suffering from shell-shock. The unearthly din, and the fierce conflagration, proved altogether too much for my sensitive nerves!

DICKY NUGENT:
I had a ripping time on Bonfire Nite. I let off about a hundred fireworks altogether, and a jumping cracker happened to alight on mister twigg, and it scorched a hole through his gown. You ought to see how he carried on! But if I hadn't distinguished the flames, he'd have been "carried off"!

BILLY BUNTER:
I don't know much about Bonfire Night, bekwase I was in the tuckshop most of the time, gorging while Rome was burning, so to speak. Mrs. Mirable had gone down to see the fireworks, so I made hay while the moon shone! "Crackers" of the hiskit variety are much better than Chinese ones!

ROUND THE BONFIRE!

By **Tom Brown.**

FUN, fast and furious, marked the proceedings on Bonfire Night. The bonfire was the biggest ever built at Greyfriars, and it blazed right merrily. Among those standing around it was Bob Cherry. The fire had a great fascination for him, for he's a "gay young spark" himself!

WHO was the practical joker who surrounded Mr. Hacker with lively jumping crackers? The master of the Shell jumped about like a cat on hot bricks. He was, in fact, a jumping Hacker!

HORACE COKER, who has a reputation for "scorching" on his motor-bike, succeeded in "scorching" his hands on Bonfire Night. He went to put an effigy of Guy Fawkes on the fire, and a tongue of flame suddenly shot out at him, and caused the mighty Horace to turn a back-somersault!

IT is estimated that over 5,000 fireworks were let off by the Greyfriars fellows. Wish I had a few shares in a firework firm!

—serial by **HEDLEY SCOTT**—introducing **Ferrers Locke!**

GALLOPING DICK!

With his heart full of bitterness against Sir Mostyn Frayne, gamester and rogue, who, in one stroke, has robbed him of his brother, and the house and lands which had been the property of the Langleys for generations past, Dick Langley turns highwayman. Now known as "Galloping Dick," he roams the countryside—the terror of the rich, and a staunch friend of the poor.



Told by
the world-
renowned
author,

**DAVID
GOODWIN.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

An Old Enemy.

JUST the same old place—nothing changed. Ecod, but my heart's been sick for the sight of it these weary months past."

Even Black Kitty seemed excited as Dick pulled her up on the brow of Blackwold Heath, and she clamped her bit and pawed the turf eagerly. She had been bred and broken in there.

As for Dick Langley, since he was first ousted from his old home by the knavery of Sir Mostyn Frayne, and had taken to the highway, where his name was now so widespread a terror, he had never ceased to long for the place of his birth. Ride where he might, there was no place like Milton, and the wild heaths that surrounded it.

Out of sheer daring he had remained in his own district, and harried it during the first two months of his highwaymanship; but when the place was filled with King's riders, seeking him night and day to bring him to the gallows, Dick outwitted them half a dozen times, and then rode away in disgust to districts that knew him less; but soon the fame of his exploits filled all England. His going from Milton filled with joy all the rich and miserly, the grinding merchants, the fat-pursed chapmen, for heavy toll he took of them; but the poor and needy were sorrowful when Galloping Dick went from among them, for none were allowed to want while he had guineas about him.

"Come, Kitty, let us push on and see how the old home itself is faring—though I misdoubt it will pull my heart-strings to look at it."

They trotted on through the woods, and came out at the other side; but before they were clear, Dick heard the sound of hoofs on the bridle-road, and pulled Kitty to a walk.

"A good horse, by the sound. But we'll stop no man at the pistol's point to-day, Kitty. I have not the heart for it. We'll give ourselves a day to look at the old haunts, and then we'll take the road again till the rich and the skin-

flints shake in their shoes at the name of us. Who comes here? One who keeps his cellarman hard at work, by the look of him."

And, indeed, it was no pleasing spectacle that appeared.

