

Fencing: The Epee
Jean Joseph-Renaud, 1913
Translated by P.T. Crawley 2017



Duel of the Duke of Montmerency-Boutteville against the Count of Beuvron.
Place Royale (Era of Louis XIII)

The history of fencing with the epee is fairly short because this new fencing is, in regard to old swordplay, a sort of schism and reform dated to yesterday. There were perhaps epee fencers in 1885 or 1889 but one can however say that epee fencing has no more than twenty years of existence.

How has this come about? Several are inspired to say, “The strongest in fencing are killed or injured in the duel” and also that “On the terrain the inexperienced are the most dangerous adversaries”.

These numerous examples exert authority from these two very precise dictums. One unlikely case of trained fencers, seen as celebrities, who, unfortunately, despite their fifteen years in the salle, receive a bad blow from an ignorant adversary who pokes out in front of themselves with no importance given as to how. For a long time, these unlikely results were attributed to chance; but a moment came, always, where one begins to think that chance has perhaps too good a deal and that fencing with the foil decidedly lacks practical qualities. Certain amateurs and professors began, instead of trying, as of old, only blows to the chest, to try everywhere- since in a duel one can hit anywhere! And, instead of using a foil, they adopted the epee, then it is, not with the foil, but with the sword, a very different weapon, with which they lay on! These innovators brought about in the assault and in the duel extraordinary successes. Their ideas encountered, however, a violent resistance in the fencing world, a world which they ended up conquering almost entirely.

The epee-

The weapon always makes the fencing: the heavy epee with enormous quillions of the XVIth century is not used in the same way as the light epee

of Louis XVI!

In the same way the modern epee of the duel imposes a different fencing from that of the foil.

It is quadrangular, flexible, light, curved, furnished with a guard with a sort of very narrow double ring; the epee is triangular, relatively light, rigid, straight and is mounted with a guard like a large "shell", width of 13 or 14 centimetres, depth of 4 or 5. It is clear that the two weapons require a different handling, that is to say different fencing.

The guard-

The two arms, held in front of the body, protect according to an angle which has for a summit the tip and has sides which pass alongside the guard. The body parts which are found in the angle behind the guard cannot be reached.

We know that the angle of the epee- the cone if we wish to place ourselves in the space from the point of view of geometry - is always well extended than that of the foil. The epee will thus have far less need, in defence, to be displaced than the foil; instead of parrying by setting aside a beat of the blade from the adversary- which deranged the other from the straight line- we parry rather more by opposing the attack with our shell and the upper part of our blade *without our blade quitting the line* (fig. 1); if it quits it leaves the arm and the hand exposed, which are the parts of the body that are closest to the adversary, who can then reach them more easily by surprise and which we must thus constantly protect.

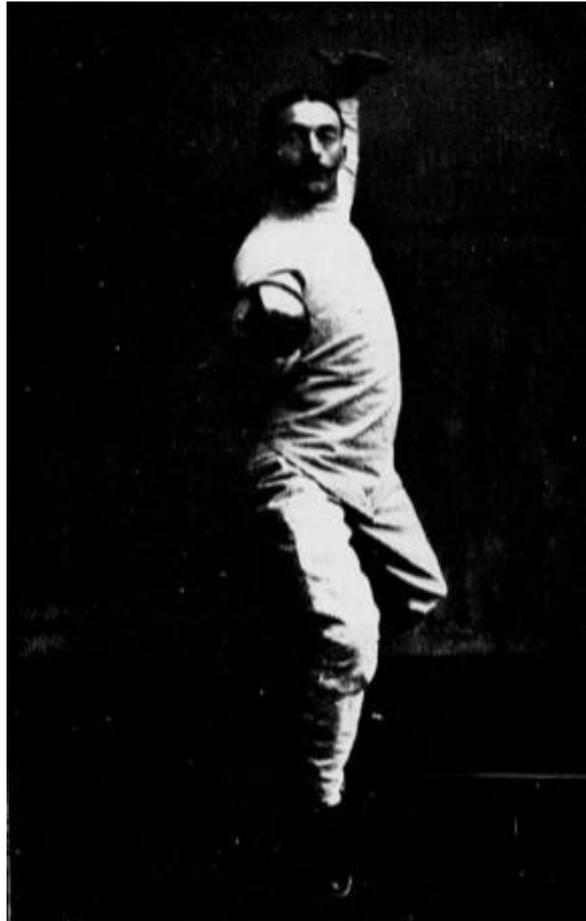


Fig.1- The epee guard. Professor Bouché

Here is already the first and considerable difference of game which we impose due to the difference in weapons: *the defensive is comprised from taking oppositions taken without quitting the line.*

The absence of conventions we impose follow another no less grand difference. With the epee one must protect the entire body and not only the chest. From here, seemingly, the necessity to parry- for example, attacks to the leg or head- to lower or raise greatly the epee; but we come to see that one must always stay *in line* under penalty of exposing the arm, hand, wrist, which are called the *advanced parts!* How is this done?

Lengthen our point by extending the arm greatly; leaving in it just enough flex that it maintains suppleness and some authority in the feints which, in epee, are applied anyway from forward actions of the torso. This very long guard, where the arm continues in an exact straight line and as horizontal as the epee itself, constitutes by itself the defence. The body is almost impossible to reach with an almost direct offence by surprise, such as with the very withdrawn guard of the foil which allows an adversary with superior speed to overcome you with the rapidity of his first attack; it is of some importance, in epee, if you have received the first attack, which you compensated “next” to your inferiority of speed with some or other tactic; on

the terrain, “next”, it is too late, and the aim of epee is to prepare for the duel! There is no other attack which counts: the first!

