
CHAPTER III

24. CUTS IN GENERAL

ALL touches made with the cutting edge of the blade upon an unprotected part of your adversary's body, are called cuts.¹

The cut is properly executed when the flat surface of the blade moves throughout the same plane.

When the sabre follows the shortest way—the straight line—to strike your adversary, the blow is called “direct cut.”

If you execute a circular movement ending with a final touch, the blow is called “cut by the molinello.” The object of this preparatory circular movement is to disengage your blade from that of your opponent.

You must perform all cuts at the moment you detect an opening, retaking the position of the guard immediately after.

25. DIRECT CUTS

(a) *To the Head*.—By a flexion of the elbow, draw back your sabre, and immediately after direct it swiftly to your opponent's forehead, placing your fist in the corresponding position. The lunge finishes your attack. We must suggest that you do not move your right foot forward too soon; it is preferable to let the arm precede in the movements for the attack.

(b) *To the Flank*.—By means of an imperceptible

¹ We recommend the guard of Tierce to facilitate the execution of the cuts during the study of these movements.

circular movement in which the elbow is used as a pivot, deliver a horizontal cut to the flank of your adversary with the hand in Second Position, ending your attack with a lunge.

(c) *To the Chest or to the Abdomen.*—As in the preceding movements, the point describes a small circular movement. The cut to the chest is delivered in a diagonal direction, with your hand in the Fifth Position. The cut to the abdomen is delivered in an ascending direction with your hand in the Fourth Position.

(d) *To the Face.*—The movements you must execute in order to deliver a cut to either side of the face greatly resemble those required for a cut to the flank or a cut to the chest.

Your cut to the flank, directed a little higher than usual, will strike your adversary's right cheek.

Your cut to the chest, directed a little above the target, will strike the inner side of the face: or in other words, the left cheek of your opponent.

REMARKS

All these touches can be made after engaging the blades. It makes no difference whether you or your opponent perform the engagement.

Let us consider, in the first place, possible attacks from your own engagement.¹

¹ It seems contradictory to deliver an attack from your own engagement or from your own invitation, since the object of these actions is to encourage your opponent to attack. However, if your adversary remains indifferent to the opportunities you offer him, or better still to the snare that you lay for him, should you not take the initiative by a sudden attack?

After your engagement in Prime, cut to the *flank*.

After your engagement in Seconde, cut to the *right cheek*.

After your engagement in Tierce, cut to the *flank*.

After your engagement in Quarte, cut to the *right cheek, head, left cheek, chest, or abdomen*.

After your engagement in Quinte, cut to the *flank*.

Let us now state the cuts that are possible after your opponent's engagements:

From his engagement in Prime, cut to the *flank*.

From his engagement in Seconde, cut to the *right cheek or head*.

From his engagement in Tierce, cut to the *flank*.

From his engagement in Quinte, cut to the *flank*.

We recommend that from the engagement in Tierce you do not attempt to execute any other than the cut to the flank. Other direct cuts, like a cut to the head, for example, would be difficult to perform and besides dangerous; it will be preferable to precede this action by a molinello.

26. CUTS BY THE MOLINELLO

Cuts by the molinello are executed from the engagement, after the sabres are crossed. In certain cases, you may employ this procedure to frustrate your opponent's engagement.

The object of these blows is to enable you to touch your adversary by a circular disengagement in a covered line, regardless of the obstacle offered by his blade.

AFTER YOUR OPPONENT'S ENGAGEMENT

In Prime.—Free your blade by a molinello to the

right and touch the abdomen; cutting edge to your left.

In Seconde.—(a) Execute molinello from the left directed to your opponent's forehead, with your hand in Third Position.

(b) By the same procedure, cut the face in Quarte, with your hand in Fourth Position. It is also possible to touch the chest; for this purpose, place the hand in the Fifth Position.

In Tierce.—(a) The elbow is always the pivot of the movement. Bring the sabre vertically near your right shoulder, in order to pass the point of your adversary's blade, and execute inward cut to the head. This movement is called *coupé*.

(b) Executing a molinello from left to right, you may touch the face, the abdomen, or the chest in Quarte.

In Quarte.—(a) Following the same method used from the engagement in Tierce, in order to touch your adversary on the head while he crosses blades in Quarte, execute a *coupé* by drawing back your sabre toward yourself, and immediately thereafter, strike at the head in the high line.

(b) Performing a molinello from the left, high in the air, strike the face in the high line (the right side of your adversary's face).

(c) Using the same molinello, with the cutting edge of your blade directed upward, deliver cut to the flank.

In Quinte.—By means of a molinello to the right, you may perform cut to the cheek, chest or abdomen.

AFTER YOUR OWN ENGAGEMENT

In Prime.—(a) A molinello coming from the left

disengages your blade from the opponent's weapon, and ends by a cut to the head.

(b) Following the same procedure, changing, however, the direction of the blade when the molinello is three-quarters completed, you may touch the face inward, or the chest, placing your hand in the Fifth Position, or the abdomen with the hand in Fourth Position.

In Seconde.—(a) By the same method, after engaging in Seconde, you may cut the head performing an ascending molinello from the left.

(b) By means of the same molinello, but changing the direction of the blade after three-fourths of its journey have been completed, execute inward cut to the face or to the chest with the hand in Fifth Position, or to the abdomen with the hand in Fourth Position.

In Tierce.—(a) With the aid of a horizontal molinello from the left to the right side, you can perform inward cut to the face, chest, or abdomen.

(b) If your adversary does not respond to your engagement by pressing your blade, you can, with the aide of the coupé, pass your blade to the inner opening and touch his head.

In Quarte.—(a) By means of a molinello coming from the left and upward, relinquish contact with your opponent's blade and deliver cut to the flank.

(b) If your adversary responds with a press to your engagement,¹ you can execute a horizontal molinello starting from the right in order to touch the face by means of an outward cut in the high line.

¹ We will study this case more in detail when we arrive at the part dealing with presses (*deviamenti*).

In Quinte.—(a) Relinquish contact with your opponent's blade by means of a horizontal molinello, so as to touch the face or the abdomen with an inward cut.

(b) Executing a molinello from the left, touch the head with an inward cut.

27. THE THRUST

The thrust is delivered horizontally with the point of the blade.

You may execute the thrust directly, by disengagement (*cavazione*) or by means of the graze (*filo*): upon your opponent's invitation, after he has engaged your blade, or from your own engagement.

The attack with the point is delivered *directly* when you lunge in Tierce or in Seconde and lodge a straight thrust in your adversary's body. This attack may be made upon any of the five invitations of your opponent.

The thrust is performed by disengagement when you elude your opponent's engagement, turning your fist and carrying forward your point in line.

The thrust is executed by means of the *filo* when you attack in Tierce or in Seconde from your own engagement, forcing your point through the line by means of a grazing movement applied against the entire length of your adversary's blade. It is necessary to hold the foible of your opponent's blade with the forte of your own, increasing progressively the pressure in order to lodge your point in line.

All thrusts are delivered with the fist in Second Position.

In order to avoid wavering of the point and to insure

precise direction of the sabre, you must carry your blade with an extended arm. This procedure enhances the proper execution of the lunge.

REMARKS

The thrust is the simplest means of touching your adversary.

We consider the thrust as the most effective of all attacks.

The point plays a very important rôle in the defense, because its threat influences your adversary.

Besides, in a combat at close quarters it is easier to use the point than to deliver hard blows with the cutting edge.

In addition, there is very little difficulty in the execution of a thrust and it can be learned very easily.

Let us now consider this attack from the point of view of actual combat: it is an error to believe that the permissible use of the point in a combat must render it inevitably deadly. It is true that a thrust may cause a fatal wound and for this reason the adversaries will not risk it. Whenever the use of the point is authorized in a combat, the adversaries keep a good distance and do not attack blindly.

