

GILBERT
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CHEMICAL MAGIC



GILBERT CHEMICAL MAGIC

A Presentation of
Original and Famous Tricks in Conjuring
Accomplished by the Use of
Chemicals

BY

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Yale University, 1909



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FOREWORD

Here's real fun! Tricks with chemicals which will mystify and amuse your friends!

Gilbert's Chemical Magic is a new idea in conjuring. We have our Gilbert's Tricks with Coins, with Handkerchiefs, with Cards, the Miscellaneous Magic Tricks, and now we have Tricks with Chemicals. There is really double fun in Chemical Magic because, besides being very mystifying to those who are uninitiated, you are given the chemical explanation of what takes place, so that you will actually learn quite a little about chemistry. Many of the tricks we describe here have been performed by some of the best spirit mediums, who have not only mystified but convinced people that the tricks were accomplished with the aid of the spirits or by means of some superhuman power. We explain how they are performed by purely natural means. The real fun lies in knowing how to do them and in mystifying your friends.

There is no danger to be feared in using the various chemicals necessary for the presentation of the tricks described in the following pages. However, you are cautioned not to attempt any combinations with the chemicals other than the ones given, and to follow directions closely.

A. C. Gilbert

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New Haven, Conn.

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Gilbert Chemical Magic

INTRODUCTION

The Thing To Do First. We do not ask that you should do at any one performance every one of the tricks which we describe, as it is possible that some of them may not particularly appeal to you. The thing to do is to pick out those which you think are the best and which are suited to your idea of an evening's entertainment. We should certainly recommend that you do each one of the tricks and then pick out those which you think will produce the most fun and amazement.

All Your Tricks Need Not Be Chemical Tricks. We do not recommend that you give an entire performance of just chemical tricks, but pick out one or two of the best and give them in connection with your evening's entertainment with some of the other Gilbert Magic Series.

How to Give a Chemical Magic Entertainment. First, have a table (see Fig. 1) with a depression or shelf in the back where the chemicals can be left open ready for use.

Second, arrange your glasses on the table in advance and have those for each trick in a row, so that you will not get them mixed up when performing; or you can actually mark on the table the name of the trick, the number, and the order in which the glasses are to be used. It is important that the articles required for the performance should be arranged beforehand so that there will be no confusion, otherwise your show will not run smoothly. With a little practice and care you will avoid all cause for trouble.

Third, the method herein described of putting the chemicals into the glasses during the performance, is quite unique and simple. For this purpose, use a little wooden wand with a notch at one end in which the chemicals can be picked up and carried unnoticeably and then dropped into the glass or bottle while you are performing. All conjurers and magicians use a wand, so do not fear that anyone in the audience will become suspicious. By gently tapping the bottle with the wand, using this in a perfectly natural manner, the chemicals will drop without in any way your audience becoming aware of what has taken place.

GROUP I

Opening Your Performance. For your introductory trick in Chemical Magic we would recommend what is known as the "Great Smoke Mystery." This makes a startling opener and you will secure your audience's interest right

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from the start and thereby hold their attention. Incidentally, as the nature of the chemicals used in the "Great Smoke Mystery" makes it necessary to perform the trick within a reasonably short time after the preparation has been made, it is well that it should be the first trick on your program.

"Patter" For Opening Your Chemical Magic Performance. It is always pleasing to hear the magician or conjurer make interesting remarks about his work while he is engaged in performing his tricks, and if these remarks happen to be humorous, so much the better for the success of the performance. Pro-

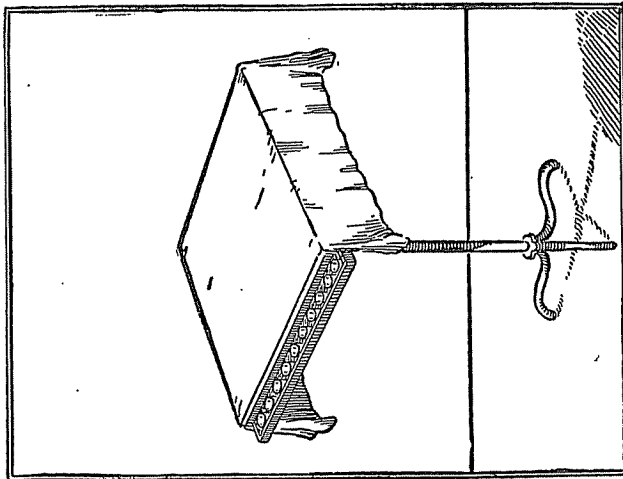


Fig. 1

fessional magicians call these remarks "patter" and so that you may have an idea as to the kind of "patter" best suited to the experiments that follow, we will give you an example with which to commence your show:

"I am going to perform for you tonight a series of experiments in Scientific

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Legerdemain. I am going to demonstrate to you that there are around u everywhere natural spirits, and possessing as I do the ability to call upon an make use of these natural spirits, you shall have the pleasure of seeing mysterie of another world.

