

The cane as a weapon

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Introduction

The value of a cane as a weapon is the increased reach and space which it covers as compared with the hand, the great variety and diversity of motions that can be made, and the multiplication and concentration of the muscular force applied to it. As self-defense is rarely needed in these days the use of a cane as a weapon is not well known. Nevertheless self defense may be needed, and that with a cane is a quick and good one when it is understood. In these pages will be formulated a system of defense and attack with the cane which is simple, effective and easily understood, which may be acquired without the necessity of an instructor. A full comprehension of the system alone will be of use, and such practice as can be given o it will greatly increase its value. It can be made an excellent systematic exercise of a light and attractive nature with the satisfaction of knowing that proficiency of it may prove of material value. The work may be done in the ordinary clothing as the system would be used in actual application. An opponent is not necessary for the understanding and aquirement of the system, but where two persons can work together carefully a better appreciation of the possibilites will be had. Practice assaults should not be made without masks and padding as otherwise serious injury may result. As a system of self-defense, much or all of it may be acquired by men of advanced age, or not in especially good physical condition, and it is to those who are least prepared for defense with the hands that it might prove of the greatest value. All intricate and difficult motions have been omitted from this system and nothing used that is not easily performed and of practical value. In case of the system coming into use for actual self-defense it is not likely that in most cases more than the simplest and most elementary protions would be needed.

Choice of a Cane as a Weapon

This system is applicable to any cane or stick, or even an umbrella, within its limitations. In the case of an umbrella the point and butt are the effective protions. A very reliable and suitable cane for a weapon is a medium weight hickory stick, as it is of great toughness and strenght and is of low cost. A cane with a straight handle has some advantages over one with a crook or offset handle as it can be used more uniformly from each end and blows from the butt are more concentrated.

How to Hold the Cane

To hold a cane ready for instant attack or defense, grasp it at a distance about one-quarter to one-third from the butt with the thumb towards the point. This gives a balance that permits of very quick motions and allows both point and butt to brought into use. The exact location of the grasp is a matter of individual choice and the particular cane, but at least from four to six inches of the butt should project back of the hand. For close direction and control the thumb may be extended along the cane. For free swinging cuts the thumb may be grasped

around the cane. The position of the thumb is changed instantly. The grasp should be sufficiently firm to prevent the cane from slipping through or being knocked from the hand.

Left Guard

Take position with left foot and left side of body slightly advanced. Left arm raised from the elbow and held across the chest. Cane grasped in right hand, point down, and right arm nearly extended downward. Legs straight, or nearly so, and weight equally on both feet. The position should be comfortable and easy and at the same time alert and ready for movement. A similar left-handed guard may be used. This is the guard to use against an assault with hands. The left hand is ready to parry or strike; the cane can not be seized, but can be used in many directions.

Right Guard

Take position with right foot and right side of the body advanced. Left arm raised from the elbow and held across the chest. Cane grasped in right hand, point down and extended to the front. Right arm extended downward and to the front. Legs straight or nearly so, and weight equally on both feet. A similar left-handed guard may also be used. This is the guard to use against an assault with a cane or similar weapon. It allows a longer and stronger defense to the left guard, but less and shorter defense in the other directions, especially the rear. The right and left guards may be quickly changed from one to the other by reversing the relative position of the feet. The advantage in keeping the point down is that the cane can not be seized or pushed to one side, and it reduces parrying to two simple movements.

Double Guard, Right or Left

The general position of the body in this guard is the same as in right or left guard. The cane is grasped in both hands with the thumbs toward the center, each end projecting from the hands about six or eight inches. The hands are bent upwards from the elbows, and the cane is held horizontally about six inches in front of the chest. This guard is used against assaults from two or more directions and may be used in place of the single guards. As blows may be delivered with either hand from this guard, it is evident that both the reach and the space are much extended. The assailant is also less certain from where to expect a blow.

Value of Attacks.

A variety of blows may be given with a cane, some of which are derived from or merge into others. All of these blows have their uses and application, and for a correct understanding they will be considered in detail.

Kind and Direction of Blows.

