

# CUDGEL-PLAYING

*Modernized and Improved ;*

OR, THE

*SCIENCE OF DEFENSE,*

EXEMPLIFIED

IN A FEW

**SHORT AND EASY LESSONS,**

*FOR THE PRACTICE*

*OF THE*

*Broad Sword or Single Stick,*

ON FOOT.

Illustrated with Fourteen Positions.

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An attentive Perusal of this work will qualify the reader to handle a Sword or Stick with Grace, enabling him to correct Abuse, repel Attack, and secure himself from unprovoked Insult.

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*By Capt. G. Sinclair of the 42d Regt.*

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**London ;**

Printed and Sold by J. Bailey, 116, Chancery-Lane.

SOLD ALSO BY

Champante and Whitrow, *Aldgate*; Willmott and Hill, *Borough*;  
Lumsden and sons, *Glasgow*;

And may be had of most Booksellers

1800

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## PREFACE

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*THE author humbly submits the following work to the public ; not only as it may tend to the refinements of a very troublesome set of gentry, but also presumes it may in some measure be worthy the attention of the officers both of the army and navy, equally, or more so than the use of the small sword ; the attitudes are as graceful, and the exercise as conducive to health; besides, the broad sword, or cut and thrust, is a necessary appendage to their professions, therefore it would be superfluous to dwell on the propriety of their making themselves perfect masters thereof.*

*To those who are not professional men it must also be a most useful and desirable accomplishment, as, in the present day, scarcely any person walks the streets without a stick ; and, when attacked by robbers or fool-hardy Lyceumites, anxious to put into practice their last lesson on the peaceful and inoffensive, naturally have recourse to it.*

*A moment's reflection will imprint on the imagination of the candid reader, the awkward figure they cut, and the danger they run in this situation, provided they are unacquainted with the rudiments of defense. On the other hand, a person skilled in the use of a stick may defend himself with ease from the attack of three or four at a time.*

*My countrymen the Highlanders, have, from time immemorial, evinced the utility of the broad sword ; and by their skillful management of it in the day of battle have gained immortal honour. Such has been the effect of their dexterity and knowledge of this weapon, that undisciplined crowds have made a stand against, nay, have defeated a regular army.*

AIRSHIRE

G. SINCLAIR.

THE  
*Art of Cudgel-Playing,*

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Lesson 1. — *Of holding the Sword or Stick,*

[Through the work the sword will often be named, it answering in every respect the exercise of the stick, and will prevent needless repetition]

IT is requisite, in order to hold a sword well, that the hilt be flat in your hand, observing that it be directly perpendicular with the right knee ; and, when you lunge, your thumb stretched at about an inch distance from the shell : when you do not intend to lunge, lay it across the knuckles as in doubling the fist. The pummel close to and under the wrist. Keep it flexible, and loose in the hand ; but when you mean to parry, thrust, or cut, it must be griped with strength, in order to throw your adversary out of the line, or conduct your blow with force and precision. By continually having the hand fast clenched you will soon tire, as the muscle of the thumb will grow stiff, and subject you to cramp.

## Lesson II. — *The Inside Guard.*

ALWAYS, when you join your adversary's sword, do it on the inside guard ; for which purpose, in the first place, turn your hand that the nails be upward, and the knuckles perpendicular with the ground ; your wrist on a level with the flank, the arm a little bent. Secondly, keep your point directly in a line with your adversary's right eye, holding it just fast enough to prevent tottering. Thirdly, narrow your body so that your shoulders, right arm, and sword form a straight line. Raise the left arm as high as the forehead, forming a half circle ; the hand open. Fourthly, bend the left knee, so that the body be sustained upon that hip, and rest thereupon. Place the right leg at a foot and a half distance ; or, according to your size, that you stand easy. The knee perpendicular with the buckle ; the heel in a line, that you may slip it behind the left.

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## Lesson III. — *The Outside Guard.*

THIS guard does not differ from the inside, respecting the position of the body. The hand is to be reversed ; the nails downward ; and the arm a little more stretched to guard the outside. The recover is generally on this guard, in which case the elbow is drawn in to the side ; the wrist bent ; your point a little inclining to the left, forming an angle, through which you must always take especial care to look your adversary full in the face.

