

CHAPTER III

GUARDS

Being peaceful men we shall first learn how to GUARD ourselves from attacks on our person, but to defend we must also attack! It would never do to assume a GUARD position and await the pleasure of our opponent to smite us with no fear of retaliation on our part. All GUARDS are therefore devised to give our opponent possibly more than he is capable of giving us. In fact, every guard we assume, in the very legitimate object of warding our person from danger, lays an opponent open to a very quick reply from us—a KNOCK OUT in a good many cases.

We shall first deal with the GUARDS pure and simple. Later on, and when the reader by dint of practice is in a position to appreciate it, we shall go on to the manner of taking advantage of these GUARDS by converting them into rapid and effective counters.

HEAD GUARD 1.-- FRONT GUARD: This you have already met with in the last chapter (Fig. 2) as a starting off position to enable you better to follow the exercises given. Assume position as described, right foot forward, toe straight to the front, body well balanced; weight on back leg. The left hand position is a matter of choice; it should be held so as to give the body the best poise, and as you will see later, is a first class GUARD. The hand should be well back over the shoulder, stick sloping with the point of stick on side of face about level with eyes. In this position the hand and head are safe, as a downward Cut from opponent will glance off your guard; and your hand, a SOFT SPOT, as you have already discovered, is far back out of danger. What would you do if attacked and your opponent had his hand within range of you? HIT IT! Eighty or more persons out of every hundred fail to realise that the hand is a very sensitive portion of their anatomy, and if damaged they are at the mercy of their opponent. Subsequent methods all tend to make you automatically get your hand out of danger. The guard position we are discussing is, of course, assumed only at the psychological moment to guard the head against a downward blow, and is employed against a weapon similar to our own. There are other methods for guarding against an opponent armed with a heavier weapon, but these will be dealt with in a succeeding chapter. The aim is to go on progressively and perfect the knowledge already gained by constant practice.

HEAD GUARD 2.-- CROSS GUARD: To appreciate these guards we will assume an opponent before us; this simplifies the description of the methods and enables us to appreciate the guards more fully. LET FRONT GUARD be your starting off position for all guards and in subsequent descriptions it will be assumed that you are in FRONT GUARD.

As your opponent's stick descends to head, swing your right hand over to left of head with an upward motion to meet opponent's descending stick; at the same time presenting your side to opponent. This gets you *under* your stick and adds force to your grip to resist descending blow. It is a very powerful guard. The stick must be tightly gripped. This is one of the many methods which will demonstrate clearly to you why your thumb should be round your stick and not resting on it. You would have no grip with your thumb on the stick. Have your hand high and clear of head with stick sloping backwards so that opponent's stick will glance off (Fig. 4). The harder the blow the quicker it is likely to glance off. Your reply to opponent from this position will be described to you in due course.

HEAD GUARD 3.-- REAR GUARD (Fig. 5): As opponent's blow descends to head, withdraw right foot to rear smartly, maintaining your stick arm and stick in original position. Left hand,

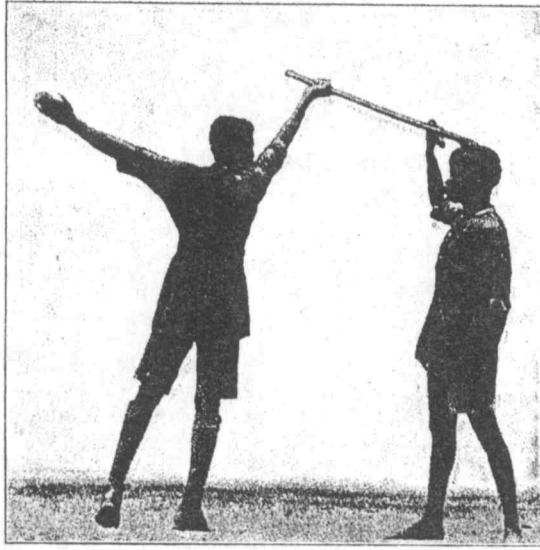


FIG. 13.

