

**Borrower:** COF

**ILL Number:** 27548006



**Patron:** Nelson, Keith

**Journal Title:** Journal of the United Service Institution of India.

**Volume:** 32 **Issue:**  
**Month/Year:** 1903 **Pages:** 153-159

**Article Author:** United Service Institution of India.

**Article Title:** F.C. Laing; THE 'BARTITSU' METHOD OF SELF-DEFENCE

**Imprint:** New Delhi [etc.], United Service Institu

**ILLiad TN:** 181008



**Call #:** Ux10 +Un315 or Un315

**Location:** mudd

**Ariel:** 129.82.31.241

**Fax:** 970-491-2252

**Shipping Address:**  
Colorado State University  
Library--ILL  
200 W Lake Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-0002

**Charge**  
**Maxcost:** 50IFM

**RESEND REQUESTS must be submitted within four (4) WORKING DAYS of original transmission, via ARIEL (130.132.32.60) or FAX (). Thanks!**

a maximum of 6  
h of a squadron  
t of 800 pounds  
1 or with a mini-  
ple.

sheet was 10' x  
heavy "dusuti."  
sagged to an in-  
king the tent. A  
bility of the tent

## THE "BARTITSU" METHOD OF SELF-DEFENCE.

BY CAPTAIN F. C. LAING, 12TH BENGAL INFANTRY.

Although the art of self-defence alluded to here is without the use of any recognised military weapon, it may perhaps be of interest to readers of this Journal as showing what science and skill can do against merely brute force.

"Bartitsu" is a name already well known in England and India, and articles in various magazines have appeared from time to time giving some idea of what this system comprises.

Before proceeding I should like it to be understood that I do not put myself forward as an expert, but merely relate my experiences as a pupil of Mr. Barton-Wright during a three months' course of instruction at his school in Shaftesbury Avenue. While on furlough in 1901 I had various opportunities of seeing his instructors give exhibitions both in public and private, and as I was much interested by what I saw and by what I heard from friends who had already joined his school, I started the course which, I regret to say, I could not prolong, my leave being up.

Although the name "Bartitsu" is now so well known, it might be explained that it is simply part of Mr. Barton-Wright's name compounded with a Japanese word "jotitsu" meaning wrestling, and the art of "Bartitsu" implies self-defence by all the methods taught at the school; these include Japanese and catch-as-catch-can wrestling, walking-stick defence, boxing, etc. In this paper I propose to deal with merely one of the two methods I selected, *vis.*, walking-stick defence; it must be remembered that to master all the methods taught would take a long time, but with the two I attempted, I advisedly say attempted, one can at any rate learn enough to feel a certain amount of confidence in case of being attacked by evil-disposed persons, and it is to guard against such attacks that the "Bartitsu" method of self-defence has been evolved.

The professor of the walking-stick defence at the school is Mons. Pierre Vigny, a Swiss, who was formerly a maître d'armes in the French Artillery: it is a system which he has invented entirely and it is meant essentially for use against an attack by foot-pads, brawlers, would-be assassins and any gentry of this description likely to be met with in a crowded city or on a lonely country road by day or night.

Mons. Vigny, I understand, not content with having invented his system, determined to test it practically, and for this purpose was in the habit of going into the purlieus and worst localities of Geneva and other large towns simply to court a row; the local roughs with praiseworthy

alacrity obliged him with as many free fights as he wanted, and although he naturally had to suffer some inconvenience occasionally by being half-murdered, he evidently gave more than he took and emerged triumphantly with a very skilful and very terrible art literally at his fingers ends.

The weapon is simply an ordinary walking-stick of medium weight and similar to those carried by most men in the town; it should, especially for practice, be straight and tough, and malacca canes are used at the school for instruction; the chief thing is for the stick to be without a crook or handle and capable of warding off a fairly hard blow.

One great advantage of the walking-stick method is that its use need not be confined to the young and agile man but can be learnt by anybody, and even a lady with a sunshade can, if properly taught, give any ordinary rough who attacks her a sufficiently unpleasant time to enable her to beat a successful retreat as long as she keeps her wits.

