

GIACOMO DiGRASSI HIS TRUE ART OF DEFENSE

plainly teaching by infallible Demonstrations, apt Figures and perfect Rules the manner and form how a man without other Teacher or Master may handle all sorts of Weapons as well offensive as defensive: With a Treatise Of Deceit or Falsing: And with a way or Means by private Industry to obtain Strength, Judgment, and Activity

First written in Italian by the Fore-said Author, And Englished by I.G. gentleman.

Revised and Reenglished by Lord Jin Liu Ch'ang

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The true Art of Defense exactly teaching the manner how to handle weapons safely, as well offensive as defensive, with a Treatise of deceit or Falsing, And with a mean or way how a man may practice of himself to get Strength, Judgment, and Activity.

There is no doubt but that the Honorable exercise of the Weapon is made right perfect by means of two things, to wit: Judgment and Force: Because by the one, we know the manner and time to handle the weapon (how, or whatsoever occasion serves:) And by the other we have the power to execute therewith, in due time with advantage.

And because, the knowledge of the manner and Time to strike and defend, does of itself teach us the skill how to reason and dispute thereof only, and the end and scope of this Art consists not in reasoning, but in doing: Therefore to him that is desirous to prove so cunning in this Art, as is needful, It is requisite not only that he be able to judge, but also that he be strong and active to put in execution all that which his judgment comprehends and sees. And this may not be done without strength and activity of body: The which if happily it be feeble, slow, or not of power to sustain the weight of blows, Or if it take not advantage to strike when time requires, it utterly remains overtaken with disgrace and danger: the which faults (as appears) proceed not from the Art, but from the Instrument badly handled in the action.

Therefore let every man that is desirous to practice this Art, endeavor himself to get strength and agility of body, assuring himself, that judgment without this activity and force, avails little or nothing: Yea happily gives occasion of hurt and spoil. For men being blinded in their own judgments, and presuming thereon, because they know how, and what they ought to do, give many times the onset and enterprise, but yet, never perform it in act.

But least I seem to ground this Art upon dreams and monstrous imaginations (having before laid down, that strength of body is very necessary to attain to the perfection of this Art, it being one of the two principal beginnings first laid down, and not as yet declared the way how to come by and procure the same) I have determined in the entrance of this work, to prescribe the manner how to obtain judgment, and in the end thereof by way of Treatise to show the means (as far as

appertains to this Art) by the which a man by his own endeavor and travail, may get strength and activity of body, to such purpose and effect, that by the instructions and reasons, which shall be given him, he may easily without other master or teacher, become both strong, active and skillful.

The means how to obtain Judgment

Although I have very much in a manner in all quarters of Italy, seen most excellent professors of this Art, to teach in their Schools, and practice privately in the Lists to train up their Scholars. Yet I do not remember that I ever saw any man so thoroughly endowed with this first part, to wit, Judgment, that behalf required.

And it may be that they keep it secret of purpose: for amongst diverse disorderly blows, you might have seen some of them most gallantly bestowed, not without evident conjecture of deep judgment. But howsoever it be seeing I purpose to further this Art, in what I may, I will speak of this first part as aptly to the purpose, as I can.

It is therefore to be considered that man by so much the more waxes fearful or bold, by how much the more he knows how to avoid or not to eschew danger.

But to attain to this knowledge, it is most necessary that he always keep steadfastly in memory all these advertisements underwritten, from which springs all the knowledge of this Art. Neither is it possible without them to perform any perfect action for the which a man may give a reason. But if it so fall out that any man (not having the knowledge of these advertisements) perform any sure act, which may be said to be handled with judgment, that proceeds of no other thing, than of very nature, and of the mind, which of itself naturally conceives all these advertisements.

1 First, that the right or straight Line is of all other the shortest: wherefore if a man would strike in the shortest line, it is requisite that he strike in the straight line. 2 Secondly, he that is nearest, hits soonest. Out of which advertisement a man may reap this profit, that seeing the enemies sword far off, aloft and ready to strike, he may first strike the enemy, before he himself be struck. 3 Thirdly, a Circle that goes compassing bears more force in the extremity of the circumference, than in the center thereof. 4 Fourthly, a man may more easily withstand a small than a great force. 5 Fifthly, every motion is accomplished in time.

That by these Rules a man may get judgment, is most clear, seeing there is no other thing required in this Art, than to strike with advantage, and defend with safety.

This is done, when one strikes in the right line, by giving a thrust, or by delivering an edgeblow with that place of the sword, where it carries the most force, first striking the enemy before he be struck: The which is performed, when he perceives himself to be more near his enemy, in which case, he must nimbly deliver it. For there are a few nay there is no man at all, who (perceiving himself ready to be struck) gives not back, and forsakes to perform every other motion which he has begun.

And forasmuch, as he knows that every motion is made in time, he endeavors himself so to strike and defend, that he may use as few motions as is possible, and therein to spend as little time. And as his enemy moves much in diverse times he may be advertised hereby, to strike him in one or more of those times, so out of all due time spent.

The division of the Art

Before I come to a more particular declaration of this Art, it is requisite I use some general division. Wherefore it is to be understood, that as in all other arts, so likewise in this (men forsaking the true science thereof, in hope peradventure to overcome rather by deceit than true manhood) have found a new manner of skirmishing full of falses and slips. The which because it somewhat and sometimes prevails against those who are either fearful or ignorant of their grounds and principals, I am constrained to divide this Art into two Arts or Sciences, calling the one the True, the other, the False art: But withal giving every man to understand, that falsehood has no advantage against true Art, but rather is most hurtful and deadly to him that uses

Therefore casting away deceit for this present, which shall hereafter be handled in his proper place and restraining myself to the truth, which is the true and principal desire of my heart, presupposing that Justice (which in every occasion approaches nearest unto truth) obtains always the superiority, I say whosoever minds to exercise himself in this true and honorable Art or Science, it is requisite that he be endued with deep Judgment, a valiant heart and great activity, In which three qualities this exercise does as it were delight, live and flourish.

Of the Sword

Albeit Weapons as well offensive as defensive be infinite, because all that whatsoever a man may handle to offend another or defend himself, either by flinging or keeping fast in his hand may in my opinion be termed Weapon. Yet notwithstanding, because, as I have before said, they be innumerable so that if I should particularly handle every one, besides the great toil and travail I should sustain, it would also doubtless be unprofitable, because the principals and grounds which are laid down in this Art, serve only for such weapons as are commonly practiced, or for such as happily men will use: and so leaving all those which at this present make not for my purpose, I affirm, that amongst all the weapons used in these days, there is none more honorable, more usual or more safe than the sword.

Coming therefore first to this weapon, as unto that on which is grounded the true knowledge of this Art, being of reasonable length, and having edges and point, wherein it seems to resemble every other weapon, It is to be considered, that forasmuch as it has no more than two edges and one point, a man may not strike with any other than with these, neither defend himself with any other than with these. Further all edge blows, be they right or reversed, frame either a circle or part of a circle: of the which the hand is the Center, and the length of the sword, the Diameter.

Whereupon he that would give either an edge blow in a great compass, either thrust with the point of the sword, must not only be nimble of hand, but also must observe the time of advantage, which is, to know when his own sword is more near and ready to strike than his enemy's. For when the enemy fetches a compass with his sword, in delivering his stroke, at the length of the arm: if he then perceive himself to be nearer by half an arm, he ought not to care to defend himself, but with all celerity to strike. For as he hits home first, so he prevents the fall of his enemies sword. But if he be forced to defend himself from any edge blow, he must for his greater safety and ease of doing it, go and encounter it on the half sword that is hindmost: in which place as the enemies sword carries less force, so he is more near at hand to offend him.

Concerning thrusting, or the most perilous blows of the point, he must provide so to stand with his body, feet and arms, that he be not forced, when he would strike, to lose time: The which he shall do, if he stand either with his arm so forward, either with his feet so backward, either with his body so disorderly, that before he thrust he must needs draw back his arm, help himself with his feet, or use some dangerous motion of the body, the which when the enemy perceives, he may first strike before he be struck. But when a man stands in due order (which shall hereafter be declared) and perceives that there is less distance from the point of his sword unto his enemy, than there is from his enemies sword unto him, In that case he must nimbly force on a strong thrust to the end he may hit home first.

The division of the sword

For as much as the Effects which proceed from the length of the sword, are not in every part thereof equal or of like force: It stands with reason besides the declaration of the cause, that I find out also the property and name of each part, to the end every man may understand, which are the parts of the length wherewith he ought to strike, and which the parts, wherewith he must defend.

I have said elsewhere, that the sword in striking frames either a Circle, either a part of a Circle, of which the hand is the center. And it is manifest that a wheel, which moves circularly, is more forcible and swift in the circumference than towards the Center: The which wheel each sword resembles in striking. Whereupon it seems convenient, that I divide the sword into four equal parts: of the which that which is most nearest the hand, as most nigh to the cause, I will call the first part: the next, I will term the second, then the third, and so the fourth: which fourth part contains the point of the sword. of which four parts, the third and fourth are to be used to strike withal. For seeing they are nearest to the circumference, they are most swift. And the fourth part (I mean not the tip of the point, but four fingers more within it) is the swiftest and strongest of all the rest: for besides that it is in the circumference, which causes it to be most swift, it has also four fingers of counterpiece thereby making the motion more forcible. The other two parts, to wit, the first and second are to be used to warde withal, because in striking they draw little compass, and therefore carry with them small force And for that their place is near the hand, they are for this cause strong to resist any violence.

The Arm likewise is not in every part of equal force and swiftness, but differs in every bowing thereof, that is to say in the wrist, in the elbow and in the shoulder: for the blows of the wrist as they are more swift, so they are less strong: And the other two, as they are more strong, so they are more slow, because they perform a great compass. Therefore by my counsel, he that would deliver an edgeblow shall fetch no compass with his shoulder, because whilst he bears his sword far off, he gives time to the wary enemy to enter first: but he shall only use the compass of the elbow and the wrist: which as they be most swift, so are they strong in ought, if they be orderly handled. ([Figure 2](#))

Having before said and laid down for one the principals of this art, that the straight Line is the shortest of all others (which is most true.) It seems needful having suggested for a truth, that the blow of the point is the straight stroke, this not being simply true, I think it expedient before I wade any further, to show in what manner the blows of the point are struck circularly, and how straightly. And this I will strain myself to perform as plainly and briefly as possibly I may. Neither will I stretch so far as to reason of the blows of the edge, or how all blows are struck circularly, because it is sufficiently and clearly handled in the division of the Arm and the sword. Coming then to that which is my principal intent to handle in this place, I will show first how the arm when it strikes with the point, strikes circularly.

It is most evident, that all bodies of straight or long shape, I mean when they have a firm and immovable head or beginning, and that they move with an other like head, always of necessity in their motion, frame either a wheel of part of a circular figure. Seeing then the Arm is of like figure and shape, and is immovably fixed in the shoulder, and further moves only in that part which is beneath it, there is no doubt, but that in his motion it figures also a circle, or some part thereof. And this every man may perceive if in moving his arm, he make trial in himself.

Finding this true, as without controversy it is, it shall also be as true, that all those things which are fastened in the arm, and do move as the Arm does, must needs move circularly. This much concerning my first purpose in this Treatise.

Now I will come to my second, and will declare the reasons and ways by which a man striking with the point strikes straightly. And I say, that whensoever the sword is moved by the only motion of the Arm, it must always of necessity frame a circle by the reasons before alleged. But if it happen, as in a manner it does always, that the arm in his motion makes a circle upwards, and the hand moving in the wrist frame a part of a circle downwards the it will come to pass, that the sword being moved by two contrary motions in going forwards strikes straightly.

But to the intent that this may be more plainly perceived, I have framed this present figure for the better understanding whereof it is to be known, that as the arm in his motion carries the sword with it, and is the occasion that being forced by the said motion, the sword frames a circle upwards, So the hand moving itself in the wrist, may either lift up the point of the sword upwards or abase it downwards. So that if the hand do so much let fall the point, as the arm does lift up

the handle, it comes to pass that the swords point thrusts directly at an other prick or point than that it respects. ([Figure 3](#))

Wherefore let A.B. be the circle which is framed by the motion of the arm: which arm, if (as it carries with it the sword in his motion) it would strike at the point D. it should be constrained through his motion to strike at point B. And from hence proceeds the difficulty of thrusting or striking with the point. If it therefore the arm would strike directly at the point D. it is necessary that as much as it lifts the handle upwards, the hand and wrist do move itself circularly downward, making this circle AC and carrying with it the point of the sword down-wards, of force it strikes at the point D. And this would not so come to pass, if with the only motion of the arm, a man should thrust forth the sword, considering the arm moves only above the center C.

Therefore seeing by this discourse it is manifest that the blow of the point, or a thrust, cannot be delivered by one simple motion directly made, but by two circular motions, the one of the Arm the other of the hand, I will hence forward in all this work term this blow the blow of the straight Line. Which considering the reasons before alleged, shall breed no inconvenience at all. Most great is the care and considerations which the paces or footsteps require in this exercise, because from them in a manner more than from any other thing springs all offense and Defense. And the body likewise ought with all diligence to be kept firm and stable, turned towards the enemy, rather with the right shoulder, than with the breast. And that because a man ought to make himself as small a mark to the enemy as possible. And if he be occasioned to bend his body any way, he must bend it rather backwards than forwards, to the end that it be far off from danger, considering the body can never greatly move itself any other way more than that and that same way the head may not move being a member of so great importance.