Jabs. Jabs are short stabbing blows given with the point or butt of cane. They are preceded by a drawing back of the hand to impart more force, and may be delivered high or low. The jab is one of the quickest attacks with the cane, and one of the hardest to avoid. Point jabs are best made with the thumb on the cane. Butt jabs may be made with the thumb on or around the cane.

Thrusts. The thrust is a stabbing blow and varies from the jab in being delivered over a longer distance and with a full extension of the arm. The hand is not first drawn back as in the case of the jab, but is extended directly forward and the weight of the body may be put into the blow. The jab and thrust are among the most effective blows that can be given with a cane as they are very concentrated and their force will penetrate clothing where a cut would have little or no effect. As a cane decreases in weight the more effective become jabs and thrusts as compared with cuts. Jabs and thrusts are also the most effective blows with an umbrella. The thrust is given with the point or long end of cane and with the thumb extended on the cane for better directing the point. The knuckles may be turned up, down, or to either side.

Upper Cuts. Upper cuts are made from downwards up, and may be delivered from the positions of guard without preparatory motion. They are not strong cuts, but are valuable as there are no preliminary indications and they are hard to parry or avoid.

Right Cuts, Left Cuts, Down Cuts. These cuts are delivered in the directions named, either high or low. They require more or less preparatory motion in the opposite direction. They are given with the knuckles turned in the direction of the blow, and the thumb may be on or around the cane. Down cuts are very strong and harder to parry than left or right cuts. Right cuts are somewhat stronger than left cuts.

Diagonal Cuts. Diagonal cuts are in an angular direction from the vertical or horizontal, and may be upward or downward, right or left. They are a valuable variation on the right, left, down and upper-cuts.

Circular Cuts. Circular cuts are full continuous swings, the first part of which is away from the object and the continuation of which is towards the object. They may be made in all directions and accumulate force during the delivery. They are valuable cuts and very deceptive, as the point of delivery may be changed without stopping the motion.

Back-handed Cuts. Back-handed cuts are made with the knuckles turned away from the direction of the blow. Upper and left cuts are most successfully made backhanded. They are not strong cuts, but may be used in connection with direct cuts and are valuable in deceptions/

Character of Cuts

In addition to their kind and direction, the character or quality of cuts with a cane are of importance and the leading characteristics will be given.

Snap Cuts. Snap cuts are short and quick and receive most of their motion

and force from the wrist. They are very quickly made and much force can be put into them. They are good cuts to use against the hands and do not carry the cane out of line.

Half-arm Cuts. Half arm cuts start from the elbow and include a wrist motion. The preliminary position will start from the shoulder, but when the cut is delivered it will be mostly from the elbow. These half-arm cuts are of more general use than any others and may be finished with a wrist snap.

Full-arm Cuts. Full-arm cuts are delivered from the shoulder and include more or less elbow and wrist motion. They are instinctive cuts and great force can be put into them. Unless there is a reasonable certainty of landing, the full-arm cut is not a good one to use. It is very plainly indicated and the slowest in delivery, and, in consequence, is more easily avoided or parried. The recovery of guard is also slower, which gives a better chance for a return attack from the assailant. Full-arm cuts may be used to advantage in making feints.

Swinging Cuts. Swinging cuts are made in a horizontal plane over a long arc and may be continued back and forth. Great force is not put into them until a opening may appear for landing. One of their principal uses is for keeping the distance open.

Cuts in general. In delivering a cut there should be a definitive idea of landing on a certain point where the full force of the blow will be developed. The force should be cumulative up to the objective point, and should cease as soon as possible after this is reached. Otherwise, if the blow is not landed, the cut goes wide and before control of the cane can be gained the assailant may deliver a counter attack. The force of a blow lies as much in the skill with which it is delivered as in the strength applied.

Points of Attack

The assault from an adversary, whether with or without a weapon, must be started with the hands, unless it happens to be a kick. The kick should be kept in mind and is not difficult to evade from the position of guard. A kick may also lead to an assailant's defeat, as it places him in unstable balance and for a few instants he is unable to retreat. Should a kick be attempted deliver a snap cut to the assailant's shin, if possible.

