

Bill Palmer Presents
The Cups and Balls
and other lessons in sleight of hand from

**H O C U S
P O C U S
J V N I O R.**

The Anatomy of
LEGERDEMAIN.

OR,

The Art of Jugling set forth in his proper colours, fully, plainly, and exactly; so that an ignorant person may thereby learn the full perfection of the same, after a little practise.

Unto each Trick is added the Figure, where it is needfull for Instruction.

The third Edition, with many Additions.

Præstat nihili quàm nihil facere.



LONDON,
Printed by *I.D.* for *R. M.* and are to be sold by *Francis Grove*
at his Shop upon Snow-hill, near the
Sarazens-head, 1638.

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Houston, Texas



Frontispiece of the Third Edition, 1638

An Introduction to the Cups and Balls from Hocus Pocus Junior The Anatomy of Legerdemain

Transliterated and modernized by Bill Palmer, M.I.M.C.

INTRODUCTION

While most magicians in the English-speaking world consider Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* to be the first magic book in the English language, this is only true to a small extent. The Scot book was never intended to be an instructional manual - far from it. It was intended to show the ignorance of the authorities in England and to expose the secrets of magic in order to protect the harmless from an oppressive government. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, which appeared in 1584 had little to offer on the cups and balls. But the items exposed in this book were used in several texts to follow, practically in the same order. In 1612, Sa. Rid published *The Art of Jugling*, which gave slightly more detailed instruction in the art of magic and conjuring. But *Hocus Pocus Junior*, which appeared in 1634, was the first text to really teach the art of magic, and the routine which follows is possibly the first actual magic routine in print.

For many years, the true identity of the author of this book, R.M., has been virtually unknown. Many thought he was R. Mab or R. Mabb, but nobody knew who R. Mabb was. In May of 2002, Dr. Philip Butterworth, a reader in medieval literature at the University of Leeds, made the announcement to a meeting of magic collectors at the Magic Circle of London that he had found a reference to a William Vincent, alias "Hocus Pocus," being granted a license to "exercise the art of Legerdemaine at any towne in the Relme of England." He further asserted that William Vincent was likely the author of *Hocus Pocus Junior*. This information was published in the November 2002 issue of *The Magic Circular*.

The following excerpt is actually from three different editions of this work. The spellings and typography have been modernized, but the language remains basically the same. The use of the long "s" has been eliminated for ease in reading. Some of the more esoteric ligatures have been omitted as well. I have left the grammar and vocabulary intact, but have explained things in the notes following. Much of the advice the author gives is still quite valid for today's conjurer. And I have added quotation marks to make it easier for the reader to scan the text and tell which parts of the text are spoken.

The basic text comes from the first edition, 1634. The illustrations are from the third edition of 1638. The text sections between † and ‡ are from the second and/or third editions. After the cups and balls routine, I have also included some manipulations which are basically the hand to pocket trick and a routine in which a stone is vanished. The instructions on misdirection and lapping will be of interest to modern conjurers.

Bill Palmer, M.I.M.C.

Houston, Texas, January 2004

The Definition of the Art of Legerdemain, with its principal parts.

Legerdemain is an operation, whereby one may seem to work wonderful, impossible and incredible things by agility, nimbleness and slightness of hand. The parts of this Art are principally two. The first is in the conveyance of Balls, Cards, Dice, Money, etc. The second is in Confederacy.

The end of the Art of Legerdemain.

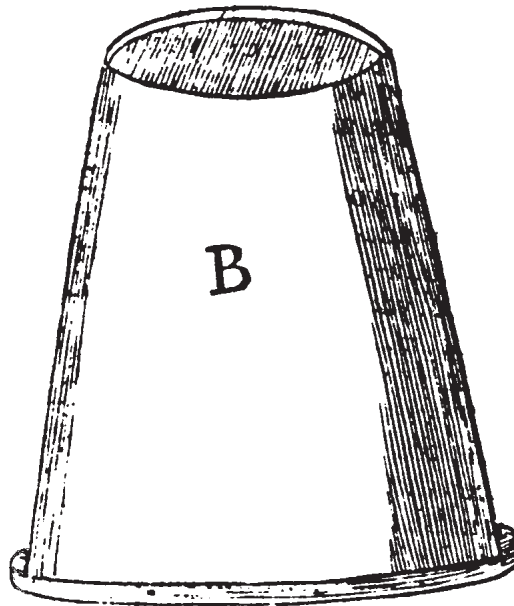
The end of this Art is either good or bad, accordingly as it is used: Good, and lawful when it's used at Festivals and merry meetings to procure mirth: especially if it be done without desire of estimation above what we are. Bad, and altogether unlawful when it is used on purpose, to cozen, deceive, or for vain glory to be esteemed above what is meet, and honest.

