

The Secrets of the Single Sword

Henri de Saint Didier, 1573

Translated by [Chris Slee](mailto:chris@sleech.info)¹, 2014

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Introduction

Preface

This is a translation of the section of the text concerning stepping and proper footwork. Please direct any comments and questions on either the translation or the fencing techniques described to me on the email address above or at my blog².

The Text

There are a number of copies of the text but only two are publicly available. The first is the copy in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France (BNF) available through [Google Books](#)³. The second is located in the Library of the city of Blois and is available through the [Bibliotheque Virtuelles Humanistes](#)⁴ (BVH).

The translation is based on the [transcription of the BVH copy](#)⁵ made in 2010 by Olivier Depuis for [l'Association pour la Recherche et le Développement des Arts Martiaux Historiques Européens](#)⁶. All amendments to the text made in the transcription have been assumed and are not noted here.

Translation

I must say first off that I am not a professional translator. I could not be considered fluent in French but I'm told by native speakers that I do read it and write it quite well. I have a DELF B1 certification and a passion for Renaissance literature. I say this only so that the reader will not be lured into thinking that my translation is in any way authoritative. However, it is, I believe, the best English translation of this portion of Saint Didier's book available at the present time.

I am also an historical fencer specialising in the sidesword techniques of the late sixteenth century, the very weapon used in Saint Didier's text. I believe that this practical experience has given me insights into the text that would not be available to other translators.

As for the text itself, Saint Didier's prose has all the signs of a man trying to emulate those better educated than him. This is not an improbable interpretation since he claims himself to be both minor gentry and a professional soldier of 25 years' service. His phrasing is often impossible to figure out because he tends to nest subordinate clauses many levels deep to the extent that it becomes difficult to determine which subject a particular verb refers to. Unfortunately, the worse offending passages are the same ones in which he seems to be

2 <http://sleech.info>

3 <http://books.google.com.au/books?id=mh0WAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Henry+de+Saint+Didier>

4 <http://www.bvh.univ-tours.fr/Consult/index.asp?numfiche=259>

5 http://ardamhe.free.fr/biblio/Saint_Didier_Transcription_1.1.pdf

6 <http://ardamhe.free.fr/>

stating his main points. Because of this, the translation is in some place not as strict as I would have liked and some juggling of word order has been called for.

Here is the list of technical terms and how I have rendered them in the translation:

- *plan* outline or instructions
- *tenue* comportment or posture
- [desgainement](#)⁷ drawing the sword from the scabbard as discussed in the first entry here
- [braye](#)⁸ pants, trousers

I've translated the literal French "putting the sword to the fist" as "drawing the sword".

The only significant alteration I have made is dropping in translation the profusion of "said," "above-mentioned," "here-above said", etc, from the text. They are intrusive and add nothing to either the meaning of the text or to show Saint Didier's writing style.

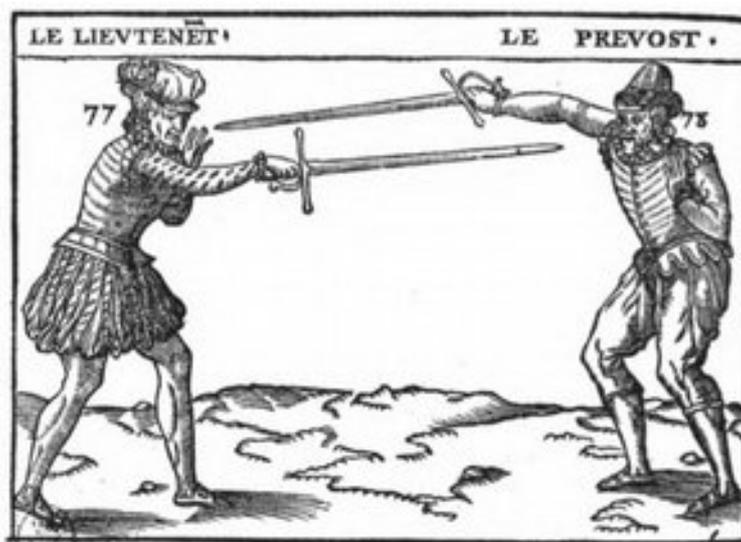
7 <http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdico1look.pl?strippedhw=Gaine>

8 http://atilf.atilf.fr/scripts/dmfX.exe?LEM=BRAIE1;MENU=menu_dmf;ISIS=isis_dmf2012.txt;OUVRIR_MENU=2;s=s050036f8;LANGUE=FR;XMODE=STELLA;FERMER;AFFICHAGE=1

The Secrets of the Single Sword

Disarms and Holds

Hereafter is shown and explained the outline and posture for the attacking Lieutenant in order to show (how) to perform the first hold against the Provost.



And in order to do this, this next Lieutenant should be on the left foot having made, as was said, his stance, guard and position mentioned above in the first outlines. And for this he should hold himself on the right foot in middle guard, holding the fingers of the sword hand downwards and the left hand directly before the face in order to keep it close⁹ to beat away a thrust from above if it happens that the Provost or other defender throws (one) to him -- because all thrusts are easy to defend and to turn aside with the hand. But one does not do them since the point is in the air and far from the force from which it proceeds, which is from its thrower. And all things which are in the air are simple to turn aside, as he (the Lieutenant) is ready to do if it happens that the Provost advances his point further, as is shown above in his illustration numbered 77 behind the throat.

The end of the guard and posture for the attacking Lieutenant who wants to show the Provost how to make the first hold.

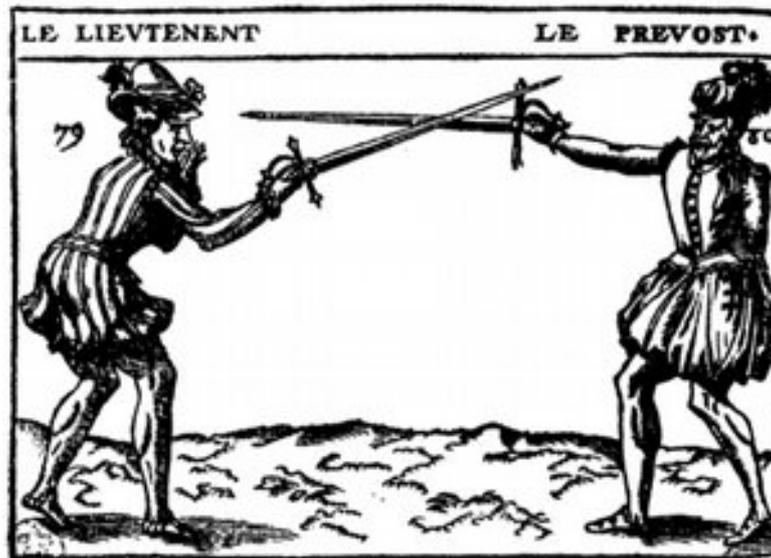
Here follows the guard and posture for the Provost in order to defend against the Lieutenant's first hold as will be seen hereafter in the illustration which follows marked 90.

