

The Greatest Juggler in the World.

BY WILLIAM G. FITZGERALD.



SOME men were born to explore; others to write, or paint, or fight. Paul Cinquevalli was born to juggle. As a boy at school he would throw his slate and pencil high into the air, catch the pencil first, and then swiftly draw the letter "A" in three lightning strokes, while yet the slate was in the air.

Therefore it is not to be wondered at that the boy presently ran away from home with a professional gymnast, whose discerning eye saw a fortune in the little fellow. And Paul, by the way, adopted the name of his new guardian.

Soon he made a name, and his father, reversing the parable, came to him and fell upon his neck.

Although rather below medium height, Paul Cinquevalli possesses enormous strength; his patience, too, is almost incredible, and his vigilance unceasing.

The feat depicted in the first photograph calls for all these things. The juggler comes on to the stage wearing the spiked helmet, and carrying four sections of a jointed pole. The tub is then brought on. He would bring it on himself only it's a thing one can't carry about conveniently; it is a family tub, and weighs 44lb. The juggler places it on one section of the pole, and makes it spin. When its velocity is great, he commences to lengthen

the pole by fitting the other sections; and at last the lower end of the pole is resting on his shoulder, whilst the tub is revolving madly some 25ft. above his head.

Even so far, this is no ordinary feat of nerve and strength; but what follows would be absolutely incredible were it not that multitudes have seen it done. Raising one hand, Cinquevalli deliberately dashes away the pole from beneath the tub, causing the

latter to fall in a perfectly straight line. The great juggler braces himself for a tremendous effort, and after judging the centre, he dexterously catches the huge tub on the spike of his helmet. And there the tub keeps revolving. But only consider the thing. A 44lb. tub falling 25ft. on to a man's head! "If I am only two or three inches out of the centre," said Mr. Cinquevalli to me, "the tub sends me flying across the stage, and nearly breaks my neck with its whirling impact."

Once, at Lyons, that tub hurled Mr. Cinquevalli twenty feet from where he stood; and to-day one may see the scars inflicted at various times by its murderous rim.

The wonderful balancing feat shown in the next photo. is the most difficult in even Cinquevalli's repertoire; it took him *eight years* to perfect. A glass is held in his mouth. In the glass is a billiard ball, on which is balanced an



CATCHING THE TUB ON THE SPIKE OF THE HELMET.

ordinary cue. On top of the cue are balanced two other billiard balls, one on top of the other. After eighteen months' weary practice he could maintain the lot in position for one, two, or three seconds—"then my will gave way, and I gave it up." Later on, in Chicago, he again attempted this feat, but found he couldn't do it at all, solely because—as he afterwards found out—there was some heavy machinery working in the basement of the house in which he lodged. He moved to San Francisco, and recommenced practice with some success.

It sounds idiotic to say that anyone could do this if the billiard balls were flattened; of course he could. Times beyond number has Mr. Cinquevalli been called upon in various parts of the world to decide bets arising out of this very feat. "It's an utter impossibility," one man will say; "he uses wax or something." But he doesn't.

In these two photos. Cinquevalli is seen in a queer garment. This is his "billiard table" jacket, which was made to his order by a Regent Street tailor. Briefly, he plays an orthodox, scientific game of billiards on his own sinewy person. The jacket is of real billiard cloth, with five beautifully-made pockets of cord and brass wire. The sixth "pocket" is the juggler's own right ear, and his forehead is "spot." His arms and knees serve as cushions, and wonderful cushions they are.

Roberts or Peall would consider the whole game wonderful. "I play an ordinary game of 'fifty up,'" says Mr. Cinquevalli. "Cannons are made in the air. There is a pocket on each shoulder, two in front, and one at the bottom of my back."

The game is a very miracle of neatness and skill. The balls fly into the air, cannon, and then descend, only to glide hither and

thither, in and out of the pockets, actuated only by a series of sharp jerks on the part of the player. "When the balls are moving over my back, I am guided only by the sense of touch." And marvellously delicate must that sense be, considering the relative lightness of the balls and the thickness of the green jacket and tights. The prettiest and most difficult move of all is from the low back pocket into one of the shoulder pockets. The ball doesn't seem to know where to go; it runs along hesitatingly, but at last it recognises its destination, and seeks it with a comical little spurt.

