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John the Alchorn
Private Schoole
of Defence.

Or
The Defects
of Publique Teachers, ex-
actly discovered, by way of
Objection and Resolution.

Together
With the true practise of the
Science, set downe in judicious
Rules and Observances; in a
Method never before
expressed.

By G. H. Gent.

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TO
THE HOPE
OF GREAT
Brittaine, Prince
Charles.

Raise is the end of
all Arts; the per-
fection of Praise is
onely in Eminence;
which begets Example and Ad-
miration. Seeing then (grea-
A 3 Prince
The Epistle
Prince, your Birth gives you the best priviledge to expresse the worthinesse of Vertue, I see not but her followers, eyther in Art or Action, should necessarily flie to your High Patronage. This consideration makes my low deserts looke upward, which in this at least will merit your view, that the Science of Defence, not unworthily stiled Noble, (if eyther truely practised, or rightly understood) was never before in our Language brought to any Method. The Professors thereof being so ignorant, that they could rather doe, then make demonstration, or

Dedicatorie.
or reduce their doing to any certaintie of principle.

Many are the imputations laid upon this Art, (for such I dare now affirm it) the chiefe whereof is, the increasing our bloody and irreligious Duels, which if the name of this Science, being called of Defence, will not auoyd, yet the most licentious age of the Romanes shall sufficiently cleare: No History of those times making mention of any Duello or single fight to the losse of any Noble Person in that State, or disreputation of the publique Justice. Yet that this kind of battell was knowne

\[4\] and
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and in some cases approved amongst the Romanes. The Hyperduels betweene the Curatij and the Horatij, and that famous Duell betweene Torquatus and the French-man, apperantly speake.

It is not then the publique profession of this Science, nor the multiplicite of Professors that increase these desperate assassinations: for Knowledge begets Wisedome, and Wisedome by how much it participates of skill with Discretion, misdoubteth the same in another, and concludes safety as the summ of her abilitie. This is manifest in

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in the Italians, the first inventors of Foyle-weapon, and the cunningst Practisers, where notwithstanding these single Combats are rather reported then seene; and yet in ruder Countries as Poland, &c. nothing more common; which I impute wholly to a daring Ignorance. Neither had this knowledge of Defence, if unjustly taxt with any so wicked effects, been graced with so many Authentick priviledges in all well governed States, nor the Professors thereof had receiued such honor and respect, insomuch that amongst the Romanes some of them had their Statues erected,
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as Plutarch witnessed. These Reasons (if my judgement faile not) forcing the same.

First, Necellitie at home, as a Remedy to an unauoyded Disease, in opposing sodaine assaults, which from Caine, pleading Antiquitie, will not now lose their plantation. And since Innocence is no protection against murtherous intents, God and Nature tollerate this Defence.

The second is, Publique good abroad, for auoyding bloud, if the state of a War should require a single Tryall, which bowsooner was presumption in Goliah, was true

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true valor in Dauid: the imitation of this example, hath beene frequent in great Persons in forraigne, and memorabe in our owne Country: as betweene Edmund, surnamed Ironside, and King Canute, to a happy issue. Neyther can I forget an offer in the same kinde made in more late yeeres, betweene Franches the first, King of France, and Charles the fift, Emperour, though without effect.

The last Reason is, Commedable and profitable Exercise. First, no other recreation carries so generall imployement
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mployment both of body and minde, as this doth: for here the Feete labour equally with the Hands, the Eye and the Judgement walk together: and for the profit, it leads to as much use in making the person ready and daring to the warre; as Horsemanship begets dexterity for the shocke. The Schoole of our private Practise being the same to the Battell, that the Muses to the Troope: for with what confidence shall hee goe on upon many, that hath no knowledge to give him hope of safety from one.

Pardon my tedious discourse,

most

Dedicatorie.