In most cases, confronting a danger of this nature, even the cuts are directed to the arm only.

In effect, the combats in which the use of the point is permitted, usually end by a wound in the forearm.

Comparative statistics of the duels, where the use of the point is permitted and those where it is forbidden, would show that our assertion is correct.

On the other hand, when the thrusts are suppressed in a combat, the adversaries assume that all the risk involved is a curable wound, and rush at each other trying to touch without regard for the consequences. The result of this is a double touch, or a severe and perhaps dangerous wound inflicted upon one of the adversaries.¹

28. PARRIES IN GENERAL

Any movement executed with the intention of interrupting, deflecting or eluding an attack is called a *parry*.

You may parry by turning aside your adversary's blade with your own weapon and also by stepping or jumping backward.

It is no doubt preferable to oppose a real obstacle, such as the blade, to your adversary's offensive. To begin with, the fencer who yields ground in order to ward off an attack does not fight and on the other hand, he finds that it is difficult to resume the offensive after retreating.

There are well-defined rules establishing the right to counterattack immediately after you execute a parry with your blade, and these enable you to change from the passive to the active rôle by employing the *riposte*.

In sabre fencing, one is tempted to "parry with the body," because in the beginning results are easily obtained by this method.

The fencer, who is intent upon a study of the defense, must at the same time train his eye to select

¹ Excluding all possibilities of duelling, sabre fencing still constitutes an excellent form of gymnastics. The theory of the duel, however, must be explained in all its details, even dealing only with a symbolic combat.

quickly the most suitable parry, and to judge exactly the distance his blade has to travel in order to check the adverse steel. He must also learn to use the most effective enveloping actions.

The fundamental rule of the parry is that the shock must be given by means of the shoulder joint, with an extended arm, and the point of the blade in line as nearly as possible.

The parry, executed with an extended arm and keeping the sabre in line, is certainly the quickest.

The joint of the shoulder becomes the tip of a cone formed by the possible movements of the arm.¹

The more you extend your arm for the parry, the shorter will be the distance you have to cover with your blade.

The parries then form the boundaries of a shield, which becomes smaller as it approaches the apex of the cone located at the shoulder joint.

When you parry, keeping your blade in line as nearly as possible, you have not only the advantage of being able to attack rapidly, but also of keeping your adversary at a convenient distance with your point.

There are three kinds of parries:

The *simple parries*, the *yielding parries* and the *counter-parries*.

29. THE SIMPLE PARRIES

There are nine different final parry positions and their names and executions are as follows:

¹ If we could join in the same plane all the points which the tip of the sabre can touch while the arm is extended, the result would be the base of a cone, the lateral surface being formed by the wide movements of the blade.

(a) *Parry of Prime*.—Take the same position of the invitation in Prime, placing your fist to the left and a little higher than your shoulder, with the arm slightly bent so as not to obstruct your vision. This parry protects all the body, as well as the arm in the inner line against cut and thrust (Fig. 17).

(b) *Parry of Seconde*.—Execute this parry in the same line of the invitation of its name. This parry protects the flank and the forearm against the point and the cutting edge (Fig. 18).

(c) *Parry of Tierce*.—Starting from the guard of Tierce, carry your point backward to the right until you reach the position of the invitation in Tierce. This parry protects the face in the outer line and the arm in the same line (Fig. 19).

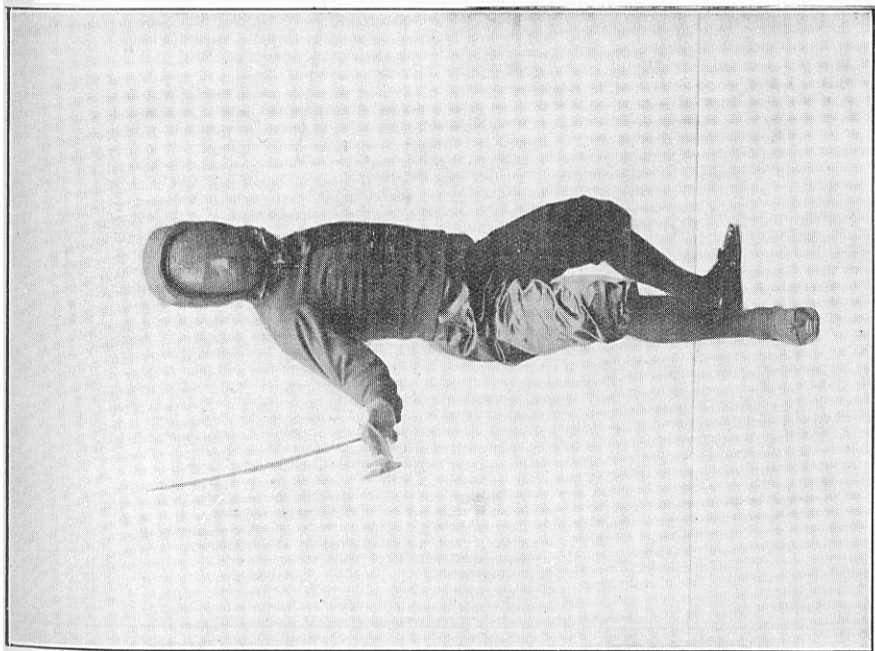
(d) *Parry of Quarte*.—Execute this parry similarly to the invitation in the same line and it protects the chest and the arm in the inner line (Fig. 20).

(e) *Parry of Quinte*.—Execute this parry similarly to the invitation in the same line, the cutting edge directed upward, the arm slightly bent, and the blade as a prolongation of your forearm. This parry covers the head and is also used against the thrust (Fig. 21).

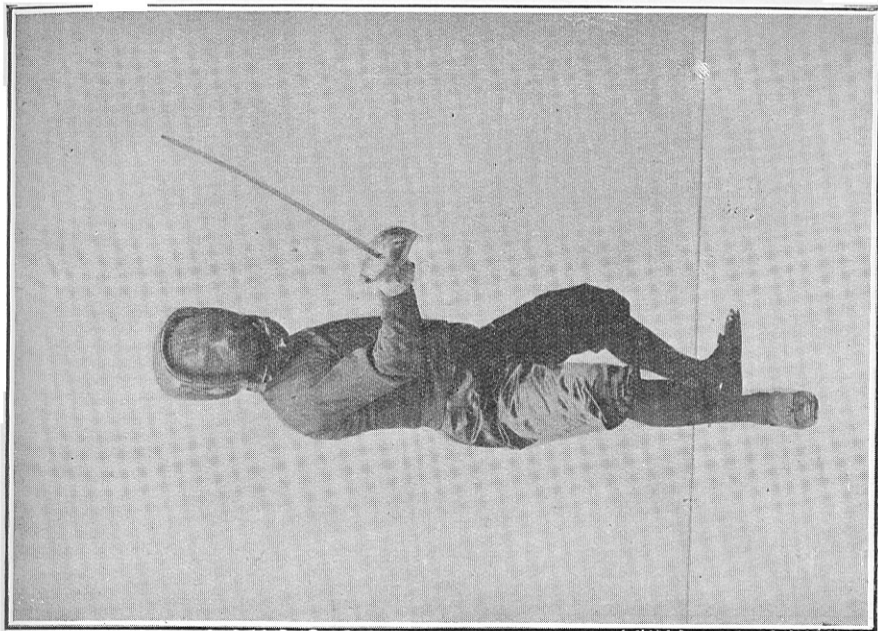
(f) *Parry of Sixte*.—This parry, like Quinte, protects the head against blows with the cutting edge, and is executed as follows:

Move your fist back to the left, nails upward, the sabre pointing ahead in an oblique direction, cutting edge upward, elbow and the wrist slightly bent (Fig. 22).

