

MASHS, SMALLSWORD CURRICULUM, NOVEMBER 2006
ATTACHMENT 1, FROM OLIVIER'S FENCING FAMILIARIZED
PART II, CHAPTER XVI

“OF THE ASSAULT IN GENERAL”

An assault is the resemblance of a single fight with swords, where you perform against your adversary, all the thrusts and all the parades that you learned by lessons; endeavouring on both sides to deceive one another by some feints, so that you may either make some thrust or parry them.

Therefore when the combatants have made the salute, they must take peculiar care to keep their proper distance and measure, and to oppose one another's parades, lest they should touch one another both at the same time.

When you begin to make an assault, you must consider whether your adversary has a mind to attack you. For that purpose, make a small step backward, presenting the point to his breast. Then, if you are engaged in *carte* over the arm, and if he comes upon you to gain his measure, force upon his blade, and give him an opening on the inside, to oblige him to thrust *carte*. When he does it, use the simple parry in *carte*, and return *carte*. If he makes the feint *une-deux*, parry with the counter in *carte*, poisoning your body somewhat backward, and throwing in a straight return. If you perceive he strengthens his body and is coming to parry your return with the simple, lose a time and disengage *carte* over the arm.

Never stretch out to your adversary; but on the contrary oppose always a parade. Don't let your eyes be fixed upon one part any more than another, by which means he can never judge what you have a mind to perform; but rather assume a bold air and study all that you want to execute. I would always advise that your aim and mind seem unsettled on all your designs, that he may not guess at them. Do not accompany your thrust with a voice, for it serves but to let your opponent know your intentions, to fatigue your stomach and to stun the spectators.

Again, it is decent and polite, whenever you hit your adversary, not to boast of it, the spectators are to be your judges. Have ambition but no malice. Such are the manners which all gentlemen ought to adopt in an assault.

You must also take care that the distance of your guard be not too wide, for I would have you make your adversary think that you are out of measure; which then you will oblige him to approach you. If your distance is too large, lose your measure; your adversary believing you are too near him, will certainly get farther, and cannot reach him. Perhaps, some will object to my not being firm, but custom will give me that firmness. And those who have seen Mr. St. George's fencing, (who is without doubt the best fencer we have) ought to have remarked that though he is of a very high size, his guard comprehends but a very little distance. By which means he is out of the other's reach, and still his adversary is within his.

Never attack your adversary but with prudence, and when you have hit him, recover directly and quickly, fixing your point to his body, so that you may always act defensively. If your adversary is not as much skilled as you, never attack him, for it is the prudence of a good fencer to bear the attack and to receive the adversary. You may not hit so often; but at the same time your adversary will not have the satisfaction of touching you, as you don't expose yourself to his thrusts.

There are many good fencers that are touched by novices; but it is their fault. They give six hits to one, that's true; but, however they receive one. But this proceeds from their imprudence only, in always attacking; they are caught by hazard rather than by address and knowledge; which proves that nothing in fencing is certain, but the art which one employs, renders it useful and agreeable. Therefore keep always and by all means on the defensive, taking care to parry well, and then you'll be almost sure to deliver the return.

If you make an attack on a person so skillful as yourself, never return to him but straight, which perform swiftly. That is the way not to spoil yourself in fencing.

When you engage the sword, take a particular care not to divide your guard. I mean, if it is in tierce, cover well the outside, so that you have nothing to fear but on the inside; and contrarily, if it is on carte, secure well the inside, that you may have the outside only to defend. For, it is incontestable that if you keep a divided guard, you will have two sides to defend instead of one.

When you step forward to gain your measure, you must never disengage, as the ancients were used to teach in their lessons. That is contrary to rules and principles. You have nothing else to do but to make yourself sure of you adversary's blade; for, you must know that as often as you quit if, you expose yourself to the time thrust, which, indeed they were not so well acquainted with as we are at present.

When you parry, hold the sword always very fast in your hand; but on the contrary, when you have a mind to make any feint, you must keep your arm flexible, and the sword easy, that you may act with more vivacity.

