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## CHAPTER V

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### 47. ACTIONS AGAINST THE OPPONENT'S BLADE

MANY are the methods of attack, and many the means of diverting it.

Each movement is based upon a principle which can clearly be defined; it is difficult, however, to foresee just what attacks will succeed most effectively against a given fencer.

Reasoning from the basic principles of the art of fencing we may assert that no attack should be undertaken without having previously engaged the adversary's blade, because this procedure limits him and protects you during the attack.

To accomplish this you have three means of attack: the beat, the pressure and the *sforzo*.<sup>1</sup>

The principal object of these actions is to make an opening for your blade or to provoke in your adversary a response which will be favorable to your plan of campaign.

It is needless to say that when your adversary keeps his blade in line ready for an elusive movement, he is expecting a hold on his blade; and these combinations may be extended indefinitely.

If the fear of being stopped by a disengagement into tempo, prevents a fencer from resolutely attacking his opponent's blade, this reveals some defective execution.

<sup>1</sup> To avoid confusion with the graze, we prefer to use the original Italian name for this action. See Section 50.-Trans.

It is on this account that the time hits by blade evasion play such important part in sabre fencing.

#### 48. THE BEATS

The object of the beat is to deflect your adversary's blade from a given line.

The beat is delivered with the middle of your blade against the middle of your opponent's blade.

Beats are divided into:

1. Simple Beats.
2. Change Beats.
3. Counter-Beats.

Simple beats are those in which the blow is struck in the same direction as in the simple parries.

The beats by a change of line, or *change beats*, are performed by a change of engagement. The most common are: from Tierce beat in Quarte, and vice-versa; from Quarte beat in Quinte, from Quinte beat in Sixte, changing and beating. Passing over the opponent's blade in order to change and beat we have: from Seconde in Prime and vice-versa; from Prime in Low Quarte, from Quarte in Prime, and from Seconde in Half-Circle.<sup>1</sup>

A counter-beat is executed in the same way as a counter-parry.

In addition to their practical usefulness in fencing, the beats offer the additional advantage of strengthening the fingers and of teaching the use of force at the right time.

<sup>1</sup> This beat is borrowed from foil fencing; you strike the adverse blade with the cutting edge of your own. By turning your fist, with the hand in Fourth Position, it is easy to cross your opponent's steel.

In order to avoid an eventual evasion of blade by your opponent, it is very important to beat when he is unaware of your intention. This is accomplished by keeping your weapon somewhat detached from that of your adversary and beating by a shoulder movement.

The beat is carried by the forearm using the elbow joint as a pivot and keeping the fist stationary in order to avoid wavering of the blade.

Beats in general are called: Beat in Prime, in Seconde, etc., or Change-Beat in Tierce, Change-Beat in Quinte, or Beat by Counter of Tierce, of Quarte, etc.

The beats must be executed with energy, and the tension of the arm which follows them must be very rapid.

When at long distance, the beat is performed at the moment you take the step, and the clash of blades must take place exactly at the moment your right foot touches the ground.

#### 49. THE PRESS

The press is executed in Tierce or in Seconde touching the adverse blade.<sup>1</sup>

The object of applying pressure against your adversary's blade is to provoke an opposition by a corresponding pressure on his own part and to take advantage of the momentary deadlock that follows in order to advance at the same time that you make an opening for your blade.

When you are in the engagement of Tierce or Seconde, apply progressive pressure to your right

<sup>1</sup> The press could be performed in all lines of engagement, but we recommend its execution only in these two lines.

against your opponent's blade, gaining as much distance as you can in order to insure the success of your final blow.

#### 50. THE SFORZO

This movement differs from the beat in that the fencer vigorously rubs down the entire length of the opponent's blade from foible to forte.

The *sforzo* is always executed against an extended arm, and its object is to disarm your opponent or at least to upset his grip on the weapon and make his parry ineffective.

The *sforzo* is then followed by a direct blow.

The *sforzo* can be executed in all lines of engagement; it is, however, more effective in Low Quarte and in Tierce.

The *sforzo* can also be performed, changing the engagement by means of a counter.

#### 51. FEINTS AFTER THE BEAT OR THE PRESS

Since the feints are derived from the simple blows, it is evident that they can be used after the beat or the press. By the time the pupil reaches this part of the method, he should be perfectly familiar with the execution of the feints which we have already studied.

After the beat or the press, you execute the two movements of the threat lunging at the end and passing the point as subtly as possible.

The knowledge of when and how to engage in action can be acquired only by practice, and this the fencer must learn by himself.



## REMARKS

In the beginning the execution will be divided into three tempos. Beat or press the blade advancing, incline your body forward when you execute the feint, and finish the attack by lunging.

When the pupil is able to execute these movements with confidence, the master will divide the action into two tempos only.

1. The step forward and beat.
2. Feint of cut or thrust and lunge.

Very soon the pupil will be able to combine the last two tempos (the feint and the blow) into one, and thus progressively increase their speed.

The attacks in which you gain control of your opponent's blade are extremely simple in the movements and are easily performed; these attacks are the starting points of many actions and we recommend a careful study of them.

## 52. CONVENTIONAL EXERCISES

Two fencers can profitably drill themselves in training exercises previously agreed upon, taking turns in the attack and defense.

In order that these exercises may benefit both fencers, it is well to perform them in such a manner that each will have to conquer equivalent difficulties, establishing different conventions for each fencer if they are not of equal ability.

*For example:* the stronger fencer will attack at long distance in order to make the parry easier for his ad-

versary. In reply the weaker man can attack at short distance, making the task of parrying proportionately more difficult for the more experienced fencer.

These conventional exercises are very useful provided the rules are faithfully adhered to. Each man must use all his energy in order to insure the success of his attack or his parry and likewise exercise self-control, avoiding touching his partner by any other blow than the one previously agreed upon.

This develops will power.

### 53. CUT AND THRUST EXERCISES AT MEDIUM DISTANCE

We present a series of examples for the preparation of exercises. There is no end to the possible variations which can be introduced in the following combinations:

#### *First Exercise*

Pupil A:	Pupil B:
Engagement or invitation in Quinte.	Takes the position of the guard of Tierce at medium distance and remains perfectly still, choosing the moment when the adversary cannot parry in time. He then flashes a cut or a thrust to his flank.
Keeping the body erect and motionless, he parries Seconde as quickly as pos-	Every time that the adversary parries it may be assumed that the attack

sible, moving the arm only. An effort must be made to avoid being touched and to parry without leaning the body backward.

was made too soon or at the wrong moment.

### *Second Exercise*

Engagement in Seconde.

In the guard of Seconde, at medium distance, subtly passes the point of the blade by a rotation of the arm and then with lightning speed makes a cut for the head, lunging and keeping the left foot perfectly flat on the floor.

Parries Quinte, with cutting edge upward, performing parry in such a manner that the blades will not clash until the final movements of the attack and the parry take place.

### *Third Exercise*

Engagement in Tierce.