With this guard you cannot reach directly nor to the right of your epee (which, speaking of our orientation, is also your right), nor on top, nor underneath; the adversary who you would touch must himself take an angled line and be transfixed himself the arm or body; you will not budge, all his speed will only serve to skewer him by himself. Under pain that he can arrive, by sliding in to the left of your epee, to make a double hit. But pass your point under his blade without pressing on it, then withdraw this blade to your right, that is to say there where you cannot be injured. One calls this small action of the epee *counter-sixte* (fig.2)

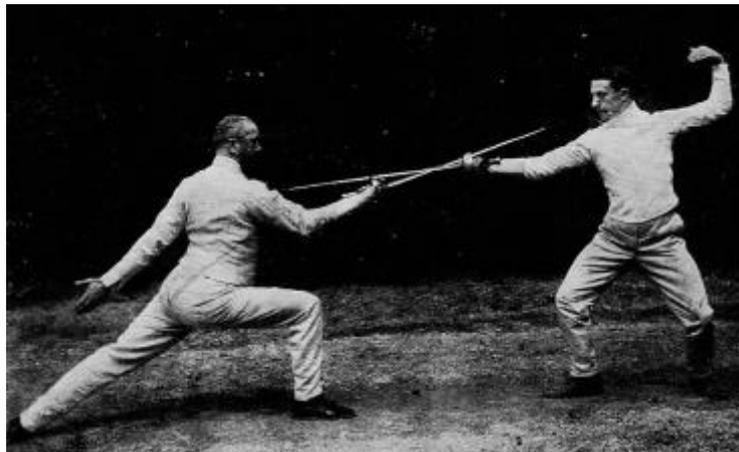


Fig.2- A parry of sixte

It is necessary that the reader of this chapter has some notion of classical fencing; if he does not possess this, then he must read with a great attention the preceding chapter THE FOIL, of master Kirchoffer.

The fencer who attacks must either impede the blade (see later) or set it aside- difficult! - the guard in question with feints, expulsions, beats etc., which lets a certain respite, unless the time of study the manner of which they are done in an affair.

Of course, lone beginners or those who feel themselves in a state of inferiority must *always* hold themselves in the guard which we have spoken of; one must consider is as an attitude of *expectation* and *observation*.

General tactics-

We have said, if the adversary wants to thrust to the face or to the upper torso by passing above the guard it is enough to extend the arm and he will skewer himself. Indeed, he takes an angled line and you a straight line. The same when he thrusts low; you have nothing more to do than extend the arm; for more safety you can then withdraw the right foot against the left foot. This action is called a *withdrawal* (fig.3).

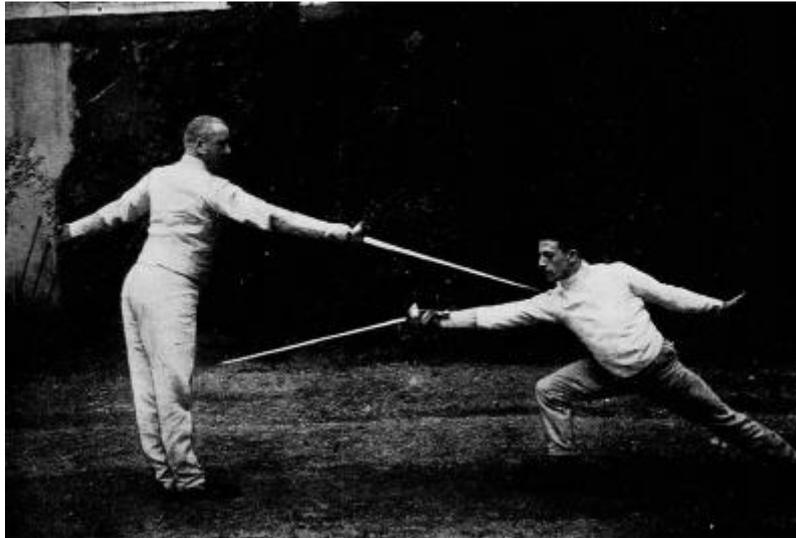


Fig.3- Stop in the high line upon a low attack, while “gathering”

It is thus a fault of the epee to thrust too low or too high if an adversary has a normal position and the indicated guard is too high. I do not advise a person to thrust low to the leg, for example, even if the adversary has his feet too far apart and too exposed and if his guard is too short it allows a frank attack. He can briskly return in line, by intention or chance, and you will skewer yourself.

But I advise an attack to the face if the head is tilted forward and the arm is too withdrawn. Note that a great number of fencers- foil fencers especially- have a fault of leaning forward. For those that do not push to return suddenly in line at the moment of your attack, I advise to begin with a brisk feint to the hand, then, without stopping, go for the face. Nevertheless, some adversaries threatened thus, quickly, to the face have the composure to return in line. Many, attacked to the leg, return there, but the attack to the face has a considerably demoralising effect.

Opposed thus, an epee blow given in a straight line has an attack given in an oblique line called “giving a stop hit” or a “stop”.

