

THE WORKS OF
GEORGE SILVER

COMPRISING

“PARADOXES OF DEFENCE”

[Printed in 1599 and now reprinted]

AND

“BREF INSTRUCTIONS VPÕ MY PRADOXES OF
DEFENCE”

[Printed for the first time from the MS. in the British Museum]

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

CYRIL G. R. MATTHEY

CAPTAIN, LONDON RIFLE BRIGADE; MEMBER OF THE LONDON FENCING CLUB; AND
MEMBRE D'HONNEUR DU CERCLE D'ESCRIME DE BRUXELLES

WITH EIGHT COLLOTYPE REPRODUCTIONS FROM THE MS. IN
THE BRITISH MUSEUM

LONDON

GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET
COVENT GARDEN

1898



INTRODUCTION.

IN 1599 a certain George Silver published a work entitled "Paradoxes of Defence, wherein is proved the true grounds of Fight to be in the short ancient weapons, and that the short Sword hath advantage of the long Sword or long Rapier. And the weakenesse and imperfection of the Rapier-fights displayed. Together with an Admonition to the noble, ancient, victorious, valiant, and most brave nation of Englishmen, to beware of false teachers of Defence, and how they forsake their own naturall fights: with a briefe commendation of the noble science or exercising of Armes. *By George Silver Gentleman.* London, Printed for Edvard Blount. 1599.", dedicated "To the Right Honorable, my Singvlar Good Lord, Robert Earle of Essex and Ewe, Earle Marshall of England, Viscount Hereford, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Bouchier and Louaine, Maister of the Queenes Maies-ties horse, & of the Ordenance, Chancellor of the Vniuersitie of Cambridge, Knight of the most noble order of the Garter, and one of her Highnesse most

in question existed, but remained unknown except to very few people up to about the year 1890, at which time it was discovered in the MS. Department of the British Museum by the late Mr. W. London. He was warned at the Museum to beware of assuming the work to be autograph, but he afterwards stated in a letter to Captain Hutton that he found "the educated but careless and corrupt spelling to be characteristic of Silver," and also that he "considered it to be the oldest English treatise on arms, with the exception of that on the two-hand sword in the Harleian MS. (3542), which dates from the fifteenth century." The "Bref Instructions" consist of thirty-four closely-written pages in very good preservation, there being but few places, and those of comparative insignificance, where the handwriting is too faded to be legible; in such cases the context, however, clearly conveys the meaning. It is interesting to note that the MS.* of the "Paradoxes" is also in the Library of the British Museum, having been purchased in 1892 at the sale of the MSS. of Edwin H. Laurence, Lot 603, at a cost of £11.

From the time that the MS. of "Bref Instructions" first became known to Mr. London he appears to have studied it with considerable care, and, although not himself a fencer, he became at once so convinced of the prac-

* MS. 47 pages. No. 34,192. "With 'Epistle Dedecatorie' (ff. 4-6) to Robert [Devereux, 2nd] Earl of Essex. Probably the actual presentation copy, &c." Vide Thimm's "Bibliography of Fencing and Duelling."

tical value to swordsmen of its contents that he made a complete transcript of it—by no means a light undertaking when the caligraphy and spelling are taken into account.

Knowing Captain Alfred Hutton by reputation as one of the most universally recognized authorities on all matters respecting the sword and its employment, it occurred to Mr. London after completing the transcript that Captain Hutton was of all others the one best qualified by his practical knowledge and experience to pronounce definitely upon the merits of the MS. He accordingly obtained an introduction, and, after some correspondence, left the transcript for perusal. This occurred in 1894. In due course it was returned, and then only Captain Hutton learned of the rather sudden death of the lender, who it appeared had some short time previously expressed a wish that the transcript might be allowed to remain in Captain Hutton's magnificent collection of fencing and duelling literature.

Thus it was, in 1895, that the "Bref Instructions," by far the more valuable part of George Silver's work, first came under my notice.

Realizing the value of this unpublished work Captain Hutton eventually extracted from Mr. London's transcript of it the material upon which he based a most interesting article in "The Indian Fencing Review" of January, 1897, on "Sword Fighting and Sword Play," constituting in itself a highly practical little work, and likely to prove of much assistance to the infantry officer

desirous of rendering himself as "handy" as possible with his sword at close quarters. More recently still, namely, on September 25, 1897, Captain Hutton gave practical illustration of the "grips" mentioned by him in that article at an exhibition of swordsmanship at the Whitton Park Club, and this display following upon the publication of his paper immediately recalled to my mind the original MS. at the British Museum. I took an early opportunity of consulting this in order to make a closer acquaintance with Silver's later and more important work, which is probably the earliest (in English, at any rate) to teach what is now considered to be the most telling and classic style of fence, viz., "Parry and Riposte."

Much impressed by what I saw and afterwards read, it struck me that a work so peculiarly English, containing so much matter of value to all swordsmen, and to infantry officers in particular, ought not to remain buried, but should rather be published for the use of those who care to read and learn. I therefore determined to complete the work so nearly finished by George Silver, by publishing his MS. of "Bref Instructions." Captain Hutton and Captain Thimm, whom I consulted on this idea, gave me every encouragement, the former most kindly placing at my disposal the transcript made by Mr. London for comparison when my own transcript was completed.

After reading the "Bref Instructions" carefully through in conjunction with the "Paradoxes," I determined to

make the work really complete, as George Silver had evidently intended it to be, by reprinting the "Paradoxes" as nearly as possible in their original form, with the "Bref Instructions" following *literatim et verbatim* in accordance with the MS., and in the same style as the "Paradoxes."

These latter alone contain much to interest the swordsman and the antiquary, but it is not so much to this portion of the work as to the "Bref Instructions" that I desire to direct attention, owing to the remarkably clear and concise manner in which much excellent and serviceable advice upon the handling of the sword is given. Taking into consideration the fact that the weapon recommended by Silver as the most serviceable nearly 300 years ago, though slightly longer and double-edged, was for all practical purposes similar, as regards the blade, to the regulation weapon of to-day, much, if not all, that he has written upon the handling of it in his time may well prove of immense service to those whose lives are at times dependent upon the more or less ready use of their swords.

The fact that so little distinction is now made between the swordsmanship of the duellist and that of the soldier must be incomprehensible to the majority of fencers who have given any consideration to the matter as thus defined. Fencing as now taught throughout Europe is made, and always has been, entirely subservient to the requirements of the duel, with all its attendant etiquette. This distinction is demonstrated by almost any work (whether of

ancient or of modern date) upon the art of sword-fencing, and it is moreover a rule to which there are few exceptions. That this distinction should exist among continental nations cannot be altogether a matter of surprise to us, seeing that the possibility, and even, in certain countries, the probability of a duel is common to both civil and military society alike, but that this method should be adopted in this country, where duelling is altogether a thing of the past, it is not quite so easy to understand.

As a means simply of promoting health, and as a recreation, fencing of the classic schools, whether French or Italian, cannot be too highly commended, and with simply such objects as these in view all the stringent etiquette of the duel and the extreme niceties of the art of fence should be strongly insisted upon in the fencing-room. It is generally admitted that the true basis of all scientific swordsmanship is foil-play—meaning thereby that a man who is fairly expert with the foil will very soon render himself equally so with the sabre; although I do not suggest that a man cannot become a good sabre fencer without the groundwork of foil-fencing—I merely say that he is invariably the better for it.

Now in all probability the only Englishmen to whom swordsmanship can ever be a matter of real necessity are officers in Her Majesty's Navy and Army, of whom it is perhaps the infantry officer rather than any other that should be considered on this account, and who in particular should be clearly instructed in the vast distinction

that exists between the sabre duel and the sabre fight, shorn of all formality and rules, as he would find it on service, whether against a savage or a civilized enemy. The method of instruction as at present authorized for his use is so closely allied to the duelling system as to be practically indistinguishable from it, and to such an extent is this true that the authority responsible for its invention and adoption has seen fit not only to neglect all instruction respecting either the attack or defence of the lower limbs, but has actually gone so far as absolutely to prohibit the attack or defence of any part of the body below the hip. From this, and from many other instances of a more or less similar nature, it is evident beyond dispute that the system and etiquette of the duel have been rigidly adhered to throughout, and this too in a text-book presumably compiled to teach *free sabre fighting*, such as would be encountered on active service. Clearly, in the place of this, a simple system should have been drawn up to teach an officer how to defend himself thoroughly, and how to attack an adversary, without puzzling him with a number of complicated parries and movements, which, even if practicable with a feather-weight duelling sabre, and in the fencing-room, become utterly impossible with the regulation sword, and in a fight of the "rough and tumble" order. Given the present infantry regulation sword of sufficient weight and strength to render it a really serviceable weapon, it would be impossible for any man to put into practice the principles which he is now

supposed to be taught. Why not, therefore, having decided upon the pattern of the regulation sword, have drawn up, or have caused to be drawn up, by one or more of our well-known swordsmen, competent from experience to judge what is really requisite for the purpose, a simple common-sense method of *sword-fighting* suitable for service requirements. This could easily be taught, and devoid of a great deal of that preliminary fencing-room drudgery that so frequently proves to be the real bar to further interest and improvement except in the case of the enthusiast—a system, in fact, of such a description that the advanced “science” of the sword is as far as possible eliminated from it, in order to make way for the simple development of individual coolness and quickness by such means as can without difficulty be practised by officers among themselves at any time.

That such a system can be drawn up, and that there are those who are thoroughly qualified to do it well, there is no doubt—the main point to be borne in mind being from the outset to dismiss all that to any unnecessary extent savours of the duelling school, and then to teach the smallest number and the simplest of parries that will protect a man *from head to foot*, and the *correct and quickest way* of delivering a cut or thrust, coupled with careful instruction in the judicious use of the left hand in defence, which is now and has long been totally ignored. So soon as an officer instructed upon such simple lines as these finds that he can always stop deliberate attacks delivered

without feints (as they might usually be expected), and can make his ripostes with tolerable hope of success, he will at once begin to acquire confidence in himself and in his sword at close quarters, and before long it is not unreasonable to believe that our officers generally would learn properly to understand, and to form a more correct estimate of the value of the weapons they wear as a fighting arm, than with certain almost rare exceptions is at present the case.

The whole matter practically then amounts to this: In order to make a man a fencer it requires an expenditure of much time, patience, and labour on the part of instructor and pupil alike. Why therefore endeavour to achieve so much which at the best can only be done in comparatively few cases, whereas far more practical results can be attained, and that in a much larger number of cases, with infinitely less trouble to all concerned? Surely, if an officer after practical experience found that he could hold his own and render a good account of himself in a hand-to-hand encounter on such lines as already suggested, is it not also reasonable to suppose that this of itself would prove sufficient incentive to him to look into the real "science" of the art of his own accord, and thus eventually to assist, though in a way unintentionally, in the re-establishment of the art of fence in this country upon an even better, and certainly upon a more justifiable basis than that upon which it exists in other countries?

To the infantry officer, then, whether he be a fencer or

not, and perhaps more especially in the latter case, I earnestly recommend a perusal and careful study of the "Bref Instructions;" for I am convinced that a great deal of what he reads therein can be put into practice in sword encounters with highly successful results, especially when they take place against men of savage or barbarian races that Her Majesty's troops are now so frequently sent to face in various quarters of the globe. To him I particularly commend the "Gryps" (cap. 6), and the ripostes that can be made from them—powerful parries, with strong, rapid, and, in the majority of cases, most unlooked-for ripostes, calculated to thoroughly surprise an adversary under almost any circumstances.

As an example: A rushing opponent delivers a sweeping downward blow at the left side of the head or neck. This is met with a high prime parry, and nothing being less likely than a feint under such circumstances, the blow can be met deliberately, or even with a forward movement of the foot, and the assailant's sword-wrist gripped firmly with the left hand under the right as his cut is checked, and almost simultaneously with the formation of the parry. The sword-point is then inclined to the rear over the left shoulder, and the pommel dashed into his face with terrific force, the way being further cleared for it by pressure downwards with the left hand upon the adversary's sword-arm. There are, of course, variations of this, and a man fairly practised in this class of close fighting would be able easily to combine all these movements

almost into a single action ; and there is, moreover, a great point in favour of this, inasmuch as it is hardly possible for any defence to be brought against a riposte of this kind in time to prove successful. The more furious and determined the onslaught the simpler and more effective the parry and riposte really become. Silver gives the "gryps" or seizures for use to meet various attacks with ripostes of this description (in many cases with the alternative of using the point), which can most effectively be made from them, and these it is which appear of such practical value as to warrant the publication of them after so many years of oblivion.

It is true that they had gone out of vogue before his time, as is shown by his statement in the "Paradoxes," that "there are now in these dayes no gripes, closes, wrestlings, striking with the hilts, daggers, or bucklers, vsed in Fence-schools," but which at the same time proves them to have been previously recognized, taught, and used, and to have simply been lost sight of as times and weapons changed.

It is sufficiently remarkable that from the very commencement Silver lays great stress upon defence ; every argument he makes use of points to the absolute necessity of this in the first instance, and it is only when in safety that he advises counter-attack or riposte.

The soundness of his views in this is amply justified by the fact that the most classic fence of the present day is admitted by schools of fence of all nations to consist of

the correctly-formed parry followed by an instantaneous riposte. He draws particular attention to the fact that for years previous to his time all had been sacrificed to attack, and that defence had been almost if not entirely neglected for the sake of attack by those who made it their business to teach the use of the sword—a fact which he justly condemns. This remains the point of primary importance throughout Silver's work, and forms the very essence of his teaching.

Much that we can read in the "Paradoxes" appears to have been, and doubtless was, written in a feeling of intense irritation against and jealousy of Saviolo (the writer on the rapier)* and his school, but the manner in which he treats his own method of defence and attack in his "Bref Instructions," as opposed to that of the Italian school of his day, clearly proves that he had thoroughly thought out the system which he advocated, and that he had reduced it to a science practically of his own creation, which is remarkable at any rate for much common sense, and in some respects, perhaps, for teaching of a unique kind. His "Bref Instructions" can be still used with great effect, almost without modification, to suit our modern sword, and it is on this account that I have brought them forward, suppressing or adding no-

* "Vincentio Saviolo. His Practise, in two bookes: the first treating of the Use of the Rapier and Dagger, the second of Honour and Honourable Quarrels. 4to, 1595. London: Printed by John Wolfe."

thing, in order to show how wide a scope they still possess for providing a powerful method of defence against all weapons, and some simple though telling ripostes for use in hand-to-hand fighting. Silver, too, fully realized the fact that the hilt or pommel of the sword (or the butt of any arm) constituted an effectively offensive portion of the weapon if properly handled. A few modern authors, who have written upon bayonet fighting, have taught the use of the rifle-butt, but Silver was, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the first writer to attach any importance to the offensive possibilities of the sword-hilt. That in it he indicates a weapon of great power, when used as an auxiliary to the point and edge at close quarters, there can be no doubt, for whereas many a man can do much damage to his opponent after being run through the body, especially if able for the moment to retain the blade in himself (and thus render his enemy momentarily powerless), few if any would be able to stand up against a back-handed blow in the face with the pommel of a regulation sword.

I suggest that sword *fighting* is not taught, and that it ought to be. Fencing should be encouraged to the utmost, but fighting should be regarded, as it was by Silver, as a distinct subject, and of much greater importance in the majority of cases.

My advice to every infantry officer is to study these grips closely, and to thoroughly master the simplicities of sword fighting, and on no account to try to persuade him-

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self that an intricate and possibly faulty duelling school will keep his skin whole in hand-to-hand fighting, unless he be already an expert fencer.

CYRIL G. R. MATTHEY.

PARADOXES OF DEFENCE,

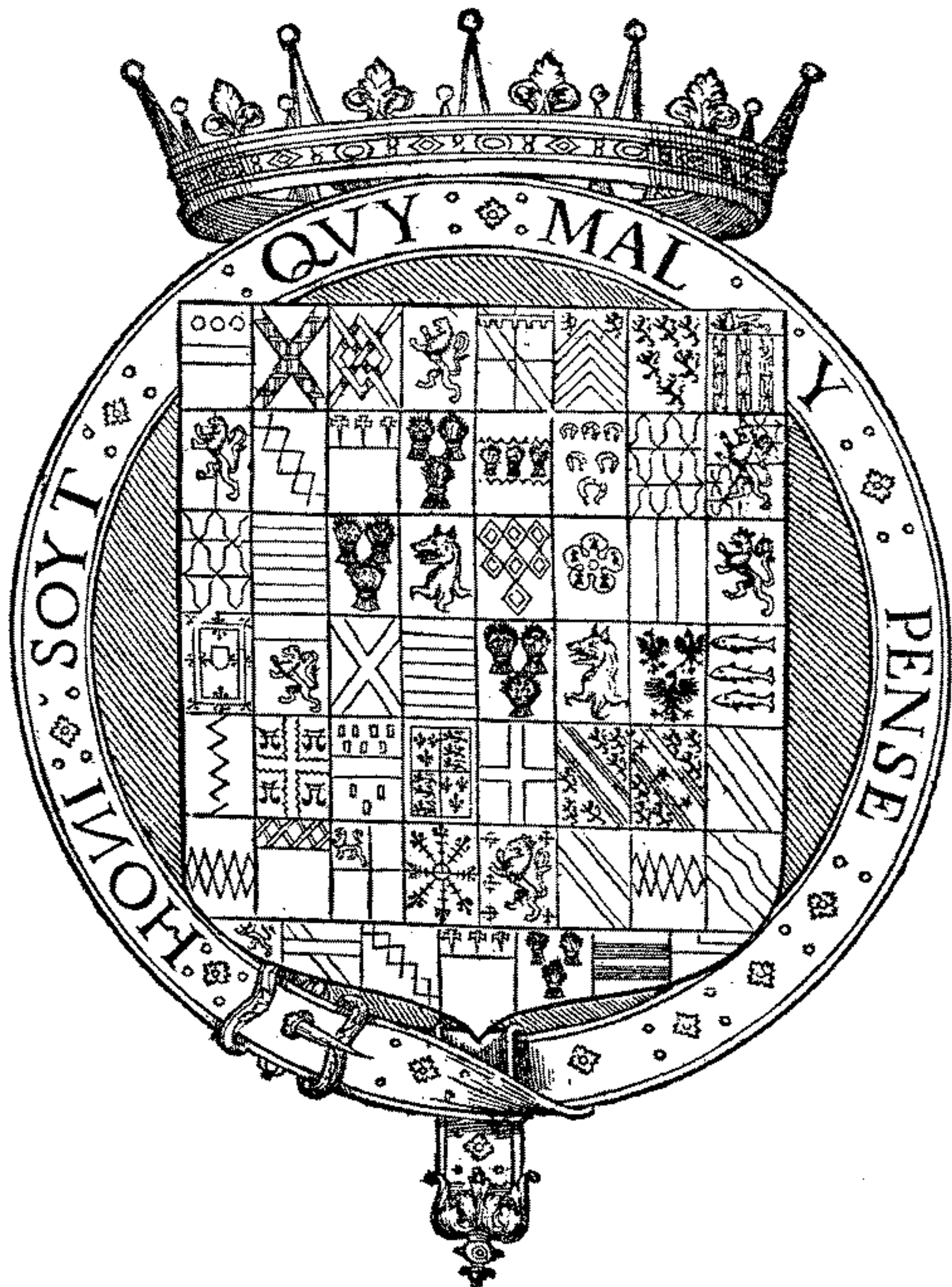
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By George Siluer Gentleman.



LONDON,
Printed for Edvard Blount.

1599.





TO THE RIGHT
HONORABLE, MY SINGVLAR
GOOD LORD, ROBERT EARLE OF
Essex and Ewe, Earle Marshall of England, Vis-
count Hereford, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Bouchier
and Louaine, Maister of the Queenes Maiesties horse, &
of the Ordenance, Chancellor of the Vniuersitie of Cam-
bridge, Knight of the most noble order of the Gar-
ter, and one of her Highnesse most ho-
norable Priuy Counsell.



FENCING (Right honorable)
in this new fangled age, is like
our fashions, euerie daye a
change, resembling the Ca-
melion, who altereth himselfe
into all colours saue white: so
Fencing changeth into all wards saue the right.
That it is so, experience teacheth vs: why it is
so, I doubt not but your wisdom doth con-
ceiue. There is nothing permanent that is not
true, what can be true that is vncertaine? how
can that be certaine, that stands vpon vncertain

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grounds? The mind of man a greedie hunter after truth, finding the seeming truth but chaunging, not alwayes one, but alwayes diuerse, forsakes the supposed, to find out the assured certaintie: and searhing euery where saue where it should, meetes with all saue what it would. VWho seekes & finds not, seekes in vaine; who seekes in vaine, must if he wil find seeke againe: and seeke he may againe and againe, yet all in vaine. VWho seekes not what he would, as he should, and where he should, as in all other things (Right honourable) so in Fencing: the mind desirous of truth, hunts after it, and hating falshood, flies from it, and therefore hauing missed it once, it assayes the second time: if then he thriues not, he tries another way: whẽ that hath failed he aduentures on the third: & if all these faile him, yet he neuer faileth to chaunge his weapon, his fight, his ward, if by any meanes he may compasse what he most affects: for because men desire to find out a true defence for themselves in their fight, therefore they seeke it diligently, nature hauing taught vs to defend our selues, and Art teaching how: and because we misse it in one way we chaunge to another. But
though

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though we often chop and change, turne and returne, from ward to ward, from fight to fight, in this vnconstant searck, yet wee neuer rest in anie, and that because we neuer find the truth: and therefore we neuer find it, because we neuer seeke it in that weapon where it may be found. For, to seeke for a true defence in an vntrue weapon, is to angle on the earth for fish, and to hunt in the sea for Hares: truth is ancient though it seeme an vpstart: our forefathers were wise, though our age account them foolish, valiant though we repute them cowardes: they found out the true defence for their bodies in short weapons by their wisdome, they defended themselves and subdued their enemies, with those weapons with their valour. And (Right honorable) if we will haue this true Defence, we must seeke it where it is, in short Swords, short Staues the halfe Pike, Partisans, Gleues, or such like weapons of perfect lēgths, not in long Swords, long Rapiers, nor frog pricking Poiniards: for if there be no certain grounds for Defence, why do they teach it? if there be, why haue they not found it? Not because it is not: to say so, were to gaine say the truth: but because it is not cer-

English maisters of defence, are profitable members in the common wealth, if they teach with ancient English weapons of true Defence, weight and conuenient length, within the compasse of the statures and strength of men to command, because it maketh them safe, bold, valiant, hardie, strong and healthfull, and victorious in the warres, seruice of their Prince, defence of their friends and countrey. But the Rapier in reason not to be taught, nor suffered to be taught, because it maketh men fearefull and vn safe in single combat, and weak, & vnseruiceable in the warres.

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taine in those weapons which they teach. To proue this, I haue set forth these my Paradoxes, different I confesse from the maine current of our outlandish teachers, but agreeing I am well assured to the truth, and tending as I hope to the honor of our English nation. The reason which moued me to aduenture so great a taske, is the desire I haue to bring the truth to light, which hath long time lyen hidden in the caue of contempt, while we like degenerate sonnes, haue forsaken our forefathers vertues with their weapons, and haue lusted like men sicke of a strange ague, after the strange vices and deuises of Italian, French and Spanish Fencers, litle remembering, that these Apish toyes could not free Rome from Brennius sacke, nor Fraunce from King Henrie the fift his conquest. To this desire to find out truth the daughter of time, begotten of Bellona, I was also moued, that by it I might remoue the great losse of our English gallants, which we daily suffer by these imperfect fights, wherein none vndertake the combat, be his cause neuer so good, his cūning neuer so much, his strength and agilitie neuer so great, but his vertue was tied to fortune : happie man, happie doale,

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doale , kill or be killed is the dreadfull issue of this diuellish imperfect fight. If that man were now aliue, which beat the Maister for the scholars fault , because he had no better instructed him , these Italian Fencers could not escape his censure , who teach vs Offence , not Defence, and to fight , as Diogenes scholars were taught to daunce, to bring their liues to an end by Art. VWas Ajax a coward because he fought with a feuen foulded Buckler, or are we mad to go naked into the field to trie our fortunes, not our vertues? VWas Achilles a run-away, who ware that well tempered armour, or are we desperat, who care for nothing but to fight, and learn like the Pimeys, to fight with bodkins, or weapons of like defence? Is it valour for a man to go naked against his enemies? why then did the Lacedemonians punish him as desperate, whom they rewarded for his valour with a Lawrell crowne? But that which is most shamefull, they teach me to butcher one another here at home in peace, wherewith they cannot hurt their enemies abroad in warre. For, your Honour well knowes, that when the battels are ioyned, and come to the charge, there is no roome for them

To this it will be objected, that in the warres we use few Rapiers or none at all, but short Swords. To that I answer: Those are insufficient also, for that they haue no

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hilt, whereby they are insufficient in their defence, and especially for the hand, which being stroken although with a verie small blow, most commonly is the losse of a man, because the force of his hand being taken from him, he is neither able to defend his life, nor greatly to offend his enemy: and againe, since the Rapier-fight hath bene taught, for lacke of practise they haue lost the use of the blow.

to drawe their Bird-spits, and when they haue them, what can they doe with them? can they pierce his Corslet with the point? can they vnlace his Helmet, vn buckle his Armour, hew a-funder their Pikes with a *Stocata*, a *reuerfa*, a *Dritta*, a *Stramason*, or other such like tēpestuous termes? no, these toyes are fit for children, not for men, for stragling boyes of the Campe, to murder poultrie, not for men of Honour to trie the battell with their foes. Thus I haue (right Honorable) for the trial of the truth, betweene the short Sword and the long Rapier, for the sauing of the liues of our English gallants, who are sent to certaine death by their vncertaine fights, & for abandoning of that mischieuous and imperfect weapon, which serues to kill our friēds in peace, but cannot much hurt our foes in warre, haue I at this time giuen forth these Paradoxes to the view of the world. And because I knowe such straunge opinions had need of stout defence, I humbly craue your Honorable protection, as one in whom the true nobility of our victorious Auncestors hath taken vp his residence. It will sute to the rest of your Honours most noble cōplements, to maintaine the defence of their weapons

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weapons whose vertues you possesse. It agrees with your Honourable disposition, to receiue with fauour what is presented with loue. It sorts with your Lordships high authority, to weigh with reason, what is fit for marshall men. It is an vsuall point of your Honor, which winnes your Lordship loue in your countrey, to defend the truth in whomsoever: and it addeth a supply to that vvhich your Lordship haue of late begun to your vnspeakeable honor and our inestimable benefite, to reduce the vvearing of swordes vwith hilts ouer the hands, to the Romane discipline; no longer then they might draw them vnder their armes, or ouer their shoulders. In all or any of these respects, I rest assured that your Lordship vwill vouchsafe to receiue vwith fauor and maintaine vwith honour these Paradoxes of mine, vvhich if they be shrouded vnder so safe a shield, I vwill not doubt but to maintaine vwith reason amongst the vwise, and proue it by practise vpon the ignorant, that there is no certaine defence in the Rapier, and that there is great aduantage in the short Sword against the long Rapier, or all maner of Rapiers in generall, of vvhich length soeuer. And that the short Staffe

Why should we leaue the hand naked, since thereby our limmes & liues are defended, our enemies discomforted, wounded, and executed? I see no reason but that the hand should be as well armed and provided for, as anie other part of the bodie.

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hath the vauntage against the long Staffe of twelue, foureteene, fixeene or eighteene foote long, or of what length foeuer. And against two men vvith their Swordes and Daggers, or two Rapiers, Poiniards & Gantlets, or each of them a case of Rapiers : vvhich vvwhether I can performe or not, I submit for triall to your Honors martiall censure , being at all times readie to make it good, in vvhat maner, and against vvhat man foeuer it shall stand vvith your Lordships good liking to appoint. And so I humbly commend this booke to your Lordships vvifedome to peruse, and your Honour to the Highest to protect in all health and happineffe novve and euer.

Your Honors in all dutie,

George Siluer.



AN ADMONITION
TO THE NOBLE, ANCIENT,
VICTORIOUS, VALIANT, AND
MOST BRAVE NATION OF
ENGLISHMEN.