Mr. Cinquevalli tells me that the next trick is one involving real danger. A 48lb. cannon-ball is pitched to him, and he catches it on the edge of a dinner-plate. Now, the plate may have flaws in its composition, causing it to shiver to atoms in the juggler's hand and cut him severely, as, indeed, has often been the case. I asked Mr. Cinquevalli how far the cannon-ball might be thrown in this feat. "The farther the better," he replied;



BALANCING THE BILLIARD BALLS (MOST DIFFICULT FEAT EVER EXECUTED.)



THE HUMAN BILLIARD TABLE.



CATCHING A 48LB. CANNON-BALL ON THE EDGE OF A PLATE.

“for then I have more time to judge where it will descend. In most cases, however,” he went on, “my assistant is not strong enough to pitch it very far—as you may imagine.”

He is an extraordinary man, this Cinquevalli. He might have his big tub suspended with fine wire, his billiard balls slightly flattened, and his cannon-ball hollow, or made of wood—such as his imitators use. Only, personally, he despises such professional chicanery. Once he saw a Japanese juggler throw up a weighted worsted ball and catch it dead on his forehead. He suggested using an ordinary tennis-ball instead, and he offered one. The Japanese juggler laughed and took it airily. Every time the tennis-ball came down it struck the man's forehead at a different angle, and rebounded a ridiculous distance. After half an hour's practice, that Japanese juggler said the thing was impossible. Now, Cinquevalli literally knows not this word as applied to a juggling feat, so he took home with him that identical tennis-ball, and practised daily for exactly *four months*. He does it easily now. The ball descends, rebounds, and is caught again and again, until it is coaxed down inert.

An amazing feat of quickness and dexterity is next shown. Cinquevalli holds in his left hand a blow-pipe, loaded with a small dart, whilst in the right he juggles a heavy knife, a fork, and a turnip. All at once the fork is thrown high into the air, followed by the turnip. Some fraction

of time before the ascending turnip meets the prongs of the descending fork, the blow-pipe is used and the dart embedded in the turnip. A moment later, the united three are received on the blade of the knife, and the juggler claims his applause.

This beautiful feat grew out of another. At supper in St. Petersburg, one night, Mr. Cinquevalli's host asked him to do something for the company's entertainment. He protested he had no apparatus, whereupon the host (resourceful man!) handed him a knife and fork and a potato that had been boiled in its “jacket” — as every potato should be, by the way.

The famous juggler juggled these things aimlessly for a time until the new trick came to him like a flash. Rising like one inspired, he continued to throw up the three



A MARVELLOUS FEAT WITH PUFF AND DART, FORK AND TURNIP.

articles, higher and higher.

Suddenly, whilst the potato was falling, Cinquevalli sliced it in halves by a swift movement, and then instantly received each

half on the p int of knife and fork. He succeeded first time, in fact; but when he began seriously to practise the feat, he realized its extreme difficulty of achievement. The potato could never be depended upon.

According to its texture, it would either fall perpendicularly or else evince a sudden briskness on being halved, which would cause it to



"RAINY DAY UMBRELLA" TRICK—THE LEMONADE BOTTLE DESCENDING.

glance off at peculiar angles. It was only after using almost as many sacks of potatoes as would mitigate an Indian (or Irish) famine, that the juggler was able to combat the vagaries of the erratic tuber.

It will be seen that Mr. Cinquevalli juggles with very homely articles, and gets ideas for new feats in very curious ways. Take the clever and diverting feat shown in the next two photos. "One summer I was up the Thames picnicking with a party of friends. At Marlow we left the launch, and on the bank there we spread the cloth. Later, I commenced juggling as usual with every-thing within reach—sardine-boxes, glasses,

serviettes, and so on. Then I picked up an umbrella, and presently a bottle half full of lemonade. After juggling these in various ways, I threw up the bottle, opened the umbrella while it was descending, and received it upon the ferrule, while it poured out its contents." Of course, this added a new trick to Mr. Cinquevalli's list.