Engages blade at medium distance and tries horizontal cut to abdomen using methods previously given.

Parries Quarte or Half-Counter of Prime, executing these parries in the manner already explained.

Following the momentum of the blade, touches the adversary's body and, without interrupting the movement of the arm, draws back the blade, passing it under the opponent's arm in order to recover to the position of the guard in Tierce.

#### *Fourth Exercise*

Sabre in line of attack.

Engages in Quarte at medium distance, circles the adverse blade by a molinello and aims ascending cut to the flank following known principles.

Parries Seconde.

#### 54. FEINT EXERCISES

Pupil A:

On guard in Tierce.

Pupil B:

On guard in Tierce. Executes according to his choice, either a direct blow or a feint to the low line, ending attack with cut to the head.

When he performs a direct attack he must try to get ahead of the parry; when

Tries to parry the final blow only; or in other words, does not allow his opponent to induce him to parry the feint. He covers himself in order to parry the final.

he feints to the low line, he must accentuate the feint to make the threat more realistic.

The fencers may execute these movements repeatedly, changing lines of attack and rôles. These exercises have the advantage of stimulating one to study the art of the parry and of developing one's eye. The attacker learns to estimate the distance and to gain ground by means of the feint. It is well to change partners often when practicing these combinations; this is an excellent preparation for the assault.

## 55. EXERCISES AT NORMAL DISTANCE (ADVANCING AND FEINTING)

### *First Exercise*

Pupil A:

Makes any invitation.

Pupil B:

On guard.

As an exercise in speed, executes a simple or double feint in the open lines, deceiving the parries.

Parries only the final as  
neatly as possible, being  
in readiness to parry a  
supplementary feint.

The attacks may be preceded by beats, presses or *sforzos*, and the fencer must choose the proper moment for their execution. No more than two feints should be made, because after that it is very difficult to parry.

### *Second Exercise*

Invitation in Quinte.

On guard in Tierce.

Attacks, feinting once or twice; for example: feint to the flank, cut to the head, or feints to the flank and to the head in order to finish touching the flank; if opponent does not parry, the feint must be finished advancing and lunging. In order to force adversary to parry, alternate the feints with real blows.

Parries Seconde and Quinte  
or Seconde, Quinte and  
Seconde.

### *Third Exercise*

Invitation in Seconde.

On guard in Tierce.

He could execute: feint to

Opposes adequate parries but tries to confine his selection to *Seconde*, *Quinte* and *Prime*.

the head, blow to the flank, or feint to the head, cut to the abdomen, or feints to the head and to the flank and cut to the head, or feint to the right cheek, or feint to the abdomen and to the head, etc., etc.

#### *Fourth Exercise*

Invitation in *Quarte*.

On guard in *Tierce*.

Feint of cut to the head or to the right cheek followed by a blow to the abdomen or to the flank, or by means of the double feint; Feints to the head and to the abdomen, finishing to the head. Feints to the flank and to the head and cut to the cheek. Feints to the abdomen, etc., ending at will.

Parries *Quinte* or *Tierce* and *Prime* or *Quarte*.

*Fifth Exercise*

Invitation in Tierce.

On guard in Tierce.

Executes:

Feint to the right cheek  
and to the flank in order to  
finish with cut to head or  
to the left cheek.

Parries Prime and Seconde,  
Tierce, etc.

*Sixth Exercise*

Refer to fifth example.

Refer to fifth example.

Executes simple or double  
feints of thrusts.

Parries constantly Tierce  
and Quarte.

*Seventh Exercise*

Sabre in line.

On guard in Seconde.

Executes beat in Tierce  
and blow to the flank, or  
beat in Quarte and cut to  
the head.

Resists beat and parries  
attack. Later on tries to  
stop opponent by a disen-

If the attacker does not  
possess sufficient speed in  
order to succeed by a



gement into tempo, which forces the fencer to attack carefully, shielding his action in order to avoid provoking the stop hit.

simple attack, he should use the feint, but only against a superior opponent.

Against an adversary of his own type.

If simple attacks are not successful because of lack of speed, he should extend himself to acquire a better execution.

### *Eighth Exercise*

On guard in low line.

On guard in Tierce.

Attacks by filo and thrusts in low line, or performs feint of filo and disengagement upward.

Occasionally touches by the filo in order to force the opponent to parry.

Parries Seconde and Quinte or Seconde, Quinte or Seconde, or Seconde, Tierce and Quarte.

### *Ninth Exercise*

On guard in high line.

On guard in Seconde.

As in previous example.

As in previous example.

*Tenth Exercise*

On guard in Seconde.

On guard in Tierce.

Attacks by means of the beat in Seconde and cut to the right cheek, or beat in Prime, etc.

Parries final or tries to elude beat, stopping opponent.

These examples show the benefits to be derived from the conventional exercises. In case of training for a combat or tournament, there is no better preparation than this for the improvement of the speed, judgment and intuition. For this purpose we recommend the study of simple and rapid attacks and the disregard of useless complications.

As soon as you have learned to parry with assurance, you must riposte rapidly, thus perfectly exercising your arm.

### THIRD PART



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## CHAPTER VI

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### 56. THE THEORY OF THE ATTACK TEMPO

IN FENCING, every attack is the result of two factors. One of them originates in the brain; it is purely intellectual and acts as a psychical impulsion. The other is subordinated to the first; it constitutes the execution of the movements conceived by the brain and is simply mechanical.

The intellect, however, does not confine its planning to the command of a reflex movement of the body and the steel; it is necessary, in the choice of this movement, to foresee what the direct and spontaneous reaction of the adversary is going to be. In addition, it is of the utmost importance to be able to select the opportune moment for the execution of the movement; and to accomplish this, a well defined and exact notion of the tempo is absolutely necessary.

It is impossible to offer a complete definition of what is called *tempo* in fencing.

It is easier to obtain a conception of this factor by the study of the form in which a time attack is developed.

The attack may be made in two different ways:

1. By a sudden and immediate stop, which resolutely surprises the opponent at a moment in which he is in a state of inertia and perplexity.

2. In response to a reflex idea, surprising the adversary at the moment he takes the initiative in any form.

Thus we have the following actions:

- (a) Actions with first intention.
- (b) Actions of attack into tempo.
- (c) Actions into tempo on the opponent's attack.
- (d) Actions with second intention.

### 57. ACTIONS WITH FIRST INTENTION

The intrinsic action with first intention is a simple action, which must surprise your opponent in such a manner that he will be tardy in taking the defensive, thus rendering useless any parry he may execute.

In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to perform the action so as to prevent any movement which might nullify it. The essential element for success is therefore the exact choice of the opportune moment to make the attack.

A feeling for tempo is in itself an attribute of genius which varies in different individuals. It is always subordinated to the momentary psychological state of the adversary, and for this reason it is exceedingly risky to try to establish the limits of the opportune movement for an attack. To do so would be purely a matter of individual opinion. Each fencer has his own way of understanding and taking the tempo, just as each individual takes the initiative in a manner peculiar to himself.