The lunge of the epee is equal to that of the foil. But it is necessary that the body always stays upright, that the face is not leaning forward. It must also be as extended as possible. In the lesson the professor must accustom his pupil to touch at distance. Of course, if he himself is afraid of sliding in a duel on the terrain, he must lunge with more reserve. But he must be capable, upon a convenient surface, to place an extended attack on the lunge. Certain masters of the epee have the mistake of only teaching the half-lunge; it is a regrettable restriction.

In foil the chest is the sole target. In epee, one thrusts everywhere. I have already said my opinion on direct attacks very high or very low.

Offensive-

Now we see the attacks to the advanced parts (hand and arm). The straight

thrust is the most frequent. If through tiredness, nervousness, bad principles or all other reason a fencer quits the guard shown in figure 1 he can be touched on the advanced parts. Often, he has the advanced parts covered on the side of your sword, but exposed on the other. Thus, the disengagement is shown. If he parries with counter-sixte make good attacks to the advanced parts, the double is a malaise, but if he raises the hand while parrying with a counter, as do all foil fencers, you can touch easily the forearm with a double underneath. The counter of quarte is trumped without difficulty by a double over the top to the forearm or arm. A one-two trump can also be performed.

To apply direct attacks to the advanced parts, the beat or expulsion in seconde and tierce followed by a straight thrust is excellent, on the condition that before he lunges one makes well to retake the hand in a position which it must be in to be covered, that is to say that it is tuned with nails on top.

As for defence I consider sixte and, also, naturally, counter-sixte as excellent to protect the advanced parts. Quarte and counter expose the forearm. Tierce exposes the inside of the arm and seconde exposes the upper part.

To attack to the body is no more difficult in epee then in foil, but completely different methods must be used. In foil one feints, and one lunges directly to the body. Indeed, in foil the attacked fencer must parry; convention makes him wrong if he extends the arm into the attack of his adversary; epee making a feint or a direct attack to the body without other preparation will risk being put immediately out of the fight by a stop hit.

One must, on my advice, to go surely to the chest, upset first strongly offend the advanced parts by a series of authoritative feints and half-attacks. If the adversary re-bends the arm in front of these he opens a path; suddenly you quit the direction of his hand and you slice the body. If, without re-bending the arm, he takes up parries, deceive these to the body or, better, deceive some of these successively to the arm, while advancing to come into measure, and, arriving at a good distance, deceive to the body.

Given equality of speed one must never finish an attack in the line of quarte. If the adversary tries, it is- at least- an assured double hit; in attacks of this type, which when thinking of foilists, you can never be covered. Even, if the extension is truly lively or if the adversary is taller than you your attack will never arrive, you alone are touched. In sixte, on the contrary, if you have the nails well on top, if you maintain your shell well to your right, a double hit is impossible.

Parries and ripostes-

Under any pretext one must not, on the remise of the guard, parry and bend the arm. The remise on guard is always a delicate time; thus, conserve the prudent position of the guard; even as required, if you doubt the riposte or

attack called “the remise of the guard”, guard while parrying with the arm fully extended.

Nevertheless, contrary to the principles of foil, parries of the epee must be taken mostly by extending the arm. Indeed, if one takes, for example, a counter of sixte while shortening the arm, one retires the tip along a path that the adversary must travel along to deceive this counter with a double inside, one opens up this path with benevolence; on the contrary, if one takes the counter while extending the arm a little, the double inside demands thus a precision and extraordinary finesse; if the adversary takes it wide, one throws at him with the point. Of course, a second counter taken with the extended arm and while advancing the shoulder can follow the first.

Try to deceive with a one-two the parry of quarte taken while extending the arm a little. You strongly risk “throwing yourself onto his blade”. For all defensive actions it is the same. I advise to only shorten the arm when parrying feints, obvious, well visible, intended to give confidence to the adversary, into which one can attack on the lunge and thus fully benefit from.

Of course, it is important to not confuse these parries on the lunge with excessive extensions, sent out blindly on little whims by inexperienced fencers. These extensions must not be taught except to beat them tomorrow or on the next again day and never done when fencing. Certainly, all that one can show him is to extend, continually, the taken part! But this rudimentary game must never be done in fencing, and it must never be successful other than against bad foilists, and again only if they are extraordinarily imprudent.

I advise as parries for attacks to the body the counter of sixte, seconde, high septime, quinte and even- contrary to certain swordsmen- the parry of quarte. Indeed, examine diagram A: A represents the attack, B the body which is placed obliquely to that; sixte or counter-sixte which tends to follow the epee in the direction b only serves thus to withdraw the attack toward the body; quarte or counter-quarte follow on the contrary usefully towards d. Each time, thus, the attack will pass the dashed line XY, it will be better to parry quarte or sixte; to parry less theoretically, I say that a well extended offense, well furnished (A), are parried most in quarte than in sixte, and that on the contrary to offences made while a little held back, short are most parried by sixte and counter-sixte, which has no less place than quarte and counter-quarte for an easy redouble to the advanced parts.