Riding a fine chestnut hunter came a richly-dressed man in the prime of life, but with a face blotched and bloated with debauchery. His eyes were deep-set and bloodshot, his cheeks overhung and flabby, and he lurched in the saddle as he rode. Dick curled his lip in disgust, for he had no love for a wine-bibber, and the man was plainly inebriated, though it was early in the afternoon. His bleared eyes hardly glanced at Dick, and he almost lurched out of the saddle as he passed.

"Odd's blood!" exclaimed Dick under his breath. "'Tis Sir Mostyn!"

He was so astonished that the man was gone before he could turn. Dick would never have thought it possible that his old enemy could have changed so much in the past few months as to be hardly recognisable.

"The fellow has gone to the dogs altogether," thought Dick. "He was always a knave, but of old he used to let others do the drinking while he fleeced them at cards. Now he's the owner of Langleys, and has all the money he can need, he has given his natural bent a free rein."

Black Kitty tossed her head and nodded.

"I haven't the heart to go and see the old house after this," Dick muttered; "it would cut me to the quick to think of that scoundrel defiling it with his presence, and like enough it is in sad order with such a master. I'll go down to the old Three Pigeons and dine there."

Mine host of the Three Pigeons received Dick with a mixture of joy at seeing the young master of Langleys again, and fear to see him risking his life in that neighbourhood.

"Ah, 'tis sorry times since you left Master Dick," he said, as he placed his best viands upon his finest napery before the young highwayman. "We don't like Sir Mostyn, we simple folk. But I'm

afraid to see you back here, sir. 'Tis a main dangerous place for you!"

"Ah, the King's riders—oh, Thompson? You think they'll hale me to the gallows? Well, I've reached the stago that I don't much care one way or the other. I've had a few brushes with them, though, and I never heard that they came off best."

"Ah, sir, but 'tain't only the King's riders this time. We've great folk among us. The Prince o' Wales is staying at Durwards Hall—Prince George himself! An' the Chief Justice is there, too."

"Is that all, good man," said Dick, with a laugh. "Why, then, there's naught to fear. Do you suppose the Prince has not something better to do than chase a poor devil of a highwayman?"

"All the same, sir, I've heard he's laid a wager he can catch you, and he has a way of winning his bets, as his companions know. He laid the bet with Lord Petre for a thousand guineas."

"There have been bets lost over me before, Thompson," said Dick; "but no matter. I have dined well, and here is your score, mine host."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Home of His Fathers.

EGAD, I think better of it," said Dick to himself as he rode off. "I'll go to Langleys, and I'll do more than look at it! I've a craving to be inside the place once more, if but for half an hour, and I'm certain there's no man in Milton dare deny me now!"

He rode along the highway and down the chaise road to the very gates of Langleys, and gazed once more at the glorious old red house, with its forty chimneys, and its great green lawns and cedars. There seemed to be nobody about save those near the stables. Beyond the right wing half a dozen grooms were lolling idly. The whole place was ill-kept and neglected.

With such an air of command did Dick ride up that the lodge-keeper swung wide

Aubrey Angel makes an astonishing discovery! What is it?

the gates, and the young highwayman rode into the park.

He saw before him the wide front entrance, and remembered with a pang how his brother Basil had met him there, white and nervous, on the fatal day. How Basil had begged money from him, and retired at once to lose it to Sir Mostyn Frayne in the upper library, as he had already lost his own.

How, too, the fatal pistol-shot had echoed through the old house, and Dick had gone up to find his brother with a smoking pistol in his hand, lying across the card-table, a bullet in his brain, and Sir Mostyn standing close by. Basil had shot himself after losing to the card-sharper the whole of the estate—Dick's half as well as his own. And how, for the sake of his dead brother's honour, Dick had accepted the debt, rode out penniless into the world, and taken to the highways with a price on his head.

"Brave times!" laughed Dick to himself grimly. "Yet I would do it again. Only I should have shot the cheating scoundrel first."

He rode up to the porch, paused a moment, dismounted, and patted Black Kitty on the flank.

"Off with you, old lass!" he said. "Go into the woods and wait for me. I would not risk you in this rascal's grounds."

Kitty turned with a whinny, cantered away across the park, leaped the fence, and vanished. Dick walked up to the great oaken door and flung it open. There was no doorkeeper or serving-man. The whole house seemed asleep.