The action with first intention is not only determined by the fact that it must surprise your adversary in a

moment of inaction, but it arises out of the intention of surprising him at the precise moment when he is expecting to be attacked; it is then necessary to resort to a preliminary suggestive preparation, inducing your adversary to establish a defense and to await the attack which is being prepared.

It is not always possible to proceed in this manner, even taking for granted that the execution of this action is the simplest of all in fencing. In effect, not all fencers possess the necessary physical qualifications for the execution of this action; and on the other hand, it is unusual for an adversary to respond to simple attacks. The offensive by every other means is always more frequent.

In the presence of an adversary with a mobile hand, who offers successive openings by the displacements of his weapon, you must choose for your attack the exact instant in which his hand changes from one position to another. The response to this attack will be a parry unless your adversary is trying to lead you into a trap.

The difference in the procedure of attack comes from the moment in which the offensive is taken. In the preceding case, the action was an "attack made into tempo," that is, performed at the moment your adversary changed his position. Therefore, the attack with first intention is determined only by the will of the fencer who attacks and at the moment most convenient for him.

Thus there exist two kinds of attacks: the one in which the moment for action is determined by you,

and the one in which the offensive is launched when one of the movements made by your adversary gives you the opportunity.

### 58. ACTIONS OF ATTACK INTO TEMPO

We have commented upon the attacks with first intention, and now we are going to try to describe the principles of the indirect attack.

The possible combinations of attacks are innumerable and they are provoked either by the fencer who takes the offensive or by the one who parries.

It now remains for you to select the precise instant and to know how to bring it off successfully. Under the circumstances, patience should be the first of your qualifications when attacking; you should not take the initiative until you are sure of your ground after reasoning out your plan of action, and inducing your adversary to a passive form of reaction.

*Against the adversary's invitation.*—While your adversary passes from one invitation or engagement to another; for example, from the engagement or the guard in *Seconde* to the invitation in *Quinte*, in *Prime* or in *Tierce*, or from the guard or engagement in *Tierce* to the invitation in *Seconde* or in *Quarte*, etc., you must choose the precise moment when your adversary changes his attitude.

*Upon the adversary's engagement.*—Just as your adversary is about to engage your blade when it is in line, you avoid the engagement and launch your attack.

*Against a sabre in line.*—At the moment your adversary changes from an invitation or an engagement



in order to put his point in line; make a sudden attack *preceded* by a beat or attack by the filo (graze).

This style of attack is not only useful as an exercise, but one most frequently employed in assault.

This practice will compel you to pay the greatest possible attention to the movements of your adversary and will train you to develop energy. The execution of this attack must be faultless in order to avoid any check because of faulty mechanism. Under the circumstances, it is necessary to possess a profound theoretical knowledge and a perfect mechanism.

As soon as the pupil has had sufficient exercise, the master will teach him to provoke the occasion for attacking, and this lesson in assault will enable him to use his own initiative freely.

#### 59. ACTIONS INTO TEMPO UPON THE OPPONENT'S ATTACK

This is the name given to actions executed upon the adversary's attack. These movements are sometimes passive and sometimes active, according to the circumstances.

The passive actions are:

- (a) The stop thrust.
- (b) The time cut to the wrist or to the forearm.

The active actions are:

- (a) The disengagement into tempo and its derivatives.
- (b) The derivatives of the stop thrust.
- (c) The derivatives of the cut to the arm.

It is important to avoid the double touch while executing time cuts or stop thrusts. In order to accomplish this it will be necessary to jump backward in the first case, and in the second one to extend the arm with the point in line of attack so as to obstruct the adversary's final blow.

It is of prime importance to avoid exchanging blow by blow, both from the practical as well as the scientific angles of the art.

Science teaches us to avoid this vicious practice and the fencer who is learning should watch himself on this point as carefully as if he were risking his life in a duel.

In the fencing hall, where the pupil acquires form, he must constantly observe the principles of regularity which are in no wise detrimental to the speed of the fencer. These constant reminders are necessary if success is to be attained.

It is the custom, when a double touch is made, that the fencer who attacks scores the touch; but it is necessary to be sure that the offensive has been carried on according to rule. The fencer who tries to get hold of his adversary's blade and sees his action deceived by its escape, loses at this moment his right of attack, because, as a result of the blade evasion, the adversary's point threatens him.

On the other hand, when a fencer threatens to execute a time hit against an adversary who attacks feinting, and provokes a parry in response to his threat, his adversary in consequence acquires the right to touch with the cutting edge or the point.

The priority in the double touch varies according to

the movements. One single interruption is sufficient to effect a change in the situation of a fencer.

#### 60. THE STOP THRUST

The stop thrust is performed upon the adversary's feints; it can be introduced at the first, second or third tempos; that is, against any feint as long as it upsets the final action.<sup>1</sup>

##### STOP THRUST DURING THE FIRST TEMPO

When a fencer is certain that his adversary will attack him by a simple feint, he must dart his point forward at *the start* of adversary's attack.

##### *First Example*

Pupil:	Master:
Invitation in Seconde.	First Tempo.
	Feint of cut to the head.
During the feint of the master, the pupil stops below with the point.	Second Tempo.
	In order to strike flank, this touch is obstructed by the stop thrust of the pupil, which bars the line.

##### *Second Example*

Pupil:	Master:
Invitation in Quinte.	First tempo.
	Feint to the flank.

<sup>1</sup> The stop thrust against a feint does not require lunging; it will be sufficient to affirm the blow by a tap with the right foot. Against a compound feint the fencer must lunge in order to perform his time attack at the moment of the adversary's preparation, and this constitutes a surprise.

Upon the feint to the flank, pupil thrusts above.

Second tempo.

In order to hit head, the stop thrust of the pupil hinders the success of this touch.

### *Third Example*

Engagement in Tierce.

First Tempo.

Feint of cut to the left cheek.

Against the adversary's feint, performs stop thrust in inner line.

Second Tempo.

In order to deceive the parry of Prime, which is to be expected and to perform thrust below. This touch is made impossible after the adversary's stop thrust.

### STOP THRUST DURING THE SECOND TEMPO

As stated previously, the stop thrust during the second tempo is performed against the second feint; the first threat having been parried, the adversary's attack is restricted to two movements; that is, a second feint followed by the final blow.

This action is stopped in the same manner as that used for the simple feint.

### *First Example*

Pupil:

Master:

Invitation in Seconde.

First Tempo.

Parry of Quinte,

upon the feint to the flank,  
performs stop thrust in  
the high line.

Feint of cut to the head,  
feint of cut to the flank,  
in order to finish to the  
head. The stop thrust,  
however, bars the final  
blow.

### *Second Example*

Invitation in Quinte.

Parries Seconde,

against the feint to the  
head, stops with the point  
in the low line.

First Tempo.

Feint of cut to the flank,  
feint of cut to the head,  
in order to touch flank;  
but the adverse sabre pre-  
vents the final hit.