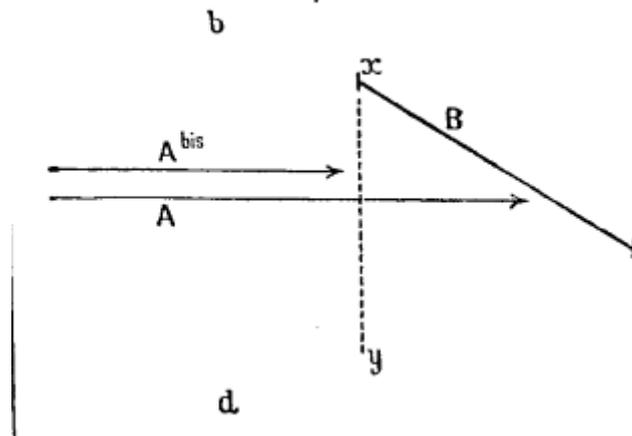


Diagram A

A serious error is the straight riposte after quarte, which exposes one strongly to a remise to the low or high. Less that the parry has not found "much blade", quarte has value on the terrain more for remises than for not being touched with ripostes. To be able to execute this riposte without risk one must that the parry is taken upon an extended attack thrust on the lunge to the fore before the foot of the attacker has touched the ground; otherwise I advise to begin a riposte direct without executing an without letting go the blade, and, if one senses the coming of a remise, the severe parry of quinte, thrust straight; if one senses a parry, quarte for example, riposte by disengaging- or with a cutover- hand well turned, nails on top, shell to the right.

After a counter-sixte, one must on the contrary riposte immediately and even, whenever possible, while binding he riposte of the parry so that the adversary does not have time to redouble by changing the line or by cramming the same line.

The parry of second must be taken by whipping, violently if one wishes, to riposte over then avoid the possible remise in the low line. One must, on the contrary, taking it lightly, while opposing circling forwards as if one wishes to riposte in the low line, - though I advise this little. Seconde is an easy parry to deceive and thus, given equal speed, it is prudent to abstain from it. Upon low attacks that are a stop hit, a simple extension of the arm while gathering (fig.3) constitutes the best defence.

I do not advise low septime as truly too easy to deceive, but often against lefthanders, the high septime can render its services to a fencer who has it well.

Tierce is an authoritative parry, easy and which does not give place for any remise. Naturally, as in all epee parries, it must be taken with the arm extended. But it dismantles a little the inside line. One must prefer sixte.

Quinte can be useful when very close- especially against remises.

Prime must be left to sabre fencers. Parry of octave only exists in treatises. Nobody uses them. Swordsmen are prevented from even thinking of trying them!

Against the extended arm-

But, you say to me, what if the adversary does not attack, forms not parries and is content to extend the arm when I take the offensive?

Certainly, it is a very simple game and very embarrassing. It allows those sort of ignorants to set out unfortunately to duels with adversaries who are far stronger than them. I mean by “unfortunately” that they injure a little or are only injured a little. Sometimes however it comes about that a violent fencer, too sure of himself, out of a want to place an attack on the lunge against one of the extenders a outrance, is himself seriously injured.

When, in a duel or assault, one has an affair with a fencer of this type one must think from the outset...so as to not risk any great matter! Indeed, this procedure is to extend the arm rigidly and excessively straightened on all out offence. All that who can reach you, it is... you are touched yourself! Thus, do not press into him!

See at first if the adversary, when you want to impede his blade, resists your hold or derobes while holding the point in line constantly.

In the first case the croisé to the flank is excellent. But it must be executed very quickly while taking the weak of the adverse epee with your strong, and gaining forward well, a bit like a straight thrust to the flank and not like a pressure following an attack (fig.4).

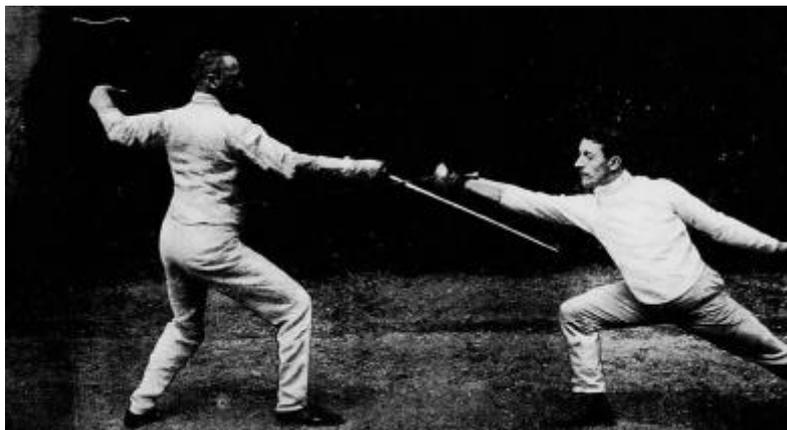


Fig.4- The croisé to the flank
(hand of the attacker remains high)

Better to tempt the adversary first! To be sure that he resists and does not derobe the point! As required, try at first to cross by taking his weak with your strong. Of course, you will not arrive, but you will see if he derobes the hand; and then the ease with which he resists your feint of a hold will give him confidence, and you will touch him better immediately when you seize his weak with your strong.

But the most frequent case, by far, is the second; the adversary derobes. Here the croisé direct is however more dangerous than professors of foil state. When you have, perhaps, place in the head than on the extended arm one must execute the croisé, and that unfortunately you, although you suspected the peril, do not resist the envy to follow sooner or later this bad advice. The adversary will cede without bending his arm, return to line his point under pain of being deviated, and you will be poked yourself in the arm or face. You will find yourself in the position of the attacked in figure 3.

Beats or straight thrusts will not acquire any result; if you make to follow our beat with an attack other than the straight thrust, you will behold again.