George Siluer hauing the perfect knowledge of all maner of weapōs, and being experiēced in all maner of fights, thereby perceiuing the great abuses by the *Italian* Teachers of Offence done vnto them, the great errors, inconueniences, & false resolutions they haue brought them into, haue inforced me, euen of pitie of their most lamentable wounds and slaughters, & as I verily thinke it my bounden dutie, with all loue and humilitie to admonish them to take heed, how they submit themselves into the hands of *Italian* teachers of Defence, or straungers whatsoeuer; and to beware how they forsake or suspect their owne naturall fight, that they may by casting off of these Italianated, weake, fantastick, and most diuellish and imperfect fights, and by exercising of their owne ancient weapons, be restored, or atchieue vnto their natural, and most manly and victorious fight againe, the dint and force whereof manie

braue nations haue both felt and feared. Our ploughmen haue mightily preuailed against them, as also against Maisters of Defence both in Schooles and countries, that haue taken vpon thẽ to stand vpon Schoole-trickes and iugling gambolds: whereby it grew to a common speech among the countrie-men, Bring me to a Fencer, I will bring him out of his fence trickes with good downe right blowes, I will make him forget his fence trickes I will warrant him. I speake not against Maisters of Defence indeed, they are to be honoured, nor against the Science, it is noble, and in mine opiniō to be preferred next to Diuinitie; for as Diuinitie preserueth the soule from hell and the diuell, so doth this noble Science defend the bodie from wounds & slaughter. And moreouer, the exercising of weapons putteth away aches, griefes, and diseases, it increaseth strength, and sharpneth the wits, it giueth a perfect iudgement, it expelleth melancholy, cholericke and euill conceits, it keepeth a man in breath, perfect health, and long life. It is vnto him that hath the perfection thereof, a most friendly and comfortable companion when he is alone, hauing but only his weapon about him, it putteth him out of all feare, & in the warres and places of most danger it maketh him bold, hardie, and valiant.

And for as much as this noble and most mightie nation of Englishmen, of their good natures, are alwayes most louing, verie credulous, & ready to cherish & protect strāgers: yet that through their good natures they neuer more by strangers or false teachers may be deceiued, once againe I am most humbly to admonish thẽ, or such as shal find in themselues a disposition or desire to learne their weapons of them, that from henceforth as
stran-

An Admonition.

strangers shall take vpon them to come hither to teach this noble & most valiant, & victorious nation to fight, that first, before they learne of them, they cause a sufficient triall of them to be made, whether the excellencie of their skill be such as they professe or no, the triall to be very requisite & reasonable, euen such as I my selfe would be contented withall, if I should take vpon me to go in their countrey to teach their nation to fight. And this is the triall: they shall play with such weapōs as they professe to teach withall, three bouts apeece with three of the best English Maisters of Defence, & three bouts apeece with three vnskilful valiant men, and three bouts apeece with three resolute men half drunke. Then if they can defend theselues against these maisters of Defence, and hurt, and go free from the rest, then are they to be honored, cherished, and allowed for perfect good teachers, what countrey men soeuer they be: but if of anie of these they take foile, then are they imperfect in their profession, their fight is false, & they are false teachers, deceiuers and murtherers, and to be punished accordingly, yet no worse punishment vnto them I wish, then such as in their triall they shall find.

A great fauor to giue them choice of their weapons, because professors of armes ought to be skilfull with all maner of weapōs.

There are foure especiall markes to know the Italian fight is imperfect. & that the Italian teachers and setters forth of books of Defence, neuer had the perfection of the true fight.



The first marke is, they seldome fight in their owne country vnarmed, commonly in this sort, a paire of Gantlettes vpon their hands, and a good shirt of maile vpon their bodies.

The secōd marke is, that neither the Italians, nor any

2
Yet they persuade vs that the crosse of the Rapiers without hilt or gantlet is sufficient.

of their best scholars do neuer fight, but they are most cōmonly fore hurt, or one or both of them flaine.

The third marke is, they neuer teach their scholars, nor set downe in their bookes anie perfect lengthes of their weapons, without the which no man can by nature or Art against the perfect lēgth fight safe, for being too short, their times are too long, and spaces too wide for their defence, and being too long, they wilbe vpon euerie crosse that shall happen to be made, whether it be done by skil or chance, in great danger of death; because the Rapier being too long, the crosse cannot be vndone in due time, but may be done by going backe with the fecte; but that time is alwaies too long to answere the time of the hand, therefore euery man ought to haue a weapon according to his owne stature: the tall man must haue his weapon longer then the man of meane stature, or else he hath wrong in his defence, & the man of meane stature must haue his weapon longer then the man of smal stature, or else he hath wrong in his defence; & the man of smal stature must beware that he feed not himself with this vaine cōcept, that he wil haue his weapon long, to reach as farre as the tall man, for therin he shal haue great disaduantage, both in making of a strong crosse, and also in vncrossing againe, and in keeping his point from crossing, and when a crosse is made vpon him, to defend himself, or indanger his enemy, or to redeeme his lost times. Againe Rapiers longer, then is conuenient to accord with the true statures of men, are alwaies too long or too heauie to keepe their bodies in due time from the crosse of the light short sword of perfect length, the which being made by the skilfull out of any of the foure true times, vpon any of the foure chiefe

Actions, by reason of the vncertaintie & great swiftnesse in any of these times, they are in great danger of a blow, or of a thrust in the hand, arme, head, body, or face, & in euerie true crosse in the vncrossing, in great danger of a blow vpon the head, or a full thrust in the bodie or face: and being taken in that time & place, the first mouer in vncrossing speedeth the Rapier man of imperfect lēgth, whether it be too long, too short or too heauie, and goeth free himselfe by the direction of his gouernours.

The fourth marke is, the crosses of their Rapiers for true defence of their hands are imperfect, for the true cariage of the guardant fight, without the which all fights are imperfect.

Of sixe chiefe causes, that many valiant men thinking themselves by their practises to be skilfull in their weapons, are yet manie times in their fight sore hurt, and manie times slaine by men of small skill, or none at all.

He first and chiefe cause is, the lacke of the 3
foure Gouernours, without the which it is
impossible to fight safe, although a man
should practise most painfully and most di-
ligently all the daies of his life.

The second cause is, the lacke of knowledge in the due obseruance of the foure Actions, the which we cal bent, spent, lying spent, and drawing backe: these Actions euerie man fighteth vpon, whether they be skilfull or vn-skilfull, he that obserueth them is safe, he that obserueth thē not, is in cōtinuall danger of euerie thrust that shalbe strongly made against him.

The third cause is, they are vnpractised in the foure true times, neither do they know the true times frō the false: therefore the true choise of their times are most commonly taken by chance, and seldome otherwise.

The fourth cause is, they are vnacquainted out of what fight, or in what maner they are to answer the variable fight: and therefore because the variable fight is the most easiest fight of all other, most cōmonly do answer the variable fight with the variable fight, which ought neuer to be but in the first distance, or with the short Sword against the long, because if both or one of them shall happen to prese, and that in due time of neither side fight be changed, the distance, by reason of narrownessse of space, is broken, the place is won and lost of both sides, then he that thrusteth first, speedeth: if both happen to thrust together, they are both in dāger. These things sometimes by true times, by change of fights, by chance are auoided.

The fift cause is, their weapons are most commonly too long to vncrosse without going backe with the feet.

The sixt cause is, their weapons are most commonly too heauie both to defend and offend in due time, & by these two last causes many valiāt mē haue lost their liues.

*What is the cause that wise men in learning or practising
their weapons, are deceiued with
Italian Fencers.*

There are foure causes: the first, their schoolmaisters are imperfect: the second is, that whatsoever they teach, is both true & false; true in their demōstrations, according with their force & time in gētle play, & in their actions

*fight perfect
it is not done in
ce & true
'e.*

actions according with true force & time in rough play or fight, false: for exāple, there is as much difference betwixt these two kind of fights, as there is betwixt the true picture of Sir *Beuis* of *Southampton*, & Sir *Beuish* himself, if he were liuing. The third, none cā iudge of the Craft but the Crafts-man; the vnskilfull, be he neuer so wise, can not truly iudge of his teacher, or skill, the which he learneth, being vnskilful himselfe. Lastly, & to confirme for truth all that shal be amisse, not only in this excellēt Science of Defence, but in all other excellent secrets, most commonly the lye beareth as good a shew of truth, as truth it selfe.

Of the false resolutions and vaine opinions of Rapier-men, and of the danger of death thereby ensuing.

IT is a great question, & especially amōgst ⁴ the Rapier-men, who hath the vantage of the thruster, or of the warder. Some hold strongly, that the warder hath the vantage: others say, it is most certain that the thruster hath the vantage. Now when two do happē to fight, being both of one mind, that the thruster hath the vantage, they make all shift they can, who shall giue the first thrust: as for example, two Captaines at *Southampton* euen as they were going to take shipping vpon the key, fel at strife, drew their Rapiers, and presently, being desperate, hardie or resolute, as they call it, with all force and ouer great speed, ran with their rapiers one at the other, & were both slaine. Now when two of the contrary opinion shall meet and fight, you shall see verie peaceable warres betweene them: for they verily thinke that he

that first thrusteth is in great danger of his life, therefore with all speede do put themselues in ward, or *Stocata*, the surest gard of all other, as *Vincentio* saith, and therevpon they stand sure, saying the one to the other, thrust and thou dare; and saith the other, thrust and thou dare, or strike or thrust and thou dare, saith the other: then saith the other, strike or thrust and thou dare for thy life. These two cunning gentlemen standing long time together, vpon this worthie ward, they both depart in peace, according to the old prouerbe: It is good sleeping in a whole skinne. Againe if two shall fight, the one of opinion, that he that thrusteth hath the vantage, and the other of opinion, that the warder hath the vantage, then most commonly the thruster being valiant, with all speed thrusteth home, and by reason of the time and swift motion of his hand, they are most commonly with the points of their rapiers, or daggers, or both, one or both of them hurt or slaine; because their spaces of defence in that kind of fight, are too wide in due time to defend, and the place being wonne, the eye of the Patient by the swift motion of the Agents hand, is deceiued. Another resolution they stand sure vpon for their liues, to kill their enemies, in the which they are most commonly slaine themselues: that is this: When they find the point of their enemies rapier out of the right line, they say, they may boldly make home a thrust with a *Passata*, the which they obserue, and do accordingly: but the other hauing a shorter time with his hand, as nature manie times teacheth him, sodainly turneth his wrist, whereby he meeteth the other in his passage iust with the point of his rapier in the face or body. And this false resolution hath cost manie a life.


That

That the cause that manie are so often slaine, and manie sore hurt in fight with long Rapiers is not by reason of their dangerous thrusts, nor cunningnesse of that Italienated fight, but in the length and vnweildinesse thereof.




T is most certaine, that men may with short swords both strike, thrust, false and double, by reason of their distance and nimblenesse thereof, more dangerously then they can with long Rapiers: and yet when two fight with short swordes, hauing true fight, there is no hurt done: neither is it possible in anie reason, that anie hurt should be done betwixt them of either side, and this is well knowne to all such as haue the perfection of true fight. By this it plainely appeareth, that the cause of the great slaughter, and fundrie hurts done by long Rapiers, consisteth not in long Reach, dangerous thrustes, nor cunningnesse of the Italian fight, but in the inconuenient length, and vnweildinesse of their long Rapiers: whereby it commonly falleth out, that in all their Actions appertaining to their defence, they are vnable, in due time to performe, and continually in danger of euerie crosse, that shall happen to be made with their rapier blades, which being done, within the halfe rapier; (vnlesse both be of one mind with all speed to depart, which seldome or neuer happneth betweene men of valiant disposition,) it is impossible to vncrosse, or get out, or to auoid the stabbes of the Daggers. And this hath falne out manie times amongst valiant men at those weapons.

Of running and standing fast in Rapier fight, the runner hath the vantage.

6  F two valiant men do fight being both cunning in running, & that they both vse the same at one instant, their course is doubled, the place is wonne of both sides, and one or both of them will commonly be slaine or sore hurt: and if one of them shall runne, and the other stand fast vpon the *Imbrocata* or *Stocata*, or howsoeuer, the place wilbe at one instant wonne of one side, and gained of the other, and one or both of them wilbe hurt or slaine: if both shall prese hard vpon the guard, he that first thrusteth home in true place, hurteth the other: & if both thrust together, they are both hurt: yet some vantage the runner hath, because he is an vncertaine marke, and in his motion: the other is a certaine marke, and in a dead motion: and by reason thereof manie times the vnskilfull man taketh vantage he knoweth not how, against him that lyeth watching vpon his ward or *Stocata* guard.

Of striking and thrusting both together.

7  It is strongly holden of manie, that if in fight they find their enemy to haue more skill then themselues, they presently will continually strike, & thrust iust with him, whereby they will make their fight as good as his, and thereby haue as good aduantage as the other with all his skill: but if their swordes be longer then the other, then their aduantage is great; for it is
certaine

certaine (say they) that an inch will kill a man: but if their swordes be much longer then the other, then their aduantage is so great, that they wilbe sure by thrusting and striking iust with the other, that they will alwaies hurt him that hath the short sword, and go cleare themselves, because they will reach him, when he shall not reach them. These men speake like such as talke of Robin Hoode, that neuer shot in his bow; for to strike or thrust iust together with a man of skill, lyeth not in the will of the ignorant, because the skilfull man alwaies fighteth vpon the true times, by the which the vnskilfull is still disappointed of both place and time, and therefore driuen of necessitie still to watch the other, when & what he will doe; that is, whether he will strike, thrust, or false: if the vnskilfull strike or thrust in the time of falsing, therein he neither striketh nor thrusteth iust with the other: he may saie, he hath stroke or thrust before him, but not iust with him, nor to anie good purpose; for in the time of falsing, if he strike or thrust, he striketh or thrusteth too short: for in that time he hath neither time nor place to strike home, and as it is said, the vnskilfull man, that will take vpon him to strike or thrust iust with the skilfull, must first behold what the man of skil will doe, and when he will doe it, and therefore of necessitie is driuen to suffer the skilfull man to be the first mouer, and entred into his Action, whether it be blow or thrust, the truth therof in reason cannot be denied. Now iudge whether it be possible for an vnskilfull man to strike or thrust iust together with a man of skill; but the skilfull man can most certainly strike and thrust iust together with the vnskilfull, because the vnskilfull fighteth vpon false times, which being too long

to answer the true times, the skilfull fighting vpon the true times, although the vnskilfull be the first mouer, & entred into his Action, whether it be blow or thrust; yet the shortnesse of the true times maketh at the pleasure of the skilfull a iust meeting together: in perfect fight two neuer strike or thrust together, because they neuer suffer place nor time to performe it.

Two vnskilfull men manie times by chance strike and thurst together, chance vnto them, because they know not what they doe, or how it commeth to passe: but the reasons or causes be these. Sometimes two false times meet & make a iust time together, & sometimes a true time and a false time meeteth and maketh a iust time together, and sometimes two true times meet and make a iust time together. And all this hapneth because the true time and place is vnknowne vnto them.


George Siluer his resolution vpon that hidden or doubtful question, who hath the aduantage of the Offender or Defender.



he aduantage is strongly holden of many to be in the offender, yea in somuch, that if two minding to offend in their fight, it is thought to be in him that first striketh or thursteth. Others strongly hold opinion that the wardr absolutely hath still the aduantage, but these opinions as they are contrary the one to the other: so are they contrarie to true fight, as may well be seene by these short examples. If the aduantage be in the warder, then it is not good anie time to strike or thrust: if the aduantage be in the striker or thruster, then were it a friuolous

a friuolous thing to learne to ward, or at anie time to seeke to ward, since in warding lieth disadvantage. Now may it plainly by these examples appeare, that if there be anie perfection in fight, that both sides are deceiued in their opinions, because if the striker or thruster haue the aduantage, then is the warder still in danger of wounds or death. And againe, if the warder hath the aduantage, then is the striker or thruster in as great daunger to defend himselfe against the warder, because the warder from his wards, taketh aduantage of the striker or thruster vpon euerie blow or thrust, that shall be made against him. Then thus I conclude, that if there be perfection in the Science of Defence, they are all in their opinons deceiued; and that the truth may appeare for the satisfaction of all men, this is my resolution: there is no aduantage absolutely, nor disadvantage in striker, thruster, or warder: and there is a great aduantage in the striker thruster & warder: but in this maner, in the perfection of fight the aduantage consisteth in fight betweene partie and partie: that is, whofoeuer winneth or gaineth the place in true pace, space and time, hath the aduantage, whether he be striker, thruster or warder. And that is my resolution.

Of Spanish fight vvith the Rapier.

 He *Spaniard* is now thought to be a better man with his Rapier then is the Italian, Frenchman, high Almaine, or anie other countrie man whatsoeuer, because they in their Rapier-fight stand vpon so manie intricate trickes,

that in all the course of a mans life it shall be hard to learne them, and if they misse in doing the least of them in their fight, they are in danger of death. But the *Spaniard* in his fight, both safely to defend himselfe, and to endanger his enemie, hath but one onely lying, and two wards to learne, wherein a man with small practise in a verie short time may become perfect.

This is the maner of Spanish fight, they stand as braue as they can with their bodies straight vpright, narrow spaced, with their feet continually mouing, as if they were in a dance, holding forth their armes and Rapiers verie straight against the face or bodies of their enemies: & this is the only lying to accomplish that kind of fight. And this note, that as long as any man shall lie in that maner with his arme, and point of his Rapier straight, it shall be impossible for his aduersarie to hurt him, because in that straight holding forth of his arme, which way soeuer a blow shall be made against him, by reason that his Rapier hilt lyeth so farre before him, he hath but a verie litle way to moue, to make his ward perfect, in this maner. If a blow be made at the right side of the head, a verie litle mouing of the hand with the knuckles vpward defendeth that side of the head or bodie, and the point being still out straight, greatly endangereth the striker: and so likewise, if a blow be made at the left side of the head, a verie small turning of the wrist with the knuckles downward, defendeth that side of the head and bodie, and the point of the Rapier much indangereth the hand, arme, face or bodie of the striker: and if anie thrust be made, the wards, by reason of the indirections in mouing the feet in maner of dauncing, as aforesaid, maketh a perfect ward, and still withall the
point

point greatly endangereth the other. And thus is the Spanish fight perfect: so long as you can keepe that order, and soone learned, and therefore to be accounted the best fight with the Rapier of all other. But note how this Spanish fight is perfect, and you shall see no longer then you can keepe your point straight against your aduersarie: as for example, I haue heard the like iest.

There was a cunning Doctor at his first going to sea, being doubtfull that he should be sea-sicke, an old woman perceiuing the same, said vnto him: Sir, I pray, be of good comfort, I will teach you a tricke to auoid that doubt; here is a fine pibble stone, if you please to accept it, take it with you, and when you be on ship-bord, put it in your mouth, and as long as you shall keepe the same in your mouth, vpon my credit you shall neuer vomit: the Doctor beleeued her, and tooke it thankfully at her hands, and when he was at sea, he began to be sicke, whereupon he presently put the stone in his mouth, & there kept it so long as he possibly could, but through his extreme sicknesse the stone with vomit was cast out of his mouth: then presently he remēbred how the woman had mocked him, and yet her words were true.

Euen so a *Spaniard* hauing his Rapier point put by, may receiue a blow on the head, or a cut ouer the face, hand, or arme, or a thrust in the body or face, and yet his Spanish fight perfect, so long as he can keepe straight the point of his Rapier against the face or body of his aduersarie: which is as easie in that maner of fight to be done, as it was for the Doctor in the extremity of his vomite to keepe the stone in his mouth.

Yet one other pretie iest more, scarce worth the rea-

ding, in commendation of outlandish fight. There was an *Italian* teacher of Defence in my time, who was so excellent in his fight, that he would haue hit anie English man with a thrust, iust vpon any button in his doublet, and this was much spoken of.

Also there was another cunning man in catching of wildgeese, he would haue made no more ado, when he had heard them crie, as the maner of wildgeese is, flying one after another in rowes, but presently looking vp, would tell them, if there had bene a dosen, sixteene, twētie, or more, he would haue taken euerie one. And this tale was manie times told by men of good credit, and much maruelled at by the hearers: & the man that wold haue taken the wildgeese, was of good credite himselve: marie they said, indeed he did neuer take anie, but at anie time when he had looked vp, and seene them flie in that maner, he would with all his heart haue taken thē, but he could no more tell how to do it, then could the cunning *Italian* Fencer tell how to hit an Englishman, with a thrust iust vpon any one of his buttons, when he listed.

Illusions for the maintenance of imperfect weapons & false fights, to feare or discourage the unskilfull in their weapons, from taking a true course or vse, for attaining to the perfect knowledge of true fight.

10 **F**irst, for the Rapier (saith the *Italian*, or false teacher) I hold it to be a perfect good weapon, because the crosse hindreth not to hold the handle in the hand, to thrust both far & straight, & to vse all maner of aduantages in the wards,

or sodainly to cast the same at the aduersarie, but with the Sword you are driuen with all the strength of the hand to hold fast the handle. And in the warres I would wish no friend of mine to weare Swords with hilts, because when they are sodainly set vpon, for haste they set their hands vpon their hilts in steed of their handles: in which time it hapneth manie times before they can draw their swords, they are flaine by their enemies. And for Sword and Buckler fight, it is imperfect, because the buckler blindeth the fight, neither would I haue anie man lie aloft with his hand aboue his head, to strike found blowes. Strong blowes are naught, especially being fet aboue the head, because therein all the face and bodie is discouered. Yet I confesse, in old times, when blowes were only vsed with short Swords & Bucklers, & back Sword, these kind of fights were good & most manly, but now in these daies fight is altered. Rapiers are longer for aduantage thē swords were wōt to be: whē blowes were vsed, men were so simple in their fight, that they thought him to be a coward, that wold make a thrust or strike a blow beneath the girdle. Againe, if their weapons were short, as in times past they were, yet fight is better looked into in these dayes, than then it was. Who is it in these daies seeth not that the blow cōpasseth round like a wheele, whereby it hath a longer way to go, but the thrust passeth in a straight line, and therefore commeth a nearer way, and done in a shorter time thē is the blow, and is more deadly then is the blow? Therefore there is no wise man that will strike, vnlesse he be wearie of his life. It is certaine, that the point for aduantage euerie way in fight is to be vsed, the blow is vtterly naught, and not to be vsed. He that fighteth vpon the

These counterfeit shews are enough to cary the wisest that know not the true fight frō the false, out of the right way.

And if their weapons were short, as in times past they were, yet they could not thrust safe at body or face, because in gardant fight they fall ouer, or vnder the perfect crosse of the sword & to strike beneath the waste, or at the legges, is great disadvantage, because the course of the blow to the legs is too far, & therby the head, face, & body is discouered: and that was the cause in old time, that they did not thrust nor strike at the legs, & not for lacke of skill,

*as in these daies
we imagine. A-
gaine, if a man
in those daies
shold haue fought
with a long
sword, they would
presently haue
put him into
Gobbes Trauers.*

blow especially with a short sword, wilbe fore hurt or slaine. The deuill can say no more for the maintenance of errors.

*That a blow commeth continually as neare a way as a thrust,
and most commonly nearer, stronger,
more swifter, and is sooner
done.*

*I I
A confutation
of their errours.*

THe blow, by reason that it compasseth round like a wheele, whereby it hath a longer way to come, as the Italian Fenser saith, & that the thrust passing in a straight line, commeth a nearer way, and therefore is sooner done then a blow, is not true: these be the proofes.

Let two lie in their perfect strengths and readinesse, wherein the blades of their Rapiers by the motion of the body, may not be crossed of either side, the one to strike, and the other to thrust. Then measure the distance or course wherein the hand and hilt passeth to finish the blow of the one, and the thrust of the other, and you shall find them both by measure, in distance all one. And let anie man of iudgement being seene in the exercise of weapons, not being more addicted vnto nouelties of fight, then vnto truth it selfe, put in measure, and practise these three fights, variable, open, and guardant, and he shall see, that whensoever anie man lyeth at the thrust vpon the variable fight, (where of necessitie most commonly he lyeth, or otherwise not possible to keepe his Rapier from crossing at the blow & thrust, vpon the open or gardant fight,) that the blowes & thrustes from these two fightes, come a nearer way, and a more stronger

stronger and swifter course then doth the thrust, out of the variable fight. And thus for a generall rule, wherefoever the Thruster lyeth, or out of what fight soever he fighteth, with his Rapier, or Rapier and Dagger, the blow in his course commeth as neare, and nearer, and more swift and stronger then doth the thrust.

Perfect fight standeth vpon both blow and thrust, therefore the thrust is not onely to be vsed.


THat there is no fight perfect without both 12
blow and thrust: neither is there anie certaine rule to be set downe for the vse of the point onely, these be the reasons: In fight there are manie motions, with the hand, bodie, and feet, and in euerie motion the place of the hand is altered, & because by the motions of the hand, the altering of the places of the hand, the changes of lyings, wards, and breaking of thrustes, the hand will sometimes be in place to strike, some times to thrust, sometimes after a blow to thrust, and sometimes after a thrust to strike, & sometimes in place where you may strike, and cannot thrust without losse of time, and sometimes in place where you may thrust, and cannot strike without losse of time, and sometimes in place where you can neither strike nor thrust, vnlesse you fight vpon both blow and thrust, nor able to defend your selfe by ward or going backe, because your space wilbe too wide, and your distance lost. And sometimes when you haue made a thrust, a ward or breaking is taken in such sort with the Dagger or blade of the Sword, that you cã neither thrust againe, nor defend your selfe vnlesse you do strike, which

*This in truth
cannot be denied.*

you may foundly doe, and go free, and sometimes when you strike, a ward wilbetaken in such fort, that you cannot strike againe, nor defend your selfe, vnlesse you thrust, which you may safely doe and goe free. So to conclude, there is no perfection in the true fight, without both blow and thrust, nor certaine rule to be set downe for the point onely.

That the blow is more dangerous and deadly in fight, then a thrust, for prooffe thereof to be made according with Art, an Englishman holdeth argument against an Italian.

Italian.

13  Hich is more dangerous or deadly in fight of a blow or a thrust?

Englishman.

This question is not propounded according to art, because there is no fight perfect without both blow and thrust.

Italian.

Let it be so, yet opinions are otherwise holden, that the thrust is onely to be vsed, because it commeth a nearer way, and is more dangerous and deadly, for these reasons: first the blow compasseth round like a wheele, but the thrust passeth in a straight line, therefore the blow by reason of the compasse, hath a longer way to go then the thrust, & is therefore longer in doing, but the thrust passeth in a straight line, therefore hath shorter way to go thē hath the blow, & is therefore done in a shorter time, & is therefore much better then the blow, & more dangerous and deadly, because if a thrust do hit the face or bodie, it indangereth life, and most commonly death ensueth: but if the blow hit the bodie, it is not so dangerous.

Englishman.

Englishman.

Let your opiniōs be what they wil, but that the thrust cōmeth a nearer way, & is sooner done then the blow, is not true: & for prooffe thereof reade the twelfth Paradox. And now will I set downe probable reasons, that the blow is better then the thrust, and more dangerous and deadly. First, the blow commeth as neare a way, & most cōmonly nearer then doth the thrust, & is therefore done in a shorter time then is the thrust: therefore in respect of time, wherupon stādeth the perfection of fight, the blow is much better then the thrust. Againe, the force of the thrust passeth straight, therefore any crosse being indirectly made, the force of a child may put it by: but the force of a blow passeth indirectly, therefore must be directly warded in the counterchecke of his force: which cānot be done but by the cōuenient strength of a man, & with true crosse in true time, or else will not safely defend him: and is therefore much better, & more dāgerous thē the thrust, and againe, the thrust being made through the hand, arme, or leg, or in many places of the body and face, are not deadly, neither are they maimes, or losse of limes or life, neither is he much hindred for the time in his fight, as long as the bloud is hot: for example.

The blow more dangerous then the thrust.

I haue knowne a Gētle mā hurt in Rapier fight, in nine or ten places through the bodie, armes, and legges, and yet hath continued in his fight, & afterward hath slaine the other, and come home and hath bene cured of all his woūds without maime, & is yet liuing. But the blow being strōgly made, taketh somtimes cleane away the hand from the arme, hath manie times bene seene. Againe, a full blow vpon the head or face with a short sharpe Sword, is most commonly death. A full blow vpon the

The blow cutteth off the hand, the arme, the leg, and sometimes the head.

necke, shoulder, arme, or legge, indangereth life, cutteth off the veines, muscles, and sinewes, perisheth the bones: these wounds made by the blow, in respect of perfect healing, are the losse of limmes, or maimes incurable for euer.