The Definition, or description of the Operator.

First, he must be one of a bold, and audacious spirit, so that he may set a good face upon the matter. Secondly, he must have a nimble, and cleanly conveyance. Thirdly, he must have strange terms, and emphatical words, to grace, and adorn his actions, and the more to astonish the beholders. Fourthly, and lastly, such gesture of body as may lead away the spectators' eyes from a strict and diligent beholding his manner of conveyance.

Of the Play of the Balls.

The Operator thus qualified must have his Implements of purpose to play withall: and first he must have three Cups, made of brass, or Crooked lane plate. These Cups must be all of one size, and the bottom of each of them must be set a little within the cup: mark the following figure, for thereby they are truly represented, both in form, and bigness: it is noted with the letter B.



Also he must have four Balls, made of Cork about the bigness of small Nutmegs. First, he must practice to hold these Cork balls, two or three of them at once in one hand. The best place, and the readiest to hold one ball is between the ball of the thumb and the palm of the hand; but if you hold more than one at one time, between your fingers towards the bottoms. The place to hold a great ball is between your two middle fingers. Remember in your play always to keep the palm of your hand downward. After you have once learned to hold these balls handsomely, you may work divers strange, and delightful feats.

But whether you seem to cast your ball in the air, or into your mouth, or into your other hand, yet still retain it in the same hand, still remembering to keep the palm of your hand downward, and out of sight.

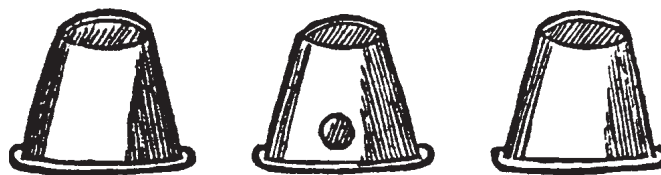
Now to begin.

[marginal note:

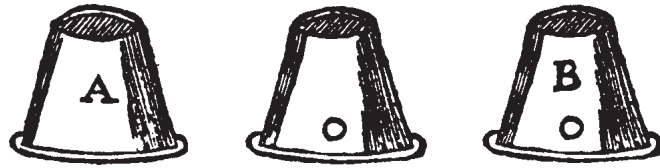
Some I have seen sit with their Codpiece open, others play standing with a budget hanging before them, but all comes to one end. Some feats may with more grace be performed standing than sitting. The manner of holding the cups will conceal the ball that you retain in your hand.]

He that is to play must sit on the farther side of a Table, which must be covered with a carpet: partly to keep the balls from rolling away, and partly to keep them from rattling.

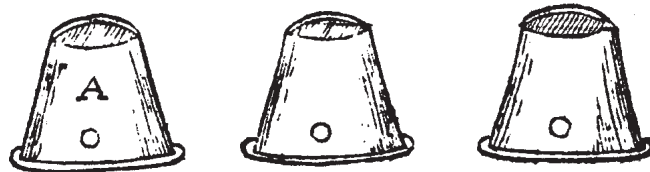
He must set his hat in his lap, or sit in such manner as that he may receive any thing into his lap, and let him cause all his spectators to sit down: Then let him draw his four balls, and lay three of them upon the table, (and retain the fourth in his right hand) and say, "Gentlemen, here are three balls you see, 1. *Meredin*, 2. *Benedic*, and 3. *Presto John*." Then let him draw his cups, and hold them all three in his right hand also, saying, "Here are also three Cups, saying, See there's nothing in them, neither have they any false bottoms." Then say, "See I will set them all on a row," and clap them all on a row, and in clapping them down, convey the ball that you retained under the middlemost cup, saying as you set them down, "Nothing there, there, nor there."