This game has success for fencers because it is very simple, and it requires to be to combat a complex offensive. Certainly, this complex offensive certainly penetrates it, but few fencers possesses it well again.

Swordsmen of today have all begun little or a lot as foilists, and in the foil, one never encounters the similar game where by convention you defend yourself by extending, and especially extending excessively!

Observe; the croisé, if bad as a direct attack, becomes excellent as a feint. You execute it while stepping without lunging, without fully extending the arm; and that briskly, nails underneath and stepping with large pace, while “closing in” to the adversary (fig. 5).

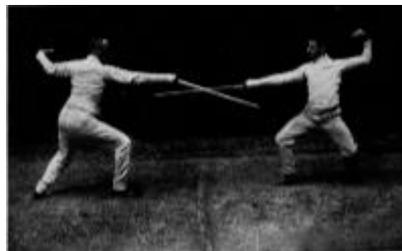


Fig.5- taking the blade upon an extended arm
1st action: feint with a bind in seconde

He, sensing your hold, returns to the high line (fig.6), but you have reserved your lunge, you are very close to him, the suddenness of your offence is disconcerting.

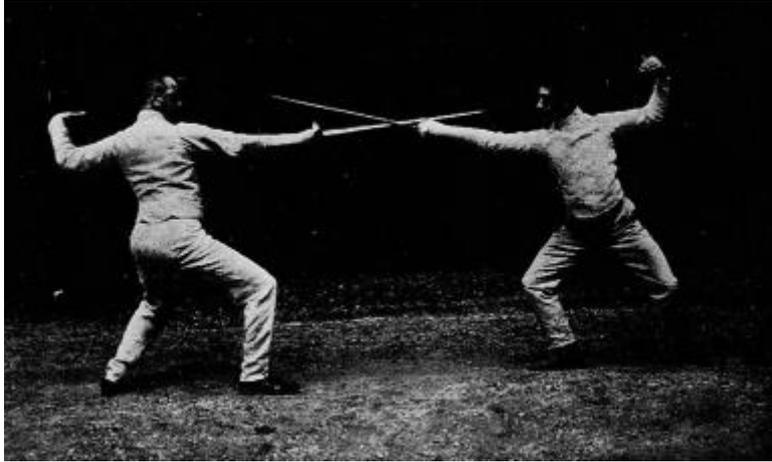


Fig.6- taking the blade upon an extended arm

2nd action: the derobement is parried with a long tierce while advancing

Some hold that you try now, it has good chance of being effective. I advise you especially sixte, straight thrust, or straight thrust in tierce (fig.7), whatever you push execute a second crois   to the flank if he derobes the first while leaning forward with his hand very high. If he derobes on the contrary with the body to the rear, perform sixte underneath or tierce underneath.

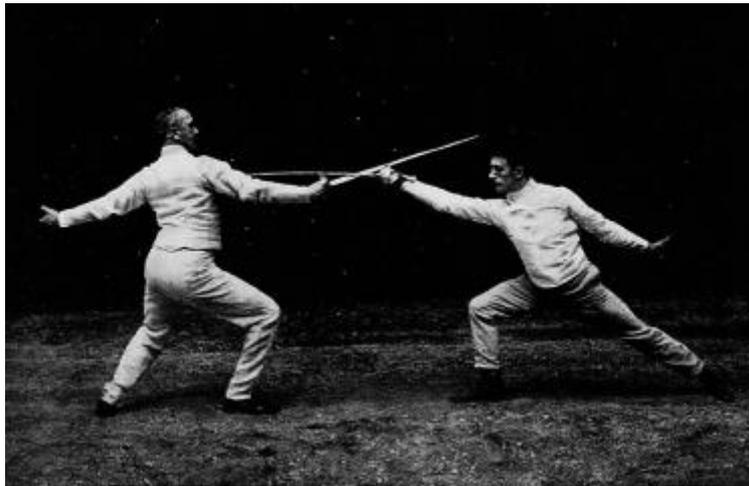


Fig.7- taking the blade upon an extended arm

3rd action: straight thrust to the body

If he is a complete expert in the derobement, if his excessively mobile points does not seem to you good to take again after a feint of a crois  , you can execute a second feint of crois  , then you take sixte or tierce, then again bind the blade making a counter of sixte or a septime enveloped, all while fully always gaining forward. Some eels will make it through the net of these successive and progressive holds.

I underline the word progressive. One must gain while taking the blade while it is deceived: a truth known to few fencers. Suppose three successive holds; each must gain on the previous since each action of attack called

one-two-three gains on that which precedes it. The third hold is executed very close; thus, only the attack which follows it- an attack which is forcibly short, delivered with a half-lunge- does not risk an extension; to avoid it, the adversary must be forced to parry- and the adversary who makes this game of extension and derobement does not how to parry.

Retreat-

I advise to not retreat other than with reserve and entirely with small steps. By recoiling one avoids, certainly, being touched, but one raises for oneself every chance of being touched. In all cases, one must only retreat just enough to not receive the attack which has surprised you, which is delivered with such regard that you sense that the parry will not be sufficient. An “all out” retreat is a useless loss of terrain and it loses opportunities to touch. Certain fencers are disconcerted by their sole science of retreating with accuracy; the attack which threatens them falls and they are however fairly close to the adversary to be able to attack them effectively upon his return to guard, or better to parry-riposte or stop hit if, thus that this is done often, he recovers forward and redoubles. This redoubling is even ordinary if large, if poorly done than a sufficient simple extension; certain fencers are specialists in this defensive method; they avoid by retreating under penalty, sometimes half a step, attacks which they judge to be well-executed and dangerous and parry-riposte, or stop hit without retreating, those who they parry too slow, wide of poorly. Nothing is nicer than an adversary who retreats with skill.

