



BROAD SWORD AND SINGLE STICK

*A Guide to the Defense of
Self and Others*

ALLANSON-WINN
PHILLIPPS-WOLLEY

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R. G. ALLANSON-WINN &
C. PHILLIPPS-WOLLEY



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FOREWARD

MY DEAR LADS,

I hope this little century-old classic will encourage you in what is good. Sword-skills may be out of fashion, but this book is not solely a guide to playtime. As R. G. Allanson-Winn—what an impeccable name!—walks us through the age-old practices and techniques of quarter-staff, broadsword, single-stick, and cudgel-play, do not see this as merely learning old skills. As he mentions, learning to ‘grin and bear’ the smart of a sharp hit and how to win and lose graciously are not skills limited to a fencing ring. Persevering in sword-training will also teach you agility, lightness of foot, and quickness of eye, even if you never draw a sword or swing a staff in anger.

It is important to learn, too, that even in hot-blooded competition not every hit is legal or legitimate. Much is made in these days of winning by any means necessary (“no holds barred” is a literal wrestling term) yet when in friendly competition, it is not the behavior of a gentleman to attempt to conquer one’s opponent with underhanded blows or deceptive techniques. Though there are few indeed opportunities to partake in judged and scored matches at single-stick, saber, or quarter-staff, you can still cultivate the courtesy and bearing of a chivalrous officer or knight of old without sapping your ability to fight for life and limb if ever the situation arises.

And even apart from the benefits to training or character, reading this book may prove valuable in some such future situation. Our guide teaches us how to make best use of a walking-staff, a knotted stick, or even an umbrella in a tough spot. Learn how to protect yourself, your mothers, sisters, and friends—and I hope you never draw sword in an unworthy cause or against an opponent to be ashamed of.

*“Honor the ladies, defend the helpless
Always help those in distress
Give mercy if you yourself would have it
These things doth chivalry requit.”*

JOHN CALVIN YOUNG
NOVEMBER 2014

PREFACE

The favour with which my little brochure on boxing has been received induces me to put together a few ideas on the subject of attack and defence with weapons other than those with which nature has endowed us.

A glance at the table of contents will suffice to show that the scope of the work has been somewhat extended, and that, though there is of course a vast deal more to be said on the wide subject of self-defence, an attempt has been made to give practical hints as to what may be effected by a proper and prompt use of those common accessories which we may find in our hands at almost any hour in the day.

Not having leisure to take in hand the whole of the work myself, I asked my friend Mr. C. Phillipps-Wolley to make himself responsible for that portion of the treatise which deals with single-stick play. This he kindly consented to do, and those of my readers who wish to make a special study of stick-play, I refer to p. 41 to p. 66 inclusive. The illustrations in this portion of the work are from photographs by the London Stereoscopic Company; all the other illustrations are from my own sketches.

THE AUTHOR

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY.

Our neighbours on the other side of the English Channel have been accused of calling us a “nation of shopkeepers.” No doubt the definition is not bad; and, so long as the goods supplied bear the hall-mark of British integrity, there is nothing to be ashamed of in the appellation; still, with all due deference, I think we might more appropriately be called a nation of sportsmen.

There is not an English boy breathing at this moment who does not long to be at some sport or game, and who has not his pet idea of the channel into which he will guide his sporting proclivities when he is a man. There are not many grown Englishmen who don't think they know something about a horse, would not like to attend a good assault-at-arms, or who are not pleased when they hear of their sons' prowess with the oar, the bat, or the gloves.

I may be quite mistaken, but it always seems to me that the well-brought-up little foreign boy is too unwholesomely good and gentle to fight the battle of life. Still, such little boys do grow up brave and clever men, and they do, taken collectively, make splendid soldiers.

Then, as to sports, foreigners seem to put too much pomp and circumstance into their efforts in pursuit of game; the impedimenta and general accoutrements are overdone; but here again I may be wrong. Of one thing we may be quite sure, and that is that the majority of Englishmen are devoted to sport of some kind. One of the prettiest little compliments you can pay a man is to call him “a good old sportsman.”

When, in addition to the advantages of a national sport or collection of national sports, such as boxing, sword exercises, wrestling, etc., you recognize the possibility that the games you have been indulging in with your friends in playful contests may at almost any moment be utilized for defeating your enemies and possibly saving your life, you are forced to the conclusion that there are some sports at least which can be turned to practical account.

Unfortunately there are individuals, possibly in the small minority, who regard anything like fighting as brutal or ungentlemanly. In a sense—a very limited sense—they may be right, for, though our environment is such that we can never rest in perfect security, it does seem hard that we should have to be constantly on the alert to protect that which we think is ours by right, and ours alone.

However this may be, let us be men first, and aristocrats, gentlemen, or anything else you please, afterwards. If we are not men, in the larger and better sense of the word, let there be no talk of gentle blood or lengthy pedigree. The nation is what it is through the pluck and energy of individuals who have put their shoulders to the wheel in bygone days—men who have laid the foundation of a glorious empire by sturdy personal efforts—efforts, unaided by the state, emanating from those higher qualities of the character, relying on itself, and on itself alone, for success or failure.

From the earliest times, and in the most primitive forms of animal life, physical efforts to obtain the mastery have been incessant.

Whether it is in the brute creation or the human race, this struggle for existence has always required the exercise of offensive and defensive powers. The individual has striven to gain his living, and to protect that living when gained; nations have paid armies to increase their territories, and retain those territories when acquired.

The exact form of weapon which first came into use will always be doubtful, but one would think that stones, being hard and handy, as well as plentiful, might have presented irresistible attractions to, say, some antediluvian monster, who wished to intimate to a mammoth or ichthyosaurus, a few hundred yards distant, his readiness to engage in mortal combat.

Are there not stories, too, of clever little apes in tropical forests who have pelted unwary travellers with nuts, stones, and any missiles which came handy?

Then, coming nearer home, there is the lady at an Irish fair who hangs on the outskirts of a faction-fight, ready to do execution with a stone in her stocking—a terrible gog-magog sort of brain-scatterer.

When man was developed, no doubt one of his first ideas was to get hold of a really good serviceable stick—not a little modern masher’s crutch—a strong weapon, capable of assisting him in jumping, protecting him from wild beasts, and knocking down his fellow-man.

To obtain such a stick the primitive man probably had to do a good deal of hacking at the bough of a hard oak or tough ash, with no better knife than a bit of sharp flint. Having secured his stick, the next thing was to keep it, and he doubtless had to defend himself against the assaults of envious fellow-creatures possessed of inferior sticks.

Thus we can imagine that the birth of quarter-staff play—not much play about it in those days—was a very simple affair; and we recognize in it the origin and foundation of all the sword exercises, and all the games in which single-stick, lance, and bayonet play a prominent part.

As the question of who picked up the first stone and threw it at his fellow-man, or when the first branch of a tree was brought down on the unsuspecting head of another fellow-man, are questions for learned men to decide, and are of no real importance, I shall not allow myself to go on with any vague speculations, but shall turn at once to an old English sport which, though sometimes practised at assaults-at-arms in the present day, takes us back to Friar Tuck, Robin Hood, and

“Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet and Much and Little John.”

CHAPTER II.

THE QUARTER STAFF.

According to Chambers's "Encyclopædia," the quarter-staff was "formerly a favourite weapon with the English for hand-to-hand encounters." It was "a stout pole of heavy wood, about six and a half feet long, shod with iron at both ends. It was grasped in the middle by one hand, and the attack was made by giving it a rapid circular motion, which brought the loaded ends on the adversary at unexpected points."

"Circular motion" and "shod with iron" give a nasty ring to this description, and one pictures to one's self half a barge-pole, twirled—"more Hibernico"—with giant fingers, bearing down on one.

Whether the fingers of our ancestors were ever strong enough to effect this single-handed twirling or not must remain a matter of doubt, but we may rest assured that in the quarter-staff we have, probably, the earliest form of offensive weapon next to the handy stone. If Darwin is correct, we can easily imagine one of our gorilla ancestors picking up a big branch of a tree with which to hit some near member of his family. This, to my mind, would be playing elementary quarter-staff, and the game would have advanced a step if the assaulted one—possibly the lady gorilla—had seized another branch and retaliated therewith.

The modern quarter-staff is supposed to be rather longer than the six and a half feet prescribed by the above-quoted authority, and I imagine it originally derived its name from being grasped with one hand at a quarter of its length from the middle, and with the other hand at the middle.

Thus, in the diagram (Fig. 1), if A E represents a quarter-staff eight feet long, divided into four equal two-foot lengths at the points B, C, and D, the idea would be to grasp it with the right hand at D and with the left hand at C; or, if the player happened to be left-handed, to grasp it with the left hand at B and with the right hand at C.

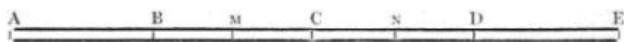


Fig. 1.

This method of holding the quarter-staff may be well enough in certain cases, but it seems to me that, for rapid attack and defence, the hands should be about three feet apart: at D and m, half way between B and C; or at B and n, half way between C and D.

Of course a great deal depends upon the height and strength of the player, but, with the hands at a distance of three feet or so apart, it stands to reason you have a greater command over the ends of the staff than you have if they are only two feet apart, and that you can consequently come quicker into "hanging guard" positions, and more easily defend yourself from short upper strokes and from "points" than you can when you have less command over your weapon.



Fig. 2.—On guard.

Before proceeding to the more technical portions of quarter-staff play, let me say that it is better to bar "points" in a friendly bout, for the weight of a stick, if only a bamboo cane, of eight feet long, is so great, that it is an easy matter to break a collar-bone or rib with a rapid thrust. In any case, remember to be well padded and to have a good iron-wire broad-sword mask on before engaging in a bout.

In dealing with the cuts and thrusts which may be made with the quarter-staff, we cannot do better than consider the ordinary broad-sword target.

In the accompanying diagram are marked the ordinary broad-sword cuts 1 to 4, 2 to 3, 3 to 2, 4 to 1, 5 to 6, 6 to 5, and 7 to 0, the centre of the target.

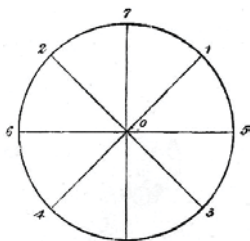


Fig. 3.

Now, we observe that the guards for these cuts must be such as to ward off the blows in the easiest manner and with as rapid return as possible to the attacking position.

With the quarter-staff in the hands of a right-handed man, the first cut would be from 2 to 3, and the guard for this would be with the staff held in the direction of c to d. Similarly, for cut two, from 1 to 4, the guard would be from a to b.

It must be borne in mind that this second cut, from 1 to 4, is generally delivered with what I shall call the butt of the staff, i.e. with that end which is nearest the right hand, in the case of a right-handed man; and that cut one, from 2 to 3, would be delivered with the butt in the case of a left-handed man.

The two guards above illustrated will almost cover any attack, but not quite.

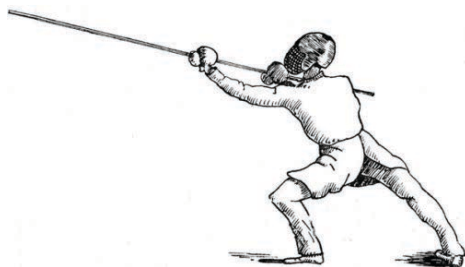


Fig. 4.—First Hit.

On examining Fig. 8 it will be seen that the guard for the first cut, viz. that from 2 to 3 on the target, is indicated by the position of the staff cd or c'd'. The guard cd meets the three cuts 6 to 5, 2 to 3, and 7 to 0, but is not sufficient to protect you against cut 4 to 1.

Similarly the guard *c'd* answers the purpose as far as cuts 4 to 1, 6 to 5, and 2 to 3 are concerned, but fails to ward off cut 7 to 0; and the same remarks apply to the other side of the target, where *ab* and *a'b'* represent the staff.

Of course the two guards in Fig. 5 may be so used as to meet all requirements, but it is, to my thinking, far preferable to thoroughly master the four as represented in Fig. 9. So doing will give increased command over the staff, and will not in any way detract from speed or general efficiency.

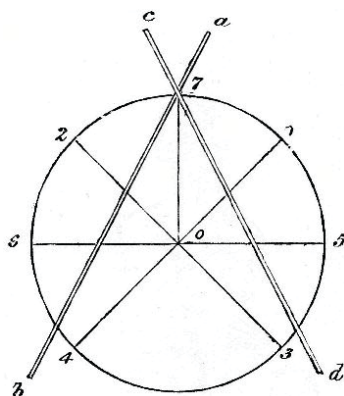


Fig. 5

It will be observed that in the sketches of guard 1 and guard 2, Figs. 6 and 7, the staff is, in each case, too perpendicular for cut 7 to 0; they represent the positions of the combatants when using guards *a'b'* and *c'd'* in Fig. 8.

I would therefore advise attention to the following diagram, which includes the guards, four in number, which are really sufficient for all hits which can be made with the quarter-staff.

The lines intersecting the circumference of the circle show the inclinations of the staff for guarding all the cuts which can be made.

We now turn to the question of position. In quarter-staff play it is usual for a right-handed man to stand with his left foot in advance of the right, as in boxing or bayonet exercise, and with his toe pointing straight in the direction of his adversary, as in Fig. 2. It is, however, often very advisable to advance the right foot suddenly to the front when bringing

sponds with the “forte” of a sword or stick. If you have learned fencing with the foils it will be of the greatest possible advantage to you, for you will then understand how slight an effort brought to bear on the foible of your opponent’s staff—in this case it will be somewhere within two feet of the end—will suffice to turn aside the most vigorous thrust.



Fig. 9.—Second hit.

It may not be out of place to add that any man who has gone through any sort of apprenticeship in fencing—either with foils or single-sticks—will not fail, when a quarter-staff is put into his hands, to know what to do with his weapon. He may, at first, feel awkward, and the length of the staff may hamper him and its weight fatigue him, but he will, with his knowledge of general principles, very soon get into the work and enjoy it.



Fig. 10.—Point.

Though the staves used are often made of light bamboo cane, one may get very severe hits and prods, so it is as well, before engaging in an encounter, to have (a) a good mask, such as broad-swordsmen wear; (b) a thick jacket of stout leather, with a high collar; (c) boxing-gloves on both hands; (d) a good pad for the middle of the body, from waist

to knee; and (e) cricket pads for both legs, which are apt to come in for nasty jars on or about the knee. Never on any account try to dispense with the pads—they may save you from permanent injury; and do they not add to your good health by promoting a beneficial opening of the sweat-glands?

In quarter-staff, as in stick-play, broad-sword exercise, fencing, etc., it is better to sink down with the knees bent, for in this position you present a smaller area for your opponent to strike at than you do when quite erect.

In leading off it is better to slide the hand which is at m or n (see Fig. 11) down to the hand which is at D or B; you then gain several feet of reach added to your lunge out; only be careful to recover quickly, and get the hand you have thus moved back to its former position.

Advancing and retreating are effected much in the same way as in bayonet exercise; viz. for the advance, move the left foot swiftly forward in the direction of your opponent for a distance of, say, eighteen inches or two feet, following this up with the right foot for the same distance, so that the same relative positions are maintained; for the retreat, move the right foot back the required distance and follow up with the left foot.

In speaking of the retreat, it must be mentioned that, from the great length of the staff, you cannot, very often, get out of the way by the ordinary retreat, as above described, but may have to make an undignified jump back for five or six feet, to avoid a quick return or, possibly, an unexpected lead-off. In a stiff bout this jumping, with all the heavy impedimenta indispensable to the game, takes it out of one considerably, and, on this account, it is a first-rate exercise for any man who may wish to get into good training.

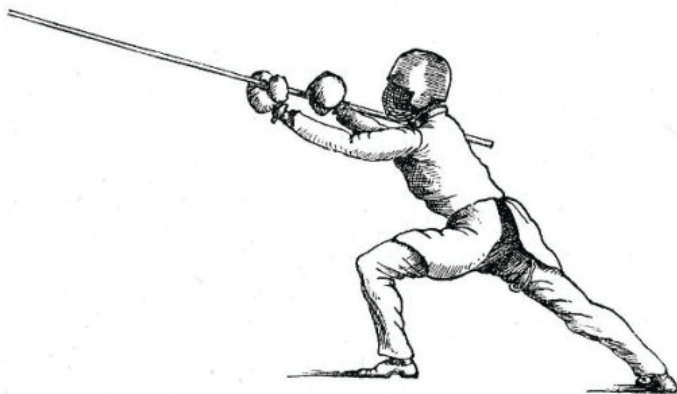


Fig. 11.—First hit, with slide.

The most common mistake learners of the quarter-staff make is that they try very long sweeping hits, which are easily guarded, instead of shorter and sharper taps, which run up points and are much more scientific.

Your sweeping hit may be likened to the “hook-hit” at boxing, for it lays open your weak points and leaves you for an instant in a position from which there is a difficulty in recovery.