I have not space in this article to explain the whole system, nor had I time to learn the whole of it myself, but I trust the reader will be able to follow the main points and, if possible, I should like to encourage him to go to Mr. Barton-Wright's school at the first opportunity; for anybody in town for a few months in the year let me recommend the forms of interesting and exciting sport already alluded to, wrestling, walking-stick, etc.: to most of us in this land of the stony-broke, polo at Hurlingham and hunting in the shires are unattainable luxuries, but an hour of "Bartitsu" three or four times a week will keep one not only fit, but will gradually turn the pupil into a fairly dangerous person for any one to tackle.

Mr. Barton-Wright himself has been taken on by every sort of adversary, professional and amateur, both in play and in earnest, and so far I have never known him to come out of the fray without having got the better of his opponents; while being hard, agile and determined he is in no sense a "strong man" of the Sandow type; his success is due to knowledge, science, and readiness of resource in every emergency when bodily risk is run in an encounter with any and every sort of human adversary.

At this point I think it may be necessary to explain one or two details about which I am frequently asked when mentioning walking-stick defence: one usual question is, what difference is there between it and ordinary single-stick? Every difference: the guards are different; but its chief difference and also advantage lies in the fact that it is ambi-dexterous, the left hand being employed in the same way as the right and alternately as required, and further the butt or short end of the stick is used for close fighting; it must be remembered that although throughout the whole of "Bartitsu" it is possible to practice without injuring one another, the final object of the system is directed towards rendering your assailant not only powerless, but, if necessary, of so severely injuring him that he is at your mercy.

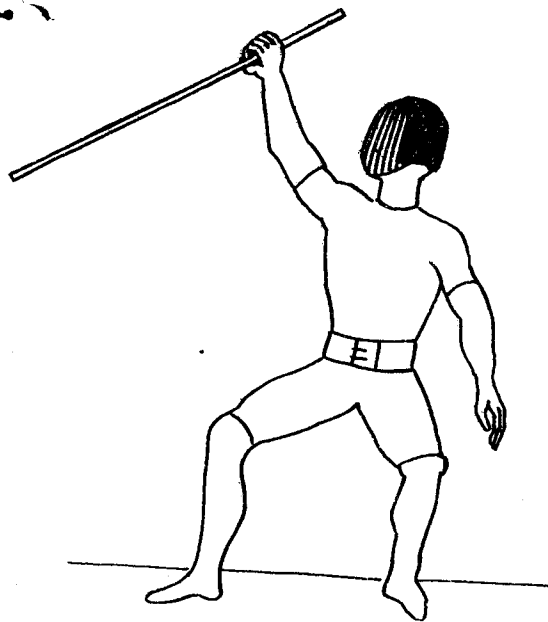


Fig. I. On Guard.

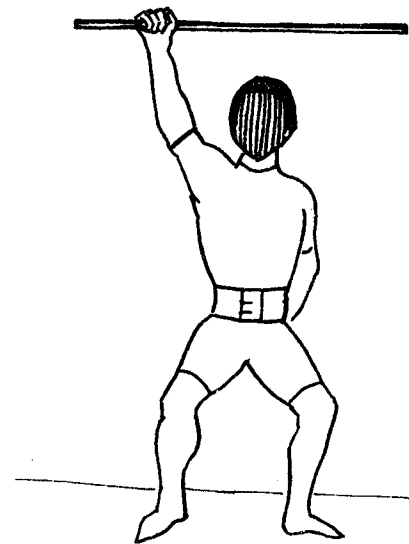


Fig. II. Head Guard.

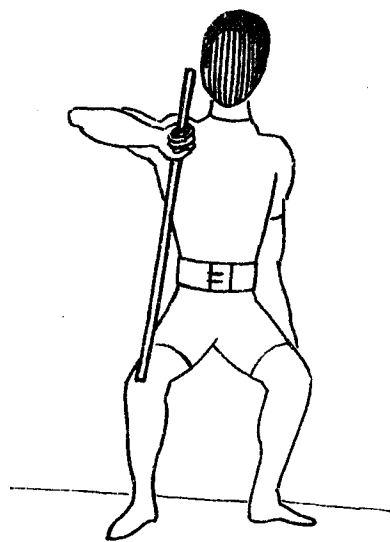


Fig. III. Flank Guard.