Foilists advocate the parry with a fixed foot. In the salle it is excellent that the professor trains his pupils to parry without retreating rapid attacks. And that then develops a real speed in their defence. But in a serious assault I reckon that one must blend parries with a fixed foot with parries while retreating: the mobile game which results is much more difficult to penetrate. It allows combinations without number. To place a good riposte, nothing is more practical than to parry once or twice while retreating, for example, as you gather up diverse attacks with counters of quarte while retreating; the adversary will certainly finish with a double over the top either stepping or stood still., but very much on the lunge, and this time you parry without retreating with a violent counter quarte tierce which has a certain effect, or better you take the time upon the double over. In epee, it is difficult to reach an adversary refusing to engage. Making to alternate parries stood still and retreating parries is one of the best ways to reach them.

Diverse-

The cutover is proscribed by excellent masters of the epee. Baudry, especially, does not teach it. Certainly, in front of a horizontal epee it is very dangerous. But the cases are fairly numerous where one however can use it in a riposte, notably when the adversary stays on the lunge in front of you with the point high, and each time you find yourself close to him you cannot

touch without retiring the arm backwards, without cramming. Combine with a disengage it can be excellent. You have an affair with someone who, in guard of sixte, parries quarte very low; one-two-over is indicted; but you dread going only to that place of the parry that the adversary extends...don't execute a one-two over, but a light feint of a straight thrust followed by an attack disengaging over the top; if the adversary extends, the cutover forms a parry: if he parries, his hand will "wrap up" even better. The disengaged attack, taken with the arm extended, presents the aspect of a sort of counter and presents less of a danger than one would think. Used appropriately it touches violently and without exposing the attacker.

Italian Game-

Italian fencing, such as Pini, Greco, Sartori and others, elevated to no less a level of French fencing from the point of view of the foil, does not exist in front of your actual school of the epee. The strongest masters and amateurs from Outre-Alps, hold up little in front of our swordsmen, even the mediocre ones. One cannot take the second in counter-time; our neighbours know of a miracle to provoke an extension from the adversary in order to impede the blade. But their attacks are made with a withdrawn arm and their ripostes land flat nine times out of ten- thus there are a number of duels which offer up examples. Among the attack appertaining specifically to Italian fencing I have only seen the Inquatarta which could present any advantage, and which in front of an adversary who seeks to make a double hit, who attacks violently and a little overstuffed; instead of simply extending the rod, one carries the left foot to the right while pivoting on the right foot, all while extending the arm; he will find nothing in front of him...except the point! (see fig.9)

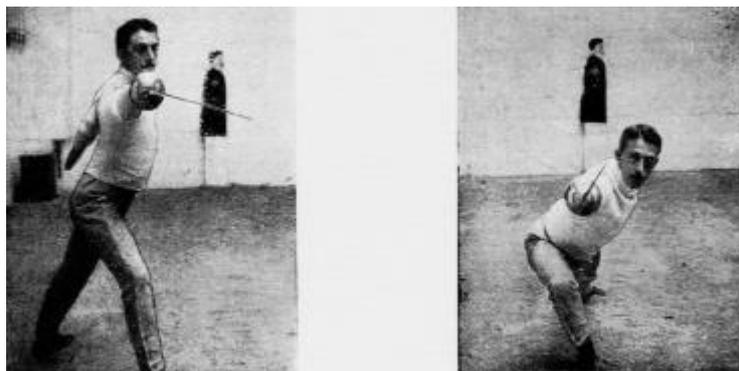


Fig.8- Inquatarta to the face

The attack thrown in the direction of the fellow placed against the wall will encounter nothing, and the attacker will skewer himself

Fig.9- Passato Sotto

The attack is thrown in the direction of the chest of the fellow, the attacker will skewer himself and his attack passes over the adversary

The Inquatarta is an attack to work on. When one possesses it well, it can be very strong in a moment of surprise. The *passato sotto* can be performed

upon an adversary who attacks with cutovers on the move, and who hides himself behind his arm, as is often done by Italians. It consists of lunging to the rear while stop-hitting in the low line (see fig.10).

Against a lefthander-

The game of the lefthander, in epee, is much less neat than in foil. That which, in the latter weapon, renders lefthanders difficult, is less their habit of encountering righthanders- of which who fence with lefthanders only exceptionally- have a difficulty in finding a way to reach the chest. Indeed, they offer their back, neck, head, arm, thigh and kidneys, even more so than right handers, but a little less the chest. And in foil only the chest is allowed! And then, they have a method of holding themselves so that all attacks skip off them; we shall see later how the epee, graced with a point d'arret, touches or does not touch but never skip off.

The tactic to use against lefthanders barely differs from ordinary tactics. But the counter of quarte allows very excellent ripostes, in the high line and even, upon well-furnished attacks, in the low line. Often anyway the counter-sixte, less good in principle against lefthanders, they strongly embarrass, because they do not have the habit of taking any other parry than counter quarte!