As the hands are, generally, the most advanced portion of an assailant's body, they should be made one of the principal points of attack. Not only are they much exposed but comparatively light blows on them with a cane will cause disablement. Should the assailant be armed with a knife or other short weapon, his hands are all the more important as a point of attack. A pistol may even be knocked from an assailant's hand by a quick and unexpected blow.

The face, head, and neck are important points of attack. They can not always be reached on a direct attack, but may be on a return attack or after a feint at some other point.

The lower half of the trunk is much exposed and is difficult to guard strongly. It may frequently be reached on direct attack and is sensitive to jabs and thrusts.

The elbows, knees and shins are sensitive to comparatively light blows and may be attacked to advantage when exposed.

Parries.

In defense against a knife, cane or other striking weapon, parries may be necessary, and they are the best and most strongly made from the right guard. In this guard the cane is entirely in front of the body and may be freely moved to the right and left. From the position of right guard with the point of cane down, two circular parried upward, one to the left, and one to the right may be made to cover the entire person. A parry should be in the nature of a counter blow against the assailant's weapon, sufficiently strong to break the force of his blow. A parry with a cane should not be made by simply holding it in opposition to a blow, as this gives the assailant a chance to divert his attack to the hand holding the cane, which the counter blow parry prevents. When the attack is made with a knife or another sort weapon the counter blow parry may be directed against the assailant's hand or forearm. Parries are the strongest when made with the thumb on the cane and the knuckles turned in the direction of the parry. The same right and left parries may be made from the left guard, but are more limited in their extent. From the position of double guard, right or left parried may be made with either hand, and as the cane is in a middle position, some will be down strokes and some up strokes. Thrusts with a cane may be safely parried with the disengaged hand or arm which gives an excellent chance for a counter attack at the same time.

Return Attacks.

Having parried or evaded an assailant's attack, an opportunity generally exists for a few instants when a return attack can be made to advantage. Thus a successful left parry may be continued and converted into a right cut for the head, or a right parry may be converted into a left cut. In evasions, as will be later explained under foot work, the assailant's attack is avoided by change of position, and a return attack may be made at the same time. As a general rule, return attacks have a better chance of success than direct attacks as the adversary is not in the best position for defense while his attack is being diverted.

Counter Parries.

If the assailant succeeds in parrying a cut he may attempt a return attack as described. This is met by dipping the point of the cane under the assailant's weapon with a circular motion in the direction from which the counter attack is delivered. Counter parries are the quickest made backhanded, or with the knuckles turned away from the direction of the parry. This is the position of the hand when the parried blow was struck.

Feints.

Feints are simulated or false attacks made to induce a parry, or hold an adversary in check. The feint, or series of feints, may be followed by a real attack. Thus a cut to the right may be started; if a right parry is induced from the adversary, instead of finishing the attack as a cut the point of the cane may be passed under the adversary's parry and the attack finished as a thrust. When a feint is used the direction of attack should change before the adversary's parry has touched the cane. If the adversary appears proficient in the use of feints, be careful not to over parry, and if the feints are not strong a parry may be reserved until the real attack is delivered.

Passing the cane.

One of the great advantages of the cane as a weapon is the possibility of passing it from one hand to the other and back. As either end of the cane may be used for attack or defense, this possibility of passing it from one hand to the other gives it a range and variety of application possessed by no other striking weapon. On account of this possibility it is worth while to familiarize the left hand with carrying and using the cane in alternation with the right.

Foot Work.

For the full development of the cane as a weapon of attack and defense it is necessary to be able to quickly change the location and position of the body without loss of balance or control. This is accomplished by movements of the feet which are executed from either the left or the right guard, and which will be described

Extend front. In making an attack to the front it may be necessary to increase the reach in order to make a hit. To do so, advance the forward foot a short distance at the same time the cut or thrust is made, the rear foot remaining in place. This advance should not be overdone for fear of slipping or losing the balance and for the further reason that the longer the extension the slower is the recovery.