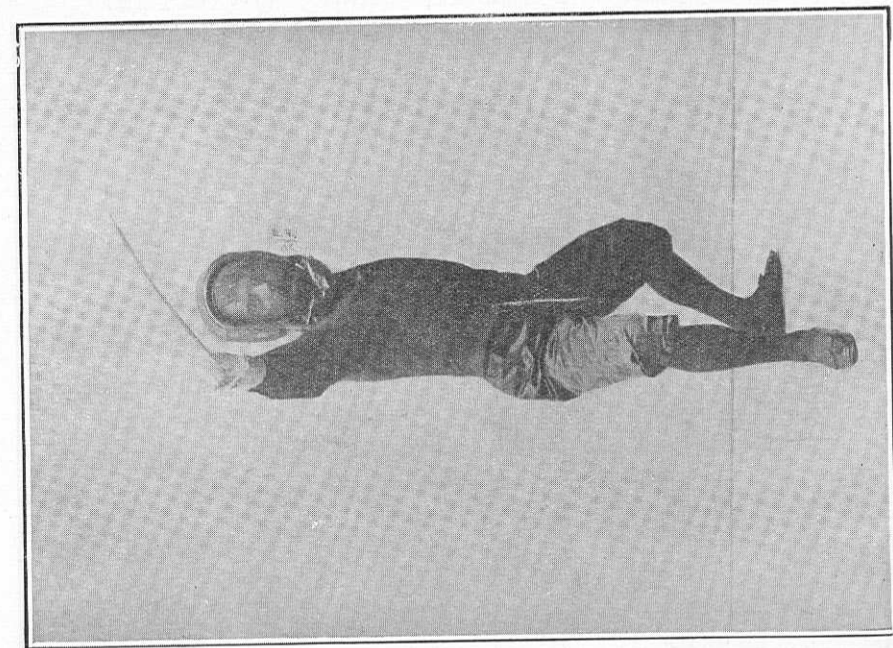
(g) *Parry of Low Tierce*.—Rest your elbow against the flank and lower the arm until the hand is level



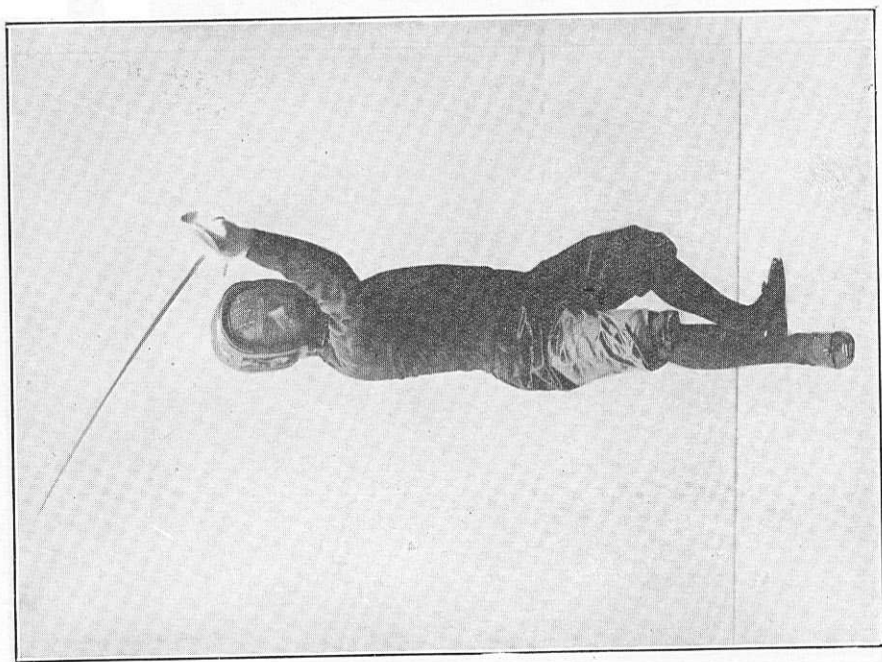
(Fig. 19)



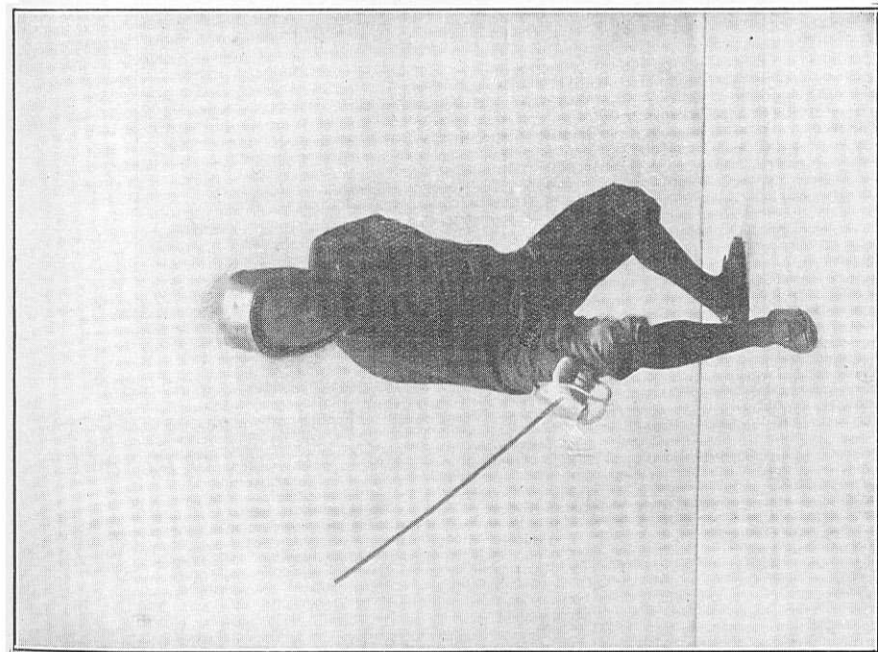
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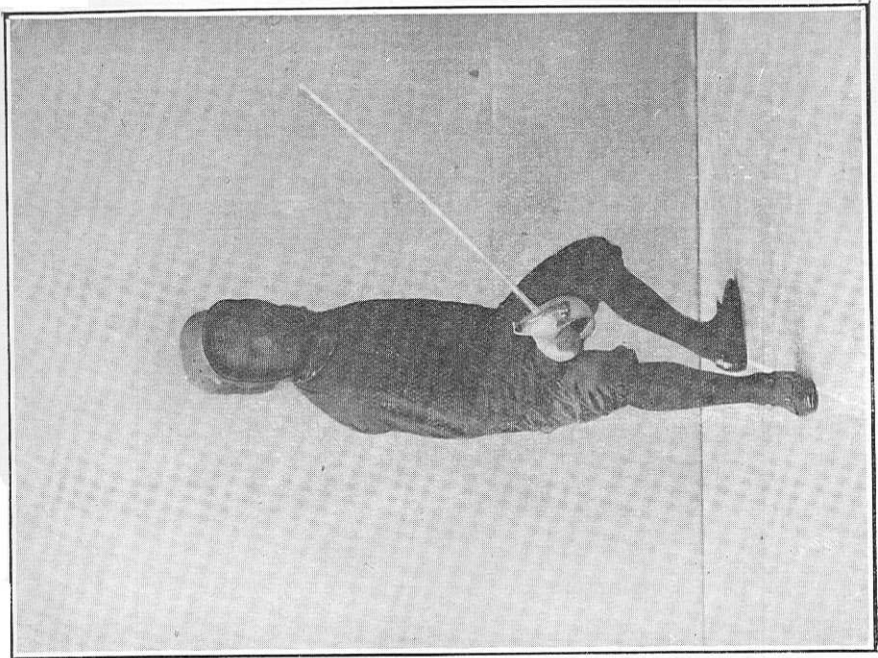
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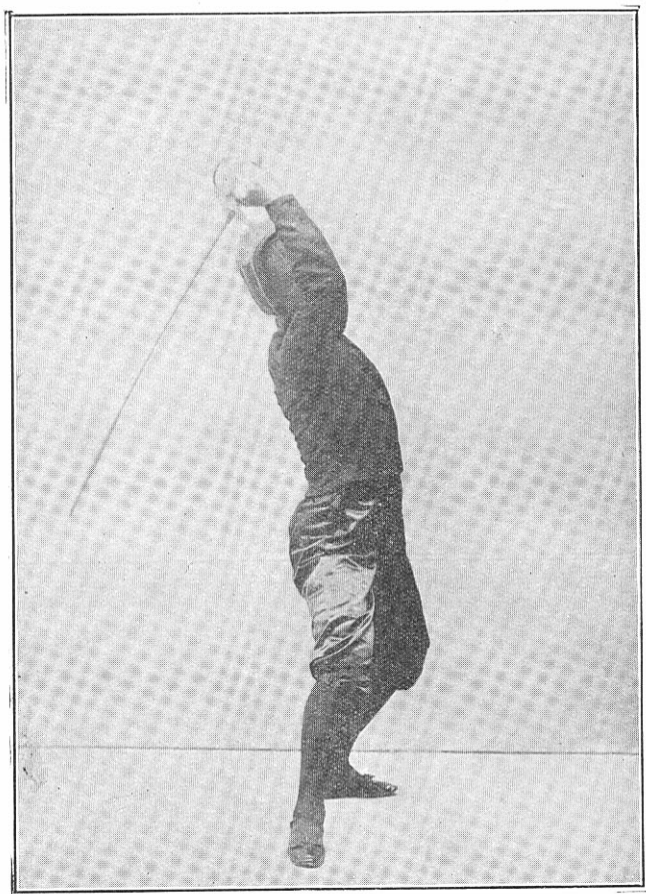
(Fig. 22)