In all these games be well “pulled together.” Watch a good fencer, either with the foils or with the sticks; see how seldom his point wanders far from the lines of attack, and how quick he is with the returns! You cannot guard and return with any sort of effect if you go in for ugly sweeping hits or hard heavy guards.

The heavy hit may come off occasionally, the clumsy guard may turn the point, but why misdirect energy? It is surely unnecessary to put forth great muscular effort when you know that the strength of a small child, if properly applied, is ample to put aside the most powerful thrust or the heaviest cut.

If quite unacquainted with fencing, broad-sword, stick-play, or bayonet-exercise, never be tempted into a bout with the quarter-staff. No one should ever go in for this game without previous knowledge.

My own idea is that learning fencing with the foils should precede all the above-named exercises, for in this way a delicacy of touch and

nicety in the matter of guarding are acquired, which may lay a really good foundation.

Nearly all first-rate stick-players have served their apprenticeship with the foils, and, where this education has been omitted, one may generally detect the ugly carving-knife-and-fork style, so unpleasant to watch. Whereas with a good fencer—"foiler" perhaps I should say—everything is done with neatness, whether he has in his hand a single-stick, a cutlass, or the leg of an old chair.

So that it comes to this: We seek the aid of the newest and most delicate weapon of attack and defence—the small-sword—to teach us how to properly make use of the most ancient and clumsy of all weapons—the time-honoured quarter-staff!

CHAPTER III.

THE BROAD SWORD.

“But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish’d by man that’s of a woman born.”

— General

Macbeth, Act V., Scene vii.

In the early stages of the world’s history our very remote ancestors were unacquainted with the art of forging instruments and weapons from metals; they were not even aware of the existence of those metals, and had to content themselves with sharpened flints and other hard stones for cutting purposes. Many of these weapons were fashioned with considerable skill, and give evidence that even in the dark days of the Stone Age men had a good idea of form and the adaptation of the roughest materials to suit the particular purpose they had in view.

To take an example from the most common forms—the spear and javelin-heads which are found along with the bones and other remains of the cave bear. These are admirably designed for entering the body of any animal; for, though varying greatly in size, weight, and shape, the double edge and sharp point render them capable of inflicting severe wounds, and of entering into the flesh almost as easily as the point of a modern sword.

As good specimens of these early spear-heads fetched high prices, finding them was at one time quite a profession, like finding bullets, etc., on the field of Waterloo. Forgeries became common, and in many cases the imitations were so perfect that the most experienced antiquary was often puzzled to pick out the genuine article when placed next to the spurious.

For the benefit of those who take an interest in this branch of research, it may be mentioned that the museum at Salisbury is full of excellent specimens both of true spear-heads and the copies “made to meet the demand,” and I may fairly say that the ordinary observer would be utterly incapable of distinguishing the slightest difference between the two.

The genus "cutting instrument," then, has for its archetype the sharp flint, which was fashioned by dint of hard labour in the very early days of man's existence on the face of the earth.

When metals were discovered and their malleability had been tested by the application of fire, not only spear and javelin-heads were formed from the new material, but short swords, consisting entirely of metal, were first constructed; and this departure marked a new era in the civilization of the world, termed by geologists and antiquarians the Bronze Age.

In a very short treatise on a cut-and-thrust weapon like the broad-sword, it would be out of place to enter into any speculations as to the probable dates at which the stone, the bronze, and the iron ages commenced their respective epochs. It seems sufficient to give the order and to mention a few of the early weapons with which we are acquainted, either through actually finding them, or by seeing representations of them on early works of art, such as alto-relievos or frescoes.

One of the earliest forms of sword was the leaf-shaped blade of the early Greeks. It properly belongs to the Bronze Age, as it is found amongst the human remains of that period. It was a short, heavy-bladed weapon, with sharp point and double edge, used, it appears from ancient monuments, for cutting purposes.



Fig. 12.—Early Greek sword.

No doubt the weight of the blade, increased by the heavy deep ridge running almost from point to hilt, made it very serviceable for cutting, but it seems more than probable that the point was also used, and that the idea of the edge was handed down to us because the ancient sculptor or delineator, in his battle-piece representations, placed the swordsman in the most spirited positions he could think of. A figure in the act of delivering a slashing cut, say cut 1 or cut 2, looks much more aggressive and eager for the fray than a similar figure about to give the point.

I only advance this as a suggestion, for it seems hard to believe that people who must have been well acquainted with the use of the point

at the end of a pole or staff—as in the case of the spear, which was the very earliest form of thrusting weapon—should abandon it when they came to the sword.

Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the short Roman sword, which was practically a large heavy dagger, sharp-pointed, double-edged, and straight-bladed, was extensively used for thrusting. For cutting purposes, however, it could not, from the absence of curve in the edge of the blade, have been equal to the early Greek weapon.



Fig. 13.—Short Roman sword.

When iron began to play a prominent part in the construction of articles requiring hardness, strength, and durability, a great stride was made in the production of war-like weapons, and it was then very soon discovered that ordinary forged iron was too soft and easily bent, and it was not until the art of tempering began to be roughly understood that iron, or more correctly speaking steel, swords were brought to a degree of perfection sufficient to entitle them to a higher place than their bronze predecessors.

It is believed that the Egyptians had some method of tempering their bronze chisels, which is now numbered amongst the lost arts; otherwise, how could they have carved the head of the Sphinx and innumerable other works out of the intensely hard stone of which so many of their monuments are cut?

The modern sword blade is constructed of steel, tempered so as to suit the particular kind of work for which it is intended.

“Mechanical invention has not,” says the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*,” “been able to supersede or equal handwork in the production of good sword blades. The swordsmiths’ craft is still, no less than it was in the Middle Ages, essentially a handicraft, and it requires a high order of skill. His rough material is a bar of cast and hammered steel, tapering from the centre to the ends; when this is cut in two each half is made into a sword. The ‘tang,’ which fits into the handle, is not part of the blade, but a piece of wrought iron welded on to its base. From this first stage

to the finishing of the point it is all hammer and anvil work. Special tools are used to form grooves in the blade, according to the regulation or other pattern desired, but the shape and weight of the blade are fixed wholly by the skilled hand and eye of the smith. Measuring tools are at hand, but are little used. Great care is necessary to avoid over-heating the metal, which would produce a brittle crystalline grain, and to keep the surface free from oxide, which would be injurious if hammered in. In tempering the blade the workman judges of the proper heat by the colour. Water is preferred to oil by the best makers, notwithstanding that tempering in oil is much easier. With oil there is not the same risk of the blade coming out distorted and having to be forged straight again (a risk, however, which the expert swordsmith can generally avoid); but the steel is only surface-hardened, and the blade therefore remains liable to bend. Machinery comes into play only for grinding and polishing, and to some extent in the manufacture of hilts and appurtenances. The finished blade is proved by being caused to strike a violent blow on a solid block, with the two sides flat, with the edge, and lastly with the back; after this the blade is bent flatwise in both directions by hand, and finally the point is driven through a steel plate about an eighth of an inch thick. In spite of all the care that can be used, both in choice of materials and in workmanship, about forty per cent. of the blades thus tried fail to stand the proof and are rejected. The process we have briefly described is that of making a really good sword; of course plenty of cheaper and commoner weapons are in the market, but they are hardly fit to trust a man's life to. It is an interesting fact that the peculiar skill of the swordsmith is in England so far hereditary that it can be traced back in the same families for several generations.

"The best Eastern blades are justly celebrated, but they are not better than the best European ones; in fact, European swords are often met with in Asiatic hands, remounted in Eastern fashion. The 'damascening' or 'watering' of choice Persian and Indian is not a secret of workmanship, but is due to the peculiar manner of making the Indian steel itself, in which a crystallizing process is set up; when metal of this texture is forged out, the result is a more or less regular wavy pattern running through it. No difference is made by this in the practical qualities of the blade."

The above-quoted description, though short and superficial, is sufficient to indicate some of the chief difficulties of the swordsmith's art, and it sets one thinking, too, as to the various uses to which cutting instruments are put, and gradations of hardness, from the high temper of razors and certain chisels to the low temper of hunters' and sailors' knives, which should always be of rather soft steel, for they are sharpened more easily, and the saw-like edge is better suited for cutting flesh, ropes, etc., than a very fine edge would be.

A comparatively soft steel does well enough for the heavy cutlass used for cutting lead or dividing a sheep, and the edge, though sharp and keen, need not, and, indeed, cannot, approach the razor-edge necessary for cutting a silk pocket-handkerchief or a feather.

Every edge, when closely examined by a microscope, presents a more or less saw-like and jagged appearance. It is merely a question of degree, and, in a sword to be used for ordinary cutting and thrusting, you want to secure hardness sufficient to produce a good edge and an instant return to its former shape after any reasonable bending, and you want to avoid anything like brittleness or liability to snap. If the disposition of the molecules is such as to give too great hardness, the blade, though capable of taking a fine edge, will probably snap, or the edge will crack and shiver on meeting any hard obstacle. For example, if you put razor steel into a cutlass, and then try to cut lead, the blade will either snap off or the edge will break away in large pieces. If, on the other hand, you make the blade of too soft steel, the edge will be readily dented or turned on one side.

Though there are wonderful reports of the excellence of Eastern blades manufactured at Damascus, it is probable that European work was quite as good, and that the tempering of steel was quite as well understood at Toledo, in Spain, where, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, splendid rapiers were produced. It seems highly probable that the rapier was an extension or refinement of the earlier heavy cut-and-thrust sword, because, though the superior value of the point was beginning then to assert itself, there was an evident attempt to preserve in the rapier the strength and cutting properties of the long straight sword of a previous time.

The Italian and Spanish rapiers were sometimes of great length, three feet or three feet six inches and more in the blade, and they were often beautifully finished, the work of the hilts being frequently both elaborate and costly. The blade itself, which was double-edged and inclined to be flat, tapered gradually from hilt to point, and was strengthened by a ridge running almost its entire length.

The French duelling-sword of modern days is sometimes spoken of as a "rapier;" but this is incorrect, as the popular Gallic dispute-settler is three-sided, and is, as it has no edge, exclusively used for pointing.

For details of historical research, and other particulars, the reader is referred to Mr. Egerton Castle's work on the sword.

The Modern Cut-and-Thrust Sword.

The word "Broad-sword" may be taken to include all kinds of cut-and-thrust swords. It is the generic term for ship's cutlass, infantry sword, and heavy cavalry sabre, which are all cutting weapons, and, though varying in length and curvature of blade, can be used for pointing.

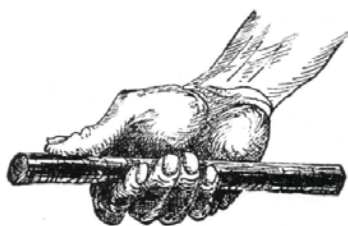


Fig. 14.—Grip for the light cutlass.

The method of holding the broad-sword depends entirely upon the weight and length of the blade. If you have a light cutlass weighing, say, about one and a half pound, and measuring about thirty-four inches in the blade, you may hold it in the same way as in single-stick play, viz. with the thumb on the back of the hilt, as in the sketch, and you will probably find that in this way the guards are made with greater facility. At the same time, when guarding, say, with the hanging guard (see Fig. 15), the thumb is liable to a severe sprain; and this is more particularly the case when the opposing blade meets the foible, or half nearest the point of your blade, at right angles, or nearly so.

To be more explicit. If A B C, in Fig. 16, represent your blade lying flat on the paper, d o the intersection of a plane at right angles to the plane of the paper and also at right angles to the tangent to the curve at the point o, where we will suppose the edges of the blades to meet, it will be seen at a glance that the leverage from o to C is considerable, and that a great strain is thrown upon the thumb which is endeavouring to keep the guard in position.



Fig. 15—Low hanging guard.

In this case the cut has been received on the “foible,” or half of the blade nearest the point. All guards should, if possible, be made with the “forte,” or half nearest the hilt.

It is important to bear in mind that the cut should be received with the guard as much as possible on the slant; i.e. you should endeavour to make the opponent’s blade glance off yours at an angle such as d’o. The difficulty of bringing about this “glance off” is certainly increased by having the thumb on the hilt, because your hanging guard—which is perhaps the most important and constantly recurring of all the guards—is apt to be higher, so far as the point is concerned, and there is the chance of letting in cuts 3 or 5 at the left side, which is exposed by an elevated point.

If, in the hanging guard, the arm is well extended, with the hand slightly above the level of the shoulder, the point dropped well to the left, and the edge turned outwards to the left, as in the illustration (Fig. 15), a very good general guard will be formed. Remember, too, that in all cuts, points, or guards, the second knuckles of the fingers should be in a line with the edge. The only exception to this rule is, perhaps, to be found in the third point, where a shifting of the hand, so as to enable the edge to be more completely directed upwards, is sometimes recommended.

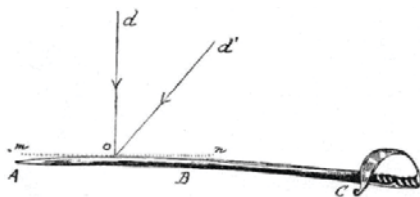


Fig. 16.—The broad-sword.

The hanging guard, or modifications thereof, is capable of warding off all cuts made at the left side of the head and body, and is also effective against cut 7. Then, by bringing the hand slightly to the right, with the elbow held well in to the right side, it is extremely easy to come into the position for guarding cut 2.

We may, I think, assume that, on the whole, the thumb held at the back of the hilt gives, in the case of a very light sword, an advantage in speed, especially with short quick cuts and points.

Turning to the heavy sabre used by the cavalry of this and other countries, we observe that to keep the thumb on the back of the hilt would lead to constant sprains. No man is strong enough to wield with effect a blade weighing about two and a half pounds and measuring little short of three feet—thirty-five inches is the regulation length of the British cavalry sabre—unless he holds it as indicated in Fig. 17.



Fig. 17.—Grip for the heavy sabre.

Most cuts made with the heavy sword are more sweeping in their nature, more “swinging,” so to speak, than the short quick cuts which can be effected with the lighter and more handy weapon; indeed, it is only to be expected that the weight of the blade and length of the sweep should give great force to the sabre; but it must not be forgotten that what is thus gained in power is lost in speed, and that in nine cases out of ten

a well-directed "point" would be immeasurably superior both in speed and effect than the most sweeping cut.

Such very different weapons are required to be thoroughly effective in different circumstances. A light, thin-bladed sword, though admirable for a man on foot, would not be of nearly so much use to a cavalry man, whose slashing cut through shield or helmet renders weight an absolute necessity. The light blade might be brought to bear with all the speed and force of the strongest man, but would be of no avail in those cases where hard, dense, and heavy substances have to be cut through.

A fly may dash against a pane of plate-glass with the utmost speed and yet fail to break the glass; but a cricket-ball thrown with a tenth part of the velocity will smash the window to pieces. This is only an analagous case, which indicates very fully the existence of the two factors in the vis-viva necessary to produce a certain result.

If you get your blade too light it will not be serviceable for heavy-cutting work, whatever the speed of the cut; and if you get the blade too heavy, it will be impossible to use it effectively on account of its weight.

Everything depends upon what a sword is expected to do; and in selecting a blade this cannot be too carefully borne in mind.

The Easterns have not, and indeed never had, any idea of using the point; but they are far and away our superiors at edge work, and their curved scimitars are admirably adapted for effective cutting, because the edge, meeting the object aimed at on the slant, has great cutting or slicing power.

This brings us to the most important matter in connection with cutting weapons—the "draw."

If you take a razor in one hand and hit the palm of the other hand a smart blow with the edge, no harm will be done; but if you vary this hit, by making it lighter and putting the slightest possible draw into it, a cut will be the result, and blood will flow freely. That is to say, anything like drawing the edge along the skin will produce a cut.

Turn to the case of the scimitar. It will be seen that the curved form of the blade from hilt to point renders it impossible for a sweeping cut, given with the arm extended its full length and with the shoulder as

centre of the circle, which the hand traces out in making the cut, to be other than a “draw,” because the edge must meet the object to be severed on the slant.



Fig. 18.—The scimitar.

Excellent examples of this kind of cutting are to be found in the circular saw and the chaff-cutting machine.

But this is not the case with a nearly straight-bladed broad-sword, which requires what may be termed an artificial draw, either backward or forward, in order that the cut may have its full effect. Of course the draw back is by far the most common form of the “draw;” and on reference to the accompanying sketch (Fig. 19) it will be seen that the edge, if the hand retains its position throughout the entire sweep, on the circumference of the circle B D, will meet the object to be cut simply as a hit, and not as a cut. This is just what we want to avoid.

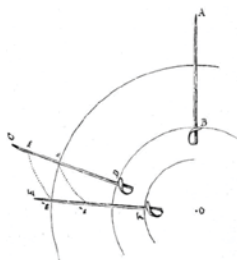


Fig. 19.