He only lives to juggle. Once he dropped a half-crown; it fell on to his felt slipper. Without stooping to pick it up, he gave his foot a jerk, and lo! the coin flew into his eye as an eye-glass. When this was done he jerked his slipper upwards from his foot, and it instantly stood meekly, toe upwards, on his massive head.

He has sustained injuries innumerable, and almost any one of these would have induced an ordinary man to seek a less dangerous and trying calling. In his



THE SHOWER.

acrobatic days he was doing a wire-walking act in a circus at Odessa. The weight of snow burst the canvas roof and descended into the arena like an avalanche. Of course it swept the wire-walker with it. He fell on to a lady's lap, breaking both her legs; she died, and her guiltless slayer was laid up for weeks.

A very effective feat is depicted in the next two photos. here shown. It is some-

thing of a physical phenomenon, but we needn't enter into that. Mr. Cinquevalli's assistant holds two open razors, and from these are suspended a couple of loops



BREAKING A BROOM-HANDLE RESTING IN PAPER LOOPS ON RAZOR-EDGES—"READY."

1886. The Prince himself was greatly struck with it, and asked the juggler to repeat it again and again, in order that he himself might select razors, broom-handle, and striking stick, and also make the paper loops.

This well-known entertainer has for many years practised the extremely difficult art of doing several things at once, until now one may see him at home writing an important business letter with one hand, juggling three plates with the other, and at the same time carrying on an animated conversation with two different people.

One result of incessant practice in this direction is the successful accomplishment of feats like the one next shown. Here we

of twisted paper, made before the audience. In the loops is hung a broom-handle.

The juggler then takes a heavy oak stick, and sharply strikes the broom-handle, breaking it in halves, but without in any way injuring the paper loops that are hung on the razor-edges. Sometimes the trick is varied by placing the broom-handle on two clay-pipes, these pipes being smoked, more or less placidly, by a couple of assistants.

Mr. Cinquevalli performed this interesting feat before a brilliant gathering at Marlborough House, in



THE FEAT ACCOMPLISHED.



FOUR SEPARATE MOVEMENTS AT ONE TIME.

see Mr. Cinquevalli juggling plates with one hand, and keeping a basin revolving on a stick with the other, whilst his powerful head is performing a trick of extraordinary delicacy. On his forehead is balanced a lighted candle, and in his mouth he has an unlighted cigarette in a holder. By certain movements of the jaws the cigarette goes back to the candle, and is lighted and smoked for a while. At length, it is ejected by blowing through the holder, and the latter then inclines again towards the candle, which it extinguishes—that is to say, Mr. Cinquevalli blows through it once more. And, remember, during all this both arms are occupied in different juggling actions.

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Elsewhere I remarked that at all times Mr. Cinquevalli is on the look-out for new tricks. I'm afraid he is often something of a trial in the house. The "afternoon tea" feat was actually invented at that cosy, attractive meal, and a remarkably neat trick it is. He juggles first of all with a cup, a saucer, a lump of sugar, and a



THE "AFTERNOON TEA" FEAT—JUGGLING.

teapot *half full of tea*. Suddenly the cup descends as if by magic into the saucer, the laggard sugar joins the cup a second later, and before you could count three Mr. Cinquevalli is gallantly pouring out "a nice hot cup"—not indeed for one fair lady, but for a mixed multitude.

Here is, perhaps, the juggler's riskiest feat. He first of all balances two pieces of gas-piping—one on his forehead, the other on his chin. On the former is placed the 48lb. cannon-ball, which the juggler has to transfer to the other piece of piping without using his hands

Slowly the forehead piece inclines forward until it touches the great ball. It slips under it, and then



THE AFTERNOON TEA FEAT—
"A NICE HOT CUP."



TRANSFERRING THE CANNON-BALL—A TICKLISH MOMENT.