(Fig. 23)



(Fig. 24)



(Fig. 25)

with the knee, keeping the point at the same height of your adversary's eyes, placing your blade to the right, cutting edge downward and to the right. This parry protects the flank and the thigh (Fig. 23).

(h) *Parry of Low Quarte*.—Place the arm and the weapon as in the preceding parry; however, it will be necessary to direct them sufficiently far to the left in order to protect the abdomen against the point and the cutting edge (Fig. 24).

(i) *Parry of Septime*.—This parry greatly resembles the yielding parries (Fig. 25).

The positions just described vary according to the direction of the blows you intend parrying.

The fundamental principle of these parries consists in opposing the forte of your blade to the foible of your adversary's blade.

For example, you cannot very well stop a blow to the abdomen with the parry of Prime if you place your hand at the height of your head. If you are a clever fencer, you can, however, lower the hand so that your opponent's blade hits the forte of your sabre, near the guard.

In order to parry an attack made at short distance, it will be indispensable for you to bend the arm, thus obtaining the advantage of riposting by a simple arm extension.

Resuming, you must always execute parries adequate to the attacks.

And now that we have described the positions of the parries, let us study the manner in which you may change from an invitation engagement or parry to

another parry; or in other words, how to execute the simple parries.

From the invitation, engagement or parry of Prime you may change:

(a) *To Seconde*: By extending the arm and carrying it to the right until it is placed in the position already described.

(b) *To Tierce*: By executing a semicircular movement with the point, using the shoulder joint as a pivot.

(c) *To Quinte*: Use the same semicircular movement employed in the preceding example, but this time ending it above the head.

(d) *To Low Quarte*: By turning the arm and bending it until the elbow touches your hip, cutting edge directed downward; thus you obtain the position already described.

From the invitation, engagement or parry of Seconde you may change:

(a) *To Prime*: By means of a shoulder movement, carry the sabre to your left, turning cutting edge to the left and upward. You obtain in this manner the position of Prime already described.

(b) *To Tierce*: Executing a semicircular movement with your forearm.

(c) *To Quinte*: Lifting the sabre by means of a shoulder movement and directing cutting edge upward.

(d) *To Low Tierce*: We shall describe the execution of this movement, when taking up the subject of yielding parries.

From the invitation, engagement or parry of Tierce you may change:

(a) *To Quarte*: Carrying your sabre to the left, arm and fist in straight line, until the fist and the blade are placed in the Fifth Position.

(b) *To Low Quarte*: This movement resembles the preceding change, but you must lower your hand in order to attain the guard of Low Quarte.

(c) *To Sixte*: By raising the blade at the same time that you bend and turn your arm until the hand reaches the level of the head, you attain the position already described.

(d) *To Seconde*: By reversing the movement required for the change from Seconde to Tierce. The point thus describes a semicircle.

From the invitation, engagement or parry of Quarte you may change:

(a) *To Tierce*: By the execution of a movement contrary to the one required for the change from Tierce to Quarte.

Balancing of the blade must be avoided. Carry sabre to your right until you attain a perfect position of Tierce.

(b) *To Low Tierce*: This movement resembles the preceding example, but it is necessary to lower the hand after carrying it to the right.

(c) *To Quinte*: By raising the arm and the blade you turn your wrist until the cutting edge of the weapon is directed upward. Thus you attain the position of Quinte already described.

From the invitation, engagement or parry of Quinte you may change:

(a) *To Seconde*: By lowering your arm to the right without changing the position of the fist.

(b) *To Tierce*: With a movement similar to the change from Prime to Tierce.

(c) *To Quarte*: By turning your arm at the same time that you place your fist in the Fifth Position. The fist describes a diagonal toward the left in order to attain the position of Quarte.

(d) *To Low Quarte*: This movement is similar to the preceding change; you must, however, lower your fist in order to obtain the position of Low Quarte.

(e) *To Prime*: This movement is executed by lowering the point of your blade and displacing your arm in order to gain Prime.

This parry seems illogical, but is nevertheless very useful: it easily deceives your adversary, who cannot complete his attack until the movement is finished.

You perform in this case a parry from Quinte to Prime, which is not a semi-counter-parry.

From the parry of Sixte you may change as follows:

(a) *To Tierce*: By turning your arm at the same time that you lower your hand. Avoid all wavering of the blade.

(b) *To Seconde*: By an ascending leverage, using the elbow as a pivot, describe a curve from right to left downward with the point of your blade, and carry your arm to the right until the position of Seconde is completed.

(c) *To Low Tierce*: This movement is similar to the change from Sixte to Tierce; but you must lower your hand to perform the parry of Low Tierce.

(d) *To Quarte*: By slightly unbending your arm while you carry your hand to the left.

(e) *To Low Quarte*: This movement is similar to the preceding change, but you lower your hand to execute the parry of Low Quarte.

30. YIELDING PARRIES

The only genuine yielding parries are executed in Prime and in Low Quarte against the filo (graze) in Tierce and Seconde.

These movements are called yielding parries because they deflect the point while yielding to your adversary's pressure without losing contact with his blade.

By reason of their great resemblance, we will also call yielding parries the ones performed from the invitations in Prime, Seconde, Tierce or Quarte in response to a blow preceded by a beat and directed to the abdomen, flank or to the right or the left side of the face.

(a) *Yielding in Low Quarte against the filo in Seconde.*

Carry your blade by a spiral motion from left to right and downward. Then raise your point, lower the fist and deflect your adversary's blade to the left so that your hand is in Low Quarte at the moment he lunges.

(b) *Yielding in Prime against the filo in Tierce.*

Lower the point of your blade and raise your hand until the cutting edge is directed to the left and upward. During this maneuver, you must never lose contact with your adversary's blade.