Lesson IV. — *The Medium Guard,*

IS between the inside and the outside ; the thumb-nail upward, so that the flat of the swords meet, both being on that guard. It is made use of when you oppose yourself in a posture of defence, before your antagonist, not knowing on what guard he means to join you. If he joins you on the outside, take care to oppose the outside ; and *vice versa*, if he engages on the inside, oppose the inside.

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Lesson V. — *The Hanging Guard,*

IS formed by raising the hand as high as the head, keeping the wrist firm ; the thumb pointing to the ground ; the arm bent, so as to form an angle, through which you must always see your adversary. Keep you point sloping so as to cover the left knee. Place the left hand under the sword arm ; the palm flat and close to the body, in order to parry your adversary's thrust, should he attempt it on the recover. If he attempts a cut at your arm, or head, you have only to straighten the arm.

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Lesson VI. — *St. George's Guard*

IS seldom used but in order to prevent being broken in upon by common cudgel players, or for show. It is performed in the following manner: being on the hanging guard, draw back the right foot obliquely

until it be parallel with the left, and about the same distance as when upon the former guards ; the body fronting your adversary, sinking well upon both knees ; the left hand placed upon the thigh to support the body firm and upright – draw the right elbow a little back, so that you just cover the left shoulder – Should your antagonist persist in pressing upon you, parry his stroke as from the hanging guard ; and, in the action of parrying, pass the left foot behind the right, and swiftly deliver your thrust, directions for which will be given in a subsequent lesson.

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### Lesson VII. – *Of the Salute with the five Guards.*

THE salute has long been established in the schools as an act of politeness, and an indication that the parties are friendly, and possess not the least rancour towards each other. It is most essentially necessary for the scholar frequently to practice the salute ; it gives him a graceful and easy carriage, and enables him to manage his sword, and change to the different guards with facility, ease, and safety.

The swords being laid across the ground, the inside of the hilt towards the right hand, place yourself two paces from your sword. Fix your eyes on your adversary's ; your hands a-kimbo ; heels joined, turned out well your toes. Advance the left foot, and then the right, which will bring you near enough to take up the sword ; to do which, keep the left knee straight. Sink as you advance, joining the backs of the hands together ; separate them slowly, making a figure

nearly resembling that of an 8, thus **Error! Reference source not found.**, timing the action so as when you bring down the right hand, you may join it to the sword. When you have taken up the sword, sink well upon both knees, forming the above figure with it ; the left hand as when upon guard. Draw back the right foot to the left heel, lowering the left hand to receive the hilt of the sword from the right, which is to rest on the left arm ; the point up-ward ; the inside of the hilt inclined to the right. Step forward and salute your adversary by shaking hands, regarding him steadfastly in recovering : join the right hand to the hilt ; draw back the left foot, making the aforesaid figure of **Error! Reference source not found.**, and come to the inside guard ; then raise the right foot a little, shifting your sword to the outside of your adversary's : change to the outside guard. Now let your foot fall as you join blades ; repeat the foregoing figure ; change sides, and come to the medium guard. Again, change sides, falling back as before : come to the hanging guard, upon which take great care you always see your adversary well under the arm ; then draw back the right foot obliquely, parallel with the left, forming the figure aforementioned, come to St. George's guard. Lastly, pass the left foot behind the right, and return to the inside guard. In the performance of the foregoing, observe that each attitude, and change, must be executed with ease, and without precipitation.

N.B. Scholars should accustom themselves to make this figure **Error! Reference source not found.**, as it is not only graceful, but abso-lutely necessary, for every cut that is made forms a

## 10 ART OF CUDGEL-PLAYING

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part of it : they must also observe, that the motion of the sword is to proceed from the wrist only.

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Lesson VIII. — *The First Position.*

BEING on the inside guard, your adversary changes to cut on the outside your leg ; – slip back the right foot to the left heel – draw in the right arm, the hand well on the outside guard – elbow close to the side, your point parallel with the left shoulder, seeing your adversary through the angle, beneath your sword ; -- bring your left hand to support the sword-arm, in which attitude you are ready to riposte upon him, and are perfectly secure from his attack.