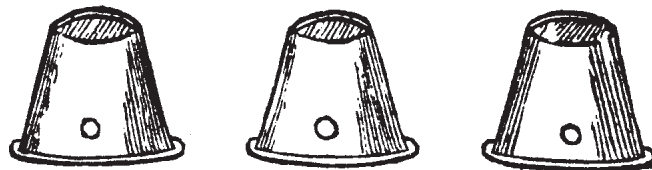
Then show your hands, and say, "Gentlemen, you see here is nothing in my hands," and say, "Now to begin," and take up with your right hand one of the three balls that you laid down, and say, "This is the first," and with that seem to put it into your left hand, and presently shut your left hand, and being shut clap it unto your ear, saying, "This is for the purging of the brain, *Presto* be gone." Then move both the utmost cups (noted with A, and B) with both your hands, saying, "and there is nothing there nor there," and in the clapping them down convey the ball in your right hand under the Cup noted B.



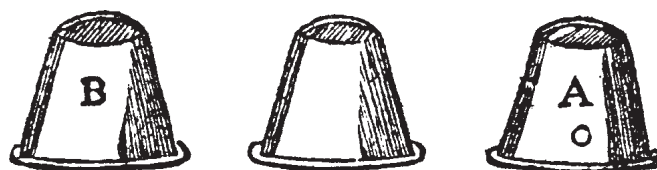
Then with your right hand take up the second ball, and seem to put it into the left hand (but retain it) shutting your left hand in due time. Then clap your left hand unto your mouth, seem to sup the ball out of your hand, and make a face as if you swallowed it. Then say, "*Presto*, and that's gone you see," and with your right hand move the cup noted A, saying, "And there is nothing," and in clapping it down convey the ball you retained, under it, so have you conveyed into each cup a ball.



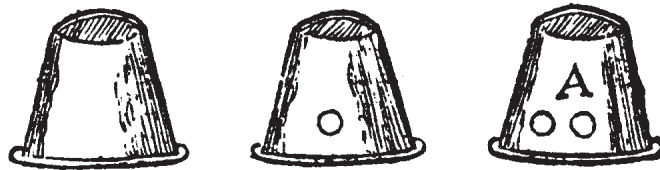
Then with your right hand take up the third Ball, and seem to put it into your left hand, shutting it in due time. Then reach it out from you, saying, "*Vade, courageous*," and open your hand, and blow a blast, looking up as if you saw it flying away, and say "*Passa, courageous*, and that's gone." Then take up the cups one after another and say, "Nevertheless Gentlemen, there is one, there is two, and there is all three again." Then cover them, and say, "See you Gentlemen, I will cover them all again." Then say, "Now for the first." Then with your right hand take up the first cup, and with your left hand take up the ball that is under it, saying, "See, I take him out," and in setting down the cup again, convey the ball in your right hand under it. Then with your right hand take the ball out of your left hand, seem to put it into your pocket (but retain it) saying, "*Vade*, that's gone into my pocket you see." Then take up with your right hand the second cup, and with your left hand take the ball from under it, and say, "See, I take this out fairly also," and in setting down the cup, convey the ball that you retained under it, and then with your right hand take the ball out of your left, and seem to put it into your pocket, (but retain it) saying, "*Jubeo*, and that's gone into my pocket." Then with your right hand take up the third and last cup, and with your left hand take the ball from under it, and say, "Here I take my last out," and in setting down the cup, convey the ball that is in your right hand under it, and then with your right hand take the ball out of your left hand, and



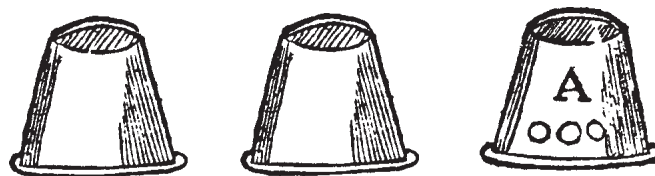
seem to put it into your pocket (but retain it) and say, "*Vade*, 'tis gone into my pocket." Then take up your cups orderly, saying, "Gentlemen, here is one you see, here is two, and here is all three again," and in setting down the last cup noted A, convey the ball that you retained in your hand under it.



Then take up one of the three balls with your right hand, and seem to put it under the cup B, but retain it, and then say, "By the powder of experience, *Jubeo*, come away when I bid you under this cup A." Then take up B, and say, "See you sirs, he scorns to tarry under this cup, but is crept under here." Then take the cup A, and they will wonder how it came thither. Then say, "Gentlemen, and you see here is but one," and in setting it down, convey that in your right hand under it. Then with your right hand take up the second Ball, and seem to put it into your left hand, shutting your left hand in due time.