(c) *In response to a beat* in the inner line against the invitation of Prime, followed by a blow to the chest, yield in Low Quarte.

(d) *In response to a beat* in the inner line against the invitation in *Seconde*, followed by a blow to the flank, yield in *Low Tierce*.

(e) *If your adversary beats* in the inner line against your invitation in *Tierce*, yield in *Septime*¹ raising your hand, bent at the wrist, nails inside. The blade is directed outward to the low line (Fig. 25).

(f) *If your adversary beats in Tierce* against your invitation in *Quarte*, and follows his beat by a cut to the left side of your face, you must parry this action yielding in *Prime*.

31. COUNTER-PARRIES

Counter-parries are performed by abandoning your opponent's blade after an engagement or a parry in order to describe a circle with the point of your own and bring it back to the original point of contact.

You take the counter of *Tierce* and of *Quarte* by passing your point under, and the counter of *Prime*, of *Seconde* and of *Quinte* by passing it over the point of your adversary's blade.

There is no counter-parry for the parry of *Sixte*.

The counter-parries are executed from the elbow with the assistance of the wrist.

The object of the counter-parries is to ward off the thrusts, the blows by disengagement or the direct feints. The half-counters derived from the counter-parries, serve the same purpose and are very effective against the cuts.

¹ This parry can also be executed against a riposte by thrust after the parry of *Quarte*. We do not recommend, however, the frequent use of this parry since it may be substituted by the counter-parry of *Tierce*, which offers you the opportunity of riposting.

The half-counter-parries are, for example, transitions:

(a) From the parry of *Seconde* to the parries of *Quarte* or *Sixte*.

(b) From the parry of *Quarte* to the parry of *Sixte*.

(c) From the parry of *Tierce* to the parries of *Prime* or of *Quinte*.

(d) From the parry of *Quinte* to the parry of *Prime*.

During the execution of these parries, you must see that your point is not entangled in the arm or the body of your adversary, and in order to prevent this your sabre should describe a more or less ample circular movement.

As we have stated before, the counters and half-counters nullify the adverse feints and in consequence force your opponent to attack by simple actions.

If you vary your method of defense—alternating simple parries with counter-parries—it will be possible for you to perform a large variety of ripostes, and your adversary will face a more versatile and powerful swordplay.

We must add to the list of movements so far as described, two particular parries which are executed before you recover from the lunge.

While the names of these parries have a great resemblance to those of two preceding movements, their execution is entirely different. These parries are called *Counter-Prime* and *Counter-Quinte*.

Counter-Prime after your opponent's lunge.—After your adversary checks a cut to his head by means of the parry of *Quinte* and tries a riposte to the abdomen, you execute the *Counter-Prime* as follows: Describe a

curve by a receding upward movement in such a manner that the blade passes near your left shoulder. This movement, made while advancing, nullifies your opponent's riposte and must be finished by a forward molinello.

Counter-Quinte.—This movement is performed in a similar fashion.

You attack your adversary in the inner line; he parries in Prime and counter attacks by a riposte to the head. To check this action you describe with your sabre a horizontal molinello which must stop the riposte, because your blade (being drawn backward above your head), clashes with your opponent's weapon in the position of Quinte.

These two parries are to be employed only when you are separated from your adversary by a short distance. His body in this position interferes with the movements of the blade and the number of parries under these circumstances is not very large.

But why not employ simple parries, since the counter-parries offer so many difficulties?

The object of these two parries is to put you in an advantageous position for the defense by means of unexpected movements.

The regular study of these parries trains your mechanism to such an extent that all complicated movements afterward seem easy to perform.

If you form the habit of using only the parries of Prime, Seconde and Quinte, your defense will be greatly simplified; and for the same reason the attack will be made more difficult for your adversary.

The other parries, namely, Low Tierce, Quarte, Low Quarte and Sixte should not be employed except from time to time; you must nevertheless be able to execute them perfectly by means of constant practice.

REMARKS

It has been said that the parries must be performed with an extended arm, and it is well understood that the joint of the elbow plays the principal rôle in the deflection of your opponent's blade and that you must advance your blade by extending the arm.

It is also necessary to use in your parries an amount of strength commensurate with the force of the attack. Thus, while a vigorous thrust demands a vigorous parry, a feint requires only moderate opposition; this prevents making wide instinctive movements in response to your adversary's feints.

During the beginning of the instruction, the master must see that the pupil makes his parries neatly, using the elbow; this will give him authority and precision.

The master will also guard the pupil against making any unnecessary movements.

32. PARRIES WHILE RECOVERING FROM THE LUNGE

As far as movements of the arm are concerned, you execute the parries while recovering from the lunge in the same manner as those executed while your body is still. The only difference lies in the action of the recovery after the lunge.

The following question comes up at this time: Must

you parry *before* or *during* the recovery to the position of the guard?¹

It is better tactics to recover the position of the guard immediately after you deliver any sort of attack, particularly when in the presence of an adversary who ripostes: in this manner you bring your body out of the reach of your opponent's weapon and gain time to execute your parry, especially if the riposte is composed of one or more feints.

In a general way, many fencers parry at the moment they recover from the lunge, the displacement of the body naturally taking a longer time than the movement of the arm. If both movements were executed simultaneously, the action of the arm would be restricted and determined by the length of the lunge.

The parry and the recovery to the position of the guard are two different actions; and while the first one must respond immediately to the riposte, we must not forget that a rapid retreat of the body facilitates the defense.

33. THE RIPOSTE

The riposte is the blow which you deliver immediately after your parry.

When your parry is performed in response to a riposte, the touch is called *counter-riposte*.

SIMPLE RIPOSTES

The simple ripostes are made in one tempo. They touch by a direct cut, by a cut preceded by a molinello, or else by a direct thrust.

¹ If your adversary always employs the same method when riposting, you are duly cautioned; in this case, you may parry and riposte while still in the lunge. This subject belongs in the chapter dealing with second intention attacks.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF PRIME

1. To the head by the molinello.
2. To the left side of the face by the molinello.
3. To the right side of the face by the molinello.
4. To the chest by the molinello.
5. To the abdomen by the molinello.
6. Direct cut to the flank.
7. Thrust in the low line.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF SECONDE

1. Thrust by the filo in the low line.
2. Thrust by disengagement in the high line.
3. Direct cut to the right side of the face.
4. To the head by the molinello.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF TIERCE

1. By thrust using the filo in the high line.
2. Thrust by disengagement in the low line.
3. Direct cut to the flank.
4. Coupé (cut-over) to the head, if your adversary responds to your parry with a press.
5. To the left side of the face by the molinello.
6. To the abdomen by the molinello.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF QUARTE

1. Cut to the flank by the molinello.
2. Direct cut to the right side of the face.
3. Direct cut to the head.
4. Direct cut to the left side of the face.
5. Direct cut to the chest.
6. Direct cut to the abdomen.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF QUINTE

1. Direct cut to the flank.
2. Cut to the head by the molinello.
3. Cut to the left side of the face by the molinello.
4. Cut to the abdomen by the molinello.
5. Thrust below.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF SIXTE

1. Cut to the flank by the molinello.
2. Direct cut to the head.
3. Direct cut to the left side of the face.
4. Direct cut to the chest.
5. Direct cut to the abdomen.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF LOW TIERCE

1. By the filo in the high line.
2. Direct thrust in the low line.
3. Direct cut to the face.
4. Direct cut to the head.
5. Direct cut to the left side of the face.
6. Cut to the abdomen by the molinello.

POSSIBLE RIPOSTES AFTER THE PARRY OF SEPTIME

1. Direct cut to the abdomen.
2. Cut to the flank by the molinello.
3. Cut to the head by the molinello.

After the parry of Low Quarte you use the same ripostes indicated after the parry of Quarte.

