

Fencing Manual 1877

Ministry of War

Official instruction manual of the

Peek inside

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The Fencing Phrase

The fencing phrase⁶⁷ is the sequence of several strikes made and received⁶⁸ without interruption.

Article III — Learning Progression

Instruction is done at the *plastron* in seven lessons and three iterations of each.

First Lesson

1. Nomenclature of the sword. The manner of holding the sword. Preparatory movements. Taking guard. The salute at arms.
2. Exercises on the direct attacks. Parries on disengagement and ripostes with the straight strike.
3. Exercises on the direct attacks. Parries with two disengagements and ripostes with the straight strike.

Second lesson

1. Exercises on various attacks (beats, pressings, expulsions). Parries with three disengagement and riposte with the straight strike.
2. Exercises on various attacks (the cutover, the glide). Parries on four disengagements and ripostes with the straight strike.
3. Exercises on various attacks in the low line (the glide, beat and pressing). Parries on one, two, three disengagements and ripostes with the straight strike.

Third Lesson

1. Exercises on changes of engagement and on compound ripostes.
2. Exercises on the double engagement and on compound ripostes.
3. Exercises on stepping (attacks, parries and ripostes with the straight strike).

⁶⁷*la phrase d'armes*

⁶⁸*portés et rendus*

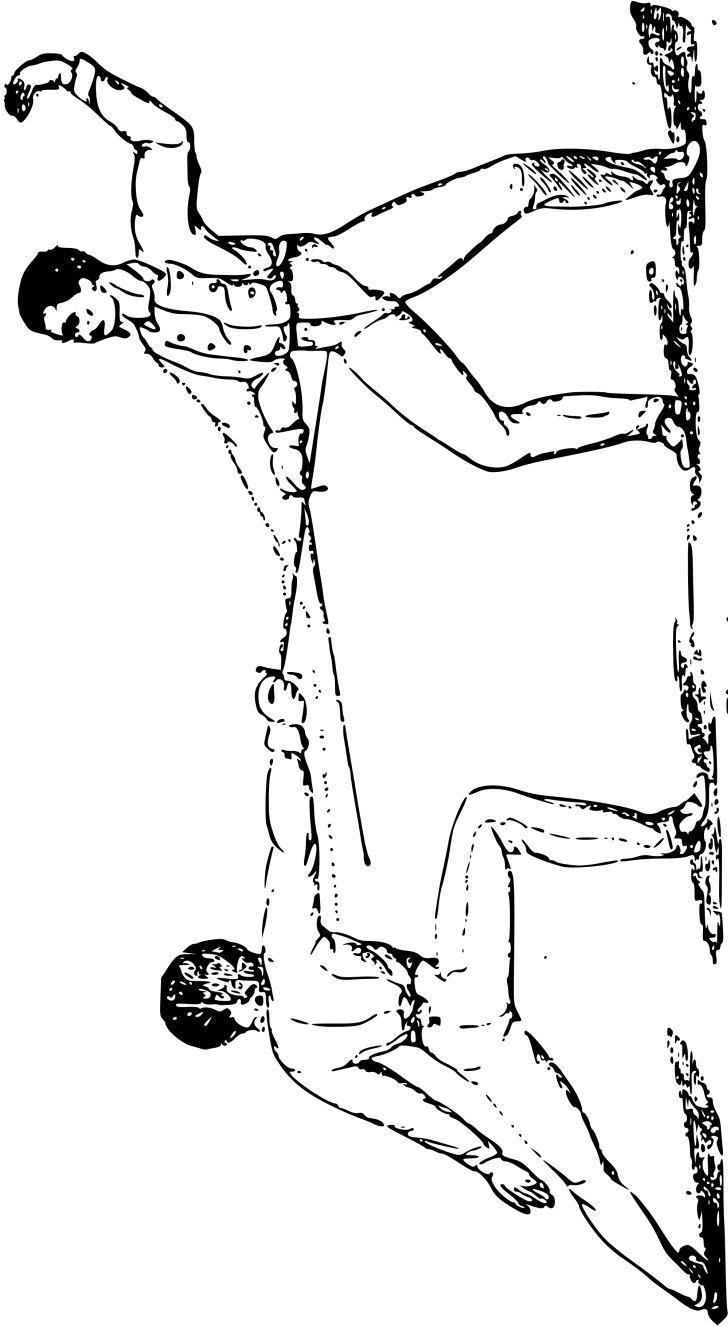


Fig. 14

On one or two disengagements:

1. { 1. Engage the sword, advance (or withdraw).
Deceive the engagement sometimes
2. *Sixte*: oppose (or parry) and riposte above and below
3. *En garde*
2. { 2. Riposte with the point by a cutover above and below
3. { 2. Riposte with the point by a circling of the sword
4. { Cutover with the point, parry in *quarte* and riposte

Change the line

One opposition

A counter

Two oppositions

An opposition and a counter

Two counters

Note: After the *sixte* and the counter, make a riposte above (or below) hand inverted in *prime*. Make varied parries in the order above.

Second Iteration

Stepping attacks (or on the step) preceded by a double engagement.

Straight strike

1. Double the engagement: advance (or withdraw)
 2. Deploy the arm (or on the step, deploy the arm)
 3. Lunge
 4. *En garde*
- } Or without decomposing strike straight

Disengagement

Doubling

One, two

Cutover

Circling the sword

Change the line

Parries after the step (or a stepping attack) preceded by a double engagement and simple and varied ripostes on one or two engagements.