And yet more for the blow: a ful blow vpon the head, face, arme, leg, or legs, is death, or the partie so wounded in the mercie of him that shall so wound him. For what man shall be able long in fight to stand vp, either to reuenge, or defend himselfe, hauing the veines, muscles, and sinewes of his hand, arme, or leg cleane cut asunder? or being dismembred by such wound vpon the face or head, but shall be enforced therby, and through the losse of bloud, the other a litle dallying with him, to yeeld himself, or leaue his life in his mercie?

He that giueth the first wound with a strong blow, commaundeth the life of the other.

And for plainer deciding this cōtrouerfie betweene the blow and the thrust, consider this short note. The blow commeth manie wayes, the thrust doth not so. The blow commeth a nearer way then a thrust most commonly, and is therefore sooner done. The blow requirith the strength of a man to be warded; but the thrust may be put by, by the force of a child. A blow vpon the hand, arme, or legge is a maim incurable; but a thrust in the hand, arme, or legge is to be recouered. The blow hath manie parts to wound, and in euerie of them commaundeth the life; but the thrust hath but a few, as the bodie or face, and not in euerie part of them neither.

Of the difference betwixt the true fight & the false: wherein consisteth (the Principles being had with the direction of the foure Governours) the whole perfection of fight with all manner of weapons.



He true fights be these: whatsoever is ¹⁴ done with the hand before the foot or feet is true fight. The false fights be these: whatsoever is done with the foot or feet before the hand, is false, because the hand is swifter then the foot, the foot or feet being a slower mouer then the hand: the hand in that maner of fight is tied to the time of the foot or feet, and being tied thereto, hath lost his freedome, and is made thereby as slow in his motions as the foot or feet: and therfor that fight is false.

Of euill orders or customes in our English Fēce-schooles, & of the old or ancient teaching of weapons, & things very necessarīe to be continued for the auoiding of errors, and reuiuing and continuance of our ancient vveapons, and most victorius fight againe.



Here is in my opiniō in our Fence-schooles ¹⁵ an euill order or custome in these dayes vsed, the which, if it might stand with the good liking of our Maisters of Defence, I thinke it necessarīe to be left: for as long as it is vsed, it shall be hard to make a good Scholler.

That is this, at the single Sword, Sword and Dagger, & Sword and Buckler, they forbid the thrust, & at the single Rapier, and Rapier & Dagger, they forbid the blow. Either they are both together best, or the thrust altogether best, or the blow altogether best. If the thrust be best, why do we not vse it at the single Sword, Sword & Dagger, & Sword and Buckler. If the blow be best, why do we not vse it at the single Rapier, Rapier & Poinyard? But knowing by the Art of Armes, that no fight is perfect without both blow and thrust, why do we not vse and teach both blow and thrust? But howsoeuer this we dayly see, that whē two meet in fight, whether they haue skill or none, vnlesse such as haue tied theselues to that boyish, *Italian*, weake, imperfect fight, they both strike and thrust, and how shall he then do, that being much taught in schoole, neuer learned to strike, nor how to defend a strong blow? & how shall he thē do, that being brought vp in Fēce-schoole, that neuer learned to thrust with the single Sword, Sword and Dagger, and Sword and Buckler, nor how at these weapōs to breake a thrust? Surely, I thinke a downe right fellow, that neuer came in schoole, vsing such skill as nature yeeldeth out of his cōrage, strength, and agilitie, with good downe right blowes and thrusts among, as shall best frame in his hands, shold put one of these imperfect schollers greatly to his shifts. Besides, there are now in these dayes no gripes, closes, wrestlings, striking with the hilts, daggers, or bucklers, vsed in Fence-schooles. Our ploughmen by nature wil do all these things with great strēgth & agility: but the Schooleman is altogether vnacquainted with these things. He being fast tyed to such school-play as he hath learned, hath lost thereby the benefite
of

of nature, and the plowman is now by nature without art a farre better man then he. Therefore in my opinion, as long as we barre anie maner of play in schoole, we shall hardly make a good scholler: there is no maner of teaching comparable to the old ancient teaching, that is, first their quarters, then their wardes, blowes, thrusts, and breaking of thrustes, then their Clofes and Gripes, striking with the hilts, Daggers, Bucklers, Wrastring, striking with the foote or knee in the Coddes, and all these are safely defended in learning perfectly of the Gripes. And this is the ancient teaching, the perfectest & most best teaching; and without this teaching, there shall neuer scholler be made able, doe his vttermost, nor fight safe. Againe their swordes in schooles are too long by almost halfe a foote to vncrosse, without going backe with the feete, within distance or perfectly to strike or thrust within the halfe or quarter sword. And in seruing of the Prince, when men do meet together in publique fight, are vtterly naught and vnseruiceable. The best lengthes for perfect teaching of the true fight to be vsed and continued in Fence schooles, to accord with the true statures of all men, are these. The blade to be a yard and an inch for meane statures, and for men of tall statures, a yard and three or foure inches, and no more. And I would haue the Rapier continued in schooles, alwaies readie for such as shall thinke themselves cunning, or shall haue delight to play with that imperfect weapon. Prouided alwaies, that the Schoolemaister or Vsher play with him with his short Sword, plying him with all maner of fight according to the true art: this being continued the truth shall flourish, the lye shall be beaten downe, and all nations not ha-

In the warres there is no obseruation of Stoccatas, Imbrocatas, times, nor answers.

Long weapons imperfect.

uing the true science, shall come with all gladnesse to the valiant and most braue English maisters of Defence to learne the true fight for their defence.

*The grounds or Principles of true fight with all
maner of weapons.*



First Iudgement, Lyings, Distance, Direction, Pafe, Space, Place, Time, Indirection, Motion, Action, generall and continuall Motion, Progression, Regression, Trauerfing, and Treading of groundes, Blowes, Thrustes, Faulses, Doubles, Slipes, Wardes, breakings of Thrusts, Closings, Gripes, & Wraftlings, Guardant fight, Open fight, Variable fight, and Close fight, and foure Gouvernours.

The wardes of all maner of weapons.

17



Al fingle weapons haue foure wardes, and all double weapons haue eight wardes. The fingle sword hath two with the point vp, and two with the point downe. The Staffe and all maner of weapons to be vfed with both handes haue the like.

The Sword and Buckler, and Sword and Dagger are double weapons, and haue eight wardes, two with the point vp, and two with the point downe, and two for the legges with the point downe, the point to be caried for both sides of the legges, with the knuckles downward, and two wardes with the Dagger or Buckler for the head. The Forrest bill is a double weapon by reason
of

of the head, and therefore hath eight wardes, foure with the Staffe, foure with the head, foure of them to be vfed as with the staffe, and the other foure with the head, the one vp, the other downe, and the other sidewaies.

The names and numbers of times appertaining vnto fight both true and false.



Here are eight times, whereof foure are 18 true, and foure are false: the true times be these.

The time of the hand.

The time of the hand and bodie.

The time of the hand, bodie and foote.

The time of the hand, bodie and feete.

The false times be these.

The time of the foote.

The time of the foote and bodie.

The time of the foote, bodie and hand.

The time of the feete, bodie and hand.

Thus haue I thought good to separate and make knowne the true times from the false, with the true wardes thereto belonging, that thereby the rather in practising of weapons, a true course may be taken for the auoiding of errours and euill customes, and speedie attaining of good habit or perfect being in the true vse and knowledge of all maner of weapons.

Of the length of weapons, and how euerie man may fit himselfe in the perfect length of his weapon, according to his owne stature, with brieffe reasons wherefore they ought to be so.

19



O know the perfect length of your Sword, you shall stand with your sword and dagger drawn, as you see this picture, keeping out straight your dagger arme, drawinge backe your sword as far as conueniently you can, not opening the elbow ioynt of your sword arme: and looke what you can draw within your dagger, that is the iust length of your sword, to be made according to your owne stature.

If the sword be longer, you can hardly uncrosse without going backe with your feet. If shorter, the you can hardly make a true crosse without putting in of your feet, the which times are too long to answer the time of the hand.

The like reasons for the short staffe, half Pike, Forrest bill, Partisan, or Gleue, or such like weapons of perfect length.



The perfect length of your two hand sword is, the blade to be the length of the blade of your single sword.

To know the perfect length of your short staffe, or half Pike, Forrest bil, Partisan, or Gleue, or such like weapons of vantage and perfect lengths, you shall stand vpright, holding the staffe vpright close by your body, with your left hād, reaching with your right hand your staffe as high as you can, and then allow to that length a space to set both your hands, when you come to fight, wherein you may conueniently strike, thrust, and ward, & that is the iust length to be made according to your stature. And this note, that these lengths will commonly fall out to be eight or nine foot long, and will fit, although not iust, the statures of all men, without any hindrance at all vnto them in their fight, because in any weapon wherin the hands may be remoued, and at libertie, to make the weapon longer or shorter in fight at his pleasure, a foot of the staffe behind the backmost hand doth no harme. And wherfore these weapons ought to be of the lengths aforesaid, and no shorter, these are the reasons: If they should be shorter, then the long staffe, Morris Pike, and such like weapons ouer and aboue the perfect length, should haue great vantage against them, because he may come boldly and safe without anie gard or ward, to the place where he may thrust home, and at euery thrust put him in danger of his life: but if these weapons be of their perfect lengths, then can the long staffe, the Morris Pike, or anie other longer weapon ly nowhere in true space, but shall be still within compasse of the crosse, to crosse and vncrosse, wherby he may safely passe home to the place, where he may strike or thrust him that hath the long weapon, in the head, face, or body at his pleasure.

*Of the lengths of the Battel axe, Halbard, or blacke Bill,
or such like weapons of weight, appertaining
unto gard or battell.*

20



Nanie of these weapons there needeth no iust length, but commonly they are, or ought to be five or sixe foot long, & may not well be vsed much longer, because of their weights: and being weapons for the warres or battell, when men are ioyned close together, may thrust, & strike sound blowes, with great force both strong and quicke: and finally for the iust lengths of all other shorter or longer weapons to be gouerned with both hands, there is none: neither is there anie certaine lengthes in anie maner of weapons to be vsed with one hand, ouer or vnder the iust length of the single sword.

Thus endeth the length of weapons.

*Of the vantages of weapons in their kinds, places, & times,
both in priuate and publike fight.*

21



First I will begin with the worst weapon, an imperfect and insufficient weapon, and not worth the speaking of; but now being highly esteemed, therefore not to be left vnremembered; that is, the single Rapier, and Rapier and Poiniard.

The single Sword hath the vantage against the single Rapier.

The Sword and Dagger hath the vantage against the Rapier and Poiniard.

The Sword & Target hath aduantage against the Sword and Dagger, or Rapier and Poiniard.

The Sword and Buckler hath aduantage against the Sword and Target, the Sword and Dagger, or Rapier and Poiniard.

The two hand Sword, hath the vantage against the Sword and Target, the Sword and Buckler, the Sword and Dagger, or Rapier and Poiniard.

The Battel-axe, the Halbard, the Blacke-bill, or such like weapons of weight, appertaining vnto guard or battell, are all one in fight, and haue aduantage against the two hand Sword, the Sword and Buckler, the Sword and Target, the Sword & dagger, or the Rapier & Poiniard.

The short staffe or halfe Pike, Forrest-bill, Partisan, or Gleue, or such like weapons of perfect length, haue the vantage against the Battel-axe, the Halbard, the Blacke-bill, the two hand sword, the Sword and Target, and are too hard for two Swords and Daggers, or two Rapiers and Poiniards with Gantlets, and for the long staffe and Morris Pike.

The long Staffe, Morris Pike, or Iauelin, or such like weapons aboue the perfect length, haue aduantage against all maner of weapons, the short staffe, Welch hooke, Partisan, or Gleue, or such like weapons of vantage excepted: yet too weake for two Swords and Daggers or two Swords and Bucklers, or two Rapiers and Poiniards with Gantlets, because they are too long to thrust, strike, and turne speedily: and by reason of the large distance, one of the Sword and Dagger-men will get behind him.

The Welch hooke or Forrest bill, hath aduantage against all maner of weapons whatsoeuer.

Yet vnderstand, that in battels, and where varietie of weapons be, amongst multitudes of men and horses, the Sword and Target, the two hand Sword, the Battel-axe, the Blacke-bill, and Halbard, are better weapons, and more dangerous in their offence and forces, then is the Sword and Buckler, short staffe, long staffe, or Forrest bill. The Sword and Target leadeth vpon Shot, and in troupes defendeth thrusts and blowes giuen by battel-axe, Halbards, Blacke-bill, or two hand swords, far better then can the Sword and Buckler.

The Morris Pike defendeth the battell from both horse and man, much better then can the short staffe, long staffe, or Forrest bill. Againe, the Battel-axe, the Halbard, the Blacke bill, the two hand sword, and Sword & Target, amongst armed men and troopes, when men are come together, by reason of their weights, shortnesse, and great forces, do much more offend the enemye, & are then much better weapons, then is the short staffe, the long Staffe, or Forrest bill.

*Of the insufficiencie and disadvantages of the
Rapiers-fight in Battell.*



Or the single Rapier, or Rapier & Poiniard, they are imperfect & insufficient weapons: and especially in the seruice of the Prince, when men shall ioyne together, what seruice can a souldier do with a Rapier, a childish toy wherwith a man can do nothing but thrust, nor that neither, by reason of the length, and in euerie mouing when blowes are a dealing, for lacke of a hilt is in daunger to haue his hand or arme cut off, or his head clouen?

clouen . And for Wardes and Gripes, they haue none, neither can any of these fine Rapier men, for lacke of vse, tell howe to strike a sound blow.

*Of the vantages and sufficiencie of the short
Sword fight in battell.*



He short Sword, and Sword and Dagger, 23
are perfect good weapons, and especially in seruice of the Prince. What a braue weapon is a short sharpe light Sword, to carie, to draw, to be nimble withall, to strike, to cut, to thrust both strong and quicke. And what a goodly defence is a strong single hilt, when men are clustering and hurling together, especially where varietie of weapons be, in their motions to defend the hand, head, face, and bodies, from blowes, that shalbe giuen sometimes with Swordes, sometimes with two handed Swordes, battell Axe, Halbardes, or blacke Billes, and sometimes men shalbe so neare together, that they shall haue no space, scarce to vse the blades of their Swordes belowe their waistes, then their hilts (their handes being aloft) defendeth from the blowes, their handes, armes, heads, faces, and bodies: then they lay on, hauing the vse of blowes and Gripes, by force of their armes with their hilts, strong blowes, at the head, face, armes, bodies, and shoulders, and manie times in hurling together, scope is giuen to turne downe their points, with violent thrusts at their faces, and bodies, by reason of the shortnesse of their blades, to the mightie annoyance, discomfort, and great destruction of their enimies. One valiant man with a Sword in his hand, will doe better seruice, then ten *Italians*, or *Italianated* with the Rapiers.

That all maner of double weapons, or weapons to be used with both handes, haue aduantage against the single Rapier or single Sword, there is no question to be made.

That the Sword and Buckler hath the vantage against the Sword and Dagger.

24



He Dagger is an imperfect ward, although borne out straight, to make the Space narrow, whereby by a litle mouing of the hand, may be sufficient to saue both sides of the head, or to breake the thrust from the face or body, yet for lacke of the circumference his hand will lie too high or too low, or too weake, to defend both blow and thrust: if he lye straight with narrow space, which is best to breake the thrust, then he lieth too weake, and too lowe to defend his head from a strong blow: if he lye high, that is strong to defend his head, but then his space wilbe too wide to breake the thrust from his bodie. The Dagger serueth well at length to put by a thrust, and at the halfe Sword to crosse the Sword blade, to driue out the Agent, and put him in danger of his life, and safely in anie of these two actions to defend himselfe. But the Buckler, by reason of his circumference and weight, being well caried, defendeth safely in all times and places, whether it be at the point, halfe Sword, the head, bodie, and face, from all maner of blowes and thrustes whatsoever, yet I haue heard manie hold opinion, that the Sword and Dagger hath aduantage of the Sword and Buckler, at the Close, by reason of the length and point of the Dagger: and at the point

point of the Sword, they can better see to ward then with a Buckler. But I neuer knew anie, that wanne the Clofe with the Dagger vpon the Sword and Budkler, but did wish himfelfe out againe: for diftance being broken, iudgement faileth, for lacke of time to iudge, and the eie is deceiued by the fwift motion of the hand, and for lacke of true Space with the dagger hand, which cannot be otherwise, for lacke of the circumference to defend both blow and thrust, it is impoffible for lacke of true Space in iuft time, the agent hauing gotten the true place, to defend one thrust or blow of an hundred. And it is moft certaine, whofoeuer clofeth with Sword and Dagger, againft the Sword and Buckler, is in great danger to be flaine. Likewise at the point within diftance, if he ftand to defend both blow and thrust with his Dagger, for lacke of true fpace and diftance, if he had the beft eye of anie man, and could fee perfectly, which way the thrust or blow commeth, and when it commeth, as it is not to be denied but he may, yet his fpace being too large, it helpeth him nothing, becaufe one mans hand being as fwift as another mans hand, both being within diftance, he that striketh or thrusteth, hurteth the warder: the reason is this: the Agent being in the firft motion although in his offence, further to go then the warder to defend, yet the warders fpace being too large, the blow or thrust wilbe performed home, before the warder can come to the true place to defend himfelfe, and although the warder doe perfectly fee the blow or thrust comming, fo fhall he fee his owne ward fo farre from the true place of his defence, that although he doe at that instant time, plainly fee the blow or thrust comming, it fhallbe impoffible for him to recouer the

true place of his ward, till he be wounded. But let the warder with the dagger say, that it is not true which I haue said, for as he hath eies to behold the blow or thrust cōming, so hath he as good time to defend himself. Herein he shal find himself deceiued to; this is the reason: the hand is the swiftest motion, the foot is the slowest, without distance the hand is tied to the motion of the feet, wherby the time of the hand is made as slow as the foot, because thereby we redeeme euerie time lost vpon his comming by the slow motion of the foot, & haue time therby to iudge, whē & how he can performe any actiō whatsoever, and so haue we the time of the hand to the time of the feet. Now is the hād in his owne course more swifter then the foot or eye, therefore within distance the eye is deceiued, & iudgement is lost; and that is another cause that the warder with the dagger, although he haue perfect eyes, is stil within distance deceiued. For prooffe that the hand is more swifter then the eye, & thereby deceiue the eyes: let two stand within distance, & let one of thē stand still to defend himself, & let the other flourish & false with his hand, and he shall continually with the swift motions of his hand, deceiue the eyes of him that standeth watching to defend himselfe, & shal continually strike him in diuerse places with his hand. Againe, take this for an example, that the eyes by swift motions are deceiued: turne a turne-wheele swift, & you shall not be able to discerne with your best eies how many spokes be in the wheele, no nor whether there be any spokes at all, or whereof the wheele is made, and yet you see when the wheele standeth still there is a large distance betweene euerie spoke. He that will not beleue that the swift motion of the hand in fight will deceiue the eye, shal stare a-

broad

*the eye is decei-
d by the swift
motion of the hād.*

broad with his eyes, & feele himselfe foundly hurt, before he shall perfectly see how to defend himselfe. So those that trust to their sight, the excellency of a good eye, their great cunning, & perfect wards of the daggers, that they can better see to ward then with a buckler, shall euer be deceiued. And whē they be wounded, they say the Agēt was a litle too quicke for them; sometimes they say they bare their dagger a litle too low : sometimes they are thrust vnder the dagger, then they say, they bare it a litle too high : sometimes a thrust being strongly made, they being foundly paid therewith, say, they were a litle too slow, & sometimes they be foundly paid with a thrust, & they thinke they were a litle too quick. So they that practise or thinke to be cunning in the dagger ward, are all the dayes of their liues learning, and are neuer taught.

The Dagger is an imperfect ward.

That the Sword and Buckler hath the vantage against the Sword and Target.



He Sword & Target together hath but two 25 fights; that is, the variable fight, & the close fight, for the close fight, the nūber of his feet are too many to take against any mā of skill hauing the Sword & buckler, & for the variable fight although not so many in number, yet too many to win the place with his foot to strike or thrust home. The sword & buckler-man can out of his variable, opē & gardāt fight, come brauely off & on, false and double, strike & thrust home, & make a true crosse vpon euery occasion at his pleasure: if the Sword & Target mā will flie to his gardāt fight, the bredth of his Target will not suffer it, if to his open fight, thē hath the Sword & Buckler man in effect the sword and Buckler to the single, for in that fight by reason of the bredth, the target can do litle good or none at all.

The short Staffe.

26



Now for the vantage of the short Staffe against the Sword and Buckler, Sword & Target, two hand sword, single Sword, Sword and Dagger, or Rapier and Poiniard, there is no great question to be made in anie of these weapons: whensoever anie blow or thrust shall be strongly made with the staffe, they are euer in false place, in the cariage of the wards, for if at any of these fixe weapons he carie his ward high & strōg for his head, as of necessitie he must carie it verie high, otherwise it will be too weake to defend a blow being strongly made at the head, then will his space be too wide, in due time to breake the thrust from his bodie. Againe, if he carie his ward lower, thereby to be in equall space for readinesse to breake both blow & thrust, then in that place his ward is too low, and too weake to defend the blow of the staffe: for the blow being strongly made at the head vpon that ward, will beate downe the ward and his head together, and put him in great danger of his life. And here is to be noted, that if he fight well, the staffe-man neuer striketh but at the head, and thrusteth presently vnder at the body: and if a blow be first made, a thrust followeth; & if a thrust be first made, a blow followeth; and in doing of any of them, the one breedeth the other: so that howsoever anie of these fixe weapons shall carie his ward strongly to defend the first, he shall be too farre in space to defend the second, whether it be blow or thrust.

Yet againe for the short staffe: the short staffe hath the vantage against the Battel-axe, blacke-bill, or Halbard,

bard: the short staffe hath the vantage, by reason of the nimblenesse and length: he will strike and thrust freely, and in better and swifter time then can the Battel-axe, Blacke-bill, or Halbard: and by reason of his iudgement, distance and time, fight safe. And this resolute vpon, the short staffe is the best weapon against all maner of weapons, the Forrest bill excepted.


Also the short staffe hath aduantage against two Swords and Daggers, or two Rapiers, Poiniards and Gantlets, the reasons and causes before are for the most part set downe already, the which being well considered, you shall plainely see, that whensoever anie one of the Sword & Dagger men, or Rapier and Poiniard men shall breake his distance, or suffer the Staffe-man to breake his, that man which did first breake his distance, or suffer the distance to be won against him, is presently in danger of death. And this cannot in reason be denied, because the distance appertaining to the Staffe-man, either to keepe or breake, standeth vpon the mouing of one large space alwayes at the most, both for his offence or safety. The other two in the breach of their distance to offend the Staffe-man, haue alwayes foure paces at the least therin they fall too great in number with their feet, and too short in distance to offend the Staffe-man. Now there resteth no more to be spoken of, but how the Staffe-man shall behaue himselfe to keepe that distance, that one of the Sword & Dagger men get not behind him, while the other shal busie him before: to do that is very easie, by reason of the smal number of his feet, for by a verie small turning of his feet, as it were in the Center point of a wheele, the other two to keepe their distance, are driuen to runne twentie foote for one, as it

*The short staffe
or half Pike hath
the aduantage a-
gainst two sword
and dagger men,
or two Rapiers.
Poiniards, and
Gantlets.*

were vpon the vttermoſt part or circle of the wheele: all this while the Staffe-man is verie well. Then it cometh thus to paſſe, whether they both labour to get behind him, or one keepe directly before him whileſt the other get behind him, yet before that be brought to paſſe, they ſhal either be both before him or iuſt againſt both ſides of him: at which time ſoeuer the Staffe-man finding either of them within diſtance, he preſently in making of his play, ſlayeth with blow or thruſt one of thē, or at the leaſt putteth him in great danger of his life. If the Staffe-man take his time, when they are both before him, that is to ſay, before they come to the half ring, iuſt againſt both ſides of the Staffe-man, then he that is neareſt within diſtance is ſlain by blow or thruſt, or put in great danger of his life. But if the Sword and Dagger men do keepe their diſtance vntill they come to the iuſt halfe ring right againſt the ſides of the Staffe-man, and then breake diſtance, that man that firſt breakeſt diſtance is ſlaine with blow or thruſt, or ſore hurt, and in great danger of death: and the Staffe-man in making that play at that inſtant, muſt turne with one large pace, the which he may eaſily do, before the other can get neare enough to offend him, by reaſon that he hath to make with his feet but one large pace, but the other hath at the leaſt three paces. But if the Sword and Dagger-men will in the time that they be before him, keep their diſtance in the time of their being vpon the middle part of the outside of the circle, right againſt both ſides of him, & will labor with all heed & diligence to be both or one of thē behind him, that troubleth the Staffe-man nothing at all, for in that very time, when he findeth them paſt the middle part of the circle, he preſently

sently turneth, by the which he shall naturally set himselfe as it were in a triangle, and both the sword and dagger-men, shall thereby stand both before him in true distance of three paces, from offending of him at the least, as at the first they did. And take this for a true ground, there is no man able to ward a sound blow with the Sword and Dagger, nor Rapier, Poinyard, and Gantlet, being strongly made at the head, with the Staffe, and run in withall, the force of both handes is such, being in his full motion and course, that although the other do carie his ward high and strong with both handes, yet his feete being mouing from the ground, the great force of the blow will strike him with his ward, and all downe flat to ground. But if he stand fast with his feete, he may with both weapons together, strongly defend his head from the blow, but then you are sufficiently instructed, the thrust being presently made, after the blow full at the bodie, it is impossible in due time to breake it, by reason of the largenesse of his space.

*The short Staffe hath the vantage against the long staffe,
and Morris Pike, and the Forrest bill against all
maner of weapons.*

 He reasons are these. The short Staffe 27 hath the vantage of the long Staffe and Morris Pike in his strength & narrownes of space in his foure wardes of defence. And the Forrest bill hath the vantage of all maner of weapons in his strength and narrownes of space in his eight wardes of defence: and the rather because the Bill hath two wardes for one against the Staffe

or Morris Pike, that is to say, foure with the Staffe, and foure with the head, and is more offensive then is the Staffe or Morris Pike: yet a questiō may be made by the vnskilfull, concerning the fight between the long Staffe and the short, in this sort: Why should not the long Staffe haue aduantage against short Staffe, since that the long Staffe-man, being at libertie with his handes, may make his long Staffe both long and short for his best aduantage, when he shall thinke it good, and therefore when he shall find himselfe ouermatched in the length of his Staffe, by the strength of the short Staffe, and narrownesse of space in his foure wardes of defence, he can presently by drawing backe of his Staffe in his handes, make his Staffe as short as the others, and so be readie to fight with him at his owne length. To this I answere, that when the long Staffe-man is driuen there to lye, the length of his Staffe that will lye behind him, will hinder him to strike, thrust, ward, or goe backe in due time. Neither can he turne the contrarie end of his Staffe to keepe out the short Staffe man from the Close, nor safely to defend himselfe at his comming in.

*question.**swere.**Againe of the vantages of weapons.*

28



Take this for a general rule, all long Staues, Morris Pikes, Forrest bills, Iauelins, or such like long weapons, of what sort soeuer, being aboue the true lengthes, the shortest haue the aduantage, because they can crosse and vncrosse in shorter time then can the longer: and all maner of short weapons to be vsed with both handes, as staues, and such like, being vnder the perfect lengthes, the

the

the longest haue the aduantage , and all maner of weapons to be vsed with one hand, that are aboue the perfect length of the single Sword, the shortest haue the vantage, and all maner of weapons vnder the iust length of the short Sword, as Fauchions, Skaines, or Hangers, Woodkniues, Daggers, and such like short weapons of imperfect lengthes, the longest haue the aduantage, because the fight of these weapons consist within the halfe or quarter Sword, wherein by the swift motions of their handes, their eyes are deceiued , and in those weapons, commonly for their handes lieth no defence. And if two shall fight with staues or Swordes, or what weapons foeuer, the one of them hauing his weapon longer then the perfect length, and the other his weapon shorter then the perfect length, he that hath the longest hath the vantage, because the shortest can make no true Crosse in true time. The short Staffe or halfe Pike, Forrest bill, Partisan, or Gleue, or such like weapons of perfect length, to be vsed with both handes, haue the aduantage against two Swordes and Daggers, or two Rapiers, Poiniarden, and Gantlets, and against all other weapons whatsoeuer, the Forrest bill excepted.

