

CHAPTER II

EXERCISES

YOUR WALKING STICK

HOW TO USE IT IN SELF-DEFENCE

BEST KIND OF STICK.

An ordinary Malacca Can or Ash Root Walking stick (as in illustration Fig. 1) is the best. The latter has the advantage of being procurable for a few pence and will serve all requirements. The weight of the stick should be such as can be manipulated comfortably by the individual's wrist. Sacrifice weight to speed always, for remember, that man is an easily vulnerable animal and has many soft spots – tap the back of your hand, inside of knee, shin, elbow, etc., etc., with your stick and experience for yourself. Once acquainted with the “Soft Spots” and the manner of getting at them, even the dandiest little cane will be converted into a by no means contemptible weapon of defence.

HOW TO HOLD STICK.

Grip stick about six inches up *thin* end; get a good balance; hold with thumb round stick – not resting on stick (Fig. 1). Maintain that grip always. At first the thumb will have a tendency to rest on the stick, but *do not allow it*. This tendency will be overcome after a little practice.

EXERCISES.

To employ your stick to its full advantage you must first go through the initial exercises; they all make for suppleness in wrist, shoulder, etc., and have the additional advantage of providing a beneficial and novel form of exercise in the performance of which you are accomplishing a double object, namely, doing your body a good turn and at the same time acquiring that necessary ease and rapidity of movement without which your stick play will be hampered. Get to know your stick. You can practise all these exercises while strolling along in the parks or country. You can practise them at any odd moment until proficiency is yours, bearing in mind constantly the one great maxim in stick work without which all your efforts will be nullified. *Your stick hand must never drop below the level of your eyes*. The reason for this will be obvious to you as you progress, and will be pointed out later.



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.

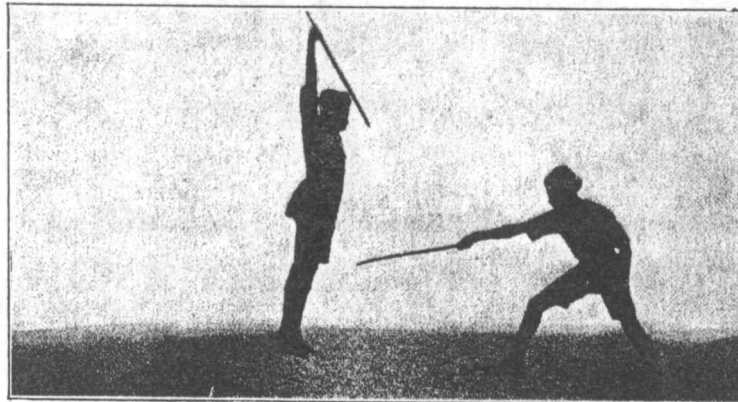


FIG. 8.

ON GUARD (Fig. 2). – Gripping stick as already described, bring right hand with straight arm well up and back over shoulder, stick sloping down with the point a little to left of and on level with eyes. The position of your body is the reverse of boxing. Right foot forward, body well balanced, weight on back leg. Left hand position is a matter of personal choice; it should be held so as to give the body the best poise and ready to be used as an additional guard. From this position practice all the subsequent exercises and perform the slowly at first.

EXERCISE 1. – Swinging point of stick down to brush left hip and circle forwards and over shoulder; left hand tucked into side or extended to rear. You will see that when your point is down brushing left hip your hand will be near left side of head (above level of eyes!) and when your point is going forward your hand will also go with it to extreme arm length (hand above level of eyes!) Carry out this exercise until your stick swings round in rapid circles from the wrist, something after the style of a catherine wheel. This may be rather awkward to perform at first, but after a little practice you will quickly get into it. Do not forget to keep thumb round stick. This exercise is what is actually done when up against an opponent and within reach of him; one of your many little “Surprise Packets” so to speak. He will anticipate if anything a cut down at him – very well, give him a cut up! – his body, hand or chin is bound to be in the way. Never do what your opponent anticipates you are going to do! Subsequent methods will place you in possession of many such “Prize Packets.” You may be in a tight corner with more than one opponent to be dealt with, so it behoves you to employ such decisive measures as will enable you to eliminate the number of your opponents as quickly as possible before their combined effort places you at a disadvantage.

EXERCISE 2. – Reverse the process. Swing point of stick down to brush left hip and circle upwards (backwards), over the shoulder and forward (hand above level of eyes). As in the last exercise you will see that when your point is down brushing left hip your hand will be near left side of head (above level of eyes!) and when your point is going forward your hand will also go forward with it to extreme arm length. This movement EXERCISES the exact method of tackling an opponent’s head. Now, just to realise right away the effectiveness and handiness of your stick, suppose you have cut at opponent’s head by this method and missed him, nothing is quicker than an employment of the “upper cut” method as shown in Exercise 1, for it is merely a manipulation of the wrist. This will make it more clear to you. Cut at an imaginary head by the method above described and without a fraction of a second’s delay get into reverse along the same track (merely Exercise 1). You will see that like a flash your attack has shifted from the top of your opponent’s head to his body, hand or chin whichever gets in the way first of your “Upper Cut.” Even if you miss a real opponent he is most likely to be impressed by your effort! And a moral effect is already a tactical advantage. If your opponent is surprised it means he is off his guard and open to any other method you see your way to employ.