"'Tis more like a monastery than a gentleman's house," said Dick—"though little like the former, I doubt, when Sir Mostyn and his cronies are carousing."

With strange feelings in his breast, Dick walked through three or four of the great rooms he knew so well. Evidently the baronet was away, and in his absence the servants took themselves off and did as they pleased. At last he wandered into the little ante-room used as a smoking-room, which opened into the large saloon where the card-tables stood. There was a wide old Queen Anne armchair by the table, and Dick sank into it, and sat there, musing, and wondering why he had come. The rest was pleasing—he had been out all the night before. Gradually, before he knew it, he had dozed off into slumber.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Loose Tongue and a Drawn Sword.

"WHAT! All Langleys for one throw of the dice? Pink me, Frayne, but that was a good stroke!"

"Nay!" hiccoughed the voice of the baronet. "'Twas not dice, but faro. We played twenty-two hours at a stretch. And his brother came up, and found the cub lying shot across the table. Ha, ha!"

The words came to Dick as though in a dream as he lay back in the armchair.

How long he had been there he did not know. He half-opened his eyes, and believed himself lying out in the green-wood, and dreaming, as he often did, of Langleys and the days of his happiness.

He was in the gloom; but a blaze of light came through the open doorway of the larger room, and dimly, as if in a dream, he saw three men sitting at the card-table. One of them was Sir Mostyn Frayne, the second an ill-looking fellow in gaudy clothes, with gambling bully written all over him. The third was a young fellow of the genus "pigeon," such as the gamester loves to prey on. He was evidently a gentleman, and foolish rather than vicious, by the look of him.

They were all somewhat advanced in wine, but Sir Mostyn more than any. He was too far gone to give any care to what he said. The three were dicing, and the rattle of the boxes and the chink of the coins played an accompaniment to their chatter.

"Ay, 'twas the best game I ever played!" cried Sir Mostyn loudly. "Ecod, if you could have seen the cub Dick's face when he saw his brother lying there!"

"'Twas lucky for you, Mostyn," said the bully. "Had Basil not been dead his brother might have refused to give up his share of the estate. Rare luck! Come, Mostyn, tell us the truth! You put that bullet in the cub yourself?"

He leered jovially at the baronet. In his senses Sir Mostyn would have drawn sword at the suggestion for fear of his own neck. But drink had transformed him for the time being into a boastful fool, while thinking himself a very clever fool for his villainy.

"You've hit it, V-Verney!" he

hiccoughed, with a grating laugh. "Ecod, it was a clever trick—eh? The young cockerel told me when the dice was thrown that he couldn't answer for his brother's share of the estate. So I shot him, and stuck the pistol in his hand!"

"You knave!" cried the young man hoarsely, springing up with a white face. "You dare to boast of such a deed! You hound, I will see you—"

Sir Mostyn dragged out his sword, with an oath, and made a lunge at the youngster. There was a sudden rush, the blade was knocked aside, and the baronet fell back, gasping, as he saw Galloping Dick before him. The young highwayman had heard the truth, and awoke to hear it was no dream.

"Leave that boy alone, dog!" he said, between his teeth. "You have confessed yourself a murderer, and it is to me you have to look. Stand back, if you please, young sir! I am the brother of the murdered man, and the quarrel is mine!"

"Ay, it's Galloping Dick Langley, and there's a price on his head!" shrieked Sir Mostyn. "We have you now, you knave! Fetch the runners, someone!"

Dick picked up a goblet of wine and flung it into the baronet's face.

Sir Mostyn started violently. Though little noted for open courage, the insult roused his blood, and he turned livid with fury. The shock seemed to sober him completely.

"Ay, out," he cried—"out upon the grass, and I will pink you first and save your body for the gibbet! Verney, you shall be my second!"

But the bully had gone. He had slipped away.

"Ah, good!" muttered Sir Mostyn, who seemed pleased at this. "No matter; I will fight without a second!"

"I will act for you, sir, if you will allow me," said the youngster to Dick. "My name is Gaskell."