One must attack lefthanders almost exclusively in the upper line, to the arm, shoulder, neck, in the back, flank, face which are the parts of the body most exposed.

Taking the blade must be executed not in seconde and sixte and counter sixte but in septime, in quarte and counter quarte. Septime, half-low, can be recommendable against other adversaries, and is thus an excellent parry, solid, rapid, easy and allows good ripostes, especially in the high line; it suffices to parry nearly all the attacks to the advanced parts of lefthanders.

Competition-

In a duel it is the first hit which counts. Competition in assaults of ten minutes, or assaults of five hits, must thus be replaced with competitions with assaults of one hit. The duel is done in the open air; one wears town shoes. The competitions must be done in the open air, and the competitors are equally in town shoes. One calls these competitions "epee poules". They bring together groups of five to twelve fencers. Each one done aware of the evidence of one hit with each of the others. Double hits, which in foil are ignored or count only due to the beneficence of virtue from obscure conventions, count as a hit against both adversaries. When the poule is finished, the fencer who has received the least hits is the winner.

A tournament is comprised of a certain number of series of poules: eliminatory, preliminary and semi-finals- where one only maintains two or three winners- then the final, which gives place to a definitive placement.

Of course, the assault with unlimited number of hits or a certain number of minutes is kept as a means of training. It is even good to not abuse the assault of one hit. It requires, indeed, excessive prudence, and it is no more than an attempt, rather lacking even the attacks and combinations with which one makes progress. Also, recently, several notable swordsmen were judged as finished, constituting an abuse which had to be acted upon.

Indeed, once one never fenced without a button blow, and the best champions thus ignorant of patience, judgement, wherewithal and energy which is required in this type of assault; they paid attention even less to the first attack than that of the last, named "la belle". In these times our fencers, by an excessive reaction, have come to thrust at only one.

The epee-

All serious epee assaults are executed with a point d'arret, that is to say that the button, made as usual with a nail end, is reformed into a point- a simple carpet tack comes together in a pinch- which is exposed from 1 or 2 millimetres. Without this point the button slides on the jacket and on the mask, in a way that in a duel the naked epee never slides: it penetrates! In foil one continually announces "passes", that is to say, "non-valid" attacks which in reality passed...right into the body! The point d'arret is not to mark hits but only to prevent sliding, and even less to make even slight injuries. Without this point, I repeat, there is no serious epee assault.

Blades must also be as fairly rigid as possible; indeed, you will stop your adversary clearly, but if your blade is too soft, it bends upon their chest and, instead of holding them at a distance, it allows them to continue his attack, and the public or jury believe it to be a double hit. It is the same for ripostes; you parry quarte and riposte immediately; the adversary remises against your parry while retiring the arm; if your blade is soft one will say double hit, and if it is rigid the remise will not arrive. Fifty similar examples of this can be cited.

Clothing-

The point d'arret and the rigidity of the blades bring me round to speaking of clothing.

It must be more solid and more padded than that which serves for foil and even epee.

The mask must be resistant to the extreme and of a slim form, all in the profile. The jacket, in heavy canvas, must be padded; a detachable collar and a groin guard, also padded, usefully protect the neck and abdomen. Also padded, the glove, made rough so that it offers a little more surface to the adversary's blows. Short trousers in thick cloth, solidly doubled. Kneepads, very thick. Yes, I say that it is of little elegance and that Prieur, the Patron of fencing clothing, would prefer to see you more "chic". But this costume is solely practical; with this one can use without inconvenience

points d'arret seriously and blades that bend little, and train a useful fashion and for the good of the duel.

Training-

What are the best training procedures? It depends on the individuals, certainly; that which cures one can injure another. However, some general recommendations are possible.

I suppose that you are fencing with a view to a duel or, better, for pleasure and for your amusement: at first have a good professor. Do not attend those that demonstrate to you that which I refer to as bad, along with all the others! I do not think that; however, I overstep my rights in saying to you: choose a salle in which pupils have success in the duel and in epee competitions. Logical and simple advice! Be assured however that it suffices to restrain much and a good guide to your choice!

Now that you have a good salle, frequent there at least two or even three times a week. Begin to assault as late as possible.

I suppose that you come to a certain ability; you desire to shine in competition. You have three training methods: the lesson, the counters and the assault; I underline the counters, because this marvellous exercise is almost put aside today.

In each session, on the plastron, often and on the lunge. Then with a friend, a provost or your professor as your heart tells you, thrust the counters, that is to say that he performs against you converse attacks which you avoid with convenient parries also, and reciprocate. Do not only hold off simple attacks while stood still, but also use, and in an assiduous fashion, attacks on the move. Continually work the taking of the blade, which constitutes the side most new, the less known, the most difficult in the new fencing. Perform each exercise first slowly and harmoniously, then more and more fast, and then will all your speed.

You will find it fruitful in the exercise of the counters "with fixed foot" by performing them thus: the attacked is placed at the end of the piste, back touching he wall, and parries- without retreating, forcibly! - the attacks from his adversary, who then then next takes his place. Pini brought about this exercise; I practiced it with him often in foil and a drew from it great benefit. The wall impedes all retreats of the body to the rear and obliges you to use speed and a considerable neatness of parry.