In order to describe the execution of the ripostes, it will be sufficient to repeat the principles for the execution of the blows after your own engagement. In addi-

tion, we must state that the riposte is to be performed from a perfect guard position and with the arm alone.

The riposte must touch your adversary before he has had time to recover after his lunge; otherwise, your counterattack will be finished too late to succeed.

The master must never allow the pupil to lunge in order to land a riposte. In order to develop quick reaction in a fencer, we recommend to the master: attack and recover the guard very rapidly; in this manner, the pupil will have to make haste in order to touch the place uncovered before the master finishes his recovery.

34. THE CUTS TO THE ARM

All the blows heretofore described as applicable in attacks or in ripostes, can be directed to the arm.

Taking into consideration the fact that sometimes the blows to the arm must be delivered from certain positions, it may be necessary to take advantage of the joint of the wrist in order to execute them.

In all cases, you must strike only with the cutting edge of your blade, for thus your weapon will remain in good position for the defense. The advantage to be derived from blows delivered with the reverse cutting edge is very small in comparison with the harm done to the defense if your adversary parries, because in this case the weapon may be badly shaken in your hand.

After you have perfect control of your weapon and complete assurance of your hand, it will be easy for you to learn how to use the reverse of your blade.

If a pupil learned to strike with the reverse, his touches would lose all precision.

The cuts to the arm are nothing else than a derivative or better still a restriction of the cuts to the body. When you know how to play well for the body, it is easy to learn how to play for the arm. You must avoid all blows to your adversary's hand both as a matter of courtesy and in order to avoid impairing his defense.

The act of continually hitting the fingers becomes ridiculous and is perfectly useless in a serious combat.

SECOND PART

CHAPTER IV

35. FEINTS IN GENERAL

Any threat which simulates a real blow and forces your adversary to parry is called a feint.

The object of the feint is to induce your opponent to uncover himself while trying to protect the opening threatened by the simulated attack.

The feint must have all the characteristics of the real blow and in order to execute it well and to give it all the appearances of a genuine blow, it must be clean cut and rapid.

If a long distance separates you from your adversary, it will be necessary for you to execute the feint while advancing so as to deceive your opponent. The illusion in this case is complete and you may score a touch, provided you get within striking distance.

However, in order to accomplish your object, the feints must be performed at the medium distance, because from this position you may touch your opponent without advancing.

If the feint is executed at a great distance, your adversary may parry instinctively or voluntarily, too soon. If the parry is intentional, its object is to force you to make wide movements which will allow your opponent to cut your arm into tempo or to stop you with a thrust to your body. It is evident that in this case the parry is only a pretence made in order to attack and not a response to the feint.

If, on the contrary, the parry is an instinctive one, you may receive it, and after coming within the medium distance you may feint again in the same or in any other line.

36. SIMPLE FEINTS

In the third part of this book we will study more in detail the definition of the feints.

In order to complete the part of the instruction intended to impart suppleness to the mechanism of the pupil, we are going to outline a method to be followed after the first fundamental elements are mastered. Let us not forget that the observations herein developed are the fruit of a ripe experience which can be gained only by practice.

The simple feint is composed of two movements: the threat made by the simulated attack, and the real action, accomplished after deceiving the parry.

The attack preceded by the feint, which in practice must be executed lunging, should be at the start worked out in two tempos, at the medium as well as at the long distance.

When your adversary is within reach, your feint should be emphasized by a tap with your right foot; at long distance you must advance during your threat; and this constitutes the first tempo. In both cases, your adversary's parry must be instantaneously deceived and your blow delivered. This constitutes the second tempo of the attack.

When feinting, it is important to make an impulsive forward movement with your body, in order to make

the menace realistic and to force your adversary to parry.

The most efficient feint is the one made with the point, and it has the additional advantage of allowing you to keep your arm protected.

37. FEINTS WITH THE POINT

The feint of straight thrust can be executed from any of the five invitations to attack.

First movement: Extend the arm with energy, the blade in line, the hand in the Second Position, and stamp your right foot on the floor, inclining your body forward toward your opponent.

Second movement: Deceive your adversary's parry with lightning speed and lunge immediately, delivering your thrust by *cavazione* (disengagement).

The following table of examples shows the principal feints, omitting the details of execution we have just described.

First Example

Master:	Pupil:
Invitation in Prime.	First Tempo.
	Feint of thrust in low line.
Parries Seconde,	Second Tempo.
	Deceiving the parry of Seconde the pupil can finish the attack in any of the following ways:
	Thrust by <i>cavazione</i> in high

or parries Counter of
Prime.

line; cut to the right cheek;
cut to the head by the
molinello; cut to the left
cheek by the molinello;
cut to the upper side of the
arm.

Thrust in low line by
means of a circular *cava-
zione*; cut to the flank by
the molinello; cut to the
arm in the low line.

Second Example

Invitation in Seconde.

First Tempo.

Feint of straight thrust in
the high line.

Parries Tierce,

Second Tempo.

Cavazione and thrust in-
ward; cut-over (*coupé*) to
the head; cut to the left
cheek by the molinello; cut
to the chest or to the
abdomen by the molinello;
cut to the flank or inward
cut to the arm; or upward
cut to the arm.

or parries Quinte,

Thrust in the low line by
cavazione; cut to the flank;
cut to the right cheek by

or parries Prime,

the molinello; cut to the abdomen by the molinello; cut to the arm underneath; inward cut to the arm.

or parries Counter of Seconde,

Thrust in low line by *cavazione*; cut to the flank; cut to the arm above.

or parries Half-Counter of Quarte.

Circular *cavazione* from right to left and thrust above; upward cut to the right cheek; cut to the head by the molinello; cut to the chest by the molinello; cut to the left cheek by the molinello; cut to the upper side of the arm.

Thrust in upper line by circular *cavazione*; cut to the right cheek by the molinello; cut to the flank by the molinello; cut-over (coupé) to the head or to the arm.

Third Example

Invitation in Tierce.

First Tempo.

Feint of inward thrust.

Parries Quarte,

Second Tempo.

Cavazione upward; cut to

or parries Counter of
Tierce,

the upper side of the arm by the molinello; cut to the flank or to the right cheek by the molinello, passing over or under opponent's blade; cut-over (*coupé*) to the head or to the arm.

or parries Seconde,

Circular *cavazione* and inward thrust; cut-over (*coupé*) to the head; inward cut to the left side of the face by the molinello; cut to the chest or to the abdomen by the molinello; cut to the inner or to the lower sides of the arm; cut to the flank by an upward molinello coming from underneath.

or parries Half-Counter of
Prime,

Thrust by *cavazione* in the high line; outward cut to the right cheek; cut to the head by the molinello; inward cut to the left cheek or to the chest by the molinello; cut to the upper side of the arm.

Cavazione in low line; cut to the flank by the molinello; cut to the abdomen

or parries Half-Counter of Quinte.

by the molinello deceiving the parry at the last moment¹; cut-over (coupé) to the arm; cut to the arm by upward or downward molinello (you may also pass your blade over or under your adversary's arm, but passing it over, your own arm will be better covered).

Cavazione in the low line; cut to the flank; molinello to the left cheek; cut to the chest or to the abdomen by the molinello; cut to the inner or to the lower side of the arm.

Fourth Example

Invitation in Quarte.

First Tempo.

Feint of thrust in high line.

Parries Tierce,

Second Tempo.

Inward thrust by *cavazione*; coupé to the head; cut by the molinello to the left cheek; to the chest; to the abdomen or to the inner side of the arm; or lastly, cut to the flank.

¹ When your adversary is in the habit of making his parries too wide.

or parries Counter of
Quarte,

Circular *cavazione* (circular disengagement) above coupé to the head; outward cut to the right cheek by the molinello; cut to the flank by the molinello or coupé to the arm.