Recover. To recover is to resume the position from which the movement was started.

Extend rear. The rear foot is moved back a short distance, the advanced foot remaining in place. The motion is followed by a recovery. There are two uses for this motion. First to evade an attack from the front, and second to temporarily bring one in closer striking distance to the rear.

Advance Advance the forward foot a short distance and follow with the rear foot to the position of guard. This motion is for shortening the distance to the front. It does not disturb the position of guard and maintains a good balance and strong foot hold. An advance should be made with caution, as it may be the signal for an attack.

Retreat Move the rear foot a short distance to the rear and follow with the forward foot to the position of guard. This motion is for increasing the distance to the front. The retreat may be combined with a parry or a return attack.

Front pass. Move the rear foot in line with or slightly in advance of the leading foot, then quickly move the leading foot to the position of guard. This motion is used to quickly shorten the distance to the front by a greater amount than is covered by the advance.

Rear pass. Move the leading foot in line with or slightly in rear of the rear foot, then quickly move the rear foot to the position of guard. This motion is used to quickly increase the distance to the front by a greater amount than is covered by the retreat. Before the second foot motion is made the original guard may be recovered in both front and rear pass.

Change guard forward. Swing on the ball or heel of the leading foot, bringing the rear foot in front to the position of guard. This quickly shortens the distance to the front and changes from one guard to the other at the same time. This motion may be combined with an attack.

Change guard backward. Swing on the ball or heel of the rear foot, bringing the leading foot to the rear to the position of guard. This increases the distance to the front and changes from one guard to the other at the same time. The motion may be combined with a parry or counter attack.

Move right, or left. Move the rear foot in the direction in which distance is to be gained, and follow with the forward foot to the position of guard. These motions may also be made beginning with the forward foot. When the rear foot is moved first, the motion may more quickly be changed to a retreat.

Turn right, or left. Swing on the ball, or heel of the advanced foot to the direction desired, following with the rear foot to the position of guard.

Face rear. Turn on the balls or heels of both feet in place and face to the rear. This motion changes the guard.

Turn rear. Swing on the ball or heel of the advanced foot, either right or left as most convenient, until facing the rear, and bring the rear foot to the position of guard.

Defense and Attack.

This subject will be generally considered from the defensive point of view as one must meet whatever attack is offered. When it can be done, an attack should be received in front, but as it is not always possible on the start, or there may be more than one attack, defense will be considered in four principal directions.

Defense to Front

If an attack is threatened from the front, the left guard is quickly and easily assumed, and as it is not an especially belligerent position it need not precipitate the attack. All of the cuts, thrusts, and parries may be executed to the front from the left guard, and it is a good one to use if the attack is with the hands. Distance may be increased or lessened at will by foot work. The following is a

odd way to meet an attack with the hands. As the assailant advances us snap and half-arm cuts at his hands, being careful that the cane is not seized. If the assailant gets within striking or grappling distance parry with the left hand and jab low at the body with point of cane. A rear extension may also be made to avoid the blow or grapple and for a firmer position. If a high grapple is made continue jabbing low at the body. If a low grapple is made raise the right arm and jab with the butt of cane at assailant's head and neck. If the assailant does not close or rush, there is a choice of attacks that can be made with a combination of the various blows and foot work. An attack on an adversary should be preceded by one or more feints to secure an opening.

If an attack from the front is with a striking weapon the right guard should be assumed as this brings the cane into full prominence and use for entirely covering and protecting the person. All of the cuts, thrusts and parries can be executed from the right guard to their fullest extent and advantage, and combined with foot work as to quickly secure the greatest distance both in advance and retreat. If the assailant opens the attack, be prepared for left and right parry and evasion, and immediate return or counter attack. If the attack is with a cane it is likely to be apparent whether the assailant is familiar with its use or not. If he is not, defense is not difficult. The position of right guard invites a down cut at the head; this can be thrown off with a left parry, and a strong right return cut can be made at the same time. Every chance should be watched for to attack the assailant's hand. Care should be taken to prevent the assailant from getting inside the guard, or effective striking at thrusting distance of the cane. Should this happen, however, change to left guard backward and jab and snap cut, seizing assailant's cane with left hand, if possible. If the attack is with a knife, the assailant's hand should be the object of short continuous attacks varied with thrusts and jabs at the body when opportunity offers. The cane should never be much out of line as the object is to keep assailant outside of the guard. If he can be kept moving backwards an opening may be made for a successful blow. If one is making a series of short advances, a very quick and long advance may be made by using a front pass combined with a front extension.