Therefore when a man strikes, either his feet or his arm are thrust forwards, as at that instant it shall make best for his advantage. For when it happens that he may strongly offend his enemy without the increase of a pace, he must use his arm only to perform the same, bearing his body always as much as he may and is required, firm and immovable.

For this reason I commend not their manner of fight, who continually as they fight, make themselves to show sometimes a little, sometimes great, sometimes wresting themselves on this side, sometimes on that side, much like the moving of snails. For as all these are motions, so can they not be accomplished in one time, for if when they bear their bodies low, they would strike aloft, or force they must raise themselves, and in that time they may be struck. So in like manner when their bodies are writhed this way or that way.

Therefore let every man stand in that order, which I have first declared, straining himself to the uttermost of his power, when he would either strike or defend, to perform the same not in two times or in two motions, but rather in half a time or motion, if it were possible.

As concerning the motion of the feet, from which grow great occasions as well of offense as Defense, I say and have seen by diverse examples that as by the knowledge of their orderly and discreet motion, as well in the Lists as in common frays, there has been obtained honorable victory, so their busy and unruly motion have been occasion of shameful hurts and spoils. And because I cannot lay down a certain measure of motion, considering the difference between man and man, some being of great and some of little stature: for to some it is commodious to make his pace the length of an arm, and to other some half the length or more. Therefore I advertise every man in all his wards to frame a reasonable pace, in such sort that if he would step forward to strike, he lengthen or increase one foot, and if he would defend himself, he withdraw as much, without peril of falling.

And because the feet in this exercise do move in diverse manners, it shall be good that I show the name of every motion, to the end that using those names through all this work, they may the better be understood.

It is to be known that the feet move either straightly, either circularly: If straightly, then either forwards or backwards: but when they move directly forwards, they frame either a half or a whole pace. By whole pace is understood, when the foot is carried from behind forwards, keeping steadfast the forefoot. And this pace is sometimes made straight, sometimes crooked. By straight is meant when it is done in a straight line, but this does seldom happen. By crooked or slope pace is understood, when the hindfoot is brought also forwards, but yet a thwart or crossing: and as it goes forwards, it carries the body with it, out of the straight line, where the blow is given.

The like is meant by the pace that is made directly backwards: but this back pace is framed more often straight than crooked. Now the middle of these back and fore paces, I will term the half pace: and that is, when the hindfoot being brought near the forefoot, does even there rest: or when from thence the same foot goes forwards. And likewise when the forefoot is gathered into the hindfoot, and there does rest, and then retires itself from hence backwards. These half paces are much used, both straight and crooked, forwards and backwards, straight and crooked. Circular paces, are not otherwise used than in half paces, and they are made thus: When one has framed his pace, he must fetch a compass with his hind foot or fore foot, on the right or left side: so that circular paces are made either when the hindfoot standing fast behind, does afterwards move itself on the right or left side, or when the forefoot being settled before does move likewise on the right or left side: with all these sort of paces a man may move every way both forwards and backwards. ([Figure 4](#))

Of Paces

Of the Agreement of the Foot and Hand

The right leg ought always to be the strength of the right hand, and likewise the left leg of the left hand: So that if at any time it shall happen a thrust to be forcibly delivered, reason would that it be accompanied with the leg: for otherwise, by means of the force and weight, which is without the perpendicular or hanging line of the body, having no prop to sustain it, a man is in danger of falling. And it is

to be understood, that the pace does naturally so much increase or diminish his motion, as the hand. Therefore we see when the right foot is behind, the hand is there also: for what who so strains himself to stand otherwise, as he offers violence unto nature, so he can never endure it: wherefore when he stands at his ward, bearing his hand wide, there also the foot helps by his strength, being placed towards that part: and when the hand is borne low, and the right foot before, if then he would lift his hand aloft, it is necessary that he draw back his foot: And there is so much distance from the place where the foot does part, to join itself to the other foot, as there is from the place whence the hand parts, to that place where it remains steadfast, little more or less: wherefore presupposing the said rules to be true, he must have great care to make his pace, h move his hand at one time together: And above all, not to skip or leap, but keep one foot always firm and steadfast: and when he would move it, to do it upon some great occasion, considering the foot ought chiefly to agree in motion with the hand, which hand, ought not in any case what so ever happen to vary from his purpose, either in striking or defending.

Of Wards

Wards in weapons are such sites, positions or placings which withstand the enemy's blows, and are as a shield or safeguard against them. For he who has no skill to carry his body and bear these weapons orderly, which either cover, or may easily may cover the whole body, cannot be said to stand in ward, insomuch that a man ought to use great diligence in the apt carrying of his body and weapons, For many times he ought to settle and repose himself in his ward, therein deliberating upon some new devise, or expecting when his enemy will minister occasion to enter upon him. [\(Figure 5\)](#)

The Wards which may be used with the single sword are threefold, Neither in my opinion may they be any more: for that one only straight line, which is the sword, may not cover, defend and easily offend after any other manner.

THE HIGH WARD.

This high ward, which also might be called the first, being the very same which every man frames at the drawing of the sword out of the sheath, may so far forth, and insomuch be termed a ward, in how much, by turning the point of the sword downward, it wards the whole person, and for that, by gathering in of the hindfoot, and increasing forwards with the right foot, a man may discharge a strong thrust above hand at his enemy. [\(Figure 6\)](#)

In this, and in all other wards, it is diligently to be noted, that he bear his weapons so orderly disposed, that the straight line which goes from the sword's point be still best to strike the enemy, either in the face or the breast: for if the point be so borne that it respect over the enemy's head, the enemy may easily first enter underneath and strike before the fall or descend thereof : And by holding the point two low, he may by beating it somewhat downwards cause it to be quit void of his body, and so safely come in to strike, the which has been many times seen.

THE BROAD WARD

This second ward from the effect shall be called the broad or wide ward, because the Arm widening and stretching itself directly as much as possible from the right side, bears the sword so far off from the body, that it seems to give great scope to the enemy to enter, albeit in truth it be nothing so. For although the hand and the handle of the sword, be both far from the body, and quite out of the straight line, yet the point of the sword, from which principally proceeds the offense, is not without the said line: For it is borne so bending toward the left side that it respects directly to strike the enemy, and being borne in that sort, it may very well both strike and defend. And when the point of the sword is borne out of the straight line, as the hand and handle is, then a man is in danger to be hurt easily by the enemy, the which happens not when the point is bending, for in such order, it is as a bar and defense to the whole body.

THE LOW WARD

This also from the effect is called the base ward or lock: Neither is this name improperly given by the Professors of this Art, for that it is more strong, sure and commodious then any other ward, and in the which a man may more easily strike, ward and stand therein with less pain. This ward is framed in the Schools after diverse fashions, either bearing the hand low before the knee, either very much stretched forwards, either between both the knees. All which fashions, (if we regard natural reason, and the motions used therein) are to small purpose: for, besides that they are all violent, and for a small time to be endured, they are also such, in the which a man may not strike but in two times, or at least in one, and then very weakly. Wherefore, casting all these aside, I will frame such a ward, as shall be applied, to time, to nature, and to safety: And it is, when one bears his arm directly downwards near his knee (but yet without it) and his sword with his point somewhat raised, and bearing towards the left side, to the end, it may arm and defend that part also, in such sort, that (being borne without violence) he may continue long. And if he would strike, he may in one time, forcibly deliver a great thrust. But this he cannot do, if he bear his sword directly before him, for then he must either draw back his arm when he would strike, or else strike in one time, but very weakly.

This ward therefore must be framed with the arm stretched downwards near the knee, but yet on the outside thereof, because after this manner a man stands safely, commodiously, and more ready, both to strike and defend. [\(Figure 7\)](#)

THE MANNER HOW TO STRIKE

Without all doubt, the thrust is to be preferred before the edgeblow, as well because it strikes in less time, as also for that in the said time, it does more hurt. For which consideration, the Romans (who were victorious in all enterprises) did accustom their soldiers of the Legions to thrust only: Alleging for their reason, that the blows of the edge, though they were great, yet they are very few that are deadly, and that thrusts, though little and weak, when they enter but iii fingers into the body, are wont to kill. Therefore I lay down this for a firm and certain rule, that the thrust does many times more readily strike, and give the greater blow against the enemy. And to the

end, a man may thrust it out with the greatest force at the most advantage, and uttermost length that may be, he must always remember to carry his left foot compassing behind him in such sort, that the hindfoot so compassing may always be in the straight line of the hand and sword, as a Diameter in the midst of a Circle. And in finishing of a blow, to draw his hindfoot a half pace forwards, and so by that means the blow is longer and stronger, and shoulder and side are only opposite to the enemy, and so far from him, that they may not be struck: and it is not possible for a man to frame a longer blow than this.

WHEN IT IS BETTER TO STRIKE WITH THE EDGE

For no other cause, the edge is preferred before the point, then for the time: the shortness whereof, is so to be esteemed above all other things in this Art, that (omitting the point and edge) it ought to be given for the best and chief counsel, that the same to be the better blow, in which a man spends least time. And therefore when this happens and may be done with the edge, then the edge is to be preferred before the point: the which as occasion serves shalbe further declared.

When I reasoned of the blow of the point or thrust I said that a man ought to thrust when the point is in the straight line, because the blow is then performed in one time. But the edge differs from the point, in that being out of the straight line, it endeavors to come into the same again. Therefore when it happens the point to be borne either on the right, either on the left side, either aloft, out of the straight line, if then one would thrust in the right line, he cannot perform it but in two times, whereas if he would strike with the edge be it right or reversed, or downwards, he may do it in one time. It shalbe also very commodious rather to strike with the edge, when as sometime a man bearing his sword in the straight line, and the enemy there finding it, does with his hand beat it on this side or that side. In which case, if he would return it again into the said line of purpose to strike, he shalbe constrained to do it with great violence and much time.

For these reasons I hold it better to let the sword sway to that side, whereto the enemy beats it, and to join unto it such force, as he may to help the motion, and (fetching withal a compass) to strike with the edge. ([Figure 8](#))

The which blow is so ready strong, that the enemy can hardly have time to withstand it, being already occupied in beating aside the sword and pretending to strike: nothing at all expecting that the adversaries sword will strike again either so quickly, or with the edge, on that side from which it was beaten.

THE MEANS TO DEFEND

The means of defending a blow given either with the edge or point of the sword, are three. one is when the weapon is opposed to the blow, in such sort that the weapon which comes striking either at the head or at the body, cannot hit home to the place whereunto it is directed, but hindered by some thing or other then set against it, be it sword, dagger, target, bill, javelin, or any thing else, which at that instant a man has in his hand. For it chanceth not always to wear or carry

weapons of purpose, or ordained to that extent. framed to that end: for which cause, it may well be said, that the soldier differs from other men, not because he is more skillful in handling the sword or javelin, but for that he is expert in every occasion to know the best advantage and with judgment both to defend himself with any thing whatsoever, and therewithal safely to offend the enemy: In which and no other thing consists true skirmishing.

He that persuades himself that he can learn this Art by the exercise of a few particular strokes of the point and edge is utterly deceived: for besides, that by those particular tricks, there is small knowledge gotten: So the chances in this Art are so dangerous and diverse, that it is impossible to deliberate suddenly, except he have the universal knowledge and understanding of all the rules and principals hereof, being grounded upon offending and defending, and not only upon the sword, the dagger, the target, the javelin and the bill. For a man at all times (when he is occasioned to strike or defend) does not carry these weapons about him, but is constrained to defend himself with a piece of wood from a javelin, with a stool or form from a sword, or with a cloak from a dagger, in which case men commonly use many other things not ordained for that purpose, doing that therewith which natural instinct teaches them. And this instinct is no other thing then the knowledge of the rules before laid down: which knowledge, being it is naturally grafted in the mind, is something the rather helped and qualified by Art, and makes a man so assured and bold, that he dares to enter on any great danger, and judges (when he sees the quality of the weapon, and the site wherein it is placed) what it may do, or in how many ways it may either strike or defend. From which his judgment springs the knowledge of all that he has to do, and how he has to handle himself to encounter any danger.

But returning to my purpose, to wit, of the way how to defend, which is to carry the weapon opposite, this manner is commonly used, but is not so profitable, being used as it is. And the reason is, because when men endeavor themselves to encounter or oppose themselves against the weapon which comes to strike them, (neither making bold that their weapon can, neither knowing how it should defend) they withdraw their body with their foot, and commit all these faults following.

1 First, by withdrawing of themselves, they encounter the enemy's sword towards the point, in which place it bears most force, and therefore with great difficulty they sustain the blow.

2 Another is, if they would strike the enemy, of force they must return their feet and weapons thither, where they were before, and yet increase forwards somewhat more, if they would strongly strike him: And in this they spend so much time, that the enemy may not only easily defend, but also, very well and safely strike. To him then that would use this manner of defense without danger, it is necessary and needful, when he encounters the enemy's sword, that he do not withdraw himself, but with his left foot increase a crooked or slope pace forwards, the which shall encounter the sword, which before was coming striking with the edge, on that part thereof, in which it has least power to offend, and shall by that means easily withstand the blow. But if the sword come with a thrust, he must find it and beat it aside: for every little motion is sufficient to drive the point far enough from danger of hurt. And there is the advantage gotten, as well in the blow of the edge as

of the point, that the body is voided out of the straight line, by means of the said slope pace: and it stands so apt and so near to offend the enemy, that one may strike in the very instant, neither can the enemy so much withdraw himself as is sufficient to avoid the stroke: For a man has to use the straight pace of the right foot to follow the enemy, which pace is so strong and so swift, that the enemy may not avoid it. And because this manner of defense, in mine opinion, seems to be most sure and short, I will use it above all other.