Dick bowed. "I am greatly beholden to you, sir. And now, Sir Mostyn, be good enough to come outside with me."

As they made for the door the baronet called aside his body-servant, who was close by, and whispered to him rapidly. Dick saw the man hurrying off to the stables when they reached the lawn.

"I am not going to soil my turf with the blood of a highwayman!" sneered Sir Mostyn. "We will go down the road to the clearing."

There was a moon, and quite light enough for fighting.

The ceremonies were soon over, and the opponents fell on. Sir Mostyn was one of the finest swordsmen in England, and Dick a pupil worthy of his father, who was accounted the second in Europe. The rapiers clashed together, and the fight began.

The first passes had hardly been made when there was an interruption. Up the road and down the road, from both sides came two squads of horsemen at full gallop.

"King's riders!" exclaimed Gaskell. "What does this mean?"

"It means that I have won the throw," said Sir Mostyn.

And the riders galloped up, calling upon Dick to surrender in the name of the King.

Then, just as Dick determined to make an end of his brother's murderer, and die on the swords of the riders rather than yield himself to the gallows, a gorgeous mail-coach, with four dashing



Dick picked up a goblet of wine and flung it into the baronet's face. Sir Mostyn started violently. Though little noted for open courage, the insult roused his blood, and he turned livid with fury. "Out upon the grass!" he fumed. (See this page.)

Just for a few minutes' work there may be hours of sheer joy!

outriders, came whirling up with the right-hand squad of the captors

"The prince!" cried Gaskell.
"Hold there!" cried a commanding voice.

And as the phaeton pulled up, a good-looking, curly-headed young buck stepped out, followed by an older man.

"Well, Petre," said he of the curly hair, "here's our man. I've won my bet!"

"It is true," replied the other, with a bow. "The thousand guineas are yours, sir."

"He is a smart fellow, pink me!" said the future King George IV, for it was he. "Look at him, Petre! What! Fighting, gentlemen? What is the quarrel?"

Dick, bowing low, replied:

"I am Richard Langley of Langleys, your Royal Highness, now known as Galloping Dick, and ripe, as you perceive, for the gallows. This is Sir Mostyn Frayne, who now holds my estates, having cheated my brother out of them at cards, and afterwards murdered him!"

"Which I can prove," said Gaskell.

"Is it so, in faith?" exclaimed the prince, turning to Dick. "Then have at each other again. And do you, Sir Highwayman, pink the scurvy rascal, if you speak the truth!"

On fell the fighters, asking no better. The steel rang sharply, and for some time there was little advantage. Sir Mostyn wounded Dick in the left arm, and received a thrust in the shoulder. But soon the fine health and clean life of Dick Langley began to tell. The baronet's face became transformed with hate when he saw he had met his match at last.

Then, seizing his opportunity, he tried



"A Royal pardon!" said the prince, handing the paper to Dick. "No longer Galloping Dick, but Langley of Langleys!" (See this page.)

a foul stroke. He caught Dick's blade with a sudden snatch of his left hand, held it aside, and made a savage lunge at his young enemy.

Dick turned his body to the left with one wrench, and the baronet's blade slipped past him. He wrenched his own rapier free at the same moment, and as, with an oath of despair, Sir Mostyn came at him again, Dick's sword passed through his heart, and the scoundrel fell, his foul deeds expiated in death.

"A good riddance of a scoundrel!" said the prince. "And you, Dick

Langley, are as neat and honourable a swordsman as I ever saw. Bring me paper here, and a quill and ink-horn!"

"The Royal pardon!" he said, handing it to Dick. "And I'll warrant my father to countersign it. And now, young sir, I see that wondrous black mare of yours galloping up the road to you, and it's time she was stalled, and ourselves, too. So let us all enter these ancestral halls of yours, and make a night of it. Galloping Dick no longer, sir, but Langley of Langleys."

THE END.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER.

(Conclusion, from page 21, of our popular serial.)

train will be waiting if it has reached there by now."

He looked at Boris for a moment.