Suppose the cut is being made parallel to the plane of the paper, and that the hilt of the sword is, in the first part of the sweep, moving on the circumference of the circle from B to D. Suppose, too, that the edge first meets the obstacle to be cut at the point n. Then slightly before n is reached the “draw” should commence, the hand coming into position at F, and the point n being necessarily drawn down to n' by the time the object has been severed. That is to say, the portion of the blade between m and n will have been made effective in the drawing cut, the point n having travelled in the direction of the dotted lines till it arrives at n'.

The point *n* is taken at random: it might be nearer the hilt or nearer the point, according to the distance of the object aimed at. It may also be observed that the “draw” might continue during the entire sweep from *B* to *F*, but a very slight consideration will show clearly the advantage of keeping the arm fully extended until the edge is quite close to the object, as, by this means, the reach is increased and the power of the cut gains considerably. The dynamical proof of this latter advantage would take up too much space, and I regret that it is rather outside the scope of this little work.

No matter how extended the arm may be when commencing the cut—and the more extended the better in the case of a long heavy sword—the “draw” should always come in towards the end of the sweep, the first part of which is merely intended to give the required impetus to the effective portion of the cut.

How is it that an apple or potato can be divided by a straight cut when placed in the folds of a silk pocket-handkerchief, which remains uninjured? Simply because there is a complete absence of “draw,” and the apple or potato is broken or split in two, much as the flesh is indented by the edge of the razor whilst the skin escapes without the slightest mark.

In cavalry charges, etc., our soldiers too often forget that they have in their hands pointing and cutting weapons, and make slashing hits, which lead to a large percentage of broken blades. I should myself always place the point before the edge, as it is quicker and far more deadly; but as there are numerous instances where cutting is necessary, it is as well to remember that a mere hit with the true edge of a straight-bladed sword is little better than a blow from a heavy stick having an oval section.

This brings us to another very important part of the subject, viz. the consideration of the best form of weapon for ordinary practice.

To many it may seem that in these few pages on swordsmanship the cart has been placed before the horse, and that a discussion on cuts and guards should have preceded the somewhat intricate questions we have been considering. I have, however, thought it advisable to leave what may be termed the “drudgery” to the end of the chapter, in the hope of thereby creating a more lively interest in the subject. It must,

nevertheless, be remembered that, to attain to any sort of proficiency with the sword, a long apprenticeship must be served.

Though stick-play is invaluable as an aid to work with the sword, it may be remarked that there are two reasons, and those important ones, why the single-stick should not be first placed in the hands of the beginner, and why it should never altogether usurp the place of the more lethal weapon. The reasons are—

- (a.) The stick is very light, and short smart hits can be made, which are impossible with a sword.
- (b.) The hit with the stick is really a hit, and there need be no draw, which, as already explained, is so important in sword-play.

To these may be added a third reason. With the stick there is always the temptation not to cut with the true edge, and it is very hard to detect faults in this direction—faults which are hard to cure, and which may quite spoil good swordsmanship.

Remembering, then, that every cut and guard must be made with the true edge, and with the second or middle knuckles of the fingers in the direction of the edge, a navy cutlass may be placed in the beginner's hand, and he may be gradually taught all the cuts and guards by means of the target, a sketch of which is here given.

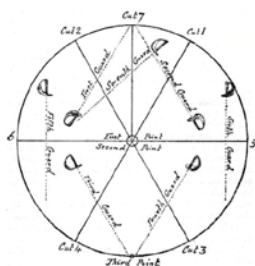


Fig. 20.—The target.

In the manual on sword-exercises at present in use in the army, it is stated that there are “four cuts and four guards, so arranged for the sake of clearness, though practically there are only two cuts—from right to left and from left to right, high and low—and two guards, one a variation of the ‘hanging’ or ‘engaging guard,’ formed high or low, right or left, according to the part attacked, and the other the ‘second

guard,' where the point of the sword is necessarily directed upwards, to guard the right cheek and shoulder."

This is very brief, and, to my mind, the effort to be concise has tended to somewhat confuse. It may, however, be well enough for the army, where there are plenty of instructors ready to explain the meanings of terms, etc. For ordinary beginners it is certainly better to take the old target and thoroughly master the seven cuts and three points, with the corresponding guards and parries, as by so doing the learner will more readily acquire a thorough appreciation of true edge-cutting. The general statement that there are two cuts—viz. variations from right to left, and variations from left to right—is correct enough, and a swordsman understands it; but it is bad for beginners to start with loose notions on the subject. Better far learn all the cuts, and learn them well, in the first instance. By this means a man and his sword become one, as it were, and the point and edge of the weapon are in time brought so completely under control that they can be directed as easily as the pencil and brush are directed by the hand of a skilful draughtsman.

As the reader will have surmised, the lines drawn through the centre of the circle indicate the directions of the cuts; but a little further explanation is necessary, for it must not be supposed that a mere following of these lines with the point of the sword is all that is required. The flat of the blade (or, more accurately, a plane passing through the edge and a line drawn down the centre of the back of the blade from hilt to point) should, throughout the entire cut, coincide with the plane intersecting the plane of the target at right angles in the particular line in which the cut is being made.

Careful attention to this will ensure cutting with the true edge, and, in the first instance, all the cuts should be made slowly and deliberately, so that errors may be instantly corrected. This may be somewhat tedious to the impetuous learner, but it really saves time in the end.

The target should be hung up on a wall with the centre about the height of a man's shoulder from the ground. Directly below the centre a straight line should be drawn on the ground from the wall, and at right angles to it.

The beginner should be stationed on this line in the position of "Attention," at about nine or ten feet from the wall, so that when he comes into the first position of the exercise his right foot may be on the line, and may point directly towards the wall.

Instructions as to drawing swords, etc., will be given later on with the Extension Motions and rules for loose play (vide p. 39). At this stage it may possibly be less confusing to merely give the following positions, leaving to the concluding portions of the chapter a few amplifications which may materially assist the swordsman when he has begun to take a genuine interest in the subject.

ATTENTION.—Having taken the cutlass in the right hand, stand facing the target, body and head erect, and the heels close together and meeting at an angle of sixty degrees on the line drawn from the wall.

With the sword hand in front of, and on a level with, the elbow, which should be close to the body, and with the blade pointing perpendicularly upwards with the edge to the front, you will be in the position of "Carry swords." Now relax the grasp of the last three fingers, and, without altering the position of the hand, let the back of the blade fall on the shoulder half-way between the neck and the point of the shoulder. This forms the position of "Slope swords," with which the exercise begins.

FIRST POSITION.—Bring the right heel before the left; feet at right angles, right foot pointing towards target; shoulders square to left, and weight of body chiefly resting on left leg.

SECOND POSITION.—Bend both knees, keeping them well apart, without raising the heels or altering the erect position of the body. Step out with the right foot along the line for about eighteen or twenty inches straight in direction of the target, still retaining most of the weight of the body on the left leg.

THIRD POSITION.—Step out still further along the line—about a yard or so (according to the height of the individual)—keeping the shin-bone as nearly as possible perpendicular to the instep. The left leg should be straight and the left heel should not leave the ground. The heels should be both on the line, and the shoulders should be square to the left; i.e. the right shoulder should be well extended and the left held back. The weight is now, of course, principally on the right leg.

At the word "Attention," then, the pupil should come into the position of "Slope swords," already described.

Prepare for Sword Exercise.—Turning on the heels, come into the "first position," with the left forearm well behind the back and the hand closed.

RIGHT, PROVE DISTANCE.—Bring the upper part of the hilt of the sword on a level with the mouth, blade pointing perpendicularly upwards, edge to the left, and the elbow close to the side. This forms the position "Recover swords." Now extend the arm to the right, and lower the blade in a horizontal position straight out from the right shoulder, edge to the rear, shoulders square to the front, and the head and eyes turned to the right in the direction in which the sword is pointing.

Return to the position "Slope swords."

FRONT, PROVE DISTANCE.—"Recover swords" as before, and, extending the arm with the point of the sword directed towards the centre of the target, step out into the third position, taking care that the edge is towards the right.

Return to the position "Slope swords."

In proving distance Right and Front, the forefinger and thumb may be stretched along the handle of the hilt, the thumb being on the back and the pommel of the hilt in the palm of the hand.

ASSAULT.—Come into First Position; raise the right arm to the front with the wrist opposite No. 1 and the elbow rather bent, and inclining towards the centre of the target, the back of the blade, near the point, resting on the shoulder, with the edge inclined to the right.

CUT ONE.—With an extension of the arm direct the cut diagonally from No. 1 to No. 4 (remembering in this, and all the following cuts, to use the true edge), and as the point clears the circle, turn the knuckles upwards, continuing the sweep of the sword until the point comes to the rear of the left shoulder, with edge to the left and the wrist opposite No. 2.

CUT TWO.—Now cut diagonally from left to right from No. 2 to No. 3. Continue the motion till the arm is extended to the right, on a level with the shoulder, edge to the rear.

CUT THREE.—Now turn the wrist so that the knuckles and edge face to the front, and cut diagonally upwards from No. 3 to No. 2, and continue the sweep until the wrist rests in the hollow of the left shoulder, with the point of the sword pointing upwards and the edge to the rear; turn the wrist so that the edge faces to the front, and drop the point until the blade is in the position for the next cut.

CUT FOUR.—Cut diagonally upwards from No. 4 to No. 1 until the blade is nearly perpendicular, edge and knuckles to the rear. Bring the arm, still fully extended, to the position of “Right, prove distance,” and turn the wrist so that the knuckles and edge face to the front, the blade being horizontal and on a level with the shoulders.

CUT FIVE.—Cut horizontally from No. 5 to No. 6. The edge will now be to the left and the point to the rear, over the left shoulder.

CUT SIX.—Turn the wrist so that knuckles and edge face to the front, and cut horizontally from No. 6 to No. 5. Continuing the sweep until the hand is nearly over the head and in the direction of No. 7, the sword being on the same line over the head, point lowered to the rear, and the edge directed vertically upwards.

CUT SEVEN.—Cut vertically downwards from No. 7 to the centre of the target, and remain with the arm extended.

FIRST POINT.—Turn the wrist, with the edge of the sword upwards, to the right. Bring the hand upwards on a level with the eyes, elbow bent and raised, the point of the sword directed towards the centre of the target, and the left shoulder advanced. Now, by an extension of the arm, deliver the point smartly to the front, with the edge of the sword still inclined upwards to the right and the point accurately directed to the centre. The right shoulder should now be well advanced and the left drawn back—this motion of the shoulders being applicable to all the points.

SECOND POINT.—Turn the edge upwards to the left, draw the elbow close to the body and let the wrist be as high as, and in front of, the left breast. Now deliver the point, as before directed, accurately towards the centre of the target, the wrist inclining towards No. 2.

THIRD POINT.—Draw in the arm till the inside of the wrist touches the right hip, the edge being raised upwards to the right, the left shoulder slightly advanced and the hips well thrown back. Now deliver the point accurately towards the lowest point on the target, the edge being carefully directed upwards to the right throughout the motion.

GUARDS.—Having gone through the cuts and points, the pupil should now give his attention to the guards and parries.

A reference to Fig. 20, in which the directions of the blade are indicated by means of the hilt and dotted lines, will make it easy for the beginner to place his sword in the seven guarding positions which follow.

GUARD ONE.—Grasp the hilt as shown in Fig. 17, turn the edge to the left with the elbow held close to the body, the wrist well to the front. Let the blade be as nearly as possible parallel to the direction of cut 1, and let it slope in the direction of the target at an angle of about forty-five degrees with the ground: i.e. let the point in this, and indeed all the guards, be well advanced to the front.

GUARD TWO.—Turn the knuckles up, draw the elbow nearer the right side and let the edge face to the right, and let the blade be parallel to cut 2. In this guard the forearm will be more directly pointing towards the target.

GUARD THREE.—Turn wrist and edge to the left, the hand being rather below the left shoulder, and the blade following the dotted lines marked “third guard.”

GUARD FOUR.—Bring the wrist and hand across the body to the right, edge to right and blade following dotted line marked “fourth guard.”

GUARD FIVE.—Wrist and edge to the left, with blade pointing vertically downwards.

GUARD SIX.—Wrist and edge to the right, with blade pointing vertically downwards. [It will be observed that these two guards, five and six, are but extensions of guards three and four, the difference being merely in the height of the hand and inclination of the blade.]

GUARD SEVEN.—Raise the hand well above the level of the eyes, so that the target can be seen under the wrist; let the arm be extended, the

point of the sword dropped forward to the left and parallel to dotted lines marked "seventh guard," and let the edge face vertically upwards.

It may be here again mentioned that with all guards and parries in actual practice, the "forte," or half nearest the hilt, should be the portion of the blade which meets the opponent's sword when the attack is made.

LEFT PARRY.—Let the wrist be drawn back to within eight or ten inches of the right shoulder, the blade pointing in the direction of the perpendicular line on the target, and let the edge be turned to the right. Now, by a second motion, turn the wrist so that the point drops to the left and forms a circle from left to right and then returns to the former position.

RIGHT PARRY.—Drop the point to the rear and form the circle from right to left of your body, the sword returning to its position as before.

Both these circular parries should be learnt and practised for the sake of adding to the strength and suppleness of the wrist; but for actual use it is better to turn the point aside by one of the simple guards, remembering not to let the hand wander far from the line of attack. In other words, you should let your "forte" catch the "foible" of the adversary's blade just sufficiently to turn aside the point, and then instantly give your point or come back to whatever guard you may have assumed in the first instance.

Some diversity of opinion exists as to the best "Engaging Guard" to take up. In the two Figs., 21 and 22, I am inclined to favour the former for use when opposed either to the small sword or the bayonet, and give preference to the latter when facing another broad-swordsman. In Fig. 21, it will be observed, the point is well forward, and it is easy with a light pressure to turn aside the opposing point and instantly lunge out in the return. The engagement is here in Tierce, but it might just as well be in Quarte, in which case the edge would be turned to the left instead of to the right.

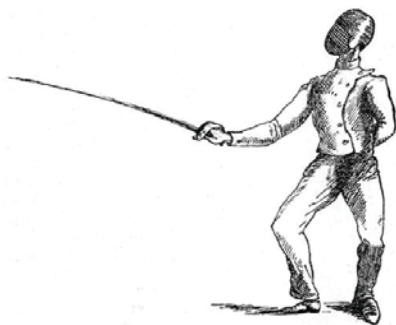


Fig. 21.—Engaging guard, A.

At the same time, the more common engaging guard, the very low hanging guard in Fig. 22, has many merits not possessed by the other. It will be better to constantly practise both these guarding positions and then come to a decision as to which you can do best in. Two things are certain, viz., you can, if proficient at both, puzzle an opponent who is at home only in one, and the change of position is a great rest in a long succession of bouts.



Fig. 22.—Engaging guard, B.

It will now be well to combine the cuts and guards, and, for this, take up the second position in front of the target, and in making each cut lunge well out into the third position, not allowing the blade to cut further than the centre of the target. Then spring back to the position from which you lunged and form the guard for the cut you have just made. For instance, having made cut 1 as far as the centre of the target, return to the second position and form guard 1. Similarly for cut 2 and all the other cuts.

In the same way make the points in the lunge, in position three, and the corresponding parries in the second position.

In many works on the subject, the foregoing exercises are given with the return in each case to the first position instead of, as above, to the second. It is, however, advisable to accustom yourself as much as possible to rapid returns from the lunge to the engaging position in which you habitually face an opponent. The change from position one to position three involves a long stretch out, and the return is, of course, harder than the return to position two, and, for this very reason, it is well to practise the exercises from both initial positions—one and two.

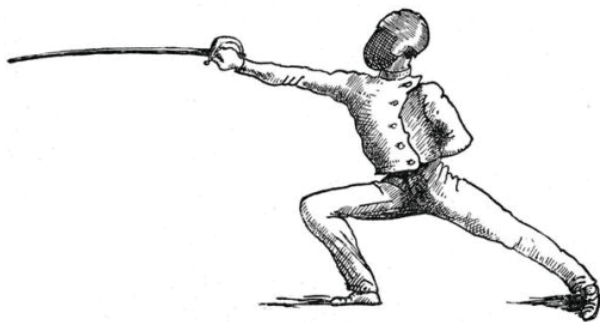


Fig. 23.—Point, with lunge.

At the risk of being considered old-fashioned, I have given the sword exercise with seven cuts and three points, with corresponding guards and parries, and it is my conviction that the beginner will do well to follow the advice given on p. 27.

The following instructions are taken from the *Manual on the Infantry Sword*, now used in the army.

Instructions for Drawing the Sword (Long)

DRAW SWORDS.—Take hold of the scabbard of the sword, with the left hand below the hilt, which should be raised as high as the hip, then bring the right hand smartly across the body, grasping the hilt and turning it at the same time to the rear, raise the hand the height of the elbow, the arm being close to the body.

Two.—Draw the sword from the scabbard, the edge being to the rear, and lower the hand until the upper part of the hilt is opposite the

mouth, the blade perpendicular, edge to the left, elbow close to the body, which forms the position "Recover swords."