There is another way, to wit, when one perceives the enemy's sword in the delivery of an edge blow, to fetch a great compass, he may strike him before the fall of his sword with a thrust : or else when the enemy thrusts, (but yet spends many times in the doing thereof) he may likewise strike him in as short time as may be. The which manner of defending is most profitable, and perchance the better of the two. For there is no man that will run himself headlong upon the weapon, or that, perceiving himself ready to be struck, will not suddenly draw back and withhold that blow which he had already prepared to discharge. And although there be some, who being struck run rashly on, yet generally, men will not so do, albeit they be struck when they are most choleric, but will, when they are struck or wounded, give back and be dismayed and by reason of the blood which goes from them, always more and more be weakened.

But when they be so wounded, it shall be for their profit to be well advised, and not to discomfort themselves for the greatness of the blow, but to bear it patiently : for that which they do in disdain and fury shall turn them to much displeasure.

3 The third manner of defense is, when the body voids out of the straight line towards this or that side, but this is seldom used alone and by itself, but rather accompanied with the opposing of the weapon, or with the second manner of defense aforesaid. If it be used alone, the manner is to slip the blow, and to strike the enemy in the same time that he is over reached in his blow. [\(Figure 9\)](#)

THE METHOD WHICH SHALBE USED IN HANDLINGTHE CHAPTERS FOLLOWING.

Forasmuch as I ought in the Chapters following to teach more particularly all the blows and defenses in every ward, (to the end that no man do marvel why I do not perform the same, and do think that the instruction is therefore imperfect) I think good (because my purpose is now to entreat of that only which pertains to true Art, to the which the blow of the point, or thrusts, are most agreeable, being more ready and strong than any other) to handle them principally, and yet not so, but that I will also talk of edgeblows when in my treatise I come to that place where it shalbe most commodious to strike therewith, placing them near to their wards and defenses, although against all edgeblows this is the best defense, to strike by the right line before the fall of the enemy's sword, for, being delivered in shorter time, it withstands their fall and lighting. The order I say, which I will observe, shalbe, to lay down every ward, their blows and defenses, but principally of the point, then of the edge, if need require.

SINGLE RAPIER

THE HURT OF THE HIGH WARD AT SINGLE RAPIER

The truest, and surest blow that may be given when a man lies at the high ward, is, the thrust above hand, as well for that it is in the straight line, as also, because it naturally stays itself in the low ward: So that from the beginning to the ending of this blow, there is never any time given to the enemy to enter, by reason, that the point stands always directly against him. But in the discharging of this blow, a man must remember to draw his left foot near his right foot, and then to increase forwards with the right foot, and to deliver it as forcibly as he may, staying himself in the low ward.

True it is, that he may also deliver a right and reversed edgeblow at the head: or else, strike downwards from the wrist of the hand: but because he is not able to turn his wrist in so small a compass, in the discharge of an edgeblow, either high or low, but that the point of the sword will be out of the straight line, by the length of a sword, in the which (before it return) the enemy has sufficient time to strike: Therefore I would not counsel any man to use them either alone, or both together. But yet between two thrusts, they may be used together, by continuing the one after the other (though they be voided) until the last thrust, the which does safely rest in the low ward. The use of them is on this manner.

When one having discharged a thrust from the high ward, perceives that it does not hurt, because it was voided by the enemy's sword, he must turn a right edgeblow from the wrist athwart the enemy's head, fetching a compass with his foot behind him toward the right side, to the end the blow may be the longer, which is the longest of all others. But if the enemy void this in like case (which is very difficult) then he must suddenly turn the reverse from his elbow increasing therewithall a slope pace with the hindfoot. And it is to be noted, that in delivering a reverse, the slope pace is in a manner always to be used, to the end he may go forth of the straight line, in the which (if he should deliver it) he may easily be struck. Having used this pace and reverse, whether it hit or not, the sword in the same instant is something to be drawn or slid: which drawing is profitable in this, that in giving the reverse it does both cause the weapon to cut, and make the greater blow. Wherefore it is to be understood, that all edgeblows ought so to be delivered, that they may cut: for being directly given without any drawing, they cause but a small hurt.

Coming therefore to my purpose, I say: that as soon as he has so drawn his sword, he ought with the straight pace of the right foot, discharge a thrust underneath, being already prepared, the which thrust is so strong, both for aptness thereof and increase of the pace, that it pierces through any impediment withstanding it. And all these blows (beginning from the thrust abovehand, till the end of the thrust underneath) being roundly delivered one after another with such swiftness as is required, are in manner not to be warded. Besides, they have so great increase of pace, that it is not almost possible for the enemy to retire so much backward, as these increase upon him forward.

THE DEFENSE OF THE THRUST OF THE HIGH WARD AT SINGLE RAPIER

All the fury in striking before spoken of, is utterly frustrated, when, as here it may be withstands and encounters the first thrust. For the defense whereof it is needful that he stand at the low ward, and as the thrust comes, that he encounter it without, with the edge of the sword, and increase a slope pace forward, with the hindfoot at the very same time, by which pace he moves out of the straight line, and passes on the right side of the enemy. And he must remember to bear always the point of the sword toward the enemy: So that the enemy in coming forwards, either runs himself on the sword, which may easily happen, and so much the rather, when he comes resolutely determined to strike, or else if he come not so far forwards that he encounters the sword, yet may be safely struck, with the increase of a straight pace: to which pace, having suddenly joined a slope pace, a man must return and increase again though the enemy were struck at the first increase of that pace: For if at the first stroke and increase, the enemy were not hit in the eye, it shall be of small purpose. Therefore as soon as he has used the crooked or slope pace, he must presently increase an other straight pace, the which does so much gather upon the enemy, that if he would strike him in the breast, he may thrust his sword up to the hilts.

Now for the lofty edgeblows, both right and reversed, the rules aforesaid may suffice: To wit, the edgeblow fetches a compass. The blow of the point or thrust is the shortest, and in this blow, he that is nearest hits the soonest: So then he must thrust under any of these edgeblows. And farther, for asmuch as it is naturally given to every man to defend himself, he may encounter the right edgeblow after an other way, and that is, to encounter it with the edge of his sword, and presently, to drive therewithall a thrust at the enemy's face, and to compass his hindfoot, towards the right side behind, to the end, that the thrust may be lengthened and his body thereby covered, considering he shall then stand right behind his sword.

This manner of defense, may serve to ward all blows of the edge, delivered from the high ward, and it is the best way of all other, because it does not only ward, but also in one and the selfsame time, both strike and defend safely.

This manner of thrust is called the reversed thrust. But if one would ward a reverse, he must oppose the edge of sword without, and therewithall increase a slope pace, and then deliver a thrust with the increase of a straight or right pace. And this may suffice for all that may be used against a lofty, reversed, edgeblow, as far forth as a man endeavors to oppose himself against the weapon. And this is the very same also with which may be used for the warding of the thrust.

THE HURT OF THE BROAD WARD AT SINGLE RAPIER

The most sure, most true principal blow that may be used in this ward is the thrust underhand, so that a man draw his left foot near his right foot, and then discharge it with the _ of the said foot, and settle himself in the low ward.

He may also in this ward with the said increase of the right foot, deliver a right edgeblow from the wrist of the hand, and stay himself in the low ward. And perchance he may (although with great danger) bestow also a reverse: yet considering he shall do it out of the

straight line, in the which only he strikes safely, I do not think it good, that he use either the said reverse, either the said right blow except it be very seldom, and for the same cause, assuring himself in the blow of the point, or thrust, the which he shall not give, except it be very commodious, or that he be forced of necessity, considering this thrust does not only easily and commodiously defend, but also, at one instant, safely strike, and offend, as shalbe showed in the defense of this ward. That therefore which he may safely do, in this ward, is to expect and watch for his enemy's coming.

THE DEFENSE OF THE BROAD WARD AT SINGLE RAPIER

If a man would defend himself from the blows of the aforesaid broad ward, it is good that he stand against his enemy in the low ward: for the whilst he is so opposite in the same ward, the enemy may neither easily enter, neither commodiously defend himself. So that he which is in the low ward may very easily withstand the downright blow, and the reverse by giving a thrust, for that he shall hit him first, And if he would only oppose his sword, and not strike also therewithall, he must encounter his enemy's sword with the edge of his own, and turning the same edge fetch a reverse, striking at the face of the enemy. And as he so turns his hand and edge of his sword, it shalbe good that he carry his forefoot a half crooked or slope pace towards his right side, staying himself in the broad ward. For defense of the reverse, it is to be marked, when the enemy lifts up the end of the Rapier out of the straight line, because then of force he fetches a compass: And whilst he so does, a man must make a straight pace forwards, and with his left hand take holdfast of the sword hand of his enemy, and incontinently wound him with a thrust underneath already prepared. Now, the very same defense is to be used against the thrust underneath, which is against the right edgeblow. Neither is there any other difference between these two defenses, but that whilst the right blow fetches his compass, a man may give a thrust and hit him first: For the thrust underneath, must only of necessity be warded, because, coming in the straight line, it ministers no advantage or time to hit home first.

THE HURT OF THE LOW WARD AT SINGLE RAPIER

A Man may in like manner in this ward, as in others, deliver a thrust, a right blow, and a reverse: but the true and principal effect of this ward, is to expect the enemy, as well for that a man bears himself without wariness, as also, because it is apt and ready to defend all blows either high or low: For being in the middle, it is easily somewhat lifted up, as something borne down: So that when one stands in this ward, he may not (as for his advantage) be the first that shall give either the downright blow, or the reverse: for both the one and the other (departing out of the straight line) are deadly, because they give time to the enemy to enter nimbly with a thrust. The thrust therefore, may be only used when one means to strike first, and it is practiced either within, or without, always regarding in either of the ways, so to bear and place his arm, that he have no need (before he thrust) to draw back the same. The enemy ward it, by the traverse or cross motion of his Rapier, as many use to do, then he ought to increase a straight pace and lift up his sword hand, holding the point thereof downwards betwixt the enemy's arm and his body and with the increase of a straight pace to deliver a thrust. And this manner of thrust does easily speed, because it increases continually in the

straight line in such sort that the enemy can do no other then give back, and especially when it is done without, for then the sword is safe from the traverse motion of the other sword.

THE DEFENSE OF THE LOW WARD AT SINGLE RAPIER

Because both the downright blow, and the reverse are very easily defended in this ward, I will not stand to speak of any other then of the thrust, restraining myself thereunto. The which thrust, if at the first it be not withstood, may prove very mortal and deadly. Therefore, when this thrust is given within, it must be beaten inwards with the edge of the Rapier, requiring the turn of the hand also inwards, and the compass of the hindfoot, so far towards the right side, as the hand goes towards the right side. And the enemy shall no sooner have delivered the thrust, and he found the sword, but he ought to turn his hand, and with a reverse to cut the enemy's face, carrying always his forefoot on that side where his hand goes. If the enemy's thrust come outwards, then it is necessary, that with the turn of his hand he beat it outwards with the edge of his sword increasing in the same instant one slope pace, by means whereof he delivers his body from hurt. And therewithall (increasing another straight pace, and delivering his thrust already prepared) he does most safely hurt the enemy.

THE RAPIER AND DAGGER

Having as briefly as I might possibly finished all that which might be said, of true knowledge of single Rapier: it seems convenient, that coming from the simple to the compound, I handle these weapons first, which from the Rapier forwards are either most simple or least compound: And especially those which now adays are most used, and in the which men are most exercised, the which weapons are the Rapier and Dagger accompanied together, and are a great increase and furtherance both in striking and defending.

Wherefore, it is to be first considered, that which these and the like weapons, a man may practice that most desired and renowned manner of skirmishing, which is said to strike and defend both in one time, which is thought to be impossible to be done with the single Rapier, and yet in truth is not so: For there are some kind of blows in the defense of which one may also strike (as in the blows of the edge, down right and reversed) both high and low, and other high blows which here are not spoken of.

Wherefore seeing with these weapons a man may very commodiously, both strike and defend, for that the one is a great help to the other, it is to be remembered, that because these weapons are two, and the one of lesser quantity than the other, to each one be allotted that part both of defending and striking, which it is best able to support. So that to the Dagger, by reason of his shortness, is assigned the left side to defend down to the knee: and to the sword all the right side, and the right and left side jointly downwards from the knee. Neither may it seem strange that the only Dagger ought to defend all blows of the left side: for it does most easily sustain every edgeblow, when it encounters the sword in the first and second part thereof.

But yet let no man assure himself, to bear any blow, with his only Dagger when he meets with the sword on the third and fourth part thereof, because that part carries more force with it then may be sustained with the only Dagger. And yet for all that, no man ought to accustom himself to defend blows with the Rapier and Dagger both together, which manner of defending is now commonly used because men believe, that they stand more assuredly by that means, although in truth it is not so. For the Rapier and Dagger are so bound thereby, that they may not strike before they be recovered, and therein spend two times, under the which a man may be struck when he strikes continuing by the straight line, increasing forwards, perceiving his enemy to be occupied and troubled in defending of himself. And albeit this is not seen to come to passe many times, yet that is because the advantage is not known, or being known, men either ready to execute it, either stand greatly in fear to do it.