(most Excellent Prince) if it be a Crime, not Error but Zeale offends: for how can I choose but speake much of Armes to you, whom wee all expect the most Heroyicke Professor and Defender of the same: to which your future abilitie in your high Achieuements, if my poore endeavours may give the least furtherance (as I promise my selfe much herein) I returne from your Acceptance, loaden with full reward and happiest expectance: whom no second respect could induce to the undertaking this so difficult Labour, which my Person shall in
The Epistle, &c.
in your command, in all humble
service, be ever at attendance to
make good, resting

The most devoted
Servant to you and
your Princely Vertues,

G. H. Gent.

THE PRIVATE SCHOOL OF
Defence.

THE INDUCTION.

Some hold opinion
that Skill avayleth
little or nothing in
fight; and therefore
so soone as they
shall see this Title,
will cast away the Discourse, as an
unprofitable Argument. Hee that
is the most obstinate enemy to
himselfe, in rejecting the benefit of
skill
skill, must needs confess it no vaine Exercise, if the apnesse and facilitie be onely thought on, to which the active practice of it brings the body, and enables it for enduring in fight. But to the point of materiall use.

Of such mens understandings I would know how comes it (then) that an ignorant handler of a Weapon meeting with an ordinarie Professor of Defence at Foyle, can neyther certainly give offence, nor avoid it.

They will answere mee, that at blunt, a man comes boldly on, and is not troubled with any such considerations, as at sharpe must of necessity disorder his remembrance, and put him out of fight.

To that, thus; All rules (indeed) must admit some exceptions: heat or cold may some what distract a fighter;
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a madde man is vne capable of it?

Then touching Coldnes, though it be brought downe into the very balenesse of Feare in one, yet it is impossible to make Skill vitally of no vse to him. For the gesture of the body vpon such a danger, will naturally fall into those motions that it hath got by practive.

So that skill to every reasonable man is something a friend. But when it is entertained by one naturally of a good temper, it can by no meanes fall vnder any of their Obiections that dispute it; for such a man brings no more fury, nor lesse assurance with him into the Field, then the Schoole, and therefore will have as much advantage of an ignorant man in fight, as there is difference betweene them in practive.

To exemplifie this, you may read

of Defence.

read of one Coranto, a Noble man, who from two and twenty Duelles returned Conquerour: Being demanded the reason by some that considered the equalitie of his adversaries in shew, and the uncertaine chances of the field: hee answered, Strength, Length, Courage, Temper and Cunning. So he concluded Nature in Art, and attributed the managing of those parts hee was borne with, to the abilitie of those hee was taught.

Since therefore that the Science of Defence is understood to be a profession of vse, it followes to examine the defects of Teachers, and to resolve vpon the worth of the knowledge: which followes immediately after our Definition.
The Definition of the Science of Defence, with the parts thereto required.

The Science of Defence is an Art Geometrical, wherewith the body is guarded with a sngle or double weapon from wrong of the Offender, or the greatest disadvantage of his Offence.

The Parts thereto required are Strength and Judgement.

Under Strength are comprehended swiftness of motion and quickness of Eye: where abilitie is without perfection of these, it is but a supply of defects, drawne from the Judiciall part or Judgement.

Under Judgement fall the considerations of Time, Place, and Distance.

It hath seemed to many that there is no certainty in this Science, which granted, it must lose his tyle; in whose behalfe we cannot but with great reason aventure, that as the body is punctual, so it hath a just circumference in the hands and feet, which to defence and safeguard thereof, runne in an equall line, which extended with strength in a just proportion, make the body the same as the Poynt is in Circle, vntoucht or impossible to be violated.

To them that obie& Example against Knowledge, in that none or few, haue ever attained this height of assurance, I can make no other answere, then argue from their owne Schoole, and say, that none
or few, in disputations, ever gave satisfaction without some doubt, therefore Logicke is no Art of true disputing. True it is, all Arts and Sciences have their just and absolute bound, to which though in the speculative part or Theorie, many have arrived, none ever did in præcise. Since as in those of words, many subtleties and nimble inventions oppress and wrest the best expositions: so in those of exercise of the body, the inequality of place, as the slapping of ground, dazzling of light, many times disorder the best and surest way of Defence and Knowledge. Wherefore though by the weakness of man's casual nature, wee can promise to our Scholler no positive securitie, yet the imperfection in the learner, makes the Art no whit lesse certaine or singular.