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Lesson IX. — *The Second Position,*

IS the same as the first, with only this variation : instead of drawing in the arm extend it, and let fall your point directly in the line, which will then hit the inside of your adversary's. The reason of not making a return from the first position is, supposing your adversary had only made a feint at the leg, and you extend to deliver the return, he parries with the outside guard, and most probably cuts you in the recover.

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Lesson X. — *The Third Position,*

IS but a small deviation from the preceding ones. Your adversary making a cut at the outside of the leg,

reverse the wrist ; the nails downward, and meet him, your edge will then most probably catch the outside of his arm ; drawing in yours, and step back with your left foot ; recover, and receive his return on the outside guard.

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Lesson XI. — *The Fourth Position.*

YOUR adversary making a cut at the inside the leg, slip the foot as before, and forming a half circle, with your point rather low, meet him on the inside the arm ; or, should he attempt the knee, slip the foot, and drop the point as in the second position.

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Lesson XII. — *Engaging and Disengaging.*

TO engage, is to oppose your adversary's sword, either on the inside, outside, or medium guard. If you perceive any opening, (which is frequently the case, by his negligently coming to the guard,) through which you may probably hit him, immediately throw in the cut, without waiting his attack. To disengage, is to shift your point from side to side ; to do which, with dexterity and neatness, you must hold your sword loosely and with ease ; pass the point quickly under your adversary's blade, turning the wrist as you pass his edge, that your hilt may receive it, should he attempt to cut on your passing ; but take care that the motion proceeds from the wrist, and that you keep perfectly in the line. When he presses with

force against your blade, I would advise you nimbly to disengage, and make the cut on the contrary side, as most probably your disengage will throw him out of the line, and give you an opening.

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Lesson XIII. --- *The Cut on the Outside of the Leg or Thigh,*

THIS cut is dangerous to attempt, you being thereby exposed to your adversary's throwing in the cuts mentioned in the second and third position. It is performed, on your adversary's recover, by reversing the hand, with the nails downward : extend the left knee, and raising the right foot at the same time, lunge about a foot forward, and make the cut ; draw in the arm and recover on the hanging guard, springing back so far that the right foot may fall in the place of the left. Riposte on the outside guard.

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Lesson XIV. --- *The Cut on the Inside of the Leg, or Thigh.*

THE attempting this is likewise attended with the risk of receiving either of the cuts described in the first and fourth positions : it is executed by lowering the point, forming a half circle ; making the extension and lunge as in the preceding lesson ; deliver the cut, to avoid which, see the fourth position. On recovering, should you not choose to make a return, come to the inside guard ; if he reposts, your return is

on the outside and come to that guard. I would advise the young practitioner never to attempt this, or the preceding cut, till he has by use acquired a thorough management of his weapon ; and when he perceives his adversary stands wider than common.

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Lesson XV. — *The Cut under the Wrist.*

YOUR adversary being on a high inside guard, form a small half circle, turning the wrist on passing his blade, so that your hilt will be upward, and your sword's edge to edge. Place your left hand on the sword-arm to steady it and drawing in your arm, bending the wrist, and raising your point, you will most likely hit the under part of his arm and wrist ; his parry will be the outside guard, to which you instantly recover, observing to turn the wrist the moment you have made the cut, or felt his parry.

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Lesson XVI. — *The Cut on the wrist,*

IS performed by disengaging under the wrist, as in the foregoing ; but, having passed your adversary's blade, you reverse the wrist, the nails downward, and make the cut. In this movement your wrist exactly performs this figure, **Error! Reference source not found.**, which I strongly recommend to beginners the frequent practice of, as not only the success of these two cuts entirely depend on its being neatly executed, but all the cuts and disengagements are a part of it ; and it will render the wrist pliant and flexible, which is an indispensable requisite in order to become a master of your weapon. Parry and recover the same as the preceding.

Lesson XVII. — *The Circular Cut.*

BEING on the inside guard, quickly disengage, forming a whole circle ; riposte on the inside. To parry which, follow your adversary's sword, and oppose the same guard ; if made from the outside, oppose the outside.