Defense to Right.

Defense to the right from the left guard is fairly good. Right and down cuts can be made strongly. Left cuts and point thrusts are poor. Foot work in this direction is limited and the position of body is not stable. Parries can be well made. In case of closure, butt jabs can be made, or, by passing the cane to left hand, both butt and point jabs. Defense to the right from right guard is poor. Right cuts, down cuts and upper cuts can be made. Point thrusts and left cuts are poor. Parries are poor. Foot work in this direction is limited and the position is unstable; in case of a closure can be made, or, by passing the cane to the left hand, both point and butt jabs.

Defense to Left.

Defense to the left from the left guard is poor. All cuts and thrusts are limited and not strong. Foot work is limited and the position unstable in this direction. By passing the cane to left hand, longer down, left and upper cuts can be made, and also butt jabs.

Defense to the left from the right guard is fairly good. Left and down cuts can be made strongly. Right cuts and thrusts are fair. Parries can be well made. Foot work is limited and the position in this direction is not stable. Point jabs can be made high and low, and butt jabs high.

Defense to Rear.

Defense to the rear from the left guard is fair. Down, right and upper cuts are fairly strong. Left cuts and thrusts are poor. Butt jabs are good. Parries are poor. Foot work is good and the position is stable in this direction. By passing the cane to left hand, point and butt jabs are possible. Defense to the rear from the right guard is very poor. Only short and weak left and down cuts, and short point and butt jabs can be made. By passing cane to left hand the possibility of cuts is improved. The foot work is good and the position stable in this direction.

Defense in Two or More Directions.

This is a situation requiring quick judgement and rapid action. The position of double guard, left gives the most uniform reach all around, and with the cane held in both hands, ready to strike with either, there is the greatest choice of direction in which to strike or thrust. Change of location and direction by foot work becomes of great importance. The quickest change of direction is a face rear, and it may be alternately reversed for quick action all round. The assailants must be kept from acting in unison, if possible, by attacking them rapidly and in turn. More chances of being struck must be taken for the sake of making more effective blows. Feints of cuts followed by strong jabs may give the quickest results. The most powerful jabs of all may be given with the cane held in both hands, and they may be delivered high and low and in all directions. Very strong short blows may also be struck with the middle of the cane when it is held in both hands. This two handed jabbing and striking is very useful when closely surrounded. Strong parries against the hands may also be made with the cane held in both hands, and there is the least chance of losing it. As soon as possible get through the circle of attack so as to bring the assailants more nearly in one direction. Strike the hands of assailants whenever possible. Having delivered a blow on one assailant do not watch for its effect, but immediately threaten or attack another. An assault from four directions is a serious matter, but it is not as hopeless as it might seem, if quickly and skillfully met.

Special cases.

Off guard, front or rear grapple. When off guard and holding the cane in ordinary manner one be grappled in front without warning. The cane cannot then be used effectively with the existing hold. To bring the cane into play, pass it behind the body and grasp it with the other hand near the point and jab forward. If the grapple is from the rear, the cane is passed in front of the body and backwards jabs made.

Guard against a dog. A dog is wary and active and rather difficult to strike. The right guard is the most suitable with the cane well in the line of attack. Left back handed cuts may be used as feints, quickly followed by right snap cuts.

Guard with the hat. In case of an assailant with a knife a very valuable guard can be made by holding the hat in the left hand by the brim. It should be firmly grasped at the side, and can be removed from the head in one motion. The hat can then be used to catch a blow from the knife, and before it can be repeated, it should be possible to deal an effective blow or jab with the cane. In case of an attack with a pistol, a chance may occur to shy the hatt into the opponent's face and thus secure a chance to strike with the cane. The use of the hat as a guard is, of course, not confined to the knife, but it may be used against any weapon. The only disadvantage is that it prevents passing the cane from hand to hand.