"It might be of interest to you to know that these spookish beings contrc the air, the water, and fire and sometimes they actually gain possession of me when I go into a trance under the spell of their power. It is through their hyp notic influence over me and their assistance that I am able to convey to you these marvelous wonders."

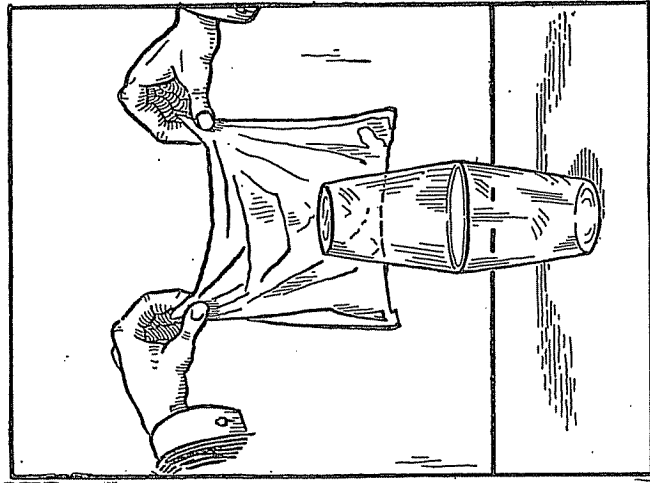


Fig. 2

THE GREAT SMOKE MYSTERY

"I have here two ordinary glasses which are quite empty and unprepare (put the wand inside of each glass, tapping it at the same time). With th

loan of someone's handkerchief (go down into the audience and borrow one), I am going to, by the aid of the spirits, for my first trick tonight, invisibly transfer smoke which I will produce by natural means in one space, to another space in the same room. (The glasses are then placed one on top of the other, mouth to mouth, and covered with the borrowed handkerchief, the paper is lighted and the smoke produced is fanned toward the glasses. While fanning the smoke, you proceed with your patter.)

"I now call upon the spirits, and by their aid the smoke that you see vanishing into the air is actually being transferred into the glasses and is being held there until I remove the handkerchief. (You now proceed to remove the handkerchief



Fig. 3

and the top glass.) The handkerchief has concealed the actual transfer, as you will note that every bit of the smoke has disappeared from the air and is to be found inside the glasses."

Effect. And now, so as to enable you to get a good mental picture of the trick, we will describe its "effect," that is to say, the part which the audience sees of what is going on.

You call your audience's attention to two empty tumblers, with rims of the same size, so that the mouth of one glass may be placed on the other. The

glasses are shown to be empty (which they are as far as the eye can see). You now place them mouth to mouth, and both are then covered with a handkerchief, the borrowed one, if you so desire. (See Fig. 2.)

Now step to one side of the stage or platform and light a brown piece of paper or anything that will make a lot of smoke; then borrow a fan and fan the smoke toward the glasses. This you continue to do for a few minutes; you then reach over and remove the handkerchief, and the tumblers will be found full of smoke. When you take the glasses apart, a great mass of smoke will arise as though it had been held under pressure. (See Fig. 3.)

How It Is Done. Two empty glass tumblers are used for the trick. Into one of the tumblers, put a few drops of muriatic acid and rotate the glass so that the few drops of the acid will spread out thinly over the inside of the tumbler and will become unnoticeable; into the other glass, put a few drops of concentrated liquid ammonia. This glass you likewise whirl around in your hand so that the ammonia will become thoroughly spread.

These glasses must be kept far apart before inverting one over the other, so that there is no opportunity for the fumes to get at one another. The attention of the audience is called to the fact that the glasses are quite empty. You can insert your wand to show that there is nothing concealed inside. Now pick up the handkerchief and at the same time one of the glasses, inverting it on top of the other, then proceed as described above.

Important Notice. There must be no time lost in covering the tumblers with the handkerchief when you bring them together, mouth to mouth, because the chemical action takes place almost immediately and you do not want the audience to discover this, for it will spoil the trick.