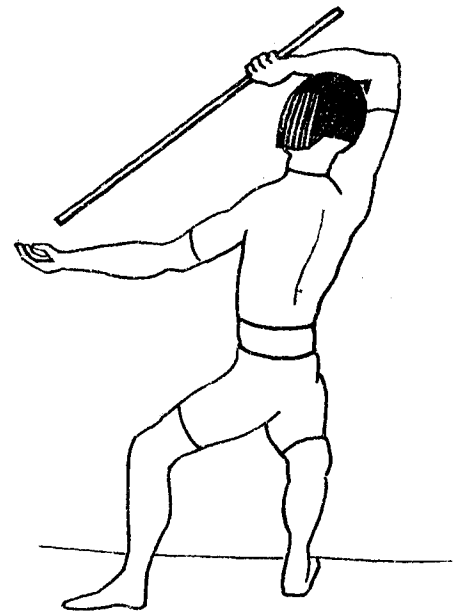


Fig. IV. Rear Guard.

It is of course not necessary to resort to extremes unless one's life is in jeopardy, but I wish to show that "Bartitsu," while affording agreeable and interesting exercise, is also a serious art like swordsmanship and that its ultimate aim is to render its exponents practically invulnerable against attack. The longer a person practices the system, the more proficient he becomes, but I believe I am correct in saying that neither Mr. Wright, Mons. Vigny, nor his Japanese wrestlers have ever been defeated.

I now propose to show, as accurately as I can, how the walking-stick is used. The figures, although very roughly drawn, give fairly correctly the positions of the body, stick and hand and with the accompanying explanations will help the reader, I trust, to understand the chief features of the system.

First, as regards clothes: all that is required is a suit of flannels and a pair of shoes without heels; the masks should be of cane similar to the pattern used for single stick and well padded over the cheek. Gloves are not generally used to guard the hands as there is no need for them when a man is fairly proficient.

It is taken for granted that the reader is familiar with the ordinary attitudes adopted in fencing; that is, as regards position of the legs at "the engage" and when lunging.

#### FIRST POSITION.

*"On guard."*—Assume the position of the fencing engage but with the right hand raised slightly above the head, arm nearly straight, keeping the stick nearly horizontal point to the front, left arm hanging down behind and kept well out of the way. Fig. I.

*Note.*—After making hits, guards and points always return to this position as soon as possible, and remember that all the positions described apply equally to the left hand as well as the right.

#### GUARDS.

*Head.*—Keeping the arm nearly straight hold the stick *horizontally* a few inches above the head, hand slightly forward, and well away to right to avoid being hit on the knuckles. Fig. II.

*Face.*—Drop point of stick over to the left hand and elbow nearly level, stick perpendicular and three or four inches away from the left cheek.

*Face sideways.*—Without changing position of the body, move stick across to the right, so that it falls perpendicularly down close to right cheek, elbow well up.

*Body.*—Drop right hand and move stick across front of body keeping elbow level with the shoulder: let the stick fall perpendicularly close to left side.

*Flank.*—Move the hand across so as to let the stick similarly guard the right side; keep elbow, hand and shoulder level as possible. Fig. III.

*Leg.*—The leg is guarded simply by moving it back about 12 inches behind the left, retiring a pace, or bringing left foot back to right, both legs straight.

*Rear guard.*—Stand equally balanced on both feet, left foot about 18 inches in front of right, toes pointing to the front, right foot pointing to the right, holding the stick as before described, raise the right arm over the head so as to keep it a few inches above the forehead, point of the stick inclining forwards and downwards, left arm stretched out in front, back of the hand to the left, fingers extended. Fig. IV.

#### HITS.

1. When making a hit at an opponent's head, always keep the fingers *uppermost*, back of the hand underneath.

2. Care must be taken in making all hits, *never* to check the blow, but carry it through, *i.e.*, disengage continually and then return immediately to the "on guard;" if the blow is checked, you cannot be in time either to guard yourself or to make a riposte.

3. The hit is made by a sort of circular sweep of the arm, fingers *uppermost*, and for loose play and practice the blows dealt should be extremely light; this is done by loosening the fingers slightly. Fig V shows hit on head and the guard by distance.