Exercises.

The following exercises are based on the matter explained in the foregoing pages, and their practice will give a fuller understanding and appreciation of the system. The cuts, thrusts, and foot work, made from each guard should be first well understood, and their practice forms a simple exercise in itself. A reasonable amount of practice will make self-defense with the cane an instinctive matter, should it be needed. The exercises should be done slowly at first, and the speed increased as they are mastered. Unless otherwise stated the motions are to the front. These exercises are but a few of the combinations that can be made.

Left guard. Advance, snap down cut at the hands, parry with left hand, rear extension, jab front low, recover.

Left guard. Retreat, back handed upper cut at the hands, down cut at the head with front extension, recover

Left guard. Back handed left cut for the hands, advance, right cut to the head, recover.

Left guard. Upper cut to the rear, pass cane to left hand, and down cut for hands, recover.

Left guard. Cut left at head, extend front and cut right at head, recover.

Left guard. Face rear, circular down cut at hands, face front, jab low, recover.

Left guard. Move right, point jab left low, turn left, upper right diagonal cut at hands, recover.

Left guard. Turn right, butt jab rear, pass cane to left hand, upper cut to front, recover.

Left guard. Front pass, start full arm down cut at head, then jab for face with butt, recover.

Left guard. Right high cut to right, left swinging cut to left, change guard forward, right high cut, recover.

Left guard. Change guard backward, snap cut at shin, thrust front low, front extension, recover.

Left guard. Extend rear, parry down cut at the head with right parry, continue as a left diagonal cut at the head, recover.

Right guard. Parry right high, left high, right diagonal down cut at head, recover.

Right guard. Down snap cut at hand, continue as a circular half-arm down cut at head, thrust low with front extension, recover.

Right guard. Start full-arm down cut, parry thrust with left hand, change guard forward, jab at face with butt, recover.

Right guard. Half arm cut at head, thrust low with front extension, recover.

Right guard. Back-handed upper cut at hand, snap down cut at head with front extension, recover.

Right guard. Face rear, pass cane, left cut at head, face front, jab front low with left hand, recover.

Right guard. Cut right high, parry left high, return right cut, recover.

Right guard. Advance, half arm right cut at hand, rear pass and parry left high, thrust front high with front extension.

Right guard. Thrust low with front extension, parry right high and recover.

Right guard. Change guard backward with rear extension, pass cane, upper cut forward, change guard backward, pass cane, recover.

Right guard. Cut left high, counter parry right, down cut at head with front extension, recover.

Right guard. Turn rear with swinging right cut, front pass with circular down cut at head, recover.

Double guard, left. Cut left with the left hand, turn right, cut right with right hand, jab left with point, circular down cut to right, turn rear, right cut, recover.

Double guard, left. Left high cut to front with right hand, continue as swinging left cut to rear, continue as low point jab to left, continue as circular down cut to right, recover.

Double guard, left. Front pass, right hand upper cut to rear, continue as circular down cut to front, pass cane, cut to left, cut to right, recover.

Double guard, left. Downward cut to front, right hand, face rear with swinging right cut, face front with swingign left cut, recover.

Double guard, left. With both hands, jab front with the point high, jab rear with the butt low, jab left with the point low, jab right with the butt high.

Double guard, left. Change guard backwards, cut left to the rear with left hand, pass cane, change guard backwards, cut right to the rear with right hand, recover.

Double guard, right. With both hands, jab right with the butt, strike front with the point, jab rear with the point, strike left with the butt, recover.

Double guard, right. With both hands, jab front, rear, right, left, recover.

Double guard, right. With both hands, strike left with the middle of cane, parry downwards to the front with middle of the cane, strike left with the butt, recover.

Double guard, right. With both hands, advance and jab front with the butt, face rear and jab rear with the point, turn left and cut left with left hand, pass cane, cut right to rear, recover.