Therefore leaving aside this manner of defense, let each man use to oppose, one only weapon against the enemy's sword, keeping the other free, that he may be able to strike at his pleasure.

And it is diligently to be noted, that not only the blows of the sword, but also of any other weapon be it never so great, may with the only Dagger be sustained and defended, when a man does boldly encounter it towards the hand.

It is therefore to be known, that in the handling of these two weapons one may with less danger give a blow with the edge then at single Rapier: For albeit the point of the Rapier be moved out of the straight line: yet for all that there is not free power given to the enemy's to strike, considering there is an other weapon contrariwise prepared to defend: but this does not so fall out at the single Rapier, which bearing itself far off when it strikes with the edge, does present and give the means to the enemy to hit home first. And yet for all that, I would not counsel no man, either in this or in any other sort of weapon to accustom himself to give blows with the edge: for that he may under them be most easily struck with a thrust.

OF THE WARDS

In the handling of these weapons, men use to frame many wards, all which, because many of them carry no reason, for that they are ether out of the straight line, either under them a man may be easily be struck, I will cast aside as impertinent to my purpose, and retain myself unto those three with the which a man may safely strike and defend, whereunto all the rest may be reduced.

HOW TO DEFEND WITH THE DAGGER

said elsewhere that the left side of the person is that part which the dagger ought to defend, that is to say, from the knee upwards: the lower parts together with the right side ought wholly to be warded with the sword.

Considering the dagger, that which is to be done therewith, it is to be noted, that for great advantage, it would be held before with the arm stretched forth and the point respecting the enemy, which although it be far from him, yet in that it has a point, it gives him occasion to bethink himself.

Now whether a man ought to hold his Dagger with the edge or flat towards the enemy, it may be left to judgment of him that handles it, so to use it, as shalbe most for his advantage. I have seen some, who bear it with the edge towards the enemy, alleging this to be their advantage, that as they encounter the enemy's sword (which comes with the edge or point) in the first or second part thereof, and therewithall do increase a pace forwards, of force the hand turns and places the edge of the Dagger there where the flat was first: So that they are to drive the enemy's sword far from them without any great trouble, because each little motion in the first part of the sword causes very great variety in the point, from which principally proceeds the hurt. In which case, it shalbe very profitable to have a good large Dagger.

There be other some, whom it pleases to carry their Dagger with the flat towards the enemy, using for their defense, not only the Dagger, but also the guards thereof with the which (they say) they take holdfast of the enemy's sword : and to the end they may do it the more easily, they have daggers of purpose, which beside their ordinary hilts, have also two long sterts of Iron, four fingers length, and are distant from the dagger the thickness of a bowstring, into which distance, when it chances

the enemy's sword to be driven, they suddenly strain and holdfast the sword, the which may come to pass, but I hold it for a thing rather to be imagined then practiced, the case so standing, that in the heat of fight, where disdain bickers with fear, little does a man discern whether the sword be in that straight or no. And when he is to premeditate and mark, endeavoring and striving in his lively judgment, he must advise himself to perform it with exquisite knowledge and perfect discerning of the enemy's motions, his nearness and farness, and to resolve himself to strike by the shortest way that may be : for there hence springs the victory.

Let every man therefore hold his dagger with the edge or flat towards the enemy, as it shall most advantage him, or as he has been most accustomed. True it is, that by holding the edge towards the enemy there is this advantage to be gotten, that with the dagger he may strike with the edge, which he may not do the other way. But let every man hold it as he will, yet he ought to carry his arm stretched out before him, with the point in the manner aforesaid, to the end he may find the enemy's sword a great deal before it hits his person.

Besides this, he ought to observe for an infallible rule, that when the point or edge comes on the left side, he must beat it from that side with the dagger. And in like sort defending himself with the sword, to drive it from the right side, for doing otherwise : that is, if he force the blows given on the left side outwards on the right side (forasmuch as the enemy's sword has by that means two motions, the one crossing, which is already given, the other straight which the enemy gives it, continuing the one with the other) it may be,

that in the straight motion, it may hit the person, before that (by the thwart or crossing motion) it be driven quite outwards. Therefore all blows shalbe beaten outwards toward that side or part of the body which is least to the end it may sooner avoid danger. And those blows that come on the right side must be beaten towards the right side : and those on the left side must in like manner be voided from the same side.

Now, as concerning the fashion of the Dagger, thus much is to be said : that it would be strong, able to bear and encounter the blows of the sword : (indifferently long) that it may be quickly drawn out of the sheath somewhat short : and those that are of the middle size would be chosen. ([Figure 10](#))

THE OFFENSE OF THE HIGH WARDAT RAPIER AND DAGGER

As in handling the single Rapier, so likewise in this, it shall not be amiss to begin with the High ward, which in managing these two weapons may be framed after two sorts. The one with the right foot before, which I call the first : and the other with the same foot behind, which I will term the second. This second requires a greater time, because the point of the sword is farther off from the enemy. The first (being more near) with the only increase of the foot forwards, strikes more readily, yet not with more forcible than the second, which, when it strikes with an increase of a straight pace, joins to the force of the arm and hand, the strength of the whole body.

Beginning then with the first, as with that which each man does most easily find: I say, he ought if he will keep himself within the bounds of true Art, to thrust only with the increase of the foot forwards, settling himself in the low warde.

In the second way, which is framed with the right foot behind, the sword aloft, and the dagger before, and borne as aforesaid, he ought in like sort discharge a thrust as forcible as he may, with the increase of a straight pace, staying himself in the low ward. Neither ought any man in the handling of these weapons to assure himself to deliver edgeblows, because he knows that there is an other weapon which defends : For he that defends has the self same advantage, to wit, to be able to with one weapon (and happily the weaker) to defend himself and strike with the stronger. The which stroke is painfully warded by him, who has already bestowed all his force and power, in delivering the said edgeblow, by means whereof, because there remains in him small power to withstand any great encounter, let him provide to thrust only.

Of all, or of greater part of the edgeblows, as well of striking as defending, I will reason at large in the Treatise of Deceit.

THE DEFENSE OF THE HIGH WARDAT RAPIER AND DAGGER

To speak of the manner how to withstand the blows of the edge, having already said that all such blows may easily be warded by giving a thrust, I omit as superfluous. But for the defenses of both sides of the body: I say, it is great vantage, to stand at the low ward, with the right foot forwards which manner of standing, the right side is put forth toward the

enemy, whereunto he will direct all his thrusts: and those may be encountered after three sorts, that is to say: with the Dagger only: with the Sword only: and with both joined together. But in each of them, a man must remember to increase a whereby that part of the body which is to be struck is voided out of the straight line.

When one wards with his Dagger only, he shall increase a pace, and bear his arm forwards, and having found the enemy's sword, he shall (with the increase of a straight pace) strike him with a thrust underneath, already prepared.

When he wards with his sword only, it is requisite, that making a slope pace, he lift up his sword, and bear it outwards, or else, as soon as he has found the enemy's sword, that with his dagger he strike at the temples of his enemy's head, staying his sword with his own : or else instead of striking with the Dagger, therewith to stay the enemy's sword, and with it, (increasing another straight pace) to deliver a thrust : but it is very commodious to strike with the Dagger.

The third way : As soon as he has made the slope pace, and found the enemy's sword, he ought to stay it with his Dagger, and therewithall, withdrawing his own sword, to discharge a thrust underneath with the increase of a straight pace.

THE HURT OF THE BROAD WARDAT RAPIER AND DAGGER

In each weapon and ward, I have laid down as a general precept, that no man ought, (either for the procuring of any advantage, either for striking the enemy more readily) deliver blows of the edge. And in like sort, I have said, that easily and with small danger, one may be struck under any such blow : which precepts, as in each time and place, they ought to be observed: so in this ward principally they may not be forgotten. For a man may not without great discommodity and loss of time, strike with any edgeblow, as he stands in this ward.

It rests therefore, that the thrust be only used, which ought to be delivered with the increase of the foot forwards, always regarding before it be given (if it be possible) to beat away the point of the enemy's sword with the Dagger.

THE DEFENSE OF THE BROAD WARDAT RAPIER AND DAGGER

This thrust as well as the other may be warded after three sorts, to wit: with the Dagger only, with the sword only, and with both joined together. But for a mans defense in any of these ways, it is good to stand at the low ward. And when he wards with the dagger only, he must make a slope pace, and finding the enemy's sword, with his said dagger, discharge a thrust underneath with the increase of a straight pace.

And when he wards with the sword only (which is the best of any other, both to strike the enemy, and to defend himself) he must oppose the edge of his sword against the enemy's, and drive a thrust at his face, fetching a compass with his hindfoot, both for the lengthening of the thrust, and assuring of himself.

It is possible to withstand the thrust with the sword and dagger joined together : but it is so discommodious and so ridiculous a way, that I leave to speak thereof, as of a way nothing safe to be practiced.

THE HURT OF THE LOW WARD AT RAPIER AND DAGGER

In each ward, when one stands bearing the point of the sword towards the enemy, it does much disadvantage him to strike with the edge. And if in any sort it be lawful so to do, it is, when he stands at the low ward: For it is commodious, and there is spent but little time in the bestowing of an edgeblow between thrusts. or, the rather to try the enemy, there may be delivered an edgeblow from the wrist of the hand, in the which as there is spent little time, so the point is carried but a little out of the straight line, so that the enemy may very hardly enter to strike under either of these blows. But it is better, not to use them, resolving rather to discharge thrust after thrust, then any edgeblow.

This warde may (as the high ward) be framed after two sorts, to wit: with the right foot behind, and the same foot before : but that with the right foot behind, is used rather to respect the enemy than to strike first. For although it carries great force by reason that the sword is far off from hurting, and before it hits home, it spends much time, yet the hurt thereof may be easily warded, either with the weapon, or by retiring a pace. I will speak of that only which is framed with the right foot before. And in this, one may strike two ways, to wit: either within or without: By (Within) I understand, when his sword is borne between the enemy's sword and dagger. By (Without) I mean, when any one of them is borne in the middle against the other.

When one finds himself within, at the half of the enemy's sword, the point whereof, is directed to strike at the right side, he must very swiftly increase a slope pace, and in a manner straight, to the end he may approach the nearer his enemy, and therewithall suddenly barring the enemy's sword in the middle with his own sword and dagger, increase a straight pace, and deliver a thrust.

This may be done after another plainer way, and that is: when he stands at the half sword, to beat the enemy's swords point out of the straight line on that side which shall be most commodious, and in that line increasing his foot forwards to drive a forcible thrust, at the enemy's face or breast.

But standing without, he may (with the increase of his foot forwards) give a thrust at the face, which the enemy of necessity must defend with his sword : but therein the sword and the point thereof is commonly carried out of the straight line, in which case he may (with the increase of a slope pace) turn a reverse at the legs, and then presently something withdrawing his sword, deliver a thrust underneath with the increase of a straight pace.

He may also after a second manner, give a right edgeblow from the wrist, as short and strong as is possible, not so much pretending to strike as to find the enemy's sword : And

it being suddenly found he must with the increase of a slope or crooked pace, lift up his hand and drive a thrust downwards, with the increase of a straight pace.

After a third sort also, he may strike, and that is to deliver the aforesaid blow from the wrist, and having met with the enemy's sword, to make presently a slope pace, and stay the sword with his dagger, and then nimbly recovering his own sword, to thrust underneath with the increase of a straight pace.

These be sufficient, concerning that which may be done in this warde with the sword both within and without, at least, for so much as may be done by true Art.

THE DEFENSE OF THE LOW WARD AT RAPIER AND DAGGER

Although in the defense of blows in each ward there is great consideration and heed to be taken: yet in this especially is required a far more excellent judgment and readiness in action. For this ward does oppose itself against all others. And the greater part of blows which are of importance, proceed from this ward.

Besides, every man does naturally more accustom himself to stay and repose himself in it, than in any other. Neither is it (as I believe) for any other cause, then that he knows, by so bearing himself, he may easily both strike and defend. And because in this ward, as I have before said, in the hurt or offense thereof, it more commodious to strike with the edge than in any other ward, albeit, it is not there given for counsel to be good to use it. But yet because it may easily happen, there shall be here laid down some defense for it: calling this principle before any other to remembrance, (He that is nearest hits soonest) to the end, that knowing what way either sword makes, each man may resolve himself to deliver a thrust under an edgeblow, by the which is prevented the fall of the said blow.

But because none, but such as are endued with deep judgment, great activity, and stout courage, do or may safely put this in practice: And to the end also, that those, who accustom to defend every blow, performing that in two times which might as well be done in one, may rest satisfied : I will lay down the defense of the edgeblow.

Therefore, whensoever edgeblows are given, they are either right or reversed, high or low.

Against the right high blow, either the only dagger is to be opposed, either the sword and Dagger both together. When the only dagger is used, then a straight pace must be increased, and the dagger hand lifted up to encounter the enemy's sword in the weakest part thereof, and being suddenly found a straight pace is to be increased, and a thrust underneath (already prepared) to be discharged. But if the sword and dagger be both together opposed, they both must be lifted up, and as soon as the blow is encountered, the enemy's face be cut by discharging a reverse, with the only turn of the hand, resting and staying itself in the broad warde..The right blow, given beneath, or below, must be warded after no manner, then by driving a thrust at the enemy's thigh, which thrust is to this purpose, that it hits home safely under that blow, and farther is a let, or bar, to the

enemy's sword, so that it may not light on the legs, considering that in the discharge of the said thrust, the hindfoot must necessarily go compassing towards the right side behind.