*Head.*—From "on guard" hit opponent's head, follow through and return to "on guard."

*Face.*—Keeping stick horizontal hit left side of opponent's head, either head, cheek or neck.

*Face sideways.*—Same as above but hit right side.

*Body.*—Hit opponent's body on right side.

*Flank.*—Hit opponent's body on left side.

*Leg.*—Hit *inside* of opponent's leg; the most useful places are just above the ankle, inside of the knee and shin.

#### POINTS.

1. Points are made as in sword play, also by throwing the stick forward with the right hand and allowing it to run through the other, as the stick strikes the opponent both hands will be grasping the stick; knuckles of left hand *uppermost*. Fig. VI.

2. Points are made with the butt end of the stick at any part of the body, the most favourable places being at the throat and ribs. Fig. VII.

3. For obvious reasons pointing is not resorted to in loose play as it is too dangerous, but it can be practised when learning.

#### COMBINED PRACTICES.

I will now give a few of the simpler combined practice from these a general idea will be gained as to how the stick is used.

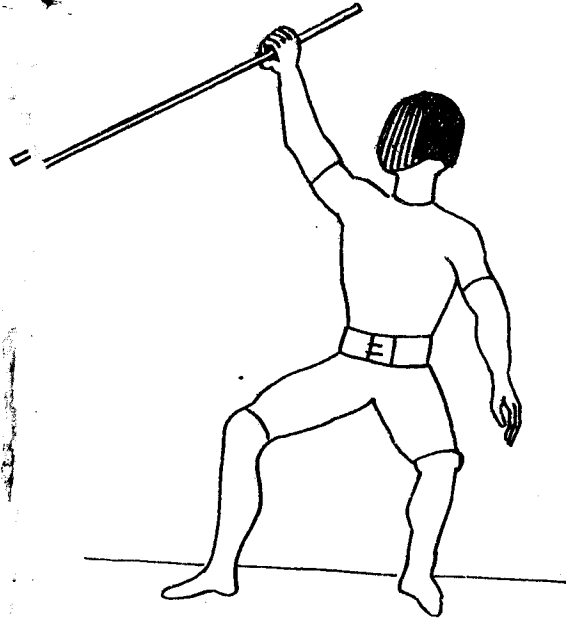


Fig. I. On Guard.

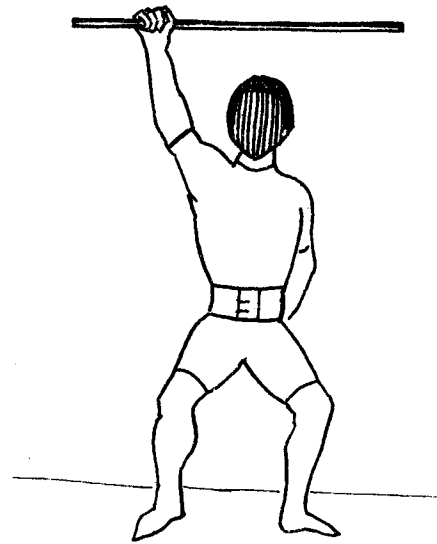


Fig. II. Head Guard.

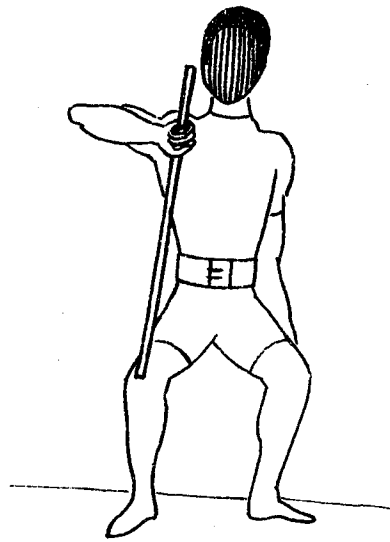


Fig. III. Flank Guard.

