

CHAPTER VIII

ACTIVE STICK PLAY

Our old friend Exercise 1 in the first chapter of this book has not been referred to for a long time; this is where he comes in. He is well worth cultivating.

When confronted by an opponent never stand still in front of him. If he looks like business and is formidable, get down into CIRCLING GUARD like a shot, right foot forward. Exercise 1 will henceforth be known as CIRCLING GUARD. Make your stick hum round in UPPER CUTS as you will by now know how to do. This will in all probability upset the calculations of your opponent and will, if your first few upper cuts miss him, certainly make him stagger back and be at a disadvantage. Do not forget that the moral effect of a stick, “whizzing” in front of an opponent with every chance of getting home, is extremely disconcerting to him! When employing your CIRCLING GUARD you will naturally judge your distance so as to get home straight away. You do not want to show your opponent what you are going to do. It does not matter if your initial move by the first



FIG. 39.



FIG. 40.



FIG. 41.



FIG. 42.

upper cut misses. Follow your opponent up or retire (still circling your stick) as the case may be. Make use of your feet; short, sharp, active steps, forwards or backwards, like the boxer.

From your CIRCLING GUARD on the move, either backwards or forwards, practise all GUARDS and CUTS which have been already described to you. Before we proceed any further, remember one thing, and that is, *in getting into any guard always step in towards opponent*. The nearer you are to him the less chance you stand of being hurt, for you lessen the force of opponent's cut. This you will have very clearly demonstrated to you in a subsequent chapter.

Again, you must remember that when employing your CIRCLING GUARD, your stick should never cease circling until the psychological moment arrives of getting into a guard or of delivering a cut.

Practice getting into FRONT GUARD from CIRCLING GUARD. Up goes your hand to its old refuge, straight arm, well back over shoulder, head and hand safe should opponent have managed to deliver blow at head. The same with CROSS GUARD; from CIRCLING GUARD, whip up your hand to left of head into CROSS GUARD. Practice this until you can get off CIRCLING GUARD into any other guard like a flash; you will find that your other guards are formed simultaneously with the stoppage of your CIRCLING GUARD. From your CIRCLING GUARD practice all cuts; let your CIRCLING GUARD run into the cuts as it were. There should be no stoppage between your CIRCLING GUARD and your CUTS. After delivering a cut get into the habit of immediately covering your head. ON GUARD at once (i.e., HEAD GUARD). Since the head and hand are vital spots it is obviously necessary to acquire the habit of immediately recovering them every time they have been exposed in delivering a cut; for opponent may have guarded your cut and give a reply. Take no risks! If he does not give a reply you can get down into your CIRCLING GUARD again, if necessary. The great point is you can change from your CIRCLING GUARD into any other guard or cut like a flash, after practice. The change will be automatic.

Get down into your CLEARING PRACTICE from your CIRCLING GUARD, deliver the four cuts as you have been taught how to do, then back into CIRCLING GUARD again. This is splendid practice for free and easy play with your stick. From your CIRCLING GUARD, your stick humming round, do not forget, practise FLICKS and FLIPS as before, no stop; a continuous movement straight from CIRCLING GUARD into a FLICK or FLIP. Practise slowly at first till you get into it.

TO DELIVER A FLICK OR FLIP FROM CIRCLING



FIG. 43.

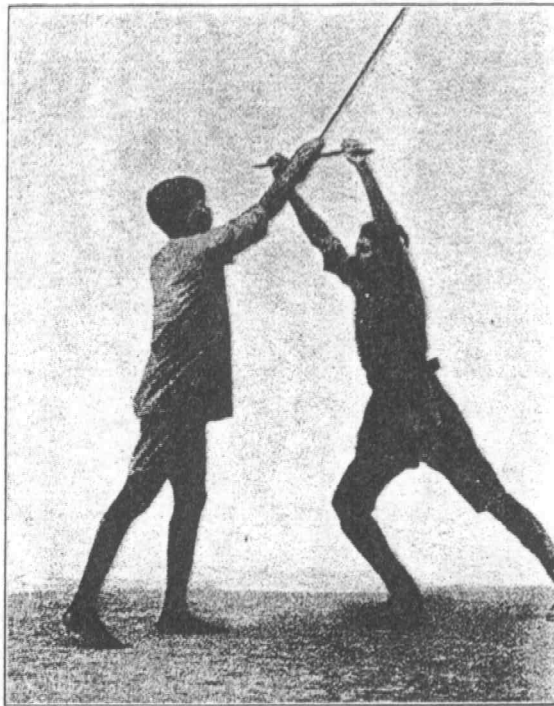


FIG. 44.