Reverses also, are either high or low. If high: they may be warded with the dagger only, therewithall discharging a thrust underneath, with the increase of a straight pace, as soon as the dagger has met with the enemy's sword. Either, they may be warded with the sword only increasing a straight pace with the left foot, therewithall discharging a thrust (already lifted up in the ward) with the increase of a straight pace of the right leg. And this manner of warding, is more according to Art, because it has been said, That all blows on the left side, are to be warded with the dagger only.

The reverse blow would be warded with giving a thrust which safely hits, and hinders the sword to light on the legs. This blow also, may be warded after each other and diverse manners, which shalbe declared in the treatise of Deceit: for this is not their proper place.

There is great regard to be taken in warding of thrusts, to wit: to bear the body out of the straight line, because this is the safest way that may be found to void them, because it very difficult to meet with them, when they come barred and closed in, and are forcibly discharge. For when a thrust comes within (at the very time that the enemy strikes) he ought to increase a slope pace, ensuring himself of the enemy's sword with his dagger, and then to discharge a thrust with an increase of a straight pace.

The thrust without is warded after the first manner, to wit, when the enemy strikes, to increase a slope pace (whereby the body voids danger) and to give a thrust with the increase of a straight pace. In this order one may warde himself from other ways of striking.

In like case, when the enemy (only to try and provoke) does deliver an edgeblow from the wrist of the hand: let every man be advised, as soon as the blow is delivered, to increase a slope pace, and deliver a thrust with the increase of a straight pace before the enemy (after his blow given) do determine to discharge any more. This may suffice, for the handling of the Rapier and Dagger truly, with advantage.

THE RAPIER AND CLOAK

That I may continue in the weapons which are most usual and most commonly worn: After the Dagger, I come to the Cloak: The use whereof was first found by chance and reduced into Art. Neither was this for any other cause, than for that nature does not only delight to invent things, but also to preserve them being invented. And that she may the better do it, she takes for her help all those thins that are commodious for her. Wherefore, as men in diverse accidents have casually proved, that the Cloak helps greatly (for as much as they are to wear it daily) they have devised how they may behave themselves in that, in which the Cloak may serve their turn. Which accidents, because they are infinite, and do not generally serve for our purpose, I will restrain myself and speak of those only which appertain to this Art, the which are such and so effectual, that they may greatly

help to the obtaining of safe victory, if they happen to be placed in such a man as knows how to use and handle them. And for that in true Art it does little prevail, the use thereof being in a manner altogether deceitful, I was resolved to put over all this to the treatise of Deceit, as unto his proper place. Notwithstanding, to the end it may not seem strange to any man, to read nothing of the Cloak in all the handling of true Art, I am minded to lay down a certain few blows in the accustomed wards, referring the more abundant handling thereof unto the treatise of Deceit.

THE MANNER HOW TO HANDLE THE CLOAK

As the Cloak in this Art, has in it three things to be considered, to wit: length, largeness, and flexibility: so it is to be weighed how far each of these will stretch, to serve the turn. Of which three, one does properly belong to it, and that is flexibility, which may neither be increased nor diminished: The other two, may receive alteration. But yet it is at any hand to be provided, that these two also be not diminished. For the Cloak is no strong thing, which of itself may withstand the blows of the weapon, being directly opposed against them.

And therefore he shall prove himself but a fool, who trusting to the cloth wrapped about his arm, does encounter any right edgeblow therewith. For seeing the Cloak is not flexible in that part (which flexibility is his only strength) little prevails either length or largeness, wrapped about a solid substance. But being opposite in that part thereof, where it has length, largeness and flexibility (which is from the arm downwards) it is available: for all three being joined together will ward any edgeblow: the which manner of warding should not be so sure, if the Cloak had only length and flexibility: For having behind it little air, which is the thing that does strengthen it, it may be easily be beaten too, and cut, by any great blow. Therefore, if a man have so much leisure, he ought to wrap his Cloak once or twice about his arm, taking it by the Cape or collar, and folding his arm therein up to the elbow, and therewithall to ward all edgeblows from the flank thereof downwards, as well on the right side, as on the left side, always remembering to carry his foot differing from his arm, for the avoiding of danger that may arise by bearing his leg on the selfsame side, near his cloak knowing the Cloak wards not when there is any hard substance behind it. Thrusts also themselves, may be given without, if with the Cloak, or with the hand in the Cloak, the enemy's sword be beaten off, one handful within the point thereof. For the edge having but small power in that case, is not able in so little time, to cut the hand. The blows also, as well of the point, as of the edge, from the flank upwards, ought to be warded with the sword: For to lift the arm so high being burdened with the weight of the Cloak, which naturally draws downwards, as it is a violent thing it is also perilous, lest the arm be placed instead of the Cloak, and so rest wounded, or lest the arm or Cloak be placed before the eyes, which by that means remain blinded. ([Figure 11](#))

AN ADVERTISEMENT CONCERNING THE WARDING AND WRAPPING OF THE CLOAK.

There are two ways (in these days) to wrap the Cloak, the one is, when one having leisure takes the Cloak by the cape or collar, and so folds it once or twice about his arm: The other is, as often times it falls out, when letting the Cloak fall down upon from the shoulder, it is happily taken by one side, and so is turned once or twice about the arm.

Now as concerning striking a man ought in the handling of these weapons as he would strike, first to increase and carry the one foot near to the other, and then farther to increase a half, not a whole pace, as in other weapons: For at these weapons, it is dangerous lest (making a whole pace) he entangle his foot or feet in the Cloak and fall down therewith. And this must be taken heed of, in the first and second folding, but principally in the second, because in it the Cloak is longer, and therefore does more easily touch the earth and entangle his feet: In the first told, although the cloak not touch the earth, because the arm does orderly bear it, yet by reason of weariness, the arm falls and causes the foresaid effect.

THE HURT OF THE HIGH WARD AT RAPIER AND CLOAK.

In these manner of weapons as in others, I will frame three wards: The first by the foresaid reasons, shall be the high warde, which in these kind of weapons more then in any other deserve the name of a ward. For the Rapier (something bending) wards as far as the cloak hand, and the cloakhand down to the middle leg: so that in this ward a man is warded from the top of the hand down to the foot. Therefore standing at this ward, whether it be with the right foot before or behind, he may deliver a thrust with the increase of a half pace forwards, staying himself in the low ward.

The right edgeblow ought to be delivered from the wrist without any motion of the feet, resting in the low ward: but in delivering of the reverse, it is necessary to fetch a whole pace, and in a manner straight. If the enemy ward it with his sword, then the encounter of the enemy's sword, must be stayed suddenly with the Cloakhand in the first part thereof, and a thrust be delivered underneath, with the increase of a straight pace.

THE DEFENSE OF THE THRUST, RIGHT AND REVERSED BLOWSOFTHE HIGH WARD AT RAPIER AND CLOAK.

For the better avoiding of the hurts which proceed from the high ward: it is necessary to stand at the low ward, in the which the thrust is to be warded in a manner of ways, to wit: either with the single sword within or without, either with the single Cloak within or without. If with the single sword within, it is requisite to fetch a compass with the foot backwards on the right side. In like case to turn the body the same way, to the intent, to carry it out of the straight line (in which the blow comes) and to drive a reversed thrust at the face, the which thrust in such order delivered is the longest that is, and such a one, as thereby the hurt is not only voided, but also at the self same time, the enemy is struck in the face. If it chance, that the sword be encountered without then it is not only profitable but also necessary, to step forwards and with the Cloak to encounter the enemy's sword in the first part thereof. And recovering his own sword, to discharge a thrust underneath with the increase of the right foot. And although it be laid down for a rule, not to use a

whole pace when handling the Cloak, this ought to be understood in striking, the which (whilst one endeavors to strike with the sword) it may be forgetting the Cloak, his arm may fall, by means whereof he may stumble against it: but in warding, it does not so happen. For nature being careful to defend herself (at every little danger) lifts up both her arms, yea, although they be oppressed with weight and burden.

Wherefore it is not to be feared, that in warding this thrust, the hand will be drawn down by the weight of the Cloak.

The same wards and defenses may be used with the single Cloak, in the which, one must likewise strike, with the increase of the right foot. This manner of warding is not very sure, and therefore it requires great activity and deep judgment, considering he ought to bear his Cloak and arm stretched out before him, and to mark when the enemy's swords point shall pass within the Cloakhand one handful or little more: and not to suffer it pass farther, but to beat it off, and increasing to discharge a thrust underneath, with the increase of a pace with the right foot. But as I have said, this manner of warding has little certainty and great peril in it, and yet it strikes well, if it be done in short time.

The right edgeblow may in like manner be warded with the single sword or Cloak: but when it comes aloft, it shall not be commodious to encounter it with the single Cloak, for by that means the eyes blind themselves. How much this imports, let others judge. But, when the said right blow comes in a manner low, so that it may well be warded, keeping the enemy in sight, then the Cloak is to be opposed, with the increase of the left pace, and presently thereupon, a thrust to be discharged, with the increase of a right pace.

When one opposes the single sword against the right blow, he must drive a thrust at the face, and fetch a compass with his hindfoot, cutting the face with the said thrust and stay himself in the broad ward. The self same must be done, when he defends himself with both together, to wit, with the sword and Cloak.

Against the reversed blow, the self same manner is used in warding to wit, either with the one, or with the other, either with both joined together.

With the Cloak, by the increase of a pace, and by encountering the enemy's sword, as far forwards as is possible, that thereby it may be done the more commodiously, delivering a thrust therewithall underneath, with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

With the single Rapier, the same defense may suffice, which is laid down in the treatise of the single Rapier, and that is, to discharge a thrust at the enemy's thigh, the which withstands the fall of the reverse blow.

Now, if one would defend himself with both these weapons joined together, he must increase a pace with the right foot, and staying the enemy's sword with his cloak, recover his own sword nimbly, and then deliver a thrust with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

THE HURT OF THE BROAD WARD, AT RAPIER AND CLOAK.

In this ward, as well as in others, a man may both thrust and strike, yet diversely; For he may not discharge a right edgeblow beneath. And the reverse is manifestly dangerous: So that, when he is to deliver it, he ought to perform it in this order.

First, he shall drive a thrust, fetching a compass with his hindfoot, that by that means it may reach the farther, then suddenly (without moving of himself) he shall deliver a right edgeblow, from the wrist, after the which presently, the reverse must follow, with the increase of a pace of the right foot: and further, must follow on the thrust already prepared, and increase the like pace.

THE DEFENSE OF THE BROAD WARD, AT RAPIER AND CLOAK.

To him that will safely ward himself from the hurt of the broad ward, it is requisite, that he stand at the low ward. And when the thrust underneath comes, he shall thrust at the face, fetching a compass with his hindfoot towards the right side, with which kind of thrust, it does lightly happen that the enemy is hit in the face: but if it fail, yet for all that, the enemy obtains not his purpose, in the discharge of the thrust of the broad ward: For by delivering the thrust underneath, and compassing of the hindfoot, the body is carried out of the straight line: So that, as soon as the thrust is delivered at the face, and the enemy not struck therewith, but passes beyond his head, the reverse is to be turned at the face, and the foot to be plucked back, settling in the broad ward. To ward the right and reversed blows, there is a thrust to be given at the thighs or some other place that may most hinder them, in the very same time that such blows are in their circle or compass. Although I do not believe that there is a man so foolish, that (in this ward) will deliver a reverse only.

OF THE HURT OF THE LOW WARD, AT RAPIER AND CLOAK.

This ward is so straight and perilous, that in no man ought to assure himself to deliver an edgeblow any manner of way. For under any of them he may be easily struck, and each of them may easily be warded with the Cloak. Therefore, he must diligently take heed, that he thrust only, the which must never be discharged before the enemy's sword be found, and then as far forwards as possible. So then finding it, he may thrust both within and without. Neither is there in this thrust any other advantage to be gotten, then to steal a half pace unawares of the enemy, which may be done very commodiously, considering the cloak occupies the enemy's sight, And having drawn his half pace, and found the enemy's sword, he must increase another half pace forwards, and strike him, costing and forcing the enemy's sword, on that side where it may do no hurt. And this may be used both within and without: But he whom it pleases, and who doubts not to be entangled in the Cloak, may (finding himself within) carry his left foot making a pace therewith, and between his Cloak and his sword, close the enemy's sword, and deliver a thrust with the increase of a pace of the right foot: And finding his enemy's sword without, he may use the self same increase and thrust. But if he find not the enemy's sword, he must deliver a little edge blow from the wrist of the hand, in such sort, that the

enemy have no leisure to enter in: And having found the Sword, to discharge a right or straight thrust, or else not voiding the enemy's sword by the increase of a left pace, to drive a thrust from aloft downwards, lifting up the fist somewhat high, and delivering it with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

OF THE DEFENSE OF THE LOW WARDAT RAPIER AND CLOAK.

To the end a man may ward himself from all the thrusts reckoned in the hurts of this ward, he neither ought, neither happily may do any other thing then void his body from the straight line, wherein the enemy purposes to strike, making a left pace forwards, somewhat thwarting or crossing and striking the enemy safely. The which does not so chance, when one defends himself either with the single Cloak or single Rapier: For whilst he assays to defend himself, he cannot strike. And if the enemy do first move, and strike straight, in the which, his sword is not carried much outwards (and it is hardly done,) I say, the enemy may by stealing of half paces, discharge a thrust perforce. And therefore he must take heed, that (as the enemy moves) he increase a slope pace (by that means voiding the hurt) then a thwart or crossing pace next, with the increase of a straight pace of the right foot, to strike the enemy with a thrust underneath.