Don't let your adversary penetrate into your intention and conjecture your parades; this you must effect by not minding his disengages and false attacks, which are only snares to make you more so, that he may find an opening to thrust in. But keep always your point fixed against his body, keep it firm and up; and if you perceive he makes his motions too wide, deliver him quickly a time-thrust.

When you are on guard and want to attack your adversary, disengage inside and outside, in order to try what parade he is going to make use of, and then determine which thrust you may venture. If he does not oppose your attacks, make an extension of the arm and slip along his blade; managing well your body (which is the most essential point). If you find he resists, disengage quickly; if, contrarily, his arm is flexible, raise your hand and push straight carte over the arm.

When you are engaged on the outside, make an extension of the arm. If your adversary opposes your blade, and is coming to parry with the half circle, double carte inside. Take care in forming your extension lest he should throw in a time thrust, or should give a fling on your sword, or should cross it. You must keep your body poised very firm upon your legs, and be ready to parry, or deceive the parade.

On the same engagement, you may also make use of feints, as of the seconde-carte over the arm; or of the little beatings of the sword, in order to get an opening wherein you may disengage nimbly a straight thrust. You may again make the feints *une-deux* under the wrist.

On the same engagement, if you perceive your adversary is going to parry with the counter in tierce and the simple of carte, counter disengage and come again to carte over the arm. If it happens that he wants to parry with the simple in tierce, which forms two parades, throw carte inside, in lunging well the thrust in tierce to disengage under his arm.

On the same engagement, if your adversary would enter in by force with a straight thrust, raise your hand, keeping the wrist flexible, and form the parade of prime in order to return seconde.

On the same engagement, if your adversary appears to be at an uncertainty to attack you, make a rumpling with strength along his blade, which will form a disarm, or at least give you a sufficient opening to enable you to thrust straight carte over the arm.

On the same engagement, in order to lay a snare for your adversary, lean upon his sword in raising and turning your hand a little, the point low as if you were going to parry the half circle. If he deceives your parade, stop him by parrying with octave and immediately deliver your thrust straight.

If you want to lay him another snare on the same engage; disengage carte. The point somewhat low, and inclining your body a little forward, your hand in the line of direction, opposed to his sword in order to secure you from the time-thrust. If he comes to join your blade, cut carte over the arm, or cut and disengage, or cut and double, according the parades he uses, of which you art to judge at the same instant you thrust.

On the same engagement, if your adversary uses always the counter in carte, counter disengage. If he baffles your design by parrying with the simple of tierce, thrust carte inside.

When you are in measure engaged on the outside, and that your adversary disengages to seize your blade in carte inside, you must directly disengage and push a time-thrust in carte over the arm. By that you shun his sword, and your thrust becomes certain. You may also, upon his disengage, mark the feint of carte over the arm to deliver carte inside, passing your last disengage under the arm.

What I said above may be in some regard applied to the engage on the inside, if the adversary disengages, and according to his motions.

Being engaged on carte inside; if our adversary keeps his wrist low and point high, make an appel and lean a little on his blade. If you find that he forces, cut carte over the arm; if he parries with the simple of tierce and waits till you recover, in order to deliver his thrust, throw him in a thrust of the wrist, recovering quickly. You may also cut and disengage, when he comes to parry with the simple of tierce, by passing your point under his arm, at the instant he comes to the parade.

On the same engagement, if you remark that your adversary is not firm on his guard, lunge out with force and rigour a thrust in tierce, and throw seconde, or double, if he parries with the circle.

When you attack by some disengages, if your adversary parries with the counter in carte, mark the extension in holding the sword rather fast, and disengage swiftly carte over the arm. You'll certainly hit him, if he continues to parry with the counter; your extension coming so near his body, that you only them pass the hand to touch him. If he should come again to the parade with the simple, make a feint *une-deux*.

Whenever your adversary marched leaning upon your blade, disengage and thrust with vivacity either inside or outside, according to the side he is engaged. If he marches in disengaging, disengage with him and throw a time thrust as above directed, in opposing fully your sword to his. That is to say, in covering yourself well to prevent an interchanged thrust.