Againē for the short Staffe or halfe Pike.

He short Staffe is most commonly the best weapon of all other, although other weapons may be more offensiue, and especially against manie weapons together, by reason of his nimblenesse and swift motions, and is not much inferiour to the Forrest bill, although the Forrest bill be more offensiue, and hath more wardes, because

the Staffe is verie vncertaine , but the Bill is a more certaine marke, by reason of the breadth of the head, whereby as the Bill hath aduantage in his wardes in the head, so therefore hath the Staffe the like defence, or rather more, to play vpon the head of the Bill , not onely to make a perfect good ward, but thereby, the rather to cast the Bill out of the right line, whereby the Staffe-man may thrust safe, and endanger the Bill-man : and the rather because therein he is the first mouer, wherein there is great vantage, both in time and force. And if the Bill-man be not very skilfull (all vantages and disadvantages of both sides considered,) the short Staffe will proue the better weapon. Lastly note this, that long Staues, Morris Pikes, and such like weapons of imperfect lengthes, being to be vsed with both hands, notwithstanding their imperfect lengthes, are perfect weapons to be vsed, the one against the other , and their fightes therein perfect, because in drawing of them backe betwixt their handes, their motions are swifter backwardes, then is the time of the Agents feet forwardes, by the which all their lost times are redeemed : therefore these weapons in their fightes, the one against the other are perfect. And these weapons in the night are the best weapons of all other, and haue great aduantage against the forrest Bill , short Staffe, or anie maner of short weapons whatsoever : for these causes, they boldly make home their fightes , and if neede be against desperate men , that will venture themselves to run in, they redeeme their lost times. But the other with shorter weapons for lacke of light, can make no true defence. Thus endeth the vantages of weapons.

Questions and answers betweene the Scholler and the Maister, of the vantages and disaduantages betweene a tall man, and a man of meane stature, hauing both the perfect knowledge in their weapons.

Scholler.

WHo hath the aduantage in fight, of a tall man, or a man of meane stature?

Maister.

The tall man hath the vantage, for these causes: his reach being longer, and weapon vnto his stature accordingly, he hath thereby a shorter course with his feet to win the true place, wherein by the swift motion of his hand, he may strike or thrust home: in the which time a man of meane stature cannot reach him, & by his large pace, in his true pace in his regression further, setteth himself out of all danger, & these are the vantages that a tall man hath against anie man of shorter reach then himselfe.

Tall men haue the vantage against men of meane stature.

Scholler.

What vantage hath a man of meane stature against a tall man?

Maister.

He hath none: because the true times in fight, and actions accordingly, are to be obserued and done, as well by a tall man, as by a man of meane stature.

Scholler.

Why then if this be true, that tall men haue the vantage against me of meane stature, it shold seeme in fight

there is no perfection, other then this, when men of like stature, reach, & length of weapon, shall fight together, the which will seldome or neuer happen, but either in the length of their weapons, statures or reaches (if their swords should be of iust length) some difference most commonly there will be in their reaches.

Maister.

Yes verily, the tall man hath still the vantage, and yet the fight is perfect, although the men that shall happen to fight, shall happē to be vnequall in their statures, reaches, or lengths of their weapons.

Scholler.

That can I hardly beleeeue, vnlesse you can tell me by Art how to auoid or safely defend my selfe, being but a man of meane stature, against a tall man.

Maister.

I will tell you: there belongeth vnto this Art of defence onely to be vsed with the feet, progression, regression, trauerfing, and treading of grounds: in any of these you playing the part of the Patient, or Patient Agent, your feete are swifter in their motions then are the Agents, because his weight and number of his feet in his comming to win the true place to strike or thrust home, are greater then yours, and therefore the true time is yours to auoid him, or safely to defend your selfe: so the Art is still true, and the tall man hath still the vantage.

Scholler.

Yet I am not fully satisfied herein, because you tell me still that the tall man hath the vantage, and notwithstanding you say the Art is true, wherein then hath the tall man the vantage, when by your Art you can defend your selfe against him.

Maister.

Maister.

I will satisfie you therein thus. The tall man hath the vantage, he can maintaine his fight, both by nature and Art, with more ease then can the man of meane stature, because the man of meane stature hath thereby a further course with his feete to passe to the place, wherein he may strike or thrust home, and in winning of that place, is driuen by Art to come garded vnder his wards to defend himselfe, because in the time of his comming, the tall man may both naturally or artificially strike or thrust home, in the which time, if the mā of meane stature should faile in the least iote of his Art, he should be in great daunger of death or hurt. But the tall man can naturally and safely come to the true place open, without any artificiall wards at all, and therein also endanger the other, or driue him still to trauerse his ground, with all the artificiall skill that he hath to defend himselfe; and all this the tall man doth by reason of his length of weapon, large pace, short course, and long reach, with great safetie, pleasure and ease. And for those causes the tall man hath still the vantage of men of meane stature, and yet notwithstanding the noble Science of Defence most perfect and good.

*Foure inuincible
aduantages consist
in a tall man
against a man
of meane stature.
Long reach.
Short course.
Length of weapō.
Large pace.*

*Of the long single Rapier fight betweene valiant men, hauing both skill, he that is the best wrastler, or if neither of them can wrastle, the strongest man most commonly killeth the other, or lea-
ueth him at his mercie.*

Vhen two valiant men of skill at single Ra- 31
pier do fight, one or both of them most cō-
monly standing vpon their strength or skill
in wrastling, will presently seeke to run into

the close; but hauing both skill, not without speciall care of their gard or crosse, the which they may safely do, by reason of the length of their Rapiers: but hapning both of one mind, the rather do bring themselues together: that being done, noskil with Rapiers auaieth, they presently grapple fast their hilts, wrists, armes, bodies or neckes, as in lustring, wrastring, or striuing together, they may best find for their aduantages: wherby it most commonly falleth out, that he that is the best wrastring, or strongest man (if neither of them can wrastring) ouercommeth, wresting by strength, or fine skill in wrastring, the Rapier from his aduersarie, or casting him frō him, either to the ground, or to such distance, that he may by reason therof, vse the edge or point of his rapier, to strike or thrust him, leauing him dead or alieue at his mercie. But if but one of these valiant men shall seeke to run into the close, and that the other shall vse his skill in trauerfing of his ground, or otherwise by standing vpon his gard or *Stocata* ward, to take all maner of aduantages at his cōming, yet all auaieth him not, because the Rapiers being long, the crossing of the blades cannot be auoided: that being made, the oppressor runneth faster forwards then can the defendant backwards, and so are brought together, as in the first assault they were, & euerie action therein accordingly performed.

Of the Rapier and Poiniard-fight betwixt valiant men, hauing both skill.

32 **I**F two valiant men do fight at Rapier and Poiniard hauing both skill, one or both of them will presently presse hard to winne the place, wherein in his iudgement he may thrust home. If both
be

be of one mind, the time is doubled in winning the same: whereby it commeth to passe, that then he that first thrusteth, endangereth, killeth or hurteth the other: and if they both thrust together, as they may do by the equall time of their feet, then they are most commonly both slaine, or both hurt. And this is well knowne vnto all men of skill, that the place being once gotten, there is neither iudgement, space, pace, nor time, either by wards with their Rapier blades, or by breaking with their Poiniards, or flying backe, that can preferue or defend them. But if but one of them will seeke to win by passage, hard pressing, or otherwise the place, wherin in his iudgement he may thrust home, it is impossible for the other to denie him the same, because the length of the Rapiers winneth him the crosse; the crosse being taken, the place is had; the place being had, he that first thrusteth, first speedeth: if both thrust together, they are both in danger: the presently followeth (vnlesse it please God otherwise to haue it) the stabs with their daggers, wherein there lieth no defence.

Of the long Rapier & Poiniard-fight betweene two valiant men, the one hauing skil, the other none: that he that hath no skill hath the vantage.

When two valiant men shal fight with lōg 33
Rapiers and Poiniards, the one hauing
skill, and the other none, he that hath no
skill most commōly proueth himself the
better mā, for these causes or reasons fol-
lowing. First the skilfull man as knowing the other to
haue no skill, or finding it to be so by his shape or

maner of comming towards him , will presently yeeld to take the aduantage of his comming , or else with all speed put himselfe into his short ward , to be readie at his comming to make out a strong *Stocata* (as the *Italians* call it:) the other knowing his imperfection in fight , assureth himselfe there can be no great good for him to stand long out at the point, presently redoubleth or reuiueth his spirits with perfect resolution , to make short worke, couragiously with some offensive action , such as nature shall best yeeld vnto him, flieth in with all force and agilitie : the skilfull man standeth watching to take such aduantages as his schoolemaister hath taught him , in the which time, manie times it falleth out, he is taught a new time, euen by an vnskilfull man that neuer fought before , is sore hurt or slaine : and if it happen they both misse in their offensive actions , then by reason thereof , and of the imperfect length of their Rapiers, they come to stabbing with their Poiniards, wherein there lyeth no defence , because distance being broken, iudgement faileth, time is lost, and their eies (by the swift motions of their handes) are deceiued.

Of the long single Rapier, or Rapier and Poiniard-fight betweene two vnskilfull men being valiant.

34 **W**Hen two vnskilfull men (being valiant) shall fight with long single Rapiers , there is lesse danger in that kind of fight, by reason of their distance in conuenient length, waight, and vnweildinesse, then is with short Rapiers: whereby it commeth to passe, that what hurt shall happen to be done , if anie with the edge or point of their Rapiers

Rapiers is done in a moment, and presently will grapple and wrastle together, wherin most commonly the strongest or best Wrastler ouercommeth, and the like fight falleth out betweene them, at the long Rapier and Poiniard, but much more deadly, because in stead of Close and Wrastling, they fall most commonly to stabbing with their Poiniardenes.

Of the imperfection and insufficiencie of Rapiers in generall, of what length soeuer they be.

IF two fight with long Rapiers, vpon euerie Crosse made within the halfe Rapier, if they haue Poiniardenes, they most commonly stabbe each other, which cannot be auoided, because the Rapiers being long, the Crosse cannot be vndone of either side, without going backe with their feete, the which likewise in due time cannot be done, because the hand is more swifter then the feete, and the feete more swifter in their course forwardes then backwardes, neither can the Crosse be preuented, because the point of necessity lyeth too farre off in his offence, or else within compasse of the true time of the hand and bodie, by reason of his imperfect length: and so by the like reasons, if two fight with long single Rapiers, vpon euerie Crosse made therewith, within the halfe Rapier, the Close cannot be auoided, wherby it commeth to passe most commonly, that the strongest man or best Wrastler ouercommeth. Now if two do fight with short Rapiers, or Rapiers of conuenient length, such Rapiers be inconuenient and insufficient also for lacke of an hilt to defend the hand and head from the blow; for no eie (in making a

35

If they stand vpon breaking with their Daggers, he that first winneth the place, and thrusteth home, hurteth the other for lacke of the circumference: if both thrust together, they are both sped, because their Spaces of Defence are too wide to answere the time of the hand, and by the swift motion thereof, the eye in that distance is by the same deceived.

The feete in their course, but not in the first motion, alwaies note for the auoiding of great errors.

perfect ward for the head, to defend a blow, can discern to take the same within three or foure inches, wherby it may as well and as often fall vpon the hand, as vpon the blade of the Rapier. Againe, the hilt as well serueth to defend the head as the hand, and is a more sure and strong ward, then is the blade of the Rapier. And further, vnderstand this for truth, that in gardant and open fight, the hand without an hilt lieth open to most blowes that shalbe stroken by the Agent, out of the gardant or open fight, because in the true cariage of the gardant fight, the hand must lie aboue the head, in such straightnes and narrownes of space, that which way soeuer the Agent shall strike or thrust at the head, face, or bodie, the remouing of two or foure inches shall saue all. And now somewhat more for the shortnesse or conuenient length of Rapiers.

Rapiers hauing no hilts to defend the head, the Rapier-man is driuen of necessitie to lie at the variable fight or low ward, and being there he can neither defend in due time, head, face, nor bodie from the blowes or thrustes of him, that shall fight out of the gardant or open fight, but is continually in great danger of the Agent, for these causes following. First, because his space is too wide to defend his head from blow or thrust. Secondly his Pace standing vpon that fight, wilbe of necessitie too great or too narrow: if too narrow, too weak: if too large, his weight and number of his feet, are too great to endanger him, that is vpon his gardant or open fight.

*Of the imperfection and insufficiencie of the fight of the
single Rapier, Rapier and Poiniard, Ra-
pier and Buckler, Rapier and
Cloke, and Rapier and
Gloue of maile.*

THe Rapier fight, whether it be single or ac- 36
cōpanied with Poiniard, Buckler, cloke, or
gloue of male, is still by reason of the insuf-
ficiencie or imperfection of the Rapier, an
imperfect fight: vnperfect instruments can make no
perfect musicke, neither can vnperfect weapons make
perfect fight: let the men that handle them haue
all the knowledge that may be in all maner of weapons,
yea the full height, or perfection, and true habite by his
great labour and industry, euen as it were naturally effe-
cted in him, yet if the weapons that they shall fight
withall be imperfect or insufficient to performe what-
soever appertaineth vnto true fight, as concerning the
perfection of their safetie, it auaieth them nothing.
What shall we then say for the Rapier? Is the Rapier
an imperfect or insufficient weapon to perfourme
whatsoever appertaineth vnto the true fight? Yea:
Wherefore? Because vnto the true fight there apper-
taineth foure fights, Gardant fight, Open fight, Varia-
ble fight, and Close fight: without all foure of these
fights it is impossible to fight safe: but the Rapier for
lacke of an hilt is an vnperfect weapon, and therefore
insufficient to fight safe vpon these foure fights, the
reasons are alreadie set downe in the Paradoxe be-
fore, but it is inferred to loose the benefit of two of the

best fights, gardant and open fight, and to flie from thē, and trust only vnto variable fight, and close fight. Now hauing proued through the imperfection or insufficien-
cie of the Rapier, the imperfection of the Rapier fight, it remaineth that I speake of the rest of the weapons, or instruments appertaining vnto Rapier fight.

The Rapier and Poiniard fight, the Rapier & Buckler fight, the Rapier and cloke fight, & the Rapier & gloue of male fight: all these fights by reason of the imperfection of the Rapier, and Rapier fight, are all also imperfect fights: and for prooue of the vncertaintie and impossibilities of safetie in any of these fights, thus it standeth. These fights depend altogether vpon variable fight and close fight: in anie of these fights it is impossible in true space of Offence to keepe the blades of their Rapiers from crossing, or frō breaking with the Poiniards, buckler, cloke, or breaking or catching with the gloue of male; because in anie of these two fights, the Agent hath still in true space the blade of the Patients Rapier to worke vpon. These things by letters cannot be made more plaine, neither is it vnknowne to the skilfull, or in fight by anie meanes to be auoided, the weapon being too farre in true space to be wrought vpon, the place cannot be denied, do the patient Agent what he can for his life to the contrarie, either by blowes, thrusts, falsing, or doubling of thrusts, going backe, indirections, or turnings of the body, or what else soeuer may in the highest touch of wit or strength, or agilitie of bodie be deuised or done, to keepe out the Agent: but still the Agent by narrownesse of space bringeth himself by strōg gard to the place, where being brought, it is as impossible to fight safe, as it is for two desperate men set together

ther being both blind; because in the true place (wonne in Rapier or variable fight) their eyes by the swift motions of their hands are deceiued, the crosses in that fight are false, their distance, iudgements and times are lost, either to offend in safetie, or safely to defend themselves: and these reasons, rules, or grounds of the feates of armes are infallible and inuincible.

Now, ô you Italian teachers of Defence, where are your *Stocatas*, *Imbrocatas*, *Mandritas*, *Puntas*, & *Puynta reuersas*, *Stramisons*, *Passatas*, *Carricados*, *Amazzas*, & *Incartatas*, & playing with your bodies, remouing with your feet a litle aside, circle wise winding of your bodies, making of three times with your feet together, marking with one eye the motion of the aduersary, & with the other eye the aduantage of thrusting? What is become of all these iugling gambalds, Apish deuises, with all the rest of your squint-eyed trickes, when as through your deepe studies, long practises, & apt bodies, both strong & agillious, you haue attained to the height of all these things? What then auaieth it you, when you shal come to fight for your liues with a man of skill? you shall haue neither time, nor place, in due time to performe any one of them, nor gardant nor open fight safely to keep out a man of skill, a man of no skill, or scholler of your owne teaching, from the true place, the place of safetie, the place of vncertaintie or mischief, the place of wounds or death, but are there inforced to stand in that mischievous, vncertaine, dangerous, and most deadly place, as two men hauing lost in part their chiefe fences, most furiously with their rapiers or poiniards, wounding or slaying each other.

Thus endeth the imperfect fights of the rapier with

all maner of weapons or instruments thereto ap pertai-
ning, with their imperfections, through the true groūds
and rules of the Art of armes, truly displayed & brought
to light.

All laud be vnto the Almighty God.

*That the reasons vsed by the Italian Fencers in commen-
ding the vse of the Rapier and Poiniard, because it
maketh peace, maketh against
themselues.*

37



T hath bin commonly held, that since the
Italians haue taught the Rapier fight, by
reason of the dangerous vse therof, it hath
bred great ciuilitie amongst our English
nation, they will not now giue the lye, nor
with such foule speeches abuse themselues, therefore
there are fewer frayes in these times then were wont to
be: it cannot be denied but this is true, that we are more
circumspect of our words, and more fearefull to fight,
then heretofore we haue bene. But whereof commeth
it? Is it from this, that the Rapier maketh peace in our
minds; or from hence, that it is not so sufficient defence
for our bodies in our fight? He that will fight when he is
armed, will not fight when he is naked: is it therefore
good to go naked to keepe peace? he that would fight
with his Sword and Buckler, or Sword and Dagger, be-
ing weapons of true defence, will not fight with his Ra-
pier and Poiniard, wherein no true defence or fight is
perfect: are these insufficiēt weapōs therefore the better,
because not being sufficiēt to defēdvs in fight, they force
vs vnto peace? What else is it, but to say, it is good for
subiects

*There are few
frayes, but more
valiant Gentlemē
slaine now then
werethen.*

subiects to be poore, that they may not go to law: or to lacke munition, that they may not fight, nor go to the warres: and to conclude, what more followeth through the imperfect workes of these *Italian* peacemakers? They haue made many a strong man in his fight weake, many a valiant man fearefull, manie a worthie man trusting to their imperfect fight, hath bene slaine, and manie of our desperate boyes and young youthes, to become in that Rapier-fight, as good men as *England* yeeldeth, and the tallest men in this land, in that fight as verie boyes as they and no better. This good haue the *Italian* teachers of Offence done vs, they haue transformed our boyes into men, and our men into boyes, our strong men into weakenesse, our valiant men doubtfull, and manie worthie men resolving themselues vpon their false resolutions, haue most wilfully in the field, with their Rapiers ended their liues. And lastly, haue left to remaine amongst vs after their deathes, these inconueniences behind them, false Fence-bookes, imperfect weapons, false fightes, and euill customes, whereby for lacke of vse and practise in perfect weapons and true fight, we are disabled for the seruice of our Prince, defence of our countrey, and safetie of our liues in priuate fight.

*That the short Sword hath the aduantage against
the long Sword or long Rapier.*

W Hereas for the most part opinions are 38
generally holden, that the long Sword,
or long Rapier, hath the vantage in fight
against the short Sword, which the *Itali-*
an teachers of Defence, by their false de-

monstratiōs haue brought vs to beleue. I haue thought good that the truth may appeare which hath the vantage, to adde my helpe vnto the reasons they vse in their owne behalfe, for that yet I could neuer heare them make a sound reason for the same. These are the reasons. First with my long Rapier, I will put my selfe into my gard or *Stocata*, holding my hilt backe by the outside of my right thigh, keeping in short the point of my Rapier, so as he that hath the short Sword, shall not be able to reach the point of my Rapier, to make his ward or Crosse with his Dagger, Buckler, Sword, or Cloke, without stepping in of his foote, the which time is too long to answere the time of the hand, by reason of my distance. I can there stand safe without danger of blow or thrust, playing the Patients part: if you strike or thrust you do it too short, by reason of my distance: if you seek to come nearer, you must do it with the time of your foote, in the which time I may safely thrust home: if in that distance you breake it not, you are slaine: if you do breake it, yet you do me no harme, by reason of my distance, and I may stand fast and thrust againe, or flie backe at my pleasure: so haue you put your selfe in danger of your life, and hauing hardly escaped, are driuen againe to begin a new bought, as at the first you did. Againe, if I please, I can be the oppressour, keeping the same gard, and my point in short as I did before, and pressing strongly by putting in by litle and litle of my feete, vntill the place with my foote be gotten, wherein (in my iudgement) I may thrust home, the which I may boldly and safely do, without respect of anie ward at all, by reason of my distance, in which time of my comming he must strike, thrust, ward, or go backe: if he go backe,

it

*These reasons
are used by the
Italians.*

it is a great disgrace: if he strike or thrust, it is too short: if he stand to defend, the place being already gotten, where I may thrust home, the thrust being verie quicke & strongly made, such is the force and swiftnesse thereof, that it is impossible by nature or art, for anie man to breake one thrust of an hundred. These reasons in my opinion may suffice to confirme the wise, that there is no question to be made, but that the long Rapier hath the aduantage against the short Sword.

Sir you haue pretily handled your discourse, concerning the vantages of the long Rapier against the short Sword, especially at the first shew, and according to common sence, but for the substance and truth of the true fight, you haue said nothing, because for the performance of anie of your allegations, you haue neither true Pace, Place, Time, nor Space: these are the reasons. Your Pace of necessitie must be too large, because otherwise you cannot keepe safe the point of your long Rapier, from the Crosse of the short Sword, vnlesse you will with a narrow Pace keepe backe your hilt so farre, that the space of your offence wilbe too large or too long in distance, and your bodie vnapt to moue and to thrust both strong and quicke in due time, nor aptly to keepe your distance, to win the place with your feete, to thrust home. So now you may plainely see, if you haue skill in the art or science of Defence, that to performe anie thing which you haue alleadged, you haue neither true Pace, Place, time nor Space. But if you will stand vpon the largenesse of your Pace, to keepe backe or saue the point of your long Rapier from the ward or Crosse of the short Sword, or vpon your *Passatos*, in all these you haue great disaduantages: and

*A confutation of
the Italians rea-
sons.*

these are my reasons: Your number will be too great, as thus: whensoever you meane out of your large pace to thrust home, you must of necessitie make foure times with your feet, and one with your hand, or two times with your feet, and one with your hand at the least: and whensoever you make any of your passages, the nūber of your feet are greater then the greatest of any of these times done out of the large pace: but the patient with his short sword, to auoyd you, or disappoint you of your thrust, hath but one time with his foot, at or before the which time, as he in his iudgemēt shall find you in your motion, hath by the slow and great number of your motions or times, sufficient time safely out of all danger to make himselfe readie to take his crosse with his short sword. Now Sir, whether you thrust or not thrust, whether you play the part of an Agent, or Patient, it helpeth you nothing, for he that hath the short sword hath foure times or motions against the long Rapier, namely, bent, spent, lying spent, and drawing backe, in all maner of fights these are to be obserued both by the Patient and Agent. Now note, he that hath the long Rapier must of necessitie play vpon one of these foure motions, or be Patient, which soeuer he shall do, he is still in great danger of the crosse of the short sword, because if he be Agent, his number is too great, he falleth into one of the foure motions, the Patient with his short sword, hauing but the time of the hand, or hād & foot, safely vpon these actions or times taketh his crosse with the short Sword: that being done, he presently vncrosseth and striketh or thrusteth at his pleasure him that hath the long Rapier, in the head, face, or bodie. Now here is againe to be noted, that when the crosse

is made, if he that hath the long Rapier stand fast, he is wounded presently in the vncrossing of the short sword, if he step or leape backe to saue himselfe, yet the time of the hand being swifter then the time of the foot, ouertaketh him, with blow or thrust in the arme, hand, head, face and bodie. Now if he that hath the long Rapier will be patient & make no play, but lie still watching to make his thrust or *Stocata* iust in the comming or mo-uing of the Agents feete with his short sword, then he hath as great disaduantage as he had when he was Patient, because thē the Agent with his short Sword hath but hand and foot to make his crosse: which is most safely to be done in that time, which we call Bent, and is as impossible for the Rapier-man to preuent, as it is for an vnskilfull to strike or thrust iust together with a man of skill. Then thus I conclude, that he that fighteth with a long Rapier, against him that fighteth with a short Sword, can do nothing in due time to defend himselfe, or hurt the other, but is still in daunger of his life, or at the mercie of him that hath the short Sword, or else hath no safe way to helpe himselfe, but onely *Cobs Trauerse* Trauerse. This *Cob* was a great quareller, and did delight in great brauerie to giue foule words to his betters, and would not refuse to go into the field to fight with any man, and when he came into the field, would draw his Sword to fight, for he was sure by the cunning of his Trauerse, not to be hurt by anie man: for at anie time finding himselfe ouermatched would suddenly turne his backe and runne away with such swift-nesse, that it was thought a good horse would scarce take him. And this when I was a young man, was verie much spoken of by many Gentlemen of the Innes of

the Court, and was called *Cobs Trauerse* and those that had seene anie go backe too fast in his fight, would say, he did tread *Cobs Trauerse*.

George Siluer his militarie riddle, truly set downe betweene the Perfection and Imperfection of fight: containing the handling of the foure fights: wherein true consisteth the whole summe and full perfection of the true fight, with all maner of weapons; with an inuincible conclusion.



Ardant fight stayeth, putteth backe, or beateth gardant fight.

Open fight stayeth, putteth backe, or beateth open fight.

Variable fight answereth variable fight in the first distance, and not otherwise, except it be with the perfect length against the imperfect.

Close fight is beaten by gardant fight.

Variable close & gardant fight, beateth gardant fight, open fight, variable fight, and close fight.

Gardant fight in the imperfection of the Agent or Patient, winneth the halfe sword, and preuenteth the close, and whosoever first ventureth the close, loofeth it, and is in great danger of death, and not possible to escape or get out againe without great hurt.

There attendeth most diligently vpon these foure fights foure offensive actions, which we call certaine, vncertaine, first, before, iust, and afterwards: they are to be performed through iudgement, time, measure, number and waight, by which all maner of blowes, thrusts,

thrusts, falses, doubles, or slips, are prevented, or most safely defended. And thus endeth my riddle.

Now followeth the conclusion, that whosoever shall thinke or find himselfe in his fight too weake for the Agent, or Patient Agent, and therefore, or by reason of his drunkenesse, or vnreasonable desperatenesse shall prese within the halfe Sword, or deserately runne in of purpose to giue hurt, or at least for taking of one hurt, to giue another, shall most assuredly be in great danger of death or wounds, and the other shall still be safe and go free.

Veritas vincit.



A BRIEFE NOTE OF THREE ITA-
lian Teachers of Offence.

I write not this to disgrace the dead, but to shew their impudēt boldnesse and insufficiency in performance of their profession when they were living: that from henceforth this briefe note may be a remembrance and warning to beware of had I wist.