This may suffice, for the handling of these weapons as much as appertains to sure play. All that which remains is reserved to the treatise of deceit, in which place shall be seen many handlings of the Cloak no less profitable then pleasant.

OF THE SWORD AND BUCKLER

Forasmuch as the Buckler is a weapon very commodious and much used, it is reason that I handle it next after the Cloak. For my purpose is, to reason of those weapons first which men do most ordinarily use, then of those that are extraordinary and less accustomed, discoursing upon each of them, as much as is requisite when I come unto them. Therefore I will first consider of the Buckler, therewith proceeding orderly.

First his form, as much as appertains to this Art. Next the manner how to use it, giving to every man to understand that the Buckler and other weapons (which are said to be weapons only of warding) may also be of striking, as I will declare in his proper place.

OF THE FORM OF THE BUCKLER

As the form of the Buckler is round and small, and ought to be a shield and safeguard of the whole body, which is far greater then it: So it is to be understood how it may accomplish the same, being a matter in a manner impossible. Let every one therefore know, that the little Buckler is not equal in bigness to the body simply, but after a certain manner, from which springs this commodity, that he which understands it, shall be resolved of the manner how to bear and handle it, and shall know that in it, which shall not only advantage him in the use thereof, but also of many other weapons.

It is to be understood, that the Buckler bears the self same respect to the body, which the little prick or sight, on the top of the harquebus artillery or such like bears to the object which they respect and behold. For when a Harquebuser or Gunner, discharges happily against a Pigeon or Tower, if they behold and find that the Prick strikes the object, although the prick or sight be very little, and of a thousand parts one: yet I say, the said prick of the Harquebuser shall cover the whole Pigeon, and that of the Artillery in a manner the whole Tower: The effect proceeding of no other thing then of the distance. And it is in this manner. The eye beholding directly through the straight sight, as soon as it arrives at the object, and may not pass through, tears it, and sends through a line sidewise, spreading itself like unto two sides of a Triangle, the which overthrowes the foundation of that thing which it strikes: The which foundation, the instrument strikes with which the discharge was made. And if it work otherwise, that comes either of that defect of the instrument, or of that it was not firm.

Wherefore, applying this example to our purpose I say, that the enemy's sword is as the line of the eyesight, The Buckler, even as the little prick or sight in the Harquebus, the body of him that holds the Buckler, as the object unto which the stroke is directed: And so much the rather the Buckler shall be the more like this prick or sight, and have power to cover the whole body, by how much it shall be the further of from the thing that is to cover.

As concerning his greatness, standing still on the form of the Buckler, by how much the greater it is, by so much the better it voids the blows. But it is to be regarded, that it hinder not the eye sight, or at least as little as is possible. Besides this, there is required, that about the middle thereof, there be a little strong circle of Iron, well nailed and hollowed from the Buckler, so that between that circle and the Buckler the Sword may enter, by means whereof, a man may either take holdfast of the sword, or break a piece of the point. But, this is done rather by chance then that any rule may be given how a man should so take hold and break it, for the sword comes not with such slowness, and in such quantity of time, as is requisite in that behalf.

It shall be also very profitable, that in the midst of the Buckler, there be a sharp point or stert of Iron, to the end the enemy may be struck therewith when occasion serves.

THE MANNER HOW TO HANDLE THE BUCKLER

If a man would, that the Buckler work the said effect, to wit: that it may be able with his smallness to cover the whole body, he must hold and bear it in his fist, as far off from the body as the arm may possibly stretch forth, moving always the arm and buckler together, as one entire and solid thing, having no bending, or as if the arm were united to the buckler, turning continually all the flat thereof towards the enemy. From which kind of holding proceed all these commodities following.

1 The first is, that the arm (standing directly behind the Buckler) is wholly covered, neither may be struck by any manner of thing which is before it. [\(Figure 12\)](#) 2 The second, that all edgeblows are of force encountered in the first or second part thereof,

where they carry least force: neither can it fall out otherwise, if the enemy would (in manner as he ought) strike either at the head or the body. For if the enemy would strike them, it is necessary, that his sword come within the buckler so much as the arm is long : For otherwise it shall never hit home. And in this case he may well ward each great blow, and therewithal easily strike, and that in a short time.

3 The third commodity is, that all thrusts are most easily warded : for the Buckler being round, with the directly flat opposite against the enemy, and warding all the body, the enemy will not resolve himself to give a thrust but only against those parts which are so well covered by the Buckler, as, the head, the thighs, or some part of the body, being discovered by ill bearing of the buckler. And seeing that these thrusts, having to hit home, ought to enter so far in, as is from the buckler to the body and more (and that is the length of the arm) they may easily and without doubt (making less motion, and therefore in little time) be driven outwards by the Buckler before they come to the body.

There are many other commodities to be gathered by so holding the buckler, which at this present are not to be recited.

Wherefore being to finish this Chapter, I say, that the Buckler ought not to defend, but only down to the knee and less. And reason would that it should defend no farther than the arm can stretch itself, that is to the middle thigh. In the act of fighting, a man stands always somewhat bowing, therefore a little more is allowed. The rest of the body downwards must be warded with the Sword only.

OF THE HURT OF THE HIGH WARD AT SWORD AND BUCKLER

Because it is a very easy matter to ward both the right and reversed blows of the edge : And for that a man may easily strike under them, I will not lay down either for the one or the other their strikings or defendings, but only talk of the thrust. I say, the thrust above may be delivered in the one with the right foot behind, the other with the right foot before.

When one should deliver a thrust with the right foot before, he must remember in any case, first (unawares of the enemy) to _ half pace, that is to say: to draw the hindfoot near the forefoot, and then to cast a thrust with the increase of a half pace forwards, settling himself after the delivery thereof in the low ward.

OF THE DEFENSE OF THE HIGH WARD AT SWORD AND BUCKLER

As a man stands at the low ward he may easily defend both those lofty thrusts. When they come, he standing at the said ward, it shall be best to drive them outwards, with the increase of a left pace, and with his sword and buckler to stay the enemy's sword. And because this left pace is a great increase : and likewise the enemy, driving his thrusts, comes with great force, it may easily come to pass that both may approach so near one to the other, that he may with his buckler give the enemy, the Mustachio, in the face, but

that must be done when fit occasion is offered, and then further recovering his own sword to discharge a thrust underneath with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

OF THE HURT OF THE BROAD WARD, AT SWORD AND BUCKLER

If a man would step forward, and strike as he stands in the broad ward, it is not lawful for him to use any other then the thrust, considering the right and reversed blows may not be delivered without great peril and danger. For in the sight or placing of this ward, the sword is far off from the body. And as he moves to fetch a right or reversed edgeblow, his sword of force will be much farther: So that it may not be done without great danger. Therefore he shall use the thrust only: in forcing and delivery whereof, he shall proceed first to carry his hindfoot a half pace forwards, and then to drive it on with the increase of another half pace of the right foot, staying himself in the broad ward.

OF THE DEFENSE OF THE BROAD WARD AT SWORD AND BUCKLER

Against the thrust of the broad ward, the Buckler is to be opposed, standing at the low ward. And when the enemy comes resolutely to thrust, then without warding it at all, he shall drive a thrust at the face, carrying the hindfoot in a compass towards the right side as well to lengthen the thrust, as also to carry himself out of the straight line, in the which the enemy comes resolutely to strike, who, by this manner of thrust is easily hurt.

OF THE HURT OF THE LOW WARD AT SWORD AND BUCKLER

As this low ward is framed in two manner of ways, that is to say, with the right foot before and behind: So likewise a man may strike therein after two sorts, Standing with the right foot behind (leaving aside, the blows of the edge, being to small purpose) he shall deliver a thrust with the increase of a the right foot, between the enemy's sword and buckler, or else, if it be more commodious without the sword and buckler, settling in the low ward, with the right foot before, in which ward, a man may strike in two manner of ways, within and without. Finding himself without, having first met the enemy's sword with his own, he shall increase a left pace, not to the intent to avoid himself from the enemy's sword, but shall with his buckler also, stay the enemy's sword, and forasmuch as he did not at the first deliver the said thrust, he shall then continue and force it on directly with the increase of a pace of the right foot. Finding himself within, the same thrust is to be used but more strongly. For, with the increase of a pace, leaving his buckler or the enemy's sword, he shuts it in between his own sword and the buckler: and keeping it in that straight, (whereby he is sure the enemy can deliver no edgeblow because it may not move neither upwards nor downwards, neither forwards, but is then without the body,) he shall continue on, and resolutely deliver this manner of thrust , with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

OF THE DEFENSE OF THE LOW WARD, AT SWORD AND BUCKLER

For the defense of all these thrusts, it is necessary that he stand at the low ward, and standing thereat, whilst the thrust comes which is delivered with the right foot behind, he

shall do no other, than in the selfsame time, deliver a thrust at the thigh or breast, turning the hilt of his sword against the enemy's sword, and compassing his hindfoot, withal bearing his body out of the straight line, in which the enemy strikes. And in this manner of warding does not only defend, but also safely hurt. For the defense of the other two thrusts, the one within, and the other without, a man must take great heed, and it is very necessary that as the enemy increases (pretending to strike safely) he carry a slope pace with the left foot and deliver a thrust above hand, upon the which the enemy of himself shall run and invest himself. And it is to be considered, that in these thrusts, he that defends has great advantage: For the enemy comes resolutely to strike, not thinking that it may in any other sort be warded then by giving back, But he that wards by increase in, defending and drawing near unto the enemy, is so placed that he may easily hurt him.

OF THE SWORD AND TARGET, CALLED THE SQUARE TARGET

It is most manifest, that the Target is a most ancient weapon, found out only for the use of warfare, and peculiar quarrels between man and man : albeit, since the finding thereof, there have been devised by the industry of man a thousand ways to serve them at their need: From whence it has come to pass, (because it seemed convenient unto the Professors of this Art) that this weapon was very commodious and profitable, as well for his fashion, as for it is a mean or middle weapon, between the buckler and the round Target: That they have framed a special kind of play therewith, although it differs from the other two weapons in no other thing then fashion. Therefore, diverse professors of this Art, being moved some by reason of the form, some by the bigness, and some by the heaviness thereof, have accustomed to bear it after diverse ways, Those who make most account of the heaviness, would for some consideration, that the right and proper bearing thereof, was to hold it leaning on the thigh, not moving there hence, but being greatly constrained thereunto.

Others, who esteemed the form and bigness thereof, because it seemed unto them that the Target without any motion was most apt of itself to ward all that part of the body which is betwixt the neck and the thigh, bare it with their arm drawn back and close to their breast. The which opinion, I mean not at this present to confute, forasmuch as by the showing of mine own opinion, it shall appear how mightily they were deceived in the holding thereof, from the true holding whereof springs all the profit which his form and bigness does give it.

THE MANNER HOW TO HOLD THE SQUARE TARGET

Being desirous to bear great respect as well to all the qualities of this Target ([Figure 13](#)) (which are, the form, the bigness, and heaviness) as unto that wherewith it may either help or hurt, I say (if a man would that the form thereof do bring him profit without hurt) it is to be held with the high point thereof upwards respecting the head: the part opposite, the low parts of the body: the right part thereof, the right side, and the left, the left side: from this manner of bearing spring these advantages. First, a man may more easily see his enemy, and view what he does by the point of the corner, which is on the one side, and that is by the high point, by which, if he would behold his enemy, from the head to

the feet, it is requisite that he carry his Target, so low, that he discover not too much of his body which is above it: to the warding whereof he cannot come again, but discommodiously, and in long time.

Besides, the said commodity of beholding the enemy, there is also another that is of this warding: For the Target being borne after this manner (framing a triangle) the sharp corner thereof respects the forehead, and the sides thereof so spread themselves, that through the least motion, any big man whosoever, may stand safe behind them. And if blows come at the head, be they thrusts or edgeblows, all of them light upon one of the said sides, behind which stands the head safe without hindering of the eyesight. The other two sides of the Target, right, and left, with very small motion, ward the right and left side of the body, in such sort, that a man may also draw back his arm: For the left side of the Target wards the elbow, which it does not do, when the high side thereof is carried equal. To conclude therefore, that in holding the Target, his bigness may the better ward, for the causes above said being superfluous to be repeated again, I counsel, it to be held with the arm stretched forth from the body, not accounting the heaviness to be hurtful, because continues not long in so holding it: and if the too long holding be painful, he may draw back his arm, and rest himself. The better to do this and to be able to see the enemy, I say, he shall hold it, his arm stretched out, with the high point outwards, respecting the forehead.

THE HURT OF THE HIGH WARD, AT SWORD and SQUARE TARGET

Many Deceits, Falses, and Wards, may be practiced in the handling of these weapons: All which I reserve to the treatise of Deceit or falsing, as unto his proper place, framing likewise in this all the rest, three ordinary wards, upon which, all the rest depend, and against which they may be opposed.

Standing at this high ward, and pretending to strike the enemy, it is first of all to be provided, that one steal a false pace from behind, and then discharge a thrust above hand, with the increase of another half pace forwards, which being warded by the enemy with his Target only, not moving his body, he may then increase a straight pace of the left foot, and (somewhat lifting up his hand, and abasing the point of his sword) force a thrust from above downwards between the Target and body of the enemy, with the increase of a pace of the right foot: the which thrust will safely speed the enemy, if his body be not first voided. The self same thrust may be delivered in this high ward, standing with the right foot behind.