In order to execute the stop thrust against the double feint, it is necessary to parry neatly the first threat and simply to take the opposition, extending the arm immediately afterward. This movement resembles the disengagement.

The stop thrust must precede the final movement of the attack regardless of its number of feints; it is only necessary to obstruct the line of the expected final blow.

The short examples demonstrated in the tabulations previously given will be sufficient to illustrate the principal combinations of the stop thrust.

It is evident that the double touch could not be avoided if the fencer who takes the offensive should finish his attack by a blow to the inner line and not to the head or to the flank, if his plan, for example, were

to feint to the head so as to finish by a cut to the left cheek or to the chest.

It is not practical to use the stop thrust against an attack preceded by several feints, because it is difficult to foresee where the final is going to strike. We advise here a cut to the arm immediately followed by a jump backward.

### 61. CUT TO THE ARM INTO TEMPO

This procedure of defense is used against an adversary who attacks by executing several feints difficult to follow, or against a style featuring repeated attacks to the arm.

The cut to the arm is executed either by the coupé or by direct hit, and must be immediately followed by a jump backward, which places the fencer out of the reach of his adversary and well protected against any attack.

In trying to touch the upper part of the arm, you offer too large a target to your adversary, and for this reason it is better to attack the forearm with the hand in Tierce, ready for the parry.

The following tabulation gives a clearer picture of the movement than any definition:

#### *First Example*

Master:	Pupil:
Feints to the head and to the flank, or to the head and to the abdomen, and	Invitation in Seconde. Touches the wrist by an outward cut at the very

performs these actions as rapidly as possible in order to force the pupil to execute the attack upon the displacement of the hand and to jump back quickly in order to avoid the final movements of the master's offensive.

start of the attack, using a movement similar to the molinello to the head, turning the wrist in such a manner that the blade will cross the arm. After the cut is executed, he continues the circular movement completing a half-circle in retrogression, from a low to a high plane, in order to take the position of the guard of Tierce (with the arm slightly bent).

When the cut to the wrist cannot be executed, the target being made elusive by the adversary's play, it is advisable to try an upward cut to the arm in the direction of the elbow, or to use the back cutting edge against the inner side of the arm.

### *Second Example*

Feints to the head and to the flank or to the left cheek and to the flank.

Invitation in Tierce.

Avoiding the adversary's blade by a disengagement, touch the arm striking from left to right and upward.

*Third Example*

Feint to the head and to the abdomen.	Invitation in Tierce. Cut in inner line with the point of the blade in the same position you would take for a cut to the left cheek.
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*Fourth Example*

Feint to the right cheek and thrust in low line.	Invitation in Quarte. Direct horizontal cut to the arm with the fist in Second Position.
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*Fifth Example*

Feints to the flank and to the head or feint of thrust in low line and cut to the head.	Invitation in Quinte. Touch arm by the coupé and go back to the position of the guard of Quinte.
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## 62. REMISE BY THRUST

### (AGAINST COMPOUND RIPOSTE)

This movement called *appuntata* in Italian is nothing more than a stop thrust executed while in the position of the lunge, against an adversary who ripostes or counter-ripostes feinting.

The principal types are as follows:

*First Example*

Master: Parries Quinte and ripostes	Pupil: Executes any attack finish-
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by the feint to the flank  
in order to touch the head  
by means of the molinello.

ing with a cut to the head.

As soon as the adversary detaches his blade so as to execute the feint, the pupil lowers the point, turning the fist to the Second Position in order to thrust in the high line, straightening the body a little and tapping the floor with the right foot.

### *Second Example*

Parries Seconde in order  
to riposte by a feint to the  
head, finishing attack with  
a cut to the flank.

Executes attack ending  
with blow to the flank.

No sooner has the adversary started the feint, than the pupil thrusts in the low line, remaining in the lunge, straightening the upper part of the body, and marks the thrust by a tap with the right foot.

### *Third Example*

Parries Tierce and ripostes

Attacks by any combination ending in blow to the flank, right shoulder or right cheek.

by a feint of thrust in low line so as to finish by thrust in high line.	Thrust in high line.
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#### *Fourth Example*

Parries Quarte and tries a  
feint to the right cheek.

	Performs attack ending in inner line.
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	As soon as the feint starts, pupil performs thrust in inner opening.
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This remise can be executed from any position whenever the adversary detaches the blade without riposting directly.

The action is particularly effective against an adversary predisposed to attack and who becomes overconfident and elated by the uncertainty of the menace. This remise, like all movements performed into tempo, must be planned in advance, in accordance with the expected response from the opponent.

The lunge must be energetic in order that the false attack may be well simulated, and it is important to remain at a proper distance in order to place the remise accurately.

The tempo actions so far studied are passive, because in the double touch the fencer who executes them is at fault.

A stop thrust is nothing else than a parry-riposte

executed ahead of time, just as a cut to the arm is equivalent to a parry-riposte.

It follows that the fencer who does not parry, who does not defend himself and cuts or thrusts simultaneously, is guilty of a serious error. It is absolutely necessary to avoid in some manner the double touch.

Each fencer must master the situation, or in other words, must conduct the action in his own way.

### 63. DISENGAGEMENT INTO TEMPO

This movement consists in eluding any attack made against your blade (beat, press, bind, *sforzo*), when you have your point in line of attack. It is performed by cut or thrust, and you must lunge.<sup>1</sup> The expression *into tempo* is used to indicate the spontaneity of the evasion of your blade.

This movement plays a very important rôle in fencing: first, its execution is extremely simple and serves as a starting point for several derivatives; and secondly, it has the advantage of keeping you covered while you execute it, which is also very important.

The evasion of the blade may be accomplished in three ways: with the point, by the coupé and by the molinello.

The coupé is the most practical, because there are more occasions to perform it.

<sup>1</sup> In theory, the evasion of the blade is followed by the feint, because the opponent is not supposed to continue his attack until he finds the adverse blade. During the assault, however, it happens that the fencer continues the attack and here the attack must be made from the position of the guard. Summing up, we advise you to lunge if the adversary stops the attack when he misses your blade, or else to stop him remaining in the position of the guard.

*First Example*

Master:	Pupil:
Advances and executes beat in Tierce.	Sabre in high line. Deceives beat and per- forms thrust in inner line. (The deception of the beat is accomplished by passing the point under the ad- verse blade.)

*Second Example*

Advances and beats in Quarte.	Sabre in high line. Deceives the beat by pass- ing the point under the opponent's blade, and exe- cutes thrust in high line.
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*Third Example*

Attempts thrust by flan- connade.	Sabre in low line.  Deceives action against his blade and performs thrust in high line.
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*Fourth Example*

Presses in Prime.	Sabre in low line.  Avoids pressure, passing
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the point over his adversary's blade and performs thrust by disengagement in low line.

*Fifth Example*

DISENGAGEMENT BY THE COUPÉ

Beats or presses in Tierce or in Queart.

Sabre in high line.