Here were three Italian Teachers of Offence in my time. The first was *Signior Rocko*: the second was *Ieronimo*, that was *Signior Rocko* his boy, that taught Gentlemen in the *Blacke-Fryers*, as *Vsher* for his maister in steed of a man. The third was *Vincentio*. This *Signior Rocko* came into *England* about some thirtie yeares past: he taught the Noblemen & Gentlemen of the Court; he caused some of them to weare leaden soales in their shoes, the better to bring them to nimblenesse of feet in their fight. He disbursed a great summe of mony for the lease of a faire house in *Warwicke* lane, which he called his Colledge, for he thought it great disgrace for him to keepe a Fence-schoole, he being then thought to be the onely famous Maister of the Art of armes in the whole world. He caused to be fairely drawne and set round about his Schoole all the Noblemens and Gentlemens armes that were his Schollers, and hanging right vnder their armes their Rapiers, daggers, gloues of male and gantlets. Also, he had benches and stooles, the roome being verie large, for Gentlemē to sit round about his Schoole to behold his teaching. He taught none commonly vnder twentie, fortie, fifty, or an hundred pounds. And because all things should be verie necessary for the Noblemē & gentlemē, he had

in

in his schoole a large square table, with a greene carpet, done round with a verie brode rich fringe of gold, alwaies standing vpon it a verie faire Standish couered with Crimfon Veluet, with inke, pens, pin-dust, and sealing waxe, and quiers of verie excellent fine paper gilded, readie for the Noblemen & Gentlemen (vpon occasion) to write their letters, being then desirous to follow their fight, to send their men to dispatch their businesse. And to know how the time passed, he had in one corner of his schoole a Clocke, with a verie faire large Diall, he had within that schoole, a roome the which was called his priuie schoole, with manie weapons therein, where he did teach his schollers his secret fight, after he had perfectly taught them their rules. He was verie much beloued in the Court.

There was one *Austen Bagger*, a verie tall gentleman of his handes, not standing much vpon his skill, but carying the valiant hart of an Englishman, vpon a time being merrie amongst his friendes, said he would go fight with *Signior Rocco*, presently went to *Signior Rocco* his house in the *Blackefriers*, and called to him in this maner: *Signior Rocco*, thou that art thought to be the onely cunning man in the world with thy weapon, thou that takest vpon thee to hit anie Englishman with a thrust vpon anie button, thou that takest vpon thee to come ouer the seas, to teach the valiant Noblemen and Gentlemen of *England* to fight, thou cowardly fellow come out of thy house if thou dare for thy life, I am come to fight with thee. *Signior Rocco* looking out at a window, perceiuing him in the street to stand readie with his Sword and Buckler, with his two hand Sword drawne, with all speed ran into the street, and manfully

let flie at *Austen Bagger*, who most brauely defended himfelfe, and presently clofed with him, and ftroke vp his heeles, and cut him ouer the breech, and trode vpon him, and moft grieuoufly hurt him vnder his feet: yet in the end *Austen* of his good nature gaue him his life, and there left hin. This was the firft and laft fight that euer *Signior Rocco* made, fauing once at *Queene Hith* he drew his Rapier vpon a waterman, where he was throughly beaten with Oares and Stretchers, but the oddes of their weapons were as great againft his Rapier, as was his two hand Sword againft *Austen Baggers* Sword and Buckler, therefore for that fray he was to be excufed.

Then came in *Vincentio* and *Ieronimo*, they taught Rapier-fight at the Court, at *London*, and in the countrey, by the fpace of feauen or eight yeares or thereabouts. Thefe two *Italian* Fencers, efppecially *Vincentio*, faid that Englifhmen were ftong men, but had no cunning, and they would go backe too much in their fight, which was great difgrace vnto them. Vpon thefe words of difgrace againft Englifhmen, my brother *Toby Siluer* and my felfe, made challenge againft them both, to play with them at the fingle Rapier, Rapier and Dagger, the fingle Dagger, the fingle Sword, the Sword and Target, the Sword and Buckler, & two hand Sword, the Staffe, battell Axe, and Morris Pike, to be played at the Bell Sauage vpon the Scaffold, where he that went in his fight fafter backe then he ought, of Englifhman or Italian, fhould be in danger to breake his necke off the Scaffold. We caufed to that effect, fiue or fixe fcore Bills of challenge to be printed, and fet vp from *Southwarke* to the Tower, and from thence through *London* vnto *Westminster*,

minster, we were at the place with all these weapons at the time appointed, within a bow shot of their Fence schoole: many gentlemen of good accompt, caried manie of the bills of challenge vnto them, telling them that now the *Siluers* were at the place appointed, with all their weapons, looking for them, and a multitude of people there to behold the fight, saying vnto them, now come and go with vs (you shall take no wrong) or else you are shamed for euer. Do the gentlemen what they could, these gallants would not come to the place of triall. I verily thinke their cowardly feare to answere this challenge, had vtterly shamed them indeed, had not the maisters of Defence of *London*, within two or three daies after, bene drinking of bottell Ale hard by *Vincentios* schoole, in a Hall where the *Italians* must of necessitie passe through to go to their schoole: and as they were comming by, the maisters of Defence did pray them to drinke with them, but the *Italians* being verie cowardly, were afraide, and presently drew their Rapiers: there was a pretie wench standing by, that loued the *Italians*, she ran with ourcrie into the street, helpe, helpe, the *Italians* are like to be slaine: the people with all speede came running into the house, and with their Cappes and such things as they could get, parted the fraie, for the English maisters of Defence, meant nothing lesse then to foile their handes vpon these two faint-hearted^r fellowes. The next morning after, all the Court was filled, that the *Italian* teachers of Fence had beaten all the maisters of Defence in *London*, who set vpon them in a house together. This wan the *Italian* Fencers their credit againe, and thereby got much, still continuing their false teaching to the end of their liues.

This *Vincentio* proued himselfe a stout man not long before he died, that it might be seene in his life time he had bene a gallant, and therefore no maruaile he tooke vpon him so highly to teach Englishmen to fight, and to set forth bookes of the feates of Armes. Vpon a time at *Wels* in Somersetsshire, as he was in great brauerie amongst manie gentlemen of good accompt, with great boldnesse he gaue out speeches, that he had bene thus manie yeares in *England*, and since the time of his first comming, there was not yet one Englishman, that could once touch him at the single Rapier, or Rapier and Dagger. A valiant gentleman being there amongst the rest, his English hart did rise to heare this proude boaster, secretly sent a messenger to one *Bartholomew Bramble* a friend of his, a verie tall man both of his hands and person, who kept a schoole of Defence in the towne, the messenger by the way made the maister of Defence acquainted with the mind of the gentleman that sent for him, and of all what *Vincentio* had said, this maister of Defence presently came, and amongst all the gentlemen with his cap off, prayed maister *Vincentio*, that he would be pleased to take a quart of wine of him. *Vincentio* verie scornefully looking vpon him, said vnto him. Wherefore should you giue me a quart of wine? Marie Sir, said he, because I heare you are a famous man at your weapon. Then presently said the gentleman that sent for the maister of Defence: Maister *Vincentio*, I pray you bid him welcome, he is a man of your profession. My profession said *Vincentio*? what is my profession. Then said the gentleman, he is a maister of the noble science of Defence. Why said maister *Vincētio*, God make him a good man. But the maister of Defence wold not

not thus leaue him, but prayed him againe he would be pleased to take a quart of wine of him. Thē said *Vincētio*, I haue no need of thy wine. Then said the maister of Defence: Sir I haue a schoole of Defence in the towne, will it please you to go thither. Thy schoole, said maister *Vincentio*? what shall I do at thy schoole? play with me (said the maister) at the Rapier and Dagger, if it please you. Play with thee said maister *Vincentio*? if I play with thee, I will hit thee 1. 2. 3. 4. thrustes in the eie together. Then said the maister of Defence, if you can do so, it is the better for you, and the worse for me, but surely I can hardly beleeeue that you can hit me: but yet once againe I hartily pray you good Sir, that you will go to my schoole, and play with me. Play with thee said maister *Vincentio* (verie scornefully?) by God me scorne to play with thee. With that word scorne, the maister of Defence was verie much moued, and vp with his great English fist, and stroke maister *Vincentio* such a boxe on the eare that he fell ouer and ouer, his legges iust against a Butterie hatch, whereon stood a great blacke Iacke: the maister of Defence fearing the worst, against *Vincentio* his rising, catcht the blacke Iacke into his hand, being more then halfe full of Beere. *Vincentio* lustily start vp, laying his hand vpon his Dagger, & with the other hand pointed with his finger, saying, very well: I will cause to lie in the Gaile for this geare, 1. 2. 3. 4. yeares. And well said the maister of Defence, since you will drinke no wine, will you pledge me in Beere? I drinke to all the cowardly knaues in *England*, and I thinke thee to be the veriest coward of them all: with that he cast all the Beere vpon him: notwithstanding *Vincentio* hauing nothing but his guilt Rapier, and

Dagger about him, and the other for his defence the blacke Iacke, would not at that time fight it out: but the next day met with the maister of Defence in the streete, and said vnto him, you remember how misused a me yesterday, you were to blame, me be an excellent man, me teach you how to thrust two foote further then anie Englishman, but first come you with me: then he brought him to a Mercers shop, and said to the Mercer, let me see of your best silken Pointes, the Mercer did presently shew him some of seauen groates a dozen, then he payeth fourteene groates for two dozen, and said to the maister of Defence, there is one dozen for you, and here is another for me. This was one of the valiantest Fencers that came from beyond the seas, to teach Englishmen to fight, and this was one of the manliest frayes, that I haue hard of, that euer he made in *England*, wherin he shewed himselfe a farre better man in his life, then in his profession he was, for he professed armes, but in his life a better Christian. He set forth in print a booke for the vse of the Rapier and Dagger, the which he called his practise, I haue read it ouer, and because I finde therein neither true rule for the perfect teaching of true fight, not true ground of true fight, neither sence or reason for due prooffe thereof. I haue thought it friuolous to recite any part therin contained: yet that the truth hereof may appeare, let two mē being wel experienced in the Rapier and Dagger fight, choose any of the best branches in the same booke, & make trial with force and agility, without the which the truth betweene the true & false fight cannot be knowne, & they shall find great imperfections therein. And againe, for prooffe that there is no truth, neither in his rules, grounds

or Rapier-fight, let triall be made in this maner: Set two vnſkilfull men together at the Rapier and Dagger, being valiant, and you ſhall ſee, that once in two bouts there ſhall either one or both of them be hurt. Then ſet two ſkilfull men together, being valiant at the Rapier and Dagger, and they ſhall do the like. Then ſet a ſkilful Rapier and Dagger-man the beſt that can be had, and a valiant man hauing no ſkill together at Rapier & Dagger, and once in two bouts vpon my credit in all the experience I haue in fight, the vnſkilful man, do the other what he can for his life to the contrarie, ſhall hurt him, and moſt commonly if it were in continuance of fight, you ſhall ſee the vnſkilfull man to haue the aduantage. And if I ſhould chuſe a valiant man for ſeruice of the Prince, or to take part with me or anie friend of mine in a good quarrell, I would chuſe the vnſkilfull man, being vnencombred with falſe fights, becauſe ſuch a man ſtandeth free in his valour with ſtrength and agilitie of bodie, freely taketh the benefit of nature, fighteth moſt braue, by looſing no oportunitie, either ſoundly to hurt his enimie, or defend himſelfe, but the other ſtanding for his Defence, vpon his cunning Italian wardes, *Poin-ta reuerſa*, the *Imbrocata*, *Stocata*, and being faſt tyed vnto theſe falſe fightes, ſtandeth troubled in his wits, and nature therby racked through the largeneſſe or falſe lyings or Spaces, whereby he is in his fight as a man halfe maimed, looſing the oportunitie of times & benefit of nature, & whereas before being ignorant of theſe falſe Rapier fightes, ſtanding in the free libertie of nature giuen him by god, he was able in the field with his weapō to anſwere the valianteſt man in the world, but now being tied vnto that falſe fickle vncertaine fight, there-

by hath lost in nature his freedome, is now become scarce halfe a man, and euerie boye in that fight is become as good a man as himselfe.

Ieronimo this gallant was valiant, and would fight indeed, and did, as you shall heare. He being in a Coch with a wench that he loued well, there was one *Cheese*, a verie tall man, in his fight naturall English, for he fought with his Sword and Dagger, and in Rapier-fight had no skill at all. This *Cheese* hauing a quarrell to *Ieronimo*, ouertooke him vpon the way, himselfe being on horsebacke, did call to *Ieronimo*, and bad him come forth of the Coch or he would fetch him, for he was come to fight with him. *Ieronimo* presently went forth of the Coch and drew his Rapier and dagger, put himself into his best ward or *Stocata*, which ward was taught by himselfe and *Vincentio*, and by them best allowed of, to be the best ward to stand vpon in fight for life, either to assault the enemie, or stand and watch his comming, which ward it should seeme he ventured his life vpon, but howsoeuer with all the fine Italienated skill *Ieronimo* had, *Cheese* with his Sword within two thrustes ran him into the bodie and slue him. Yet the Italian teachers will say, that an Englishmã cannot thrust straight with a Sword, because the hilt will not suffer him to put the forefinger ouer the Crosse, nor to put the thumbe vpon the blade, nor to hold the pummell in the hand, whereby we are of necessitie to hold fast the handle in the hand: by reason whereof we are driuen to thrust both compasse and short, whereas with the Rapier they can thrust both straight and much further then we can with the Sword, because of the hilt: and these be the reasons they make against the Sword.

BREF INSTRUCTIONS

VPÖ MY PRADOXES OF DEFENCE
for the true handling of all Mann^r of
weapons together w^t the fower grownds
& the fower gou^rnors w^{ch} gouernours
are left out in my pradoxes w^tout the
knowledge of w^{ch} no Man can fight saf

By George Silver Gentleman
[1599]



TO THE READER.

OR as much as in my padoxes of Defence I haue admonyshed Men to take heede of false teachers of Defence, yet once againe in these my bref instructions I do the lyke, because Diuers have wryten books treating of the noble science of Defence, wherin they rather teach offence then Defence, rather shewing men therby how to be slayne than to defend them selues frō the Dang^r of their enemys, as we may dayly se to the great grief & ouerthrowe of many braue gentlemen & gallent of ouer victorious nation of great brytaine, And therefore for the great loue & Care y^t I haue for the well Doing & p^rseruation of my Countrymen, seeing their Dayly ruens & vtter ou^rthrow of Diu^m gallant gent: & others w^{ch} trust only to that Impfyt fyght of y^t Rapior, yeaue although they Deyly se their owne ou^rthrowes & slaughter therby, yet becaus they are trayned vp therin, they thinke & do fully pswade them selues that ther is no fight so excelent & wher as amongst diu^rs other their oppynyons y^t leadeth them to this errous on of y^t cheifest is, because ther be so many slayne w^t these weapons & therefore they hold them so exelent, but these thinges do

cheiffy happen, first because their fyght is Imprfyt for that they vse nether the prfyt gronds of true fyght, nether yet the 4 gou'nors w^tout w^{ch} no man can fight saf, nether do they vse such other rules w^{ch} are required in the right vse of prfyt defence, and also their weapons for y^e most prte beinge of an Imprfyt length, must of necessity make an Imprfyt Defence because they Cannot vse them in due tyme & place, for had these valerous mynded men the right p^rfection of the true fyght w^t the short sword, & also of other weapons of prfyt length, I know y^e men would com saffer out of the field frō such bloddye bankets & that such would be their p^rfections her in, that it would saue many 100 mens lyues. But how should men lerne p^rfection out of such rules as are nothing els but very Imprfectiō it self. And as it is not fyt for a man w^{ch} desyreth y^e clere lyght of the Day to go downe into the bottom of a deepe & Darke Dungion, belyvinge to fynd it there, so is it as Impossyble for men to fynd the prfyt knowledge of this noble science wher as in all their teachings every thinge is attempted & acted vpō Imprfyt rules, for ther is but one truth in all things, w^{ch} I wish very hartely were taught & practysed here amongst vs, & y^e those Imprfyt & murtherous kynde of false fyghts might be by them abolyshed. Leaue now to quaf & gull any Longer of that fylthy brynysh puddle, seeing yō may now drink of y^e fresh & clere sprynge.

O that men for their Defence would but geve their mynde to practise the true fyght in deed, & lerne to bere true brytish wards for thire defence, w^{ch} yf they had it in prfyt practyse, I speak it of myne owne knowledge y^e those Imprfyt Italyon Devyses w^t rapyor & ponyard
would

would be clene cast asyde & of no account of al such as blind offections do not lead beyond the bonds of reason. Therefore for the verye zealous & vnfayned loue y^t I beare vnto yo^r high & royal prson my Cuntrymen pytting their causes y^t so many braue men should be dayly murthered, & spoyled for want of true knowledge of this noble science & not as som Imagyn to be, only y^e excellence of y^e rapior fyght, & wher as my padoxes of defence is to the most sorte as a darke ryddle in many things ther in set downe, therefore I have now this second tyme taken som paynes to write these few breek Instructions ther vppō wher by they may the better attayne to the truth of this scyence & laying open here all such things as was som thinge Intrycat for them to vnd^r stand in my p^rdoxes & therfor y^t I haue the ful p^rfectiō & knowledge of the p^rfyte vse of all mann^r of weapons, it Doth embolden me here in to wryte for the better Instruction of the Vnskyllfull.

And I haue added to these my breek Instructions c^taine necesarie admonytions w^{ch} I wish every man not only to know but also to obs^{er}ue & follow, Chiefly al such as are desyrous to enter into the right vsage & knowledge of their weapons, & also I haue thought it good to Annexe here vnto my p^rdoxes of Defence because in these my breek Instructions, I haue referred y^e reader to diu^s rules ther in set downe.

This haue I wryten for an Infallible truth & a note of remembrance to o^r gallant gent: & others of o^r brave mynded Nation of great bryttaine, w^{ch} bere a mynde to defend them selues & to wyn honour in the feeld by their Actions of armes & syngle Combats.

And know y^t I write not this for vaine glorie, but out

of An entyre loue y^t I owe vnto my natyve Cuntrymen, as on who lamentith their Losses, sorrye y^t so great an errour should be so Carefully noryshed as a s^tpant in their bosoms to their vtt^r confusyō, as of long tyme haue byn seene, wher as yf they would but seeke the truth her in they were easyly abolyshed, therefore follow the truth & fly Ignorance.

And confyd^r y^t learnyng hath no greater enemye than Ignorance, nether can the vnskyfull euer Judge the truth of my arte to them unknowen, beware of rash Judgment & accept my labours as thankfully as I bestow them willingly, censuer me Justly, let no man Dispise my worke herin Causeles, & so I referre my self to the censuer of such as are skylful herin & so I cōmyt yō to the prtection of the almyghty Jehovah.

yo^r in al loue & fryendly Affectiō,

GEORGE SYLVER.



A D M O N Y T I O N S
TO THE GENTLEMEN &
BRAVE GALLANTS OF GREAT
BRITAIN AGAINST QUARRELS &
BRAULES WRITEN BY GEORGE SILUER.
GENT.

Heras I have declaired in my prdoxes of defence of the false teachinge of the noble scyence of defence vsed here by the Italyon fencers willing men therin to take heed how they trusted ther vnto w^t suffytient reasons & profs why.

And wher as ther was a booke wryten by Vincentio an Italiō teacher whose yll vsinge practises & vnskyllfull teaching were such y^t it hath cost the lyves of many of o^r brave gentlemen & gallants, the vnc^taintye of whose false teaching doth yet remayne to y^e dayly murthering & ouer throw of many, for he & the rest of them did not teach Defence but offence, as it doth playnlye appere by those y^t follow the same Imprfyt fyght according to their teaching or instructiōs by the orders from them pceedinge, for be the actors y^t follow them neuer so prfyt or skylfull therin one or both of them are eyther

fore hurt or slaine in their Incountrs & fyghts, & yf they alledge y^t we vse it not rightly according to y^e p^rfectiō therof, & therefore cannot defend o^r selues, to w^{ch} I answer yf themselues had had any p^rfection therin, & that their teaching had byn a truth, themselues would not have byn beaten & slayne in their fyghts, & vsing of their weapons, as they were.

And therefore I proue wher a man by their teaching can not be saf in his defence following their owne ground of fyght then is their teaching offence & not defence, for in true fyght against the best no hurt can be don. And yf both haue the full p^rfection of true fyght, then the one will not be able to hurt the other at what p^rfyt weapon so ever.

For it cannot be sayd y^t yf a man go to the feld & cannot be sure to defend him self in fight & to com saf home, yf goid be not against him whither he fyght w^t a man of skyll or no skil it may not be said y^t such a man is Mast^r of the Noble scyence of defence, or that he hath the p^rfection of true fyght, for yf both haue the p^rfection of their weapons, yf by any Device, on should be able to hurt the other, ther were no p^rfection in the fyght of weapons, & this firmly hold in yo^r mynd for a generall rule, to be the hayth & p^rfection of the true handling of al maner of weapons.

And also wheras y^t said Vincentio in y^t same booke hath written discours of honour & honourable quarrels making many reasons to prve meanes & wayes to enter y^e feeld & cōbat, both for the lye & other disgraces, al w^{ch} diabolicall devyces tendeth only to villayne & destruction as hurtynge, Maymynge & Murtheringe or kyllinge.

Annymating y^e myndes of yonge gentlemen & gallants to follow those rules to maintaine their honors & credits, but the end therof for the most parte is eyther kyllyng or hanginge or both to their vtter vndoinge & great gref of themselves, & their friends, but then to late to call it againe. they consyder not the tyme & place that we lyue in, nor do not thoroughly looke into the danger of the lawe til it be to late, & for that in diuers other cuntries in these things they have a larger scope than we have in these our dayes.

Therefore it behoveth vs not upō euery abuse offered wher by o' bloud shalbe Inflamed, or o' choler kindled presently w^t the sword or w^t the stabb, or by force of Armes to seeke Reuenge, w^{ch} is the propre nature of wild beasts in their rage so to do, being voyde of the vse of reason, w^{ch} thinge should not be in Men of discreatiō so much to Degenerate, but he y^t wil not endure an Iniurye, but will seeke revenge, then he ought to do it by Cyvill Order & prof, by good & holsom lawes, w^{ch} are ordayned for such Causes, w^{ch} is a thinge far more fyt & requisted in a place of so Cyvell a gou'nment as we lyve in, then is the other, & who so follow^t these my Admonitions shalbe accounted as valyent a Man as he y^t fyghteth & farr wyser. for I see no reason why a Man should adventure hys lyf & estate upō every tryfle, but should rather put vp diu's abuses offered vnto him, because it is agreeable both to the Lawes of god & o' Cuntrye.

Why should not words be Answered w^t words againe, but yf a Man by his enemye be charged w^t blowes then may he Lawfully seeke the best meanes to defend himself, & In such a Case I hold it fyt to vse his skylle & to show his force by his Deeds, yet so, y^t his dealyng be
not

not w^t full Rygour to the others confufyon yf poffyble it may be efchewed.

Alfo take heed how yō appoynt the field w^t yo^r Enemye publickly becaufe o^r Lawes do not prmyt yt, neyther appoint to meet him in pryvat fort left yō wounding him he accufe yō of fellownye faying you have robbed him &c. Or he may laye companye clofely to Murther you & then to report he dyd yt him felf valyently in the feeld.

Alfo take heed of thyne Enemyes Stratagemes, left he fynd **Meanes to make yō** to looke a fyde vpō fomthing, or caufe yō to fhew whether yō have on a p^rvy Coate, & fo when yō Looke from him, he hurt or kyll you.

Take not armes vpō euery light occafyon, let not one fryend vpon a word or a tryfle violate another but let ech man zealoufly embrace fryendfhypp, & turne not famylyaritie into ftrangnes, kyndnes into mallice, nor loue into hatred, norifh not thefe ftrange & vnnaturall Alterations.

Do not wyckedly refolue one to feeke the others ou^tthrowe, do not confyrme to end thy Mallice by fyght becaufe for the moft prte y^t endeth by Death.

Confyder when thefe things were moft vfed in former Ages they fought not fo much by envye the ruen & diftruction on of another, they never tooke tryall by fword but in defence of Innocencye to maintayne blotlefs honour.

Do not vpon Euery tryfle make an Action of revenge, or of Defyance.

Go not into the feeld w^t thy fryend at his Intreatye to take his prte but firft know y^e mann^r of y^e quarrell how Juftly or vniuftlye it grow, & do not ther in maintaine
wronge

wronge against ryght, but examyne the cause of the contravercye, & yf ther be reason for his rage to lead him to y^t mortall resolution.

Yet be the cause neuer so Just, go not w^t him neyther further nor suffer him to fight yf possyble it may by any meanes be otherwys ended & wyll him not to enter into so dangerous an action, but leue it till neccesytie requireth it.

And this I hold to be the best Course for it is foolishnes & endlesse troble to cast a stone at euerye Dogge y^t barks at you. this noble scyence is not to cause on man to abuse another iniurioulye but to vse it in their necessyties to defend them in their Just Causes & to maintaine their honour & Credits.

Therefore flye al rashnes, pryde, & doynge of Iniurie all foule faults & errours herin, p^rsume not on this, & therbye to think it lawfull to offer Iniurye to Anye, think not yo^rself Invincible, but consyder y^t often a verye wretch hath kyllled a taule man; but he y^t hath humanitye, the more skylful he is in this noble science, the more humble, modest, & V^rtuous he should shew him self both in speech & Action, no lyer, no vaunter nor quarreller, for these are the causes of Wounds, Dishonour & Death.

Yf you talke w^t great men of honourable qualitie w^t such chiefly haue regarde to frame yo^r speeches & Answer so reverent, y^t a foolish word, or froward Answer geve no occasyon of offence for often they breed Deadly hatred, Cruell murthers & extreem ruens &c.

Ever shun al occasyons of quarrels, but marshall men cheiflye generals & great comānders should be exelent skylfull in the noble science of defence, therby to be

able to answer quarrels, Combats & Challenges in Defence of their prince & Cuntry.

Vale.

Bref Instructions vpon my pradoxes of Defence for the true handlyng of all Mann^r of weapons together w^t the fower grownds & the fower gouⁿors wth gouernours are left out in my pradoxes w^out the knowledge of wth no Man can fight saf.

Cap. I.

<i>The fower grownds or</i>	1.	<i>Judgment</i>
<i>principles of y^e true</i>	2.	<i>Distance</i>
<i>fyght at all manner of</i>	3.	<i>Tyme</i>
<i>Weapons are these 4, viz.</i>	4.	<i>Place.</i>

He reason wherof these 4 grownds or p^rinciples be the fyrst & cheefest, are the followinge, because through Judgment, yō kepe yo^r dystance, through Distance yō take yo^r Tyme, through Tyme yō safely wyne or gayne the Place of yo^r adu^sarie, the Place beinge woon or gayned yō haue tyme safely eyther to stryke, thrust, ward, cloze, grype, slyp or go back, in the w^{ch} tyme yo^r enemye is disapoynted to hurt yō, or to defend himself, by reason that he hath lost his true Place, the reason y^t he hath lost his True place is by the length of
Tyme

Tyme through the numb^s of his feet, to w^{ch} he is of necessytie Dryven to y^t wilbe Agent.

The 4 gou'nors are those y^t follow.

1. The fyrst gou'nor is Judgment w^{ch} is to know when yo^r Adversarie can reach you, & when not, & when yō can do the lyke to him, & to know by the goodnes or badnes of his lyinge, what he can do, & when & how he can p^rforme it.
2. The second gou'nor is Measure. Measure is the better to know how to make yo^r space true to defend yo^r self, or to offend yo^r enemye.
3. The third & fourth gou'nors is a twyfold mynd when yō pres in on yo^r enemye, for as yō have a mynd to go forwarde, so yō must haue at y^t instant a mynd to fly backwarde vpō any action y^t shalbe offered or don by yo^r adu^rsarie.

Certaine general rules w^{ch} must be obsyved in y^r prsyt vse of al kynde of weapons.

Cap. 2.

1. **F**yrst when you com into the feeld to encounter w^t yo^r Enemy, obsyve wel the scope, Evennes & vneunnes of yo^r grounde, put yo^rself in redynes w^t yo^r weapon, before yo^r enemye Com w^tin distance, set the svnn in his face travers yf possible yō can still remembrynge yo^r gou'nors.
2. Let al yo^r lyinge be such as shal best like yo^rself, euer confyderinge out what fyght yo^r Enemye chargeth yō, but be sure to kepe yo^r distance, so y^t nether hed, Armes,

hands, body, nor legges be w^tin hys reach, but y^t he must fyrst of necessitye put in his foote or feet, at w^{ch} tyme yō haue the Choyse of iij Actions by the w^{ch} yō may endang^r him & go free yo^rself.