THREE.—Bring the sword smartly down until the hand is in front of the elbow and little finger in line with it, the elbow close to the body, blade perpendicular, edge to the front; which forms the position of "Carry swords;" the left hand resumes the position of "Attention" directly the sword is drawn.

SLOPE SWORDS.—Relax the grasp of the last three fingers, and, without disturbing the position of the hand, allow the back of the sword to fall lightly on the shoulder, midway between the neck and the point of the shoulder.

RETURN SWORDS.—Carry the hilt to the hollow of the left shoulder (the left hand, as before, raising the scabbard), with the blade perpendicular and the back of the hand to the front, then by a quick turn of the wrist drop the point into the scabbard, turning the edge to the rear until the hand and elbow are in line with each other square across the body.

TWO.—Replace the sword in the scabbard, keeping the hand upon the hilt.

THREE.—The hands are brought back to the position of "Attention."

DRAW SWORDS.—As before.

SLOPE SWORDS.—As before.

STAND AT EASE.—Keeping the sword at the "Slope," draw back the right foot six inches, and bend the left knee.

The Four Cuts (from Second Position).

ASSAULT.—Raise the hand and sword to the rear, arm bent, wrist rounded, the back of the sword resting upon the shoulder, with the edge inclined to the right.

ONE.—Extend the arm, and direct the cut diagonally downwards from right to left, and, continuing the sweep of the sword, prepare for cut "two," the back of the sword upon the left shoulder, edge inclined to the left.

TWO.—Cut diagonally downwards from left to right, and turning the wrist let the sword continue its motion until it rests upon the right shoulder, edge to the right.

THREE.—Cut horizontally from right to left, and prepare for cut “four,” the flat of the sword resting upon the left shoulder.

FOUR.—Cut horizontally from left to right, and come to the “Engaging Guard” (vide Fig. 22).

The Four Guards.

FIRST.—Raise the hand smartly above the head, and a little in advance of it, the point of the sword lowered to the left front, edge upwards.

SECOND.—Draw back the elbow to the right, and bring the sword to a diagonal position, covering the right cheek and shoulder, point upwards, inclining to the left, edge to the right.

THIRD.—Bring the hand across the body towards the left shoulder, edge of the sword to the left, point down and inclining to the front.

FOURTH.—Square the upper arm with the shoulder, the forearm to be in front line with the elbow, and wrist slightly below it, point of the sword inclined to the front, edge to the right.

ENGAGE.—As before.

Points and Parries.

FIRST.—With a quick motion, direct the point to the front by extending the arm, the arm moving in a straight line to the front of the “First Guard” position, and without altering the direction of the edge.

PARRY.—Brace up the arm quickly and parry upwards by forming “First Guard.”

SECOND.—Deliver the point quickly by extending the arm and sword to the front.

PARRY.—Draw back the arm and parry to the right, by forming “Second Guard.”

THIRD.—Lowering the point, extend the arm.

PARRY.—Draw back the arm, and parry to the left by forming “Third Guard.”

FOURTH.—Raise the point and deliver the thrust.

PARRY.—Parry downwards to the right by forming “Fourth Guard.”

It will be worth the reader’s while to compare carefully the preceding four cuts and points and their guards and parries, with the earlier exercises, the description of which commences on p. 31.

It will be seen that the third and fifth guards (old style) are merged in one, that the fourth and sixth are also merged in one, and the first guard—the old guard in quarte—is dispensed with altogether, and its place taken by a low hanging guard, which is a variation of the old seventh guard, formed with the hand held rather more to the left.

It will also be observed that the parries for the points are also very different. My advice is, “Learn in the old style and then glean all you can from the new.”

Extension Motions.

It is a good plan to practise the following movements every morning before beginning the sword exercises. To avoid confusion they are here given as in the little Manual on the Infantry Sword; they are effected without any accessories, and you commence by being in the position of “Attention,” i.e. stand with the heels close together at an angle of about sixty degrees, arms hanging down by the sides, chest expanded, back straight, shoulders back, and head well up.

First Extension Motions.

ONE.—Bring the hands, arms, and shoulders to the front, the fingers lightly touching at the points, nails downwards; then raise them in a circular direction well above the head, the ends of the fingers still touching, the thumbs pointing to the rear, the elbows pressed back and shoulders kept down.

TWO.—Separate and extend the arms and fingers upwards, forcing them obliquely back until they are extended on a line with the shoulders,

and as they fall gradually from thence to the original position of "Attention," endeavour as much as possible to elevate the neck and chest.

THREE.—Turn the palms of the hands to the front, press back the thumbs with the arms extended, and raise them to the rear until they meet above the head, the fingers pointing upwards and the thumbs locked, with the left thumb in front.

FOUR.—Keep the knees and arms straight, and bend over until the hands touch the feet, the head being brought down in the same direction, and resume the "Third motion" slowly by raising the arms to the front.

FIVE.—Resume the position of "Attention," as directed in "Second motion."

The whole of these motions should be done very slowly, so as to feel the exertion of the muscles throughout.

First Position in Three Motions.

ONE.—Move the hands smartly to the rear, the left grasping the right just above the elbow, and the right supporting the left arm under the elbow.

TWO.—Half turn to the left, turning on the heels, so that the back of the left touches the inside of the right heel, the head retaining its position to the front.

THREE.—Bring the right heel before the left, the feet at right angles, the right foot pointing to the front.

Second Position in Two Motions.

ONE.—Bend the knees gradually, keeping them as much apart as possible without raising the heels, or changing the erect position of the body.

TWO.—Step out smartly with the right foot about eighteen inches in line with the left heel, bringing the foreleg to the perpendicular, and retaining the left as in preceding motion, the weight of the body resting equally upon both legs.

Third Position in One Motion.

ONE.—Step forward to about thirty-six inches, the right knee remaining perpendicular to the instep, the left knee straight and firm, and foot flat upon the ground, the body upright, and the shoulders square to the left.

Loose Practice.

In practising with broadswords the blades should be as light as possible, and I believe an eminent firm has brought out a special sword for the purpose. The following rules and suggestions may be of use in independent practice.

1. Helmets, jackets, gauntlets, body pads, and leg pads should invariably be worn.
2. No hits or points to be attempted until the swords have been crossed. The parties should engage out of distance, i.e. after crossing the blades, step back about eight inches and come to the "Engage" just out of distance.
3. All cuts and thrusts must be delivered lightly and with the true edge or point. Heavy sweeping cuts should not, under any pretence whatever, or however thickly the parties may be padded, be allowed.
4. Only one cut or thrust should be made on the same lunge.
5. In case the opponents both attack at once, the hit counts to the one in the third position, or on the lunge. If both parties lunge simultaneously, and both bring the hit home at the same instant, no hit is to be scored to either.
6. If one party is disarmed, a hit is scored to his opponent.
7. Care should be taken to protect the inside of the right knee with an extra pad, as this is a particularly tender spot, and a hard hit there may cause serious injury.

When the beginner has established some command over the cutlass he should learn the cavalry sword-exercise, for a description of which the reader is referred to Colonel Bowdler Bell's Manual.

CHAPTER IV.

SINGLE STICK.

Contributed by C. Phillipps-Wolley.

Single-stick is to the sabre what the foil is to the rapier, and while foil-play is the science of using the point only, sabre-play is the science of using a weapon, which has both point and edge, to the best advantage. In almost every treatise upon fencing my subject has been treated with scant ceremony. "Fencing" is assumed to mean the use of the point only, or, perhaps it would not be too much to say, the use of the foils; whereas fencing means simply (in English) the art of of-fencing another and de-fencing yourself with any weapons, but perhaps especially with all manner of swords.

In France or Spain, from which countries the use of the thrusting-sword was introduced into England, it would be natural enough to consider fencing as the science of using the point of the sword only, but here the thrusting-sword is a comparatively modern importation, and is still only a naturalized foreigner, whereas broad-sword and sabre and single-stick play are older than, and were once as popular as, boxing. On the other hand, the rapier was in old days a foreigner of peculiarly shady reputation on these shores, its introducer being always alluded to in the current literature of that day, with anathemas, as "that desperate traitour, Rowland Yorke."

"L'Escrime" is, no doubt, the national sword-play of France, and, for Frenchmen, fencing may mean the use of the foil, but broad-sword and sabre-play are indigenous here, and if fencing is to mean only one kind of sword-play or sword-exercise, it should mean single-stick.

Like the swordsmen of India, our gallant forefathers (according to Fuller, in his "Worthies of England") accounted it unmanly to strike below the knee or with the point. But necessity has no laws, still less has it any sense of honour, so that before long English swordsmen realized that the point was much more deadly than the edge, and that, unless they were prepared to be "spitted like cats or rabbits," it was necessary

for them either to give up fighting or condescend to learn the new fashion of fence.

As in boxing, it was found that the straight hit from the shoulder came in quicker than the round-arm blow, so in fencing it was found that the thrust got home sooner than the cut, and hence it came that the more deadly style of fighting with the rapier supplanted the old broadsword play.

Single-stick really combines both styles of fencing. In it the player is taught to use the point whenever he can do so most effectively; but he is also reminded that his sword has an edge, which may on occasion do him good service. It seems, then, to me, that single-stick is the most thoroughly practical form of sword-play for use in those "tight places" where men care nothing for rules, but only want to make the most out of that weapon which the chance of the moment has put into their hands. It may further be said that as the sabre is still supplied to our soldiers, though rarely used for anything more dangerous than a military salute, whereas no one except a French journalist has probably ever seen, what I may be allowed to call, a foil for active service, the science of single-stick has some claim to practical utility even in the nineteenth century, the only sound objection to single-stick being that the sticks used are so light as not to properly represent the sabre.

This is a grave objection to the game, when the game is regarded as representing real business; but for all that, the lessons learnt with the stick are invaluable to the swordsman. The true way to meet the difficulty would be to supplement stick-play by a course with broad-swords, such as are in use in different London gymnasiums, with blunt edges and rounded points.

But gunpowder has taken the place of "cold steel," and arms of precision at a thousand yards have ousted the "white arm" of the chivalrous ages, so that it is really only of single-stick as a sport that men think, if they think of it at all, to-day. As a sport it is second to none of those which can be indulged in in the gymnasium, unless it be boxing; and even boxing has its disadvantages. What the ordinary Englishman wants is a game with which he may fill up the hours during which he cannot play cricket and need not work; a game in which he may exercise those muscles with which good mother Nature meant him to earn his living,

but which custom has condemned to rust, while the brain wears out; a game in which he may hurt some one else, is extremely likely to be hurt himself, and is certain to earn an appetite for dinner. If any one tells me that my views of amusement are barbaric or brutal, that no reasonable man ever wants to hurt any one else or to risk his own precious carcase, I accept the charge of brutality, merely remarking that it was the national love of hard knocks which made this little island famous, and I for one do not want to be thought any better than the old folk of England's fighting days.

There is just enough pain about the use of the sticks to make self-control during the use of them a necessity; just enough danger to a sensitive hide to make the game thoroughly English, for no game which puts a strain upon the player's strength and agility only, and none on his nerve, endurance, and temper, should take rank with the best of our national pastimes.

Gallant Lindsey Gordon knew the people he was writing for when he wrote—

“No game was ever yet worth a rap,
For a rational man to play,
Into which no accident, no mishap,
Could possibly find its way.”

Still, there comes a time, alas! in the lives of all of us, when, though the hand is still ready to smite, the over-worked brain resents the infliction of too many “merry cross-counters,” and we cannot afford to go about with black eyes, except as an occasional indulgence. Then it is that single-stick comes in. Boxing is the game of youth, and fencing with foils, we have been assured, improves as men fall into the sere and yellow leaf. Single-stick, then, may be looked upon as a gentle exercise, suitable for early middle age.

There is just enough sting in the ash-plant's kiss, when it catches you on the softer parts of your thigh, your funny bone, or your wrist, to keep you wide awake, and remind you of the good old rule of “grin and bear it;” but the ash-plant leaves no marks which are likely to offend the eyes of squeamish clients or female relations.

Another advantage which single-stick possesses is that you may learn to play fairly well even if you take it up as late in life as at five and twenty; whereas I understand that, though many of my fencing friends were introduced to the foil almost as soon as to the corrective birch, and though their heads are now growing grey, they still consider themselves mere tyros in their art.

That single-stick is a national game of very considerable antiquity, and at one time in great repute on our country greens, no one is likely to deny, nor have I time to argue with them even if I would in this little brochure. Those who are interested in spadron, back-sword, and broad-sword will find the subjects very exhaustively treated in such admirable works as Mr. Egerton Castle's "Schools and Masters of Fence." These pages are merely intended for the tyro—they are, at best, a compilation of those notes written during the last ten years in black and white upon my epidermis by the ash-plants of Serjeants Waite and Ottaway, and Corporal-Major Blackburn. Two of them, unfortunately, will never handle a stick again, but the last-named is still left, and to him especially I am indebted for anything which may be worth remembering in these pages. A book may teach you the rudiments of any game, but it is only face to face with a better player than yourself that you will ever make any real advance in any of the sciences of self-defence.

And here, then, is my first hint, taught by years of experience: If you want to learn to play quickly, if you want to get the most out of your lessons, whether in boxing or stick-play, never encourage your teacher to spare you too much. If you get a stinging cross-counter early in your career as a boxer, which lays you out senseless for thirty seconds, you will find that future antagonists have the greatest possible difficulty in getting home on that spot again. It is the same in single-stick. If you are not spared too much, and are not too securely padded, you will, after the ash-plant has curled once or twice round your thighs, acquire a guard so instinctively accurate, so marvellously quick, that you will yourself be delighted at your cheaply purchased dexterity. The old English players used no pads and no masks, but, instead, took off their coats, and put up their elbows to shield one side of their heads.

There are to-day in England several distinct schools of single-stick, the English navy having, I believe, a school of its own; but all these

different schools are separated from one another merely by sets of rules, directing, for the most part, where you may and where you may not hit your adversary.

The best school appears to be that in which all hits are allowed, which might be given by a rough in a street row, or a Soudanese running a-muck. The old trial for teachers of fencing was not a bad test of real excellence in the mastery of their weapon—a fight with three skilled masters of fence (one at a time, of course), then three bouts with valiant unskilled men, and then three bouts against three half-drunken men. A man who could pass this test was a man whose sword could be relied upon to keep his head, and this is what is wanted. All rules, then, which provide artificial protection, as it were—protection other than that afforded by the swordsman's guard—to any part of the body are wrong, and to be avoided.

Let me illustrate my position. I remember well, at Waite's rooms, in Brewer Street, seeing a big Belgian engaged with a gentleman who at that time occupied the honourable position of chopping-block to the rooms. The Belgian had come over to take part in some competition, and was an incomparably better player than the Englishman, but then the Belgian wished to play according to the rules of his own school. It was arranged at last that each should do his worst in his own way, and it was hoped that Providence would take care of the better man.

Unfortunately the worse man of the two had been very much in the habit of taking care of himself when subjected to the attacks of such punishing players as Ottaway and Mr. Jack Angle.

The Belgian's legs had been protected by a rule of fence, which made it illegal to hit below the waist, or some such point, and now naturally they fell an easy prey to the Englishman's ash-plant. The result was, of course, that in a very short time that Belgian's thigh was so wealed that at every feint in that direction he was ready to be drawn, and to uncover head or arm or any well-padded spot, not already sore, to the other man's attack.

Let me touch lightly on one or two little points before plunging in medias res. In spite of what I have said about hard hitting, please remember that I have recommended my pupil only to suffer it gladly for

his own sake. It will improve his temper and his play. On the other hand, hard, indiscriminate hitting is to be discountenanced for many reasons, and principally because, as a rule, a hard hit means a slow one. Always remember that all the time taken to draw your hand back for a blow is time given to the enemy to get his point in, and that a blow delivered from wrist and arm (bent only as much as it should be when you "engage") would suffice to disable your adversary if the sticks were what they pretend to be, "sharp swords." Again, in ordinary loose play, remember you are playing, or are supposed to be playing, with the weapons of gentlemen, and should show the fine old-fashioned courtesy to one another which is due to a foeman worthy of your steel. If there is a question as to a hit, acknowledge it as against yourself, as in the cut below, by springing up to attention and bringing the hilt up to the level of the mouth, blade upright, and knuckles turned to your front.



Fig. 24.—Acknowledging.

Again, if you should get an awkward cut, do all you can not to return savagely. If you make any difference at all, play more lightly for the next five minutes, otherwise you may drift into a clumsy slogging match, ending in bad blood. Finally, if you do get hold of a vicious opponent, do not, whatever you do, show that you mind his blows. If he sees that a cut at a particular place makes you flinch, he will keep on feinting at it until he hits you wherever he pleases; but if, on the contrary, you take no notice of punishment, you are apt to dishearten the adversary, who feels that your blows hurt him, and is uncertain whether his tell upon you in like manner. I may as well say here that throughout this paper, I have, as far as possible, used English words to explain my meaning, abstaining from the French terms of the fencing school, as being

likely to confuse a beginner, who may not want to learn French as an introduction to fencing.