And for this guard, it is required that the Provost, has made the same stance, guard and position, as was said above, in one of the drawings (of the sword), having thrown the right foot behind and being stood on the left foot in high guard, holding the sword hand with the finger downwards, situating the point of it directly at the left eye of the Lieutenant, holding the left hand directly before his breast as is shown here above in the illustration noted 78 behind his hat.

The end of the guard and posture for the defending Provost.

⁹ lit.: to be more near with it

In these following two illustrations the first strike is shown, which is a *maindroit* or thrust from above thrown by the Lieutenant against the Provost in order to make the first hold of this sword alone.



And in order to do it, this Lieutenant, having made the above-mentioned stance, guard and position, is stood on the left foot and, standing there in order to execute this strike which is a *maindroit* or thrust from above. This next Lieutenant advanced the right foot and threw a *maindroit* or thrust, at his choice, against the Provost, holding the fingers of the sword hand upwards and the left hand directly before his nose as is shown in the illustration numbered 79 behind the throat.

Thus, the end of the strike that the Lieutenant must throw at the Provost in order to make the first hold of this sword alone.

Here follows the teaching and defences of the first strike for the Provost in order to prepare himself to make the first hold which you see here after in the illustrations.

And in order to do this, having also made his stance and drawing (of the sword), the Provost should be stood in high guard being on the left foot, such as is drawn above in the illustration of the Provost numbered 78. And in order to defend himself from this *maindroit* or thrust from above that is thrown against him by the Lieutenant in order to show him the first hold which can be made¹⁰ and made against these strikes, this Provost being on the left foot has thrown the right foot behind and has crossed the Lieutenant's sword, strong on weak, lifting upwards a little his sword point and the left hand directly in front of the Lieutenant, holding the fingers of the sword hand upwards and the left hand before the breast, as is shown above in the illustration noted 80 behind the top of the head.

Thus the end of how the Provost defends against the above mentioned strike by the Lieutenant.

By these two following illustrations the attacking Lieutenant shows to the defending Provost how he and all others should face the first hold of this sword alone and, afterwards, will show him the counter-holds and such¹¹. Anyone who will observe all that is said and that

¹⁰ pour luy monstrer que la premiere prinse ce peut faire

¹¹ de sorte

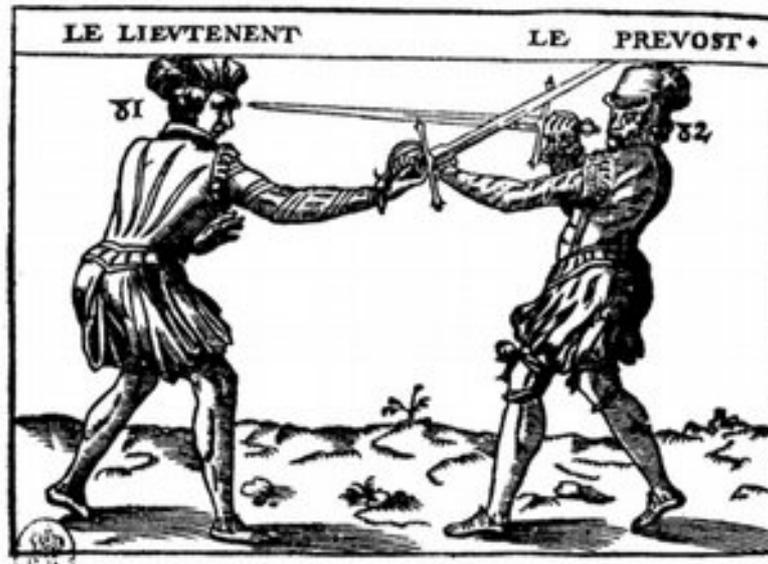
follows hereafter without omitting anything will never find himself surprised nor attacked, and if he find himself (thus) he ought to confess that it is not the fault of the author of the art but having committed the fault himself, such that he who recognises his fault could be said to be learned even though he could otherwise teach it and do it himself.

I advise you, all supporters of Mars, that this art and science of arms was not written by the author to be abused, but to¹² preserve your honour and health because whoever will do the it¹³ otherwise does not require either the author or the art. Thus to him who will abuse it -- and yet the wise dominate the stars and the bad (merely) want to.

12 *ains pour*

13 *la reigle*

The first strike, thrown on the *maindroit* or thrust from above, for the first hold by the Lieutenant and then¹⁴ executed by the Provost, as is shown here.



And in order to do this, it is needed that this Lieutenant, having made his stance, guard and positioning, being on the left foot, should advance the right foot, as is shown in the figure and illustration above noted number 79. And also, this following Lieutenant, being on the left foot here above, advanced his right foot and threw a high thrust or *maindroit* to the Lieutenant (ed: Provost?), holding the fingers of the sword hand upwards and this Lieutenant holds his left hand directly before his stomach below the sword arm as is shown in the illustration marked 81.

Thus the end of the strike which the Lieutenant threw in order to demonstrate to the Provost how to do the first hold of this sword alone.

Hereafter will be shown and explained how the Provost must and can make the first hold against the Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the Provost, being on the left foot as the Lieutenant threw the *maindroit* or high thrust, as he could, threw the left foot behind and crossed his sword with the Lieutenant's, strong on weak, turning the fingers of the sword hand upwards. And in the same instant without any delay¹⁵, advanced his left foot strongly forward and has gripped with his left hand the guard of the (Lieutenant's) sword and pretends to give him a turn in order to make him stop, as will be seen here after, holding the point of the sword directly at the forehead as is shown above in the illustration and figure noted with number 82.

Thus the end of the first hold, next executed for the defending Provost against the Lieutenant.

14 *presque ?*

15 *peu d'intervalle*

The first hold, shown by the Lieutenant and in this strike also shown by him, and executed by the Provost, as is shown here.



And in order for the Lieutenant to properly show how the Provost should do and execute this first hold, it is needed that the Lieutenant should be on the left foot, and, being there, advance the right foot and throw a *maindroit* or high thrust against the defending Provost. And being surprised by the Provost, who removed his sword from him, the Lieutenant was constrained to withdraw his right foot and to stand on the left foot and to hold his left hand before his breast, holding it ready to defend the point of the Provost's sword, and the Lieutenant holds also his left hand against his left thigh, as is shown in the illustration noted with number 83 behind the throat.

