

# **The First Dayes**

## **Discourse, concerning the Rapier and Dagger.**

**I**

**L.** If anie had ever cause to bee sorrowfull for their departure from friends & parents, then had I just occasion to take our departures one from the other most greivous. And therefore our meeting againe in so pleasant a place as this, must needes be verie joyfull and delightsome: wherefore among other favours you have doone mee in instructions of the single Rapier, I intreate you to shew me the lyke touching Rapier and Dagger.

**V.** That which I have heretofore shewed you, is but small in regarde of that I meane to teach you hereafter, so that having delivered you the manner of the single Rapier, you may the better concieve my discourse of the Rapier and Dagger, because it serveth much to the use thereof, and it shall not be necessary wholye to repeate the same, but I will onelye shewe you how to put your selfe in garde with your Rapier and Dagger, for if I desire to make a good scholler, I would my self put his Rapier in one hand, and his Dagger in the other, and so place his body in the same sorte, that I have before spoken of in the single Rapier, setting his right foot formost, with the point of his Rapier drawne in short, and the Dagger helde out at length, bending a little his right knee, with the heele of his right foote directly against the midst of the lefte, causing him to goe round toward the left side of his adversary in a good measure, that he may take his advantage, and then I would thrust a stoccata to his bellye beneath his dagger, removing my right foote a little toward his left side.

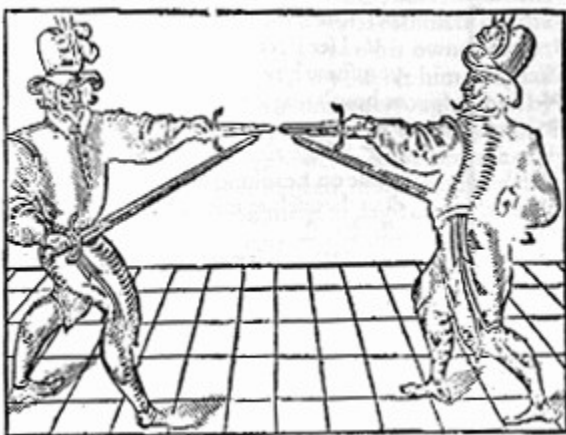
**L.** And what must your scholler doe the whilste?

**V.** The scholler must break it downward, with the point of his Dagger toward his left side, and then put a stoccata to my belly beneath my Dagger, in which time I breaking it with the pointe of my Dagger, goe a little aside toward his lefte hand, and make an imbroccata above his Dagger, and the scholler shall breake the imbroccata with his Dagger upward, parting circularly with his right foote toward my lefte side, and so thrust unto mee an imbroccata above my Dagger, in which time with the pointe of my Dagger, I will beate it outward toward my lefte side, and answere h im with a stoccata in the bellye under his Dagger, parting circularly with my right foote toward his left side: and in the same time he must answere me with the like under my Dagger, breaking my

stoccata outward toward his lefte side, stepping toward my lefte side with his right foote, at which time I must moove with my bodye to save my face, and breake his poynte toward my right side, answering him with a riversa to the head, and so retire with my right foote, at which time he must come forward with his left foote in the place of my right, and his Dagger high and strait, turning his swoorde hand, so that his poynte may goe directlye to my bellye, and he must take the riversa on his sworde and Dagger.

L. But is it not better for the scholler to holde his Dagger with the point upward, as I have seene many doe to defend a riversa?

V. He that holdeth the point upward, is ever in danger to be hurt on the head, or to receive a fincture in the bellye or in the face, and likewise he is in jeoperdye to be hurt with a Stramazone, betweene the Rapier and the Dagger, because he closeth not his weapons: therefore remember well how to carrye your Dagger, and by exercise you shall see the Dagger, for there are many that breake the stoccata inward.



L. Why then do you never breake anie thrust inward?

V. All stoccataes comming under the Dagger, & imbroccataes above the Dagger, are to bee beaten outward toward the lefte side, but an imbrocata by a riversa either in the belly or in the face, should be broken inward toward the right side, with a little retiring of the bodie, which must be answered with a riversa well followed, in which instant the scholler must passe forward with his lefte foote, then will I retire wyth my left foote behinde my right, and yeelding backe with my bodie, I will beate the point of his swoorde with my dagger toward my lefte side, and so make a direct thrust to his head: then the scholler must step with his right foote in the place of my lefte, carrying his Dagger not too high, but so that his arme and his Dagger be held straight out, to receive a

blow if it be offered, and then he shall thrust a stoccata to my belly, which I will beat toward my left side, and make an imbrocata above his Dagger, stepping with my right foote toward his left side, then must he beate my imbrocata toward his lefte side, parting with his right foot on my left side, and so make an imbrocata above my Dagger, then I parting with my right foot on his lefte side, will beate his imbrocata towarde my lefte side, and make a blow to his head: in which time hee must do the halfe incartata, that is, he must bee readie while I lift up my hand, to but a stoccata to my belly, bearing out wel his dagger to receive the blow, turning sodainly his body on the left side, so that the heel of his right foot be just against the middle of his left, and this is the true half incartata.

**L.** I pray you why do you make your schollers use so many stoccataes and imbrocataes?

**V.** To make my schollers apt and readie with rapier, dagger, and foot, that they may accompany one another in one instant, whereof there is great use in fight. But one that would teach these principles and cannot plaie with his body, putteth himselfe in great danger to be hit on the face, especially if the scholler be anie thing readie, and thrust a long stoccata, for if the scholler answere readily, his dagger cannot save him. Therefore hee that wil exercise these rudiments must have a very apt and well framed body, so that if you desire to bee made readye and perfect, practise these principles, learning well the time and measure, and therby you shall open your spirites in the knowledge of the secrets of armes: neither do as many do, who when they are to fight, playe like children that runne to learne their lessons when they should repeat them, therefore learne, that in time of peace you may use it for a good exercise of the bodye, and in time of warre you may knowe how to defend your selfe against your enemies: and do not as many, that when they have just occasion to fight, withdraw themselves, despising knowledge and vertue, not considering that almost every little prick killeth a man, and I have seen which thorough a foolish conceite of their owne abilitie, have been wounded and slaine: therefore if you will prevent the fury of such, you must be well practised in your weapons.

**L.** As farre as I can percieve, the rules of the single rapier, and of Rapier and Dagger, are al one, and I see well, that to learne first the Rapier alone, is very necessary to bring the body, hand, and weapon to be readye together in one instant, but one difference I finde betweene the single Rapier and the other, because in managing the Rapier alone, you cause the scholler to hold his left hand shorte, and in the other to holde out his hand and Dagger as straight as hee may, whereof I would gladly know the reason.

V. At the single Rapier if you holde foorth your lefte hand at length, your enemye maye wound you thereon, because you are not so well garded as if you withdrew it shorter, neither so readye to put by the swoorde of your adversarye as with a Dagger, and therefore remember this well.

L. I see it standeth with good reason, but I praie you shew how I must assault mine enemye in fights or how being assaulted by him, I must defend my selfe.

V. There are many that when they come to fight, runne on headlong without discretion, because finding themselves injured, they holde it their partes to assault first.

L. Why? is it not the challengers parte to bee the first assaulter?

V. Yes, if you finde time and opportunitie, for (I pray) tell me why goe you to fight?

L. To defend mine honour and maintaine my right.

V. What is to defend your reputation, but so to hurt your enemye, as your selfe may escape free? for when you goe to fight, put on this resolution, either to take away his life, or to cause him to acknowledge his faulte, with seeking pardon for the same, which is more honorable then a bloody victory: neither do like children, which in their wanton fighting stand farre a sunder, and make semblance to beate one another: therefore note it well, for if your adversary be a man of judgement and valour, and you be the first in offering, you bring your lyfe in jeopardy: for either of you being within distance observing time, the first offerer is in danger to be slain or wounded in the counter time, especially if he thrust resolutely: but if you be skilfull and not the other, then may you gain time and measure, and so hit him, saving your selfe, & then the more furiouslie your enemye commeth on, the more he runneth headlong upon his owne danger. Some are of opinion that they can hit him that shall hit them first, but such as have never fought: or if by chance in one fight they have beene so fortunate, let them not thinke that Summer is come because one swallow is seene. Mee thinketh more commendable for a man to defend himselfe, and not offend his enemye, than to hurt his enemye and bee wounded imselfe, for when you shall perceive the danger that insueth by every assault without time and measure, you wil change your opinion: and some others there are that hold it a shame for a man to retire.

L. In deede it is accounted disgracefull to give ground, because therein a man seemeth to feare his enemye.

V. There is difference between retiring orderly and running backward, for to hit and retire is not discommendable, though the other be shamefull, & hee that holdes the contrarie, understandeth little the danger of weapons.

L. And I praie you what good doth retiring?

V. If you be assaulted on the sodain, your enemy having gained time and measure, so that you are in evident danger to bee slaine, had you rather die than retire a foot?

L. Some are resolute rather to die than yeelde an inch.

V. But if such knew they should be slaine, & that so small a matter would save their lives, I doubt not but they would retire with both feete rather than faile. Many talke as they have heard, and not as they know: whereupon I will recite a Combate perfourmed by a great Captaine called Signior Ascanio della Cornia.

L. Truly I have heard of one such, but I know not whether it were he that was a master of the Campe in that great armie of Don John d'Austria against the Turke.

V. He was the very same, but to come to the matter touching the opinion of the ignorant: this Captaine being entred the listes against his adversarie in the presence of many Princes and great men (which listes environing the circuit appointed for the Combate, and being touched nu eotjer pf them, the same person is helde vanquished, as if he had beene driven out) was very furiously charged by his enemie, and fought at the first onely to save himselfe by retiring, which the other perceiving, began to scoffe at him, bidding him beware of the listes, wherewithall the Captaine espying advantage, made a resolute stoccata cleane through his bodye, and so slew him, now whether of these think you wonne most honour?