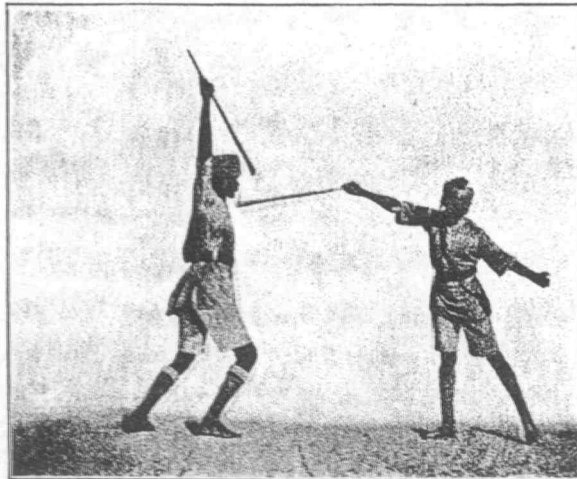


FIG. 14.

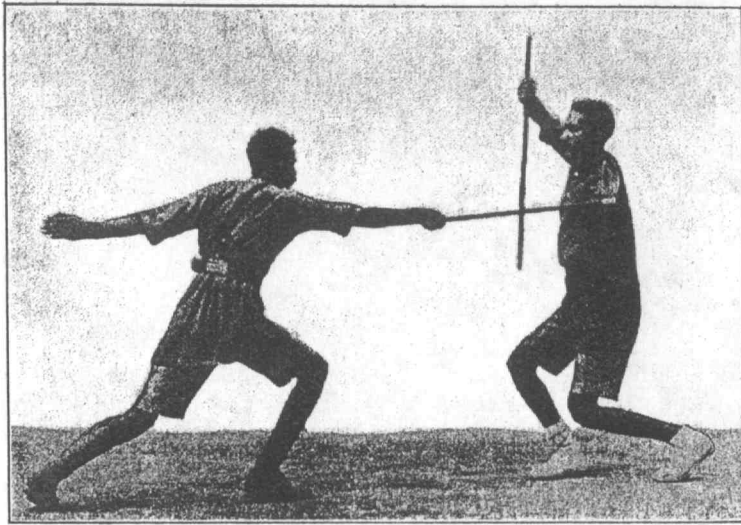


FIG. 15.

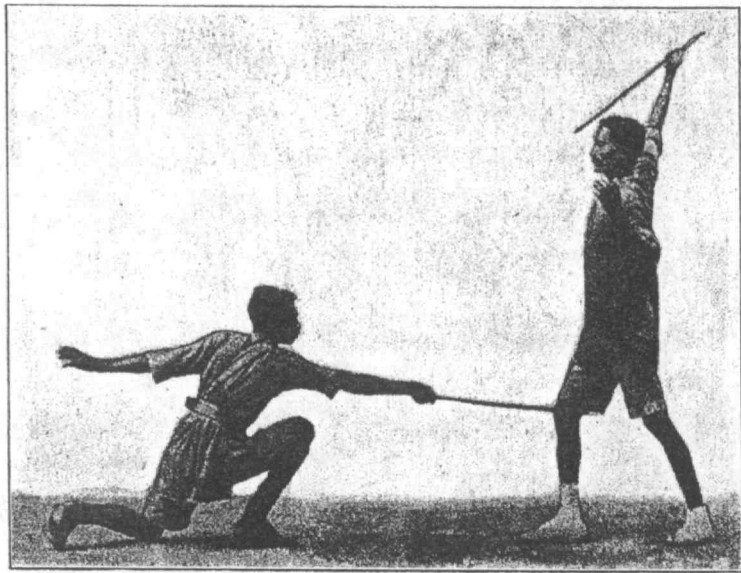


FIG. 16.

remember is always comfortably held, and on the look out to get to work should an opportunity occur. This is a very efficient guard and in this position you have your opponent at a great disadvantage.

2.-- BODY GUARD (left side): As opponent strikes at your face or body, swing body round from waist and bend body at waist towards the left by pulling your left hip; at the same time drop your guard to meet blow, your right hand high, your stick gripped tight and forward of body, perpendicular to the ground. Your stick must be held forward of body so that if point of opponent's stick glances off your guard, your elbow, face or body will not be in danger. Tuck in left arm tight to side (Fig. 6). You can take a hard blow on your triceps if the elbow is tucked in tight without sustaining any damage. Again, your ribs are protected should your opponent get home. In this position you can open up like a spring trap to reply to your opponent.