1. The fyrst is to strike or thrust at him, at y^t instant when he haue gayned yō the place by his cominge in
2. The second is to ward, & Aft^r to strike or thrust from y^t, remembringe yo^r gou^rnors
3. The thyrd is to flippe alyttle backe & to strike or thrust after hym.

but euer remember y^t in the fyrst motion of your Adversarye towarde yō, y^t yō flyde a lyttle back so shall yō be p^rpred in due tyme to prforme anye of the iij Actions Aforesaid, by disappoyntyng him of his true place, whereby yō shall safelye defend yo^rselfe & endanger him.

remember also y^t yf through fear or polyfye, he strike or thrust short, & ther w^t go back, or not go back, follow him vpon yo^r twofold gou^rnors, so shall yo^r warde & slype be prformed in lyke mann^r as before, & yo^rself stil be saf.

Kepe yo^r dystance & suffer not yo^r adu^sarie to wyn 3. or gayne the place of you, for yf he shall so do, he may endanger to hurt or kyll you.

Know y^t the place is, when on may stryke or thrust home w^tout puttinge in of his foot.

Yt may be obiected against thys last ground, y^t men do often strike & thrust at the half sword & yet the same is prfytly defended, where to I answer y^t that defence is prfytly made by reason y^t the warder hath his true space before the stryker or thruster is in his force or entred into his action.

Therefore

"Put in his foot,"
i.e. advance.

"His cominge in."
It must be remembered that in Silver's time the lunge was unknown, at least to English fencers, & the only movements of the feet were "passes" and "traverses," which with "slips" constituted a great part of the defence as well as of the attack.

"Passes" were steps either forwards or backwards and the "traverses" were steps in a lateral direction.

"Slips" were little short steps either lateral or backwards.

These movements were also much used in feints of attack.

"To wyn or gayne the place;" i.e. to come within striking distance.

Therefore alwaies do p'vent both blow & thrust, the blow by true space, & the thrust by narrow space y^t is true crossinge it before the same com into their full force, other wyse the hand of the Agent beinge as swyft as y^e hand of the patient, the hand of y^e Agent beinge the fyrst mou^r, must of necessity strike or thrust y^t prte of y^e patient w^{ch} shalbe stryken or thrust at because the tyme of y^t hand to the tyme of y^e hand, beinge of lyke swyftnes the fyrst mou^r hath y^e aduantage.

"Space" is the distance which the sword blade has to traverse in changing from one position to another: thus from "medium" to "quarte" or "tierce" would be a "narrow space," while from "tierce" to "septime" or from "seconde" to "quarte" would be a very "wyde space."

4. When yo^r enemy shal pres vpon you, he wilbe Open in one place or other, both at syngal & dubble weapon, or at the least he wilbe to weake in his ward vpon such p^rffinge, then strike or thrust at such open or weakest prte y^t yo shal fynd neereft.

5. When yō attempt to wyn the place, do it vpon gard, remembringe yo^r gouⁿors, but when he p^rffeth vpō yō & gayneth yō The place, then strike or thrust at him in his cōmyng in,

A time hit or thrust.

Or yf he shal stryke or thrust at yō, then Ward it, & stryke or thrust at him from yo^r warde, & fly backe Instantly accordinge to yo^r gouⁿors, so shall yō escape safte, for that the fyrst Motion of the feete backwarde is more swyft, then the first motion of the feet forwarde, wher by yo^r regressyon wilbe more swyfter, then his course in p^rgressyon to Anoye you, the reason is, that in the fyrst motyon of his p^rgressyon his Numb^r & Waight is greater then yo^rs are, in yo^r first motyon of yo^r regressyon, neu^rtheless al men knowe that the cōtynual course of the feet forwarde is more swyft then the Contynuall Course of y^e feet backwards.

Parry and Riposte. Silver is very careful to emphasise the necessity of "flying backe," i.e. getting away, immediately after an attack, whether it be successful or otherwise.

6. yf yo^r enemy lye in varyable fyght, & stryke or thrust at yō then be sure to kepe yo^r Distance & strike

Time hits & thrusts.

or thrust at such open prte of him as are neereſt vnto you, viz, at the hand, Arme, hed, or legg of him, & go back w^t all,

yf ij men fight at varyable fyght, & yf w^tin diſtance, they muſt both be hurt, for in ſuch fight they Cannot make a true Croſſe, nor haue tyme trulye to Judge, by reaſon y^t the ſwyft motyon of the hand, beinge a ſwyfter moue^r, then the eye Deceyveth the eye, at what weapon ſoeuer yō ſhal fyght w^t all, as in my pradoxes of defence in the chapter therof doth appere. 7.

Looke to the grype of yo^r Enemye, & vpō his ſlype take ſuch warde as ſhal beſt fyt your hand, from w^{ch} warde ſtrike or thrust, ſtil remembrynge yo^r gouernors, 8.

yf yō can Indirect yo^r enemye at any kynde of weapon, then yō haue the aduantage, becauſe he muſt moue his feet to direct him ſelf Againe, & yō in the meane tyme may ſtrike or thrust at him, & fly out faſt, before he can offer anything at you, his tyme wilbe ſo longe. 9.


When you ſhall Ward blow or thrust, made at yo^r right or left prte, w^t any kynd of weapon, rememb^r to Draw yo^r hynde foot a lyttle c^rculerlye, from that prte to w^{ch} the ſame ſhalbe made, wher by yō ſhal make yo^r defence the more prfyt, & ſhal ſtand the more Apt to ſtrike or thrust from yt. 10.

The "grype" is the ſeizing of the ſword-bilt with the left hand,— for this purpoſe a "guanto da preſa," or gripping gauntlet with the palm protected with fine mail, was ſometimes uſed. To "indirect" is to either manœuvre or force him from the true line of direction.

A Demi-volte.

*A declaration of al the 4 generall fyghts to be
used w^t the sword at dubble or syngle,
longe or short, & w^t Certaine
p^ticular rules to them
Annexed.*

Cap. 3.

1.  Pen fyght is to Carrye yo^r hand & hylt a loft aboute yo^r hed, eyther w^t poynt vpright, or point backwards w^{ch} is best, yet vse that w^{ch} yo^r shall fynd most aptest, to strike, thrust, or ward. The "Guardia alta" of Marozzo & "Terza guardia" of Viggiani.
2. Gardant fyght in gen^rall is of ij sorts, y^e fyrst is true gardant fyght, w^{ch} is eyther prfyt or Imprfyt. A "hanging" guard.
 The prfyt is to carry yo^r hand & hylt aboute yo^r hed w^t yo^r poynt doune to wards yo^r left knee, w^t yo^r sword blade somewhat neer yo^r bodye, not bearing out your poynt, but rather declynynge in a lyttle towards yo^r said knee, y^t yo^r enemye crose not yo^r poynt & so hurt you, stand bolt vpright in this fyght, & yf he offer to presse in then bere yo^r hed & body a lyttle backwarde. "True gardant" is a High Prime.
 The Imprfyt is when yo^r bere yo^r hand & sword hylt prfyt hayth aboute yo^r hed, as aforesayd but leanyng or stoopinge forwarde w^t yo^r body & therby yo^r space wilbe to Wyde on both syds to defend the blow stryken at the left syde of yo^r hed or to wyde to defend a thrust from the ryght syde of the body, To stand with the body leaning forward is an "imperfect" position.
 Also it is Imprfyt, yf yo^r bere yo^r hand & hylt as aforesayd, berynge yo^r poynt to farr out from yo^r knee, so y^t yo^r enemy May Crose, or strike Asyde yo^r poynt, & therby endanger you,

"Bastard gardant" is a kind of high seconde, but more central.

The second is bastard gardant fyght w^{ch} is to Carrye yo^r hand & hylt below yo^r hed, brest hye or lower w^t yo^r poynt downwarde towarde yo^r left foote, this bastard gardant ward is not to be vsed in fyght, ecept it be to Crosse yo^r enemyes Ward at his comynge in to take the grype of him or such other advantage, as in diu^rs plac^s of y^e sword fyght is set forth.

"Forehand ward" is a medium guard.

Close fyght is when yō Cross at y^e half sword eyther 3. aboue at forehand ward y^t is w^t poynt hye, & hande & hylt lowe, or at true or bastard gardant ward w^t both yo^r poynts down.

Close is all mann^r of fyghts wherin yō have made a 4. true Crosse at the half sword w^t yo^r space very narrow & not Crost, is also close fyght.

The Italian terms were imperfectly understood in England at the end of the XVth century, & Silver has evidently misconstrued them.

Variable fyght is al other mann^r of lyinge not here before spoken of, wher of these 4 that follow are the cheefest of them.

"Quinta guardia" of Capo Ferro.

Stocata: w^{ch} is to lye w^t yo^r right legge forward, w^t (1.) yo^r sword or rapior hylt back on the out syde of yo^r right thygh w^t yo^r poynt forewarde to ward yo^r enemye, w^t yo^r dagg^r in yo^r other hand extendinge yo^r hand towards the poynt of yo^r rapior, holdinge yo^r dagg^r w^t y^e poynt vpright w^t narrow space betweene yo^r rapior blade, & the nayles of yo^r dagg^r hand, kepynge yo^r rapior poynt back behind yo^r dagg^r hand yf possyble,

"Prima guardia" of Capo Ferro, "Guardia alta" of Alferi, & "Guardia di becha passa" of Marozzo.

Or he may lye wyde below vnd^r his dagg^r w^t his rapior poynt down towards his enemyes foote, or w^t his poynt fourth w^t out his dagg^r.

"Quarta guardia" of Alferi.

Imbrocata: is to lye w^t yo^r hylt hyer then yo^r hed, beringe yo^r knuckles vpwarde, & yo^r point depending towarde yo^r Enemyes face or brest.

Mountanta: is to Carrye yo^r rapior pummell in the palm

palm of yo^r hand resting it on yo^r lyttle fynger w^t yo^r hand belowe & so movntyng it vp a loft, & so to com in w^t a thrust vpō yo^r Enemyes face or brest, as out of y^e Imbrocata.

4. Passata; is eyther to pass w^t y^e Stocata, or to carrye yo^r sword or rapior hylt by yo^r right flanke, w^t yo^r poynt directly against yo^r Enemyes belly, w^t yo^r left foote forward, extendinge fourth yo^r dagg^r hand w^t the poynt of yo^r dagger forward as yō do yo^r sword, w^t narrow space between yo^r sword & dagg^r blade, & so to make yo^r passage vpon him,


The "short syngle sword fight" was a fight with a one-hand sword, and without the assistance of a defensive weapon in the left hand.

Also any other kynd of varyable fyght or lyeinge whatsoeuer a man can devise not here expressed, is cōtayned vnder this fight.

The "sword dubble" is any kind of single-hand sword assisted by a defensive weapon in the other.

Of the short syngle sword fyght against the lyke weapon.

Cap. 4.

1.  F yo^r enemye lye a loft, eyther in open or true gardant fight, & then strike at the left syde of yo^r hed or body yo^r best ward to defend yo^r self, is to bere it w^t true gardant ward, & yf he strike & com in to the cloze, or to take the grype of you yō may then safely take the grype of him as it appereth in the chapter of the grype,
2. but yf he do strike & not com in, then instantly vpō yo^r ward, vncrose & strike him either on the right or left syde of y^e hed, & fly out instantly.
3. Yf yō bere this w^t forhand ward, be sure to ward his blowe, or kepe yo^r distance, otherwyse he shall decue

A high prime.

A direct "riposte."

"Fly out" suggests a lateral movement of the feet, but might

also mean a backward one.

N you

you w^t euery false, stil endangeringe yo^r hed, face, hand, Armes, bodye, & bendyng knee, w^t blow or thrust. Therefore kepe well yo^r dystance, because yō can very hardly deserue (being w^t in dystance), by w^{ch} syde of yo^r sword he will stryke, nor at w^{ch} of those prts aforesayd, because the swyft motion of y^e hand deceyveth the eye,

yf he lye a loft & strike as aforesaid at yo^r head, yō may 4. endanger him yf yō thrust at his hand, hilt, or Arme, turninge yo^r knuckles downwarde, but fly back w^t all in the instant y^t yō thrust,

yf he lye a loft as aforesaid, & strike a loft at the left 5. syde of yo^r hed, yf yō wil ward his blow w^t forehand ward, then be sure to kepe yo^r distance, except he com so c^ttaine that yō be sure to ward his blow, at w^{ch} tyme yf he com in w^t all, yō may endanger him from y^t ward, eyther by blow, thrust or grype,

yf he lye a loft & yō lye a lowe w^t yo^r sword in the 6. varyable fyght, then yf yō offer to ward his blow made at yo^r hed, w^t true gardant ward yo^r tyme wilbe to longe Due in tyme to make a sure ward, for that it is bett^r to bere it w^t forehand ward, but be sure to kepe yo^r distance, to make him com in w^t his feet, wher by his tyme wilbe to longe to do y^t he intendeth.

yf ij Men fight both vpō open fyght he y^t first break- 7. eth his distance, yf he attempt to stryke at the others hed, shalbe surely stryken on the hed himself, yf the patient Agent strike ther at in his Comynge in, & slyp a lyttle back w^t all, for y^t slydinge back maketh an indirection, wherby yo^r blow Crosseth his hed, & maketh a true ward for yo^r owne, this will yt be, because of his length of tyme in his cōmyng in,

A similar guard is favoured by some modern Austrian sabre players.

A time thrust in "quarte" at the sword hand.

A "quarte" parry, followed by "riposte" or "grip."

A time hit with "opposition."

8. Also yf ij fyght vpon open fyght, it is better for the patient to strike home strongly at the Agents hed, when the said Agent shal pres vpon him to wyn the place then to thrust, because the blow of the patient is not only hurtful to the Agent, but it also maketh a true Crose to defend his owne hed,

9. yf he charge yō a loft, out of the open or true gardant fyght, yf yō answer him w^t y^c Imprfyt gardant fyght, w^t yo^r body leanyng forward, yo^r space wilbe to wyde on both syde to make a true ward in due tyme, & yo^r arme And body wilbe to neere vnto him, so that w^t the bending in of his body w^t the tyme of hand & foote, he may take the grype of you,

but yf yō stand vpright in true gardant fyght, then he cannot reach to take the grype of you, nor otherwise to offend yō yf you kepe yo^r distance, w^tout puttinge in of his foote or feete wherin his number wilbe to great, & so his tyme wilbe to longe, & yō in that tyme may by puttinge in of yo^r body take the grype of him, yf he pres to com in w^t vsing only yo^r hand, or hand & foote, & ther vpon yō may stryke or thrust w^t yo^r sword & fly out w^t all accordinge to yo^r governors, se more of this, in the chapter of the grype.

"Number wilbe to great," i.e. will have to make too many steps or passes.

10. yf he wil stil prsse forcibly a loft vpō you, Charginge yō out of the open fyght or true gardant fyght, Intendinge to hurt yō in the face or hed, or to take the grype of yō Against such a on, you must vse both gardant & open fyght, wherby vpon euery blow or thrust that he shall make at you, you may from yo^r wards, strike or thrust him on the face hed or bodye as it appeareth more at large in the 5th Chapter of these my Instructions.

11. yf yō fyght w^t on y^t standeth only vpon his gardant fyght *A variety of*

*guards to be used
in order to
prevent fatigue.*

or yf he seeke to com in to yō by the same fyght, then do yō strike & thrust Contynually at al mann^r of open place that shall com neereſt vnto you, ſtill remembringe yo^r gou^rnors, ſo ſhall he Contynually be in dang^r, & often wounded, & weryed in that kynd of fyght, & you ſhalbe ſaf, the reaſon is, he is a c^rtaine marke to you, & yō are an vnc^rtaine marke to hym.

And further becauſe he tyeth him ſelf vnto on kynd of fyght only, he ſhalbe wearyed for want of Change of lyinge, & yō by reaſon of many changes ſhal not only ſtyll fyght at eaſe, & much more braue, but you haue lykewyſe iiij fyghts to his one, to wytt, gardant, open, cloſe, & variable fyght, to his gardant only, therefore y^t fight only is not to be ſtode vpon or vſed.

But yf althiſ will not ſue, & although he hath receyved 12. Many Wounds, wyl contynually run on to com in, & forcibly breake yo^r dyſtance, then may you ſaffly take the grype of him, & hurt him at yo^r pleaſure w^t yo^r ſword, as appeareth in the chapter of the grype, & he can nether hurt nor take y^e grype of yō, becauſe the numb^r of his feet are to many, to bringe his hand in place in due tyme, for ſuch a on ever geueth yō the place, therefore beſure to take yo^r tyme herin.

*In "Sword and
Buckler" or
"Sword and
Dagger" fight-
ing, ſtrike with
the deſenſive
weapon inſtead of
gripping, and trip
up his heels.*

Loneragan, 1771.

*"ſyck ſyt" (ſic
fit).*

In the lyke ſort may yō do at ſword & dagg^r, or ſword & buckler, at ſuch tyme as I ſay, y^t yō Maye take the grype at the ſynge ſword fyght, yō may then inſteed of the grype, ſoundly ſtryke him w^t yo^r buckler on the hed or ſtabb him w^t yo^r dagg^r & inſtantly eyther ſtryke vp his heeles or fly out, & as he lyketh y^t coolinge card to his hot braine, ſyck ſyt, ſo let him com for another.

yf ij fyght & that both lye vpō the true gardant fyght 13.
& that one of them will neede ſeek to wyn the half ſword
by

by pressinge in, y^t may yō saflye do, for vpō y^t fyght the half sworde may saflye be woon, but he y^t first cōmeth in, Must fyrst go out, & y^t prsently, otherwise his gard wilbe to wyde aboue to defend his hed, or yf fyt for y^t defence, then wil it be to wyde vnd^rneath to defend y^t thrust frō his body w^{ch} things the patient Agent may do, & fly out saf, & y^t Agent cannot avoyd it, because the moving of his feet maketh his ward vnequall to defend both prts in due tyme, but the one or the other wilbe disceived & in danger, for he being Agent vpon his first entrance histyme (by reason of y^t numb^r of his feet), wilbe to longe, so y^t y^e patient Agent may first enter into his action, & the Agent must be of force an after doer, & therefore cannote avoyde this offence aforesaid.

The "patient Agent" is the man who stands upon the defensive, the "Agent" being the one who attacks.

14. yf he com in to encounter the Cloze & grype vpō y^e bastard gardant ward, then yō Maye Crosse his blade w^t yo^rs vpō the lyke gardant ward also, & as he cometh in w^t his feet & haue gayned yō the place, yō may p^rsently vncrosse & stryke him a sound blowe on y^e hed, & fly out instantly, wher in he cannot offend yō by reason of his lost tyme, nor defend him self vpon yo^r vncrossing, because his space is to wyde wherby his tyme wilbe to longe in due tyme to prvent yo^r blowe, this may yō do safly.
15. yf he cō in vpon the bastard gardant ward, bearing his hylt lower than his hed, or but brest hye or lower, then strik him soundly on the hed w^{ch} thinge yō may easlye do, because his space is to wyde in due tyme to ward the same.
16. yf yo^r Enemy charge you vpō his Stocata fyght, yō May ly variable w^t large Distance & vnc^rtaine w^t yo^r sword & bodye at yo^r pleasure, yet so y^t yō may stryke,

thrust or Ward, & go forth & back as occasion is, to take y^e advantage of this cōmyng in, whether he doth it out of the Stocata, or passata, w^{ch} advantage yō shalbe sure to haue, yf yō obserue this rule & be not to rash in yo^r actions, by reason y^t y^e numb^r of his feet wilbe great, & also because when those ij fyghts are met together, it is hard to Make a true Crosse, therefore w^tout Large dyf-
 dance be kept of them, Commonly they are both hurt or slayne, because in narrow distance their hands haue free Course & are not tyed to the tyme of y^e foote, by w^{ch} swyft motion of the hand the eye is deceyved, as yō may read more at large in the cap: of my pradoxes of defence.

You may also vse this fyght, against the longe sword, or longe rapior, syngle & dubble,

vpōn this ground som shallow wytted fellow may say, yf the patient must keep large distance then he must be dryven to goback styll, to w^{ch} I answer y^t in the con-
 tynnuall motion & travers of his ground he is to travers circuler wyse, forwards, backwards, vpō the right hand, & vpō the left hand, the w^{ch} travers is still a certaintye to be vsed w^tin him self, & not to be p^rvented by y^e Agent, because the Agent cōmeth one vpō an vnc^rtaine marke, for when he thinketh to be sure of his purpose, the patient is somtymes on the on syde, & som tymes on y^e other syde, somtymes to far back, & somtymes to neere, so y^t stil the Agent must vse the numb^r of his feet w^{ch} wilbe to longe to answer y^e hand of y^e patient Agent, & it cannot be denyed but the patient Agent by reason of his large distance, stil seeth what y^e Agent doth in his cōmyng, but the Agent cannot se what the other doth, til the patient Agent be into his Action, therefore

to

“The number of his feet will be great”—i.e. he will have to make too many steps or “passes.”

This is exactly the traverse recommended by Roworth.

to late for him eyther to hurt the patient, or in due tyme to defend him self, because he entreth his actiō vpō y^e knowledge of the patient, but he know^t not what y^e patient Agent will do til it be to late.

17. yf the Agent say y^t then he wil stand fast vpon some sure gard & somtymes moving & trav^{sing} his ground, & kepe large distance as y^e patient do, to w^{ch} I answer, y^t when ij men shal meete y^t haue both the p^rfection of their weapons, against the best no hurt can be don, other wise yf by any devise on should be able to hurt the other, then werther no p^rfection in y^e vse of weapons, this p^rfection of fyght being obserued, p^rventeth both close fyght, & al mann^r of clozes, grype & wrestling & al mann^r of such other devics what so euer.

18. Also yf he charge yō vpō his Stocata, or any other lying aft^r y^t fashion, w^t his poynt low & large paced, then lye yō a loft w^t yo^r hand & hylt aboue yo^r hed, eyther true gardant, or vpō the open fight, then he cannot reach yō yf yō kepe yo^r distance w^tout putting in of his foot or feet, but yō may reach him w^t the tyme of yo^r hand, or w^t the tyme of your hand & body, or of hand, body & foot, because he hath al redy put in his body w^tin yo^r reach & haue gayned yō the place, & yō are at lybertye & w^tout his reach, til he put in his foot or feete, w^{ch} tyme is to longe to answer the tyme of yo^r hand, & his space to wyde in that place to make a ward in due tyme to defend his hed, Armes & hande, one of w^{ch} wil be alwaies w^t in yo^r reach.

note stil in this y^t yo^r weapons be both short of y^e Equal & convenient length of y^e short sword.

19. yf out of his varyable fyght he strike at y^e right or left syde of the hed or body, then yo^r best ward is to
bere

*Parries of
"tierce" and
of "quarte."*

bere it w^t fore hand ward, otherwise yo^r space wilbe to wyde & to far to make yo^r ward in due tyme.

Yf he lye variable aft^r the mann^r of the passata then 20.
yf yō lye aloft as is aboue said, yō haue the Advantage, because he y^t lyeth varyable cannot reach home, at hed hand or arme, w^tout putting in of his foote or feet, & therefore it cannot be denyed, but y^t he y^t playeth aloft, hath stil the tyme of the hand to the tyme of y^e foot, w^{ch} fight beinge truly handled is aduantage invincible.

Yf he lye variable vpō the Imbrocata, then make a 21.
narrow space w^t yo^r poynt vpwarde, & sodainly yf yō can Crose his poynt w^t yo^r blade put asyde his poynt strongly w^t yo^r sword & strik or thrust at him, & fly out instantly, euer remembering yo^r gouernors y^t he deceve yō not in taking of his poynt.

yf he strike or thrust at yo^r lege or lower prte out of 22.
any fyght, he shal not be able to reach the same vnles yō stand large paced w^t bendinge knee, or vnles he com in w^t his foote or feete, the w^{ch} yf he shal so do, then yō may strik or thrust at his arme or vpper prte for then he putteth them into the place gayning yō the place wherby you may strike home vpō him & he cannot reach yō.

but yf he stand large paced w^t bendinge knee then wyn the place & strike home freely at his knee, & fly back ther w^t.

yf he com to the close fight w^t yō & y^t yō are both 23.
crost aloft at y^e half sword w^t both yo^r points vpwards, then yf he com in w^t all in his Crossing bere strongly yo^r hand & hylt ou^r his wrist, close by his hylt putting it ouer at y^e backsyde of his hand & hylt p^rssinge doune his hand & hylt strongly & sodainly, in yo^r entring in,
& so

*From this it
appears that in
Silver's time the
knees were very
little bent.*

*A time hit or
thrust at the arm
or upper parts.*

*Forcible pressure
in "tierce" at
"half-sword."*

& so thrust yo^r hylt in his face, or strike him vpō y^e hed w^t y^r sword, & strike vp his heeles, & fly out,

Recommended also by Lonergan, 1771.

24. yf yō are both so crost at y^e bastard gardant ward, & yf he then pres in, then take the grype of him as is shewed in y^e chapter of y^e grype,

Or w^t yo^r left hand or arme, strike his sword blade strongly & sodainly towarde yo^r left syde by w^{ch} meanes yō are uncrost, & he is discour'd, then may yō thrust him in the body w^t yo^r sword & fly out instantly, w^{ch} thinge he cannot avoyd, nether can he offend yō

Beating the sword away with the gauntleted left hand.

Or being so crost, yō may sodainly vncrose & strike him vpō the hed & fly out instantly w^{ch} thinge yō may safely do & go out free.

An alternative.

25. yf yō be both crost at y^e half sword w^t hys poynt vp & yo^r poynt doune in the true gardant ward, then yf he pres to com in, then eyther take y^e grype of him, as in the chapter of the grype, or w^t yo^r left hand or arme, strike out his sword blade towards yo^r left syde as aforesaid, & so yō may thrust him in the body w^t yo^r sword & fly out instantly.

Again the alternatives of "gripping" and beating the sword off.

26. Do yō neuer attempt to cloze or com to y^e grype at these weapons vnles it be vpō the slow motiō or disorder of yo^r enemye,

but yf he will cloze w^t you, then yō may take the grype of him safely at his comynge in, for he y^t first by stronge pressing in adventureth the cloze looseth it, & is in great danger, by reason y^t the numb^r of his feet are to great, wherby his tyme wilbe to longe, in due tyme to answer the hand of y^e patient Agent, as in the chapter of the grype doth plainly appere,

When he encloses, "grip" him.

27. Alwaies remembering yf yō fyght vpō the variable fight y^t yō ward vpō forehand ward, otherwise yo^r space

wilbe to wyde in due tyme to make a true gardant ward, to defend yo^r self.

yf yō fyght vpō open fyght, or true gardant fyght, 28. neuer ward vpō forehand ward for then yo^r space wilbe to wyde also, in due tyme to make a sureward,

yf he lye aloft w^t his poynt towarde you, aft^r the 29. mann^r of the Imbrocata, then make yo^r space narrow w^t yo^r point upwarde & put by his poynt, & strike or thrust as aforesaid but be sure herin to kepe yo^r distance, y^t he deceue you not in taking of his poynt.

*“Parrying” and
“Riposting.”*

*Of diu^s aduantages y^e you may take by strykinge
frō yo^r warde at y^e sword fyght.*

Cap. 5.

*A parry in
“high tierce”
with its ripostes.*

YF yo^r enemy strike at the right syde of yo^r hed, 1. yō lyinge true gardant, then put yo^r hilt a little doune, Mounting yo^r poynt, so that yo^r blade May Crosse a thwart yo^r face, so shal yō make A true ward for the right syde of yo^r hed, from the w^{ch} ward yō may instantly strike him on the ryght or left syde of the hed, or to turne doune yo^r poynt, & thrust him in the bodye, or you may strike him on the left syde of the body, or on the out syde of his left thygh.

Or yō may strike him on the out syde of the right thygh, on of those he cannot avoyd yf he fly not back instantly vpō his blowe, because he know^t not w^{ch} of these the patient Agent wil do.

*A parry of
“prime” with
its ripostes.*

Yf yō lye vpō yo^r true gardant ward, & he strike 2. at the left syde of yo^r hed, yō haue the choyse from yo^r ward to strike him from yt, on the right or left syde of
the

the hed, or to turne doune yo^r poynt, & thrust him in the bodye, or yō May stryke him on the out syde of the right or left thygh, for the reason aboue sayde in the last rule, except he fly out instantly vpō his blowe.