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Lesson XVIII. — *The Single Feint*

CONSISTS of two motions with the wrist, either from the outside guard to the inside guard, or *vice versa*, from the inside to the out, without turning the hand. You disengage over the point, making the first offer not more than three or four inches down his blade ; — he not perceiving the feint, and supposing the cut will come home, parries your first motion ; you quickly disengage, and riposte on that side on which you were on guard. In performing this, make an appel\* with the foot on each disengage. Make the extension on your first disengage. Parry as in the preceding.

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Lesson XIX. — *Of the Double Feint.*

THE double feint consists of three motions or disengages. Example : from the inside guard, I disengage to cut on the outside, you parry ; I proceed to the inside, and perceiving you again disposed to parry it likewise, I nimbly disengage a third time, and deliver

\*An appel is a beat with the foot on the ground, to support yourself firm, and alarm your adversary. It ought always to accompany your motion.

the cut on the outside the arm, and *vice versa*, from the outside guard ; but would not advise its being made from the outside, as it is both difficult, and likewise dangerous to attempt to cut on the inside : observe to make the extension with the left leg, as if you meant to deliver the cut on the first disengage.

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Lesson XX. — *Of Forcing the Blade.*

IF your adversary comes to parade before you, on the medium guard, and does not appear firm, raise your hand on the outside guard, making the extension of the left leg as you raise the hand ; beat his sword out of the line by striking on the feeble of his blade, and cut home in the line. You may parry his cut by dropping your point, and come to the outside guard ; by a quick change you may cut under your antagonist's arm, but as you may receive an interchanged thrust, I would not advise you make the attempt, but rather draw back the body and right hand, so that you gain his feeble, bring him round, forcing him in the line.

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Lesson XXI. — *Of Springing the Blade.*

YOUR adversary having come to the parade as before described, raise the hand, and make the extension ; seize your adversary's feeble, and bear your stroke home in the line, sliding along his blade you will hit the inside of his arm ; recover the outside guard. The parry is the inside guard. These are very good attacks, as they determine, and necessarily oblige

your adversary to alter his position, which you are narrowly to observe, in order, if possible, to throw in a cut in the change.

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Lesson XXII. — *Of the Advance Cut across the Breast.*

YOUR antagonist being on the medium guard, raise your hand, and seize his feeble, make a lunge, holding your body upright, bearing down his sword ; and draw yours across the breast, to oppose which he will drop his point, turning the wrist, the nails downward; break the measure of the body by drawing a little back, and drawing in his arm till he gains your feeble, then brings you around and ripostes on the outside. Observe the moment he moves his arm for that purpose, before he gains your feeble : riposte on the outside, and you will most probably hit him ; or, slipping back the foot, draw it across the body, and you will cut the inside arm.

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Lesson XXIII. — *Of the Disarms incidental to the above.*

UPON attempting the cut above mentioned you're your adversary lunges forward at the same time with you, he means to disarm you in the following manner: having parried the thrust as above described, he quickly seizes the wrist of your sword arm, under his, and pulls you forward with force ; the least struggle on your part, after he has possession of your wrist,

must be fatal, as his sword is at liberty ; to prevent which, disarm when you find he has parried, bear your wrist down as low as possible, (bending his sword) so that he cannot get his left hand beneath to seize your wrist ; and, should he attempt it over the wrist, bring forward your left foot behind his right ; seize the sword-arm, and draw it close down to the left thigh ; snatch your sword from the hold, and place the point to his breast ; he cannot keep his hold on your sword, as on the least resistance, if you bend your left knee against his, you may with ease throw him down, should he persist in opposing you.

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Lesson XXIV. — *Observations on the foregoing.*

YOUR adversary having attempted the cut, and you have parried it, both weapons being bound, his leg seems to invite your stroke ; but, beware of trying that experiment, as he will easily slip it, and effect the cut across the body, and will be in readiness to enforce it with a most powerful thrust, so that, on the whole it is better to endeavor, by breaking the measure, to bring him round, and riposte on the outside.