To those that reject the Science, because they cannot promise themselves supreme excellence, is to reject the study of Physicke, because hee cannot be a Galen, or a Paracelsus; or if any shall from the fall of some man of the sword (as our word men tearme them) by the unskilfull arme of some rude assailer, contente our instruction, I would haue such a youth turne Multertor, because Ventidius that ruder Asses, came to be Consull, and Valerius Cato the Grammarian became a hackney-man: Fortune not Science herein is to be blamed.

Notwithstanding, that the excellence of this Science may not want Example; I cannot forget the memorable perfection of the two Romanes Bythrus and Bacchus, who having fought eighteen severall Combats or Duellees, returned both
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required to much as shift of body, to which the Eye must like a faifthful Centinell give warning, and the Feete nimbly give performance: for if the Eye faile in perceiveing opportunitie, or the Feete in taking it, in vaile is the force of arme: on these two then we ground Abilitie, to which the Judgement gives the crowne or conquest.

Now for Judgement, as wee said before, Time must be observed when, Distance where, Place how. Occasion of Time and Distance may seeme faire to the eye, yet the Place may justly barre it. As where open way is given to a Passage with advantage, the incertaintie of footing may cast you too forward, and disorder your weapon by unsettled motion. Againe, Place and Distance may both draw you on, yet Time may promise by letting slip that occasion

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both without hurt, and at the last were both, at one Passage, runne through and slaine, leaving no place to Judgement, that could give preeminence to eyther; whereupon it became a Proverbe in Trials of equalitie, Estius contra Bacchum. But I haue diggest too farre in magnis velus voluisse sat est; In high matters it shall suffice to sit in Phalus Chayre, though wee cannot runne his full dayes journey: wherefore wee returne againe to handle the parts derived, which make to approxe our Definition; the Eye and the Feete.

That which wee call strength, is not onely a Bucke-beating abilitie of the arme; for the point, to which all vie of weapon is now with great reason reduced, is not so blunt but small force makes it enter: neither in Large or Passage is the force required
occasion, some opener way to greater advantage: for upon every seeming sharing of the armes, it is better to make offer of hurt to that part, then put home; for such prof-fer many times draws the aduer-sary to a guard, that neglects a place of more deadly danger. Last-ly, Time and Place may both succeed to your wishes, yet Distance may safely check your resolution: for to no obseruation more then this is the judgement required, which being from our purpose to set downe in figure, I referre you to the laborious worke of Giovan de Grazie, the Italian, who handles this point at large, and hath tooke vp, much ground in the expression thereof.

Thus much for our speculative part in this Science, wherein I know none can disagree with me: which

of Defence could not omit to set downe, because it makes to the honour of the worthy Professors of this Science, whom I desire the courteous Reader by no meanes to imagine that I am so ignorant to meane, where any question is made of their sufficiency in this Booke: for I dare boldly affirme, for generall Weapons no Country can afford more able and sufficient professors then this our owne in their performance, whose teaching I will not dispraise, if it come not within compass of these following Taxations, which by way of Objection and Resolution, I presume, I have made apparently worthy of censures to all indifferent practifles.
The Defences of the Teachers

Objection I.

Objection

Objection

HEE that shall reach a strong man with a single weapon to runme, pedge, or shift, taketh from him the advantage of his strength, or having length to his strength, or length to the aforesaid, and should stand offend to the near

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Resolution.

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Objection II.

The publike Teachers teach, at many weapons, as they give it out in their Challenges, as though every weapon were used with severall Guards and Defences, one contrary to another.

Resolution.

This is mere deceit, to blind the eyes of their spectators in publicke, as they doe their Scholler's in private: for all mentioned in the defect are contain'd in two weapons, that is Single Rapier and Quarter-staffe, and their defences, as you shall finde in the rules of Practice.