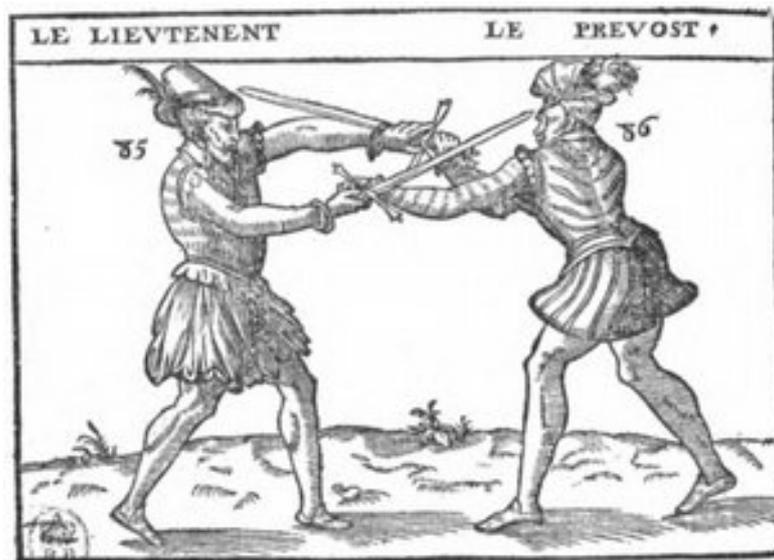
Thus, all that the Lieutenant does in order to show to the Provost what he should do in order to execute all the first hold of this sword alone.

Here follows the first hold and its execution for the following Provost against the Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the Provost, having made his first stance, guard and above-mentioned situation, that is to say, being on the left foot, and the Lieutenant having thrown at him a *maindroit* or high thrust, as he may, should advance his right foot. And in order to make and execute this first hold for the following Provost, has thrown his left foot backwards and has crossed the Lieutenant's sword, strong on weak, lifting a little the point of the sword upwards and at the same instant without any little interval, the Provost advances the left foot and with his left hand grabs the guard of the Lieutenant's sword, turning the top of it downwards, giving the turn in order to make him leave (abandon) the sword, and carrying it under the arm, presenting the sword point directly at the Lieutenant's mouth, as is shown here above in the illustration noted 84.

This the end and demonstration from the Lieutenant and the execution of the first hold for the Provost.

In a hold he should make a counter-hold, as is shown by the Lieutenant to the Provost.



And in order to do this, the Lieutenant being on the left foot will throw a straight *maindroit* or thrust from above on the left side of the Provost and in the same instant will turn to advance the left foot and will take the guard of the Provost's sword coming underneath his arm and wanting to give the turn, the Provost made the counter hold which is exactly the same as was told and shown to him, as is here above in the illustration noted with number 85 behind his throat.

Thus the end for making the counter-hold for the Lieutenant.

Here follows the counter-hold for the Provost against the attacking Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the Provost will be on the left foot in high guard and when the Lieutenant will advance the right foot, in order to throw a *maindroit* of thrust from above, as he may at his choice, the Provost will throw the left foot backwards and will cross the *maindroit* or thrust thrown by the Lieutenant, strong on weak, and when he sees that the Lieutenant will advance the left foot in order to come to take the guard of the sword in order to make the first hold, the Provost, seeing this, in the same instant will advance the left foot and will take the guard of the Lieutenant's sword with his left hand, passing the sword under the arm, turning the top of the hand downwards and, having taken it, will pretend to turn this hand in order to remove the point of the sword, as is shown here above in the illustration of the Provost, noted with number 86 behind the neck.

The end of the counter-hold for the Provost against the Lieutenant.

In the figures and illustrations which follow is shown how the counter-hold noted 85 and 86 are executed, both for the Lieutenant and the Provost, so that the Lieutenant, having carefully observed the will of the author, has removed entirely the Provost's sword and also the Provost having done the same, observing on his part that which he must do, removing the Lieutenant's sword, so that one will see here after that the Lieutenant has the Provost's sword and the Provost has the Lieutenant's sword, as is noted in the illustrations with number 87 for the Lieutenant and 88 for the Provost.

Here follows the counter-hold, shown above by the Lieutenant and executed by the Provost.



And in order to dot his, the Lieutenant being on the left foot, as was said, will advance the right foot, throwing a *maindroit* or thrust from above on the Provost and, in the same time once again will advance the left foot and will take the Provost's sword underneath he right arm, turning the left hand, giving a turn in order to make him leave (abandon?) the sword and, seeing that the Provost was quick and clever even at the same time, this Lieutenant has withdrawn his left foot backwards and holding the Provost's sword underneath his left arm and has immediately put his hand directly (or his right hand) to the point of the sword, pretending to put the sword on point, as is shown in the illustration above noted with number 87 behind his head.

Thus the end of the counter-hold executed by the Lieutenant against the Provost.

Here follows a very good counter-hold for the Provost corresponding to the counter-hold made above by the Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the following Provost will be on the left foot in high guard and when the Lieutenant will advance the right foot as he can and must, in order to throw a *maindroit* or thrust from above, the Provost will throw the left foot backwards and will cross the Lieutenant's sword, strong on weak, beating away the *maindroit* or high thrust what was thrown and, when he will see that the Lieutenant will advance the left foot in order to take the guard of the sword in order to make the hold, the Provost will advance the left foot at the same time as him and will take the guard of the Lieutenant's sword underneath his sword turning the left hand downwards as is shown in the illustration of the Provost noted with number 88.

Thus the end of the counter-hold for the Provost against the Lieutenant.

The posture and guard for the second hold for the Lieutenant against the Provost.



And in order to do this, the Lieutenant having made one of the drawings (of the sword) is stood on the left foot in low guard, situating the point of his sword directly at the pants of the Provost, his pupil, making him do and hold in medium guard, and the Lieutenant holds the edge of the sword downwards and the left hand directly before his breast, as is shown above in the current illustration noted with number 89 behind the neck.

The end and definition of this low guard for the attacking Lieutenant.

After having treated above of the guard and posture of the Lieutenant, it remains to treat of the guard and posture of the defending Provost.

The Provost, after having made his stance, guard and situation, is stood on the left foot in medium guard, holding the guard as high as the right shoulder and the fingertips of the sword hand downwards and he will hold the left hand on the left thigh - and all others which want to hold this guard will hold them and will make the gesture as this Provost - as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 90.

The end of the guard and posture for the Provost.

Hereafter the Lieutenant shows the Provost, as he must do, the second hold and even so the Lieutenant begins to do it.

The second hold for the demonstrating Lieutenant against the defending Provost.