THE DEFENSE OF THE HIGH WARD, AT SWORD SQUARE TARGET

The foresaid thrust may easily be warded, if in the very time that it comes it be encountered with the high point of the Target, but yet with that side which bends towards the right hand. And as soon as the enemy's sword is come one handful within the Target, it must be strongly beaten off by the Target towards the right hand, increasing the same instant a left pace. Then with as great an increase of a pace of the right foot as may be

possible, a thrust underneath must be given, already prepared, because a man ought to stand at the low ward for the warding of the thrust abovehand.

THE HURT OF THE BROAD WARD, AT SWORD and SQUARE TARGET

In this ward likewise, the enemy may be invested on the point of the sword, by going forwards as straightly as is possible, and by striking quickly before the enemy. For the Target (whose charge is only to defend) is so great, that it may easily ward all edgeblows, and those chiefly which come from the knee upwards. Farther, when a blow is pretended to be delivered, it is manifest, that a thrust does enter by a more narrow straight than any edgeblow does. And therefore, when one would strike the enemy standing at the lock or low ward, he must remember that he approach as near him as he may possible: and being so near, that with his Target put forth one handful more forwards, he may beat away the enemy's sword, then by so beating of it, he shall increase a left pace, and presently after it, with the increase of the right foot, deliver him a thrust, if it so chance that at the first encounter he strike him not strongly.

THE DEFENSE OF THE BROAD WARD, AT SWORD SQUARE TARGET

Standing at the low ward, one may ward and defend the thrust of the broad ward, diverse ways, among all which, there is one way, very easy and sure and thus is it. For the defense of this thrust, it is necessary, that he stand at the low ward, his sword and arm being in their proper place: and that with his Target something stretched out from his body, he provoke the enemy, who being determined in himself, and coming resolutely to give a thrust, he then ought with the increase of a pace of the right foot, to strike the enemy with a low thrust, underneath both his own and his enemy's Target.

THE HURT OF THE LOW WARD AT SWORD AND SQUARE TARGET

There are many blows to be bestowed, standing at the low ward, all which I esteem as vain and to no purpose, considering the manifold and abundant defense of the Target. Therefore I will restrain myself unto two only which are very strong and hardly to be warded. And they are two thrusts, the one within, the other without, with the right foot both before and behind.

When one finds himself within, with his right foot before, and so near his enemy, that by the increase of a left pace, he may with the right side of his Target, beat away the enemy's sword in the middle thereof, then he ought nimbly to increase that left pace, and (closing in the enemy's sword between his Target and his own sword) to deliver a forcible thrust at the thighs, with the increase of the right foot. He may also do the very self same when he finds himself to stand with his right foot behind, but then he must farther of the right foot first, and then continuing still force his sword and paces directly onwards, if he hit not the enemy as he would at the first.

But if it chance that he find himself without, then he must (having first found out fit opportunity to beat off the enemy's sword with his Target) increase a left pace, and

placing the high side of his Target under his enemy's sword and his own sword upon it, closing it in, in the middle, increase a pace of the right foot, and discharge a forcible thrust, at the breast or face. And he may do the self same, when he stands with the right foot behind.

THE DEFENSE OF THE LOW WARD, AT SWORD and SQUARE TARGET

For the warding of those two thrusts of the low ward, it is necessary, that a man stand at the same ward. And as the enemy comes resolutely determined to thrust within, he must as soon, or more readily then he, increase a left pace, and with the right side of his Target close in the enemy's sword, between it and his own sword, and then to enter perforce, and thrust either between the two Targets or else under them, with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

But if the enemy come without, he must increase the self same slope pace, and with the right side of his Target beat off the point of the enemy's sword, and then thrust either above, either beneath, as in that occasion it shall be most to his advantage with the increase of the pace of the right foot. And when in consideration of the abundant defenses of the Target, he may neither increase his paces, nor deliver a thrust, he must settle himself in the low ward with the right foot behind, which ward I will largely handle in the treatise of deceit or falsing, being as it were his proper place, here ending the true handling of the sword and square Target.

OF THE SWORD AND ROUND TARGET.

The round Target ([Figure 14](#)) would require a long and most exquisite consideration because it is of circular form, most capable, and most perfect of all others. But for that my purpose in this my work, is to write that only which I know does appertain to this Art, giving leave to every man to busy himself in his own profession. And leaving a great part of this consideration to the Mathematicians and Historiographers to reason of his diverse qualities or passions, either who was inventor thereof, either, whether it be a weapon of antiquity, or of this our age, And coming to discourse of that, wherein it profits in this our time, (being a weapon so greatly honored and esteemed of Princes, Lords, and Gentlemen, that besides the use thereof in their affairs, as well by day as by night, they also keep their hoses richly decked and beautified therewith) And considering only that thing, in the round Target, among all weapons which may profit or hurt in the handling thereof, I say, that the said round Target has been diversely held, borne and used, by diverse men in diverse ages, as well as the other square Target, and other weapons of defense, as well as of offense. And there want not also men in our time, who to the intent they be not wearied, bear it leaning on their thigh as though that in this exercise (in which only travail and pains are available) a man should only care for rest and quietness. For by the means of these two, strength and activity, (parts in the exercise of weapons, both important and necessary) are obtained and gotten.

Other some, holding their whole Arm bowed together, have carried it altogether flat against their body, not regarding either to ward their belly, or utterly to lose the sight of

the enemy, but will at any hand stand (as they think) safe behind it, as behind a wall, not knowing what a manner of weight it is, both to see the enemy, and work other effects, which, (by so holding it) may not be brought to pass.

OF THE MANNER HOW TO HOLD THE ROUND TARGET.

If a man would so bear the round Target, that it may cover the whole body, and yet nothing hinder him from seeing his enemy, which is a matter of great importance, it is requisite, that he bear it towards the enemy, not with the convex or outward part thereof, altogether equal, plain or even, neither to hold his arm so bowed, that in his elbow there be made (if not a sharp yet) at least a straight corner. For besides that (by so holding it) it wearies the arm: it likewise so hinders the sight, that if he would see his enemy from the breast downwards, of necessity he must abase his Target, or bear his head so peeping forwards, that it may be sooner hurt than the Target may come to ward it. And farther it so defends, that only so much of the body is warded, as the Target is big, or little more, because it cannot more then the half arm, from the elbow to the shoulder, which is very little, as every man knows or may perceive: So that the head shall be warded with great pain, and the thighs shall altogether remain discovered, in such sort, that to save the belly, he shall leave all the rest of the body in jeopardy. Therefore, if he would hold the said Target, that it may well defend all that part of the body, which is from the knee upwards, and that he may see his enemy, it is requisite that he bear his arm, if not right, yet at least bowed so little, that in the elbow there be framed so blunt an angle or corner, that his eyebeams passing near that part of the circumference of the Target, which is near his hand, may see his enemy from the head to the foot. And by holding the said convex part in this manner, it shall ward all the left side, and the circumference near the hand shall with the least motion defend the right side, the head and the thighs. And in this manner he shall keep his enemy in sight and defend all that part of the body, which is allotted unto the said Target. Therefore the said Target shall be born, the arm in a manner so straight towards the left side, that the eyesight may pass to behold the enemy without moving, for this only occasion, either the head, or the Target.

THE HURT OF THE HIGH WARD, AT SWORD AND ROUND TARGET

Because the round Target contains in it most great and sure defense, therefore ought not any edgeblow which may be easily warded with the single sword without the help of the Target be delivered. Thrusts also enter very difficultly to strike the body, because the Target, by means of the least motion that is, seems to be, as it were a wall before the body. And to thrust at the leg is no sure play. That which remains to be done, is to thrust forcibly with the sword: and when one perceives, that the point thereof is entered within the circumference of the enemy's Target, it is necessary that he increase a left pace, and with the circumference of his own Target, to beat off the enemy's sword and Target, to the end, it suffer the thrust so given of force to enter in. And (having so beaten and entered) to continue on the thrust in the straight line, with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

When he finds himself in the high ward, he shall increase a half pace with the hindfoot, gathering upon the enemy, as near as he may without danger. And being so nigh that he may drive his sword within the circumference, then as soon as he perceives his sword to be within it, (his arm being stretched out at the uttermost length) he ought suddenly to increase a left pace, beating off with the circumference of his own Target, the enemy's Target: and with the increase of a pace of the right foot, to cause his thrust to enter perforce. This also he may practice when the enemy endeavors, to withstand the entrance of the thrust, when it is already past, within the circumference of his Target.

But if the enemy (as it may fall out) ward this thrust not with part of the circumference, which is near his hand, but that which is above it (by means whereof his Target discovers his eyes) then he may very commodious, increasing his paces as aforesaid, recover his thrust above, and force it underneath, with the increase of a pace of the right foot. And this is a more sure way of thrusting than any other.

THE DEFENSE OF THE HIGH WARD, AT SWORD AND ROUND TARGET

For the defending of the thrust of the high ward, it is most sure standing at the low ward, and to endeavor to overcome the enemy, by the same skill by the which he himself would obtain the victory. In the very same time, that he delivers his thrust, a man must suddenly increase a slope pace with the left foot, beating off the enemy's Target with his own, and driving of a thrust perforce with the increase of a pace of the right foot. And with this manner of defense being done with such nimbleness as is required, he does also safely strike the enemy, who cannot strike him again, because, by means of the said slope pace he is carried out of the line in the which the enemy pretended to strike.

THE HURT OF THE BROAD WARD, AT SWORD AND ROUND TARGET

It is very difficult to strike in this broad ward, if first with much compassing and gathering of the enemy, a man do not assay with the circumference of his Target near his hand, to beat off the enemy's sword. And being so beaten, to increase a left pace, and farther by adding thereunto the increase of a pace of the right foot, to discharge a thrust. But it shall happily be better in the handling of these weapons, not to use this broad ward: for the hand is borne out of the straight line, in the which he may strike both safely and readily: And before it return to said line, there is much time spent.

And farther, a man is not then in case with his Target to beat off the enemy's sword: But if happily he be, yet (though he be very ready, as well with the hand as foot) his thrust shall never enter so far that it may hit home: For the enemy, with a very small motion of his Target forwards, may very easily drive the enemy's sword out of the straight line. Therefore, he that would change or shift out of this ward, to the intent to strike, must of necessity be passing nimble and ready, and before he delivers his blow, must beat the enemy's sword with his Target.

THE DEFENSE OF THE BROAD WARD, AT SWORD AND ROUND TARGET

Because in every occasion or accident a man stands safe in the low ward, I will endeavor in this case, to place him also in the same ward, for the encountering of the hurt of the broad ward. That therefore which by mine advise he shall do, is that -eat heed, not to suffer his sword to be beaten off any manner of way. And when the enemy without this beating presumes to enter, he must in the self same time increase a left pace and safely deliver a thrust underneath with the increase of the right foot. And farther, when the enemy shall perform, that is, first find the sword and beat it off, (seeing of necessity if he would enter and hit home, his sword must pass by the circumference of the Target near the hand) then, to withstand the entry, it is requisite that he drive the enemy's sword outwards on the right side with his Target and with the increase of the said pace, that he enter and strike him.

THE HURT OF THE LOW WARD, AT SWORD AND ROUND TARGET

A man may strike in this ward, the right foot being behind, and before, and in both ways, he may bear his sword either within or without. If therefore he find himself to stand with the right foot behind and without, he shall assay at any hand, before he determine to strike, to find the enemy's sword with his own, and as soon as he finds it shall clap to his Target, and strike perforce with a low thrust, increasing with the right foot. But finding himself to stand within, no more with his sword, then he does with his Target, he shall prove whether he can find the enemy's sword, and having found it, shall strain it fast between his own sword and Target, and then shall deliver a thrust with the increase of a pace of the right foot, the which thrust of force speeds: This being performed, he shall settle himself in this, or in either of these ways in the low ward with the right foot before. And as he so stands in this ward, he may after the same sort strike either within or without.

Therefore finding himself within, he shall provide to meet with the enemy's sword, and with the increase of a left pace, shall clap to his Target, for the most safety, and then drive on a forcible thrust. with the increasing of the right foot. And finding himself to bear his sword within in the said ward, and with his right foot behind, he shall endeavor to find the enemy's sword with his Target, and having found it, shall close it in between his own sword and Target, and with the increase of a left pace, shall perforce hurt the enemy, with the increase of a pace of the right foot.

Now, all these thrusts, no doubt shall speed every time that the enemy either makes no traverse motion with his body, either as he strikes, comes directly forwards, or else being fearful, goes directly backwards, for it is not possible that one man go so fast directly backwards, as an other may forwards. Yet it is therefore diligently to be observed in this ward, never to determine to strike, either in the handling of these, or of any other kind of weapons, if (with one of them) he shall not first find the enemy's sword. The which redoinings to great profit of every man, but especially of those, who have strong arms, for that they are better able to beat back the enemy's weapon.

OF THE DEFENSE OF THE LOW WARD, AT SWORD AND ROUND TARGET.