Obiect.
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offence without defending, which since onely the Rapier or Sword can most certainly doe, the mayne of both must necessitile be call upon them.

Objection III.

The publicke Professors of this science, teach nothing at Backsword, and Sword and Dagger, but the bare blow.

Resolution.

If the point beats the blow in right as lesse ingaging him that prosters a thrust, then him that offends, with edge, which I know and they cannot deny, it is as much prejudiciali to their Schollers, to teach them the bare blow at Sword and Dagger, as if they should teach at Rapier onely to thrust and not disorder;

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order: the necessary vse whereof you shall finde in the next Resolution.

Objection V.

IN single Rapier, and Rapier and Dagger, they teach all their Schollers as they call them, Stucks, otherwise Longe, to throw them into his without disordering their adverse Rapier: and doe likewise teach Passages, to runne them right forward upon their enemy.

Resolution.

To my knowledge there is no offending Longe, otherwise stuck, upon any man, with any estate, without disorder: and no Passage that is done without shift, can be without great danger.

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Obiection VI.

They will suffer their Schollers to see one another's practice, and likewise they themselves will discover every man's play to any man.

Resolution.

To let any man see another's practice, giveth much advantage to the spectator, and is much prejudicial unto him whole practice is seen: and most murderous and damnable in the Teacher to betray their owne Schollers to death.

Obiection VII.

They will seldom or never fight in the same guard they teach others: nor so much as hold the same guard.

of Defence.

guard good to morrow they used ye-

sterday.

Resolution.

Their knowledge is accidentall, not materiall, they have some generall notions, which (wanting Art) they cannot reduce to heads and principles: how can hee then be constant in one guard, that cannot set downe any for belte, and yeeld a reason thereof?

Hence it comes that I was taught more in a weeke by an understanding Artist, then I could learne in seaven yeares practice in publique Schooles. And if any of their Schollers happen to be excellent, it proceeds rather out of their owne wittie and industrious observance upon the accidents of practice, then from any certaine de-

C a monstra-
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monstration of their Teachers.

Considering all these advantages and disadventages, let every man make his owne Pratcile private, and with those hee may have no cause to deale withall: for their nice trickes in Schooles, or Player-like fights at many Weapons upon Stages, are more shadowes without substance. Therefore let Art and Nature he joyned in one.

Order in fight.

The managing of a Quarrell is halfe the performing thereof; let every man be rather Defender, for hee hath the aduantage of the Offender in choyse of Weapons. Let him if hee bee strong make choise of a single Weapon, eyther being a long Rapier, or a long Sword: for the Challenger hath thereby the disaduantage of a strong man; for hee cannot command his point to help his weaknesses upon the Close. Or likewise a Turkey Sambatorie; for he is crooked, and hath a broad point that will not enter, and therein is the least danger of all; and is much auaeable for a strong man for the Close of aduantage to disarme.

Let him that is weake of body, and hath a short reach, make choise of a double Weapon, being a short Rapier and Dagger, or short Sword and Dagger: to may he the easier command them to help his weaknesses; for he must keepe his enemy from the Close. Therefore let him giue a little ground, for that will encourage his enemy (a strong man desirous to close) to come forwards. Then is your Passage, or Cross-Passage with shift vnexpec-
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strength, let him offend to the highest parts, otherwise answer.
Likewise if a strong man be offender, and hath a long reach, let him offend at length to the highest part, or else to seek for the Close of advantage as aforesaid.

To help the length of a short man.

If a weak man be offender having a short reach, let him runne Passages upon his enemie, with as much shift of body as he can: Shun the Close; for if hee seek to hit at length, he giveth advantage to his enemie to hurt him; for his enemie hath advantage at length by reach, and advantage of strength upon the Close; or if he be strong though short of reach, let him make choyse of a single Weapon to dilarme.

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To help the strength of a weak man.

Three things help the strength of a weak man: change the point when the aduerse seekes to take it; change backe to recover it; or else open your side, and then it is not well to be taken.