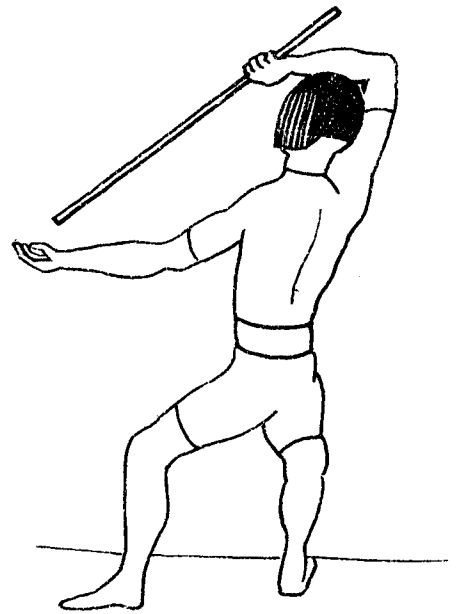


Fig. IV. Rear Guard.

## 1ST PRACTICE.

1. "On guard." Hit head, guard head, riposte head.
2. "On guard." Hit face, guard face, riposte head.
3. "On guard." Hit face (sideways), guard face, riposte head, and so through all the hits as described already.

## 2ND PRACTICE.

Same as above but lunge for first hit, recover for the guard and lunge for the riposte.

## 3RD PRACTICE.

From "rear guard."--Guard face sideways, then head as already described, retire one pace, right foot leading, draw left foot back to right, making a half-left turn of the body, riposte on opponent's head and return to "rear guard."

## 4TH PRACTICE (CHANGING HANDS).

To "rear guard."--With a circular motion of right arm from front to rear hit upwards, point of stick just clearing the ground so as to hit opponent's ankle; as the stick rises to level of shoulder change it into left hand at the place where it was held in the right hand; hit opponent's face, then point at his body and return to "on guard," changing stick back to right hand.

There are numerous others, which space prevents me from entering into here, and I will close this paper by giving one or two examples of how an adversary should be met and disposed of.

*First.*--We will suppose you are attacked by a man also with a stick in his hand: in nine cases out of ten a man who doesn't know "Bartitsu" will rush with stick uplifted to hit you over the head. Assume "first position," guard head, then, before he has time to recover himself, hit him rapidly on both sides of his face, disengaging between each blow as explained, the rapidity of these blows will generally be sufficient to disconcert him; the moment you see this; dash in and hit him in the throat with the butt end of your stick, jump back at once and as you jump hit him again over the head.

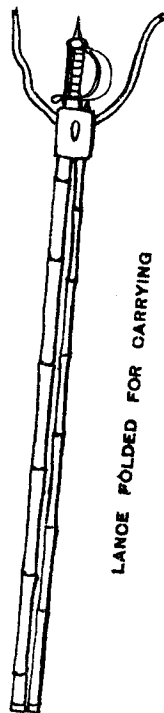
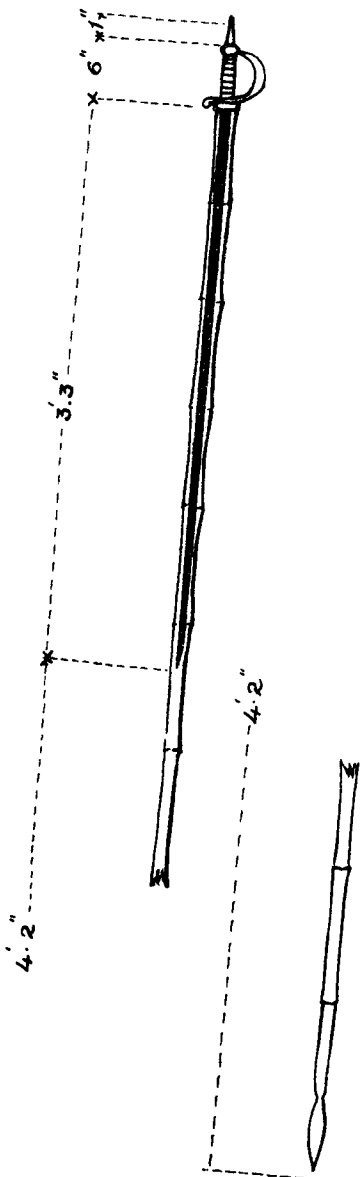
*Second.*--A man without a stick rushes at you with his fist, he will probably strike out at your face or body with his left hand; if so, take up the "rear guard" position and as he strikes guard with left arm, seize his left wrist, and hit his left elbow with your stick, advance right leg and point with butt end of your stick at his throat, then follow this up by thrusting your stick between his legs and so levering him over.