"If my master will trust me I will lead him to the siding, but I shall have to go with him. It will not be safe for me to return again."

A strange scene followed then. In a straggling line the fugitives trudged after their guide, with Boris and Locke at their head. Over the foggy, rough ground they paced, now striding through a patch of dank reeds, then scrambling over high mounds of wet mud.

For the best part of two hours they trudged, then ahead of them appeared a line of sheds and the glimmering rails beyond. Drawn up close to the sheds was a long goods train, with huge sheets of tarpaulin slung over each wagon.

Locke and Boris went on ahead, making a swift search. There was no sign of engine-driver or guard. The derelict train stood apparently abandoned on the out-of-the-way siding.

"They will come and haul out at dusk," Boris declared. "They will go by the loop line in the darkness, for there are hungry men who might raid them if they saw all this foodstuff leaving our impoverished country."

They rejoined their companions, and Locke made his plans quickly. Presently, in little groups of twos and threes, the tired fugitives separated, each party seeking shelter in the laden wagons.

Boris and Locke and Jack Drake found a corner in one of the leading trucks, and, hidden under the protecting tarpaulins, waited with nerves on edge. The friendly darkness came down, and Jack's quick ears caught the first sounds of the approaching engine.

The clanking sound of the couplings being adjusted was like music in the ears of the lad, and when, with a slow, grunting jerk, the long grain-train began to move, he turned towards his governor in the darkness, and caught at the detective's hand.

"We're on the last lap now, governor," the youngster whispered; "and, my hat, I think it's the winning one, too!"

Three days later at Chanar, the junction line station that marks the end of the Russian territory and the beginning of Manchuria, a group of tattered, hungry men and women were gathered in the British Consul's office there.

That same night the mail train carried them down to Mukden, on the first stage of their homeward journey.

"They can do simply nothing, my dear Locke," was the Consul's blunt comment. "Our Government is powerless, so far as Russia is concerned, and, as you know, any of our countrymen who go there do so at their own risk. But at least you have done something. I have heard about this White Heather Brotherhood, and this amazing exploit of yours will prove to your enemies that they are not so powerful as they imagine."

This conversation had taken place just before the train had departed for Mukden, and Ferrers Locke nodded to the official.

"There is only one man whom I would have liked to have seen punished," he returned grimly. "and that is Red Mask."

The Consul shrugged his shoulders.

"They found an engine in the lake below the bridge leading to the barracks, but there is no official news concerning the man you mention. But, dead or alive, Red Mask met his master when he met you!"

And with that Ferrers Locke had to be content.

THE END.



THE COMPETITION OF THE YEAR!

THIS brief paragraph is just by way of being a reminder—not, most certainly, to my chums, the regular readers of the MAGNET. They know all there is to know concerning the splendour of the great Competition which has set the world agog. All I intend to do this week is to rub it into the new supporters who march in Monday by Monday, that they can set to straightaway and work for one of the magnificent prizes offered in connection with the Footballers' Names contest. That is that—just that, and nothing more. Those small reproductions of the earlier sets of puzzle pictures clear the way. There has been, and is, a perfect mad rush for the MAGNET, and copies are at a premium.

"THE GIPSY MILLIONAIRE!"

Another yarn about Mick for next week. When you read this real live story in next week's MAGNET you will find yourself tumbling bang into the unexpected. It is just the same with Mick, the brisk young nomad who finds at long last the giddy wheel of Fortune spinning merrily in his favour. The circumstances are strange enough to leave any reader wondering over the details of an entrancing tale for many a day. To be able to do this is proof of the excellence of any narrative.

HOW IT HANGS OUT!

This has no reference to the week's wash! I am still dealing with Mick, as he appears next Monday. He has been something of a mystery ever since he appeared at Greyfriars—one of the fellows never rightly understood. There have been weird influences and remarkable agencies busy behind the screen of his life, as it were—something which has piqued others far more than Mick himself. He has just gone on, taking what came, and playing up to the blows of adversity. Of course, matters being what they are, there was no chance of Mick being other than on the worst possible terms with Aubrey Angel. But it is indirectly through certain actions of Aubrey Angel that the gipsy plops right into the most amazing prosperity. All this is related in the most convincing style. You will admit that next week's yarn is a real stunner. Whatever happens, Mick's mark will be left on Greyfriars.