L. In my judgement Ascanio, who entertained the furie of his adversarye, till in discretion hee found oportunitie to execute his purpose.

V. I am glad to heare you of that opinion, for wee see the like in martiall policie, where oftentimes retraits are made of purpose to drawe the enemye either into some imboscata or place of advantage, and such as are most insolent and presumptuous, are easiest drawne into those plots, who runne headlong on their death like beastes. In like sorte, hee that understandeth the true use of his weapons, wil suffer his adversarye in his rashnes, untill he finde time and advantage safely to annoy him. And sithens I have begun to speake of

combates, I wil recite one other performed in Piemont, in the time of Charles the 5, betweene two Italians, and two Spaniards, as I have heard it delivered by divers Gentlemen present at the action. A Spanish Captaine, more brave in shew than valorous in deede, to insinuate himselfe with the Emperour, began in scornfull sorte to find fault with other nations, and among the rest, with Italians, where the Spaniard had never had foote of ground, if the Italians themselves had not been made instruments of their owne conqueste: but to let that passe, this Spaniard having in woords disgraced the Italian nation, it came to the Italians eares, whereupon two Italians, the one of Padua, and the other of Vicenza, wrote a cartell unto the Spaniard, which was carried by him of Vicenza, who finding the Spaniard accompanied with divers Gentlemen, delivered him the cartell, which he received, saying that hee would go to his Chamber and read it, whereunto the Vicentine replied, that he should read it ere hee departed, and that it was a cartel. Which the Spaniard having read in presence of the whole companye, asked the Vicentine whether he or his fellow would maintaine the cartell, to whome the Vicentine answered, that the woords repeated in the cartell was a lye, and that hee was present to avouch it: wherewithall he offered to draw foorth his sworde, and so the Spaniard and his companion accepted the combat against the two Italians, of which matter the Emperour having advertisement, conceived displeasure against the presumption of the Spaniard, and so, place of combate was prepared in presence of many great personages: the combatters being entered in the listes, one of the Italians (who were both in their shirts onely) rent of the lefte sleeve of his shirt, which the Spaniard beholding, saide hee needed not take so muche paine, for he meant to have cut of his arm sleeve and all: to whom the Padouan replied, that he meant to have cut of the Spaniards head firste, and therefore prepared his arme for the purpose, wherewithall they encountered all very furiouslye, so that the Vicentine was first wounded, who crying out to his fellow that he was hurt, the Padouan comforted him with hope of better successe to come, and began warely to keep his garde, but the Spaniards presuming on the victorie, charged them so much the harder without regarde, till at length the Padouan finding his time, with a resolute stoccata ranne the one through the bodie, and with a sodaine riversa, cut the others neck almost quite in sunder, and so they were both slaine together: I have induced these examples for two causes, the one, for that many contemne this art, and make no account thereof, and the other because there are some so insolent, as they seek nothing but to sowe discension between frendes and allies, which if they restrained, it might save the lives of many men: for as wee see in the last example, there wanted not much to have caused a generall mutiny between the Spaniard & the Italian, through the insolencie of the Spaniard, if the Emperour had not drawne the matter to a shorter triall, by forbidding any one to offer the first blow amongst them, upon

paine of death: pronouncing the Italians victors, that had acquitted themselves in so honourable sorte. Therefore you may see how dangerous the company of these quarrelsome persons is, who doe lesse harme with their swordes then with their tungs: for as the Italian proverbe is, *La lingua non ha offa, ma fa rompere il doffa*, that is, the tung hath no bones, and het it breaketh the backe: ill tungs are occasions of much debate. But to returne from whence I have digressed, you must never be too rash in fight, account of your enemye, yet feare him not, and seeke all meanes to become victor, and so you shall maintaine your reputation, and not endanger your selfe in unadvised hastines.

L. I have taken great pleasure in these discourses, which in my opinion importe very much the knowledge of Gentlemen, and truely the Spaniards were justly punished for their pride, in scorning other nations: you shall see manye of that humour, that will blame other nations, who deserve to be rejected out of all civile company: for if one man have a faulte, his whole cuntry is not straight to bee condemned thereof. But shew me I beseech you, how I must behave my selfe when I am to fight, you have already taught mee the time, measure, and motion of my body, and now I would learne something of resolution.

V. Having taken weapons in hand, you must shewe boldnes and resolution against your enemy, and be sure to put your selfe well in gard, seeking the advantage of your enemye, and leape not up and downe. And beware in charging your enemye you goe not leaping, if you be farre off, but when you approach, gard your selfe well, for everie little disorder giveth advantage to your adversarie, therefore learne to knowe advantages, and thrust not at your enemye untill you bee sure to hit, and when you have given measure, not when it is time to thrust: then finding your enemye out of garde, make a stoccata resolutely, or else not at all: for although you be in time and measure, and yet your enemye bee well garded, he may verie easily hurt you though his skill be but small. As may be seene in many, which altogether ignorant in the use of weapons, will naturally put them selves in some gard, so that if one looke not well about him, he shal be much endangered by such a one, not because he knoweth what he doth, but by reason that not foreseeing the danger, hee followeth his purpose wyth resolution, without being able to yeelde a cause for that he hath done. Therefore (I saie) you must seeke to gain not measure onely, but time and opportunitie as wel to save your selfe as anie your enemye, if you will do well, & then if it happen not well unto you, thinke that God doth punish you for your sinnes: for wee see often that at some one time a man will doo excellent well, & yet afterward he shall seeme as though he had never taken weapons in hand. And to make it the more apparant: There was a souldier in Provence for his valor in many exploitcs before shewed, generally reputed a verie gallant man,

who on a time being in a town besieged, was so suddenlye stricken with the terrour of the batterie, and dismaide therewith, that hee could no longer refrain from seeking some cave to hide himselfe: who afterward taking hart agresse, came forth againe, and beeing demaunded of the Captaines where hee had been, who told them the truth of the whole matter, and afterward behaved himselfe very valiantly.

In like sorte Marco Querini a gentleman of Venice, Captaine of the Gallies belonging to the signorye of Venice, in the sea Adriaticum, living delicatelye in all carelesnes, suffered the Turkes to run over the gulfe, spoyling and robbing at their pleasure, not daring to make resistance, which the Generall of the Signory understanding, repaired thither with all expedition, thretning Querini Captaine of the gulfe, if hee perfourmed his office no better, the whole shipping should be taken from him, & he sent home to Venice on foot. The shame whereof moved him so farre, that afterward hee became famous for his exploits.

Moreover in the time of the Venecians warres with the Turke, the Generall of the Turkish forces beeing come into the Sea Adriaticke, neere unto Schiavonia, Allibassa & Carracossa, who afterward died in the battaile of Pautou, would needs invade the Isle Cursolla with some forces, and batter a towne there, where the men dismaied with the suddainnes of the attempt, betooke themselves to flight, and left the place to the defence of the women, who quitted themselves with such undaunted courage, that one of them betaking her self to a peece of artillerie, plaied the gunner so artificiallye, that she directed a shot cleane through the ship where Allibassa was, much sopyling the same, which hee perceiving, presently commaunded the ancker to be waied, and hoising up sailes, retired all his forces, by which meanes the women saved the cittie: so that heerin we see the difference of mens dispositions in courage at divers times, and yet I commend it not in any man to want valour at any time. But to come to the purpose, albeit one be not so well disposed to the managing of weapons at one time, as at some other, yet having the practise and understanding thereof, he shall ever be sufficient to maintaine his parte.

**L.** It may well be that you have saide, and I think that hee that hath the perfect use of his weapons, may very well defend himselfe against any man, though hee finde his body but ill disposed: but seeing you have begun to discourse of time, I pray you teach mee something concerning the difference of time.

**V.** You know what I have saide concerning the same, in my discourse of the single Rapier, and in like sorte I must instruct with Rapier and dagger: therefore you must at the first charge your enemye, and having gotten advantage of



ground on the lefte side, you must make a stoccata under his dagger, if he hold it too high, retiring immediately a little with your lefte foote, accompanied with your right, but finding his dagger low you must make a fincture underneath, and thrust above his dagger, & that is the just time, in doing whereof you must remember to carry your right foote a little aside, following with the left toward the left part of your adversary, and if he offer you either stocata or imbrocata, you may answer him with a half incartata, turning your hand as in doing the stoccata: or otherwise if hee beare his dagger low, you may thrust to his face, which is les danger for you, because everye little blowe in the face staieth the furie of a man more than anie other place of his body, for being through the bodie, it happeneth often times that the same man killeth his enemy notwithstanding in the fury of his resolution: but the bloud that runneth about the face, dismaieth a man either by stopping his breath, or hindering his fight: and he shall oftner find advantage to hit in the face than in the belly if he lie open with his weapons: but marke wel how he carrieth his rapier, if long & straight with his Dagger aloft, you must charge him lowe on your right foot, and having gained measure, beate downe the pointe of his sword with your dagger, and make a stoccata under his dagger without retiring, but beware that in breaking his point you put not down his dagger arme, but hold it firme, neither draw it in, least your enemy hit you on the face, or give you an mibrocata above your dagger: but bearing your dagger firme and straight, if your enemy should answer your stoccata, he might be in daunger to receive a thrust. If your enemy carrie his sword short, in an open ward, you maie come straight on him and give him a punta riversa either in the belly or face, with such readines, that your sword be halfe within his dagger before hee can breake it, turning nimblye your hand toward your left side, so that in offering to breake he shall make himselfe be hit jeither in the face or in the belly: and forget not to retire an half pace with the right foot, accompanied with the left.