Avoids contact with opponent's blade, withdrawing weapon vertically in the direction of his right eye, with the hand in the third position; no sooner does adverse blade swing wide, than pupil touches head, arm, etc.

*Sixth Example*

DISENGAGEMENT BY THE MOLINELLO

Advances in order to engage blade in Tierce.

Sabre in high line.

Avoids engagement, performing molinello from left to right and ends movement by a cut to the left cheek, the chest or the abdomen, passing blade over the point of his adversary's weapon.

*Seventh Example*

Advances and beats in Quarte.	Sabre in high line. Avoids the beat executing upward molinello in order to finish action with cut to the right cheek, or to the flank, passing the blade over the point of his ad- versary's weapon.
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*Eighth Example*

Advances in order to en- gage in Seconde.	Blade in low line. Avoids engagement, either executing cut to the right cheek or performing moli- nello to the head or to the left cheek.
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*Ninth Example*

Advances by means of a press in Prime.	Blade in low line. Avoids press performing a horizontal molinello to the flank, passing point over adversary's blade.
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## REMARKS

In order to study properly the attacks into tempo, it is a good idea to give the exercises just described the closest possible semblance of a real combat.

The fencer, who takes the offensive, must always try to touch; and in order to make him cautious we advise his partner to stop him from time to time. When both partners practice in earnest, this exercise becomes a sort of a bout and constitutes an excellent preparation for the assault.

#### 64. SECOND INTENTION

For every action in fencing there is a response; hence the endless number of possible combinations.

When you simulate an attack or movement in order to find out how your adversary responds to it, giving you an inkling of his tactics, you are performing an action with second intention. Naturally all this is done with the idea of profiting from the faults or habits of your adversary.

Each fencer has personal tendencies in the attack, the tempo or the parries and will betray himself more easily in the beginning of the assault, because all fencers are anxious to score the first touch.

The seasoned fencer, however, waits a little in order to study in advance his adversary's play so as to uncover his habits and defects.

If you notice that your adversary is inclined to extend his arm against your attack, we advise you to encourage or even provoke this *tempo* in order to parry and riposte, or to oppose against his action any other action into tempo.

When two experienced fencers contend, the stratagems they use against each other are endless and the slightest false move exposes the fencer. Hence the

struggle is mental in the highest degree inasmuch as the intellect here plays the principal rôle and makes it possible for one to overcome physical difficulties by means of science.

The actions in second intention are of great assistance to the fencer who is not physically gifted and who must compensate his physical shortcomings with tactical qualities.

### *First Example*

Master:	Pupil:
Invitation in Seconde.	Advances and feints to the head.
Executes stop thrust below.	Wards off stop thrust by the parries of Seconde or the Half-Counter of Prime and performs riposte to the head or to the face.

### *Second Example*

Invitation in Quinte.	Advances executing feint to the flank.
Performs cut to the arm and jump backward.	Parries Tierce and executes riposte, reaching forward as far as possible in order to touch opponent during the retreat; or after parrying, starts a new attack ( <i>ripressa d'attaco</i> ), feinting to the flank and finishing to the head, etc.



*Third Example*

Sabre in high line.	Advances beating in Quarte.
Avoids beat by a disengagement, followed by a cut to the head or by an upward thrust.	Parries Quinte or Tierce and executes riposte according to parry used.

*Fourth Example*

Sabre in high line.	Attacks with a beat, followed by a blow to the flank, remaining at a certain distance.
Parries Seconde and executes riposte to the head.	Parries riposte and executes counter-riposte, remaining in the position of the lunge.

## 65. THE COUNTER-TEMPO

Among the actions with second intention we count the counter-tempo so called because in order to perform it you execute a stop thrust or a cut to the wrist into tempo, instead of warding off your opponent's attack by means of a parry.

Your adversary, instead of attacking directly, indicates a feint, expecting a second intention attack from you. If the moment is opportune, you counter-

attack into tempo; otherwise, it will be preferable for you to parry.

After resorting a second time to the counter-tempo, it will be wiser for you not to attempt it again because your opponent will be on his guard against it.

Two adversaries could in turn defeat the other's intentions by a series of analogous combinations, and this is the highest expression of the art.

### *First Example*

Master:	Pupil:
Performs stop-thrust below.	Advances threatening the head.
	Avoids thrust, jumping backward and executes at the same time vertical cut to the arm. The opponent is touched at the moment he lunges.

### *Second Example*

Inward cut to the arm.	Advances threatening cut to the left cheek.
	Withdraws arm by the coupé and touches adversary at the moment he changes his line.

*Third Example*

Engages blade in Seconde.

Advances, feinting cut to the head.

Feints stop-thrust in low line so as to finish attack with a cut to the head by the molinello.

Against the feint of stop-thrust, pupil performs thrust in high line and this nullifies the cut to the head.

*Fourth Example*

Engages blade in Tierce.

Advances, threatening thrust in low line.

Executes feint of stop-thrust in high line, and, believing that his opponent will parry Tierce, performs disengagement downward.

Against the feint of stop-thrust in high line, pupil executes thrust in low line, barring in this manner the passage to the disengagement downward.

*Fifth Example*

Engagement in Seconde.

Executes feint of stop-thrust below in order to finish with a cut to the head by the molinello.

Advances feinting blow to the head.

Upon the feint of stop-thrust, pupil executes cut to the wrist by the coupé and jumps backward at the same time.

*Sixth Example*

On guard in Tierce.

Threatens with feint of vertical downward cut (coupé) to the wrist and follows with a disengagement, counting upon the adversary's parry.

From the position of the guard in Tierce, advances threatening the flank.

Upon the feint of cut to the wrist, pupil lunges and executes thrust in advance of the disengagement, which is interrupted by this action.

*Seventh Example*

On guard in Seconde.

Performs feint of stop-thrust below in order to finish with disengagement upward.

From the position of the guard in Tierce, pupil advances, threatening by the feint of cut to the head.

Thrusts above against the feint of stop-thrust in low line.

In order to acquire absolute accuracy in the execution of the counter-tempo it is well to study it by a process of analysis into its elements. But this practice must be carried on with precision, each part of the action being neatly outlined without blurring.

The instruction of a finished fencer demands the practical study of tempo with all its finesses, of which the subdivisions are endless.

The fencer, who wishes to practice tempo, must possess a subtlety of mechanism comparable to that of the pianist who, thanks to a remarkable system of fingering, strikes the desired notes without looking at the keyboard.

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## CHAPTER VII

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### 66. COMBAT ENGAGEMENT

#### SILENT LESSON

WE have now arrived at the study of the ensemble of all movements which you must use when taking the offensive or defensive against your adversary.

These tactical movements are of the utmost importance, because they will enable you not only to seize the opportune moment for your action, but also will unmask the plans of your adversary.

This is the manner in which these movements are to be studied: The master (representing the adversary) tells his pupil to try several actions before each attack; for example, a feint, an attack on the blade or a determined step forward, all this with the idea of finding out the intentions of the adversary, tantalizing him.