Double guard, right. Swinging cut to right with right hand, and back to guard, face rear, swing cut to left with left hand, and back to guard, repeat.

Double guard, right. With right hand, upper cut to front, continue as a circular down cut to rear, continue as upper cut to left, continue as circular down cut to right, recover.



Left guard.



Right guard.



Double ₁₆ guard, left.



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*From right guard, thrust front, with
front extension.*



From left guard, upper cut to rear.



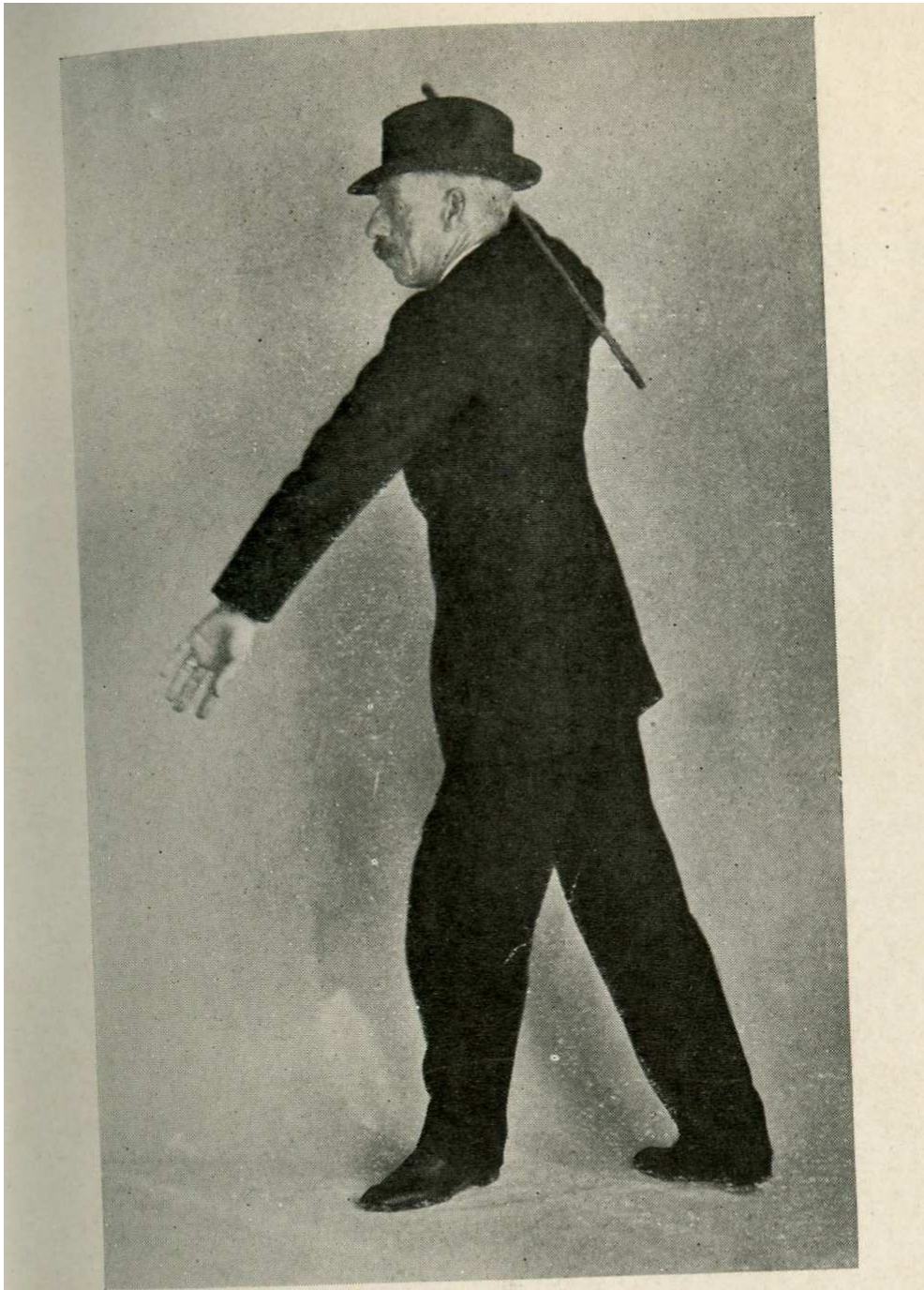
*From left guard, pass cane to left hand and
circular down cut to front.*



From right guard, right parry, high.