Moreover, if your enemy lie with his sword alofte, and the point downwards, you maie charge him foure waies, first on the right side, closing your weapons in a lowe gard, and your right foot within the right foot of your enemy toward his left side, and then being within distance, give him a stoccata, sudenly drawing home your point againe, or you may play with your bodie, but hold your dagger firm, marking (as it were) with one eye the motion of your adversarie, and with the other the advantage of thrusting.

Secondly, you may make a stoccata to his bellye, not resolutely, but to cause him to answer you, and then you must playe with your bodye toward your lefte side, and bearing the thrust on your right side, passe a little on his right side, and make a riversa above his sworde.

Thirdly, you may come upon his point with your dagger, closing well your weapons, and then beating away his point with your dagger, in the same instant put a stoccata either to his face or bellye, but in anye case stirre not your dagger arme, least hee falsifie and give you an imboccata above the dagger: therefore remember to beare your arme straite, and only your wrist higher or lower.

Fourthly, you may charge him on the right side in the same warde, but contrariwise, for where before you bent your body on the right side, you must now turne on the left, so that his pointe may still be without your body, and hold your dagger at length, then being within measure, you may suddenly passe with your left foot, carrying the point of your dagger upward, and turne your point under his Rapier, that it goe directly to his belly, in manner of an imboccata, in doing whereof you must turne your body well, lifting up your sworde hand, and with your Rapier and Dagger, assure your selfe of his, otherwise your weapons lying open, if your enemye bee skilfull, and know how to turn his hand, hee might hit you either in the bellye or face with a riversa, or cut you on the head, for every disorder endangereth a mans life.

Furthermore, if your enemy carry his sword low, charge him directly, turning your body on the right side, with your dagger at length, the pointe hanging something toward the ground, and then as you finde his dagger, so make your thrust: if high, to his belly, if lowe, to his face: if his head be above, put a stoccata to his face by a traversa (as it were) under his dagger, and forget not to retire withall with your right foot: and if hee hold out his sword with the pointe upward when you are toward his right side, you put your self in the ward aforesaid, bending your body on your lefte side, and so gaining ground, make a stoccata under his sworde, so that your dagger be under his rapier, and keepe it without your bodye from your left side, and your point in his belly and remember alwaies that in taking your enemies pointe, you stir not your dagger arme, because hee may then endanger you, as I have before said. Moreover, if your enemye put himselfe in the same gard, with his rapier at length, and you in your gard with your right foot formost and your point held short, so that your right foot be opposite to his, you shall little and little steale ground with your right foote, and followe with the left, till you are within distance, and then with agilitie thrust either to his belly or face: and this is a notable thing if it bee well understoode, for beside the knowledg it requireth practise, that you learne not to approche neerer to your enemy then you may save your self: otherwise you may charge him on the right side, bending your body to the left side, and then having gotten the advantage, you must suddenly passe with your left foote, turning withall your pointe under his sword, that it ascend to his bellye, and clap your dagger as neere as you can to the hiltes of his sworde, all which

together with the motion of the body, must be done at one instant. I shall not need to discourse much of your enemies holding of his dagger, but as your enemy carrieth it, either high or low, so (I say) you must with discretion thrust either to his face or belly: but you must bee verye well exercised in these passataes, for perfourming them with quicknes of the bodye, albeit you happen to faile of your purpose, yet your enemye shal be able to take no advantage therof, but you shal be ready to anoy him stil either above or beneath, wherein you must followe him in moving his body: so shall you stil holde your advantage, and hit him where you will, & if he thrust again, you shall break toward your right side, and reply with a riversa to the face. Againe if your enemye beare his rapier long and straight, you may charge him, and beating away his sworde with your owne, sudenly turn in your point to his face or belly, which is a verie good thrust, being done with great agilitie.

If you percieve your enemies rapier farre out, & that he go about to falsifie upon you either above or underneath your dagger, then put your selfe in your ward, with your weapons close together, and as low as you may, holding firme your dagger hande, and whatsoever falsifieng he maketh, never move awaie your Dagger hande, neither lifte it high or lowe to get your enemies Rapier, and if you lye belowe in the ward when he falsifieth, remaine so without styrring any higher, (for otherwise hee might at that time finde fit opportunitie to hit you, if he be skilfull in wepons) but follow him close, for if he once thrust resolutely, be it above or beneath, he must needs lose his whole Rapier, and you may easily hit him, and in your thrusting stand firme with your body and dagger. Also if he holde his dagger straight upward, and that the point of his rapier be at the hiltes of his dagger, as you shall finde occasion, so doe, that is, if his dagger hand be high, thrust a stoccata to him under his dagger: if lowe, make a stoccata to his face, either close by the hand, or by the middest of his arme, and if you will thrust as you are in your warde you may, or else with retiring. Moreover, if your enemye turne his dagger point toward his right side, charge him on that side, with a punta riversa to his face, remaining in your warde, or retiring as you please. Againe, if he lying in that warde, carry his point out of the ward of your dagger any whit a little too high, charge him close, and holding forth your Dagger, you may suddenly take his point with your Dagger, or if you will you may by removing the right foote a little forward, give him a stoccata, but keepe stedfast your dagger hand, as I taught you before, least otherwise he make an imbroccata to your face. Againe, if he carrye his point any whit too much toward your right side, turn your body on your left side, in a good ward, charging him on the right side, and bring your right foote cleane without his right foot, and having so doone, thrust your rapier under his about the middle, and so make a passata upon him, or you may

charge with a *riversa* to his throte, or such like, either abiding in your warde, or suddenlye scaping away with your body. If you percieve he holde his rapier farre out, and not turned, charge him below, turning your body on the right side, and turne your dagger point somewhat lowe upon your enemies point, and having gotten this advantage, being within measure, thrust either to his bellye or face, as you shall best see cause.

**L.** I finde now that after a man hath the arte, hee must also have great exercise and practise to bring his bodie to a true frame. But as you have hetherto shewed me to charge mine enemie in due time, so now I praie you to teach me to defend my selfe when my enemie chargeth me.

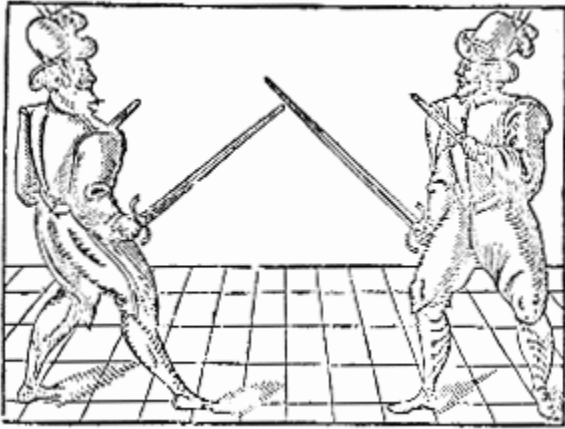
**V.** If your enemie charge you, and ahve gotten anie advantage of you either with his foot, or turning of the bodie, or rapier, or dagger, or by what meanes soever, seeke to put your selfe in a sure warde, and retire a little, keeping your selfe still in gard, least else by retiring, if you move up your bodie or dagger, your enemy might by dexteritie and quicknes offend you greatly: but whilst hee chargeth you, cover to turne your bodie on one side or other, as you find the point of your enemies rapier, and even at that instant that he moveth his foot in charging you, as you finde him open in any place, so seeke to offend him, and beware (as I sayd before) in what sort you retire, for sometime there is a fit time, when you thrust to retire, and some times not, therefore take diligent heed thereunto.

Moreover, when he hath gotten advantage, being in his ward, if he would thrust a *stoccata* to you under you dagger, you shall be nimble to avoide it by turning your daggers point downward, & you shall answer him with a *stoccata*, or *imbrocata*, or *punta riversa*, as you shall finde opportunitie: but if he make an *imbrocata* above your dagger, you may avoide it by lifting up a little the point of your dagger, and by turning the wrist of your hand to the left side, for that his *imbrocata* shall go cleane without your left side, & you may make a thrust to him, as you shall finde him open in anie place. Againe, if hee make an *imbrocata* to your bodie, you may give backe a little with your bodie, and beat it awaie with your right side, & may make to him a *punta riversa* to his bodie or face: likewise if he be towards your right side, & thrust at your face, you may yet beat it awaie, & answer him with a *punta riversa* or a *passata*. Againe, if he make an *imbrocata* above your dagger, beware that your rapiers point be within his, and make unto him a *meza-incartata*, turning the pointe either to the belly, face, or throate: but you must with greate agilitie turne your point & bodie on your right side. Againe, if he make a blow to your head, at the instant that he moveth his hand make you sodainly a *stoccata* unto him, and (if you be in a

good ward) you may make a punta riversa to his thigh, but if he make a blow to your leg, stand fast in your warde with your bodie farre out, and in his thrusting come forward with your right foote, whereby you shal cause him to leese the greatest part of his rapier, and turne your dagger point low, receiving the blow on the same, and you may make unto him either a stoccata to the face, or a riversa to his necke or arme. Again, when he thrusteth to your leg, remove your right foote to your right side, as it were making a circle, & so offend your enemy: as if he make a riversa to the head, you may take it upon your rapier & dagger, passing with your left foot, turning your rapier hand & making a stoccata: and if you will you may by passing receive the riversa upon your dagger onely, but looke you carrie your dagger point aloft, as I have told you before. Againe, if hee make the riversa to your leg, you may sodeinly passe with your left foot to his right, & take the riversa on your dagger, for thereby you get the strength of his rapier, and are master of it, and may easily strike him. Again, if he make anie violent blow at your head, retire a little on your lefte side, & receive it with your rapiers point, passing with your left foote, & turning your point to his face, & clapping your dagger on his rapier: all other blows and riversaes you may easily receive on your dagger, but it behoveth you to receive them with the point of your rapier, otherwise your enemy might thrust his rapier between your rapier & dagger especially if he cast his hande upward and his pointe downward, therefore take heed how you thrust, for these are all good times. If your enemy come furiouslie upon you to assault you, keep you still in your gard, and in his comming neere to you, thrust at him, for he is neither in ward nor yet standeth firme, and the more resolutely he commeth upon you, the more he is in danger, and the woorse it is for him, because he may easily with a little bricke bee slaine: but courage joynd with skill and knowledge is verie good.