Outfit.

The accessories necessary for single-stick are much more numerous now than in the old days on the village green. Then two stout ash-plants, and the old North-country prayer (beautifully terse), "God, spare our eyes!" were considered all that was necessary. Now a complete equipment costs rather more than a five-pound note.

First, then, there is the helmet, constructed more solidly than that used for foil play, although the wire mesh of which it is made is generally a good deal wider than the mesh of the fencing mask. The best helmet is made of stout wire, with a top of buffalo hide, completely covering the head, and with padded ear-pieces to take off the effect of a slashing cut. These are better than those made of cane, which are apt to give way before a stout thrust and let in the enemy's point to the detriment of eyes and complexion. Be careful, in choosing your helmet, to see that it fits you exactly, as a nodding helm may, in a close thing, so interfere with your sight as to give your adversary a very considerable advantage. The jacket generally used for this play is made like a pea-jacket, with two sleeves, and should be of stout leather. If this is loose fitting, it will afford ample protection, and is not so hot as the padded coat sometimes seen. Besides being too hot, the handsome white kid padded jackets soon get holes made in them by the ash-plant, whereas the brown leather is seldom torn.

In addition to the jacket, an apron of leather, extending from the waist almost to the knee, should be worn, covering both thighs, and saving the wearer from dangerously low hits.

Some men wear a cricket pad on the right leg. This, I think, makes a man slow on his feet, and is besides unnecessary. The calf of any one in condition should be able to despise ash-plants; and, as I said before, a bare leg makes you wonderfully quick with your low guards.

Stick play is a fine test of a man's condition. At first every hit leaves an ugly mark, but as soon as the player gets really "fit," it takes a very heavy blow indeed to bruise him. The sticks themselves should be

ash-plants, about forty inches in length and as thick as a man's thumb, without knots and unpeeled.

If you want them to last any time it is as well to keep a trough of water in the gymnasium, and leave your ash-plants to soak in it until they are wanted. If you omit to do this, two eager players, in half an hour's loose play, will destroy half a dozen sticks, which adds considerably to the cost of the amusement.

The old English sword hilt was a mere cross-piece; but in play it has always been customary to protect the fingers with a basket. This may be either of wicker or of buffalo hide. The latter is infinitely the best, as wearing much longer, affording a better protection to the fingers, and not scraping the skin off the knuckles as the wicker-baskets too often do. The basket has a hole on either side; one close to the rim, and the other about a couple of inches from the edge. In putting your basket on, put your stick through the former first, as otherwise you will not be able to get a grip of your stick or any room for the play of your wrist.

There is only one other thing necessary, and then you may consider yourself safe as a schoolboy with the seat of his trousers full of the dormitory towels: and that is either a stout elastic ring round your wrist—a ring as thick as your thumb—or a good long gauntlet. I rather recommend the ring as interfering less with the freedom of your hand, and as protecting more effectually that weak spot in your wrist where the big veins are. If a blow catches you squarely across this spot, when it is unprotected, you may expect your right hand to lose its cunning for a good many minutes. By the way, it is as well to see that the collar of your jacket is sufficiently high and well supplied with buttons, otherwise there is apt to be a dangerous gap between the shoulder and the bottom of the helmet.

One last word: if you see that the point of your stick is broken, don't go on playing; stop at once. A split ash-plant is as dangerous as a buttonless foil, and just as likely as not to go through the meshes of a mask, and blind where you only meant to score. As the chief fault of single-stick as a training for the use of the sabre is that the stick does not properly represent the weight of the weapon which it simulates, it is not a bad thing to accustom yourself to using the heaviest sticks in the gymnasium. This will strengthen your wrist, and when in a competition you

get hold of a light ash-plant, you will be all the quicker for your practice with a heavier stick.

A cut on p. 46 by Mr. Graham Simpson represents the way to acknowledge a hit, and a cut by the same artist in Fig. 25 below illustrates, as far as we know it, the less careful method of our forefathers. The use of the elbow to shield the head, though common in the contests on the village greens, was in its way no doubt more foolish than our pads; for though a sturdy yokel might take a severe blow from a cudgel on his bare arm, without wincing, the toughest arm in England would have had no chance against a sabre.



Fig. 25.—Old style.

Position

Having now secured the necessary implements, let us begin to learn how to use them. First, as to the stick, which, you will remember, represents for the present a sabre, and consequently a weapon of which one edge only is sharpened. In order that every blow dealt with the stick should be dealt with what represents the sharp or “true” edge of the sword, it is only necessary to see that you get a proper grip of your weapon in the first instance. To do this shut your fingers round the hilt, and straighten your thumb along the back of the hilt, thus bringing your middle knuckles (or second joints of your fingers) and the true edge into the same line. If you keep this grip you may rest assured that every blow you deal will be with the edge.

And now as to position—the first position from which every attack, feint, or guard, begins. Ned Donelly, the great boxer, used to tell his pupils that if a man knew how to use his feet, his hands would take care of

themselves. And what is undoubtedly true in boxing is equally true in fencing. "Look that your foundations are sure" should be every fighting man's motto. Take trouble, then, about the position of the feet from the first. To come on to the engaging guard, as shown in Fig. 26, stand upright, your heels together, your feet at right angles to one another, your right foot pointing to your front, your left foot to your left, your stick in your right hand, loosely grasped and sloped over your right shoulder, your right elbow against your side, and your right hand about on a level with it, your left hand behind your back, out of harm's way.



Fig. 26.—Engaging guard.

It is not a bad plan to put the fingers of the left hand through the belt at the back of the waist. If this is done, it counteracts, to a certain extent, that tendency to bring the left hand in front, which a good many beginners display, and for which they get punished by many an unpleasant rap on the knuckles.

Now take a short pace to the front with the right foot, and, in the words of the instructor, "sit down," i.e. bend both legs at the knee, so that the calves are almost at right angles to the thighs. This position will be found a severe strain upon the muscles at first, but they will soon get used to it. The object of the position is twofold. First, the muscles are thus coiled, as it were, ready for a spring at the shortest notice; and in the second place, the surface which your stick has to guard is thus considerably reduced. Be careful to keep the right heel in a line with the left heel, a space equal to about twice the length of your own foot intervening between them, and see that your right toe points squarely to the front and your left toe to your left. If your right toe is turned in, you will never advance straight to your front; and if your left toe is

turned in, you contract the base upon which your body rests, and very soon will begin to roll and lose your balance altogether. As far as the legs and feet are concerned you are now in your proper position, which you will only leave when you lunge, or when you straighten yourself to acknowledge a hit, and to which you will invariably return as soon as you engage.

If you wish to advance, advance the right foot a short pace, bringing the left after it at once, so that the two resume their relative positions to one another, half a pace nearer your enemy. If you wish to retire, reverse this movement, retiring with the left foot and following it with the right. In both cases keep your eyes to the front, your feet at right angles, and your knees bent.

Now as to the stick. There are two forms of guard in common use amongst players, the hanging and the upright guard, of both of which illustrations will be found in these pages. In Rowland Yorke's time men sought for what I think they called "the universal parry" almost as anxiously as they did for the alchemist's stone which should turn all things to gold. Of course such a thing has never been found, but either of these guards, if truly taken and kept, will stop the attacks of most men as long as you keep them at their proper distance.

In passing, let me say that if a man will try to overwhelm you with rushes, the best thing you can do is to straighten your stick, thrust, and don't let the stick run through the basket. This has a wonderfully soothing effect upon an excitable player.

In Fig. 27 the upright guard (or high tierce) is shown, in which the right elbow should be close in to the side, the forearm at right angles to the body, wrist bent, so as to turn the knuckles outwards, and the stick pointed upwards, at an angle of about 45°. In Fig. 26, the hanging guard, the point of the stick should be inclined slightly downwards, the knuckles turned upwards, the forearm should be kept slightly bent, the hilt a little outside the right knee, the point of the stick a little low and in the direction of the left front.

If the point of the stick be kept up, the adversary finds a way in by cutting upwards under the point; if the hilt is not outside the right knee, the back of the sword arm will be unprotected; and if the sword arm

itself is not kept slightly bent, no effective blow can be delivered by it without first drawing back the hand.



Fig. 27.—Upright guard, or high tierce.

This, of course, is a fatal fault. The moment your adversary sees your hand go back, he will come out. As you retire for the spring, he will spring. Time is the very essence of single-stick, and the chief object of the player should be to make his attack in the fewest possible motions. For this reason a slightly bent arm is necessary when on guard. Of course if the arm is unduly bent the elbow will be exposed, but a little practice will soon enable any moderately supple man to so hold his arm as to be ready to cut direct from his guard and yet keep his elbow out of peril. And this brings me to a question often discussed amongst players, viz. which is the better guard, the upright or the hanging guard, for general purposes. Although I have been taught to use the hanging guard myself ever since I began to play, I unhesitatingly say that the upright guard is the better one, as enabling a player to save time in the attack. In the hanging guard the knuckles (i.e. the edge) are up and away from the enemy; the wrist must be turned before the edge can be brought into contact with his body, and this takes time, however little. In the upright guard the knuckles (i.e. the edge) are towards your opponent, the arm is ready flexed, everything is in readiness for the blow. If, then, as I believe, the advantages of the two guards, as guards, are equal, the advantage of the upright guard as a position to attack from seems to me undeniable.

In all guards remember that it is not sufficient to oppose some part of your weapon to your adversary's. You must meet him, if possible, with what the old masters called the "forte" of your blade, that is, the part

from the hilt to the middle of the sword, with which you have naturally more power of resistance than with the lower half of the blade. Of course all guards must be made with the edge of the sword outwards, and make sure that you really feel your enemy's blade (i.e. make a good clean guard) before attempting to return his attack.

There is another matter to which many teachers pay too little attention, but which is as important as any point in the fencer's art. It is obvious that the player should try, if possible, to hit without being hit. To do this effectively it is necessary in attacking to maintain what fencers call a good "opposition," that is to say, to so carry your stick in cutting or thrusting at him as to protect yourself in the line in which you are attacking.

This is easier to explain in practice than on paper, but it may perhaps be sufficiently explained by examples. If, for instance, you are cutting at the left side of your opponent's head, you must, to stop a possible counter from him, keep your hilt almost as high as the top of your own head and carry your hand well across to your own left. If you do this correctly, you will, in case he should cut at your left cheek as you cut at his, stop his cut with the upper part of your stick.

Again, in thrusting at him, if you keep your hand as high as your shoulder, and in a line with your right shoulder, you will protect the upper half of your own body from a counter, so that, even if your thrust fails and does not get home, the upper part of your blade will stop his cut.

It is necessary to study so to attack your opponent that, in the very act of delivering a cut or thrust, you may stop him in as many lines or directions of attack as possible.

If you find your man will counter in spite of all that you can do, take advantage of this habit of his by feinting a cut to draw his counter, stop this, and return.

This will have the effect of making him do the leading, which will be all in your favour.

Hits, Guards, Feints, etc.

For the purposes of instruction and description, the principal hits in single-stick have been numbered and described according to the parts of the body at which they are aimed.

There are four principal hits: (1) a cut at your opponent's left cheek; (2) a cut at his right cheek; (3) a cut at his left ribs; (4) a cut at his right ribs. 5 and 6 are mere repetitions of 3 and 4 on a lower level, guarded in the same way, and aimed at the inside and outside of the right leg instead of at the ribs.

In the accompanying cuts numbered 28, 29, 30, 31, the four principal attacks and the stops for them have been illustrated, and with their help and a long looking-glass in front of him the young player ought to be able to put himself into fairly good position.

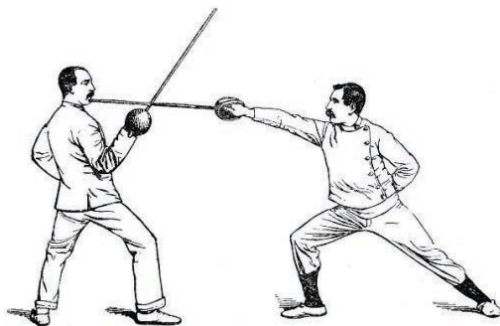


Fig. 28.—Cut 1 and guard.

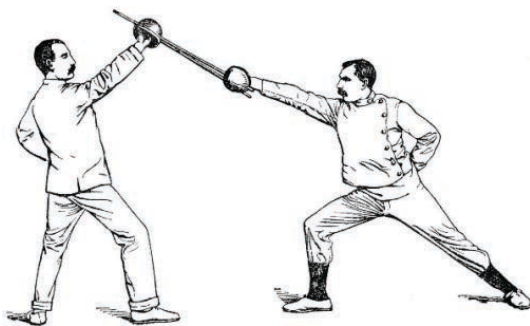


Fig. 29.—Cut 2 and guard.

In addition to the cuts there is the point, which, as our forefathers discovered, is far more deadly than the edge. Of this more later on.

Almost every cut is executed upon the lunge. As you and your adversary engage, you are practically out of each other's range unless you lunge.

Standing in the first position the heels are two feet apart. On the lunge, I have seen Corporal-Major Blackburn, a man, it is true, over six feet in height, measure, from his left heel to a point on the floor, level with his sword point, nearly ten feet. This gives some idea of what is to be expected from a man who can lunge properly. To do this, throw out the right foot as far as it will go to the front, keeping the heels still in line and the right foot straight.

Keep the outside edge of the left foot firmly down upon the floor, and keep it still at right angles to the right foot. If your left foot begins to leave the ground you have over-reached yourself; you will find it impossible to get back, and you will be at your opponent's mercy. See that your right knee is exactly over your right ankle, your left leg straight, your chest square to the front, and your head well up. If you can get yourself into this position, you will have no difficulty in recovering yourself if your lunge fails, and you will gain nothing by bending your body forward from the waist. On the contrary, you will spoil your balance.

This lunge will do for every cut and every point.

To recover after a lunge, throw your weight well back upon your left leg, and use the muscles of the right thigh and calf to shoot yourself back into position. If the knee of the right leg has been kept exactly over the ankle, the impetus necessary to regain your original position will be easily obtained. If, however, the right foot has been protruded too far, and the caution as to the knee and ankle disregarded, you will find yourself unable to return quickly from the lunging position, and will consequently be at your opponent's mercy. It is in the operation of returning from the lunge that the player realizes to the full the advantage of keeping the shoulders well back and head erect.

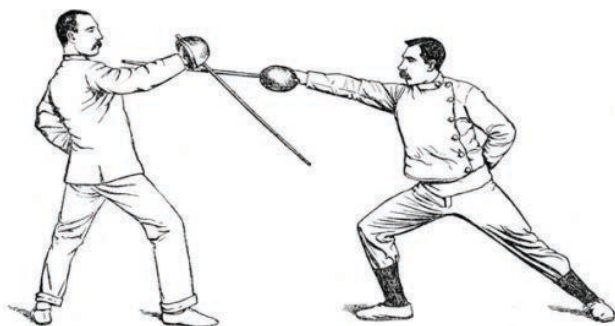


Fig. 30.—Cut 3 and guard.

The illustrations should speak for themselves, but perhaps I had better explain them.

In cut 1 (Fig. 28), lunge out and cut at the left cheek of your opponent, straightening the arm and turning the knuckles down.

To stop this cut, raise the engaging guard (hanging guard, Fig. 26) slightly, and bring the hand somewhat nearer the head, as shown in the illustration, or stop it with the upright guard, with the elbow kept well in and the right hand about on a level with the left shoulder.

In cut 2 (Fig. 29), lunge out and cut at your opponent's right cheek, with your arm straight and knuckles up. The natural guard for this is the high upright guard, with the elbow well in to the right side, the arm bent and turned slightly outwards, and wrist and knuckles turned well to the right.

In cut 3 (Fig. 30), make free use of the wrist, bringing your blade round in the smallest space possible, and come in on your man's ribs with your arm straight and knuckles turned downwards.

To stop this cut you may either use a low hanging guard, brought across to the left side, the right hand about on a level with the left shoulder, or a low upright guard, with the hilt just outside the left thigh.

The hanging guard is the safer one of the two, as it is difficult in practice to get low enough with the hilt in the upright guard to stop a low cut of this kind.

In cut 4 (Fig. 31), cut at your adversary's right ribs, and keep your knuckles up, and when he attacks you on this line, stop him with the hanging

guard held low on your right side, or with the upright guard, with arm, wrist, and knuckles turned outwards.

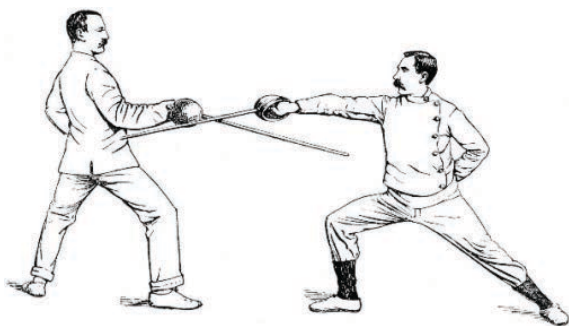


Fig. 31.—Cut 4 and guard.