As soon as the master believes that his pupil has had sufficient preparation, he attacks immediately upon each movement performed by the pupil in order to demonstrate in a practical manner the linking and sequence of the phases of sword play.

When the master simulates the parry in response to a feint, the pupil must attack into tempo<sup>1</sup>; if the master extends blade in line or tries a cut to the wrist, the pupil must attack with second intention<sup>2</sup>; and lastly, if the master assumes the rôle of an immobile fencer, the pupil must attack at great speed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Section 58

<sup>2</sup> See Section 64

<sup>3</sup> See Section 57

All these exercises give the pupil the opportunity to use the knowledge he has so far acquired, and the master should insist upon the prolonged practice of these movements before proceeding to give the lesson in assault.

The initiative of the pupil is awakened in this manner, because the master does not command the movements to be performed, but simply provokes them.

This phase of the instruction is justly called the "silent lesson."

### *First Example*

Master:	Pupil:
On guard in Seconde.	Executes feint of cut to the head.
Threatens stop-thrust.	Attacks energetically with second intention, parries Seconde.
Performs stop - thrust in low line.	Parries at will.
Allows self to be touched by the riposte.	

### *Second Example*

The sabre in high line threatening disengagement into tempo.	
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*Cavazione* (disengagement) into tempo, taken with decision and energy.

Allows pupil to touch him by the riposte.

Threatens after beating blade.

Attacks resolutely, executing the beat as naturally as possible, but parries on time the disengagement in order to perform riposte at will.

### *Third Example*

On guard in Tierce, making pupil believe that he is going to touch the wrist from above.

Executes the threatened cut to the wrist and jumps backward in order to increase the difficulties of the counter-attack for his adversary.

Allows the pupil to touch him.

Threatens by a feint to the flank.

Advances with resolution threatening flank with a second intention attack, parries the cut to the wrist in Tierce, attacks by a new step forward and performs feint to the flank in order to finish with cut to the head or to the abdomen.



*Fourth Example*

From any invitation or engagement gives the impression that he will perform one or two parries.

Makes adversary believe that he is going to execute an attack preceded by a feint.

Executes fast attack, using one or two feints.

*Fifth Example*

Keeps sabre immobile in line.

Prepares attack by means of a beat.

Chooses the most opportune moment to touch by first intention attack either by cut or thrust, but in any case always preceding attack by a beat.

Lets the pupil touch.

*Sixth Example*

On guard in Tierce, simulating a feint of attack into tempo.

Invitation in Seconde.

Executes threatened attack.

Repeat invitation in a convincing manner.

Stop-thrust in low line.

*Seventh Example*

On guard in *Seconde*, threatening to attack into tempo by means of a thrust in low line followed by a blow to the head.

Simulates attack to the head.

Executes threatened feint of thrust in order to touch the head.

Advances, threatening the head and performs thrust below.

## 67. LESSON IN ASSAULT

When in the course of instruction the student has attained a perfect and almost spontaneous execution of all the movements demanded in fencing, the master may introduce him to the assault by means of a conventional contest, which is in some respects a lesson in assault.

In this part of the instruction, which is the student's début in the assault, the master must respond to all the intentions of the student in order to develop his judgment by facilitating his budding conceptions.

These exercises develop the aptitude of the pupil as well as his talents.

This stage of the instruction is of the utmost importance, and the master should consider the student's special gifts in order to adopt ways of fencing that best suit his character, intelligence and physique.

Each action of the pupil must be commented upon and corrected when there is any fault.

As a general rule, beginners overwork cuts to the arm and tempo actions. To correct this, the master must demonstrate the danger of the double touch, calling the attention of the pupil to the inconveniences of the tempo attack when performed at the wrong moment.

This is, on the other hand, what we advise you to do in order to make his sword play easier.

The master should not intimidate the pupil by stop-attacks nor interrupt his offensive by counter parries, using only moderate speed in his ripostes. The pupil may thus return to the position of the guard and combat regularly according to the principles he has acquired.

The best way to overcome obstacles during the process of instruction is to allow the pupil to progress as slowly as the difficulty requires.

Only such a gradually progressive method will steer him clear of discouragement and timidity. The experience of the master is the prime factor in the success of the pupil.

After a certain time, when the pupil gains confidence in himself and in his tactics, the master will put more and more vigor into his own play until the lesson in assault becomes a real contest.

## 68. THE ASSAULT

The assault is an imaginary combat between two fencers who put into play their strength and skill. During the action they reveal all their foresight, their cunning and perspicacity. The better tactician, that is,

the one who uses his brain to better advantage, will triumph over brute force; in fencing, science compensates for physical disadvantages.

If we consider fencing from the double moral and esthetic points of view, its benefits can be readily appreciated; but it is important to preserve rigorously its artistic side. Let us not forget that fencing transforms into action the mature conceptions of the intellect. The conclusion from these observations is that the brain must control all actions in fencing.

#### 69. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

We recommend that the student fence often with strong as well as with average fencers; the first will train you for strict swordplay, and the second will enable you to study the execution of certain attacks the mechanism of which may not yet be fully under your control. Each new adversary presents different difficulties; diversity in your swordplay will bring you prudence and judgment.

The swordplay of a fencer shows his character as precisely as graphology does; his attitude, habits and manner of reasoning offer a very fertile field for observation. A fencer with a calm temperament will never proceed blindly, while the fencer possessing a violent character will invariably be recognized by his fiery and impatient swordplay. A reflective man will fence like a well-poised tactician and the contrary will be observed in an impulsive type. Frankness is revealed in the prompt acknowledgment of the touches and in a disdain for secondary methods of avoiding them.

When you meet a weak fencer, it is well to study his

character immediately, thereby obtaining information which you may use to your future advantage.

In opposing a nervous and brutal adversary, we counsel you to keep the long distance and to play for his arm; against indifferent and cool swordplay it is necessary to provoke an attack; and finally, a fencer possessing an impressionable temperament can be upset by a mobile play composed of beats, feints and presses. The foregoing considerations refer to the temperament of the fencer.

We shall now consider the point of view of deportment. Once you are on guard, all your attention must be directed to your opponent and you must not interrupt the action under pretext of any remark. Moreover, talking is forbidden while under arms. The adversary is obliged to direct all his attention to the combat. For this reason it is wrong to disturb him by any device that is foreign to the science of arms.

In the presence of a weak fencer who recognizes his inferiority, it is courteous not to display all your resources but to make it easy for him to maintain an honorable bearing in the course of the swordplay.

It is ever an impropriety for a fencer to complain of the swordplay of his adversary, especially on the part of an average fencer who attempts to saddle his own faults on his adversary.

With a superior adversary, you must seek to profit from his instruction and not to nullify his actions by means of indirect methods.

The assault is a courteous contest and not a match; gallantry should predominate always.

If you are obliged to fence with an adversary who is lacking in courtesy and very pretentious, guard your own deportment very strictly, this being the best lesson you can give him.