Againe, if a tall man should assault a little man, this ward is exceeding good for the tall man, because if he charge the other, & the tall man thrust, being within reach, he loseth his point, & the little man may give him a stoccata, or make a passata at him, but if the tall man know how to put himself in ward & thrust, he might have great advauntage by the length of his reach, in thrusting a stoccata, and retiring with his bodie. Againe, if your enemy woulde make a passata on you with his left foote, when you finde him to remove, & woulde beate your weapons awaie with his dagger, move your right foote a little backward, and sodeinly turne your point over his dagger, and make an imbrocata to him, for in his passing he looseth his dagger, and whilst he passeth, you may retire a little into your ward, and make a stoccata to his face, and suche like, whereof I cannot now stand to write.

## The Second Dayes Discourse, of Rapier and Dagger.



I

**Luke.** I Have been so well satisfied with this firste ward of Rapier and Dagger, that I should thinke my selfe verye happie, to put in practise, as much as you delivered unto in precept: but I will not spare any labour to exercise all. But now you shal doe me muchpleasure, if you will teach mee the other warde, which you call Puncta reversa.

**V.** I have discoursed unto you, how profitable the former wardes bee, as well to learne as to fight, beeing well understoode and practised: and even so will I now make you acquainted with the worthines of this ward, and of what importance it is, notwithstanding that it is quite contrary to the other: especially, in learning of it. Therefore he that will teach that warde, must place his scholler even as at single Rapier, that is, that his feete stand both equall with toe and heele, even as if hee were to sitte downe, and that his Rapier handle to be held within side of his right knee, and that somewhat shorte, and that his Dagger be helde out at length with his arme stretched out, holding the point of his rapier continuallie upon the face of his maister, who ought to set himselfe in the same ward, and to give a stoccato in the middle of the Rapier, in punta reversa to his scholler, or else betweene the arme and the Rapier, or in the bellie, or in the face, escaping a little backward with his right foot, accompanied somewhat with his left, towards his left side.

L. What shall the scholler doe in the meanwhile?

V. While your maister giveth you the thrust, you shall not strike it by with your dagger, but onelie turning your Rapier hand, passe with your lefte foote towards his right side, and the point of your Rapier being placed above his, and thrust forward, shall enter right into his bellie.

L. And what shall the maister doe to save himselfe?

V. When he giveth the thrust, and you passe towards his right side, hee shall with great nimblenes recoyle a little backward with his right foot, accompanied with the left toward the left side, bearing his bodie backward, and pearching your Rapier with his dagger, shall strike it outward from his left side, and give you a Mandritta at the head.

L. Then what remaines for me to doe?

V. You shal come with your right foote, to the place where your maisters right foot was, and shal give him a thrust in the belly or in the face, receiving the mandritta upon your Rapier and Dagger, and the event will be no other then the same of the former ward: and by this meanes you shall become very nimble and quick, both with foote, hand, and bodie: otherwise, if you have not all these partes readie and perfect, by offering the stoccata, you hazard yourself gretly & dangerously. For while you thrust, if your adversarie surpasse you in nimblenesse, and bee readie, he may enter with his lefte foot and put you in great danger, bringing your weapon into his owne power. Therefore when you wyll give this thrust either in the bellye or face, passe with your right foot towards the right side of your enemy, so that your right foote bee somewhat on the out-side of your enemies right foote, and so being in right measure, you may give him the said thrust either in the bellie or in the face with great celeritie and aptnesse, recoiling somewhat with your left foot, accompanied wyth the right: and if your enemy enter with his left foote, you shall speedily turne your bodie on your lefte side, whereby, the more secretly your enemy commeth upon you, and the more forcibly hee entereth, the more hurt shall hee doo himselfe, and the more easily shal you be able to master him, and become Lorde of his owne weapon.

Besides, if you place your right foot a little towards your enemies right foot, you may make a thrust toward his right side, but in thrusting, see you bring your right foote towards your enemies left side: if you see that hee goeth about to enter with his left legge, turne your bodie well on your right side, for then if hee enter with his left legge, the point of his Rapier will go by the out side of

your bodie, and you may give him a riversa upon his legge with your Rapier, and stabbe him with your dagger in the bodie. All which you must do with great celeritie and quicknesse, turning your bodie with great nimblenesse on your left side, and recoiling somewhat with your left foote, being accompanied with the right, and so you shal deliver your selfe and your rapier withall out of the power of your enemie, but if you bee not passing readie with your foot, and in turning your bodie wel and fitly on your right side, your enemie entering maye thrust you in the bellie with his Rapier, and give you a stabbe with his Dagger besides. Therefore I advertise you to exercise your selfe continually, that occasion being offered you to fight, you maie perfourme the same with much readinesse, and without daunger, otherwise, if you onely faile in one and even the least point, you endanger your life. For it is not maine force that doth the deede, but readinesse, dexteritie, and use of knowledge and arte. You must therefore labour and take paines, which beeing joyned to the greate desire and love you beare to this arte, will bring you to the perfection therof. Insomuch that you shall bee able to turne and winde your bodie which waye you will, and therewithall know how and which waie you ought to turne it.

Againe to the purpose: If your enemie make towardes your right side, and offer a thrust, happilie pressing too much forward, you shall immediatelie turne your bodie on the left side, so that the point of his Rapier passing beside your bodie, you maye give him a stoccata: or you may plaie with your bodie, and beate his Rapier pointe outward from your right side wyth your Dagger, and give him a punta riversa over his Rapier in the belly or face. Or also while hee thrusteth, you may beate it by with your Dagger, and carrying your right foote towardes his right side, give him the same thrust. Or againe, whilest hee doeth thrust, you maye stande firmelie, turning your bodie a little upon your lefte side, and strike by his Rapier pointe with your Dagger, and therewithall give him a riversa upon the legge. And if hee bee skilfull in managing his weapon, take heede in anie case that you let him not get within you, or winne grounde of you, but seeke still to growe upon him with your foote, that is, that your right foote bee without side of his right foote, and when hee gives the forsaide thrust, take heed you strike neither with your Rapier nor Dagger, if you meane to enter upon him with a passata, because hee having once gained of you both opportunitie of time and measure of grounde, you endaunger your selfe verie much: but you shall onely turne your Rapier hande inwarde, passing speedelie with your lefte foot to his right foote, placing the middest of your right foote just at the heele of your lefte foote, holding your bodie on the left side.

As for your Dagger, that must bee helde up with the pointe alofte, to the ende that it maie bee master of his Rapier: and so shall hurte him either under or



above his Dagger. But you must beware and take greate heede, not to passe directlie right uppon him, when you make your passata with your lefte foote towarde his right foote, for if that he bee anie thing skilfull, hee maie give you a stoccata or imbroccata. Wherefore when you make towards him, see you throw your selfe wholie on the lefte side, accompanying your left foot with your right, in the manner aforesaid.

Furthermore, if you percieve your enemies Rapier pointe to bee borne towards your right side, having gotten uppon him with your right foote, passe with your lefte foote verie speedilie and quicklie to his right foote, and carrying your Dagger, as in the manner aforesaid, and give him an imbroccata upon his Rapier. But if you finde his Rapier point born upon your bodie, you shall turne your bodie on your lefte side, and with great celeritie drawe your point under his Rapier, that hte point therof be upon his bellie, and your left foote by the right, your dagger being readie with the point upward, to command his rapier, resting your bodie on your right side.

Furthermore, if you percieve his Rapier to be long, and the point therof borne somewhat high, you shall neverthesse answere him in this ward: now not holding your Rapier hand on the inside of your knee, but carrying your dagger straight out, and winding your bodie on your lefte side, you shall make semblaunce to beate by his weapon with your dagger, and with great quicknesse you shall draw the point of your dagger under his Rapier, readily turning your bodie uppon your right side, and carrying your right foote together with your left somewhat towards his left side, &c. But beware how you use this passata, unlesse you bee well practised in it, and see you holde stiffe your dagger hande, for if you suffer your hand to swarve aniething downward, your enemy maie give you an imbroccata in the face.

Moreover, in your passata lift not your dagger too high, because (if he bee skilfull with whome you fight) whilst you lifte up your dagger, or holde your Rapier and Dagger to open, and not inough closed, hee maie retire a little, and so give you a stoccata or imbroccata, insomuch that you must have an especiall care of all, or or else you cannot avoide daunger of death. A gaine, when you make this passata, see that you remaine not with your lefte foote, because he may give you a mandritta uppon the legge, or else a stoccata in the bellie. Also in the same passata, see that your bodie rest not wholie uppon your lefte side, because that so dooing, you shall your selfe beare your enemies Rapier pointe upon your face.

Besides this, when you lie in this warde, and make uppon your enemy towards his right side, if you perceive that hee holde his Rapier hand

somewhat high and farre off from his bodie, followe you well in this warde, and getting sufficient grounde of him, you maie give him a stoccata in the bellie: and in giving it, see that the pointe of your Rapier enter under the middest of his, being your selfe readie to winde awaie with your bodie.