All the foresaid thrusts are warded, by not suffering the sword to be found by the enemy with either of his weapons. For the enemy (not finding it, will not assure himself, or presume to enter, without first finding of the sword) may most easily be struck and not strike, if a man increase a slope pace, (to the end he may void his body from hurt,) and with the increase of a straight pace of the right foot, do also discharge a thrust beneath. And after this order he may strike safely, (not only when his sword is not found by the enemy, but also when it chances to be found) if he be ready and nimble to make his slope pace, and to beat off, as forcible as he may, the enemy's Target with his own sword and Target, thereby forcing a low thrust to enter in, with the increase of a pace with the right foot. And thus much concerning the true striking and defending of the sword and round Target.

OF THE CASE OF RAPIERS.

There are also used now adays, as well in the schools, as in the lists, two Swords or Rapiers, admitted, and approved both of Princes, and of the professors of this art, for honorable and knightly weapons, albeit they be not used in the wars. Wherefore I shall not vary from my purpose, if I reason also of these, as far as is agreeable to true art. To him that would handle these weapons, it is necessary that he can as well manage the left hand as the right, which thing shalbe (if not necessary) yet most profitable in every other kind of weapon. But in these principally he is to resolve himself, that he can do no good, without that kind of nimbleness and dexterity. For seeing they are two weapons, and yet of one self same kind, they ought equally and indifferently to be handled, the one performing that which the other does, and every of them being apt as well to strike as defend. And therefore a man ought to accustom his body, arms and hands as well to strike as defend. And he which is not much practiced and exercised therein, ought not to make profession of this Art: for he shall find himself to be utterly deceived.

THE MANNER HOW TO HANDLE TWO RAPIERS.

It is most manifest that both these weapons may strike in one and the same time: for there may be delivered jointly together two downright edgeblows on high and two beneath: two reverses, and two thrusts, and are so rich and plentiful in striking, that it seems they may be used only to strike. But this ought not to be practiced, neither may it without great danger For all that, whatsoever may be done with either of them, is divided into striking and defending. That this is true, it may be perceived in the single Sword, which assays both to strike and defend. And those who have taken no such heed, but have been bent only to strike being moved either through cholera, either believing, that they had to deal with an ignorant person, have remained thereby mightily wounded. of this, there might be laid down infinite examples, which I leave to the intent I may not swerve from my purpose. I say therefore that of the two Rapiers which are handled, the one must be applied towards the other to strike, regarding always to use that first which wards, then that which strikes: for first a man must endeavor to defend himself, and then to strike others. ([Figure 15](#))

OF THE HIGH WARD AT TWO RAPIERS.

Presupposing always, that either hand is very well exercised, as well in striking as in defending, this ward shall be framed after two ways, which yet in manner is all one. The one with the right foot, and the other with the left, so working continually, that the hind arm be aloft, the former beneath in manner, as when the low ward is framed at single sword. And as a man strikes, he must always maintain and continue this high ward, which at the two rapiers, is the most perfect and surest and he may easily perform and do it: for whilst he enters to give a high thrust with his hind foot, although that foot be behind yet it must accompany the arm until it has finished his thrust, and settled itself in the low ward. The other sword and hand (which was borne together with the former foot in the low ward) remaining behind by reason of the increase of the high thrust, must presently be lifted placed in the same high ward.

Therefore it is to be noted, that whosoever means to shift from this ward and strike, whether it be with his right or left foot, before or behind, it is requisite that he stand without, and when he would strike, he shall first prove with his low sword, whether he can find the enemy's weapons, and having suddenly found them, he shall nimbly beat them back, and (in a manner) in the same instant force on a high thrust, with the increase of a pace of the right foot: from the which, if the enemy (for saving of himself) shall hastily and directly give backwards, he shall follow him, delivering presently the other high thrust behind, already lifted up. And this thrust will safely hit him and speed, because it is not possible that one may go so fast backwards, as an other may forwards.

Farther, as well in this ward, as in others, the ward may be framed with the right foot before, and the right arm lifted, and so contrariwise. But because there is small force in this ward both in the feet and hands, which stand not commodiously either to strike or defend, and seeing that there is required in the handling of those weapons, great strength and steadfastness I have thought good, not to lay it down, as to small purpose.

THE DEFENSE OF THE HIGH WARD AT TWO RAPIERS.

The direct opposition and defense of the high ward is the low ward, the manner whereof shall be seen in his proper place. That which principally is to be considered (for the low ward also, in like sort as the other may be framed after two sorts) is this, that of necessity a man stand with the same foot before as the enemy does, to wit: if he bear the right foot before, to put forth the right foot also, and to endeavor as the enemy does, to stand without, for of both ways that is of the more advantage and safety. Finding himself therefore without, in the low ward, he must not refuse, but rather suffer his sword to be found and beaten by the enemy: for this does redound much more to his advantage than to his enemy's because the enemy carries small force in his low hand wherewith he endeavors to find and beat off the sword, considering it is borne to far off from the other: for that which is slenderly united, is less forcible: whereas standing at the low ward, he bears both his hands low near together and sufficiently strong. Therefore as soon as the enemy having beaten back the sword, shall resolve himself to give a thrust, he must increase a slope pace, and with his hind low sword, drive the enemy's high thrust outwards toward the right side, if it chance that he were in the low ward with his right

foot before, And suddenly with the other low sword behind (which was suffered to be beaten off by the enemy, because it might turn the more to his disadvantage: for seeing the enemy's sword being slenderly united, as I have said before, carried but small force, it was the rather beaten off and disappointed: So that as soon as the slope pace is increased, and the said high thrust warded, before the enemy place his other sword also in the high ward, he may with the straight pace of the right foot deliver a low thrust continuing still to eat down the enemy's sword with his own low sword, that is borne before. And this manner of warding is most safe and sure: for besides that it strikes the enemy with the slope pace, it does likewise in such sort deliver the body from hurt, that of force the enemy is disappointed. Neither is there any other sure way to ward this high thrust, being so strong, and besides, having so great increase of pace.

This manner of defense is most strong and sure, and is done with that sword which is farthest off. Yet there is another way, and that is, with the low sword before, the which is no less stronger and sure than the other, but yet much shorter. For look in what time the other defends, this strikes.

Therefore in the low ward it is to be noted, (when the enemy moves, pretending to beat off the sword and therewithall to enter,) that then the point of the sword be lifted up, keeping the hand so steadfast, that it oppose itself and keeping outwards the enemy's high thrust, and having made this bar, to keep out his weapons, then and in the self same time, he shall increase a straight pace, and with the low sword behind shall strike the enemy in the breast, to whom it is impossible to do any effectual thing, or to avoid the said stroke, for that (by means of the point of the sword lifted up in the manner aforesaid) both his swords are so hindered, that they may not safely strike, either with the edge or point

.OF THE HURT OF THE BROAD WARD AT TWO RAPIERS.

This broad ward, may in the self same manner be framed two ways, and it may deliver the self same blows, in the one as in the other: This ward is framed with one foot before, and one foot behind, the arm (which is borne on the side of the hind foot) being stretched wide, and broad outwards. Therefore when one stands at this ward, and would deliver as straight and as safe a thrust as is possible, he shall first prove with his low Rapier, whether he can find his enemy's Rapier, which being found, he shall turn his fist outwards, and force the enemy's Rapier so much, that it may do no hurt, and then withall increasing presently a slope pace, shall go forwards to strike the enemy in the thigh, with the wide thrust. He might as well also thrust him in the flank, or in the head, but yet the other thrust is used, because the Rapier, which is directed to the thigh, is in place, to hinder the enemy's other Rapier to light on the legs.

And as in the high ward, so likewise in this, he must always stand without, and having delivered the wide thrust, he ought presently to widen the other arm, and settle himself in the broad ward.

OF THE DEFENSE OF THE BROAD WARD AT TWO RAPIERS.

For the defense of the thrust of the broad ward, it is necessary that a man stand at the low ward, and therewithall diligently observe, the motions of the enemy's body, how it compasses and passes to and fro, by knowledge and due consideration whereof, he may easily defend himself. If therefore the right arm be stretched out wide, the right foot also (being behind) shall be in like manner widened, the which, when it increases forwards, shall also carry with it the right shoulder, voiding always with the left side.

And the self same must be considered, and practiced, when he stands at this ward, the contrary way. That therefore which he must do, for the defense of himself, shalbe to void that part of his body, which may be hurt by the enemy's wide and broad thrust, and to oppose himself against that part of his enemy, which comes forwards pretending to strike: And this he shall do, at what time the enemy (finding the sword) would come forwards in his thrust. And in the self same time, (assuring himself with his own low sword) shall increase a slope pace, thereby investing and encountering that part of the enemy, which came striking, and with the which framed the broad ward. Neither can it be safe striking at any other place, for either, he shall find nothing to encounter, by means of the motion of the body, or else if he do not oppose himself against the shoulder of the enemy which carries the hurt, he is in hazard to be struck by the enemy's broad thrust.

OF THE HURT OF THE LOW WARD AT THE TWO RAPIERS

The low ward shall be framed after two ways, the one with the right foot before, the other with the left, and each of them may strike, either within, either without. The way which strikes within, has one blow, the way which strikes without has two, and in all, they are six. I will lay down but three, because they differ not from the other three, but only in the hand and foot, which must be place before, so that they are the self same, for I have already presupposed, that he who takes upon him to handle these weapons, can as well use the one hand, as he can the other. He may therefore find himself to stand with his right foot before and within, (I understand by within, when he bears one of his swords between both his enemy's swords, and likewise when the enemy carries one of his, between the other two. It is likewise true, that this also may be said within, to wit, when both weapons are borne in the middle between the other two. But I suppose no man so foolish, who handling these weapons, will suffer both his swords to be without, being a very unsure ward whereof I leave to speak.

That therefore, which he is to do, (finding himself with both his rapiers below, and within, with his right foot before, and after the said first way of being within) shalbe, that marking when he may close in the enemy's Rapier, between the which the enemy's rapier shall be so shut in and barred, that it may do no hurt, and one of the two Rapiers, that is to say, the right Rapier shall passe under the enemy's rapier, and thrust safely. And his other Rapier, albeit, it may thrust directly, yet (for the better saving of himself, from the enemy's other Rapier that is at liberty) he shall bear it somewhat abasing his hand, with the point upwards, the which point shall safeguard him, from the enemy's said Rapier, although this last note, be superfluous. For seeing the enemy must ward himself from the thrust that hurts him, he has no leisure, nor happily minds to strike, but only to defend

himself, either by voiding his body, or else by some other shift, which he shall then find out.

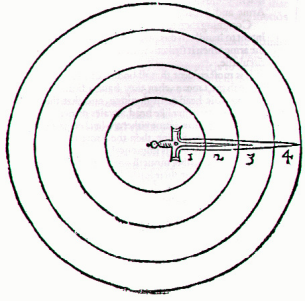
The way of warding without, may strike directly after two ways: The first, by beating off the enemy's Rapier, with his own that is before, and by delivering a thrust, either at the breast or head, with the Rapier that is behind, increasing therewithall a slope pace, and settling himself in the low ward, with his left foot before.

The second is, by taking opportunity, which he may do, if he be nimble. And he ought with the increase of a slope pace, to drive the point of his former Rapier directly towards the enemy, and above the enemy's Rapier. And his other own rapier, which before the increase was behind, he must force on, under the enemy's rapier. And thus, not giving over, these two thrusts must be strongly and nimbly driven towards the enemy, by means whereof being overtaken, the enemy has no other remedy to save himself, then to retire back: for he may not come forwards, but he must run himself upon the weapons, and that he will not do. So then, the enemy retiring himself may be followed, as far as the increase of the right foot will bear, then, settling in the low ward.

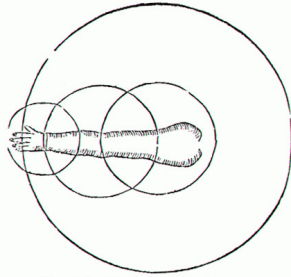
OF THE DEFENSE OF THE LOW WARD AT THE TWO RAPIERS.

All three thrusts of the low ward, by standing at the same ward, may easily be warded, and that after one manner. If a man remember first to void his body from hurt, by the increase of a pace, that is very slope, or crooked, either before the enemy comes thrusting, either as soon as he moves himself for the same purpose, or if he be active and nimble to traverse, and in defending himself to strike the enemy.

Therefore when any of the same three thrusts come, and before he perceives his Rapier to be closed, and barred in, he shall move a slope pace, to the intent to avoid himself from hurt, and with his Rapier, which is at liberty, he shall go forwards and deliver a thrust at the enemy's face, which thrust, does surely speed, if he be resolute to enter.



The Division of the Sword



This circle blaw of the point of the sword striketh circularly
and how he that striketh with the point
strikes straight.

Figure 2

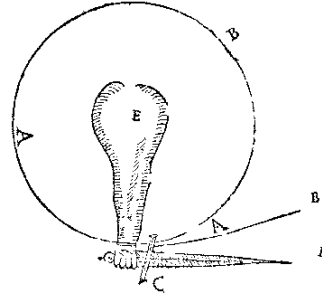


Figure 3

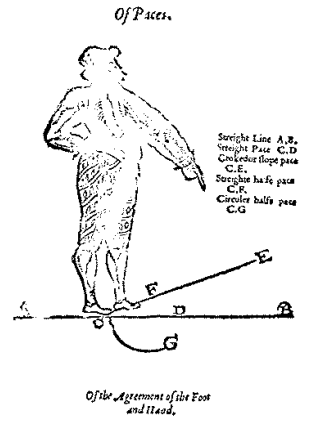


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



The Line of the edge is from A to F,
The line of the point from C to D,
and from D to E.

Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Fig 13



Fig 14



Fig 15