3. Yf he charge yō vpon the open or true gardant fyght, yf yō wil answer him w^t the lyke, then kepe yo^r distance, & let yo^r gatheringe be all waies in y^t fyght to warde his right syde so shal yō w^t yo^r sword choake vp any blowe that he can make at yō, from the w^{ch} ward yō May stryke him on the right or left syde of y^e hed, or thrust him in the bodye.

but yf he thrust at your face or body, then yō may out of yo^r gardant fight break it doun warde w^t yo^r sword bering yo^r poynt strongly towarde yo^r right syde, from the w^{ch} breaking of his thrust yō may likewise strike him frō the right or left syde of y^e hed, or thrust him in the bodye.

A thrust parried with the "seconde," and its ripostes.

4. Yf yō meet w^t on y^t cannot strike frō his warde, vpō such a on yō may both dubble & faulse & so deceue him, but yf he be skylful yō must not do so, because he wilbe stil so vnc^rtaine in his traverse that he will styll p^rvent you of tyme & place, so y^t when yō think to dubble & false, yō shal gayne him the place & ther vpō he wilbe before yō in his action, & in yo^r comynge he will stil endanger yō,

*To "dubble" = to "remise."
To "faulse" = to "feint."*

5. yf yō fyght vpō the variable fyght, & that yō receue a blow w^t forehand ward, made at the right syde of yo^r hed or body, yō haue y^e choise of viij offenciue Actions frō y^t ward, the first to stryke him on the right syde, eyther on the hed shold^r, or thygh, or to thrust him in the body, or to stryke him on the left syde either on the hed shold^r or thygh, or to thrust him in the body,

A parry of "tierce" with its ripostes.

*Parry of
"quarte."*

the lyke may yō do yf he ſtrike eu^r at yo^r left ſyde, as is aboue ſaid, yf yō bere it w^t fore hand ward.

In this forehand ward kepe yo^r diſtance, & take heed 6. y^t he deceyue yō not w^t the dounright blowe at yo^r hed out of his open fyght, for being w^t in diſtance y^e ſwift motion of y^e hand May deceue yo^r eye, becauſe yō know not by w^{ch} ſyde of yo^r ſword his blow wil com

Alſo ſe y^t he deceue yō not vpō any falſe offerynge to 7. ſtryke at the on ſyde, & when therby yō haue turned yo^r poynt aſyde, then to ſtrike on the other ſyde, but yf yō kepe diſtance yō are free from y^t, therefore ſtyll in all yo^r actions rememb^r y gouⁿors

yf he wil do nothings but thruſt, Anſwer him as it 8. is ſet doune in the 16th ground of y^e ſhort ſword fyght & alſo in diu^{rs} places of the 8th chapt^r.

*How to engage
with a man who
uſes point.*

Alſo conſyder yf he lye at the thruſt vpon y^e ſtocata, 9. or paſſata, & yō haue no waye to avoyde him, except yō can Croſſe his ſword blade w^t yo^{rs}, & ſo Indirect his poynt, therefore kepe narrow ſpace vpō his poynt, & kepe well yo^r diſtance in vſing yo^r trauers.

but yf he put forth his poynt ſo y^t yō may Croſs it w^t fore hand ward, for yf yō wacth for his thruſt then lye vpō forehand ward w^t poynt alittle vp. yf he lye w^t his poynt Mounted, & yf yō ſynge yo^r thruſt vpō the out ſyde of yo^r ſword to warde yo^r right ſyde, or back of yo^r ſword hand, ſtrike or bere his poynt out towarde yo^r right ſyde, & ther vpon putting forward yo^r body & left foote Circuler wyſe to warde his right ſyde yō May ſtrike him vpō his ſword Arme, hed, face or bodye.

*A "demivolte"
after a parry of
"quarte."*

Or yf yō take it on the Inſyde of yo^r ſword blade to warde yo^r left ſyde then w^t yo^r ſword put by his poynt ſtrongly & ſodainly towarde yo^r left ſyde, drawing
yo^r


yo^r left foote Circuler wyse back behind the heele of yo^r right foote, & strike him on the insyde of his sword hand or Arme or on the hed, face, or body, & fly out accordinge to yo^r gou^rnors

This May yō vse against y^e sword & dagg^r longe or short, or rapior & ponyard, or sword & buckler.

10. Also rememb^r yf he haue a longe sword, & yō a short sword, euer to Make yo^r space so narrow, y^t yō may alwaies break his thrust before y^t be in force yf possible yō may, & also to kepe large distance whether he charge yō out of the Stocata, passata, or Imbrocata &c, of this yō may se more at large in the 8th chapter.

The mann^r of Certaine gryps & Clozes to be used at y^e syngle short sword fyght &c.

Cap. 6.

1.  F he strike aloft at the left syde of yo^r hed, and run in w^t all to take the Cloze or grype of you, then ward it gardant, & enter in w^t yo^r left syde puting in yo^r left hand, on the insyde of his sword Arme, neere his hylte, bering yo^r hand ou^r his Arme, & Wrape in his hand & sworde vnd^r yo^r Arme, as he cometh in, Wrestling his hand & sword close to your bodye turninge back yo^r right syde from him, so shal he not be able to reach yo^r sword, but yō shal styll haue it at lybertye to stryke or thrust him & endanger the breakinge of his Arme, or the takinge away of his sword by y^t grype.

2. Yf yō are both Crost in Close fyght vpon the bastard gardant ward alowe, yō May put yo^r left hand on the out syde of his sword at the back of his hand, neere or

at the hylte of his sword Arme & take him on the insyde of y^t arme w^t yo^r hand, aboue his elbowe is best, & draw him in towarde yō strongly, wrestinge his knuckles downwarde & his elbowe vpwarde so may yō endang^r to break his arme, or cast him doune, or to wrest his sword out of his hand, & go free yo^r self.

in like fort vpō this kynd of cloze, yō may clape yo^r 3. left hand vpō the wrist of his sword arme, holding it strongly & ther w^t thrust him hard from yō, & p^rsently yō may thrust him in the body w^t yo^r sword for in y^t Instant he can nether ward, strike, nor thrust,

yf he strike home at the left syde of yo^r hed, & ther 4. w^t all com in to take the cloze or grype of your hilt or sword arme w^t his left hand, first ward his blow gardant, & be sure to put in yo^r left hand und^r yo^r sword & take hold on the out syde of his left hand, Arme or sleve, putting yo^r hand vnder the wrist of his Arme w^t the toppe of yo^r fing^{rs} vpwarde, & yo^r thumb & knuckles downwarde, then pluck him strongly towarde yo^r left syde, so shal yō indirect his feet turning hys left should^r towarde yō, vpō w^{ch} instant yō Maye strike or thrust him w^t yo^r sword & fly out saf, for his feet being indirected, although he hath his sword at lyberty, yet shal he not be able to Make any offencyve fight against yō because his tyme wilbe to longe to direct his feet againe to vse his sword in due tyme.


Also yf he attempt the cloze or grype w^t you vpon 5. his bastard gardant ward, then crosse his sword w^t the lyke ward, & as he cometh in w^t his feet you haue the tyme of yo^r hand & bodye, wherby w^t yo^r left hand or Arme yō May put by his sword blade, w^{ch} thinge you must sodainly & strongly do, casting it towarde yo^r left syde

fyde, so may yō vncrosse & thrust him in y^e body w^t yo^r sword & fly out instantlye, for yf yō stay ther he wil direct his sword againe & endanger yō, this may safely be don, or yō May vncrosse & turne yo^r poynt vp, & strike him on the hed, & fly out instantly.

6. Yf he presse in to the half sword vpō a forehand ward, then strike a sound blow at the left syde of his hed turnyng strongely yo^r hand & hylt pressing down his sword hand & arme strongly, & strike yo^r hilt full in his face, beringe yo^r hilt strongly vpō him, for yo^r hand beinge vpp^rmost yō haue the aduantage in y^t grype, for so May yō breake his face w^t yo^r hylt, & strike vp his heels w^t yo^r left foote, and throwe him a great fall, al this May safely be don by reason y^t he is weake in his cōmyng in by y^t moving of his feet, & yō repell him in y^e fulnes of yo^r strength, as appeareth in the Chapter of y^e short single sword fyght, in the 23rd grownde of the same,
7. remember that yō neu^r attempt the Cloze nor grype but looke to his slyppe, Confyder what is said in the 8th gen^rall rule in the Second Chapter, & also in the 26th ground of the syngle sword fyght in the 4th Chapter.

*Of the short sword & dagger fyght
Against the lyke Weapon.*

Cap. 7.

1.  BSRVE at these weapons the form^r rules, defend w^t yo^r sword & not w^t yo^r dagg^r, yet yō may cross his sword w^t yo^r dagg^r, yf yō may conveniently reach the same therw^t, w^t out puttinge in of yo^r foote, only by bendinge in of yo^r body,
other

other wyse yo^r tyme wilbe to longe, & his tyme wilbe sufficient to displace his owne, so y^t yō shal not hyt it w^t yo^r dagg^r, & so he may make a thrust vpon yō, this tyme y^t I here Meane, of puttinge by of his sword is, When he lyeth out spent w^t his sword poynt towarde you, & not else, w^{ch} thinge yf yō can do w^tout puttinge in of yo^r foote, then yō may vse yo^r dagg^r, & strike strongly & sodainlye his sword poynt ther w^t vp, or doune, to indirect the same, that don, instantly ther w^t strike or thrust at him w^t yo^r sword,

Also yō may put by his sword blade w^t yo^r dagg^r When 2. yo^r swords are Crost, eyther aboue at forehand ward, or belowe at the bastard gardant ward & ther w^t instantly strike or thrust w^t yo^r sword & fly out accordinge to yo^r gou^rnors, of this yō may see more at large in y^e Chapter of the syngle sword fyght in the 24th ground of the same.

Also yf he be so foolehardye to com to the cloze, 3. then yō may gard w^t yo^r sword & stabb w^t yo^r dagg^r, & fly out saf, w^{ch} thinge yō may do because his tyme is to longe by the numb^r of his feet, & yō haue but the swyft tyme of yo^r hand to use, & he cannot stabb til he haue setted in his feete, & so his tyme is to late to endang^r yō, or to defend himself.

Know y^t yf yō defend yo^rself w^t yo^r dagger in other 4. fort than is aforesaid, yō shalbe endang^r to be hurt, because the space of yo^r dagg^r wilbe still to wyde to defend both blow & thrust for lacke of Circomference as y^e buckler hath.

Also note when yō defend blow & thrust w^t yo^r sword 5. yō haue a neerer course to offend yo^r enemye w^t yo^r sword then when yō ward w^t yo^r dagg^r, for then yō may for the most prte from yo^r warde strike or thrust him.

6. Yō must neyther Cloze nor com to the grype at these weapons, vnles it be by the slow motyon or disorder of yo^r adv^rsarie, yet yf he attempt y^e Cloze, or to com to the grype w^t yō, then yō may safely Cloze & hurt him w^t yo^r dagg^r or buckler & go free yo^r self, but fly out according to yo^r gou^rnors & ther by yō shal put him from his attempted Cloze, but se yō stay not at any tyme w^tin distance, but in due tyme fly back or hazard to be hurt, because y^e swyft motion of the hand being w^tin distance will deceue the eye, wher by yō shal not be able to Judge in due tyme to make a true ward, of this yō may se more in the chapter of the back sword fyght in the 12th ground of the same.
7. yf he extend forth his dagg^r hand yō may make yo^r fyght at the same, remembering to kepe distance & to fly back according to yo^r gou^rnors.

Every fight & ward w^t these weapons, made out of any kynd of fyght, must be made & don according as is taught in the back sword fyght, but only y^t the dagg^r must be vsed as is aboufaid, in steed of the grype.

8. yf he lye bent vpō his Stocata w^t his sworde or rapior poynt behind his dagg^r so y^t yō cannot reach the same w^tout putting in of yo^r foote, then make al yo^r fight at his dagg^r hand, euer remembering yo^r gou^rnors, & then yf he draw in his dagg^r hand, so that yō may Crose his sworde blade w^t yo^{rs}, then make narrow space vpō him w^t yo^r poynt & sodainly & strongely stryke or bere his poynt towarde his right syde, indyrecting the same, & instantly strike or thrust him on the hed, face, Arme, or body, & fly back ther w^t out of distance stil remembering yo^r gou^rnors.
9. yf he lye spent vpō his variable fyght then kepe yo^r

distance & make yo^r space narrow vpō him, til yō may Crosse his sword or rapior point w^t yo^r sword poynt, wher vpon, yō having won or gayned the place, strike or thrust instantly.

yf he lye bent or spent vpō the Imbrocata bere vp 10. yo^r point, & make yo^r space narrow & do the lyke.

Of the short sword & dagger fyght against the longe sword & dagger or longe rapior & poinard.

Cap. 8.

YF yō haue the short sword & dagg^r, defend 1. w^t yo^r sword & not w^t yo^r dagg^r, except yō haue a gautlet or hylt vpō yo^r dagger hand, then yō may ward vpō forehand ward, vpon the dubble w^t the poynt of yo^r sword towarde his face.

Lye not aloft w^t yo^r short sword yf he lye alowe 2. variable on the Stocata or passata &c, for then your space wilbe to wyde to make a true Crosse in due tyme, or to farr in his course to make yo^r space narrow, the w^{ch} space take heede yō make very narrow, yea, so y^t yf it touch his blade, it is better.

I say make yo^r space narrow vntil yō can crosse his 3. sword blade strongly & sodainly, so shal you put by his point out of the right lyne, & instantly strike or thrust, & slyp back according to yo^r gou^rnors.

but take heede unless yō can surely & sassy crosse go not in, but although yō can so crosse, & ther vpon yō enter in, stay not by yt but sly out according to yo^r gou^rnors,

yf w^t his longe sword or rapior he charge you aloft 4. out of his open or true gardant fyght strykyng at the
right

right syde of yo^r hed, yf yō haue a gautlet or close hylt vpon yo^r daggr hand then ward it dubble w^t forehand ward, bering yo^r sword hylt to warde yo^r right should^r, w^t yo^r knuckles upwarde & yo^r sword poynt to warde the right syde of his brest or sholder, crossing yo^r dagger on yo^r sword blade resting yt ther on vpon y^e hyer syde of yo^r sword beringe yo^r hylts close together w^t yo^r dagger hilt a little behind yo^r sword hilt bering both yo^r hands right out together spent or verye neere spent when yō ward his blowe, Meetinge him so vpon yo^r ward that his blow may light at yo^r half sword or w^tin, so that his blade may flyde from yo^r sword & rest on yo^r daggr, at w^{ch} instant tyme thrust forth yo^r poynt at his brest & fly out instantly, so shal yō cōtynually endanger him & go saf yo^r self.

5. Yf he strike a loft at the left syde of yo^r hed, ward as aforesaid, bering yo^r sword hilt towarde yo^r left should^r w^t yo^r knuckles down warde, & yo^r sword poynt towarde the left syde of his brest or shold^r, bowing yo^r body & hed a little forewarde towarde him, & rememb^r to bere yo^r warde on both syds y^t he strike y^r not vpon the hed, then vpō his blow meet his sword as is aforesaid w^t yo^r dagger crost ou^r yo^r sword blade as before, & when his sword by reason of his blowe vpon yo^r sword shal flyde doune & rest vpon yo^r dagger, then sodainly cast his sword blade out to warde yo^r left syde w^t yo^r dagger, to indirect his point, & ther w^t thrust at his brest frō yo^r ward & fly out instantly, the like may you do yf his sword glance out frō yo^{rs}, vpō his blowe.

al this may safely be don w^t y^e short sword & close hylted dagger or gautlet

Stay not w^t in distance of the longe sword or rapior 6.
w^t yo^r short sword, nor suffer him to wyn the place of
you, but eyther Crose his sword, or make yo^r space
verye narrow to crose it before his blow or thrust be
in force, yet keping yo^r distance wher by he shall
strike or thrust at nothing, & so he shalbe subiect to the
tyme of yo^r hand against the tyme of his feet.

Kepe distance & lye as yō thinke best for yo^r ease & 7.
safty, yet so y^t yō may strike, thrust, or ward, & when
yō find his poynt Certaine, then make yo^r space nar-
row & crose his sword, so shal yō be the first mou^r, &
enter first into yo^r action, & he beinge an aft^r doer, is
not able to avoyd yo^r Crose, nor narrow space, nor any
such offence as shalbe put in execution against hym.

havige Crost his longe sword or rapior w^t yo^r short 8.
sword blade, & put his poynt out of the strait lyne by
force then strike or thrust at him w^t yo^r sword & fly
out instantly accordinge to y^r gou^rnors.

Stand not vpō gardant fyght only, for so he will 9.
greatlye endanger yō out of his other fyghts because
yō haue made yo^r self a c^rtaine marke to him, for in
contynuyng in y^t fyght only yō shal not only weary
yo^r self, but do also exclude yo^rself frō the benyfyt of
the Open, variable, & close fyghts, & so shal he haue
four fyghts to yo^r one, as yō may se in the Chapter of
the short syngle sword fyght in the 15th ground therof.

Yf he lye in Open or true gardant fyght, then yō 10.
may vpon yo^r open & gardant fight safty bringe yo^r
self to the half sword, & then you may thrust him in
the body, vnder his gard or sword when he bereth it
gardant, because he is weak in his garde, but fly out
instantly, & he cannot bringe in his point to hurt yō
except

except he go back w^t his foote or feet, w^{ch} tyme is to longe to answer the swyft tyme of the hand.

yf he put doune his sword lower to defend y^t thrust then will his hed be open, so y^t y^o may strike him on the hed ou^r ouer his sword & fly out ther w^t, w^{ch} thinge he cannot defend, because his space is to wyde to put vp his blade in due tyme to make a true ward for the same.

11. Understand y^t the whole som of the long rapior fyght is eyther upon the Stocata, Passata, Imbrocata, or Mountanta, al these, and al the rest of their devycs you may safely prevent by kepinge yo^r distance, because therby you shal stil dreue him to vse the tyme of his feet, wherby y^o shal stil p^rvent him of y^e true place, & therefore he cannot in due tyme make any of these fyghts offensive vpon you by reason y^t the number of his feet will still be to great, so y^t he shal stil vse the slow tyme of his feet to the swyft tyme of yo^r hand, & therefore y^o may safely defend yo^r self & offend him,

Now you plainly se how to p^rvent al these, but for the bett^r example note this, wher as I say by kepeinge of distance som may obie^ct y^t then the rapior man will com in by degrees w^t such warde as shall best lyke him, & dryve back the sword man continually, to whome I answer, y^t can he not do, by reason y^t y^e sword mans travers is made c^rculer wyse, so y^t the rapior man in his comyng hath no place to carrye the poynt of his rapior, in due tyme to make home his fyght, but y^t stil his rapior wil lye w^t in the compass of the tyme of the sword mans hand, to make a true crosse vpon him, the w^{ch} crosse beinge made w^t force he may safely vncrose, & hurt the rapior man in the Arme, hed,

face or body, w^t blow or thrust, & fly out saf before he shal haue tyme to direct his poynt againe to make his thrust vpō y^e sword man.

Yf y^e rapior man lye vpon the stocata, first make yo^r 12.
space narrow w^t yo^r short sword, & take heed y^t he strike not doune yo^r sworde poynt w^t his dagger & so Jump in & hurt you w^t the thrust of his longe rapior, w^{ch} thing he may do because he haue comaunded your sword, & so yō are left open & discov^{ed} & left onlye vnto the vnc^taine ward of yo^r dagg^r, w^{ch} ward is to syngle for a man to venter his lyf on, w^{ch} yf yō mysse to prforme Neuer so lyttle yō are hurt or slaine.

To p^rvent this danger yō must remember your 13.
gou^rnors, & p^resently vpon his least motion be sure of yo^r distance, & yo^r narrow space, then do as follow^t.

Yf he lye vpō his stocata, w^t his rapior point w^t in 14.
or behind his dagg^r hand out strait, then lye yō variable in Measure w^t yo^r right foote before & yo^r sword poynt out directly forth w^t yo^r space very narrow as neere his rapior poynt as yō may, betwixt his rapior poynt & his dagger hand, from w^{ch} yō may sodainly w^t a wrist blow, lyft vp yo^r poynt & strike him on the out syde or in syde of his dagg^r hand, & fly out w^t all, then make yo^r space narrow as before, then yf he thrust home at yō, yō are redy p^rpred for hys thrust, or yō may thrust at his dagger hand, do w^{ch} yō shal thinke best, but yo^r blow must be but only by moving of yo^r wrist, for yf yō lyft vp yo^r hand and Arme to fetch a large blowe then yo^r tyme wilbe to longe, & yo^r space to wyde in due tyme to make a true ward to defend yo^r self from his thrust, so shall yō hurt him although he haue a gantlet therone, for yo^r thrust wil run vp
between

between his fing^{rs}, & yo^r blow wil cut of the fyng^{rs} of his gantlet, for he cannot defend himself from on blow or thrust of 20, by reason that yō haue the place to reach home at his hand, & for y^t cause he cannot p^rvent it, nether can he rech home to you w^tout putting in of his foot or feet, because his distance is to large, but upon eu^r blow or thrust y^t yō make at his hand slypp back a little, so shal yō still vpō eu^r blow or thrust y^t yō make at him, be out of his reach,

but yf vpon yo^r blow or thrust he wil enter in w^t his foote or feet to make home his stocata or thrust vpō you, then by reason of yo^r slydyng back, you shalbe prepared in due tyme to make a prfyt ward to defend yo^rself w^t yo^r sworde.

Therefore euer respect his rapior poynte & remember to make & kepe narrow space vpon it w^t yo^r sword poynt, that yō may be sure to break his thrust before it be in ful force.

15. Yf he thrust at yo^r hyer prts w^t his poynt a lyttle mounted, then make narrow yo^r space w^t yo^r poynt vpon his, yf yō Crose his blade on the insyde between his rapior & his dagg^r, yf he pres in then frō yo^r crose beat or bere backe his poynt strongly towarde his right syde, and havinge indirected his poynt, strike him on the insyde of the rapior or dagg^r hand or Arme, or on the hed, face, or body, & fly out instantly,

Or you may vpon his p^rssinge in w^t his thrust Slypp yo^r poynt doune as he cōmeth in, & put vp yo^r hylt & ward it gardant, & ther w^t from that ward cast out his poynt, & sodainly strike him in one of the placs aforesaid, & fly out instantlye remembringe yo^r gouⁿors.

16. Yf he lye fast & do not com in, then strike & thrust

at his daggr hand, w^t yo^r wrist blow and flypp back ther w^t euery tyme

but yf he lye fast & beat doune yo^r poynt w^t his 17.
dagger, & then thrust at you from his Stocata then
turne vp yo^r hilt w^t yo^r knuckles vpwarde & yo^r nayles
dounwarde, takinge his blade vpō the backfyde of
yo^rs towarde yo^r left fyde & bere it gardant towarde y^t
fyde, & so may yō offend him as before is said vpō y^t
ward.

The lyke may yō do vpon him yf he lye out w^t his 18.
poynt, when yō haue crost y^e same w^t yo^rs, & strike it
to eyther fyde, & so indirect his poynt, and then strike
or thrust & fly out.

The lyke must yō do, yf he lye with his point 19.
directly towarde yo^r bellye

but yf yō crose his poynt so mounted or dyrect as 20.
abouesaid, vpō y^e out fyde of yo^r sword w^t his poynt
a little hyer than yo^r hylt, so y^t you may crose his
blade, then yf he thrust ouer yo^r blade syngle uncross-
ing the same, then may you break it w^t yo^r forehand
ward out towarde yo^r right fyde, & yf he com in ther
w^t, then strike him on the out fyde of his rapior hand
or Arme, or on the hed or face, & fly out ther w^t

but yf he thrust in ouer yo^r sword as abouesaid & 21.
prefs in his blade strongly dubble w^t the helpe of his
dagger, then put doune yo^r poynt & turne vp yo^r hylt
gardant, so shal yō safely defend it beringe it gardant
out towarde yo^r left fyde & from yt strike him in be-
tween his rapior and dagger in on of the foresaid
places, & fly out,

but yf from this crose he flypp his poynt doune to
thrust vnd^r yo^r sword, then strike doune his poynt to-
warde

warde his left foote & ther w^t strike him on the out syde of his rapior hand or arme, hed, face, or body, & fly out instantly, according to yo^r gou^rnors.

Also yō may vpon this of his poynt doune, then turne yo^r poynt short ouer his blade in yo^r steppynge back, & put yo^r poynt doune in the insyde of his blade turnynge vp yo^r hilt gardant as aforesaid, & then yf he thrust at yō, bere it gardant towarde yo^r left syde, & then haue you the same offenciue blowes & thrusts against him as is abouesaid vpō y^e same ward.

22. Yf he lye aft^r the Stocata w^t his poynt doune towarde yo^r foote, then crose his blade on y^e out syde, & yf he turne his poynt ou^r yo^r blade to make his thrust vpon you, then turne vp yo^r hilt & bere it gardant as abouesaid, bering it out towarde yo^r left syde, & frō y^t ward offend him as is abouesaid
23. Also in this fyght take heed y^t he thrust yō not in the sword hand or arme, therefore euer respect to draw it back in due tyme, remembering therein yo^r twofold gou^rnor, in yo^r comyng in, to make yo^r crose or narrow space.
24. Yf at sword & dagger or buckler he strike in at the out syde of yo^r right legge ward it w^t the back of yo^r sword, carrying yo^r poynt doune holding yo^r knuckles dounwarde & yo^r Nayles upwarde, bering yo^r sword out strongly towarde yo^r right syde, vpon w^{ch} ward yō may strike him on the out syde of the left legge, or thrust him in y^e thigh or belly
25. The lyke may yō do yf he strik at yo^r other syde, yf yō ward his blowe w^t the edge of yo^r sword yo^r hand & knuckles as aforesaid, casting out his sword blade

towarde yo^r left fyde, this may be vsed at short or longe sword fyght.

you must neuer vse any fyght against the longe 26.
rapior & dagg^r w^t yo^r short sword but variable fyght,
because yo^r space wilbe to wyde, & yo^r time to longe,
to defend or offend in due tyme.

Also yō must vse large distance euer, because out of 27.
y^t fyght yō can hardly make a true crose because being
w^t in distance y^e eye is deceived to do it in due tyme

rememb^r in putting forth yo^r sword point to make 28.
yo^r space narrow, when he lyeth vpō his stocata, or
any thrust, yō must hold y^e handle thereof as it were
a longst yo^r hand, resting the po^mell thereof in the
hollow prte of the mydl of the heele of yo^r hand to-
warde the wrist, & the former prte of the handle must
be holden betwixt the fore fynger & thumbe, w^tout
the Myddle Joynt of the fore fynger towarde the topp
ther of, holding y^t fynger somethinge strait out gryp-
ing round yo^r handle w^t yo^r other iij fingers, & laying
yo^r thumbe strait out vpō the handle, so y^t yo^r thumbe
lye al alonge vpon y^e same, so shal yō lay yo^r point
out strait towarde his, the better to be able to prforme
this actiō prfytly, for yf yō grype yo^r handle close
ou^rthwart in yo^r hand, then can yō not lay yo^r poynt
strait vpon his to make yo^r space narrow, but y^t yo^r
poynt wil stil lye to wyde to doe the same in due tyme,
& this is the best way to hold yo^r sword in al kinde of
variable fyght

but vpō yo^r gardant or open fyght then hold it w^t 29.
ful gryping it in yo^r hand, & not laying yo^r thumb
alonge y^e handle, as som vse, then shal you neuer be
able strongly to ward a stronge blowe.

This

30. This haue I written out of myne entyre loue y^t I bere to my country men, wifhing them yet once againe to follow the truth, & to fly the vaine Imprfyt rapior fight, the bett^r to faue themfelues from wounds & flawghter, for who fo attayneth to the p^rfectiō of this true fyght w^{ch} I haue here fet forth in thefe my bref Instructions, & also in my pradoxes of defence, fhall not only defend them felues, but fhall ther by bring thofe that fyght vpō that Imprfyt fyght of y^e rapior vnd^r their mercye, or elfe put them in Cobbs trauers, where of yō may read in the 38 Chapter of my pradoxes aforefaid.