MASHS, SMALLSWORD CURRICULUM, NOVEMBER 2006
ATTACHMENT 2, FROM OLIVIER'S FENCING FAMILIARIZED
PART II, CHAPTER XVII

“OF THE MEASURE”

Nothing is so difficult in fencing as to know well the measure, since there are no certain rules to determine and fix it. Practice and justness of the eye must give you an idea of it. It is a must essential point; and he who neglects to learn it, is often hit in an assault.

To assure yourself of a right measure, you must pay attention to the length of the sword and the height of your adversary. Therefore keep yourself out of distance, 'till you know how far he can lunge out.

If you are engaged with a tall man, you are only to make little motions out of measure; and if he answers to them, reach nimbly the measure in order to deliver your thrust. If he parries, you must make a quick recovery.

You may, also attack him, out of measure; and after having well assured yourself of his sword by engaging it, for fear of the time-thrust, make your left foot follow and immediately deliver your thrust, to which a man of a middle size ought to accustom himself particularly, when he fences with a tall one.

You must not retreat when he marches. On the contrary, engage his sword, in order to parry the thrust he might have a mind to deliver. As for example, give him an opening to thrust carte over the arm. If he delivers that thrust, parry with the simple tierce, rather high than otherwise, and return seconde with quickness.

**MASHS, SMALLSWORD CURRICULUM, NOVEMBER 2006
ATTACHMENT 3, FENCING A LEFT HANDED FENCER**

**FROM OLIVIER'S FENCING FAMILIARIZED
PART II, CHAPTER XVIII**

“OF THE LEFT HANDED”

To defend yourself from one who fences with the left-hand, you must observe the same rules as with the right-handed. The play, at first, will become a little more puzzling, as you are but seldom used to fence with them. It may nevertheless be necessary to do it now and then; and masters ought to be attentive to accustom their scholars early to it; that, if they meet with such adversaries, the situation of the sword should not seem more strange to them on one side than on the other.

In order to attack a left-handed fencer, endeavor to engage him always on the outside of the arm, that you may perform either small strokes or glizades along his blade, to thrust under the arm.

That engagement is the most advantageous, as you may make use of the parade of the counter in carte, which is the best you can execute against him. If it does not cause a disarm, (which is almost certain) at least it gives you a sufficient opening to deliver your return.

If he holds his wrist low and the point high, make use of simple parades.

If you find he has a mind to disarm you (and that you will be able to perceive by his attempts) avoid it by stepping a little backwards; or else by keeping your arm flexible, in order to deliver a time-thrust, as soon as you loose his sword.

**FROM ANGELO'S THE SCHOOL OF FENCING
“OBSERVATIONS ON LEFT HANDED FENCERS”**

It often happens that the right handed fencer is much embarrassed in defending himself against a left handed one, occasioned by the constant habit of fencing always with right handed fencers, which gives the left handed fencer a considerable advantage. You seldom have occasion to fence with a left handed man, because the number of these is but small; and the same reason, when tow left hands meet, they are equally at a loss with one another.

To obviate this inconveniency, I am of the opinion, that a fencing master should accustom his scholars to fence with both hands; (that is to say) that when the pupil has learnt to handle his foil well with the right hand, he should be exercised with the left hand. This practice will be found hard with every body, but with a good will, and by taking pains, you may attain a degree of perfection which will be advantageous to yourself, and will do honour to him that teaches.

The master should not only use his scholars to take lessons with both hands, but should likewise use them to fence loose, called assaulting; this method would enable them to defend themselves with both hands, and they would never be at a loss against an adversary who might present himself to them in a different position than their own.

When a right handed and a left handed fencer are together, they ought to be attentive, both of them, to keep the outside of the sword; this side being the weakest, they have both of them the facility of beating, or making a glizade or press on the outside of the blade.

If the beat is given properly, it is almost impossible that the sword doth not drop out of the hand, except the adversary takes the precise time of the beat, either by disengaging, or by turning his wrist in tierce.

You must observe also, that the right handed fencer ought to thrust carte instead of tierce, to the left handed one, and tierce instead of carte; that is to say, that he ought to thrust all the outward thrust within, and the inner thrust without.

The same rules also are for the left hand to the right handed fencer; by this means the hand will always be opposed by the sword, and the body and face always be covered.