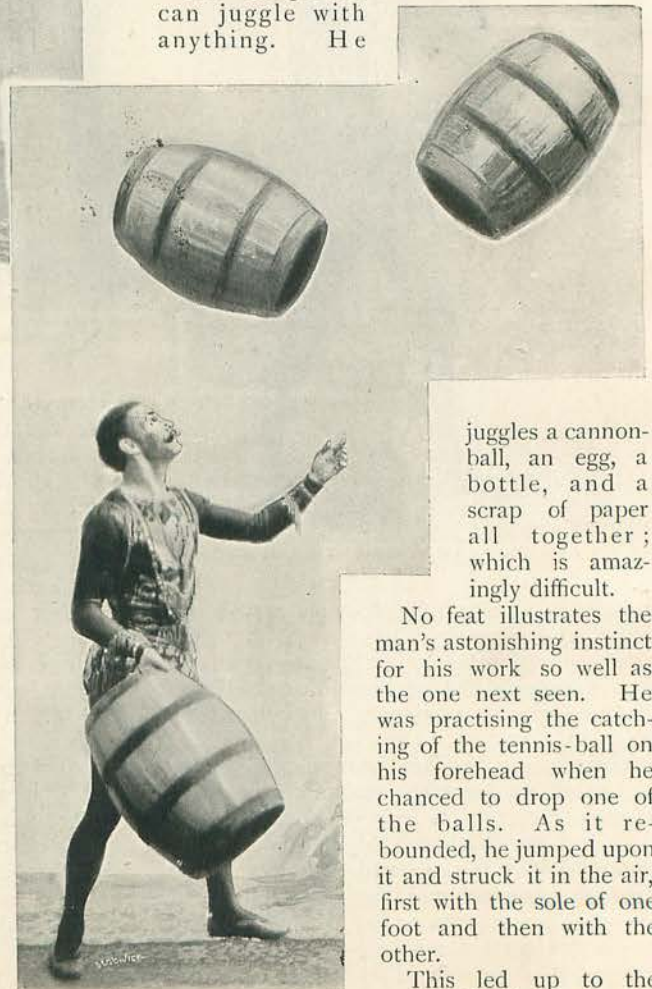
by some extraordinarily delicate movements, it begins to take the weight off the other section of piping. The crucial moment is when the ball is exactly between the two; it is so apt to slip down between them. Obviously, the time for getting out of the way is not great. The 48lb. cannon-ball has only to descend 15in., and Mr. Cinquevalli's head is held well back, as you may see in the photo.

What, then, does he do when it slips? Well, somehow he knows when it is going wrong; he feels it. Quick as thought he turns his face aside, and receives the ball on the side of his neck. Only once or twice has the ball had the best of the incredibly brief race, and then Mr. Cinquevalli couldn't take solid food for days, so sore and stiff were his jaws.

There is hardly a trick that has not its own story. I asked Mr. Cinquevalli how he came to do the extremely difficult feat seen in the next photo.—difficult if only on account of the sheer physical strength called into play.

"Years ago," he said, "I was engaged at Koster and Biall's famous theatre, in Thirty-fourth Street, New York. Every day, on my way to the theatre, I had to pass the shop of a wealthy cooper. One morning he greeted me as usual, and said: 'Say, I saw yer last night, and it were fairly marv'lous—right, straight marv'lous.' Then he pointed to some 18lb. casks, and said: 'Could you juggle them, now?' I said I could, where-upon he declared with rapture that he would make me a set of three, if I would use them. And I use that very set now."