Of y^e sword & Buckler fyght,

Cap. 9.

SWORD & Buckler fight, & sword & dagg^r fyght are al one, faving y^t yō may fafly defend both blowe & thruft, fyngle w^t yo^r buckler only, & in likesort yō may fafly ward both blowes & thrufts dubble, y^t is w^t sword & buckler together w^{ch} is great aduantage againft y^e sword & dagg^r, &c, & is the fureft fight of al fhort weapons.

Of the two hand sword fight againft y^e like weapon.

Cap. 10.

THESE weapons are to be vfed in fight as the fhort staf, yf both play vpō dubble & fyngle hand, at the ij hand sword, the long sword hath the aduantage yf the waight ther of be not to heavye for his ftrengh y^t hath it, but yf

both play only vpon dubble hand, then his blade w^{ch} is of cōuenient length agreeing w^t his stature y^t hath it, w^{ch} is according with the length of the measure of his syngle swordblade, hath the advantage of y^e sword y^t is to long for y^e stature of the contrarye prtye, because he can crose & vncrose, strike & thrust, cloze & grype in shorter tyme than the other can.

Of the short staf fyght, being of cōuenient length, against y^e like weapon.

Cap. 11.

THE short staf hath iiij wards, y^t is ij w^t y^e point vp, & ij w^t the poynt doune,

At these weapons euer lye so that yō may 1. be able to thrust syngle & dubble, & to ward, strike, or thrust in due tyme, so shal yo^r enemye, yf he fyght only vpō dubble hand be driuen of necessitie, seeking to wyn the place, to gayne yō the place wher by yō may safely hurt him, & go free yo^r self by reason of yo^r distance, & when yō shal seeke to wyn the place vpon him he shal not be able to gaine the place vpon you, nor to kepe the place frō you wher by he shal eyther be hurt, or in great danger of hurt, by reason of yo^r large reach, true place & distance, yo^r fight being truly handled keeping it self from Cloze & grype.

And in like sort shal it be betweene two, w^{ch} shal 2. play vpon the best, y^t is, yf they play both dubble & syngle handed.

yf yō fynd yo^r self to strong for yo^r adu^rfarie in any 3. mann^r of ward, whether the same be aboue or belowe, put by his staf w^t force, & then strike or thrust from it,
but

4. but yf yō fynd him to strong for yō vpō hys blowes from a loft, so y^t yō can hardly bere them vpon yo^r ward, then when he stryketh in a loft at yo^r hed, & by hys maine strength would beat doune yo^r staf, & so geue yō a hurt before yō shalbe able to com againe into yo^r ward,

Against such a on giue the slypp in this sort, sodainly dray back the hyer prte of yo^r body a lyttle & yo^r for most foote w^t all, & slyp in the poynt of yo^r staf vnd^r his staf, & thrust single at him, & fly out w^t all, so shal you be sure to hyt him & go out free,

5. yf he lye a loft w^t his staf, then lye yō w^t your hind^r hand alowe, w^t yo^r poynt vptowards his staf making yo^r space narrow because yō may crose hys staf to ward his blow before it com in ful force, & then strongly & sodainlye indirect his poynt, & so thrust at him syngle, the w^{ch} yō may do before he can remoue his feet, by reason of the swyftnes of yo^r hand & fly out ther w^t, do this for both syds of y^e hed yf cause require yt, so shal yō saue both yo^r hed, body, and al prts, for yo^r vpp^r prts are garded, & yo^r lower prts to farr out of his reach.

6. yf he lye a lowe w^t his poynt doune, then lye yō w^t yo^r poynt doune also, w^t yo^r formost hand lowe & yo^r hind^r most hand hye, so y^t yō may crose his staf, & do in al things as is before said in the other

7. yf he lye vpō the thrust then lye yō w^t yo^r space narrow lying vp or doune w^t yo^r poynt in such sort as you may crose his staf, & therby yō shal be able to put or beat by his thrust before it be in ful force, & then strike or thrust, euer remembering yo^r gouernors.

yf vpon this any wil obiect y^t yf this betruie, then it

is in vaine to strike, or thrust, because he y^t doth it is stil in danger, this doubt is answered in the short single sword fight, in the 12th ground thereof

Yf yo^r adu^sarie strike a loft at any syde of yo^r hed 8. or body, ward it w^t yo^r point vp & making yo^r space so narrow y^t yō may crose his staf before it com in ful force bearing or beating doune his blow strongly, back againe towards y^t syde y^t he stryketh in at you, & out of y^t ward, then Instantly, eyther strike frō y^t ward, turning back yo^r staf, & strike him on y^t syde of the hed y^t is next yo^r staf,

Or lyft vp yo^r staf againe, & so strike him on the hed or body, or thrust at his body dubble or syngle, as yō may find yo^r best aduantage ever in holding yo^r staf, let ther be such convenient space between yo^r hands, wher in you shal fynd yo^r self aptest to ward, strike or thrust to yo^r best lyking

Yf yō play w^t yo^r staf w^t yo^r left hand before & yo^r 9. right hand back behind, as many men do fynd them selues most aptest when y^t hand is before, & yf yo^r aduersarie vpō his blowe com in to take the cloze of you, when yō fynd his staf crost w^t yo^rs neere his hand then sodainlye slyp vp yo^r right hand close to the hind^r syde of yo^r formost hand, & p^rsently loosing yo^r for must hand & put it vnd^r your owne staf, & then crose or put by his staf ther w^t & w^t yo^r hand take hold of his staf in such sort y^t yo^r lyttle fyng^r be towards the poynt of his staf, & yo^r thumb & fore fing^r towards his hands, & p^rsently w^t yo^r right hand mount y^e point of yo^r owne staf casting the point thereof back ouer yo^r right shold^r, w^t yo^r knuckles doun wards, & yo^r nayles vpwards, & so stabb him in
the

the body or face w^t the hind^r end of y^r staf, but be sure to stabb him at his cōmyng in, whether yō catch his staf or not, for somtymes his staf will lye so farr out y^t vpon his cōmyng in yō cannot reach it, then catch y^t arme in his comynge in w^{ch} he shal first put forth w^t in yo^r reach, but be sure to stabb, for his staf can do yō no hurt, and having so don, yf yō fynd yo^r self to strong for him, strike vp his heeles, yf to weake fly out.

10. The like must yō do yf yō play w^t yo^r right hand before, & yo^r left hand back behind, but y^t yō neede not to slyde forth yo^r left hand, because yo^r right hand is in the right place of yo^r staf alrebye to vse in y^t action, but then yō must displace yo^r left hand to take hold of his staf, or the grype as is a foresaid, & to vse the stabb as is aboue said,

11. yf both lye a loft as aforesaid, & play w^t y^e left hand before, yf he strike at the Ryght syde of yo^r hed or body then must yō crose his staf before his blow be in ful force, by making yo^r space narrow, & then strike it strongly back againe towards his left syde, & from y^t ward yō may turne back yo^r staf & strike him backwards ther w^t on the left syde of the hed, or lyft vp yo^r staf & strike him on the right or left syde of the hed, body, or arme, or thrust him in the body, the lyke blowes or thrusts may you make at him whether he strike or thrust, having put by his staf, remembering yo^r gou^rnors.

The like ord^r must yō vse in playing with the right hand before,

12. but yf he thrust at yō cōtynually then euer have a speciall care to cōfyder, whether he lye a loft or be-
lowe,

lowe, & do continually thrust at yō ther from, then looke that yō euer lye so y^t yō make yo^r space so narrow vpon him, y^t yō be sure to crose his staf w^t yo^{rs}, & put it before it be in full force, and frō y^t ward, thrust at him syngle or dubble as yō fynd it best, & yf he rememb^r not to fly back at y^t instant when he thrusteth it wilbe to late for him to avoyd any thrust y^t yō shal make at him,

Of the short staf fyght against the longe staf.

Cap. 12.

IF yō haue a staf of the cōuenient length 1. against a staf of longer length than is cōuenient then make yo^r space narrow, & seeke not to offend vntil yō haue strongly & swyftly put by his point the w^{ch} yō shal w^t ease accomplish, by reason of yo^r narrow space & yo^r force, then strike or thrust as yō shal thinke best.

This short staf fight against y^e longe staf is don in 2. the same sort that short staf fight to short staf is don, but y^t the man w^t the short staf must alwaies rememb^r to kepe a narrow space vpon y^e long staf, wher so euer the longe staf shal lye, Hye or lowe, cōtinually make yo^r space narrow vpō him, so shal yō be sure yf he strike or thrust at yō, to take the same before it be into his full force & by reason y^t yo^r force is more w^t yo^r short staf than his can be at the poynt of his longe staf, yō shal cast his staf so farr out of y^e streit lyne w^t yo^r short staf, y^t yō may safely enter in w^t yo^r feet, & strike or thrust home at him.

Yet this p^rsent shift he hath at y^t instant, he may 3.
flypp

flypp back his staf in his hands, w^{ch} tyme is swyfter then yo^r feet in cōmyng forward, wher by he wil haue his staf as short as yo^{rs}, yet by reason y^t at y^e first yō cast his staf so farr out of the right lyne, that yō had tyme to enter in w^t yo^r feet, yō shal then be so neere him, y^t yō may make narrow space vpō him againe, so y^t he shal haue no tyme to slyp forward his staf agayne in his former place, nor to go back w^t his feet, & so to recou^r the hind^r end of his staf againe, because yf he slyp forth his staf to strike or thrust at you, that may yō safely defend because of your narrow space vpō him, & ther w^t al yō may strike or thrust him frō yo^r warde, eyther at syngle or dubble,

4. but yf he wil go back w^t his feet thinking by y^t meanes to recou^r the whole length of hys staf againe, y^t can he not do in cōuenyent tyme because the tyme of yo^r hand is swyft^r than y^e tyme of his feet, by reason wherof yō may strike or thrust him in his goyng back.
5. Againe it is to be remembred in y^t tyme y^t yō keepe him at y^t bay, vpō the drawing in of his staf, the hind^r end therof lying so farr back behind him wilbe so trobblesom vnto him, that he can make no prfyt fight against yō & cōmonly in his drawing in of his staf it wilbe to short to make true fight against you, nether to offend yō nor defend him self.
6. yf he attempt the Cloze w^t yō then stabb him w^t the hind^r end of yo^r staf as is said in y^e fyght of y^e ij short staves of cōuenyent length, in the 9th ground therof


Note. Rememb^r y^t at Morris pyke, forrest byll, longe staf & two hand sword, y^t yō lye in such sort vpō yo^r wards v^t yō may both ward, strike, & thrust,

both dubble & syngle, & then returne to yo^r former wards flyps & lyinge againe & then are yō as yō wer before

The like fight is to be vsed w^t y^e Javelen, prtyson, halbard, black byll, battle Axe, gleve, half pyke &c.

Off the fight of the forrest byll against the like weapon & against the staf.

Cap: 13.

 HE forrest byl haue the fyght of the staf but 1. y^t it hath iiij wards more w^t the hed of the byll, y^t is one to bere it vpwards, another to beat it dounwards so y^t the carrage of yo^r byll hed be w^t the edge neyther vp nor doune but syde wyse.

The other ij wards are on to cast his byl hed towards the ryght syde, thother towards y^e left syde.

And vpon ei^r on of these wards or catches run vp to his hands w^t the hed of yo^r byll & then by reason y^t yō haue put his staf out of y^e right lyne, yō may catch at his hed neck arme or leggs &c w^t y^e edge of yo^r byll, & hook or pluck him strongly to you & fly out w^tall.

Yf yō cast his staf so farr out y^t yo^r byl flyde not 2. vp to his hands, then yō may safely run in flyding yo^r hands w^tin one yard of y^e hed of yo^r byll, & so w^t yo^r byl in one hand take him by y^e legg w^t the blade of yo^r byll & pluck him to yō & w^t yo^r other hand defend yo^r self from his gryps yf he offer to grype w^t you.

Yf you fight byll to byll do the like in al respects 3. as w^t y^e staf in yo^r fyght, for yo^r byll fight & staf fyght
is

is al one, but only for the defence & offence w^t the hed of y^e byll, & wher y^e staf man vpō the cloze yf he vse y^e stabb w^t the butt end of his staf, the byll man at y^t tyme is to vse y^e catch at his legg w^t y^e edge of his byll, as in y^e second ground above is said.

4. Rememb^r euer in al yo^r fyght w^t this weapon to make yo^r space narrow whether it be against the staf or byll so y^t what so euer he shal do against you, yō shal still make yo^r ward before he be in his ful force to offend you.

5. Also yf yō can reach w^tin the hed of his byll w^t the hed of yo^r byll then sodainly w^t the hed of yo^r byll snach his byll hed strongly towards you, & therw^tall indirect his byl hed & forcibly run vp yo^r byl hed to his hands, so haue yō the lyke advantage as abouesaid, wheras I spake of runyng vp towards his hands.

6. Yf he lye alowe w^t his byl hed then yf yō can put yo^r byll hed in ou^r the hed of his bylle & stronglye put doune his byl staf w^t yo^r byl hed, bearinge it flat, then yō may p^rsently run vp yo^r byll hed single handed to his hands & fly out therw^t, so shal yō hurt him in y^e hand & go free yo^rself.

7. The like may yō do w^t yo^r byll against the short staf yf yō can pres it doune in y^e lyke fort, but yf he haue a longe staf then run vp dubble handed w^t both hands vpon yo^r byll, w^{ch} thynge yō may safely do because yō are in yo^r strength & haue taken him in the weak prte of his staf.

8. Yf he lye hye w^t his byll hed then put vp yo^r byll hed und^r his & cast his byll out to y^t syde y^t yō shal fynd fyttest, so haue yō the aduantage to thrust or hook at him & fly out.

Or yf yō cast his byl farr out of the right lyne then run in & take him by the legg w^t y^e edge of yo^r byl, as is said in the 2nd ground of this chapter.

Yf yō ward his blow w^t yo^r byl staf w^tin yo^r byl 9. hed, then answer him as w^t y^e short staf.

Note y^t as the byl mans aduantage is to tak the staf w^t y^e hed of y^e byl so the staf man by reason y^t y^e hed of y^e byl is a faire mark hath y^e aduantage of him in y^e casting asyde of the hed of the byl w^t his staf or beating y^t asyde, the w^{ch} yf y^e byl man looke not very well into it the staf man ther vpon wil take al mann^r of aduantages of y^e staf fyght against him.

*"The Chapter on the Morris pike is unique, as no other work speaks of parries with that weapon."—
W. London.*

*Of the fyght of y^e morris pyke against
the lyke weapon.*

Cap: 14.



F yō fight w^t yo^r enemy having both morris 1. pyks w^t both poynts of yo^r pyks forwards, alowe upon y^e ground, holding the butt end of the pyke in one hand syngle w^t knuckles vpwards & the thumb undrneth, w^t the thumbe & forefing^r towards yo^r face & the lyttle fynger towards the poynt of y^e pyke, bering the butt end of the pyke frō the one syde to y^e other right before the face, then lye yō w^t yo^r arme spent & yo^r body open w^t yo^r hand to y^e right syde w^t yo^r knuckles Dounwards & yo^r nailes vpwards.

Or yō may lye in y^t fort, w^t yo^r hand over to the left syde w^t yo^r knuckles vpwards & yo^r nayles Dounwards, wherby al yo^r body wilbe Open. yf then he shal sodainlye rayse vp the point of his pyke w^t his other
hand

hand & com to thrust at yō, then in the Mountinge of his poynt or his cōynge in sodainlye tosse vp the poynt of yo^r pyke w^t yo^r hand syngle & so thrust him in the leggs w^t yo^r pyke & fly out therw^t.

Or els you May stand vpō yo^r ward & Not tosse vp yo^r pykes poynt but breake his thrust by crossynge the poynt of his pyke w^t the Mydds of yo^r pyke by casting vp yo^r hand, w^t the butt end of yo^r pyke aboue yo^r hed, & so bering ouer hys point w^t yo^r staf, to the other syde as for example,

2. Yf yō lye w^t yo^r hand spent towards the left syde of yo^r bodye, then sodainlye bere his poynt ouer strongly towards yo^r right syde.

Yf yō lye w^t yo^r hand spent towards yo^r right syde then bere his poynt towards yo^r left syde, & ther vpon gather vp yo^r pyke w^t yo^r other hand & thrust at him & fly out.

Yf he cōtynew his fyght w^t his point aboue, & yō lye w^t yo^r pyke brest hie & hyer w^t your hand & point so, y^t yō may Make yo^r thrust at his face or body w^t yo^r poynt Directly towards his face, holding yo^r pyke w^t both your hands on yo^r staf yo^r hinder hand w^t yo^r knuckles vpwards & yo^r formust hand w^t yo^r knuckles downwards & ther shaking yo^r pyke & faulding at his face w^t yo^r poynt as Neere his face as you may, then sodainlye Make out yo^r thrust syngle handed at his face & fly backe w^tall, w^{ch} thrust he can hardly breake one of 20 by reason y^t yō haue made yo^r space so narrow vpon his gard, so y^t yō beinge first in yo^r action he wil stil be to late in his defence to defend himself.

4. but note while yō lye fauldinge to Deceve him looke well to yo^r leggs y^t he in the Meane tyme tosse not vp the

poynt of his pyke syngle handed & hurt yō therw^t in y^e shynes.

Yf he lye so w^t his poynt vp a loft as you do then 5. Make yo^r space Narrow Mountinge yo^r point a lyttle & crose his pyke w^t yo^{rs} & stronglye and sodainly cast his poynt out of the right lyne and thrust whome from the same syngle or dubble as you fynd yo^r best aduantage, & fly out therw^t.

Or yō may run in when yō haue cast out his poynt flydinge both yo^r hands on yo^r staf til yō com w^tin iij quarters of a yard of the hed of yo^r pyke & stabb him therw^t w^t one hand & w^t yo^r other hand kepe him of from y^e grype.

Now yf he be a man of skyll, notw^tstandinge y^e 6. Making of y^t faulte in suffering you to do so yet this help he hath, as yō are cōmyng in he will sodainlye draw in his pyke poynt & fly back w^tall, then haue yō no helpe but to fly out instantly to the myddle of yo^r pyke & from thence backe to y^e end & then are yō as at the first begynnyng of yo^r fyght yō were.

Yf you fynd y^t he lye farr out of y^e right lyne w^t 7. his poynt or y^t yō can so farr Indirect y^e same then cast yo^r pyke out of yo^r hands, crose over vpon the myds of his pyke, by w^{ch} meanes yō shal entangle his pyke, then while he doth stryve to get his pyke at lybertye, run you in sodainlye drawing yo^r Dagg^r & strike or stabb at him.

Then yf he haue the prfection of this fyght as well 8. as you, he wilbe as reddy w^t his dagg^r as yō are w^t yo^{rs}, then must yō fyght it out at the syngle dagg^r fyght as is shewed in the 15th Cap: then he y^t hath not the prfection of y^t fyght gow^t to wracke.

And

9. And here note y^t in al the course of my teachinge of these my breef Instructions yf both the prtyes haue the ful pfection of y^e true fyght then the on will not be able to hurt thother at what prfyt weapon so euer.
10. But yf a Man y^t haue the pfection of fight shal fight w^t on y^t haue it not then must y^t vnskyful man go to wrack & thother goe free.

Of the single Dagger fyght against the lyke weapon.

Cap: 15.

1. **F**IRST know y^t to this weapon ther belongeth no Wards nor gryps but against such a one as is foolehardy & will suffer himself to haue a ful stabb in the face or bodye to hazard the geving of Another, then against him yō may vse yo^r left hand in throwinge him asyde or strike vp his heeles aft^r yō haue stab^d him.
2. In this dagg^r fyght, yō must vse cōtynual motion so shal he not be able to put yō to y^e cloze or grype, because yo^r contynuall motion disappointeth him of his true place, & the more ferce he is in runynge in, the soon^r he gayneth you the place, wherby he is wounded, & yō not any thing the rather endangered.
3. The mann^r of handling yo^r cōtynuall motion is this, kepe out of distance & strik or thrust at his hand, Arme, face or body, y^t shal press vpon yō, & yf he defend blow or thrust w^t his dagg^r make yō blow or thrust at his hand.
4. Yf he com in w^t his left legg forewards or w^t the right, do you strike at y^t prte as soone as it shalbe w^t in yo^r reach, remembering y^t yō vse contynual motion

in yo^r p^rgression & regressyon according to yo^r twyfold gou^rnors.

Although the dagg^r fyght be thought a verye dan- 5.
gerous fyght by reason of y^e shortnes & synglenes
therof, yet the fight therof being handled as is afore-
said, is as saf & as defencive as is the fight of any other
weapon, this endeth my b^ref Instructions.

Finis.



Sundry kinds of play or fight. Thornborow.

- 1 Uncertain variable
- 2 syngle
- 3 gardant.

iiij different kinds of fight.

- 1 y^t forceth or p^rfleth on
 - 2 he y^t goeth back w^t som blow or thrust
 - 3 he y^t standeth to his wards or passato
- } w^t an Imp^rfit ward
& out of y^e way.

1. Against him y^t p^rfleth y^e, naked play is best becs he useth his foote, y^e open lofty play y^e hand.

2. y^e 2nd is best followed w^t y^e variable & vncertain handling els should yō be a ma^ke to yo^r enemy & too slow in motion.

3. y^e 3rd must be incountred w^t y^e gardant play wherin you shal try him at y^e B sword or how he can escape y^e p^rting blow or thrust.

When yō gather kepe yo^r place & space equal & only be a patient & rememb^r y^t y^e gardant play bringeth yō safely in & keps yo^r enemy out.

Know this ord^r of play els y^e best may be deceaved, to be used against al these differencs & bring y^e good-

nes therof in suspitiō, for al these plaies are good in their kynd, tyme & occasiō offered by diu'sitie of play, but not on of them to be continually used & played vpon as a p'fectiō against euery assault.

1. In y^e naked play yō must set yo'self vpright w^t yo^r feet in a smale space, obseruing y^e place of yo^r hand wher yō may strike or thrust most quickly & redely & so take y^e tyme of him y^t p'ffeth on (v'sing y^e tyme of his feet) w^t yo^r blowe or thrust wher he is most open.

1. In y^e variable play, yō dryve him to his shyfts changing yo'self into sundry kynds of blowes thrusts & lyings, w^{ch} yō must not stay upon,

2. seeking to + him stil in his playes as yō may, wherby yō shal force him to fly, or els to stand to y^e proof of his B sword play.

3. the gardant play is to be v'sed against y^e blowe, thrust & passata y^t cometh w^tin dang^r of hurt, for treading y^e right way & keping yo^r place & hand in space & strength you cannot loose y^e tyme to defend frō either of those offers.

these Judged of in reason & known by som practise wil make yō deale safely against al sorts, skilful or vn-skilful, so y^t feare or Ang^r hinder not yo^r Knowledge.

Of Tymes.

1. The tyme of y^e { hand
foote
hand & foot
foot & hand. naught

Of place space. strength & tyme.

1. y^e tyme of y^e hand is when yō strike frō a wrd or stand in place to strike.

2. the tyme of y^e foot is when yō step forward to strike or when yō gather towarde yo^r own right syde.

3. y^e tyme of y^e hand & foot is when yō tread yo^r ground in course to strike rather than p^rssing forwards, or when yō slide back or go back, yo^r hand & foot being then of equal agillitie.

4. y^e tyme of y^e foot & hand is when yō handle yo^r gardant play vsing then a slowe motiō in both.

ther is but i good way to gather vpō yo^r enemy, gardant. Al other are dangerous & subiect to y^e blowe on y^e hed or thrust on y^e body.

for no way can ward both but as afor^d.

yo^r hand & feet in good play must go together, whether it be in quick or slow motion.

In gathering forwards or towrds yo^r right syde yo^r hand falleth frō yo^r place, space, & strength & so falleth out y^e los of tyme.

when yō gather & suffer y^t gou^rne yo^r fight, defend only. when yō do, be single, or not fixed towards on any lying, but also y^e quicknes of yo^r hand in its p^rp^r place carried,

In breaking y^e thrust when yō lye aloft single or gardant & space yo^r arme somewhat bowing in warding y^e blowe, haue respect to yo^r place of hand & strength, yo^r arme strait. this course in yo^r tyme is best p^rformed, the on of these w^t yo^r hand aloft yo^r point downe thother yo^r hand in place yo^r more high yo^r space less curious.

Dubble	(fence	defence	treble
	tyme		ward
	place		way
	space		flow motiō
	hand		Dubble (fals
	arme, weapō	true fingle	spacious
	body	Strait	obscure.
	foote	Manifest	

II tyme is cheefly to be ob^rved in both actions vpō
 93^{re} w^{ch} (place) waiteth.
 (space)

Upon these 3 y^e 4 following, vpon these 4 y^e first
 3, upon these y^e later 3.

to hurt or defend, a tyme in both is to be ob^rved
 to y^e furtherance of w^{ch} place is to be gotten, w^tout w^{ch}
 tyme wilbe to long to p^rform y^t w^{ch} is intended, y^e space
 is to be noted betwene ij opposits & in respect of
 touching, or in regard of saving as also for p^rving of
 tyme, by y^e smale way it hath either to y^e body, or
 puting by y^e weapon.

the next 4 must be vsed together to p^rforme thother
 iij rules, for y^e hand being nymble & quick of itself
 may els be hindered in y^e want of any of these, the
 weapon must be framed & inclyned to s^rve y^e agilitie
 of y^e hand eyther in hurting or defending.

4
 □ the body vpright or leanyng to y^e weapon, y^t it
 hind^r not y^e dispositiō of thother ij the foot answerable
 to them plying y^e hand & ward al in strait space, y^e wrd
 w^t hand high w^t y^e point downe, the arme strait out as
 redy for both actions.

al vndr play is beaten w^t most agil, single & y^e lofty
 the lofty w^t y^e gardant, His when w^t his foot he
 seeke y^e low lying is out of place to
 ofend defend or not so for lack of tyme
 space & crossing, yf he lye out w^t his
 long^r weapō it is put bye frō aloft, who
 hath place tyme & reach of body &
 arme al w^t y^e +.

93 re y^e reading
 y^e enterlyyinge
 of other things
 therto adioyn-
 ing.

the lofty naked play is beaten w^t y^e ward becs of

{ Cross }
 { space }
 { tyme }

to Defend, y^e lofty naked single loose play frveth to win
 y^e Tyme of y^e lowe & dubble play.

the bent gardant requireth yo^r arme strait high &
 out y^e point down towards (93 re II wel) y^e body &
 foote y^t way inclyned.

the way vnd^r y^e wrd w^tdrawing y^e body from harmes,
 the motiō slowe y^t y^e actiō of y^e hand be not hindered.
 the rest are y^e dispositions of y^e placed displaced
 handlings

Slowfoot : swift hand : quick foot : slow hand.

tread : stride : follow : falaway :

When yō seek to offend w^t blow or thrust, yo^r place of
 hand is lost, y^e way to redeeme it is to slyde back vnd^r
 yo^r lofty ward as aforestd alwaies y^t yo^r adu^sarie lye
 aloft redy to strike or thrust or vse his hand only,

yf yō would offend him y^t lyeth lowe vpō y^e thrust
 then when yō displace yo^r weapon frō aloft yō may
 aft^r yo^r blow at hed or arme or neereft place, stand &
 thrust before yō go backe because he is out of place &
 space & cannot +, & therby looseth his tyme to annoy
 yō & yō may thrust & retyre for a new assault.

this not so fownd,

In striking or thrusting neu^r hind^r yo^r hand w^t puting
 forth yo^r foote but kepe y^e place therof til yō haue of-
 fended w^t y^e one only y^e bending of yo^r body very
 little foreward may suffice, els yō loose a dubble tyme,
 on in setting forth yo^r foot thother in recou^ring yo^r
 lost place of yo^r fōt both to y^e los of tyme & yo^r
 purpose.

Strike : thrust : ward : breake :

the dubble offence is in striking & thrusting.

the iij fold defence in { warding y^e blow
 { breaking or puting bye y^e thrust
 { slyding back vnd^r yo^r hanging ward.

wyn y^e place : stand fast, strike home
 offend, defend, & go saf.