During every assault, you must attend carefully to your deportment. In case of fatigue it is better to rest for a moment rather than to allow yourself to drift into aimless fencing.

Elegance in fencing consists in a due regard for the form and in the simplicity of the movements.

You must never give way to impulses which may be afterward regretted; you must, on the contrary, maintain your reserve, which is a mark of distinction.

#### 70. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NATURISTS

One distinguishes among fencers two principal types called in Italian "*Schermitori*" and "*Tiratori*." The first, venerating the principles, observe the rules to a nicety and appreciate only the blow which results from a nice conception and not a touch made by chance. An assault between such fencers is a triumph of the tactics of the art. On the contrary, two "*Tiratori*" seek to employ their physical resources and, after a series of brutal and confused passes, victory rests with him who is the more powerful. It is futile, in our opinion, for fencers of this class to devote themselves to the study of fencing, since it is a waste of effort.

In this class also belong the "naturists." This term in our opinion is inexact, because it expresses, in the present case, the antithesis of its real meaning. Our conception of a naturist is a fencer who follows his instinct without the slightest reflection.

The fencer, who parries an attack instead of striking a blow, follows a natural movement, inspired by the spirit of self-preservation. The ignorant fencer then should not be called naturist; the term "uncouth" best describes him.

The fencer known as the naturist does not study the science of arms, but searches for the means to touch, regardless of how he scores. The rules of the art do not exist for this *nihilist*, or rather for this anarchist of the science, who expects to succeed without being a tactician and seeks to fish thus in troubled waters. His reasoning is as follows:

"If my adversary is attentive but not thorough, I strike with the cutting edge and with chances of touching; if my partner is of equal skill I strike with greater force. In the following cases I am also successful: if he tries to perform a cut to the flank, I chop his head; if he tries to touch my head, I play for his abdomen."

This line of reasoning, applicable to the fencing hall—with the protection of the jacket, the mask and the glove—would be promptly discarded in a duel. One upon the terrain, the naturist, deprived of his mask, his torso naked, will seek to parry in spite of himself, the instinct of self-preservation having awakened in him.

The science of fencing teaches us how to meet this type of swordplay even in the *salle d'armes*.

You have learned in the theory of the art the means to foresee all methods of resistance; knowing the devices of the naturist, it will be easy for you to annihilate him. Your policy in this case will be simple, because

your adversary does not parry, does not execute attacks into tempo or counter-actions, but is invariably satisfied to use the cutting edge by storm as often as possible and trusting to his good luck.

If you attack the naturist with second intention, he advances making irregular movements, and it is then, very easy to touch him in the arm.

No fencer should allow himself to be disconcerted by an irregular adversary.

When fencing against opponents of the type just described, you will find the following recommendations useful:

- (a) You must attack only rarely, and always by surprise.
- (b) Be very careful to keep your adversary at a good distance, threatening his chest with your point and attacking his arm energetically with frequent cuts.
- (c) Advance by short steps in order to attack him in two tempos, or else provoke a blow in order to perform a riposte.
- (d) Let your adversary believe that you are going to retreat each time he threatens you, this with the idea of provoking his irregular movements, which will permit you to stop him vigorously with your point, particularly in the high line.
- (e) Threaten your adversary with a series of feints and false attacks until he is cornered; then attack him with the cutting edge by a swift single action, and retake the long distance position.



- (f) Against this type of opponent, you must be satisfied with the use of simple actions, which can be easily executed with great rapidity.
- (g) Do not give your adversary the opportunity to attack you from the medium distance. Your opponent, when attacking from the long distance, will have to develop his action while advancing, with the result that speed and precision will fail him.

We shall finish our list of recommendations by advising you not to try more than a small number of touches against the naturalist. It is better not to start any action unless you are sure of the success of your attack. This will prove your superiority.

#### 71. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE ATTACKS

We have discussed at length the preponderance of the rôle played by the qualities of judgment in fencing, and for this reason the selection of the moment for the execution of an action in fencing is a very delicate point in the matter of arms.

The fencer on guard influences his opponent in some manner, either by his movements, his immobility or by any other cause; and it is easy to understand that this form of suggestion will be proportional to the superiority of the fencer over his adversary.

This psychological problem is present every time that two fencers cross blades.

This suggestion, which is nothing more or less than the expression of the will of the stronger man, momentarily compels your adversary to assume a passive rôle.

We can even state that an attack always *succeeds* by suggestion. As a matter of fact, is an attack anything else but an action performed before your adversary has had time to come to his senses? The choice of the proper moment for the attack is, according to this principle, an advantage seized at the time your suggestion is strongest.

It is to be noted that during the assault, the weaker man always follows without resistance the movements of his adversary; if the stronger man engages blades in a certain position his partner will accede to the engagement; if he holds the blade in high line, the adverse blade will assume the same position; if he keeps his point steadily in line, the inferior fencer will do the same thing, etc.

The first aim of a fencer therefore should be independence, or in other words, the development of sufficient will power to resist the adversary's influence.

If one of the adversaries is stronger than the other, we would advise the weaker man to upset the plans of his opponent, using mobile tactics, and to try to avoid being caught by surprise, rather than to try to surprise the antagonist.

In this mental struggle, the more obstinate will be the victor.

*The following attacks are recommended:*

We have already stated that the attacks by the filo provoke the strongest defensive reaction. Their threatening effect is so marked, that they have a strong influence over the nervous system of the man who is attacked.

If your adversary is in the required position, you advance protected by a filo attack, and as soon as the distance is shortened, the rest of your combination is performed.

If the occasion for the filo does not present itself, you must use the beat in order to develop an attack into tempo.

The beat can be performed in any position and against any style of fencing but it is necessary not to give your adversary the opportunity to elude your blade because this action would expose you to a touch by a disengagement (*cavazione*) into tempo. In order to avoid this accident, it is advisable to move the hand continually in order to conceal the intention of beating the steel

Never attack unless you are covered.

It is a frequent occurrence to face an adversary who avoids all attacks on his blade by the molibity of his hand or by his repeated attacks to your arm into tempo. Against adversaries of this type it is a good idea to perform attacks into tempo in the following manner:

For example, make an invitation in Tierce, in such manner that your opponent is tempted to try a cut for your arm; advance one step and your opponent will try to perform the foreseen attack.

Instead of opposing a parry to this action (which would not give you the opportunity to perform a successful riposte), draw your arm back holding your blade vertically, advance by means of the feints of coupé and touch after one or two threats. Your opponent, disconcerted when his blade swings wide, will think only of

parrying. The theory of the double feint finds application in this case and it insures the success of your counter-attack.

This style of offensive, which we would call "flying attack," prepares to perfection the stage for the attacks with second intention. In effect, your opponent is forced either to extend his arm or to execute a lunge in order to touch your arm, and in either of these two cases he is at a disadvantage. The parry and the counter-attack are then indicated and cannot but succeed. It is evident that the advance must be made with caution, and since almost any attack is possible against you while advancing, you had better be prepared to parry in case of surprise.