But Cinquevalli can juggle with anything. He



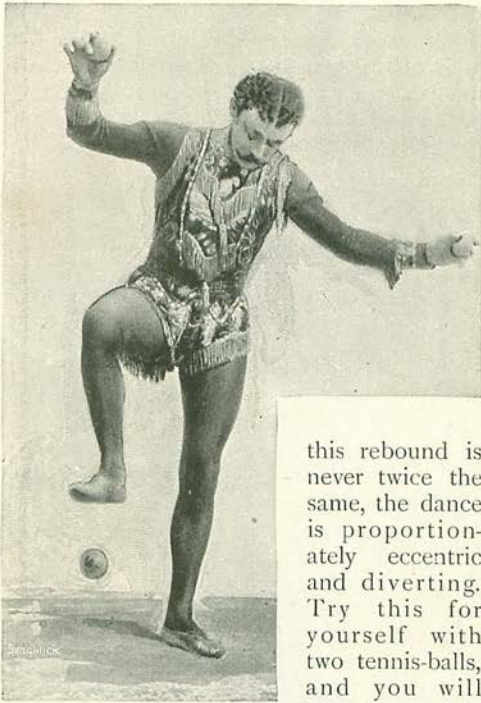
JUGGLING THREE CASKS.

juggles a cannon-ball, an egg, a bottle, and a scrap of paper all together; which is amazingly difficult.

No feat illustrates the man's astonishing instinct for his work so well as the one next seen. He was practising the catching of the tennis-ball on his forehead when he chanced to drop one of the balls. As it rebounded, he jumped upon it and struck it in the air, first with the sole of one foot and then with the other.

This led up to the extraordinarily clever war-

dance, which Mr. Cinquevalli executes on the stage, having beneath his feet some tennis-balls. Of course, the steps of the dance are wholly controlled by the upward rebound of the balls, and as



THE "WAR DANCE" WITH TENNIS-BALLS.

this rebound is never twice the same, the dance is proportionately eccentric and diverting. Try this for yourself with two tennis-balls, and you will most certainly realize the apparent impos-

sibility of a sustained dance.

Cinquevalli possesses amazing strength, though no one would think so who met him in the street. Look at the next photo. The juggler has raised his assistant—table, chair, and all—and placed the whole in his mouth, whilst he juggles three balls with evident *nonchalance*. The assistant weighs 108 lb.; the chair 22 lb., and the table 15 lb. And this in a man's mouth!

The genesis of this remarkable feat was a wager, made in a café in Paris. Cinquevalli was there recognised one day by a gentleman, who betted 500 francs that the juggler could not lift him in the chair above his head. Simply that—no holding the chair in the mouth. The challenge was accepted, and Mr. Cinquevalli retired to practise with a terrified waiter. In a few minutes he came in and won the wager, though with a tremendous effort. "I couldn't hold the gentleman quite at arms' length above my head," he remarked, naïvely, "because he was in such a hurry

to get down. Besides, on that occasion the chair was none too strong."

The next photograph shows how complete is the great juggler's command over three separate movements executed at the same time. He juggles some hats with one hand, and holds in the other an inverted straw hat, whirling on a stick. On his forehead is balanced another stick, surmounted by an unfashionable hat.

Mr. Cinquevalli has juggled with his great cannon-ball for many years, but the law of gravitation still renders it a dangerous professional companion. It does not turn upon and rend him, but it sometimes descends upon and cripples him. Tame it may be for a long time, but it breaks out now and then. The photo. reproduced shows a perfectly appalling



JUGGLING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.



THREE INDEPENDENT MOVEMENTS.

feat, done for the first time in Providence, U.S.A. The manner of it is this: The 48lb. cannon-ball is hoisted up 40ft., measured distance. It rests on a collapsible shelf at this height, and the shelf is controlled by a string, acting on a bolt.

Immediately beneath the ball is placed a big, strong table. The string is jerked;

down comes the cannon-ball and smashes that table into firewood. And then Cinquevalli takes the place of the table. The feat calls for great strength, iron nerve, and wonderful skill of judgment. If the stage lights get into the juggler's eyes, the ball will, perhaps, strike him an inch or two out of the proper place—the lower part of the back of the neck—and then he sees stars, and gets "pins and needles" most shockingly. If the deviation were to run to three or four inches, it would mean certain death.



CANNON-BALL FALLS 40FT. ON TO MR. CINQUEVALLI'S NECK, AFTER DEMOLISHING BIG TABLE.