

## FOREWARD

MY DEAR LADS,

I hope this little century-old classic will encourage you in what is good. Sword-skills may be out of fashion, but this book is not solely a guide to playtime. As R. G. Allanson-Winn—what an impeccable name!—walks us through the age-old practices and techniques of quarter-staff, broadsword, single-stick, and cudgel-play, do not see this as merely learning old skills. As he mentions, learning to ‘grin and bear’ the smart of a sharp hit and how to win and lose graciously are not skills limited to a fencing ring. Persevering in sword-training will also teach you agility, lightness of foot, and quickness of eye, even if you never draw a sword or swing a staff in anger.

It is important to learn, too, that even in hot-blooded competition not every hit is legal or legitimate. Much is made in these days of winning by any means necessary (“no holds barred” is a literal wrestling term) yet when in friendly competition, it is not the behavior of a gentleman to attempt to conquer one’s opponent with underhanded blows or deceptive techniques. Though there are few indeed opportunities to partake in judged and scored matches at single-stick, saber, or quarter-staff, you can still cultivate the courtesy and bearing of a chivalrous officer or knight of old without sapping your ability to fight for life and limb if ever the situation arises.

And even apart from the benefits to training or character, reading this book may prove valuable in some such future situation. Our guide teaches us how to make best use of a walking-staff, a knotted stick, or even an umbrella in a tough spot. Learn how to protect yourself, your mothers, sisters, and friends—and I hope you never draw sword in an unworthy cause or against an opponent to be ashamed of.

*“Honor the ladies, defend the helpless  
Always help those in distress  
Give mercy if you yourself would have it  
These things doth chivalry requit.”*

JOHN CALVIN YOUNG  
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