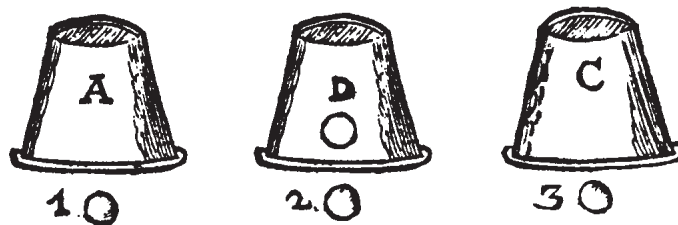
Then hold your said left hand from off you, and pronounce these words: "With a *Revoca stivoca* (open your hand tossing it up) that's gone." Then take up the cup A, and say, "See here they are got both together." Then say, "Here are but two," and in setting it down convey the ball you retained in your right hand under it.



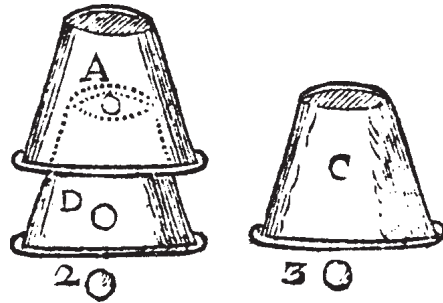
Then with your right hand take up the third ball, and seem to put it into your left hand, and shutting it in due time, saying, "This is my last Ball, *vade, passa couragious*, (open your hand then, tossing it up, and staring after it) and that's gone you see." Then take up the cup A, and say, "Here they are all three again."

†(begin first segment not in first edition)

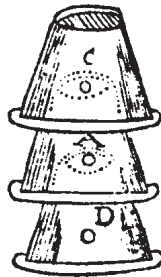
Set your cups on a row again, and under one of them, as D, convey your fourth ball, which you retained in your hand, and lay the other three balls by.



Then with your right hand take up the first ball and seem to put it into your left hand, shutting your said left hand in due time, then as of you were at dice, cast your left hand at the cup D, and blow after it, saying, "*Vade pas*, and 'tis gone." Then take up the cup noted A, and clap it upon the cup D, and in clapping it on, convey the Ball you retained in your right hand upon the top of the cup D.

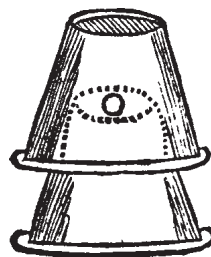


Then take up the second Ball with your right hand, and seem to put it into your left, shutting it in due time, and as you did before, now in like manner seem to make the same to vanish with a word of command, then take up the cup C, and clap it upon the cup A, and at clapping it on, convey the ball you retained in your right hand, upon the top of the cup noted A.

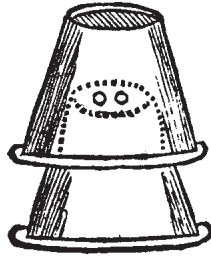


So then you have conveyed under each cup a ball, then take up the third ball, seeming to vanish it as the two former, but retain it, then show them under each cup, which will be very strange.
 ‡(end first segment not found in first edition)

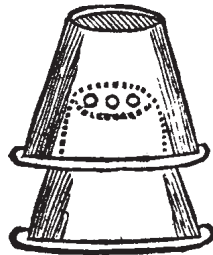
Then take one cup in your right hand, and clap it upon another, saying, "See Gentlemen I will set you one cup upon another," and in clapping it on, convey the ball you retained in your right hand upon the top of the lowermost cup; mark the figure following.



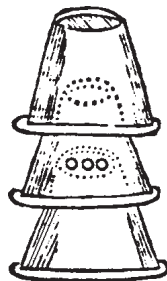
Then take up one ball and seem to cast it in the air, and staring after it, say "Vade, that's gone." Then with your right hand take up the uppermost cup, say, "See here he is crept between my cups," and in clapping it down again, convey the ball that you retained under it.



Then with your right hand take up the second ball, and seem to put it into your left hand, shutting it in due time: then open your left hand, tossing it, say, “*Vade*, and that’s gone,” then with your right hand take up the uppermost cup, and say, “Do you see Gentlemen, they are snuggled like a young man and a Maid in bed together,” and in setting it down, convey the ball that you retain.



Then with your right hand take up the third ball, and seem to put it in your left hand, but retain it shutting your left hand in due time: then hold it from you; and then open your hand, tossing it up, and gaping after it, say, “*Montifiledede*, mount, that’s gone,” and then take up the cup and say, “Here are all three again.” Then cover them again, and say, “Single is nothing,” then clap the third cup upon them, saying, “but double is somewhat.”