3.-- FLANK GUARD (right side): Drop point (lest you forget it is assumed you are in FRONT GUARD) and hold stick forward of body and perpendicular to ground. At the same time jerk your body round half-right from waist (Fig. 7). Another position for a very speedy reply to opponent.

4.—ANKLE AND LEG GUARD: As opponent strikes, do not drop 2.-- HEAD GUARD; simply draw back right or left foot if you are in FRONT GUARD or REAR GUARD respectively (Fig. 8). Do it smartly, and get on your toes ready to deliver your reply, which should be like a flash after you have had a little practice and know how to do it.

5.—HAND AND WRIST GUARD: You may have tempted opponent to strike at your hand or *he* may know it is a "Soft Spot" and makes for it. Very well, shoot hand to rear smartly. You will be able to do this like a flash after practice and when subconsciously you have fully realised the disadvantage of a smashed hand! On withdrawing hand to rear, throw shoulder back, keeping point of stick in front of and level with face (Fig. 9). Woe betide the unfortunate opponent if he has missed you!

6.— GUARD AGAINST POINT: Do not forget the FRONT GUARD position you are assumed to be in. As opponent's point (stick, spear, whatever it is), comes in, drop point of your stick and, as your point drops, jerk body round from waist half-left smartly and pass opponent's point to your left side. You are then ready to reply to him (Figs. 10 and 11).

ANOTHER METHOD (2).—In the last chapter, Exercise 1, you circle upwards and forwards; very well, to guard against point, instead of circling your stick as in Exercise 1, circle your



FIG. 17.

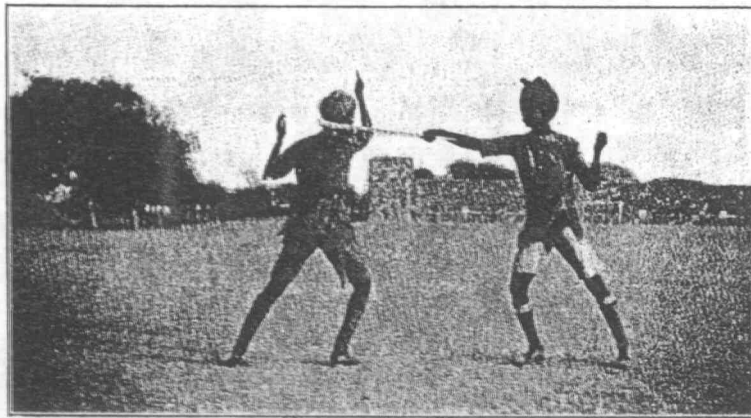


FIG. 18.

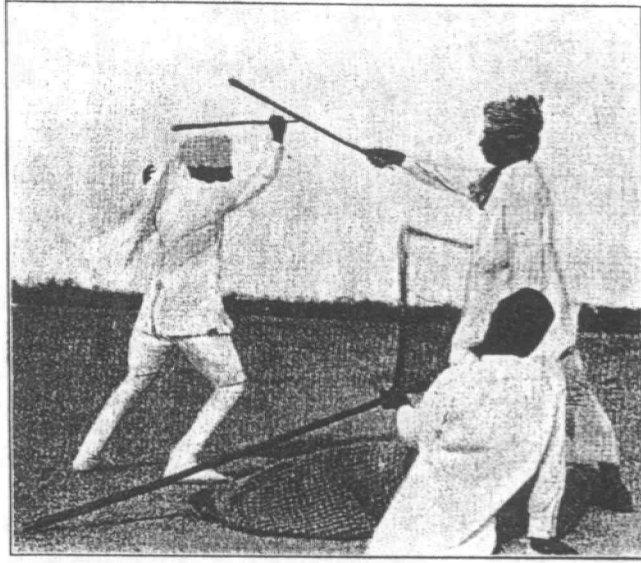


FIG. 19.

stick *across* your front. Hand above level of eyes. Make the stick hum; the hum will develop with practice. No point can get in at you as long as you keep your stick circling. Opponent in attempting futile thrusts will lay himself open to the employment of one of the many methods you will have at your disposal.

Practice these guards assiduously. Perfection will come with constant repetition, and with perfection rapidity of movement.