



CHAPTER V.

Juggling with Bottles.

Juggling with bottles is, to my mind, less effective than any other kind of Juggling. From most points of view they are the least satisfactory of all the properties commonly utilised for juggling purposes. I shall not, therefore, deal at unnecessary length with the subject. To begin with, I strongly advise my readers not to use real bottles until they are fairly expert in the use of articles of similar shape made of wood or composition. Very awkward accidents may occur even to an experienced Juggler, owing to bottles colliding and breaking during manipulation. However, to those who desire to add tricks with bottles to their *repertoire*, I recommend champagne bottles. The glass is thicker than in the general make of bottles and their shape is better adapted for the work. Do not get the large size, but the size known as half bottles. The larger are altogether too heavy and cumbersome for ordinary work. In juggling three bottles, they are held by the neck two in the right hand and one in the left. The lead is naturally made with the right hand: the bottles are made to turn one revolution only and are caught again by the necks. There are many entertaining little tricks that will

suggest themselves to the inventive tyro in bottle-juggling. An old and favourite one is juggling three to the tune of "Weel may the Keel Row," or similar tune, while standing in front of a box, (a case made to hold a dozen is a good size and very suitable for the purpose). After juggling the bottles a few times round whilst standing, gradually lower the body until the hands are not very far above the box, and complete the trick by keeping time to the music by striking the box with the bases of the bottles as they come into the hand.

One of the prettiest effects in bottle-juggling, is produced by what is known as the Plate and Bottle Trick. This is done by holding an ordinary dinner-plate in the right hand, bottom upwards, with the bottle standing upon it, (fig. 5.) The bottle is then thrown half a turn into the air and when

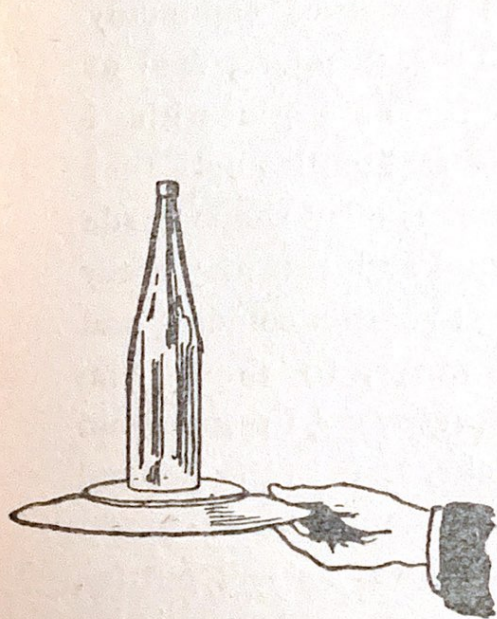


FIG. 5.

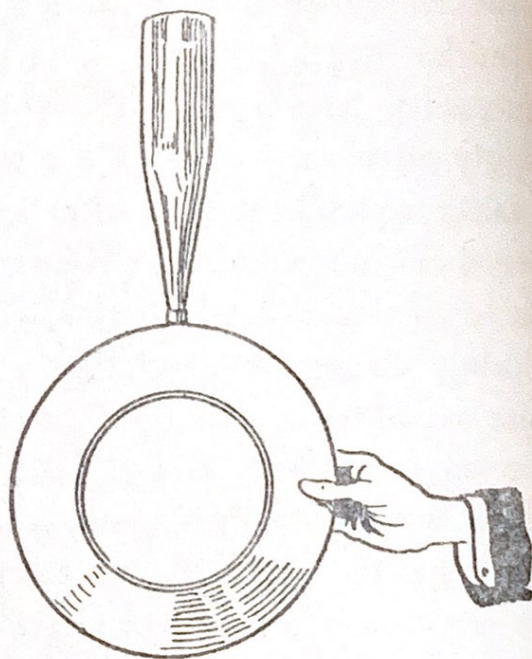


FIG. 6.