Furthermore, in charging him, if you finde that his pointe bee carried to the ground-ward, turne steadfastly uppon your lefte side, and holde your dagger out in length towards his right side: and if you can beate the middest of his Rapier with your Dagger, at the same instant give him a stoccata. You maie also in the same warde make a passata with your lefte foote. But if perhappes your enimie when you lie in this warde, should make semblaunce to thrust you, not meaning so to do, but onelie for vauntage, so you bee in equall measure, answere him, and loose not that time: but if you be not in equall reach, thrust not earnestly, nor make a passata uppon him, for so you shoulde endaunger your lyfe: but in aunswering him make but a short thrust at him, to the ende that if your enimie or adversarie afterwarde make a true thrust, or else come forwarde with his lefte foote, to make a passata uppon you, you maie sodainly turne your bodie on your lefte side, and place your Dagger-hand right with your right knee. And so you maie give him a stoccata in the bellie, or else a riversa uppon the legge, and become maister of his weapon: and by howe much the more strongly hee thrusteth, and the more furiously hee entereth with the passata, by so much the more easilie may you hurt him: but have a great and speciall regarde to doo it with much nimblenesse and dexteritie both of bodie and hand.

Furthermore, if you find his Rapier long, in charging him you maie strike the middle of his Rapier with yours, and sodainly give him the punta riversa: but it must be done with great quicknesse of the hand, beeing readie with your right foote to steppe towards your enemies right side, or else to recoile somewhat with your bodie backwardes as swiftly as you canne: for else if your enimie at that instant shoulde enter with a passata something fiercelye, your lyfe were in greate hazarde, and especiallye if you shoulde make your thrust straight, carrying your foote right towards his, as manie doo: but if you steppe with your right foote aside, you maie verie easilye avoide the daunger.

Againe, if you finde his Rapier point out at length, you maie strike his Rapier with yours, and give him a greate mandritta or riversa at the head, but with greate swiftnesse of hand and bodie. Also lying in the same warde towards the right side of your enimie, you may give a false stoccata at his bellie, and if your enimie doo happe to strike it backe with his Rapier, you shall sodainly put the pointe of your Rapier over his, and give him a stoccata or punta riversa uppon his face, or his bellie, if hee shoulde too much hang downe his hand, at

which time you must beare your right foote aside towards his right side. You maie also offer a false thrust at his face, and if hee go about to strike it by with his Rapier, you maie put your pointe under his Rapier, and carrying your right foot side- waie, give him a stoccata in the bellie: or in both these false thrusts, when he beateth them by with his rapier, you may with much sodainnesse make a passata with your lefte foote, and your Dagger commaunding his Rapier, you maie give him a punta, either dritta, or riversa.

Moreover, if your enemie finding you with your Rapier point borne out in length, should strike by your rapier with his, in the verie instant that he striketh, you maie passe with your right foote towards his right side, and with great quicknes putting your Rapier over his, give him a punta riversa in the face, and if hee bee not verie skilfull at his weapon, you may sodainly make a passata upon him, and this maie happen upto you verie often: but you ought to be well exercised in these pointes, which may make you verie nimble and quicke with your foot, body, and hand, least for want of knowledge and practise in the facultie, you fal not into some inconvenience and dishonour, for in the verie least point consisteth life and death.

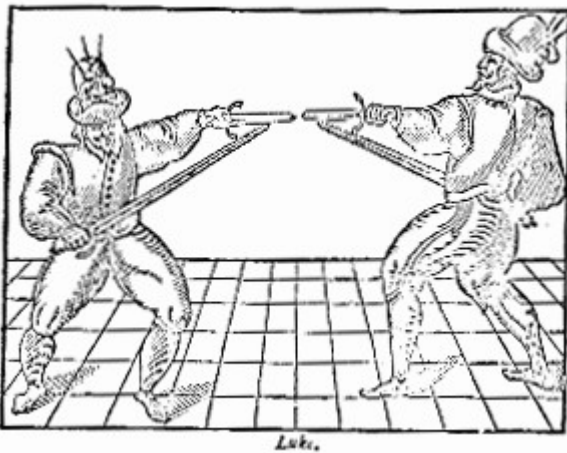
Therefore neglect not htese things, but rather take pains and travaile in the knowledge of them, honoring and esteeming them both excellent and profitable: neither have I entered into this charge, to discourse and explaine these pointes for their sakes that hate valour and knowledge, for unto such doo I not directe my speech, but unto those that love, regarde, and honour vertue: who beeing worthie of this knowledge, may alwaies commaund my service.

But to returne to our purpose: if your enemie find you in this sayde warde, holding your bodie towards your left side, and towards his right side, and give you a mandritta at the head, you shall speedilye and with greate agility turne your bodie on your right side, and receiving his mandritta upon your Dagger, retourne him a stoccata either in the bellie or in the face. Likewise, if hee give you an imbrocata over the Dagger, you shall (turning your bodie upon your right side) aunswere him with a stoccata. But if hee when you lie in this warde, give you a riversa at the heade, you may immediatlye make a passata with the lefte foote, and so presentlye requite him with a stoccata.

If you think it not convenient, and therefore will not passe with your lefte foote at the same instaunce that hee giveth the riversa, you shall turne your bodie on your lefte side, and so have your choice eyther to give him a stoccata in the bellie, or a riversa at the legges: and if you bee thoroughly exercised and practised in charging, you may give him a dirtta or a riversa at his legges, being the first to strike.

Many things more may you doe in this warde, according as your enemy fighteth: and you may use this warde after many manners, so you be throughly acquainted with it, and have by continuall practise brought your foote, hand and bodie to it. But this shall suffice untill another daye.

## The Thyrde Dayes Discourse, of Rapier and Dagger.



I

**Luke.** I know not certainly, whether it hath been my earnest desire to encounter you, that raisde me earlier this morning than my accustomed houre, or to be ascertained of some doubtfull questions, which yester-night were proposed by some gentlemen and my selfe, in discourse of armes: for they helde, that although a man learne perfectly the dritta, riversa, the stoccata, the imbrocata, the punta riversa, with eche severall motion of the body, yet when they hap to come to single fight, where the triall of true valour must end the quarrell, they utterly forget all their former practises. Therefore I would request of you, (if you so please) to know your opinion, whether in single fight a man can forget his usuall wardes, or use them then with as much dexteritie and courage as he accustomed in play.

V. It is very likely, that many are of this opinion, for there are fewe or none that in cause of quarrell when they come as we tearme it to buckling, but suffer themselves to be overcome with fury, and so never remember their arte: such

effect choller worketh. And it may be some being timerous and full of pusillanimity, (which is ever father to feare) are so scarred out of their wits, that they seeme men amazed and voide of fence. Or some may be taken in the humor of drinke; or with divers other occasions, that may enfeeble their understanding. And by these reasons well may they forget in fight, what they learned in play: but in them in whome no such effectes are predominant, neither are assailed with such accidentes, they behave themselves discretely, and are not distempered with any such perturbations: and besides this, I have seen many that being fearfull by nature, through dayly practise have become couragious, and alwaies so continued. Neither is it possible, but in practise he should obtaine courage and encrease his valour more then before.

**L.** But to what end doe you teach such skill, if it be scarce secure, and hard to performe.

**V.** To this I answer, that this vertue or art of armes is proper and behovefull to everye one for their lives, because that no man on earth, but hath had or hath in presence some difference or contention with some of his companions, which most commonly is decided by fight. To them that are of an hautie courage, this skill addeth advantage: to them whose nature is fearful, the use of weapons extenuateth a great parte of feare: and these, both the one and other, ought as much as in them lyeth, to avoide all cavilling, and such disordered speeches as procure contention: but especiallye, let such men take heede, to whome nature hath not given a valorous spirite: as for others, whose courage is hot, it importes them very much, to have great skill in their weapon, for being over-mastered with heate and courage of their harts, if in managing their armes they want s skilfull dexteritie, they soone spoyle themselves: for through wante of knowledge, they come to be overthrowne, where rather it behoveth them with advisement and discretion, not onely to spy their own faults, and soone to amend them, but also through his enemies over-fights, to take his owne advantage.

**L.** True it is I confesse what you hae saide, for sure, who so wanteth courage, must of necessitie forget his cunning. But tell of curtesie, were it that a man were to combate, and through brevitie of time it were not possible to be perfect in the depth of his knowledge, what order would you take, to instruct him that he might be safe and dangerles.

**V.** I wil tell you, I would acquaint him with one only warde, which amongst all other is the best for fight, to him who will understand it: of which I meane now to entreate, to the end I may enstruct you in it, that being throughly practised in that onely warde, you maye combate securely. Therefore to make my scholler

perfect in that manner of lying, I would place him with his lefte foote and dagger before, extending his bodye fare, and I also would lye so, then would I have him traverse towards my left side, and I circularly would passe with my right foote, thrusting a stoccata either at his face or brest.

L. And what shall the scholler doe then to defend himselfe, and offend you?

V. Whilste I thrust my stoccata at him, and that I passe about towards his lefte side, in that moment that I parte from him and thrust, hee shall likewise in that counter-time passe circularly towards my left side, and then shall thrust a stoccata at my brest or face, winding his body upon his left side.

L. And how will you save yourselfe?

V. In that instant, wherein both my selfe and he doe passe thrusting at me in that counter-time, if I be not very prompt, with the motion of my bodie, hee maye easilie strike me in the brest or face: therefore whilste that I thrust at him and he at me, I will break it with my Dagger from my lefte side, turning the pointe either high or lowe, according as hee thrustes, and I would helpe my selfe with drawing my body backwards, and in that time I would carry my right foote towards his lefte, and then would I thrust an imbroccata above his Dagger.