What Takes Place. When the glasses come together, the vapor from the two chemicals combine with one another and form ammonium chloride. This is a white fume which the audience takes for the smoke that you have transferred from the smoking paper to the glasses, in a mysterious way.

Note. Muriatic acid is the commercial name given to hydrochloric acid.

CHANGING WATER TO WINE

To do this trick you can work up some good patter about prohibition, telling your audience that it does not affect the magician, as he can change water to wine.

You have ready for this trick a wineglass half full of water. Up to this time of the performance, you have not used your wand. You now pick up the wand,

which has a few crystals of potassium permanganate in the notch, which you placed there before the beginning of the performance. Take an ordinary handkerchief and pass it for examination. We do not recommend borrowing one, for it is apt to get spoiled with some of the chemicals and this would be rather embarrassing. Next, show the glass of water and, after taking a drink from it so that your audience will know it is perfectly all right, cover it with the handkerchief. You now pick up the magic wand, and lifting the corner of the handkerchief, tap the glass with the wand, saying that you will call on the spirits to change the water to wine. You drop the crystals of potassium permanganate which were on the wand into the glass.

Now shake the glass so that the color will spread throughout the water; then lift the handkerchief, affecting a mysterious manner, and show the magic change which has taken place.

What Took Place. Potassium permanganate dissolves readily in water and gives this a reddish tint very much like that of claret wine. Only a very few crystals are needed to color a great deal of water.

CHANGING WINE TO WATER BY PASSING YOUR HAND OVER THE GLASS

This trick may be presented independently of the one preceding as it is in itself an excellent one; however, it will be found that by presenting it as a complement to the "Changing Water to Wine Trick" a very superb effect is obtained. **Effect.** Pass your hand slowly over and slightly in front of the glass. Presto! It is water!

"Patter." "Now, ladies and gentlemen, before I prevail further upon the powers that be to assist me in my miraculous changes of matter, I want to have you know that everything you see changed has assumed a new form and is really changed. I do not stoop to substitution by sleight-of-hand. For example, I have here a glass of wine; by passing my hand over it, thus, I change it to water. If you do not believe it is possible, watch closely."

How It Is Worked. Before the performance, fill a small wineglass full of water, colored with a few drops of potassium permanganate solution; then, just before coming on the stage, you drop into the palm of your hand a little peroxide of hydrogen. Peroxide is easily obtainable, being usually kept in every home. You can hold this in your hand while making your opening remarks without attracting any attention. When you say, "By passing my hands over the wine I change it to water," what you do is to drop some of the peroxide from your

palm into the solution, which becomes bleached. This trick, like the others, should be practiced beforehand. You should ascertain exactly how much peroxide will be required to bleach the red solution.

Explanation of What Happened. The hydrogen peroxide oxidized the potassium permanganate forming a new compound. This forming of a new compound is known in chemistry as chemical reaction. The new compound formed is colorless.

TO POUR MILK FROM A MILK BOTTLE FULL OF WATER

"Patter." "With the price of milk soaring the way it is, this necessity will soon become a luxury. However, I am here to free the people by breaking up the Milk Trust. I have the power of taking ordinary water and converting it into milk. Behold! I take this bottle of water, pour its contents into a glass and lo! by my power of mind over water it is converted into milk!"

How It Is Worked. Before you start the performance, drop three "measures" of calcium oxide into a quart milk bottle, half full of water. Shake until the lime is dissolved. Pour the clear liquid into another milk bottle. Into an ordinary wineglass place two measures of sodium carbonate. Dissolve this in two teaspoonsful of water. You are now ready to do the trick. When lime water is poured into the glass, it makes the solution appear like milk. (One "measure" of a dry chemical is understood to be the portion which will remain on the flat end of a teaspoon after lightly tapping it.)

What Happened. When the lime-water poured into the glass united with the sodium carbonate, a very fine precipitate (calcium carbonate), was formed and this gave the water the appearance of milk.

POUR WINE FROM PITCHER OF WATER, POUR BACK AND IT IS WATER AGAIN

"Patter." "I will now give a more lucid demonstration of the power of mind over matter. Here I have a pitcher of water in one hand. In the other, an empty glass. Will someone step close and examine them? Thank you! Now, ladies and gentlemen, I command this water to change into wine." (Pour solution slowly from the pitcher into the glass, filling the glass about one-half or two-thirds full. This solution becomes red in the glass. After the applause is over, you can further declare), "I can now command this glass of wine to return to its pristine state; by pouring the wine back into the pitcher, lo and behold, the wine is again water!"