And in order to do this, the Lieutenant will do and will put himself as was said in low guard on the left foot situating the point of the sword as was said directly at the Provost's pants or belt, as was noted with numbers 89 and 90 in the illustrations above. And in order to do and execute this second hold for the Lieutenant, who is the attacking demonstrator, being in low guard, as was said, will advance the right foot, pretending to throw a *maindroit* or thrust from above, coming from him, the Provost seeing himself thus charged of such a strike, wants to defend himself, crossing and beating away the Lieutenant's sword. And thus the Lieutenant will advance the left foot and throw at him a backhand to the head. The Provost will want to beat it away immediately with his sword, thus the Lieutenant will advance the left foot in the instant and will take the guard of his (Provost's?) sword with his left hand and will threaten him (the Provost) with a thrust to the stomach, as is shown in the illustration noted with number 91 behind his neck.

Thus the end of the second hold and demonstration of it for the Lieutenant against the Provost. Here follows that which the Provost must do for the second hold against the Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the Provost is also on the left foot in middle guard, as is noted above in illustration 90. The Lieutenant having thrown a *maindroit* or thrust from above, at his choice, the Provost threw the left foot backwards and crossed and beat away the Lieutenant's sword, strong on weak and, seeing that he has been constrained by the Lieutenant's stance and hold, the following Provost, seeing this constraint, signalled with his left hand that he wants to turn and beat away the thrust that he wants and can do to the Lieutenant, as is shown above in the nearest illustration and drawing noted with number 92 at the back of the head.

The end of the second hold made by the Lieutenant on the Provost and that which he (the Provost) can do.

The second hold shown by the author to the Lieutenant and executed by him against the Provost, to the end that he can do the same to another.



And in order to do this, this following Lieutenant should, being on the right foot, advance the left foot and throw a *maindroit* or thrust from above on the Provost, stealing it¹⁶ on the left-side (*renvers*), passing the sword underneath the guard of the Provost's sword and, in the same instant and tempo, will advance the left foot and will cross the Provost's sword, strong on weak, and take the guard of the sword with his left hand, holding it, being drawn, and thus will be constrained to leave¹⁷ it, seeing the point before him and this will do all others when they will do the same, as is shown above in the illustration noted behind the throat with number 93.

Thus the end of the second hold shown and executed by the Lieutenant on the Provost.

And the Provost, seeing himself this surprised and pressed, observing the injury and danger which may occur, is constrained to leave the sword and throw his right foot backwards, preparing his right and left hands to beat away the thrust that the Lieutenant wants to throw at him. But he doesn't care¹⁸ because he only does it in order to show him how he may do the above-mentioned holds on another, imitating well everything shown him by the Lieutenant, as is shown above in the illustration of the following Provost numbered 94 behind the throat.

Thus, that which the Provost must face and do for the second hold against the Lieutenant.

Hereafter will be shown by illustration and writing how the Lieutenant, having shown the Provost, the Provost doing the same to him, because he who does not know how to show it knows nothing¹⁹.

16 *le desobant*

17 ed: abandon?

18 *mais il n'a garde*

19 *car ce n'est rien de sçavoir qui ne le scait monstré*

The second hold, as shown and executed by the Lieutenant and at present executed by the Provost against the Lieutenant, as shown here.



Here follows the demonstration how the Lieutenant wants to show, and make shown, to do to the Provost this second hold on the sword alone. And in order to do this, the following Lieutenant, being on the right foot, threw a straight²⁰ *maindroit* or thrust from above on the Provost's left shoulder, advancing the left foot and seeing agility²¹ and surprise that by this means and instruction that the Provost executed it, the Lieutenant is constrained to throw back(wards) his right foot and leave sword that he had in his right hand and with his left hand beat away the Provost's sword. This Lieutenant is well guarded if he wants that the Provost not make on him this hold, but he is pretending to be ignorant of this aim that the Provost does to him this hold, as is shown above in the illustration of the Lieutenant noted with number 95 behind his hat.

Thus, how the Lieutenant should leave his sword seeing that the Provost has done well to him as was shown above.

Here follows the demonstration of what the Provost must do in order to remove the sword from the Lieutenant imitating point by point that which he (the Lieutenant) just showed him and did to him, these second holds.

And in order to do this, the Provost having made one of the four²² drawings (of the sword), guard and positions, and standing on the left foot, and seeing that the Lieutenant has thrown at him a straight *maindroit* or thrust from above, the Provost having good understanding and memory²³ of that which has been done and shown to him, the Lieutenant having the same heart, at the Provost immediately and without any interval cross with his sword the Lieutenant's sword, strong on weak, and threatens him with a thrust to the throat or nearby has caused him to leave his sword, as is shown above in the illustration and figure of the Provost noted with number 96 behind the hat.

Thus the end of this second hold executed by the Provost against the Lieutenant, his instructor, having shown to him what²⁴ he must do.

20 ed: direct?

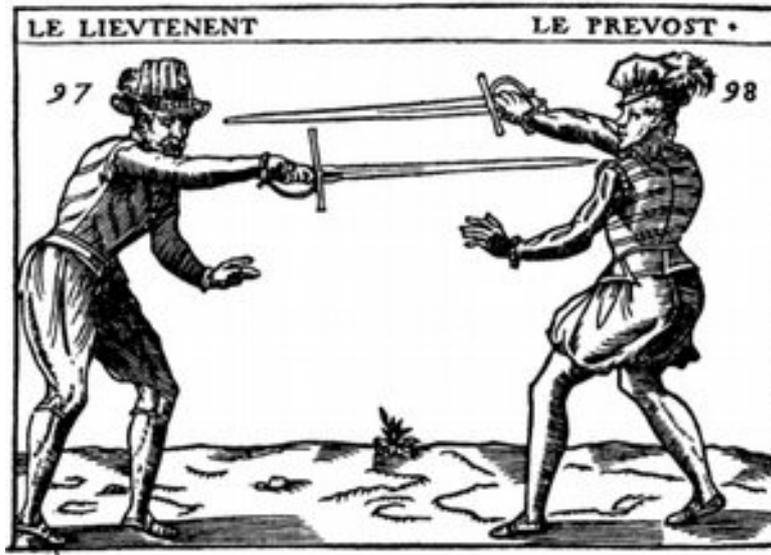
21 *promptitude*

22 ed: three?

23 ed: *souverance* = *souvenance*?

24 ed: *commē* = *comment*

Here follows the guard and posture in order to do the third hold for the Lieutenant against the Provost.



And in order to do this, this Lieutenant having made of the four drawings (of the sword), as he may, is stood on the left foot on medium guard holding the fingers of the sword hand downwards, situating it directly at the Provost's left breast, holding the left hand on the left thigh, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 97 behind the hat.