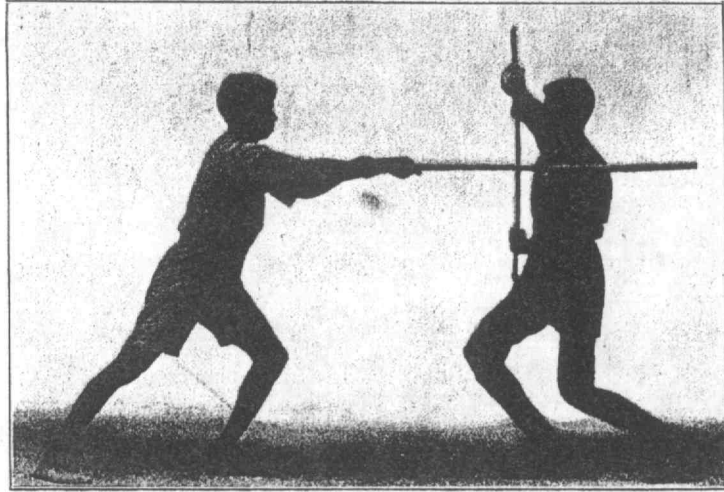


FIG. 45.

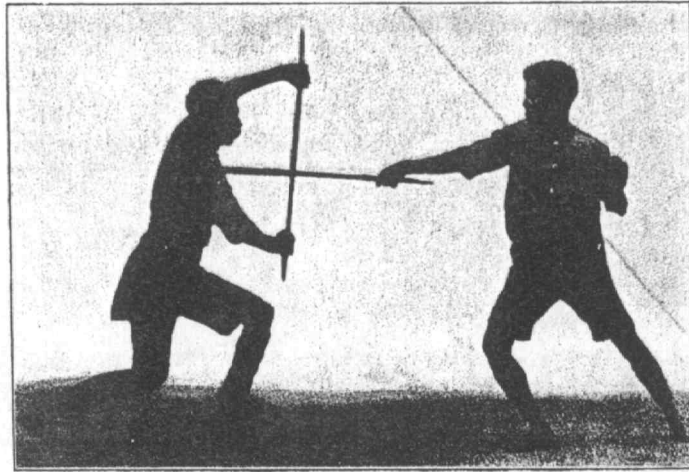


FIG. 46.

GUARD.—As your stick revolves and point goes to the front, lunge out for your FLICK or FLIP.

You will soon get into it and you will realise what an extraordinarily efficient weapon of self-defence you will have converted your hitherto useless Walking Stick into.

Now that we have arrived at this stage, the use of the left hand and arm as GUARD will be demonstrated to you. We have so far only referred to the left hand and arm for employ-men in adding force to CUTS, FLICKS and FLIPS, for seizing opponent's stick or other weapon should it come within reach, and also for giving poise to the body. We will now see how the left arm can be employed as a guard.

The left arm is a very efficient secondary guard, and the hardest blow at the head can be guarded by shooting the left arm up to meet the descending blow. As the blow descends shoot the left arm up to its fullest extent to meet the blow. The fingers should be closed, the hand in its upward flight describing a spiral motion, finishing with fully extended arm and palm turned to the left with a jerk. A blow will glance off without any injury to arm (Fig. 28). Arm must be shot straight up like a flash, for it would not do for descending blow to land on a bent arm when it would not glance off without damage. It is all a matter of practice. Do not forget, the fingers *closed*, the spiral motion of hand, and the very necessary finish with a jerk of the palm hand to the left. The employment of the left arm as a guard for a blow delivered at your body will be described in the next chapter in a method for disarming an opponent.