L. And what can he doe?

V. Hee shall doe the like, guiding his right foote towarde my left, and shall breake my imbroccata outwarde from his lefte side, and thrust an imbroccata at mee above my Dagger, and I wil retire aside, as I have tolde you in the former wardes, and make at him with a dritta, or riversa, or an imbroccata with the dritta, as in the others.

L. I am of this minde, that whosoever would performe this warde, had neede to be perfectlie instructed and throughly exercised, and that he be of good knowledge: for certainly this I thinke, it is an excellent ward for him that knowes to doe it well, but very dangerous for a raw scholler or imperfect. And if you would manifest some lying to counter-check this warde we have spoken of, I should thinke my selfe highlye beholding for such a favour.

V. Observe this firste, if you were in fight, to use this ward, and that your enemie in like sorte should garde him selfe with the same lying: marke this cheefely and first how hee beares his weapons and his bodie, high or lowe, and how hee holdes his Rapier and Dagger, and according to his lying, assaulte and

offer to him. Therefore in the encounter that you shall make, charge him towards his lefte side, keeping your selfe safelye in your warde, and have this regarde, to keepe your poynte within his. And if he lye high with his bodye and Dagger, keepe your poynte under his Dagger handle, and thrust your stoccata at his breste: but if you see him lye with his Dagger lowe, thrust an imbrogata at his belly with great celeritye, or at his face, avoiding with your right foote circularlye towards his lefte, turning quickly your body upon your lefte side, in manner of an halfe wheele: but it behoves you to be verye readye, otherwise, in staying in your passage, if hee avoyde in that counter-time, hee maye put you in danger of life: the like is, if you passe directlye, you are both in danger of death: or if you should passe directlye, and hee keepe himselfe in safe warde, or that he avoide in compasse, he may well save him and endanger you. Therefore finding your enemye in this warde, ever observe to carrie your selfe in compasse.

Moreover, if you assaile your enemye with this warde, and hee lye with his right foot foremost, if hee holde his rapier far from him, you may directlye take his pointe, keeping your dagger long out, and your bodie lowe: and if he thrust either above or belowe, keep your Dagger ready to break his thrust, and offer home to him upon the lefte foote, or passe towards him with your right foote, as you shall finde best. And in your caricado see if you can commaund his swoorde with your Dagger, either from your lefte or right side, and then thrust your stoccata or punta riversa. If you see him lye displaied, followe him, bearing your Dagger within his sword, and you maie well thrust your stoccata either at his face or breast: or else make a passata resolutelie, wheeling halfe about, keeping your selfe presentlie in a good warde, upon your right foote.

Moreover, in this warde you maye easilie give him a mandritta or riversa upon his legge, or you maie use a caricado upon his right side, keeping your warde, and carrying well your bodye, that the halfe of your right foote garde your lefte heele, and guiding your body directly upon your left side, make forward directly upon his right foot, thereby to commaund his swoodre, and then may you strike him upon the lefte foote. Againe, if you see hee keepes his Dagger pointe upon you, thrust a stoccata at his face: if you finde him not well commanding his point, charge him upon his right side, bearing the dagger long, and break his thrust outwards, offering your stoccata at his face or brest. Likewise, if you see he commaund not his point, and being advantaged upon his right side, you maye with great readines put your pointe under his sword, lifting your sword hand and your dagger, when in the mean time you may give him a stoccata or imbrogata, and be master of his swoorde with yours and your

Dagger. And in charging him upon his right side, you may give him a riversa upon his legge.

Againe, if hee offer a mandritta at your head, in the lifting of his hand advance your selfe with your right foote, and receive it upon your Dagger, giving him a stoccata at his brest or face: so if hee thrust a riversa at your head, you shal lift up the point of your Dagger, & receive it on your dagger & sworde, & in the same time thrust an imbroccata at his belly, or else taking the riversa upon your Dagger, you shall give him another upon the legges, or a stoccata in the belly. Likewise, if your enemie shall give you a mandritta upon the legge, you shall nimblely passe circularly with your right foote towards his lefte side, for so hee cannot offend you, and you may hit him either in the belly or face.

Moreover, if your enemie thrust an imbroccata above your Dagger, you must readilye passe with your right foote before he retire with his point, and you may well hit him in the face, breast, or legges. Again, if when you charge him towards his right side, you see his point be farre out and somewhat high, keepe your bodie uppon your lefte side, and lie lowe covered in your ward, bearing your dagger at the length of your arme, keeping good measure: and in your cariage, make shew to put by his Rapier with your dagger, and sodainly fal your point under his sword, traversing with your right foot round, turning your bodie uppon your right side, & so thrust your stoccata at his face or breast. And if he hold his point high, you may charge him directly with his point, for if hee thrust either above or below, in the time of his thrust advance your left foote, extending your dagger, and by that advancing hee shall loose his point, and you maie hit him with a dritta or riversa at your pleasure. And if he thrust at you, and you passe about with your right foote, then you maie likewise hit him.

**L.** Truly you have given mee to understand excellently of this ward: but let me intreate you to teach me how I maie defende my selfe if one assaile mee in that ward, and how I may best offend my enemie, keeping my right foot foremost.

**V.** I have told you many things concerning this ward, if you know how to doo them and practise them. Besides there bee diverse other thinges which I cannot shew you with speaking: but for this time it will bee sufficient if you can perform what I have declared. And I will tell you: if you lie with your right foote foremost, and he keepe his left foote forward, according as you marke his lying, so do, charging him either on the lefte or right side. And although you hit him not, and that he passe upon his right foote, doe you but change your bodie to your left side, lifting up the point of your poniard, firming your hand on your right knee, so shall you be master of his sword, and maie easily strike him, and the more fierce he is, the more shall you commaund his weapon and endanger



him: neither can hee strike you either withi or without your dagger, or on the legges. And if you see he keepes his dagger winding towards his right side, thrust a riversa at his face, so that your point may enter in the midst of his dagger, and sodainly recoile, and if he likewise parte, turne your bodie, as I have tolde you, upon your lefte side, and as you see him lie, so garde your selfe, bearing your bodie on which side you thinke best.

And surely beleve mee, the first warde I taught you of Rapier and dagger, is absolutely the best both against this and anie other kinde of lyings. Therefore I woulde wish you to learne it perfectly, and exercise it thoroughly, that if occasion happen, you may be both skilfull and well practised. But take heede of one fault, which many incurre, who if in plaie they receive one or two stoccataes, they inforce themselves to give one or be revenged. But this is neither fit for a scholler, nor orderlie, since in plaie we shuld behave our selves friendlie, both to learn and passe the time, and also to exercise ourselves in stirring our bodies, and use this arte for the right effect. Wherein wee ought especiallie to avoide choer and anger. For where occasion happens to fight, in deede, rapiers are not as foiles, which cannot doo much hurt, but a small pricke of a Rapiers pointe maie either kill, or at the least maime. So that in anie wise avoide so daungerous an oversight. And if you happe to wound your enemie, though verie smallie, yet by the fight of his blade, hee being kindled with furie, shall both enfeeble his strength, and fall from his right bias. Therefore I wish you take good heede, and if you see your selfe apte to incline to such a faulte, amende it, and learne perfectlie to defende your selfe well, to the end that if perhappes you cannot hurt your enemie, either for that he surpasseth in skil, or you want strength, yet you maie avoide danger of beeing hurt your selfe, which will bee both honorable and profitable to you, considering that even the verie first thrust is sufficient to ende the whole controversie. Therefore bee heedfull and wise, and remember I have tolde you soundly for your owne safetie.

**L.** I assure you I will followe your advise, which I see grounded on such reason, as everie wise and reasonable man ought to followe it, estraunging himselfe from all furious fellowes, who thinke to purchase honour by running headlong on their death. Therefore will I sequester my selfe from their acquaintance. But I praie you prosecute and go forward with the rest of this ward.

**V.** Sithence I see you conceive such pleasure in it, I will proceede on and goe forward a little farther. Manie there bee which exercise this warde uppon theyr lefte foote, but therein they differ. Therefore it importes to bee well instructed in the diversitie: for if your enemie lie in that warde, and y ou uppon your right

foote, and he beare himselfe and his Dagger highe, charge him towards his lefte side, and in the approche, see you parte with greate readynesse with your right foote towards his left, and speedilie thrust you a stoccata in his belly, & in the thrusting, look you ender under his arme or hande, turning your bodie on the right side, and the back side of your sword hand toward your left. If he hold his dagger low, charge him towards his left side with your right foote side-waies, and thrust either a stoccata or imbroccata, as you shall thinke best, above his dagger, and for your owne safegard, turne your bodie upon the right side. And if you see him lie displaide, carrie your bodie on your right side, and traverse to his lefte, and then thrust your stoccata betweene his sword and dagger.