Fifth Example

Invitation in Quinte.

First Tempo.

Feint of thrust below.

Parries Seconde,

Second Tempo.

Thrust by *cavazione* to the high line; cut to the right cheek; cut to the head by the molinello; cut to the left cheek; cut to the chest or cut to the upper side of the arm.

or parries Low Quarte,

Cavazione to high line; cut to the right cheek passing blade under adversary's hand; cut to the head by the molinello; cut to the arm above; coupé to the arm, to the head or to the flank; cut to the right cheek by the molinello.

or parries Half-Counter of
Prime,

Cavazione and thrust to low line; molinello to the

or parries Counter of
Quinte.

flank; cut to the arm from
above or from underneath
coming from the right side;
cut to the abdomen de-
ceiving the parry at the
last moment.¹

Circular *cavazione* finish-
ing underneath; molinello
to the left cheek, chest or
abdomen.

38. DISENGAGEMENT FEINTS (CAVAZIONI)

These feints differ from the direct feints in that the threat, which is the initial movement, is made by a disengagement.

The feint by *cavazione* should be also studied in two tempos:

1. Describe a circle around the adversary's weapon with the point of your blade; direct the point to the unprotected line, extend the arm inclining your body forward, and tap the floor with your right foot.

2. Deceive your opponent's parry, lunge and touch him.

REMARKS

It is very important to practice in two tempos the attack and the recovery to the position of the guard, until such time as the pupil executes the feint faultlessly. This study will give him neatness of mechanism. When this is finally achieved, the two movements of the feint may be combined into one.

¹ See note at foot of Third Example.

As soon as the pupil executes rapidly the two movements of the feint and is able to perform at the same time a perfect lunge, the master must parry the final touch and train the pupil to recover the position of the guard with all speed, showing him the ripostes or the attacks upon his recovery, which confront fencers under similar circumstances. The pupil will thus develop a quick eye and parrying sense.

At the start the master will permit the pupil to touch him, parrying now and then in order to induce the pupil to make a more energetic attack. Later on, he must parry regularly and even execute ripostes. When the pupil has learned to parry the riposte, he should be made to riposte in turn.

This exercise, carefully supervised in the beginning so as to detect any defects in its execution, should be afterward conducted like an assault, that is, leaving the initiative to the pupil who must choose an unprotected line for his riposte.

39. FEINTS BY THE FILO

(GRAZE FEINTS)

The principal object of the feint of thrust by the filo is to provoke an instinctive reaction, and for this reason it may be well termed the key in fencing.

The filo has the double advantage of holding the adverse blade while you press with your own against it, thus greatly reducing the risks and protecting your advance.

The feints by the filo are more disturbing to the nerves of an opposing fencer than those made with the

cutting edge, because your gliding along his blade forces him to respond instinctively to the pressure.

The feint by the filo is possible whenever your adversary's point is in line of attack.

Prudence demands that you establish contact with the adverse blade before you start your advance.

The feint by the filo may be directed to the chest or to the flank, with your hand in the Second Position.

The starting point of each of these threats is the same as that of the other feints already studied.

We earnestly recommend that you use the feint by the filo when you attack. The stop thrust is then practically impossible, because the filo closes the line.

Since the filo protects the advance, you may attack from the normal distance by simple actions, or by following the filo with some other feints, which will permit you to bring your blade into a favorable position for the final blow.

Since we recommend that you make all attacks from a point out of reach of your adversary, it is logical to use the filo when advancing.

Our long experience prompts us to recommend very strongly this form of attack.

The following question may arise: How is it possible to graze along a blade which is not in line of attack which happens when the hand of your adversary is to some extent in motion or while it rests on different invitations?

We reply that a clever fencer can always induce his opponent to bring his blade in line.

40. FEINTS WITH THE CUTTING EDGE

There are two kinds of feints made with the cutting edge of the blade: those performed with a direct movement and those preceded by a *molinello*. The latter are not frequently used, because in order to execute them you must protect your arm carefully, which is extremely difficult.

The principles governing the direct feints of cut are the same as those for the execution of the feints with the point which we have previously studied. The only difference in the present case is that the edge threatens instead of the point.

It must be noted that during the execution of these feints the fist is to be kept on a level with the shoulder regardless of the direction of the feint. While deceiving your adversary's parry, your fist must also remain in the same position, without displacing it to the right, left, forward or backward.

As to the wrist, it may be turned around in different directions according to the requirements of the threat: for a cut to the head, for example, the weapon is raised so that the edge of the blade may be perpendicularly in front of your adversary's forehead; when threatening the flank, turn your hand to the left; when threatening the abdomen turn it to the right. It is unnecessary to repeat that all these rotations must be made on the same spot.

A direct attack should score a hit in spite of the parry; but it will not succeed unless the line is well uncovered. It is for this reason that feints are employed to provide an opening for the direct attacks made

either with the point or with the cutting edge of your blade.

First Example

Master:

Invitation or engagement
in Prime.

Parry of Seconde.

Pupil:

First Tempo.

Feint of direct cut to the flank.

Second Tempo.

Deceiving the parry of Seconde, the pupil may deliver: cut to the right cheek, cut to the head, inward cut to the left side of the face by the moli-nello, disengage upward, or cut to the arm.

Second Example

Invitation or engagement
in Seconde.

Parry of Prime, of Quinte
or of Tierce according to
the opponent's threat.

First Tempo.

Feint of direct cut to the left cheek, to the head, to the right cheek or to the arm.

Second Tempo.

Deceiving the parry, the pupil may try: cut to the flank, to the head by the coupé; to the left cheek, to the chest or to the ab-

domen by the molinello; to the upper or lower sides of the arm, or disengagement downward, or the following:

Coupé to the head or to the arm; cut by the molinello to the right cheek or to the flank; or disengagement upward.

Third Example

Invitation or engagement in Tierce.

First Tempo.

Feint of direct cut to the head, to the left cheek, to the chest, to the abdomen or to the flank.

Half-Counter of Quinte, Quarte, Half-Counter of Prime or Seconde, according to the feint.

Second Tempo.

Deceiving the parry, the pupil may attack in any of the open lines.

Fourth Example

Invitation or engagement in Quarte.

First Tempo.

The pupil may threaten the head, the right cheek, the flank or the upper side of the forearm.

Parry of Quinte, Tierce, Low Tierce or Seconde.

Second Tempo.

Deceiving the parry, the

pupil may attack in any	of the unprotected lines.
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Fifth Example

Invitation or engagement
in Quinte.

First Tempo.

Feint of cut to the flank or
to the abdomen.

Parry of Seconde, Low
Quarte or Half-Counter of
Prime.

Second Tempo.

Deceiving the parry the
pupil may attack in any of
the unprotected lines.

41. FEINTING DURING THE ADVANCE

You may be confronted by two different situations when feinting during your advance:

Your adversary may either parry immediately in order to close the line threatened by your feint or he may deflect your blade at the precise moment; these situations are due to lack of experience or to a pre-meditated plan of your opponent.

Let us consider the first case when your opponent parries your feint immediately.

Is it possible then to finish the attack?

This will depend on yourself. You will score a hit if your speed is superior to the defensive powers of your adversary; but you will be checked if you are too slow or if there is lack of spontaneity in your attack.

In the second case, when your opponent parries regularly, your attack should succeed, because the deception of the parry takes place a little ahead of it,

and, therefore, speeds being equal, the offensive should score.

In actual practice these situations are greatly varied, and each variation calls forth the corresponding shade of response.

The feint deserves very serious study, for it is the basis of the offensive in sabre fencing.