Cuts 5 and 6 are made like cuts 3 and 4 respectively, and must be met in all cases by a low hanging guard. It is well to practise these low hanging guards continually, as a man's legs are perhaps the most exposed part of his body.

The point when used is given by a simple straightening of the arm on the lunge, the knuckles being kept upwards, and, in ordinary play, the grip on the stick loosened, in order that it may run freely through the hilt, and thus save your opponent from an ugly bruise, a torn jacket, or possibly a broken rib. When the knuckles are kept up in giving point, the sword hand should be opposite the right shoulder. But the point may also be delivered with the knuckles down, in which case the hand should be opposite to the left shoulder.



Fig. 32.—The point.

The point may be parried with any of the guards previously described.

It is well to remember that one of the most effective returns which can be made from any guard is a point, and that a point can be made certainly from every hanging guard by merely straightening the arm from the guard, lunging, and coming in under your opponent's weapon. But perhaps this is a thing to be learnt rather from practical play than from a book.

Now, it is obvious that if any of the foregoing guards are as good as they have been described, it is necessary to induce your adversary to abandon them if you are ever to score a point.

This may be done in a variety of ways, when you have assured yourself that he is invulnerable to a direct attack, not to be flurried by a fierce onslaught, or slow enough to let you score a "remise"—that is, a second hit—the first having been parried, but not returned.

The first ruse to adopt, of course, is the feint—a feint being a false attack, or rather a move as if to attack in a line which you threaten, but in which you do not intend to attack. All feints should be strongly pronounced or clearly shown. A half-hearted feint is worse than useless; it is dangerous. If you have a foeman worthy of your steel facing you, he will detect the fraud at once, and use the time wasted by you over a feeble feint to put in a time thrust.

The ordinary feint is made by an extension of the arm as if to cut without moving the foot to lunge, the lunge being made the moment you have drawn off your enemy's guard and laid bare the real object of your attack.

Sometimes, however, if you cannot succeed otherwise, a half or short lunge for your feint, to be turned into a full lunge as you see your opening, may be found a very useful variation of the ordinary feint. If you find feints useless, you may try to compass your adversary's downfall by "a draw." All the time that you are playing you should try to be using your head, to be thinking out your plans and trying to discover his. In nine cases out of ten he has some favourite form of attack. If you discover what it is, and know how to stop it, indulge him, and invite him even to make it, having previously formed some little scheme of attack of your own upon this opening. Let me illustrate my meaning by examples. If you notice a hungry eye fixed yearningly on your tender

calf, let your calf stray ever so little from under the protection of the hanging guard. If this bait takes your friend in, and he comes with a reckless lunge at it, throwing all his heart into the cut, spring up to your full height, heels together, and leg well out of danger, and gently let your avenging rod fall along his spine. This, by the way, is the only occasion, except when you are acknowledging a hit, on which you may be allowed to desert the first position for legs and feet.

But this is a very old ruse, and most players know it: a much better one may be founded upon it. If, for instance, you think you detect any coquettish symptoms in the right leg of your adversary, you may know at once what he is meditating. Oblige him at once. Lunge freely out at his leg, which will of course be at once withdrawn. This, however, you were expecting, and as his leg goes back your hand goes up to the high hanging guard, covering your head from his cut. This cut stopped, he is at your mercy, and you may cut him in halves or crimp his thigh at your leisure. This position is illustrated in Fig. 33.

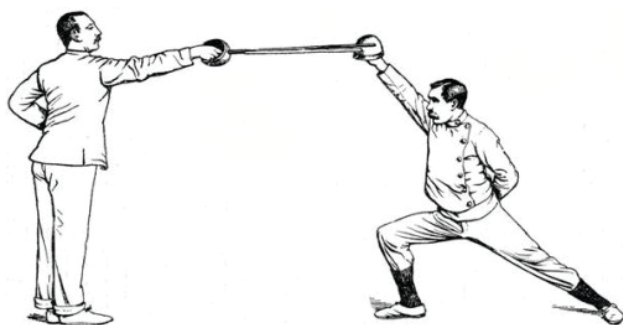


Fig. 33.—A ruse.

Once again: some men set their whole hearts on your sleeve, and you may, if yours is the hanging guard, lure them to their destruction through this lust of theirs. Gradually, as the play goes on, your arm tires, your hand sinks, your arm at last is bare, and the enemy comes in with a cut which would almost lay open the gauntlet, were it not that at that moment you come to the low upright guard and return at his left cheek.

These are what are known as draws, and their number is unlimited.

Another thing sometimes heard of in single-stick play is “a gain.” This is a ruse for deceiving your opponent as to distance, and is achieved by bringing the left heel up to the right, in the course of the play, without abandoning the normal crouching position. This, of course, makes your lunge two feet longer than your victim has any reason for believing it to be.

A false beat is another very common form of attack, consisting of a cut aimed at the hilt or at the forte of your stick, the object being to make you raise your point, if possible, so that the attacker may come in under with cut three.

This is very well met by a thrust, the arm being merely straightened from the guard, and the lunge delivered directly the “beat” is made.

A pretty feint having the same effect as the “beat,” as opening up cut three, is a long feint with the point at the chest, cut three being given as the sword rises to parry the point.

But probably I have already transgressed the limits of my paper. What remains to be taught, and I know full well that it is everything except the merest rudiments, must be learned stick in hand. I can only wish the beginner luck, and envy him every hour which he is able to devote to acquiring a knowledge of sword-play.

The Salute.

Although the salute is a mere piece of sword drill, of no use for practical purposes, it is still worth learning, as being the preliminary flourish common at all assaults-at-arms, and valuable in itself as reminding the players that they are engaged in a knightly game, and one which insists on the display of the greatest courtesy by one opponent to the other. Even if you are playing with bare steel, it is expected of you that you should kill your enemy like a knight, and not like a butcher; much more then, when you are only playing a friendly bout with him, should you show him all possible politeness. On entering the ring you should have all your harness on except your mask; this you should carry in your left hand until you are face to face with your antagonist. When in the ring, lay your helmet down on your left hand and come to the slope swords—your blade upon your right shoulder, your elbow against your

side and your hilt in a line with your elbow, your knuckles outwards. Your body should be erect, your head up, your heels together, your right foot pointing straight to your front, your left foot at right angles to it pointing to the left.

Both men acting together now come to the engaging guard, and beat twice, stick against stick; they then come back to the "recover" by bringing the right foot back to the left, and bringing the stick into an upright position in front of the face, basket outwards, and thumb on a level with the mouth.

After a slight pause, salute to the left in quarte, i.e. extend the stick to your left front across the body, keeping the elbow fairly close to the side and the finger-nails upwards; then pause again for a second, and salute to the right in tierce (the back of the hand up); pause again, and salute to the front, by extending the arm in that direction, the point of the stick towards your left front. Now step forward about two feet with the right foot and come to the engaging guard, beat twice, draw the left foot up to the right, draw yourself up to your full height, and come again to the recover, drop your stick to the second guard (i.e. low hanging guard for the outside of the leg), making a slight inclination of the body at the same time (probably this is meant for a bow ceremonious), and then you may consider yourself at liberty to put on your mask and begin.

Don't forget, when you cross sticks, to step out of distance again at once. This salute, of course, is only usual at assaults-at-arms, which are modern tournaments arranged for the display of the men's skill and the entertainment of their friends. At the assault-at-arms, as we understand it generally, there is no element of competition, there are no prizes to be played for, and therefore, so long as a good display is made, every one is satisfied, and nobody cares who gets the most points in any particular bout.

In competitions this is not so, and time is an object; so that as soon as the men can be got into the ring they are told to put their masks on and begin.

In assaults and in general play you cannot be too careful to acknowledge your adversary's hits. In a competition do nothing of the kind. The

judges will see that every point made is scored, and you may safely relieve your mind from any anxiety on that ground. But in general play it is different, and you cannot be too careful in scoring your adversary's points, or be too liberal in allowing them, even if some of them are a little bit questionable.

Acknowledging.

The ordinary form of acknowledgment (and a very graceful one it is) is accomplished as follows:—On being hit, spring to attention, with your heels together and body erect, at the same time bringing your sword to the recover, i.e. sword upright in front of your face, thumb in a line with your mouth, and knuckles outwards.

The acknowledgment should be only a matter of seconds, and when made the player should come back to the engaging guard and continue the bout.

Foul Hits.

Of course there are occasions on which the best player cannot help dealing a foul hit. When this happens there is nothing to be done except to apologize; but most of these hits may be avoided by a little care and command of temper. By a foul hit is meant a blow dealt to your opponent on receiving a blow from him—a hit given, not as an attempt to “time,” but instead of a guard and, as a matter of fact, given very often on the “blow for blow” principle.

This, of course, is great nonsense, if you assume, as you should do, that the weapons are sharp, when such exchanges would be a little more severe than even the veriest glutton for punishment would care for.

If you only want to see who can stand most hammering with an ash-plant, then your pads are a mistake and a waste of time. Ten minutes without them will do more to settle that question than an hour with them on.

There ought to be some way of penalizing the player who, after receiving a palpable hit himself, fails to acknowledge it, and seizes the opportunity instead to strike the hardest blow he is able to at the unprotected shoulder or arm of his adversary.

One more word and we have done with the courtesies of sword-play.

Don't make any remarks either in a competition (this, of course, is worst of all) or in an ordinary bout. Don't argue, except with the sticks. Remember that the beau-ideal swordsman is one who fights hard, with "silent lips and striking hand."

Competitions.

Once a man has mastered the rudiments of any game and acquired some considerable amount of dexterity in "loose play," he begins to long to be pitted against some one else in order to measure his strength. Before long the limits of his own gymnasium grow too small for his ambition, and then it is that we may expect to find him looking round for a chance of earning substantial laurels in public competitions. Unfortunately the stick-player will not find many opportunities of displaying his skill in public. As far as the present writer knows, there are only two prizes offered annually in London for single-stick, and neither of these attract much attention. One of them is given at the Military Tournament at Islington, in June, and one at the German Gymnasium, in December. The former of these prizes is open only to soldiers, militia-men, or volunteers, the latter to any member of a respectable athletic club, who is prepared to pay 2s. 6d. for his entrance fee. The attendance of spectators at both shows is very poor, which is to be regretted, as the interest of the public in any game generally goes a long way towards insuring improvement in the play.

It is just as well, before entering for either of these competitions, to know something about the conditions under which they take place, and the rules which govern them. The bouts are generally played in a fourteen foot ring, at least that is the statement in the notice to players, and it is as well to be prepared to confine your movements to such a limited area. As a matter of fact, no objection ever seems to be raised to a competitor who transgresses this rule, and we remember to have seen a nimble player skipping about like an electrified eel outside the magic circle, until stopped by a barrier of chairs at the edge of the big arena.

At the Military Tournament the play is for the best out of three hits, i.e. the man who scores the first two points wins. At the German Gymnasium the competitor who first scores five wins the bout. This is better

than at the Tournament, although it will seem to some that even this is hardly a sufficient test of the merits of each player. The bouts seem too short, but probably this is unavoidable; that which is to be regretted and might be remedied, being that no points are given for "form:" the result is that, in many cases, the anxiety to score the necessary points as soon as possible results in very ugly and unscientific rushes, in which no guards are attempted and from which the most reckless and rapid hitter comes out the winner. This, of course, is the same for every one, and therefore perfectly fair, but it does not tend to elevate the style of play.

But the great difficulty at these competitions appears to be the difficulty of judging. And here let me say at once that it is as far from my intention to find fault with any individual judge as it possibly can be. Being English, I believe them to be above suspicion; being sometimes a competitor myself, it would not be for me to impugn their honesty if they were not. Whatever he does, I would always advise the athlete to preserve his faith in judges and a stoical silence when he does not quite agree with them.

All I would suggest for the benefit of judges and judged alike in these trials of skill which test the eyesight and quickness of the umpires almost as much as the eyesight and quickness of the competitors, is that some definite code of scoring should be established and recognized amongst the different schools-of-arms in England.

In order to facilitate the scoring they have a very good plan at the Military Tournament of chalking the competitors' sticks. This precaution ensures a mark upon the jacket every time the ash-plant hits it; but even this is not always sufficient, for it is quite possible for a true guard to be opposed to a hard cut with a pliant stick, with the result that the attacker's stick whips over and leaves a mark which ought not to be scored, for had the weapons been of steel this could not have happened.

This, however, is a point which would generally be detected by one of the three judges in the ring.

What gives rise to question in players' minds is not any small point like this, so much as the question of timing and countering.

To take the last first: If A and B lunge together, both making direct attacks, and both get home simultaneously, it is generally admitted that the result is a counter, and nothing is to be scored to any one.

But if A makes a direct attack, and B, ignoring it, stands fast and counters, this is a wilful omission to protect himself on his part; and even if his cut should get home as soon as A's it should not count, nor, I think, should it be allowed to cancel A's point, for A led, as the movement of his foot in lunging showed, and B's plain duty was to stop A's attack before returning it. This he would have done naturally enough if he had had the fear of a sharp edge before his eyes.

I even doubt whether a time-thrust or cut should ever be allowed to score, unless the result of it be such as would have rendered the direct attack ineffectual in real fighting. Should not the rule be, either that the point scores to the person making the direct attack, as shown by the action of his foot in lunging (unless, indeed, the attacked person has guarded and returned, when, of course, the point is his), or else make the rule a harder one, but equally fair for every one, and say no hits shall count except those made clean without a counter, i.e. to score a point the player must hit his adversary without being hit himself?

Of course bouts would take longer to finish if this were the rule, but such a rule would greatly simplify matters.

The really expert swordsman is surely he who inflicts injuries without receiving any, not he who is content to get rather the best of an exchange of cuts, the least of which would with sharp steel put any man hors de combat.

In connection with public competitions, I may as well warn the tyro against what is called "a surprise." On entering the ring the men face each other, come on the engaging guard, and begin at the judge's word of command. The sticks must have been fairly crossed before hits may be counted. But it is as well the moment your stick has crossed your opponent's to step out of distance again, by taking a short pace to the rear with the left foot and bringing the right foot, after it. You can always come in again at short notice; but if you do not keep a sharp look out, a very alert opponent may cross swords with you and tap you on the arm almost in the same movement. If he does you may think it rather sharp

practice, but you will find that it scores one to him nevertheless. As no word of practical advice founded on experience should be valueless, let me add one here to would-be competitors. Do not rely upon other people for masks, aprons, or other necessities of the game. You cannot expect a gymnasium to which you do not belong to furnish such things for you, and even if they were provided they probably would not fit you. Bring all you want for yourself; and if you value your own comfort or personal appearance when you leave the scene of the competition, let your bag, on arriving, contain towels, brushes, and such other simple toilet necessities as you are likely to require.

CHAPTER V.

THE BAYONET.

History tells us that firearms of sorts were in existence as far back as the fourteenth century, and that they were probably of Flemish origin. Certain it is that, prior to 1500, there were large bodies of troops armed with what may be called portable culverins, and in 1485 the English yeomen of the guard were armed with these clumsy weapons. Later on, in the middle of the sixteenth century, we hear of the long-barrelled harquebus being used in Spain, and before the close of the century the muschite was in use in the English army. This was a heavier weapon than the harquebus, and the soldiers were provided with a long spiked stake with a fork at the upper end in which to rest the ponderous barrel whilst they took aim.

The method of discharging these weapons was primitive in the extreme, as it was necessary to hold a lighted match to the priming, in a pan at the right side of the barrel, and one can imagine what a lot of fizzing, spluttering, and swearing there must have been in damp weather!

Improvements in the harquebus and musket, as it got to be called later on, continued to be developed from time to time. In the early days, matchlocks were sneered at as being inferior to crossbows, much in the same way that the first railway engine was contemptuously spoken of and written about by the coaching men at the beginning of this century; but when in 1700 the flintlock musket made its appearance popular prejudice was shaken, and it was completely removed in 1820 when percussion guns came into pretty general use.

This may appear to be a digression and somewhat outside the scope of this little work. I give it, however, to show the origin of the rifle, to which, after all, the bayonet is but an adjunct.

About the middle of the seventeenth century it occurred to the sapient mind of one Puséygur, a native of Bayonne, in France, that it would be a grand thing to have a sharp point on which to receive an advancing adversary after one had missed him, or the fizzling matchlock had

failed to go off. The weapon devised was a sharp-bladed knife, about eighteen inches long, with a rounded handle six or eight inches long, to fit like a plug into the muzzle of the musket, and the bayonet in this form was used in England and France about the year 1675. It was, of course, impossible to fire the piece with the bayonet fixed; it was a case of fire first and then fix bayonets with all possible dispatch. One can imagine what receiving a cavalry charge must have meant in those days. Towards the close of the seventeenth century an important step was made in the right direction. Bayonets were then for the first time attached to the barrel by two rings, by which means the gun could be fired whilst the bayonet was in its place and ready for instant use. Very early in the eighteenth century a further improvement was invented, in the shape of a socketed bayonet, which was firmer and more satisfactory than anything previously devised.