*From right guard, right counter parry after
adversary has parried left cut.*

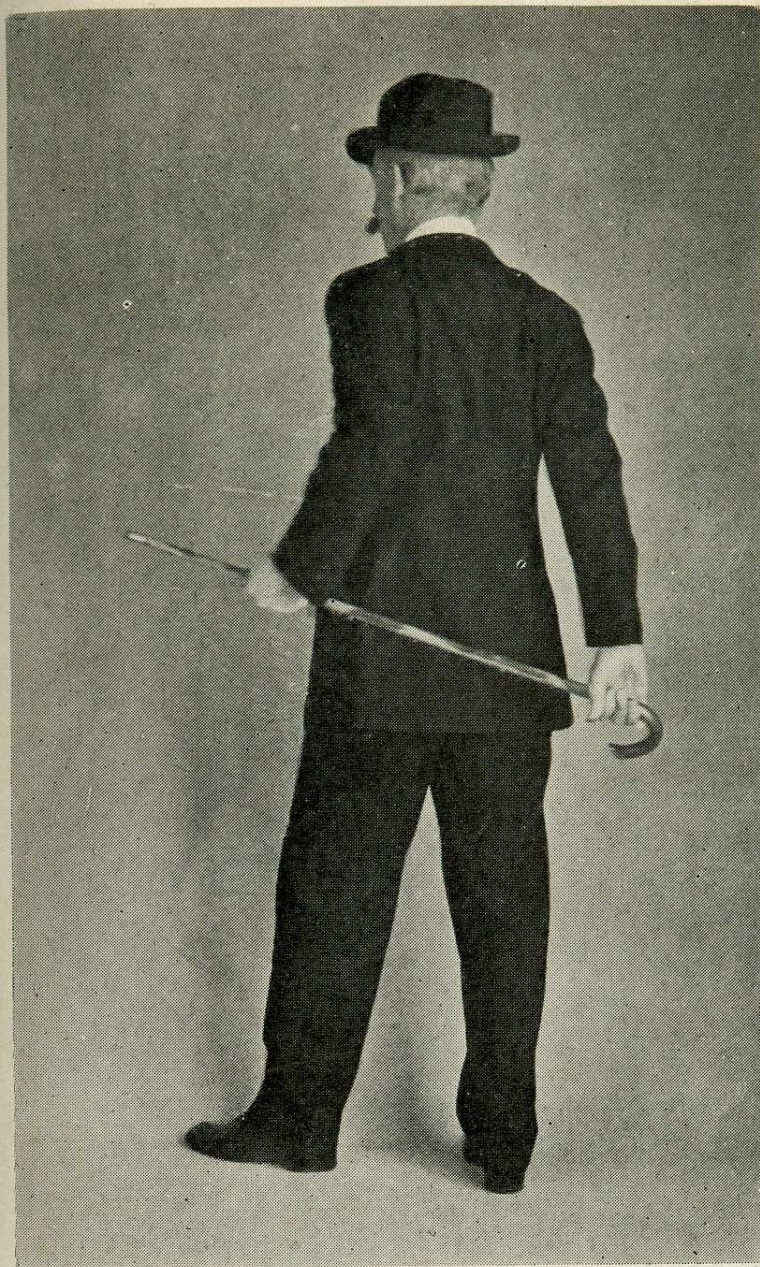


*From right guard, rear pass half completed;
parry low thrust with left hand, and
full arm down cut to front.*



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From double guard, left; jab high to rear with butt.



*Off guard, grappled high in front; pass
cane behind body to other hand and jab
forward with point.*



*From left guard; parry knife thrust with
the hat, and jab forward with point.*