#### APPLICATIONS OF THE BEAT

The beats are excellent preparations for attack even when they do not upset the adversary's grip upon his weapon. When you make an opening for your blade by means of a beat, you acquire the right of way in the attack; while on the contrary, if your adversary eludes the beat into tempo, you must parry or incur a fault in case of double touch.

The science of fencing shows us two ways of avoiding the retraction of the blade: the attack into tempo and the attack with first intention. In our opinion the first intention attack does not expose you to the danger of missing when you beat, because when your action is opportune, your adversary does not have sufficient time to withdraw his blade.

While your adversary maintains his blade in line,

you may be certain that he is prepared to elude your beat; in order to upset his plans it will be necessary to make him believe that you are going to strike in a certain direction, and then beat in the opposite side.

It should be unnecessary to state that you must never betray your intentions in advance, and that the beats are performed with the arm only.<sup>1</sup>

#### APPLICATION OF THE PARRIES

The counter-parries will be effective against a light style of fencing including numerous feints. The counters interrupt the action.

For this reason, you should oppose the counter-parries at the beginning of the attack rather than at the end, so as to flash back your riposte immediately after the blades come into contact.

In this manner, you will force your opponent to use simple attacks, which are easier to parry. The fencer who uses feint combinations cannot be rapid.

#### APPLICATION OF THE FEINTS

When your adversary invariably stops your feints by means of counter-parries, it is better to attack him by means of coupés in order to avoid the clash of blades.

Beginners have a tendency to parry in a hurry even when they are out of reach. Against these adversaries it is advisable to execute a threat from a certain distance and to advance deceiving, at the same time, the parry

<sup>1</sup> The best illustration we can suggest is the movement of a cat's paw. Here you have spontaneity and opportuneness.

provoked by your threat. As soon as you are at the medium distance, you may complete your action.

Finally: against an impressionable opponent you should execute rapidly the initial movement of the double feint and plant slowly the final blow. The opposite tactics should be used against the rapid parrier who waits for the last phase of the movement.

One may arrive at the conclusion that it is easier to touch a good fencer from long distance by a simple feint than to succeed using the same attack against an inexperienced one.

#### APPLICATION OF THE BLOWS INTO TEMPO

It is not superfluous to repeat that the time hits must be executed only in a spontaneous manner after the necessary preparation has been made, or against a foreseen combination being performed by your adversary.

The blow into tempo is an action which must take your opponent by surprise and its success depends on concentrated attention.

In order to prepare the stop-thrust, it is necessary to simulate fear, retreating at the slightest action of your adversary, threatening him with time cuts to the wrist, and attempting to parry when you are out of his reach; it is easy to understand how your adversary, confronting an attitude of this sort will lose his patience and attack you furiously. It is then that the stop-thrust perfectly prepared and vigorously performed succeeds wonderfully well. In order to surprise your adversary you must stop him at the moment he launches his

attack. It is not fair, however, to employ too frequently a method which reacts so inevitably upon your opponent's nervous system.

The cut to the arm into tempo is prepared in a different manner: make your adversary believe that you are going to stand your ground and parry or that you are going to stop him with your point. He will then try to perform a counter-tempo attack, starting with a number of preparatory movements during which it will be easy to touch his arm.

The general principles just stated are the result of a personal study. Each fencer will adapt them to his own temperament. This is the end of our general suggestions. The great variety of situations to be found in fencing, demands the individual initiative of each fencer, and in the same manner each man may find his own inspirations in the science of arms.

## 72. PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE LEFT-HANDED FENCER

Fencing against a left-handed fencer does not offer any particular difficulty, the only difference being in the lines, while the movements are very much alike.

The left-handed fencer presents his back where the right-handed one exposes his chest, in such a manner that the cuts to the flank directed against one, would be cuts to the abdomen if directed against the other, and vice-versa.

It is to be noted that it is more difficult to touch the left-handed adversary in the chest or in the face because of the care he exercises during the lesson and the assault to protect himself against the attacks of the

right-handed fencers. This is the high line in the case of the left-handed fencer and the inner line in the case of the right-handed fencer.

For this reason it is advisable to direct your attacks against the outer line of this type of opponent. This is a habit which requires some perseverance.

It is also a good policy to beat the steel changing the engagement, particularly in *Seconde*, because in this position the adverse blade does not offer great danger, the back of your hand being protected by the guard of your sabre.

The left-handed fencer will attack in preference your chest and corresponding side of your body, and you will use as much as possible the parry of *Prime* in order to perform direct ripostes to the abdomen or ripostes by the *molinello* to the flank.

He will also show a preference for the cut to the arm from his guard in *Tierce*, by a circular movement coming from above or will strike horizontally from his right.

In any case it is better to obtain actual experience against the left-handed fencer than to devise theories on the subject.

### 73. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF PRIORITY IN THE DOUBLE TOUCH

In order to eliminate controversy in the double touch, we are enumerating herewith the basic principles governing it. These rules are not purely theoretical, but of actual application in tournaments.



The double touch may be simultaneous or almost simultaneous and may be brought about:

1. By the attacking party.
2. By the defending party.
3. By both parties.

1. Double touch brought about by the attacking party.

This takes place:

(a) When the attacking party tries to perform an action against the opponent's weapon, and continues his attack after missing the adversary's blade.

(b) When the same party in response to a disengagement into tempo, a cut to the arm or a stop-thrust, performs an ineffective parry and continues his attack without any other concern.

He cannot invoke his rights as attacking party, having lost them by his effort to parry. This behavior betrays a very serious lack of judgment and in a duel would be disadvantageous or even dangerous.

(c) When the attacking party continues the attack after his adversary has responded to his feint by a beat or any other contact of blades.

It is a recognized principle that the object of any feint is to deceive a parry; if this parry has not been eluded by the attacking party, he loses the rights conferred by the offensive, which is considered as ended.

The fencer who parries has the right to the riposte:

(d) When attacking party continues after being touched in the arm and there is a lengthy period of time between the stop-hit and the attack.

2. Double touch brought about by the defending party.

This occurs:

(a) When the defending party is touched by a simple attack which he has not parried, being content with stopping his adversary with the point or by a cut to the arm.

(b) When expecting a complex offensive the defending party executes a stop-thrust and the adversary develops a simple attack.

(c) When a long period elapses between the parry and the riposte, permitting the attacking party to apply a remise. The fencer who parries must not lose an instant in performing the riposte.

### 3. Double touch brought about by both fencers.

This occurs:

(a) When one of the fencers applies numerous feints and his opponent decides to stop him and performs his tempo action against the final blow.

The attacking party cannot force his opponent to parry, and on the other hand the defending party cannot claim validity for his blow against the last feint because he had the opportunity to execute the tempo action at the beginning of the attack in order to avoid the double touch.

(b) While the two parties attack simultaneously after reciprocally waiting in vain for the adverse offensive. The attacking party must force his adversary to defend himself or, as in the preceding case, both adversaries are guilty of the same fault.