1. Double the engagement, advance (or withdraw). Deceive the double engagement sometimes.

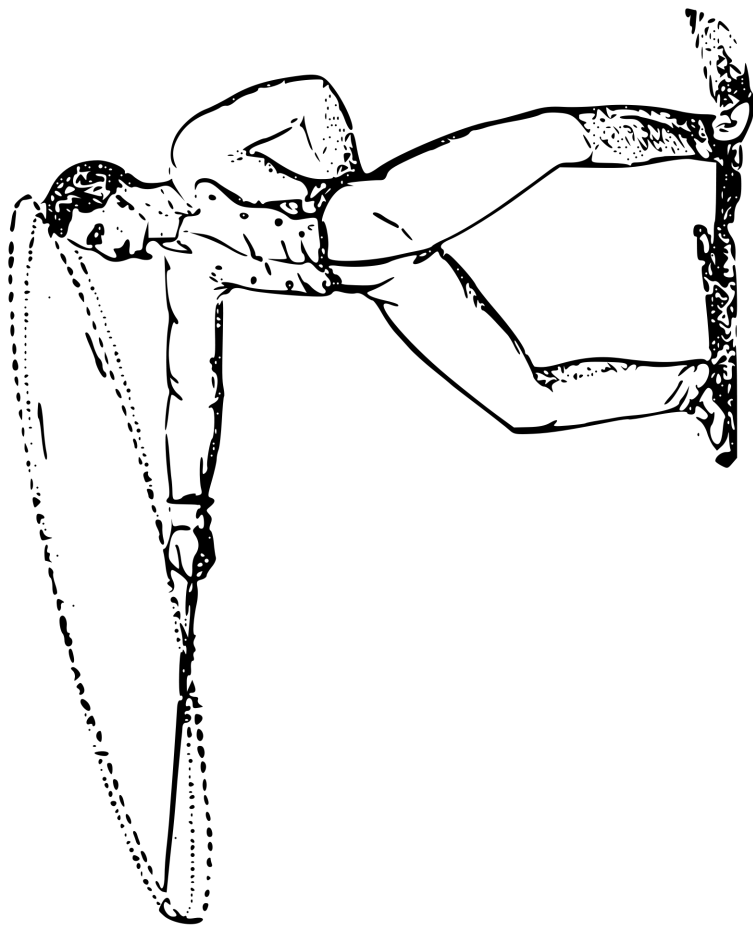


Fig. 6

By a sabre strike¹¹⁸ for the flank, stomach and forearm strikes and for the point.

The feint serves to form compound strikes. It is executed as the strike itself but without lunging.

Head Strike

Execute a moulinet backwards to the left and deploy the arm stopping the sabre at the height of the top of the head, the edge forward (fig. 8).

Sash Strike¹¹⁹

Execute a moulinet backwards to the left and deploy the arm stopping the sabre at the height of the shoulder, the edge forward, directing the strike diagonally from right to left (fig. 9).

Face Strike to the Right

Execute a moulinet from right to left and deploy the arm stopping the sabre at the height of the face, the edge to the right, the hand fingers downwards (fig. 10).

Face Strike to the Left

Execute a moulinet from left to right and deploy the arm, stopping the sabre at the height of the face, the edge to the left, the hand fingers upwards (fig. 11).

Flank Strike

Deploy the arm stopping the sabre at the height of the flank, the edge upwards, the thumb slightly to the left (fig. 12).

Stomach Strike

Deploy the arm stopping the sabre at the height of the stomach, the edge upwards, the thumb slightly to the right (fig.13).

After having touched, retire the sabre quickly backwards, impressing on it an oblique direction, in the direction of the edge, in the manner of a saw.

Rules to Observe during the Bout

Refer to Article VI of the first part.

Conduct and Discipline in the *Salle d'Armes*. Duties of the Masters and Provosts.

The masters and provosts must have to heart constantly holding the *salle d'armes* in the best state of cleanliness and looking to decorate it with the help of panoplies [of weapons] and sheaves of foils,¹²⁶ masks and gloves, topped with panels in cardboard¹²⁷ or wood recalling the battles and combats in which the regiment, the battalion or squadron has taken a glorious part, or by highlighting noble devices such as "Honour and Homeland. Valour and Discipline. Courage and Dedication. Glory to God. Respect to the Masters. Honour in Arms. *Vive la France*", etc.

They must endeavour to have always observed in the *salle* the courtesy, decency and marks of respect prescribed by the Internal Service¹²⁸ and prevent smoking there and require that one enters there uncovered.

They must take care to prevent quarrels or to appease them and to only intervene in the aim of conciliation in the name of the military confraternity.

They will never tolerate anyone to spar¹²⁹ outside of their presence and without their authorisation which they must accord only with prudence and discernment, and only in the interests of instruction.

They must follow with attention all the events of the bout which they have authorised, with the method of being able, after the clear¹³⁰ and final salute, to remark on the faults committed, indicate how one could avoid them and signal to each opponent the characteristic defects in his game and the means to remedy them.

¹²⁶ *faisceaux de fleurets*

¹²⁷ pasteboard?

¹²⁸ *le service intérieur*

¹²⁹ *qu'on fasse assaut*

¹³⁰ *belle?*