Moreover, you maye thruste your stoccata either at his face or breast, but doo it with greate promptnesse, and in the same time recoile with your left foot drawing after your right, and be quicke in the retire to recover your rapier, that if your enemie make forward, you may be readie againe to thrust: therefore be quicke and vigilant, otherwise if in your thrusting you be not readie, in that selfe same time your enemie maie well hit you: but retiring with your feete, and escaping with your bodie, you shall shunne all daunger. Againe, if you finde his rapier point hight, charge him lowe upon the left foot, and directlie with your dagger at his Rapiers point, bearing your Dagger as I have taught you: so you maie thrust either at his face or brest without retiring, but being sure to lie wel in your ward, for in the time whilst you retire or withdraw your feet, you shall be in danger, but keeping that ward sure, you are without perill, for whether hee thrust above or belowe, you beeing in that ward are safe, and more ready to winde your pointe above or belowe his dagger, or you maie give him a mandritta on the legs: neither can he hurt you in his circular or turning, if he should so recoile. Againe, if you see him lie upright, lie you so likewise, but ever keep your Dagger readie, and you maie feigne a stoccata at his face, and whilst he goeth about to breake it, winde your pointe quicklie under his dagger, and wheele with your bodie halfe compasse, avoiding with your right foote side-waies, as I have tolde you. And if hee charge you lowe and lie open, comming directlie on your pointe, give backe your bodie a little, and thrust a riversa or stoccata like an imbroccata, and readilie remove with your right foot backward: or if hee lie as manie doe, with his sword upon his dagger crosse-wise, you may redilie thrust him in the face, and retire backward towards his lefte side. Againe, in that maner of lying, you maie charge him towards his right side, and thrust a stoccata at his face, betweene his Rapier and Dagger, ever remembring that your sword passe by the middest of his Dagger, and give him a riversa in recoiling backward towards his right side. And if you fortune not to hitte him, and that he passe upon his right foote, doe you but change your

bodie to the lefte side, lifting up your poinard, and holding your hand firmelie on your right knee, so shal you be master of his swoorde, and maie easilie hit him: and the more fierce he is, the more you shall commaund his weapon, and mangle him, neither can he strike you, either within or without your Dagger, or with a dritta or riversa upon the legges. Againe, if you see him holde his dagger with the point turning to his lefte side, thrust at his face a riversa, guiding your pointe to ender in the middest of his dagger, and soddenlie recoile: and if he likewise parte, doe as I have alreadie tolde you, winding your bodie well upon your lefte side: if you finde him lying open, use your caricado toward his right side, and lye loew in your warde, carrying your bodie on your lefte side, bearing your Dagger out at length, as I have taught you in the first warde: but let your hand beeing directly with your knee, turne with your bodie, and in this manner you maie offer a thrust: and if hee thrust first, beare your dagger readie to defend your selfe, and your rapier to offend him. But in this be very heedful, as I have often tolde you, neither elevate nor abase your dagger hand, nor beare him over the one side or the other, for if your enemy have good skill in his weapon, and withall a readie hand, he may easilie beare his pointe compasse and hurt you: or many times feigne a thrust to deceive you. Therefore be alwaies advised to keepe your hand firme, not abasing or lifting up your pointe, or turning your wrist on the one side or other: and if he thrust at you, you maie well readilie both defend your selfe, and offend him.

Moreover, if he abase his point, lie in your lefte foot warde, and use your caricado upon his right side, and if hee thrust either an imbroccata above your Dagger, or a mandritta at your head, removing his right foot, turne readilie your bodie on your right side, lifting up your Dagger, and turning your wriste. Againe, if you finde his pointe farre out, charge him in your left foot ware towards his right side, and charge him with your Dagger close to his sworde, and letting fall your pointe under his, you maie easilie thrust a stoccata or imbroccata, but ever keepe firme your Dagger hand, and lift not up your bodie, and in breaking his thrust toward his left side, you maie give him a riversa either in the brest or on the legs. Besides this, many more practises there be, which with good exercise of body, and readines of hand, might easilie be effected. But because it groweth somewhat late, and our discourse hath lasted so long, I will take my leave of you, retiring my selfe to dispatch some busines before my going home.

**L.** I am infinitely beholding unto you for these good instructions, and to morrow I wil meete you, to understand somewhat more, for my farther skil, and avoiding of idlenes.

V. God be your guide, and to morrow I will expecte you.

## **The Fourth Dayes Discourse, of single Rapier.**

**Entreating how a lefte handed man, shall plaie with  
one that is right handed.**

**A**

**Luke.** After your departure yesterdaie in the after-noone, I was in an honorable place, wher upon occasion of some jelousie of love of certaine gentlewomen two gentlemen of the companie fell at words, and from words to deeds, but they were not suffered at that time to proceede to any further action, nevertheles they gave their faithes the next morning to trie it with their weapons. And so accordinglie they met, and bravely perfourmed their combate: in the execution whereof I tooke great pleasure to be a beholder, not that I had anie delight to see them kill one another, but for another cause, (and that was) to see by experience the truth of that which I have heard manie affirme: and seeing there is so good an opportunity offered, I will entreat you, having troubled you in a great matter, that you will assoyle me certaine doubttes, which I shall demand of you, and make me rightly understand them, whereby I shall remaine greatly bound unto you.

V. I praie you tell me, what were these gentlemen which fought, and whether anie of them be hurt: after, be bolde to declare to me your doubttes, and I will not faile to resolve you the best I can.

L. Sir, I doubt not of your curtesie, which I have found you alwaies willing to shewe to everie man, but cheefely to your freends: but to tell you the truth, I have forgot the gentlemens names, but this I can well saie, that in the handling of their weapons they behaved themselves very manfullie, neither of them receiving any wound, for they were both very quicke with the rapier to offend, and with their daggers to defend: but the greatest reason that hath led me to be present there, was to see how well they managed their weapons, one of them being right handed, and the other left handed: because I know many of opinion, that the left handed have great advantage of the right, yet I see both doe their uttermost this morning, without any hurt of either partie, and in beholding both the one and the other diligently I could not discern anie jot of advantage

betweene them: therefore you shall doe me great favour, if you discourse unto me, whether the left hand can have any advantage of the right, or the right of the lefte: withall instructing me, both how to defende my selfe from such a one, and how to offend him.

V. Of this question, I have heard many times much reasoning, and many there are indeede which so think, but beleeve me, the left hand hath no advantage of the right hand, nor the right, of the lefte no otherwise than you your selfe finde your owne advantage.

L. Tell me therefore, if you would teach a left hand, how would yon begin?

V. I would teach him first with the single rapier, making him to stand with his left foote forwardes, and that his heele should be right against the middle part of his right foote, & I would put my selfe with my right foot forward, as I told you before concerning the single rapier, & I would that the scholler should hold his sword out at length, that the point thereof bee directlie at my face, and that he holde his swoord hand, as it were in a line, from his bodie, & outwards of my sword towards my right side, passing withal with his left foot towards my left side, putting his rapier under mine, and to give me an imboccata in the belly, by turning the knuckle of his hand downwards towards his left side.

L. It seemeth that you doo all contrarie to the right hand, because in teaching the right hand, hee useth the stoccata, but the left hand, you make him to begin with the imboccata. But what will you doo to defend your selfe in the meane time?

V. I will avoide somewhat with my body, and with my hand beate downe his imboccata without my left side, and carrying my right foot after my left foot, give him a riversa at the head.

L. What shal the scholler doo in his defence, both to hurt you and save himselfe?

V. He shal doo quite contrarie unto him that is right handed, because the right hand, when I offer him a riversa at the head, passeth with the left foote, and giveth me the imboccata under my rapier, but the left hande, whilst I go backe with my right foot, and that I lift my rapier to give him the riversa, he swiftly passeth with his right foot before his left, and giveth me a stoccata, lifting his hand from behinde: & so in the passataes which he shall make, standing with his left foote forward, and passing with his right foot to strike his enemie, whereas the right hand passeth with his left foot when he giveth a

stoccata to his enemie, the left hand cleane contrarie, in passing gives the imbroccata to his enemie: & wheras the right hand shall give the stoccata, and that which I saie, is for the left handes instruction against the right. But noew I will speake no further of this warde, for so much as no other thing foloweth but that which I have told you alreadie concerning the first warde of the single rapier, and I will declare unto you the warde of the rapier and dagger, both to instruct the lefte handed how to deale against the right hand, and how the right hand ought to behave himselfe against the lefte hande, which shall be our next discourse. And for this time I praie you pardon me, having occasion to go a little way hence, to take up a matter betweene two of my friends, upon certaine differences happened betweene them, & by and by we will meet againe. Farewell.

### **The lefte handes Warde at Rapier and Dagger.**

**L.** Seeing you have already declared howe a lefte hande is to bee taught at single Rapier, I praie you also tell mee, how you would likewise instruct him at Rapier and Dagger, and afterwarde the defence against him.

**V.** If I should make a good lefte handed scholler, I would place him with his lefte foote forward, and his lefte heele against the middle of his right foote, making him to holde his Rapier shorte, and his Dagger out long.

**L.** In what warde would you put your selfe?

**V.** I would put my selfe in the firste warde of Rapier and Dagger, carrying my bodie in good ward towards my left side, and I would give him a stoccata under his Rapier, bearing my right foot towards his lefte side, turning well my bodie circularlie upon my right side, and he in the same time turning the point of his dagger downe, shall beate by my stoccata from his lefte side, and withall passing with his lefte foote towards my lefte side, hee shall give me an imbroccata under my Dagger; I in the meane while will avoide a little with my body, striking by his imbroccata from my left side, and carrying my right foote againe towards his lefte side, I will give him an imbroccata under the Rapier: then he shall turne his Dagger pointe upwadre, and strike by my imbroccata from his lefte side, going with his lefte foote circularly towards my left side, and shall give me a stoccata in the face over my Dagger, and I will beate by his stoccata outwards from my lefte side, going againe with my right foote circularly towards his lefte side, and give him another stoccata under the Dagger, and hee shall beate it by as before, going aside with his lefte foote towards my lefte side, and shall give me an imbroccata under the dagger, as

before, and I avoiding a little with my bodie, will beate his imbroccata outwards on my right side, parting at the instant with my right foote, and carrying after my lefte: and give him a riversa at the head, and if I should not bowe backward with my bodie when I did beate by his imbroccata towardes my right side, I my selfe should receive it in mine owne bellie, or the face: and whilst I goe with my right foote, and give him a riversa, he shal goe with his right foot where my right foote was, and give me a stoccata in the bellie, whereas he shal receive the riversa upon his Rapier and Dagger.