A good Guard

Is hee that lyeth with the right side as thinne as hee can, towards his enemie, and the point no higher then the shouder, trusting to your Rapier or Swords defence; for thereby your enemie hath little roome to hit, and you the leffe to defend. And also a good guard discourageth the enemie to offend, and is ready always to defend. He that dazels much, never defends well: for if you offend when hee
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Principles belonging to Fight

Stay no longer within reach of your enemy then you are offending.

Offend alwayes upon the advancee comming forward.

In offending, go outher wise your weapons point straight use your enemies brest, for then you are aways ready to defend your feet, and offend your enemies.

Many trickes doe too much trouble the minde: know all, use fews; three defends the whole.

Rules of Practise.

There is but three exercises in a single weapon.

1. Longer.
2. Passage.
3. Change: backe and turne, and them backe to your guard.
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And likewise three Offences.
1 Disorder Longe.
2 Disorder Passage.
3 Your binding Passage for the Cloze of advantage.

The Dagger helps the Rapier especially in two things in Offence.
1 Passage.
2 Croffe-Passage.
And two in Defence.
1 When the Rapier binds high, the Dagger binds low.
2 Or when the Dagger binds high the Rapiere binds low.

The chiefest way to force a man to good practise for play or fight, is to make him maintaine a single weapon against all advantages.

First, let him learne single Rapier; then to maintaine single Rapier against Rapier and Dagger; and likewise against Sword and Dagger: and lastly, to maintaine short Sword against all the afore-said advantages.

I have concluded my rules of Practife, and the whole Booke, with the most necessary instruction belongs to this Science, and the least obscured in Schooles, which is the maintaining of Defects: this being the scope and true end of our skill, to help the weake, wherein the strongest shall also confesse himselfe to want this knowledge, if he consider the use thereof in accidental quarrels, which cannot be denied much to exceede occasions for the field: for supposing himselfe incident to sodaine on-lets, how is hee provided with his wearing weapon, being for the most part, a single Rapier or Short Sword, to defend himself from the advantage of a Sword and Dagger, Rapier and Dagger, or Halberd? whereas by practise against
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against this unequall opposition (as in the Chapter before prescribed) he shall finde himselfe enabled not onely for defence in this extremity, but also may offend his adversarie, as I haue seene upon the publique Stage, a single Rapier most shamefully foyle both Halberd and halfe Pike. To addde to this supply of defect, I would haue a man wanting one hand, or one eye, by practise, to helpe his imperfection: or being lame in both armes, with his feete and shifft of body, to cleare that defect (all cunning in this Art consistinge more in feete then hands.) Further, should one be lame in feete hauing eyes and armes, I would haue him practise those Weapons and Guards may best perfect his condition, being neyther able to pursue nor retyre. This I could expressse, being a man my selfe defective,

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fective, but that act and demonstra-
tion, not words, must make this apparant, wherein I referre my selfe to judicious tryall, concluding with an Answere to one Objection, that will arise from meanest understanding, being this.

Why should so few of our Fencers arrive to this knowledge, or to no more height of doing, then this discovery of their defects hath manifested?

I answere, these two conditions must concurr to make a Fencer absolute, Art and Nature; now for Art examine the equalitie of those Vthers our Masters brings vp, you shall finde most of them. Butchers, Byt-makers, Shooe-makers, or Truncke-makers, men envred to the hide, rather able to bear blowes then to avoid them. Whence wee see a Gentleman or Artill, who can re-
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ductknowledge vnto rule, in small
tume out-goes his Teacher hauing
both Hands, Art and Nature, his
Schoole-master wanting one, and
many times both of them. Not
that this my taxation reacheth to
all Masters of Defence: for I haue
seene some, whom I must confess
to be both knowing and able, who
detest our commonly applauded,
rude, and buffeting play: whose
judgements will be as far from de-
prausing mee or my worke, as I shall
be from the least envy towards
them, whom I confess
much worthy of esteeme
and reward.

I N I S.