Then may you seem to pull all the three corks out of the top of the upper cup, causing them to vanish one after another, as I have sufficiently taught you before, which may be performed by that one ball that you retain in your right hand.

And lastly, take the uppermost cup, and set it down first by itself, then with both hands nimbly hoisting the two other cups, shuffle them one upon another, and the balls will not fall out, and so it will be thought that you have pulled the three balls out of the bottoms of the two uppermost cups.

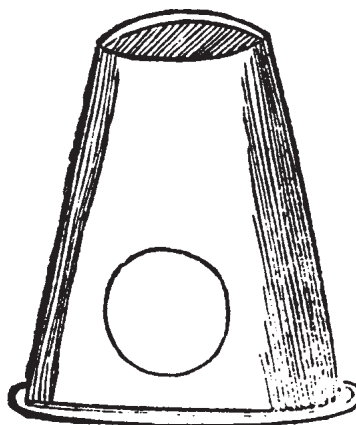
†(begin second segment not found in first edition)

I could teach you to vary these feats a hundred ways, but I leave it to those who intend to follow the trade.

‡(end second segment not found in first edition.)

*How to make a great Ball seem to come through a
Table into a Cup.*

Set one of your cups upon a Table, and take a good big stool-ball out of your pocket, and say clapping your hand with the ball in it under the Table, "My masters would you not think it a pretty trick that I should make this ball come through the table into the cup?" Then some one or other will take up the cup to see if it be so. Then holding the ball between your two middle fingers of your right hand, stare him in the face, and say, "Nay but you must not move my cup out of its place, while I have said my words of command." With that see your cup in its former place, and in setting it down nimbly, convey the ball under it, and say, "*Hei Fortuna nunquam credo, vade couragious.*"



"Now see (say) if it be there or not," which when they see they will imagine was conjured into it by virtue of your words.

Other very pretty tricks with Balls.

Retain one small ball in your hand, and lay three other small balls upon the table: then with your right hand take up one of the three balls, and put into your left hand, saying, "There is one." Then take up the second, and put that into your left hand also, and therewith likewise put the ball you retained in your right hand, saying, "And there is two," (yet you know there is three already) and shut your hand in due time. Then take up the third ball in your right hand, and clap your right hand unto the upper part of your left arm, retaining the ball firmly, pronounce these words: "*Jubeo celeriter*, come all into my hand when I bid you." Then withdraw your right hand (holding the palm thereof downward) saying, "That's gone Gentlemen." Then open your left hand, and say, "Here are all three together," and lay them down on the Table.

Another.

Take up one of the balls in your right hand, and put it into your left, holding it firmly between your forefinger and thumb of your said left hand. Then with your forefinger and thumb of your right hand (but be nimble) seem to pull one ball out of another, which you may do by slipping the ball that you retained in your right hand between the forefinger and thumb of the said hand, saying, "Thus by acclivity have I learned to do, out of one little ball for to make two: and all of a bigness." Then lay all four balls upon the table.

Another.

With your right hand take up one of the balls, and seem to put it into the left, but retain it, shutting your left hand in due time, and say, "There is one: then hold your hand from you." Then with your right hand take up another, saying, "Here I take another." Then pronounce these words, "*Mercus mercurius*, by the powder of experience, *Jubeo*." Then open your left hand, saying, "That's gone," and then open your right hand and show them both together.

*How to make a stone seem to vanish out of
your hand.*

You must have a stone of a reasonable bigness, such as you may well hide in your hand, sitting in such manner as I have formerly said, that you may receive any thing into your lap, take this stone out of your pocket saying, "You see, Gentlemen, here is a stone, a miraculous stone: Will you have it vanish, vade, or go away invisible?" Which being said, withdraw your hand to the side of the table letting the stone slip down into your lap, in which time stare about you, saying, choose you whether. Then reach out your hand and say: "*Fortuna variabilis, lapis inestimabilis, Jubeo, vade, vade, couragious*." Open your hand then tossing it up, and blow a blast, and look up, saying, "Do you see it is gone." Your looking up will make them to look up, in which time you may take the stone again in the other hand, and slip it into your pocket.

Another.