The British bayonet in the hands of our soldiers has over and over again carried victory into the serried ranks of our adversaries, but, now that arms of precision have reached such a pitch of perfection, and are still on the advance in the matter of rapid firing, it is to be doubted whether hand-to-hand conflicts will play a very prominent part in the battles of the future.

A distinction must be drawn between the ordinary weapon with which the Guards and army generally were till recently provided (I refer to the triangular-fluted bayonet, used exclusively for thrusting purposes), and the sword-bayonet, which serves both for cutting and thrusting. The advantage of the former was evidently its lightness and handiness; but it must be remembered that, save for thrusting, spiking a gun, or boring a hole in a leather strap, it was practically useless, whereas the sharp edge of the sword-bayonet makes it an excellent companion to Tommy Atkins on all sorts of occasions, too numerous to mention.

In the early months of the present year the new rifle and bayonet placed in the hands of the Guards caused a good deal of comment. As my readers are aware, the new arm is a magazine small-bore rifle, carrying a long conical ball. It is not a pretty-looking weapon, and its serviceable qualities have yet to be tested in actual warfare. But it is with the bayonet we are now chiefly concerned. At first sight it reminds one of an extra strong sardine-box opener, but on closer inspection it is evident

that, though quite capable of dealing with tinned-meat cans, etc., it has very many merits which are wanting in all the other bayonets which have gone before it. It is a strong double-edged, sharp-pointed knife, twelve inches long, rather more than an inch wide, and about a fifth of an inch deep through the strong ridge which runs down the centre of the blade from point to hilt. The handle is of wood, and it is fastened to the muzzle of the rifle by means of a ring and strong spring catch or clip. Altogether it is almost a model of the early Roman sword.

From this short description it will be seen that, though the soldier loses a good many inches in reach, he is provided with an excellent hunting-knife, which can be turned to any of the uses of a knife—from slaughtering a foe to cutting up tobacco.

Then, again, it is possible that the loss in actual reach may be more than compensated for at very close quarters by the greater ease with which a man can “shorten arms” effectively as well as by the double edge. Every ounce saved in the weight of a soldier’s accoutrements is a great gain, and these new bayonets are light and, as I have hinted, are likely to be extremely useful for the every-day work of a long march.

It is not my intention to deal with the bayonet-exercise as practised by squads of infantry, but, before proceeding to deal with some of the more important situations in attack and defence, I would advise those who wish to become proficient to learn the drill. The best way to do this is to join the Volunteers, and get all the squad work possible as a means of gaining a command over the weapon—the continued use of which for any length of time is extremely fatiguing. When the rudiments are mastered, and you know fairly well how to respond to the reiterated words of command: “High Guard”—“Pint;” “Low Guard”—“Pint,” etc., and can form the “pints” and guards in a respectable manner, it will be well to join some school of arms with a proficient and painstaking military instructor who is also an expert swordsman. I say swordsman advisedly, because I am convinced that it is only one who is a fencer who can be really qualified to impart knowledge on the subject of weapons chiefly used for pointing.

No man can be said to use the bayonet efficiently who is not able to tackle another man similarly armed—a swordsman on foot or a mounted man armed with the cavalry sabre.

For ordinary practice the first thing to be secured is a good spring-bayonet musket, somewhere about the weight of the ordinary rifle, provided with a bayonet which, by means of a strong spiral spring inside the barrel, can be pressed back eighteen inches or so when it comes in contact with the object thrust against. It is hardly necessary to observe that the point of the bayonet must be covered with a good button, similar to those used on fencing foils, only much larger. The button should be tightly encased with layer upon layer of soft leather, and then bound over with stout parchment or stiff leather, and tied very strongly with whipcord or silk just behind the button. This precaution is very necessary to guard against broken ribs, collar-bones, etc.

The illustrations which embellish or disfigure this chapter do not profess to do more than indicate a few of the more important positions, points, and guards which occur in bayonet-exercise: for fuller details the reader is referred to the various manuals issued from time to time by the Horse Guards and War Office authorities. In these little books will be found all the words of command and, I believe, illustrations of every point and parry.

At an assault, and opposed to a man armed also with a bayonet, the first position is indicated by the accompanying sketch. The head should be held well up, the chest expanded, and the weight of the body nearly evenly balanced on both feet, which should be about eighteen or twenty inches apart, so as to give a good firm base without detracting from the rapidity of advance and retreat. In the case of a tall man, the feet will be rather further apart than with a short man; but this is a matter which can be easily adjusted to suit the requirements of each particular case.

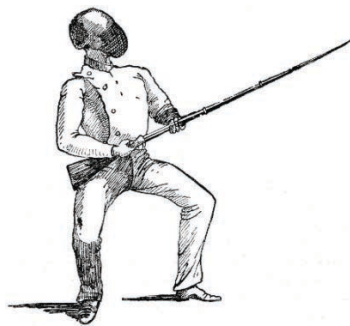


Fig. 34.—On guard.



Fig. 35.—Point, from guard.

The great thing is to get accustomed to the position—to feel “at home” in it—and to be able to shift it at a moment’s notice, and, when necessary, to make a firm stand. The drill work is very good for all this, and though it is tedious and irritating to many, it is worth what it costs.

In Fig. 35 we have the point from guard, and in delivering this point the feet retain their positions, flat upon the ground, the right leg is straightened, the left knee bent, and the body advanced over the left knee as far as possible consistent with stability. The left shoulder is necessarily somewhat in advance of the right, and the arms are stretched out horizontally, and quite on a level with the shoulders. The barrel of the rifle, too, is to be held horizontally, with the bayonet pointing to the adversary’s throat and chest.

In Fig. 36 we have the point from guard with the lunge, which ought to give an extra reach of a foot or more. Here, as in the point without the lunge, the sole of the right foot should remain flat upon the ground, whilst the left is advanced about a foot or fifteen inches smartly on the straight line between the right heel and the adversary.

It is most important to remember that in all lunges the step-out should be bold and decided, but that to over-stretch the distance is worse than stepping short, because it leaves one in a position from which it is hard to recover. Having made your attack, you want to be in a position of easy retreat to the base of operations, which is “on guard.”

We next come to what is called the “Throw-point,” by which a little extra reach is obtained over the ordinary point with lunge. This is a point which may be very effective, but unless a man is strong in the

arm he should not use it much on account of the difficulty in rapidly regaining hold of the rifle with both hands. The throw-point comes in when in making the ordinary lunge you feel that you are going to be just ever so little short; you then release your hold of the barrel with the left hand, and, bringing the right shoulder well forward, you continue the lunge, holding the rifle by the thin part of the stock alone. The very instant your right arm is fully extended, and the point of the bayonet has reached its furthest limit, you should draw back the rifle, regain possession of the barrel with the left hand, and come into the "on guard" position.



Fig. 36.—Point, with lunge.

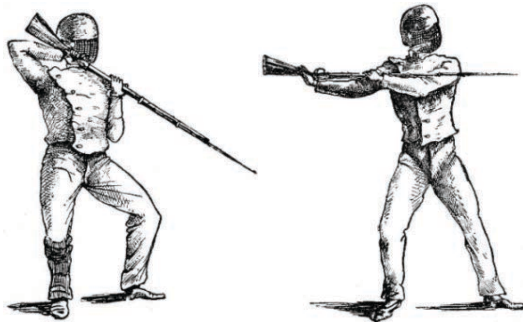


Fig. 37.—Throw point.



Fig. 38.—Guard—opposed to Swordsman.

As previously hinted, a knowledge of fencing is of the first importance in studying the use of weapons where the point is the main factor, and the longer the weapon the more this fact is forced upon us. It is of course true for all weapons, but the leverage being so great in the case of the rifle and bayonet, it becomes more apparent. For example, the slightest touch from the thin blade of a foil is sufficient, when applied near the point of the bayonet, to bring about the necessary deflection of the weapon. Indeed I cannot help thinking that if two men fought, one armed with the small-sword or light rapier and the other with the rifle and bayonet, the swordsman would win—always supposing that they were equally expert in the use of their respective weapons. It would seem that the lightness and consequent “handiness” of the rapier must more than make up for the length and strength of the more ponderous arm.



Figures 39 & 40.—Shorten arms & low guard.

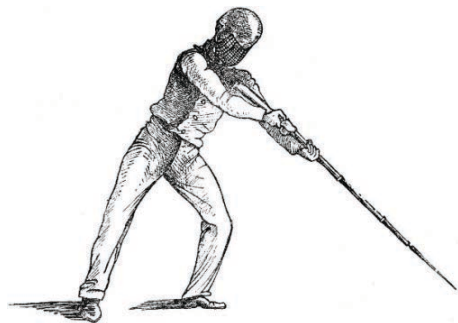


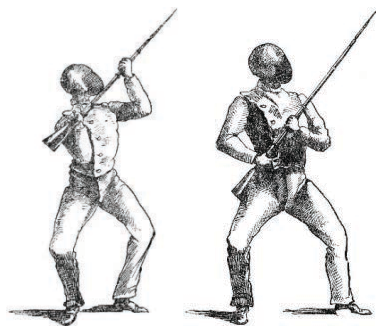
Fig. 41.—Point from low guard.

Conflicts between the sword and bayonet are common enough, but it is the broad-sword, as a rule; and one does not often see the bayonet, opposed to the small-sword, used exclusively for thrusting.

In Fig. 38 is given the best general position for coming on guard when opposed by a swordsman. The great object is to keep the opponent at a distance; directly he gets your side of your point you are in difficulties. Therefore never let the point of your bayonet wander far from the lines leading straight to his body.

There is, of course, the “Shorten-arms,” shown in Fig. 39; but in actual conflict you might be a dead man twice over before you could get the bayonet back to the position indicated. When the swordsman gets to close quarters, and has possibly missed you, a good plan is to knock him down with the butt of the rifle—using the weapon like the quarter-staff (vide Fig. 9).

The next two sketches show the positions in “Low Guard” and “Point from Low Guard”—the latter being particularly effective on broken ground when an enemy is rushing up a hill at you, or when you want to spike a fellow hiding in long grass.



Figures 42 & 43.—High guard (opposed to mounted man); head parry.

The “High Guard” and “Head Parry” are chiefly used when dealing with cavalry. It seems to me hardly necessary to give the points of these guards, as they simply amount to extending the arms straight in the direction of the foe.

A man on foot possesses one or two great advantages over a mounted man, for his movements are quicker, and if he can only avoid being ridden down and can keep on the horseman’s bridle-hand side, he ought to have a good chance of delivering his point in the left side. It is most important that the man on foot should be ready to spring back so as to avoid a sudden sweep to the left, which will bring him, if the horse is spurred forward at the same time, right under the rider’s sword arm.

It is almost superfluous to add that in practice the general habiliments should be much the same as those used when playing quarter-staff. In the illustrations the hands are left bare in order to show the grip of the rifle, but boxing-gloves should invariably be worn, or a broken finger may be the result.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CUDGEL.

One remembers reading somewhere, I think in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," of a certain "grievous crab-tree cudgel," and the impression left by this description is that the weapon, gnarled and knotty, was capable of inflicting grievous bodily harm.

Any thick stick under two feet long, such as a watchman's staff or a policeman's truncheon, may be fairly called a cudgel, and it is not so long ago that cudgel-play formed one of the chief attractions at country fairs in many parts of England.

A stage was erected, and the young fellows of the neighbourhood were wont to try conclusions with their friends or those celebrities from more distant parts of the country who were anxious to lower their colours.

The game was at times pretty rough, and the object of each combatant was to break the skin on the scalp or forehead of his antagonist, so as to cause blood to flow. As soon as the little red stream was seen to trickle down the face of one or other the battle was at an end, and the man who was successful in drawing first blood was declared the victor. Similarly, German students, squabbling over love affairs or other trivial matters, fight with a long sort of foil, which has a very short lancet blade at the extreme point. Their object, like our old cudgel-players, is to draw first blood, only our Teutonic cousins, in drawing the blood, often lop off their friends' noses or slit open their cheeks from ear to mouth.

There is a great similarity in these two games, because in each the head, and the head alone, is the object aimed at. In the one case the defeated party went away with a pretty severe bump on his head, and in the other he hies him to a surgeon to have his nose fixed on, or his cheek stitched up with silver wire.

I have never been fortunate enough to witness a bout with the cudgels, but those who have been more lucky say that the combatants stood very close to each other, making all the hits nearly straight on to the top

of their adversaries' heads, and guarding the returns and attacks with their cudgels and with their left arms.

Considering the cudgel as a modern weapon, I am inclined to advocate its use for prodding an enemy in the pit of the stomach, for, with the extra eighteen inches or so of reach which your cudgel gives you, it is likely that you may get your thrust well home, at any rate before the opponent can hit you with his fist. Many of us know what a blow on the "mark" with the naked fist will do. Well, the area of the knuckles is very much greater than the area of the end of even a very stout stick, so that, if you can put anything like the same force into the thrust that you can into the blow, you will bring a smaller area to bear on a vital point, and consequently work on that point with greater effect.

A grievous crab-tree (or blackthorn) cudgel, with two or three ounces of lead let into one end, is a good thing to have under your pillow at night. Armed with this instrument, you can steal up behind your burglar whilst he is opening your wife's jewel case or bagging your favourite gold snuff-box; but don't get excited about it, and remember to hit his head rather on the sides than on the back or front.

Some authorities advocate "life-preservers," but later on I hope to give my reasons for not caring much about this combination of lead and cane.

The Shillalah.

In Ireland they were formerly very partial to the use of the shillalah, and even to this day there is a little bit of fun in this line to be seen at most of the fairs.

The shillalah proper is about four feet long and is usually made of blackthorn, oak, ash, or hazel; and it is a great point to get it uniform in thickness and in weight throughout its entire length. It is held somewhere about eight inches or so from the centre, and my countrymen, who are always pretty active on their pins when fighting, use their left forearms to protect the left side of their heads.

It is extraordinary what a lot of knocking about a sturdy Irishman can put up with, and what whacks he can receive on the head without any apparent damage. One cannot help thinking that the Celtic skull must be thicker than the Saxon. The brains in the former are certainly more

capable than those in the latter of producing brilliant and amusing, if incorrect, ideas and expressions. The history of the Emerald Isle swarms with Boyle-Rocheisms as the country itself has long been said to swarm with absentee landlords.

After a certain fair, where the whisky and the whacks had contended pretty severely for the first place as regards strength, a certain Paddy was found lying, as Mrs. Malaprop would say, "in a state of *como*," in a ditch hard by the scene of conflict. A friend solicitous, and fearing the worst, said, "Och, Paddy, what ails ye? Are ye dead?" A feeble voice replied, "Ochone, no, Jack. I'm not dead, but I'm spacheless."

The length of the shillalah gives it a great advantage over a shorter stick, for, when held about a third of its length from the end, the shorter portion serves to guard the right side of the head and the right forearm. Indeed, the definition of the quarter-staff, given at the commencement of Chapter II., seems to me to apply far better to the shillalah, which may in a sense be regarded as the link between the ordinary walking-stick and the mighty weapon which Robin Hood wielded so deftly in his combat with Little John.

The use of the point is almost unknown in Irish conflicts. My countrymen twirl their shillalahs above their heads with a whirring noise, and endeavour to knock off their opponents' hats so as to get at their heads. Then begins the fun of the fair—all is slashing and whacking, and the hardest skull generally comes off the best. Sometimes a great deal of skill is displayed, and I often wonder whether a really expert swordsman would be much more than a match for some quick, strong, Kerry boys I could pick out. Be it remembered, a swordsman invariably keeps his left hand behind his back, whilst an Irishman nearly always makes his left forearm the guard for the left side of his head, and so has more scope for hitting than he would otherwise have. One is here reminded of the conflict between Fitz-James and the Highland Chieftain, Roderick Dhu:—

"Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;

For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield."

The left arm, supplying the place of the targe, alluded to in Scott's lines, is doubtless an advantage; but, in the case of the two combatants whose merits we are considering, the ordinary swordsman possesses superior reach, can lunge out further, and knows full well the value of the point.

A *melée* at an Irish fair is worth seeing, but it is better not to join in it, if possible.



The fun of the fair—"Whirroo."

The Walking-stick.

The choice of this useful adjunct is by no means as easy as many people suppose, for it involves not only a knowledge of the prerequisites—in the matter of various kinds of woods, etc.—but also an acquaintance with the situations a man may find himself in, and the uses to which he may have to put his walking-stick.