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Lesson XXV. — *Of seizing the Time to cut under the Arm, on your adversary's changing to the Hanging Guard, before he comes into the line.*

BOTH being either on the in, or outside guard, you perceiving your adversary going to change to the hanging guard, change quickly, meeting with your edge his blade before he comes to the line. Turn the

wrist, the nails up, and cut within the arm, gliding along his weapon : to parry which, he will turn his hand at the same instant with you, and most likely cut you under the wrist ; which, if he makes good, you will naturally drop it a little, and make an opening above, which he immediately seizes, so that this cut is not the most safe to be practiced when you play with an artist, as you have two to one against you.

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Lesson XXVI --- *Forcing the Stick on the Hanging Guard.*

YOUR adversary being on this guard, and you have not joined him, force him out of the line as in the preceding lesson. Turn the wrist, and make the cut as in the foregoing ; this being parried as the preceding, you likewise run the risque of the two cuts in return as aforesaid.

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Lesson XXVII. --- *Of the Thrust from the Hanging Guard.*

IF your adversary makes the thrust, either put it by with the left hand, which is ready for that purpose, when on that guard, and cut immediately right down the forehead ; or parry with your weapon, and bring your left foot forward behind his knee, seizing his wrist, and keep it down to your thigh : place your point to his breast, this is the safest method of disarming, as it exposes the least, and is certain.

Lesson XXVII. — *Of the Thrust when your Adversary holds a crooked Wrist.*

IF your adversary holds a crooked wrist, on the inside guard, there will be a small opening, through which you will see his body uncovered ; disengage nimbly under the hilt, and lunge with your nails up ; if you feel him parry, turn the wrist instantly, and recover : if you make the thrust nimbly he will hardly parry it ; but, if you are not used to thrusting, I would not advise you to attempt it, but make the cut over the wrist, as if he parries, which is only turning the wrist to the outside guard, he will most likely force you out of the line, and cut you in return.

N.B. If you keep the pummel of the sword close to the wrist, there will be no opening for the thrust.

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Lesson XXIX. — *Of lowering your Point, to invite your adversary to cut over the wrist.*

BOTH being on the outside guard, your adversary covers his point, by which his wrist is quite uncovered ; you make the cut, he meets your stroke with the true edge, and forcing home in the line, will, most probably, hit you ; if not, it will oblige you to alter your position, and bring you to action. Should you continue on the inside, and take no notice of his lowering his point, but lower yours likewise, he will cut you above the wrist, where there will be an opening, or he will lunge forward, and make a thrust over the arm, which you are to parry with the outside guard with force, to drive him out of the line, and return on the outside.

Lesson XXX. — *Of the Distance, or Measure*

NOTHING is so material, and at the same time so difficult, as to know with precision the distance you are to keep from your adversary, as almost on every motion the measure is broken. There are no certain rules whereby to determine it : frequent practice and attention to size and agility of your adversary, will give you an idea of it ; it is by not paying proper attention to the measure that most hits are given in an assault, than any other defect in play. For example : if you are within your adversary's reach, upon the extension of the left leg only, he will throw in a thrust, or cut, with such force and velocity, that most probably will be out of your power to parry. If upon your lunge you can reach the leg, you will be sufficiently near, at which distance, with the extension of the left leg only, you will reach the forepart of your adversary's arm ; and, as you riposte on his recover, a swift motion will reach him before he regains his position, if you are too late do not attempt it, but rather wait his attack. This is a most excellent guard, and well calculated for chance encounters in the street, as there is no show or preparation for it, and your adversary probably supposing you are totally unacquainted with the stick, will heedlessly attack you, when in all human probability you will settle the difference with the point of your stick, without any trouble, or receiving a single blow.

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Lesson XXXI. — *Spadroon Guard.*

YOU generally have recourse to this guard when you are pressed hard, and have little room to act in : it is