Take your stone again out of your pocket, saying, "Here it is once again, and I will give it unto any of you to hold," and reach your hand out unto them, and opening your hand, say, "Lo, here it is." Then when any one is about to take it, withdraw your hand to the side of the table, and make your conveyance as before, in which time say, "But you must promise me to take it quickly."

Then will he say, "I will."

Then reach your hand being shut out unto him again, and while he striveth, thinking to take it quickly, hold fast and say, "*Vade couragious, celeriter vade*:" in which time you may take up the stone in the other hand, and hold it from you. Then open your hand and say, "Lo, if you can hold a pretty Lass no faster, when you have her, I will not give a pin for your skill."

[marginal note:

By agility and nimbleness of hand you may make a piece of a hare Skin to stir and run about you as a live creature, and at last to vanish away, will be imagined to be some Familiar that you deal withall.]

Notes:

By conveyance and to convey, the author means the action of secretly introducing an object somewhere, such as under a cup when it is being placed down on a table.

Take particular notice of the hint of the finger palm – “The place to hold a great ball is between your two middle fingers.”

This is the earliest text that I know of that actually teaches lapping and the proper timing of a vanish. Note in particular the oft-repeated instruction “shutting the hand in due time.” This stresses the proper timing of the motions of a false placement. The instruction to keep the hand palm downwards when concealing an object in it would help many modern magicians. This text also teaches misdirection by means of the direction of the magician’s vision. This is what Malini referred to as “the eye.”

One sharp-eyed reader spotted an apparent inconsistency in the text *How to make a stone seem to vanish out of your hand*. This is in the place that asks “Would you have it vanish, vade or go away invisible.” The word “vade” is in italics everywhere else in the text. The reason for this is interesting. The other occurrences of the word are where the “vade” is in Latin, used as a magic word, meaning “go.” In this case, it is actually an archaic English word which means “fade.”

Rules of capitalization and punctuation have changed much since the 17th century. Also, some of the rules of grammar are a bit different. I have used the grammar of the time, rather than our grammar.

Several patter conventions may have been first printed in this booklet, also. I refer specifically to “Here is one, this is two, etc.,” which magicians still use to this day.

This little book went into many editions. In fact, it was followed by a series of books known to magic historians as “H. Dean” and a host of other similar books that were published as late as the 20th century.

Thanks to John Clarkson for his help and assistance in proofreading this text.

Bill Palmer, M.I.M.C.
Houston, Texas January 2004



About the Author

Bill Palmer is a native of Houston, Texas. For several years he has performed at renaissance festivals and similar historical events as Merlin the Magician and Hocus Pocus, a 17th century conjurer based upon the material he found in *Hocus Pocus Junior*.

Hocus Pocus first appeared at Cavalier Dayes in Smithville, Texas. During the performances, Bill used a specially made leather chop chop cup for his cups and balls routine. While this was not entirely historically correct, it made for an audience pleasing performance.

The costume, shown in the photo to the left, was based upon the frontispiece of the book.

How this book came to be

In 1993, I became infatuated with the paddle trick. One morning, Steve Burton and I took a trip to Austin, Texas to visit the McManus-Young collection at the Harry Ransom Research Library. It was during that visit that I saw my first copy of *Hocus Pocus Junior*. I obtained a photocopy of it, which I shared with Steve. Steve chose to publish a reconstruction of the first edition of the book. His version appeared in an extremely well done collector's edition in 1997. He saw the value of the information in the cups and balls routine in that book.

Subsequent to that visit, during further research on the paddle, I learned of the massive amount of material that was available on microfilm from University Microfilms, Inc. Better yet, I had access to it through Rice University. So I acquired photocopies of several different editions of the book.

To my surprise, the second and third editions had some extra material on the cups and balls. To me, these were much more important than the first edition, simply for that reason.

The span of time between the publication of the first and third editions was only four years. This means that the book sold out completely twice between the first and third printing. Printing was different in those days. The entire book had to be re-set, by hand, and once a run for a set of pages was printed, the copy was dismantled and the type re-used for other pages. So each run of books had a massive set-up time, and each run had its own set of typographical errors.

Rather than produce an edition that was simply a copy of the items anyone could find and photocopy, I decided to give you an edition that was reasonably easy to read, with the patter and the routine separated by quotation marks, which do not appear in the original text. It is my hope that you find this edition of use to you, not only for the historical aspect, but because the instructions are actually timeless.

Bill Palmer, M.I.M.C
Houston, Texas, 2004