First, then, as to the matter of the best wood. There are, roughly speaking, two headings under which we may class our types of raw material—strong and stiff wood, such as the oak and the hazel; and strong and pliable, such as the ash-plant and various kinds of canes. What one really wants to secure is a sufficient amount of stiffness and strength to enable one to make an effective hit or longe, without any chance of snapping, and a degree of pliability and spring combined with that lightness which makes a stick handy and lively in actual encounter.

The oak has plenty of power and about the right density, but, unless you get a rather big stick—too big for all-round usefulness,—it is apt

to snap. The hazel is perhaps rather too stiff, and it is certainly too light, though for this very reason it is handy. Then, again, there is no bending a hazel without a great chance of breaking it. A good strong ground-ash is not to be despised if cut at the right time, but it is always apt to split or break. Turning to the rattan-cane, we find a capital solid cane—almost unbreakable—but with rather too much bend in it for thrusting, or warding off the rush of a savage dog. The rattan, too, is very apt to split if by any chance the ferrule comes off; and when once it has really split you might just as well have a birch-rod in your hands.

Where, then, shall we look for a stick which combines all the good qualities and is free from the drawbacks just enumerated? Without the slightest hesitation I refer you to the Irish blackthorn, which can be chosen of such convenient size and weight as not to be cumbersome, and which, if carefully selected, possesses all the strength of the oak, plus enormous toughness, and a pliability which makes it a truly charming weapon to work with.

It is a matter of some difficulty to obtain a real blackthorn in London or any big town. You go into a shop, and they show you a smart-looking stick which has been peeled and deprived of most of its knobs, dyed black, and varnished. That is not the genuine article, and, if you buy it, you will become the possessor of a stick as inferior to a blackthorn as a pewter skewer is inferior to a Damascus blade.

The best way is to send over to Kerry, Cork, or some other county in the Emerald Isle, and ask a friend to secure the proper thing as prepared by the inhabitants.

The sticks are cut out of the hedges at that time of year when the sap is not rising; they are then carefully prepared and dried in the peat smoke for some considerable time, the bark of course being left on and the knobs not cut off too close; and, when ready, they are hard, tough, and thoroughly reliable weapons.

As regards appearance, too, I think, when the hard surface of the rich-coloured bark has been rubbed up with a little oil and a nice silver mount fixed on the handle, no man need feel ashamed of being seen with one of them in Piccadilly or Bond Street.

The section of these sticks is seldom a true circle, but bear in mind, when giving your order, to ask for those which are rather flat than otherwise. I mean that the section should be elliptical, and not circular. The shape of the stick then more nearly approaches that of the blade of a sabre, and if you understand sword exercise and make all cuts and guards with the true edge, you are far more likely to do effective work.

Again, the blow comes in with greater severity on account of the curvature at either end of the major axis of the ellipse being sharper than it is at the end of any diameter of the circle, the sectional areas, of course, being taken as equal.

The length of the blackthorn depends on the length of the man for whom it is intended, but always go in for a good long stick. Useful lengths range between 2 ft. 10 in. and 3 ft., and even 3 ft. 6 in. for a very tall man.

The blackthorn, being stiff and covered with sharp knots, is a first-rate weapon for defence at very close quarters. When, therefore, your efforts at distance-work have failed, and you begin to be "hemmed in," seize the stick very firmly with both hands, and dash the point and hilt alternately into the faces and sides of your opponents.

Always have a good ferrule at the end of your stick. An inch and a half from an old gun barrel is the best; and do not fix it on by means of a rivet running through the stick. Let it be fixed in its place either by a deep dent in the side, or by cutting out two little notches and pressing the saw-like tooth into the wood. It is also a good plan to carry these saw-like teeth all round the ferrule and then press the points well into the wood; there is then no chance of the fastening-on causing a split or crack in the wood.

The weight of the stick is an important matter to consider. Some blackthorns are so enormously heavy that it is next to impossible to do any quick effective work with them, and one is reminded, on seeing a man "over stucked,"—if I may be allowed such an expression—of Lord Dundreary's riddle, "Why does a dog wag his tail? Because the dog is stronger than the tail," or of David in Saul's armour. Some time ago it was rather the fashion for very young men to affect gigantic walking-sticks—possibly with the view of intimidating would-be plunderers

and robbers, and investing themselves generally with a magic sort of *noli me tangere* air.

Without wishing to detract from the undoubted merits, in certain special cases, of these very big sticks, I am bound to say that, only being useful to a limited extent, they should not be encouraged. Let the stick you habitually carry be one well within your compass. If it comes up to guard readily and without any apparent effort or straining of your wrist, and if you find you can make all the broadsword cuts, grasping it as shown in Fig. 14, without the least spraining your thumb, then you may be pretty sure that you are not “over-sticked,” and that your cuts and thrusts will be smart to an extent not to be acquired if you carried a stick ever so little too heavy for you.

Though it is a good plan to be accustomed to the feel of the weapon which is most likely to serve you in time of need, it is nevertheless a grand mistake to get into a way of imagining that you can only use one kind of stick or one kind of sword effectively.

This is one reason why it is so advisable to range wide in fencing matters. I would always say, commence with the foils and work hard, under some good master, for a year or so without touching any other branch. Then go on to broad-sword, and keep to alternate days with foils. Later on take up the single-stick, and then go on to bayonet-exercise, quarter-staff, and anything else you please.

This extended range of work will give you a wonderful general capability for adapting yourself at a moment's notice to any weapon chance may place in your hands: the leg of an old chair, the joint of a fishing rod, or the common or garden spade; any of these may be used with great effect by an accomplished all-round swordsman.

There is one point on which a few words may not be out of place in this connection.

Good men, with their fists, and those who are proficient with the sword or stick, often complain that, in actual conflict with the rough and ready, though ignorant, assailant, they are worsted because the adversary does something diametrically opposed to what a scientific exponent of either art would do in similar circumstances.

It is certainly trying, when you square up to a rough and expect him to hit out with his fists, to receive a violent doubling-up kick in the stomach; and similarly annoying is it, when attacked by a man with a stick, to experience treatment quite different to anything you ever came across in your own particular School-of-Arms.

But after all this is only what you ought to expect. It is absolutely necessary to suit yourself to your environment for the time being, and be ready for anything.

Depend upon it science must tell, and there is always this very consoling reflection to fall back upon: if your opponent misses you, or you are quick enough to avoid his clumsy attack—either of which is extremely likely to happen—it is highly probable that you will be able to make good your own attack, for, as a rule, the unscientific man hits out of distance or wide of the mark, and this is rarely the case with a scientific man.

It once fell to my lot to be set upon by a couple of very disagreeable roughs in Dublin, one of whom did manage to get the first blow, but it was “all round” and did not do much harm. Before he could deliver a second hit I managed to lay him out with a very severe cut from my blackthorn, which came in contact with his head just between the rim of his hat and the collar of his coat. Now, had my knowledge of stick-play been insufficient to enable me to accurately direct this cut (cut 5) to its destination, I might not now be scribbling these pages. As it turned out, this poor injured rough was placed hors de combat, and was afterwards conveyed to the hospital, and I only had to tackle his friend, a stubborn varlet, who, after knocking me about a good deal and also receiving some rough treatment at my hands, ran away. He was “wanted” by the police for some time, but was never caught.

This little episode is only given to show that the proper delivery of one blow or hit is often enough to turn the tables, and how advisable it is to practise often, so as to keep the eye and hand both steady and quick.

When walking along a country road it is a good plan to make cuts with your stick at weeds, etc., in the hedges, always using the true edge, i.e. if aiming at a certain part of a bramble or nettle, to cut at it, just as though you were using a sabre. By this sort of practice, which, by the way, is to be deprecated in a young plantation or in a friend’s garden, you may greatly increase the accuracy of your eye.

It is merely an application of the principle which enables a fly-fisher to place his fly directly under such and such over-hanging boughs, or gives the experienced driver such control over his whip that he can flick a midge off the ear of one of his galloping leaders.

Much does not, in all probability, depend upon the success or failure of the piscator's cast, and very likely the midge might safely be allowed to remain on the leader's ear; but if you are walking in a lonely suburb or country lane, your life may depend upon the accuracy with which you can deliver one single cut or thrust with your faithful blackthorn.

I can almost hear people say, "Oh, this is all rubbish; I'm not going to be attacked; life would not be worth living if one had to be always 'on guard' in this way." Well, considering that this world, from the time we are born to the time we die, is made up of uncertainties, and that we are never really secure from attack at any moment of our lives, it does seem worth while to devote a little attention to the pursuit of a science, which is not only healthful and most fascinating, but which may, in a second of time, enable you to turn a defeat into a victory, and save yourself from being mauled and possibly killed in a fight which was none of your own making. Added to all this, science gives a consciousness of power and ability to assist the weak and defenceless, which ought to be most welcome to the mind of any man. Though always anxious to avoid anything like "a row," there are times when it may be necessary to interfere for the sake of humanity, and how much more easy is it to make that interference dignified and effective if you take your stand with a certainty that you can, if pushed to extreme measures, make matters very warm indeed for the aggressor? The consciousness of power gives you your real authority, and with it you are far more likely to be calm and to gain your point than you would be without the knowledge. Backed up by science, you can both talk and act in a way which is likely to lead to a peaceful solution of a difficulty, whereas, if the science is absent, you dare not, from very uncertainty, use those very words which you know ought to be used on the occasion.

There are necessarily a good many difficulties to be faced in becoming at all proficient in the art of self-defence, but the advantages to be gained are doubtless very great.

An expert swordsman, and by this I mean one who is really au fait with any weapon you may put into his hand, who is also a good boxer and wrestler, is a very nasty customer for any one or even two footpads to make up to.

The worst of it is that it takes so long to become really good in any branch of athletics. When you know all, or nearly all, that is to be learned, you get a bit stiff and past work! But this, after all, need not trouble one much, since it applies to all relations of life. As a wise man once said, with a touch of sorrow and regret in his tone, "By the time you have learned how to live, you die."

The Umbrella.

As a weapon of modern warfare this implement has not been given a fair place. It has, indeed, too often been spoken of with contempt and disdain, but there is no doubt that, even in the hands of a strong and angry old woman, a gamp of solid proportions may be the cause of much damage to an adversary. Has not an umbrella, opened suddenly and with a good flourish, stopped the deadly onslaught of the infuriated bull, and caused the monarch of the fields to turn tail? Has it not, when similarly brought into action, been the means of stopping a runaway horse, whose mad career might otherwise have caused many broken legs and arms?

If, then, there are these uses beyond those which the dampness of our insular climate forces upon us, it may be well to inquire how they can be brought to bear when a man, who is an expert swordsman, or one who has given attention to his fencing lessons, is attacked without anything in his hands save the homely umbrella.

It is, of course, an extremely risky operation prodding a fellow-creature in the eye with the point of an umbrella; and I once knew a man who, being attacked by many roughs, and in danger of losing his life through their brutality, in a despairing effort made a desperate thrust at the face of one of his assailants. The point entered the eye and the brain, and the man fell stone dead at his feet. I would therefore only advocate the thrusting when extreme danger threatens—as a dernier resort, in fact, and when it is a case of who shall be killed, you or your assailant.

There are two methods of using the umbrella, viz. holding it like a fencing foil—and for this reason umbrellas should always be chosen with strong straight handles—for long thrusts when at a distance, or grasping it firmly with both hands, as one grasps the military rifle when at bayonet-exercise. In the latter case one has a splendid weapon for use against several assailants at close quarters. Both the arms should be bent and held close to the body, which should be made to work freely from the hips, so as to put plenty of weight into the short sharp prods with which you can alternately visit your opponents' faces and ribs. If you have the handle in your right hand, and the left hand grasps the silk (or alpaca), not more than a foot from the point, it will be found most effective to use the forward and upward strokes with the point for the faces, and the back-thrusts with the handle for the bodies. Whatever you do, let your strokes be made very quickly and forcibly, for when it comes to such close work as this your danger lies in being altogether overpowered, thrown down, and possibly kicked to death; and, as I have before hinted, when there is a choice of evils, choose the lesser, and don't be the least squeamish about hurting those who will not hesitate to make a football of your devoted head should it unfortunately be laid low.

Then, again, there is no better weapon for guarding a heavy blow aimed at you with a thick bludgeon than an umbrella, which, with its wire ribs and soft covering, is almost unbreakable, when all its ribs are held tightly with both hands; it is also, for the same reason, when thus grasped with both hands, an excellent defence against the attack of a large powerful dog, which may spring at your throat; but, in this case, remember to get one of your legs well behind the other so as to bring most of the weight of your body on the foremost leg, and, if you are lucky, you may have the satisfaction of throwing the animal on his back.

Thrusting, prodding, and guarding, then, may be called the strong points of the gamp; it is no use for hitting purposes, and invariably tumbles to pieces, comes undone, and gets into a demoralized condition when one tries to make it fulfil all the conditions of the unclothed walking-stick. Besides which, the handles are never made strong enough for hitting, and the hittee is protected by the folds of silk.

Hitting, then, is the weak point of the gamp. Try to remember this when you feel inclined to administer a castigation to man or beast, and bear in mind that a comic scene may ensue, when, hot and angry, you stand with your best umbrella broken and half open, with the silk torn and the ribs sticking out in all directions.

Sometimes umbrellas have been made even more effective weapons by what is called a spring dagger, which consists of a short, strong knife or dirk let into the handle, and is readily brought into play by a sudden jerk, or by touching a spring. This may be all very well for travellers in the out-of-the-way regions of Spain, Sicily, or Italy, but I don't like these dangerous accessories for English use, as they may be unfortunately liable to abuse by excitable persons.

In addition to the weapons already alluded to, there are others which, though not so generally known, or so generally useful, may be turned to good account on certain occasions.

The "life-preserver" consists of a stout piece of cane about a foot long, with a ball of five or six ounces of lead attached firmly to one end by catgut netting, whilst the other end is furnished with a strong leather or catgut loop to go round the wrist and prevent the weapon flying from or being snatched from the hand.

Of course this instrument may be very effective, very deadly, but what you have to consider is this: the serviceable portion is so small—no bigger than a hen's egg—that unless you are almost an expert, or circumstances greatly favour you, there is more than a chance of altogether missing your mark. With the life-preserver you have, say, at most a couple of inches only of effective weapon to rely on, whereas with the cudgel at least a foot of hard and heavy wood may be depended upon for bowling over the adversary.

A leaded rattan cane is a dangerous instrument in expert hands, but my objections to it are very similar to those advanced with regard to the shorter weapon. Leaded walking-sticks are not "handy," for the presence of so much weight in the hitting portion makes them extremely bad for quick returns, recovery, and for guarding purposes.

To my mind the leaded rattan is to the well-chosen blackthorn what the life-preserver is to the cudgel—an inferior weapon.

One does not want to kill but to disable, even those who have taken the mean advantage of trying to catch one unprepared in the highways and byways. To take an ordinary common-sense view of the matter: it is surely better far to have a three to one chance in favour of disabling than an even chance of killing a fellow-creature? The disablement is all you want, and, having secured that, the best thing is to get out of the way as soon as possible, so as to avoid further complications.

The sword-stick is an instrument I thoroughly detest and abominate, and could not possibly advocate the use of in any circumstances whatever.

These wretched apologies for swords are to outward appearance ordinary straight canes—usually of Malacca cane. On pulling the handle of one of these weapons, however, a nasty piece of steel is revealed, and then you draw forth a blade something between a fencing-foil and a skewer.

They are poor things as regards length and strength, and “not in it” with a good solid stick. In the hands of a hasty, hot-tempered individual they may lead to the shedding of blood over some trivial, senseless squabble. The hollowing out of the cane, to make the scabbard, renders them almost useless for hitting purposes.

In the environs of our big cities there is always a chance of attack by some fellow who asks the time, wants a match to light his cigar, or asks the way to some place. When accosted never stop, never draw out watch or box of lights, and never know the way anywhere. Always make a good guess at the time, and swear you have no matches about you. It is wonderful to notice kind-hearted ladies stopping to give to stalwart beggars who are only waiting for an opportunity to snatch purses, and it would be interesting to know how many annually lose their purses and watches through this mistaken method of distributing largess.

Let me conclude by saying that, if you want to be as safe as possible in a doubtful neighbourhood, your best friends are a quick ear, a quick eye, a quick step, and a predilection for the middle of the road. The two former help you to detect, as the two latter may enable you to avoid a sudden onslaught.



COLOPHON

This republication of an old classic manual of sword- and stick-fighting techniques is set in Sebastien Kosch's lovely Crimson Text—a modern 'old style' face specifically designed for booksetting, that assisted our effort to preserve the feel of the period in a clean modern design.

The display face is that old standard of modern British typesetting, Gill Sans. Inspired by a 1916 design for the London Underground by Edward Johnston, Eric Gill's humanist sans consorts well with old style types and has been used in a multiplicity of contexts over the past century without wearing out its flexibility.

The main text was laid out in Adobe InDesign CS6 with optical margins and glyph extension algorithms applied. External and internal layouts and typesetting are by John Calvin Young.

