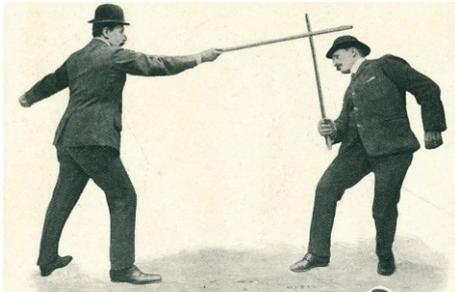


Championing the Cane

La Vie au Grand Air, 9th February 1906

Where it is shown that again the cane is an appreciable weapon of defence and a simple umbrella can pull you out of a difficult situation. Demonstrated by Professor Chabrier.



Head blow and its parry



Thrust to the face and its parry

In this age of ubiquitous jiu-jitsu there is a tendency to forget the old and simple methods of “self-defence” which sufficed for many years and which I found to be no worse for this purpose.

It is thus that the more we progress the less we practice wielding the cane; an excellent helper to be well considered in its role as an elegant accessory made practical by its convenience. Why? Without a doubt because the simplest methods retain the fewest willing devotees.



We tend today to multiply the methods of defence against possible attacks by a ruffian who lurks in the shadows or on a street corner.

In the depth of winter, wrapped up and ensconced in a long overcoat which partly impedes his movements, a fellow is hindered in his defence. He is well padded but to the detriment of his speed and agility.

A punch will not always be thrown well when one is imprisoned by clothing. As for jiu-jitsu, it does not allow much- judging by the demonstrations in which it has been shown- as it will be hindered by the armholes.

On the contrary, with a cane, a simple rattan manoeuvred by a well-trained hand, one has every chance to leave a dangerous situation against not only one but also against two adversaries.



Flank blow and its parry. Slipping a flank blow to the leg and riposting with a head blow
Parry against a leg-blow. Parry for a thrust to the body



Parrying a cane blow with an umbrella. Upon a head blow slip and close with a thrust of the umbrella



Upon an umbrella thrust close with a straight to the face

In this case clothes hinder, it is true, but they do not immobilise completely and this is enough. This theory must clearly be insufficient to convince the masses since as we progress the less we encounter cane users.

I do not have the pretension to show here a complete theory of the cane, anyway in this case “complete” does not mean “lengthy”.

The cane comprises of, in summary, two ways of striking; flank blows and thrusts. Deliver these to the head, body and legs. And when one adds straight thrusts to the head to the repertoire, in whatever fashion one wishes, one has exhausted the repertoire of attacks.

But if wielding a cane appears simple one will come to realise that it is very complicated in reality due to the training it requires which can only be maintained by practice.

This baton fencing requires it be done with a vertiginous rapidity and, no matter what natural gifts you have, this speed will only reach its complete development through training.

Clearly this remark applies to all sport and is not exclusive to the cane but it tends to prove that to become a good cane user, in the combative sense of the word, it is not enough to have a baton in hand and a twitching arm to save you. There is another choice to make.

In default of a cane, which is not always with you, the prosaic umbrella can save you from a bad footing. Advice; strike always with the point if you really wish to do harm. How many in existence have attacked with an umbrella which resulted in nothing? This is because they are striking with, what is known in a certain world as, “the mattress”, that is to say the silk canopy when rolled it is up on itself.

The instances which I reproduce here thus have no other pretence than to be a humble “abc” of defence with weapons made up from the accessories of your everyday life.

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Parry against a cane-blow with an umbrella and close with a kick to the flank

If one has no cane then set aside the umbrella blow with a hand, then riposte with a kick to the flank

Translated by P. T Crawley, 2015

Thanks to Rodney Bennett for finding he article and making it available