In sabre fencing the adversaries keep out of reach, and therefore the advance before the lunge is almost a normal condition. Consequently, the feint is strongly indicated for the attack, because it constitutes the best means of gaining ground; besides, it forces your adversary to take the defensive. This, however, makes certain precautions necessary. First of all, you must protect your arm during the advance and be ready to parry the stop thrust.

In all cases it will be necessary to prepare the attack so as to surprise your adversary, executing your movements with energy and decision. The reaction will be an instinctive parry.

42. DOUBLE FEINTS

The double feint is executed in three tempos. The double feint is the simulation of a feint followed by a blow after deceiving the second parry.

The double feint is the device of a slow fencer against a speedier adversary who parries almost simultaneously the first two movements; it is only at the third parry that the attacker, not meeting his opponent's blade can score a touch.

In theory there should be no such thing as the double

feint, because a fencer is supposed to possess sufficient speed to touch his adversary deceiving one parry only. But what happens when your adversary does not respond to your feint with a parry? He is obviously awaiting the final movement of your feint. Here the double feint reveals its rôle, which does not consist in deceiving two parries, but in avoiding your adversary's snare.

It is always important to threaten with vigor so as to draw your adversary to the parry, particularly during the second tempo.

43. DOUBLE FEINTS AT THE NORMAL DISTANCE

The execution of the double feints is a very delicate matter; therefore, we advise you to study these feints carefully.

They are divided into three tempos, based on the same principles that apply to the feint. These three tempos, so to speak, are the same as those of the *lunge preceded by the advance*. In effect, the first tempo consists of the advance of your right foot; in the second tempo, your left foot follows in order to re-establish the correct distance of a well balanced guard. This step is followed by the lunge.

This movement, practiced in the beginning in three different tempos, will be afterward timed in such a manner that the first feint and the step are executed simultaneously.

The cadence of this advancing attack must be regulated according to the speed of your adversary; and on this account it offers real difficulty.

The object of the double feint advancing is to bring you near your opponent, who, being now within range, can be touched by the second feint, which is the final movement of the attack.

We are now going to study, with the aid of the following tabulation, the double feints executed at long and medium distances.

44. DOUBLE FEINTS WITH THE POINT

First Example

Master:	Pupil:
Invitation or engagement in Prime.	First Tempo. Feint of thrust in low line. ¹
Parries Seconde.	Second Tempo. Deceives parry by a disengagement upward.
Parries Tierce, Quinte or Prime,	Third Tempo. Lunges in order to touch by disengagement, passing under opponent's blade.
or parries with Counter of Prime,	Circular disengagement to threaten flank and disengagement upward.
or parries Seconde, and Counter of Seconde, or Seconde and Half-Counter of Quarte.	Disengagement upward, followed by circular disengagement in the same direction.

¹ Direct thrust in the case of an invitation, or thrust by *cavazione* if attack starts from an engagement.

Second Example

Invitation or engagement in Seconde.	First Tempo. Feint of thrust in upper line.
Parries Tierce, Quinte or Prime.	Second Tempo. Deceives parry and feints below.
Parries Seconde, or parries (second and third tempos) with Counter of Seconde and Tierce, etc., or parries by the Half- Counter of Quarte and Tierce, or parries Tierce and Counter of Tierce, Half- Counter of Quarte and Counter of Quarte, Quinte and Counter of Quinte, Prime and Counter of Prime.	Third Tempo. Disengages to high line and lunges. Threatens in high line by a circular disengagement in order to disengage to low line. Threatens in the high line in order to finish in the inner line by a disengage- ment. Feints by disengagement and deceives parry with another circular disengage- ment.

Third Example

Invitation or engagement in Tierce.	First Tempo. Feint of thrust in inner line.
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Parries Low Quarte or
Seconde.

Second Tempo.

Deceives parries by disengagement in high line or upward direction.

Parries Tierce, Quinte or
Prime,

Third Tempo.

Disengages to low line and lunges.

or parries Counter of Tierce
and Low Quarte, Half-
Counter of Quinte and
Seconde, Half-Counter of
Prime and Seconde,

Deceives parries by a circular disengagement, followed by a disengagement.

or parries Quarte and
Counter of Quarte, Se-
conde and Counter of Se-
conde.

Deceives parries, feinting by disengagement, followed by circular disengagement.

Fourth Example

Invitation or engagement
in Quarte.

First Tempo.

Feint of thrust in high line.

Parries Tierce.

Second Tempo.

Deceives parry by disengagement to inner line.

Parries Low Quarte or
Seconde,

Third Tempo.

Disengages in the high line or the inner line by lunging.

or parries Counter of Quarte and Tierce,	Feints a circular disengagement and disengages to the inner line.
or parries Tierce and Counter of Tierce, Tierce and Half-Counter of Quinte, Tierce and Half- Counter of Prime.	Feint of disengagement in order to finish by a circular disengagement to low line.

Fifth Example

Invitation or engagement in Quinte.	First Tempo. Feint of thrust below.
Parries Seconde or low Quarte.	Second Tempo. Deceives parry by disengagement and feint to high line.
Parries Tierce, Quinte or Prime,	Third Tempo. Lunges with disengagement to low line.
or parries Counter of Quinte and Seconde,	Circular disengagement to low line and disengagement to high line.
or parries Seconde and Counter of Seconde, or Second and Half-Counter of Quarte.	Disengagement and circular disengagement to high line or to inner line.

These double feints are of little practical value in attacks; but, on the other hand, they provide excellent

exercise for the pupil in training his hand for the direction of the point and the accuracy of the parry.

After giving the foregoing tabulation, we believe it is unnecessary to mention the innumerable possible combinations of feints with cutting edge and point and vice-versa, because it is easy to find the parries to be opposed to them.

REMARKS

It will be very advantageous for the pupil to practice several parries every day, after he has practiced the attack.

When teaching parries, the master must demonstrate at the same time their execution and application until the pupil understands all possible combinations in fencing. Thus the pupil becomes accustomed to discover by himself all the possible attacks suitable for the individual parries.

The master will proceed wisely if he gives the lesson as follows: Instead of saying: "Execute such feint or such attack," he says to the pupil: "I am going to execute such and such parries; deceive them."

This lesson in attack improves the judgment of the pupil and gives him verve and spontaneity in his actions.

45. RIPOSTE BY FEINT

The riposte which does not strike your opponent directly after you parry and return the blow, but instead touches him only after you deceive one or two of his own parries, is respectively called riposte by the feint or riposte by the double feint.

These movements are the result of hesitation after your parry. The direct riposte is delayed and your adversary has time to return to the guard position. Under the circumstances, you are forced to lunge in order to score a touch.

This tardiness in the riposte is due either to a sluggish condition of the hand (which must be overcome), or to a certain amount of hesitation, after parrying a blow coming from an unexpected direction. In this case, the riposte by the feint is indicated.

46. THE REMISES

A remise is the repetition of an attack made upon an adversary who does not riposte after having parried.

Occasionally the remise is a happy touch; but it becomes dangerous against a possible riposte.

We would advise you to use the remise with moderation and only against an adversary who is in the habit of riposting only now and then.

The remise is employed in three forms:

1. As a simple remise.
2. As a continued attack (*raddoppio*).
3. As a renewed attack (*ripresa d'attacco*).

1. When your adversary parries and remains motionless: deliver a second attack upon any unprotected line remaining in the lunge and emphasizing your touch by an energetic tap with your right foot.

2. If your adversary retreats without parrying, advance your left foot, and this will enable you to follow him in his retreat and to attack him a second time.

3. Against a fencer who avoids the attack by a jump backward, advance your left foot close to the right one and start a new attack.

These remises can be applied to the movements which have been studied thus far. Against a series of feints (1) you perform the simple remise and return to the guard position with your right foot; in (2) and (3), you recover the position of the guard with your left one.