Thus the end of the guard and posture for the Lieutenant in order to prepare himself to do this third hold against the Provost.

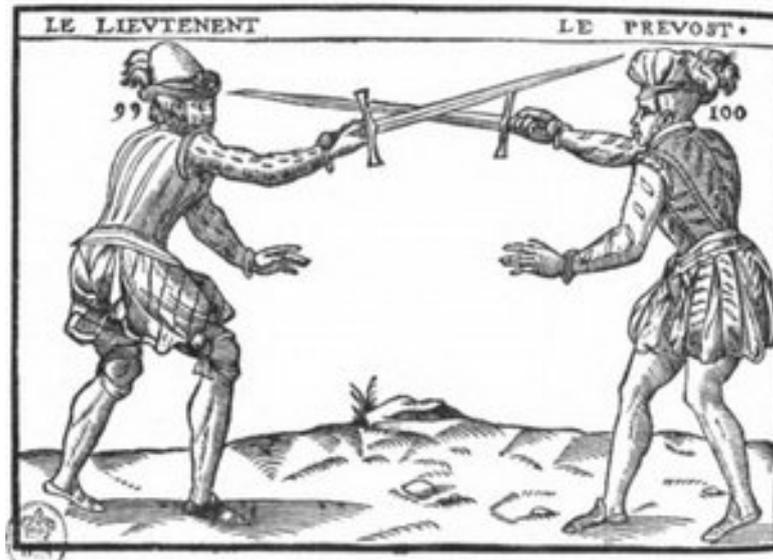
Hereafter is shown the guard and posture for the Provost.

The Provost's guard is, having made the same drawing (of the sword), as said above, to one of the drawings (of the sword) and be stood on the left foot, for the first time and seeing that the Lieutenant holds himself in medium guard, this Provost will hold himself in high guard, situating the point directly at the Lieutenant's left eye, holding the fingers of the sword hand downwards and he should hold well the sword flat, as one of those above²⁵.

Thus the end of the guard and posture for the Provost in order to throw the first strike for the third hold.

²⁵ *qu'un de puisse demourer dessus*

Here follows the first strike in order to do and show the third hold for the Lieutenant and Provost.



And in order to do this, it is needed and necessary that the Lieutenant be on the left foot, having made all that which is required, that is to say, like the stance above and one of the three drawings (of the sword). And in order to execute this strike, he will advance the right foot and will throw a thrust from above to the Provost's left shoulder, holding the guard of the sword middlingly high, holding the fingers of the sword hand downwards and the left hand directly before the right breast, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 99. And in order to execute this third hold, in the same instant, the Lieutenant should, without advancing the left foot, take the guard of the defending Provost's sword, stretching out strongly with the left arm passing it above the right, holding the top of the hand upwards, giving the turn underneath the arm or elbow and threatening immediately a thrust to the Provost's face, as is shown above in the illustration noted 99.

Thus the end of the third hold for the Lieutenant against the Provost.

Here follows the defence of this first strike in order to do and execute the third hold for the Provost against the Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the Provost will have thus made one of the drawings (of the sword), guards and situations with the above stance, and be standing on the left foot. And the Provost, seeing the the Lieutenant in the same instant has thrown at him a thrust from above, the Provost being on the left foot, threw it behind and has crossed the sword, with which the Lieutenant has thrown at him a *maindroit* or thrust from above, and defended it by this means: beating it away, strong on weak, holding the top of the sword hand downwards, situating the point directly at the Lieutenant's forehead, holding the left hand directly before and on the right thigh, as is shown above in the illustration noted 100.

The end of the defence and teaching of this strike in order to prepare to do this third hold for the defending Provost.

The third hold shown and executed by this Lieutenant against the Provost to this end that the Provost will know it to him and may do in the future and, by consequence, can do it to others



And in the same instant without any interval in order to win²⁶ time, having thrown the *maindroit* or thrust, as was said and shown above in other illustrations noted with numbers, not to this Lieutenant but to the above 99 and Provost 100, this Lieutenant should take the Provost's sword with his left hand, turning the top of this hand downwards and the palm²⁷ upwards, holding it flat, the fingers extended, pushing it along the arm, underneath the elbow, lifting well up in order to make him leave it and make (him) lose the point, as he must, threatening a thrust to the Provost's face and of this constraining him to leave the sword, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 101 behind the neck.

The end of the third hold for the Lieutenant against the Provost

Here follows that which the Provost must do, the Lieutenant showing him how to do it.

And in order to do it, the Lieutenant, having made as has been said in several place above and throughout, which is what the Provost must do, as he has one of the guards and stances above and is stood on the left foot and the Provost, seeing that the Lieutenant has advanced the one step in order to throw at him a *maindroit* or thrust from above, and at a glance, has grabbed to him the sword of which the Provost has been constrained to abandon seeing that the Lieutenant presents at him a thrust to the face, because the Provost holds his left main directly before his left breast, ready to beat away and turn aside the point of the Lieutenant's sword, which is a thrust which must be to the face, as all is shown above in the illustration of the following Provost noted with number 102 behind the cap.

Thus the end of the third hold made and executed by the Lieutenant and of that which the Provost could do, being thus surprised by the Lieutenant, his master.

26 ed: gain?

27 *le creux*

The third hold, shown above by the Lieutenant to the Provost, and is here executed by the Provost, as is evident.



And in order to do this, the Lieutenant having thrown at him a *maindroit* or thrust from above advancing the right foot, having made as is shown above in several strikes, the stance, guard and situation, such as pleased him, and immediately the Lieutenant having thrown the *maindroit* or thrust from above, the Provost has diligently executed this hold, of which the Lieutenant being constrained to abandon the sword. And seeing that the Provost wants to throw at him a thrust to the belly, the Lieutenant, as was said, has forced him to abandon his sword and the left hand, pretending to beat away the Provost's sword, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 103.

Thus the end of the counter-hold which the Provost has done to the Lieutenant, as is evident.

Here-after follows what the Provost must do in order to execute the third hold against the Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the Provost being on the stance of the left foot, the Lieutenant will throw a *maindroit* or thrust from above, at his liberty, on the Provost's left shoulder or to the left breast. But in order to annul any strike that he could throw, the Provost should and is required to the the left foot behind and cross with his sword that of the Lieutenant, strong on weak, and on this same right foot in the same instant the Provost will pass the sword underneath the Lieutenant's sword, allowing the point to fall²⁸ underneath the Lieutenant's arm and without any interval will take with the left hand the Lieutenant's sword, with the flat of the hand will lift it upwards, having passed it underneath the elbow in order to make him lose it (the sword) from his hand, threatening him with a thrust to the belly, as is shown above in the illustration of the Provost noted with number 105 behind the throat.