In your salle, make study assaults, that is to say be careful lest the hit with the button than the progress. Your hand rolls badly into counter sixte, use only this parry; be careful of this batter, thus that you can have the advantage by parrying counter quarte, of little importance, it is a defeat that you will repeat. Perform well the attacks on the lunge and bad taking of the blade, look for adversaries from whom one must take their blades always extended, even if that must beat you. Be fearful of fencers of such and such

a type, never lose an opportunity to assault with them... The secret of the study assault consists of seeking out difficulty.

Do not refuse to fence in your salle. Accept every invitation to fence even though you may be lacking in what to do. Seek out the most difficulty; it helps to not be beaten and to beat others. Encounter as many fencers as possible. It is through contact with a number of different games that you will acquire personality.

In each session do not go to near fatigue. Our fathers said that one must leave the table hungry. Good, leave the salle for the changing room when you sense again you have at least one assault left in your legs. Take a good shower beforehand- cold or tepid according to your temperament. And sleep well.

Competitions are held to one hit and outdoors. Practice thus in these conditions. Almost all the good epee salles have training gardens. In all cases, if you live in Paris, are the Academy of the epee, of the Society of Epee Fencing, Arms of Combat etc., and attend all the gatherings.

The assault to one hit demands prudence, but not inactivity. I advise, at first, to stay well covered, well hidden, behind the shell in epee, and to continually upset the adversary with feints to the advanced parts, body and head. Try to annoy; if he is imprudent, he will show his imprudence immediately, such that you are on the defensive, that you wait, instead of surprising you, perhaps, when the time comes.

In all cases, you will study. See which attacks he uses- there is always one- and when you have judged it, and only then, perform with decisiveness and speed. Never risk and attack without preparation. Be wary of an adversary who exposes himself exaggeratedly in some or other line; there is a great chance that he is waiting for you with a parry-riposte, stop hit or an impedance of the blade. Certain fencers only know one attack, for example showing you their forearm, at which you thrust, to parry a violent tierce and riposte, an attack which they perform marvellously and upon which you must not throw yourself! Before lunging into their open line, thrust there with restraint, ready to parry; if nothing suspicious appears, begin again and this time "hit", but only after a few moments have passed, after having feinted several different attacks.

Hygiene-

As for a special regime there is none. Everything must be done without excess. Sleep well, rise late, eat well and, outside of practice, do not think of fencing or the tournament for which you are preparing. You will enervate yourself in advance. Especially cease all training at least four or five days before the grand event so that you arrive rested and fresh.

In the event of a duel-

In a duel fence as in the poule- and you will touch. Under no pretext change

your game on the day of the encounter. Do not have any preconceived ideas before arriving on the terrain. Especially do not hurry. You have all the time. Wait for a good occasion and do not go to, through impatience, attack blindly a circumspect adversary. The more you desire to touch strongly the more you should undoubtedly wait, especially if the adversary feels that you are superior to him. He will hold thus a defensive determination, giving no blade, offering nothing other than the advanced parts, he will perhaps sacrifice these, offering you the wrist, hand, all while holding himself ready to tender the rod if you go badly with regards to the body. Always resist, whatever your antagonist does, with the temptation to “risk all”, to touch or be touched, but it will all end! Hold fast.

I repeat that which I have said above: patience is not inactivity! Do not allow your adversary a moment's peace. Continually harry him with feints- the arm well covered- false starts, beats, withheld attacks. There are two types of tired- muscular fatigue and nervous fatigue; the latter will come quickly if it is disturbed without release.

Furthermore, when you have found a serious occasion to attack, benefit from it; and then depart on the lunge, with all your speed, and all your force. You must not be “reserved”, such that are not restrained in the moment.

Foilists, on the terrain, are completely befuddled. Well trained in the epee, you will feel “at home”. You will even find some pleasure in the future!

To finish, some gymnastic exercises that are useful for fencers.

First, and above all, there is no doubt that it is more useful for fencing to have muscles. There is a truth that Italian fencers fence with the largest bodies. Medium and heavy barbells are excellent; with two “2 kilogramme” practice all the classic actions and especially those which interest the deltoids and triceps; then with heavy barbells and “sphere weights” make to develop a little, which stiffen the deployment of the arm, and much snatch the hand in two actions; the snatch gives a decision and a concentration in the effort which is most useful in fencing; the two actions will strengthen the legs, thighs and hips. Finish with a series of flexibility exercises with light weights.

You will find in weights with the arm extended, if scandal, a force of resistance necessary to have a game well “in line”. But nothing must be done in the days which precedes a serious assault.

Jump rope is excellent. Cycling, on the contrary, is very harmful-there is nothing stopping many fencers from doing this. but they must quit it during a period of training.

If you lack force in the and, in the “pinch”, one now makes small special instruments, a sort of sprung barbell, which gives some strength over time.

You can, if the assault leaves you breathless, try to run each morning for 2 to 3 kilometres.

I do not recommend ever doing swordplay with both hands. It is the most certain means of being neither strong on the left nor the right. Do some other exercise with the left hand if you desire to “compensate”.

J. JOSEPH-RENAUD



Duel between André Gaucher- Joseph-Renaud (Parc de Princes)
A.Gaucher-- Baron d'Harcourt--Cte de Reverseaux--Joseph-Renaud



Monte Carlo Tournament (epee assault)



Duel Pini- San-Malo (Cheri Building, in Neuilly)
De Alvéar-- Pini, A. Tavernier--San-Malo