descending neck downwards is caught on the edge of the plate (fig. 6.) Though by no means one of the simplest movements it is not so difficult as it looks and is well

worth the time it may require to perform it. A small hock bottle (half-size again) will be found the most suitable for the purpose : its peculiar shape tapering from base to neck being the better adapted to retain its equilibrium. These bottles can be obtained at any Wine and Spirit Stores for a copper or two. Having obtained one, the pupil must, with the point of a hammer or other tool fitted for the purpose, gently tap and chip the mouth of the bottle-neck so as to roughen its edge. This, of course, will tend to prevent its slipping off the edge of the plate when caught there. First practise *balancing* the bottle on the edge of the plate. When the pupil can do this, the rest is easily learnt. Hold the plate with a firm grip with the fingers on the inside of the plate, and when throwing the bottle off do not throw it too high, just high enough for the bottle to take half a turn. When the bottle is thus thrown from the back of the plate and caught on the plate edge, balance it there for a few seconds and then throw it from the plate edge and catch it on the back of the plate again. This will be found somewhat easier than throwing it from the back of the plate and catching it on the edge. If the pupil is inclined to give the required time and attention to bottle and plate manipulation, he can vary his practice by throwing the bottle held by the neck from the left hand under his leg or round his back, and catching the neck of the bottle as before on the edge of the plate. In both these throws the bottle must be made to turn one complete revolution. Of course the final catch must be on the back of the plate, bottle upright as in the first position, and then with one of your "most sweetest" smiles at your audience and a little bow, replace the articles on your table and—"there you are." In this trick the pupil must guard against throwing the bottle too high. It only requires to turn one complete revolution, and *should not* be thrown higher than to take this turn

"comfortably," as one might say. Until expert at bottle and plate tricks, the use of an enamelled plate will be advisable.

Another showy little exhibition is effected with two bottles, a plate and four liqueur glasses or small wine glasses. For this performance you require an assistant to pass the articles to you. Commence by balancing one of the bottles neck downwards on your chin or forehead. The plate, (as shallow a one as you can procure) and just sufficiently large to accomodate the other articles, is then passed to you, and placed by you, on the top of the bottle which is already balanced. Place the plate inside upward, just as it ordinarily rests on the table. Your assistant then passes you the other bottle which you place on the centre of the plate and then one by one the four glasses at equal distances on the plate round the bottle. I remember regarding this trick in my young days as a wonderful instance of the equilibrist's skill, and it is always received with favour. It certainly is "gaudy"; but, if the pupil has become possessed of any knack in balancing it will be found infinitely easier to learn than it appears to be. One or two hints may be given that will be found worthy of notice. One is to fit a cork in the neck of the bottom bottle, cutting off nice and squarely any cork projecting above the neck. Also cut two circular pieces of linen slightly larger

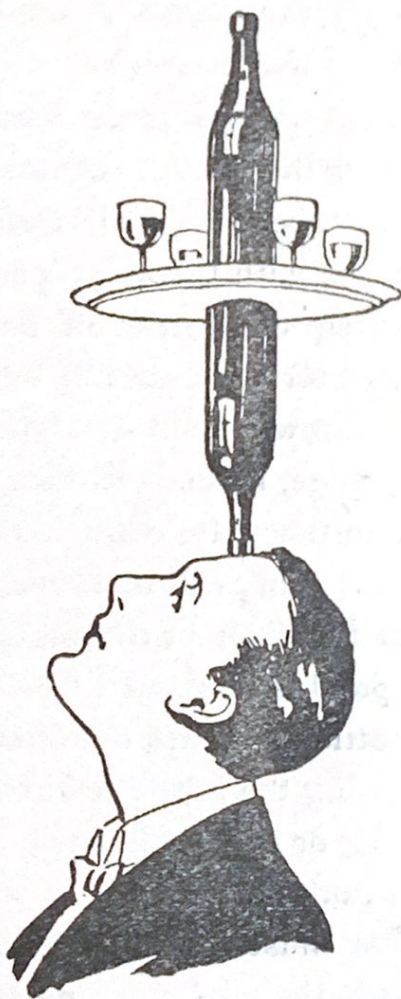


FIG. 7.

than the diameter of the bottoms of the bottles, and paste them on the top and bottom centres of the plates. These will be found not only to prevent to a great extent the tendency to slide, but will act as a guide in placing the plate and bottle centrally. Glasses with coloured tops add to the charm of this pretty drawing-room feat.