Thus the end of the third hold for the following defending Provost against the Lieutenant.

Hereafter will be shown the stance and guard for the Lieutenant and Provost in order to make and execute the fourth and last hold of this sword alone. There are others and in the other edition, nothing will be left out.

²⁸ *laissera tomber la pointe*

The stance and guard for the fourth and last hold for the attacking Lieutenant against the defending Provost.



And to deal well with this above-mentioned guard and fourth hold for the Lieutenant, he should have thus made the stance, one of the drawings (of the sword) and guard above. And in this example here²⁹, it is required that the Lieutenant be on the left foot in high guard holding the top of the sword hand upwards and the fingers downwards, situating the sword point directly at the Provost mouth, holding the left hand on his left hip, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 105.

The end of the guard in order to make a strike for executing this fourth hold for the Lieutenant.

It will be shown hereafter the guard and stance in order to defend a strike which will be a *maindroit* or thrust from above thrown by the Lieutenant against the Provost in order to do the fourth hold.

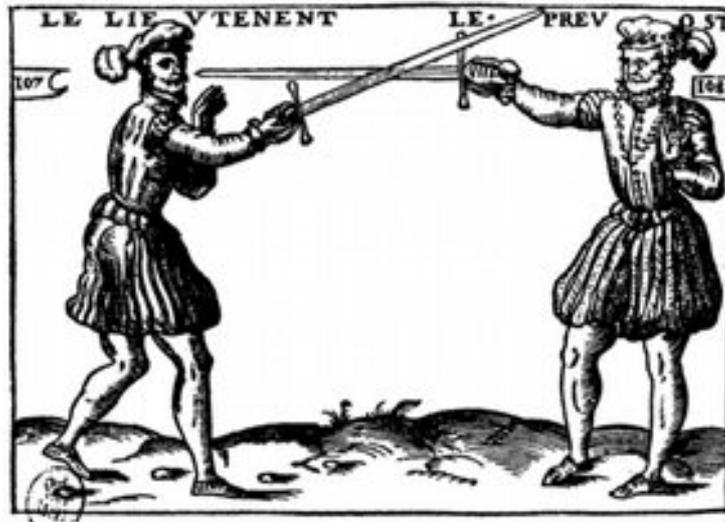
In order to do this, having made one of the three drawings (of the sword) and being on the left foot, the Provost will hold himself in medium guard, which is the best³⁰, holding the top of the sword hand upwards, situating the point of it directly at the Lieutenant's left breast, and the left hand directly before his hip, as is shown above in his illustration noted with number 106.

Thus the end of the description and stance for the Provost.

29 *cestuy cy*

30 *la plus superlative*

The *maindroit* or thrust from above, thrown by the Lieutenant and defended by the Provost, which should be repeated³¹ by the Lieutenant in order to execute the fourth hold against the Provost.



And in order to do this, this following Lieutenant should be on the left foot in high guard, as is shown above in his other illustration noted with number 105, seen in its place. And in order to execute this strike, which is a *maindroit* or thrust from above, at the Lieutenant's choice, he will advance the right foot and will throw a straight thrust to the Provost's face, holding the guard of the sword as high as the right shoulder and the top of the sword hand downwards and the left hand in front of his chin, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 107.

The end of this strike for the attacking Lieutenant.

The means of defending oneself by the Provost from this *maindroit* or thrust from above thrown by the Lieutenant in order to then after execute the fourth hold.

And in order to do this, the following Provost should be on the left foot in middle guard, as is shown above in his illustration noted with number 106. And for the defence of this *maindroit* or thrust from above thrown by the Lieutenant, the Provost should and is required to throw the left foot backwards and cross his sword with that of the Lieutenant, be it a *maindroit* or thrust from above, strong on weak, as was done above in one of the oppositions and follow-ups, and threaten a thrust to the Lieutenant's face, holding the top of the sword hand downwards and the fingers upwards, and the left hand directly before his breast, situating the sword point directly at the Lieutenant's mouth, as is shown and done above in the Provost's illustration noted behind the throat with number 108.

Thus how the Provost guards himself well from the above strike thrown by the Lieutenant.

Hereafter will be shown the fourth and last hold, which is very subtle, in order to make the opponent abandon³² his weapons, who will be subject to a *maindroit* or thrust from above that one will throw which will serve to discover³³ ignorance or knowledge. Because if he is ignorant and clumsy he could do (it) easily and if he is skilful he should make a feint, as will be seen hereafter in its place in the Lieutenant's explanation which he will do it to show it to the Provost.

31 lit.:thrown again

32 *faire quitter*

33 *espion pour apporter*

The fourth hold shown by the attacking Lieutenant to the defending Provost as clearly shown here and explained below in writing.



And in order to do this, the Lieutenant, being on the left foot as is shown above in the illustration, in the stance and guard noted above with number 105, advanced the right foot and threw a *maindroit* or thrust from above on the Provost's left side, in order to discover, as was said and shown above in the Lieutenant's illustration noted with number 107, and this Lieutenant seeing that the Provost has defended himself from this *maindroit* or thrust from above, in order to do this hold the following Lieutenant has from a *maindroit* stolen his sword underneath the Provost's sword and this Lieutenant has let his sword fall above the Provost's arm, turning the fingers of the sword hand upwards and with the left hand holding the Provost's sword near the point. This done, the Lieutenant speaks to the Provost and tells him "listen, if I want to lower and weigh down my left hand, you will be constrained to abandon your sword, as you can and in fact will do to me", as is shown above in the Lieutenant's next illustration and drawing noted with number 109.

Thus the end of the fourth and last hold for the demonstrating Lieutenant against the defending Provost.

Here follows that which the Provost could do, not knowing any counter-hold, because to every hold there is a counter-hold, not that which was done above but below will be done through the information³⁴ that the Lieutenant gave him.

And in order to do this, the following Provost being on the left foot in middle guard, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 106, the Provost, in order to learn to do this above-mentioned hold, threw the left foot behind and is stood on the right foot and has crossed the *maindroit* or thrust from above that was thrown by the Lieutenant. But the Lieutenant, having avoided it by a stolen *maindroit* in order to complete his hold, has made³⁵ the Provost at the conclusion³⁶ abandon his sword and, if he wanted to, has made him lose his hand. But allowing it to him again, however, the Provost has done as he could, being deceived as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 110.

The end of that which the Provost could do against the Lieutenant, his instructor.

34 *intelligence*

35 *a rendu*

36 *extremite*

The fourth and last hold executed by the defending Provost against the Lieutenant, his instructor, as (shown) here plainly by the illustration, showing him that which was done above.