Many more examples could be given, but they are better shown practically; always remember, however, in dealing with an antagonist, never await an onslaught if you can help it; go straight for him;



always keep moving, and as opportunity occurs let him have it on any part of the body he leaves unguarded; the fact of changing the stick from one hand to the other is often more disconcerting than by hitting a man on vulnerable parts like the shin and ankle, you can generally get him at a disadvantage; never let your stick rest but always disengage to be ready for a guard or riposte.

If I have been fortunate enough to interest the readers of this Journal in one of the many forms of "Bartitsu," I shall hope to describe later in another article a further series of "walking-stick defence" tactics, combined with some of the most useful and punishing falls and grips used in Japanese wrestling, and in closing let me again urge every one to go through a course of instruction at the first opportunity. "Bartitsu" can never be learnt theoretically and my chief desire in sketching the rough outline above is to induce readers of all ages to take up and learn it for themselves.



LANCE FOLDED FOR CARRYING

THE SWO

BY CAPTAIN F

In the October number of the question of the most suitable lance for the Native Cavalry. May I suggest, when perfected, the adoption of both stages of both lance and scabbard for the latter.

The accompanying remarks follow my idea more clearly.

The lance I propose is to have the usual steel head; at the bottom of the scabbard for a straight lance-butt, the button being used when the lance is being carried.

The sword blade, above the lance-butt, is to be by means of a steel spring.

In order to decrease the weight, it might be made lighter; but it should not exceed that of the lance.

The advantages claimed are:

1. One combined weapon.
2. Decrease of weight.
3. Each man carries his own lance, most suitable for the service.
4. The construction of the lance is either weapon.
5. Convenience of carrying.

In conclusion I should state that it would be most suitable to be carried as shown in the sketch.

The disadvantage of the lance being straight and not curved; but I may consider a straight lance to be curved.

## THE SWORD-LANCE : A SUGGESTION.

BY CAPTAIN F. C. LAING, 12TH BENGAL INFANTRY.

In the October number of this Journal, "Tulwar" briefly discussed the question of the most suitable hand-to-hand weapons for use in the Native Cavalry. May I venture to offer a suggestion which might possibly, when perfected, produce a weapon combining the advantages of both lance and sword, making the former a sort of elongated sheath for the latter.

The accompanying rough hand sketch may assist the reader to follow my idea more clearly.

The lance I propose is made, as at present, of bamboo, carrying the usual steel head; at the butt end it is hollowed so as to form a scabbard for a straight sword, the handle of the sword forming the lance-butt, the button being made long enough to fit into the stirrup when the lance is being carried.

The sword blade, about 3 ft. 3 in. long, is prevented from falling out by means of a steel spring similar to that of the sword bayonet.

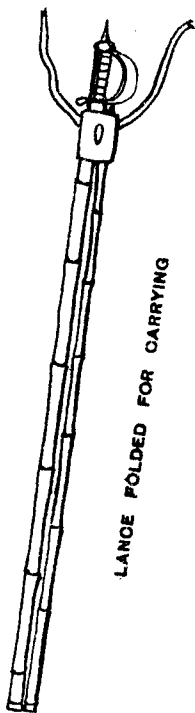
In order to decrease the weight the lance head and sword guard might be made lighter; in any case the weight would probably not exceed that of the lance now in use by more than a few ounces.

The advantages claimed for this form of weapon are:—

1. One combined weapon instead of two.
2. Decrease of weight on the horse.
3. Each man carries a weapon which he can use in the manner most suitable to the requirements of the moment.
4. The construction in no way affects the strength or utility of either weapon.
5. Convenience of carrying.

In conclusion I should add, that if the jointed lance is adopted, it would be most suitable to the combined sword-lance as it can be carried as shown in the sketch.

The disadvantage of the weapon may consist in the sword being straight and not curved; there are adherents of both forms and some may consider a straight thrusting sword more serviceable than the curved.



LANCE FOLDED FOR CARRYING