Practise these two exercises (as well as the subsequent ones) and, in fact, all; till you can do them speedily. The quicker you can make your stick revolve the better. Make it hum! If you find that the rapidity of movement causes a sensation of undue fatigue, then look to the poise of your stick or assure yourself as to its weight in relation to the strength of your wrist. *Err on the light side always. It is speed you must want, and not weight.*

Force and speed in delivering the cuts will come with practice. Your efforts at first will naturally lack force, but, in a short time, you will be able to deliver all cuts with surprising speed and force because it is largely a matter of wrist work.

EXERCISE 3. – Swing stick *parallel* to ground, right to left, so as just to brush top of head, hand working to and fro in front of face and above level of eyes. The hand goes to the front as point goes forward, and back towards fore-head as the point goes to the rear. The hand should be

nearly touching forehead when stick is pointing to the rear. Do not carry hand round head—*employ wrist* and keep hand working backwards and forwards only. Do not forget to have your stick parallel to the ground the whole time it is circling; the point will have a tendency to stick up on the air when going to the rear, but do not allow it and do not let your thumb wander. Perform all exercises slowly at first. You will drop into efficient performance of all exercises with surprising speed after a little practice.

You will appreciate this exercise later, for this is the method you will see is employed in all Cuts at left side of opponent, from face, neck, body, downwards.

EXERCISE 4. – Exactly the same as the Exercise we have just done only reverse the process. Swing stick the other way, left to right, and observe the same rules; stick must be parallel to ground and the hand working above level of eyes. This is the method you will soon see of delivering all Cuts on right of opponent's body, from face, neck, etc., downwards.



FIG. 9.

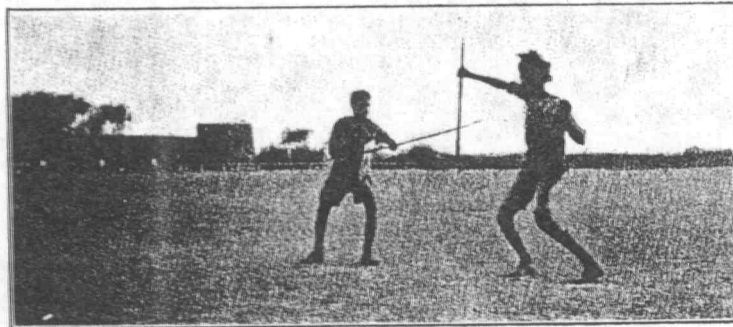


FIG. 10.

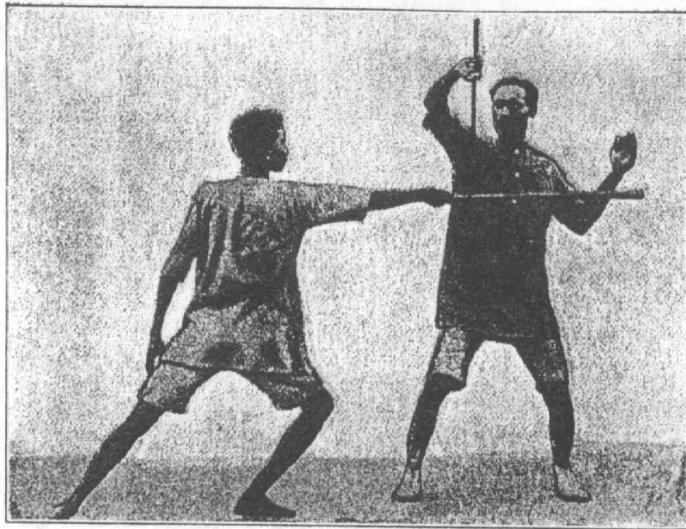


FIG. 11.



FIG. 12.

You will by now appreciate the fact that by these performances you are above all things cultivating a supple wrist which is so essential for speed.

EXERCISE 5. – Perform EXERCISES 1 and 2 on right side of body. You have hitherto only done them on the left side.

EXERCISE 6. – Perform EXERCISES 1 and 2 alternately on both sides of body, first left, then right, very much after the style of Indian Club Swinging. Swing body in rhythm with the swing of your stick. See that stick brushes your hips and assure yourself that hand is *above level of eyes*. Be careful, too, that all instructions as to performance of these EXERCISES, as given above, are carried out. Practise as you swing along for your morning or evening walk in a quiet place where you can do no damage.

These exercises must be persisted in till they are smoothly carried out as if the joints were working in well-oiled bearings. Practise!

EXERCISE 7. – ARM AND SHOULDER EXERCISE. Stand to “Attention,” hold stick in both hands, swing arms up full extent in line with body; and keeping arms extended, move them backwards and forwards above head smartly. The body must remain still (Fig. 3). This strengthens the muscles and quickly enables you to perform the exercises without and sense of effort.