And in order to do it, this Lieutenant should be on the left foot, as was said above, and advancing the right foot will throw a *maindroit* or thrust from above, at his choice, as is shown above in the other illustrations of the same Lieutenant noted with number 107. this Lieutenant having thrown on of the strikes, this Provost did the same as that above, the Lieutenant did to him as evident in the illustration noted with number 109 but to this hold here, the Lieutenant has been constrained to abandon his sword and with his left hand wants to beat away the Provost's sword, which wants to throw a thrust at him, as evident in the illustration above noted with number 111 behind the throat.

The end of that which this Lieutenant has done, having shown the Provost what he needs to face this hold.

Here follows the execution of this fourth and last hold of this sword alone for the Provost against the Lieutenant, his instructor.

And in order to do this, the following Provost, being on the left foot and when he will see that the Lieutenant or other attacker, should throw a *maindroit* or thrust from above, advancing the right foot, the Provost will throw his left foot backwards and in the same instant will steal his sword underneath the guard of the Lieutenant's sword and, with very little interval, will let fall the point of the sword on that of the Lieutenant and immediately the provost will take the point of the Lieutenant's sword with his left hand and will pass and lower it down and thus will constrain the Lieutenant to abandon his sword, as is shown above in the Provost's illustration noted with number 112.

Thus the end of this fourth and last hold of the sword alone both for the attacking Lieutenant as for the defending Provost.

Hereafter will be shown some good and subtle individual strikes extracted from the above strikes of the sword alone which I call the subtleties which can be done and made, both in attacking and in defending.

Subtleties

The guard and stance in order to do and execute the subtleties of this sword alone, both for the attacking Lieutenant as for the defending Provost.



And in order to do this, it is necessary that the demonstrating Lieutenant, having made one of the drawings (of the sword), stances, guards and situations, will be on the left foot in high guard, holding the sword hand as high as the right shoulder, the top of it upwards and the fingers downwards, situating the point of the sword at the Provost's face, and the left hand below his sword arm, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 113 behind the bonnet.

The end of the stance and guard for the attacking Lieutenant.

Here follows the definition, guard and stance for the Provost.

And in order to do this, the Provost should make one of the drawings (of the sword), such as pleases him, and hold himself on the left foot in low guard holding the guard of the sword on his left knee, situating the point of it directly at the Lieutenant's belt or pants, the edge downwards and the left hand directly before the left breast, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 114.

The end of the guard for the Provost.

The first cut, which is a *maindroit* from below, thrown by the Lieutenant against the Provost, which serves to discover in order to expose ignorance or knowledge.



And in order to do this, the Lieutenant is on the left foot in high guard, as is shown above in his said guard and posture of the subtleties noted with number 113. And in order to do and properly execute this subtlety for the demonstrating Lieutenant, he will advance the right foot and will throw a *maindroit* from below to the knee, which serves to discover for exposing the ignorance or knowledge of him against whom such a strike will be thrown, because, if he is ignorant, he will cross sword against sword, and if he is knowledgeable he will throw a *maindroit* on the sword arm. But it is good to see that this Provost is ignorant as he crosses his sword with that of the Lieutenant, showing to the Provost the fault which he had made, beating away the sword instead of throwing a *maindroit* on the arm, as he will do hereafter. But in this strike he crosses the sword, as is shown above in his illustration noted with number 115.

Thus as the Lieutenant threw a *maindroit* from below to the knee in order to see ignorance.

Here follows the defence of this strike for the Provost.

And in order to do this, it is necessary that the Provost, has made the same stance, guard and situation that is shown above in the Provost's illustration noted with number 114. And in order to defend himself from this strike, which is a *maindroit* from below to the knee thrown at him by the Lieutenant, the Provost, being ignorant - as are many demonstrators - has thrown the left foot backwards and has crossed with his sword the Lieutenant's sword, which is not to presume ignorance but to be all done, expecting that he leave the suitable and take the unsuitable, which as was said and shown above in his illustration noted with number 116 behind the Provost.

Thus how the Provost defends himself against the first strike thrown by the Lieutenant. But he defends himself from it, as intended and as shown severally (often?) following human nature. Because it does this [the same] without ever knowing [having taken] the art.

The guard and posture for the Lieutenant and Provost in order for the Lieutenant to show the Provost how he should do it instead and not as he did in the previous strike.



And in order to do this, it is necessary that this Lieutenant, having made one of the three drawings (of the sword) whichever pleases him, and being stood on the left foot in medium guard, situating the point of his sword directly at the left breast, holding the top of the sword hand upwards and the left hand below the sword arm, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 117.

The end of the Lieutenant's guard in order to do and execute this subtlety, following the ignorance that the Lieutenant wanted to (show) the Provost, noted with numbers 115 and 116.

Here follows the text for knowing (how) to do the Provost's posture and guard for executing this subtlety, by the Lieutenant showing it to the Provost, as will be seen hereafter in the next strike.

And in order to do this, the following Provost should have made the stance that was made by the following Lieutenant above, his demonstrator, and one of the drawings (of the sword) and be standing on the left foot in high guard holding also the guard of the sword and the sword hand upwards, situating the point directly at the face, holding the left hand directly before his breast, as is shown above in the Provost's illustration notes with number 118.

Thus the end of the guard and posture for the Provost.

The first strike of this subtlety, which is on the first strike of the sword alone, here shown by this Lieutenant and executed by this Provost.



This current Lieutenant, in order to do well and show to the Provost this *maindroit*, the first strike of the program of the sword alone and of this subtlety, being on the left foot, should advance the right foot and throw a *maindroit* from below to the Provost's knee, holding his left hand directly before the face, as is shown here above in the illustration noted with number 119.

The end of this first strike which is a *maindroit* from below thrown by this following Lieutenant and defended by the Provost and executed by him, there where he should.

Here follows all that the Provost should do in order to defend himself and offend, at the same time, this low *maindroit* to the knee thrown by the Lieutenant against the Provost.

And in order to do this, the Provost is in high guard, as is shown above in the other illustration numbered 118. And now this Provost, having seen that the Lieutenant has thrown a low *maindroit* at him to the left knee, the Provost, at this time³⁷ recognising that he did poorly to beat away the sword and that the only stance sufficient to protect against³⁸ this *maindroit* and at this time, and at this time this Provost throwing the left foot behind in the same instant defended this *maindroit* coming from high guard on the Lieutenant's sword arm and presenting then³⁹ a thrust at the Lieutenant's belly, holding the guard of the sword somewhat high and the fingers of this hand upwards and his left hand directly before his left breast, as is shown above in the illustration numbered 120.

The end of this subtlety for the Provost and of all that which he should do following the instruction of the author and of his Lieutenant.