**L.** These things would seeme very strange to such as understand them not, because when you offer that riversa to the right handed man, you teach him to passe with the lefte foote, and to give you the imbroccata, contrarilie you in the same case make the lefte handed man, to passe with his right foote, giving you the stoccata.

**V.** Did I not tell you that the lefte hand had no advantage of the right, nor the right of the lefte? onelye use and knowledge giveth the better either to the right or the lefte: and oftentimes you shalbe occasioned to doe manye thinges, dealing with the left handed man, which you must do cleane contrary to that which you woiuld doe, dealing with the right handed man: wherfore seek to learne and to practise your selfe, that when occasion shall be offered, you maye knowe how to behave your selfe, and contemne the opinions of these *Spaca montagne*, which despise arte, because ignorance was ever the enemy of knowledge. Is it possible that he which never saw the warres, can be better knowledged then he which hath spent his life wholye therein, and borne honorable charges? can hee which never made shot in anie peece of artillerie or hargebuse, or bow, be more perfect, or at least know so muche as they which of long time have made profession thereof? So it is in the use of weapons, and in every other facultie: for example, take a Cannoneer which well understandeth his arte, and he will charge his Peeces in such good sorte, that it shall be a hard matter, or almost impossible for them to break: afterward take one of these contemners of arte, who with their blinde judgement presume to be able to doe all thinges, to such a one give the handling of a Peece of ordinance, and let him not want powder, shot, or any necessaries therto belonging, and let him charge according to his vaine knowledge, you shal see him presently breake all and kill himselfe. The like falleth out in the handling of armes, the ignorant will doe one thing for an other, which shall turne to his own confusion, for by the moving of his bodie or foot onely out of time and order, he may easilie overthrow him selfe, and hasten his owne death.

L. It hath been seene nevertheles, that many altogether unexperienced in the hargebuse, have made as good shot as they which have long practised the same.

V. It is an olde saying, that one flower maketh not a spring, for although this unskilful man have made, or may make at any time some good shot, assure your selfe it is to be attributed to chance or fortune, or as it is said, to his good hap, and if he should bee demaunded at what hting hee made his levell, if hee wil confesse a truth, hee will not denie, that his levell was set at an other marke, and in truth it may not be otherwise: for triall wherof make him shoote again, and you shall see having no more knowledge then before, nor practising the said exrecise, that scarse ever hee will make the like shot againe. But they which are wel instructed and exercised therin, will seldome make one fault. In like sort in the use of other weapons, one maye give a cunning stroke, but it shal be by fortune, and no cunning: so that thinking to give the like blowe againe, he will occasion his owne death, and that onely by not knowing what time to strike: after the same manner hee that will take upon him to charge a Peece of artillerie, not knowing the charge therof according to the waight of her bullet, will soone breake all, and murder him selfe: but he which truely hath his arte, you shall see him with dexteritie charge & discharge, without any encombrance, having his secrets readie to coole the Canon when she is overheated, and other artificiall feates which hee can make to serve his turne: so that it is no mervaile that he which is guided onely by presumption, and will thrust him selfe into matters which hee knoweth not, if hee overthrowe him selfe and such as rely upon him: and especially certaine harbrainde wits, who use to despise every thing, with whom I exhorte you to have no dealing, seing they are men void of al reason, which ought to be the rule of mans life, and without which a man is no man, but the outward shape of a man onely.

L. Truly I know you say the truth, and of force the knowledge of al good sciences must come from God, which is of a divine nature. But let this passe, I pray you resolve me in this: wherfore use you not to strike at the poniard side, as well as at the right side, and by what reson strike you at the sworde side? tell me also which is the better side to strike, either the poniarde side or the sworde side, and which of them is more safe?

V. When you goe to charge a lefte handed man in your warde, looke first in what ward he lyeth, and how hee holdeth his weapons, answering him in the same forme: and touching your demaund, to knowe wherfore I strike not at the Dagger side, I will tell you: when I finde him in this ward carrying his lefte foot formost, if I should make at his Dagger side and strike firste, I put my selfe in danger to hurt my self, because in thrusting I runne upon the pointe of my



enemie: but making at his lefte side, I am out of danger of his pointe, whereof making to his Dagger side I am in perill: for if you strike firste and the lefte handed man have a good Dagger, and be quicke with his sworde, he will alwaies put you in hazard of an imbroccata: and in truth there are fewe lefte handes which use stoccataes, but for the most part imbroccataes. Now if he offer you the imbroccata first, being towards his dagger, and you being nimble with your bodie, whilst hee strikes at you, you shall a little bow aside with your body, and beat by the pointe outwards from your left side, and you may easilye give him a stoccata or an imbroccata: but if you strike, first you endanger your self: and if you will strike the first, you shall go towards his left side, to be in more safetie, and offering yourblowe, seeke to be without his pointe, striving to fasten your stoccata at his face, and retire your lefte foot back with great swiftnes, your right foot accompanying your left: but finding him in his ward, to beare his swoorde out at length, if you be well advised, you shall carrie your right foot after your left, and lye in the third ward I taught you concerning the left foot: and regarde wel whilst you are in warde upon the right foot, and if you wil, out of the first ward of Rapier and dagger, enter into the third: be sure that you passe not forward with the left foot firste, for in so doing he might give you a stoccata in the belly or face: therefore carie your right foot after your left, and in the said ward, charge him towards his left side, who lying with his left foot forward, as you do, if you charge him on the left side, unles he be verie ready and perfect at his weapon, you shal have great advantage of him, & make your selfe master of his weapons, and greatly indanger his life. Neverthelesse if he be skilful, and know how to plaie with his bodie, he maie avoide the foresayd dangers, and hazard your life, if you bee not the more skilfull, albeit you finde him, as I said before, lying with his left foot forward. Wherefore it is necessarie that you understand and practise well your selfe, seeing the least errour you maie make, may be your great hurt.

**L.** But suppose that one be altogether ignorant, and have not these turnings of his bodie in a readinesse, you tolde mee there was no difference betweene the right hand and the left hand, neither of them having advantage of the other. And now you tell mee, that the right hand, in case he lie in the third ward, traversing toward the left side of his enemy, hath great advantage of a left hand. I praie you therefore shew mee if there be anie other ward, wherein the lefte hande may so lie, that the right hand shall have no advantage upon him.

**V.** You know how I saide there was no advauntage betweene them, besides that which use and knowledge give to either partie, wherefore if the right hande change from the first warde into the third, to assault the left hand, then the lefte hand shall carrie his lefte foote after his right, so lying with the right foote

forwarde in good ward, and the right hande lie in the third warde, with his lefte foot forward, and so shall neither the one or the other have a iote of advantage, except that which he can give by true observation of time and measure and his better knowledge: so that if the lefte hand be well instructed, finding his adversarie with his right foote forward, and with his owne right foote forward chargd toward the right side in good warde, then shall he have the advantage upon the right handed, and be able to make him selfe maister of his enemies armes. But if the right hand bee well knowledged and bee acquainted with the turnings and windings of the body, and be quick and readie with the rapier and dagger, he maie avoide these hazards, and endanger the left handed man. And this is one of the speciall points which either the one or the other can learne. This which I have tolde you (especiallie if either of them have to deale with one that is ignorant) will give him the advantage against his adversarie. Furthermore, if you shall lye in the first warde with your right foote foremost, bearing your selfe somewhat towards the right side of your enemy, and hee offer a mandritta at your head, be you readie with your dagger bearing the pointe high, and turning your bodie upon your left side, for so you shall give him a stoccata, or imbroccata, or punta riversa, in the belly or face, according as you shal finde your best advantage, & your enemy most discovered: you may also standing stedfast in good warde, give him a riversa at the legges. But if you should offer to avoide it by turning of your bodie, and be not quick therein, your adversarie might give you a mandritta upon the face or head: for there are many who in avoiding with their bodies, lose their daggers, and put themselves in great danger: also the escape which you make with your bodie upon the lefte side, is clean contrary to that which you use against the right handed man, because that when the right handed maketh a mandritta at your head, you do not raise the point of your dagger much, and turne your bodie upon your right side, but dealing with the left handed man, you turne your bodie upon your lefte side: also when he giveth you a riversa, you shal turne your bodie upon the right side. Moreover, if you shall have occasion to make a mezza incartata, you shal do it in a sorte clean contrarie to that which you make dealing with a right handed man, for you make your mezza incartata to the right handed man, giving him a stoccata, but to the lefte handed by an imbroccata, playing well with your bodie: if you be well skilled in your weapon, exercising your selfe in the first, second, and third wards, you shall do many thinges more then I speake of. Likewise the left handed, if he practise well these foresaid wardes, shall be able to defend himselfe, and to deal against any other ward. And for this time I will not discourse to you any farther, onely I advise you to exercise your selfe in all these points I have set down unto you, because besides the knowledge, you shall make your practise absolute in such sorte, that when occasion to serve to speake of such matters, you maie be able

to give a sufficient reason therof, & also defend your selfe against such as will offer you injurie, for the worlde is nowe subject to many wronges and insolencies. But you shal therby make your selfe most perfect, and know far more in this behalfe than I have uttered unto you, for it is not possible in this art to expresse all by words, which by your own experience and diversitie of occurrences you shall finde. But for this time enough, let us pray to God to defend us from all mishaps.

L. Amen, saye I, thanking you hartilye for your curtesie and favour shewed me in these matters, and I will not faile heereafter to visite you nowe and then, that our friendshippe maie dailie grow greater, offering at all times my small power to doo you service in acknowledgement of this your goodnes.

V. And I also thanke you for your kindnesse and loving offers. *Adio.*

L. *Adio.*

**The end of the first Booke.**