performed with the greatest safety from the inside guard ; lower your point, and form a half circle, you bring your edge, or hilt, directly under your adversary's blade, where you stop. Sink well upon both knees, and bring the left hand to steady the sword arm, which is to be a little bent, the body perfectly upright ; in this position you are secure from either cut or thrust of your adversary. Should he attempt the outside, slip the foot, and turning the wrist, you receive his arm on the edge of your sword, as mentioned in the third position ; if on the inside, slip back, and form the half circle, you meet him in the fourth. If he attempts the head, raise the hilt as high as your face, in a line with your eyes, the other hand covering the left side of your forehead, in order to put by his sword after he has delivered his blow, and instantly make the extension and lunge. Being come to this guard, you must be particularly careful not to suffer your adversary to beat upon the feeble of your sword, which will most probably force it out of your hand, therefore narrowly watch his motions, and you will easily perceive if he is acquainted with the disarm, or the guard ; should he make the attempt, nimbly elude him, and cut outside the arm. If he comes to the Spadroon guard, you must, by a quick and rapid beat, endeavor to disarm him, if not, it will oblige you to alter your position, and bring you to action. Should you continue on the inside, and take no notice of his lowering his point, but lower your's likewise, he will cut you above the wrist where there will be an opening ; or, he will lunge forward, and make a thrust over the arm, which you are to parry

with the outside guard, with force, to drive him out of the line, and return on the outside.

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THE scholar having attentively gone through the preceding lessons, will now be able to play loose, which is a representation of a single combat, when he must perform all the cuts, thrusts, and parries before described, endeavoring to deceive and discompose his adversary, by appels, false attacks, beatings, disengagements, and extensions ; that by his parrying a judgment may be formed in what manner to attack, with a probability of success. When two gentlemen are going to play loose, or in the terms of the fencing-schools, to make an assault, they must (having made the salute) take care to preserve a proper distance, and to oppose each other's cuts or thrusts, lest they should touch each other at the same time. At the beginning of an assault, you must observe whether your adversary means to commence the attack, which you will quickly see by his gripping his sword ; force a little upon his blade, and invite him to cut on the outside, by giving him an opening, which, if he does, parry, and make a quick return over his wrist ; if he attempts the single feint, parry, forming a circle with the inside guard, keeping your body somewhat backward, and throw in a straight return.

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NEVER lean over your adversary, but keep upright and firm ; let not your eyes be fixed on any one part more than another, which will mask your intentions in what you are going to perform, and baffle his

parades. Look boldly, and with confidence, in his face, and reflect on the probably consequences of every motion before you make it. Appear undetermined in your mind, and aim in all your attacks, that he may be at a loss what you are about to do. Make your attack coolly and with prudence, and when your blow has succeeded, recover quickly, lowering your point, but so that you may act defensively. Should you be more skillful than your antagonist never attack him : to be sure you may not hit him so often, but then he will not have the satisfaction of touching you. There are many good players that are hit by very bad ones, but it is their own fault : they probably may give six hits to one, but, however, they seldom or never come off untouched, which proceeds from their impatience and imprudence : in making frequent attacks they are hit by change rather than by the skill of their adversary, therefore always keep on the defensive, taking care to parry well, and then you will be almost certain of throwing a hit on the return, unless you perceive a palpable opening. When you engage, be careful of not remaining on the medium guard ; if it is on the inside, turn your wrist well up, if on the outside reverse the wrist, and secure well the outside, so that you have but one side to defend. When you advance to give your measure, never disengage, but make sure of your antagonist's blade, for should you quit it you expose yourself to be forced from the line, and consequently to his return. In parrying, keep the sword fast in your hand ; on the contrary, when you propose a feint ; your arm must be flexible, and the sword easy, so that you may perform your intentions

with more celerity, disregarding the disengages and false attacks of your opponent, but follow him coolly, and you will soon find an opportunity of throwing in a cut, or lunge, with effect. When you come to the guard, and have a mind to attack in your turn, change quickly from the in to the outside guard, and observe narrowly by the motion of his wrist, what parry he puts in practice, and then determine on your stroke. If you perceive him languid in his motions, force his blade, and make the cut across the breast, or straight home in the line.

Should you perceive any irresolution in the part of your adversary, in making his attack, force him out of the line, and attack him with vivacity ; if you perceive him changing to the hanging guard, change with him, and cut under the arm, taking care not lay too much stress in the cut, lest he parry it, and make good the two cuts described in lesson XXVI, but a thorough attention to the foregoing, will, with practice, enable a person to sustain an assault in all the various changes that occur in loose playing, and which to expatiate on further would be tiresome to the learner, and would unnecessarily swell these few pages to a volume, as they are all described, with little variation, in the preceding sheets.

FINIS

J. Bailey, Printer, 116, Chancery-Lane