THIS IS SPECIAL!

Look out next week for the first instalment of our new football serial. It is the work of a writer who is new to the MAGNET, namely, Mr. Hedley Scott. The fact that this author has reached the pages of the MAGNET is enough in itself to show his form. He has kicked a fine goal. I have every confidence in this new serial. It is dashing and spirited, and contains a strong plot with plenty of fibre in it. Let me know your opinion. As you are well aware, these are bigger days than ever for football. There is more in the game—quite a fresh spirit of strenuous endeavour, and the swing of the football pendulum, so to speak, means no end to everybody. It is all part and parcel of the nation. It is bringing out new qualities of endurance and initiative, and, of course, in a matter of this kind with horizons widening, comes the chance of the new writer. He it is who can interpret better than anyone some of the real significance of the changing times. Outside all that we are in for a gripping story, which is bound to rebound to the credit of the old MAGNET.

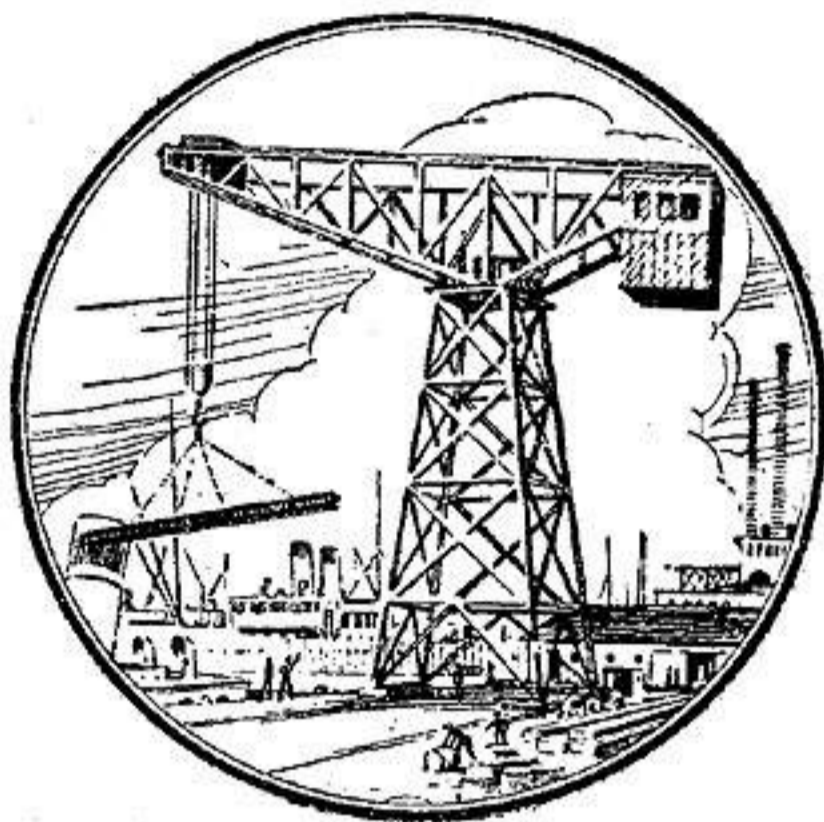
By way of extra interest, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake play a prominent part in the new Serial.

A SHOOTING SUPPLEMENT!

Just wait and see Bunter spread himself as a Bisley hero in the supplement of the "Greyfriars Herald" next week! It is a feast for the gods. We may, in the dim, dead past, gone beyond recall, have suffered moments of disappointment over the porpoise. I say we may, for I am not going to attack a giddy performer like the Owl of Greyfriars. You find him next week as a sportsman of the sportiest; no target can withstand him; he is the boss of the bullseye.

THE EDITOR.

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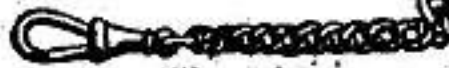
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