37 *a ce coup*

38 <http://atilf.atilf.fr/scripts/dmfX.exe?>

[LEM=garantir;XMODE=STELLA;FERMER;;AFFICHAGE=0;MENU=menu_dmf;ISIS=isis_dmf2012.txt;OUVRIR_MENU=2;s=s01271938;LANGUE=FR;](http://atilf.atilf.fr/scripts/dmfX.exe?LEM=garantir;XMODE=STELLA;FERMER;;AFFICHAGE=0;MENU=menu_dmf;ISIS=isis_dmf2012.txt;OUVRIR_MENU=2;s=s01271938;LANGUE=FR;)

39 *encores*

The guard and low posture in order to execute and do the second strike of these subtleties, which is a *renvers* from below, being on the right foot which serves to discover in order to expose ignorance or knowledge, both for the attacking Lieutenant as for the defending Provost.



For executing well and dexterously this second subtlety for the Lieutenant, he should have made one of the drawings (of the sword), and in order to throw this second strike the Lieutenant should be on the right foot in low guard, the edge of the sword downwards and the guard of the sword on his left hip, situating the sword point directly at the Provost's right thigh, holding the left hand directly before his belt⁴⁰, as is shown above in the illustration numbered 121.

The end of the declaration of the guard for the Lieutenant.

Here follows the guard and posture for the Provost and the declaration of such.

And in order to do this, the Provost should have made the same drawing (of the sword) and same⁴¹ guard and that he hold himself and be on the right foot, holding the sword guard on his right thigh, situating the sword point directly at the Lieutenant's pants or nearby, holding the edge of the sword downwards and holding his left hand near his belt, the fingertips near his pants, as is shown above in the illustration numbered 122.

The end of the posture for the Provost.

40 *la brayette*

41 *presque*

The second strike, which is a *renvers* from below which serves to discover in order to do and execute better the second subtlety for the Lieutenant against the Provost.



And in order to do this, the Lieutenant should be on the right foot in low guard, as is noted above in other illustrations and noted for this Lieutenant with number 121. And being in this stance and guard, he pretends⁴² to throw a thrust to the Provost's face and in the same instant advances his left foot and throws a backhand to the Provost's right knee, holding the guard of the sword a little high and holding the left hand below the sword arm, as is shown above in the illustration noted with number 123 behind the bonnet.

The end of the strike, which is a *renvers* from below, which serves to discover for the Lieutenant to expose ignorance, as it does, and not knowledge.

Here follows that which the Provost does in order to defend this *renvers* from below thrown by the Lieutenant.

And in order to do this, the Provost being also on the right foot in low guard, as is shown in the illustration numbered 122 and this Lieutenant having advanced the left foot in order to throw a backhand from below to the Provost's knee, which seeing himself attacked⁴³ like this, the Provost threw his right foot backwards and crossed his sword (against) that of the Lieutenant, as the ignorant and even today all ignorant demonstrators do but the skilful and learned no longer do - at least they must do - because they win the tempo in all things and principally in this art of arms, as will be shown hereafter, and this Provost holds his left hand directly before his breast, as is shown in the illustration numbered 124.

The end of the false strike which the following Provost does because it was left suitable and takes the unsuitable.

42 *face semblant*

43 *chargé*

The second strike which is a *renvers* on the Provost's arm thrown and executed by this current Lieutenant against the Provost, showing him what he could do and not to beat away the sword, as he has done above, in the following illustrations.



And in order to do this, this Lieutenant is on the right foot in low guard, as was said and shown above noted with number 121. And the Lieutenant being on the right foot will pretend to throw a thrust to the Provost's face and will advance the left foot pretending to throw a backhand to the knee. The Provost wants to beat it away as he did sword against sword. This Lieutenant, seeing this, lifts his sword and throws a backhand to the elbow of his sword arm, holding his left hand below his sword arm, as is shown above in the illustration numbered 125 behind his bonnet.

The end of this *renvers* executed and demonstrated by the Lieutenant to the Provost.

Here follows that which the Provost does.

The Provost is on the right foot in low guard, as is noted in the illustration numbered 122. The Provost must, in throwing his right foot backwards, throw a *renvers* on the Lieutenant's arm and not cross the Lieutenant's sword with his sword, as he did returning [?] to beat it away as in the above strike - which caused the Lieutenant to throw a *renvers* on the elbow of his sword arm. And this Provost holds his left hand directly before his left breast, as is shown above in the illustration numbered 126 behind his neck.

The end of that which the Provost does against the Lieutenant in order to defend this second subtlety.

Here follows another very good and subtle strike, neglecting the *renvers* on the arm and coming from a thrust to the belly, crossing strong on weak the Provost's sword, as is shown here by the author to the Provost and, by consequence, the Provost will learn from the Lieutenant.

Another very good and subtle strike for the Lieutenant against the Provost, neglecting the backhand on the elbow and throwing a thrust to the belly, as is shown here.



In order to properly do and execute this thrust⁴⁴, which is a subtle and very good strike, it is required that this Lieutenant should be on the right foot and, being there, advance his left foot and pretend⁴⁵ to throw a low backhand at the Provost's knee. The Provost will think to beat it away thus the Lieutenant will advance his left foot and instead throw (it? a strike?) on the arm, as he did in the preceding strike, crossing strongly in the middle of his sword that of the Provost and threatening him with a thrust to the stomach, holding his left hand below the elbow of his sword arm, as is shown above in the illustration numbered 127 behind the feather in his hat.

Thus that which the Lieutenant must do in order to execute and demonstrate this strike in the form of a thrust at the Provost.

Here follows that which the Provost must do for the last strike of this sword alone.

And this next and last Provost in this entire treatise⁴⁶ being on the right foot, seeing that the Lieutenant wants to throw at him a backhand from below to the knee, the Provost threw the right foot behind and thinking to throw a backhand on the Lieutenant's sword arm, as has been shown by him above in the illustration of the Provost which is numbered 125 and here the Provost find himself frustrated in the execution of his *renvers*, which he thought well done whereas the Lieutenant beat (it) away, strong on weak, and threatened him with a thrust, but this has been done by the Lieutenant showing the Provost that he can do both above-mentioned strikes, *renvers* thrusts, and this last Provost holds his left hand directly before his breast in order to beat away the Lieutenant's sword, given that he crossed him strong on weak, and he can not defend it nor throw a thrust except with his left hand, as is shown above in the illustration numbered 128 near the feather in his bonnet.

Thus the end of the defence of this strike for the last Provost against the Lieutenant and all the others contained in this treatise on this sword alone, as was said, the mother of all arms.

Made and composed by Henri de Saint Didier, esquire, Provençal gentleman.

44 *ce coup en estoc*

45 *fera semblant*

46 *de tout cedit traité*