



# **How Not To Slip On a Banana**

*...and other unusual advice and oddities*

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**How to Rob a Peasant  
Codex Wallerstein c.1470**

Corner him by a tree, cut the skin on his  
throat (pinch it and just make a  
shallowcut).

Show him the blood, and he'll give you the  
cash.



## **How to Improvise a Rapier** **Joseph Swetnam 1617**

Now if thou have a quarrell and willing to answer, and not being furnished with a Rapier, then take a cudgell of what length thou wilt thy selfe, and make a shoulder within a handfull of the ende of it by cutting him halfe way through, and there binde the haft of thy knife, and so the shoulder will keepe him from slipping backe, and this is as sure and as fearefull, and as good as a Rapier to encounter against a Rapier and Dagger, or a Sword and Dagger, so that you have close hilted Dagger: likewise you may tie a point at the But- end of the Cudgell, to put in thy finger that thy Cudgell slippe not out of thy hand: this weapon I have made good prooffe of, but it was in another Country, where I could get no other weapon to my minde.



## **How to Take on a Musket with a Rapier Thibault 1630**

“Seeing that his opponent...prepares his musket for attack, he does not remain at rest. Preparing himself...for defence by the obliquity of his step and for offense when he reaches the end...”



**How to Take a Swordcut to the Head  
McBane 1728**

If you meet a man with a sword  
and target...take a wet napkin  
and put it under your hat, and  
that will prevent his cuts.



## **How to Rid the World of Lefthanders Capt. John Godfrey 1747**

I dare say nobody would choose to be left-handed, and therefore would propose a Way to put a stop to that undesired Race...

The Nurse carries the Child in the left Arm; the consequence of that is, its right Arm is confined and the left at liberty to play and exercise...

If accustomed to that Habit...no wonder [it continues]to use the left Arm; and I am confident most would be left-handed, if they were not by the Parent's Care broke of that Habit after they are parted from the Nurse.



## **How to Scare Off a Dog (I)** **Charles Random- 1835**

If you can seize a dog's front paw neatly, immediately to squeeze it sharply, he cannot bite you 'til you cease to squeeze it; wherefore, by keeping him well pinched, you may lead him wherever you like, or you may, with the other hand, seize him by the skin of the neck, to hold him thus without danger, provided your strength is equal to his efforts at extrication.



## **How to Scare Off a Dog (II)**

### **Charles Random- 1835**

A ridiculous, and with most dogs efficacious mode, to be used when menaced by their attacks, is, to look at them with your face from between your opened legs, holding the skirts away and running at them thus backwards, of course, head below, stern exposed, and above and growling angrily. Most dogs...are so dismayed that, with their tails between their legs, they are glad to scamper away

[*Caveat:*] I have never tried this with a thorough-bred bull-dog, nor do I advise it with them, although I have practised it, and successfully, with most of the other kind.





## **Snuffbox Defence Charles Random 1835**

If you nimbly can fill your other hand, in your pocket, with the contents of your snuff-box, you cannot do better than by throwing some, but always with a good aim and without waste of such excellent ammunition, into the eyes of those close to you, [then] salute their heads with your trusty sapling at the same time



## **Why We Have Knife Crime**

### **Charles Random 1835**

Stilettoes or daggers of any kind...are a disgrace to an Englishman's hand! Their extensive introduction cannot fail...to destroy his proud fame for manly honour, and bring him to a level with those wretches whom formerly he indignantly used to reprobate for their cowardice!...The fist, is by far the more national, the more manly, and the more honourable mode of self-defence...it's encouragement alone can arrest the growth of a race of knife dastards



## **How Bellydancing Will Help You Win a Fight Emile Andre- 1910**

A type of guard used in certain circles when one is beset with punches, kicks or knife blows consists of advancing from one side to the other, turning from left guard to right guard without ever staying in one of the guards, so that the adversary does not know if you will attack from a True or False guard. It has a graceful movement that resemble belly-dancing. One could call it the “Undulating Guard.



**What the Newspapers Aren't Telling You**  
**Jean-Joseph Renaud 1912**

Beware at night, in the corridors of large international hotels, of the "hotel rat" who, dressed in a black silk shirt, springs silently out of a dark corner and knocks you out, from behind, with a single blow of a long and thin bag of sand....This genre of attack isn't always reported in the newspapers. It is very frequent.



## **Use Marbles to Defend your Home George Dubois - 1918**

- 1- Wrap the handrail of the stairs with a coil of barbed-wire
- 2-Starting at the bottom step, place on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> steps a board the same size as the step and place under each four or five marbles, borrowed from a small boy.

*Nota Bene:* Do not forget to take up the boards the next morning if possible, or if a criminal does not turn up, otherwise the whole family will come down the stairs ..on their backsides!



## **Paint the Fence**

Make a small movement alternating between up-and-down and down-and-up with the weapon's point...thus the weapon will stay in line against the adversary's cone of defence...this movement resembles whitewashing a wall.



## **How to Avoid Getting Your Bottom Pinched...or Worse by Cads**

I advise...young ladies...to place a half dozen steel pins in their skirt, in the body of their jacket, in their overcoat or wherever else they will undoubtedly be...pinched.



## **Pepper Spray for the Ladies**

If the area is a little rough then carry a quantity of ash[in a handwarmer], this will allow you to blind two or three aggressors and flee... when a woman desires to adopt a constant method of protection, I advise them to add to their handwarmer an equal amount of pepper. At all times, the double-mix of pepper and ash is fearsome one. It gives it the strength of six or seven handfuls of ash alone.

A vigilant woman, living alone, can have this protection in her home in a cup.





### **Cheap Defence for a Young Lady**

A dear little worker does not always have the money to buy a revolver. Ribbons are expensive [and] face-powder is becoming unaffordable on their meagre income...but every dear worker... can buy a sewing bodkin with a solid shaft for two or three sous...it allows one to make grievous wounds to the face, the chest, and especially the aggressor's hands. You must atack, that is to say threaten and strike, into the space in front without stopping, in such a way that the man will not know where to strike or to grip.



## **Fire in a Theatre**

In a panic, everyone in the row will turn to the exit...You must teach your wife and children that to do this is a criminal folly as they will be crushed.

Once the rush of spectators begins I would lie down flat on my stomach in front of my seat, letting the crowd in front of me clamber over my seat and those of my companions. In under two minutes the rows will be empty because the uproar will now be in the wings and isolate the stage, in less than a few minutes the flames will surround it. What's more the fire won't take hold immediately from below, then it will be flooded by the torrents of water which will fall from the "gods".

In all cases rescue will come to this side, not to the side of the entrance blocked by the greater number of spectators...this is the moment to retrace one's steps and leave without being exposed to the crush of the crowd.



## **How to Catch the Local Poacher**

One is more often robbed in the countryside...[such as] the petty theft of a chicken, or the theft of one's rabbits.

At night, coat all the catches and locks of the chicken coop with...blue paint; do it also to the catch which closes the little garden gate.

Any individual who goes there at night cannot fail to get his hands covered. Prussian Blue is tremendously bright, the man can wash his hands but with little result as they will remain stained and, the next day after the theft, at an early hour, pass by the home of the suspected thief and you will be left without doubt because your neighbour will have bright sky-blue hands.



## **How to Catch a Thieving Servant**

One rainy day...leave the door to your bureau open and leave, declaring loudly that you are heading out for a while. Our rogue will not fail to take this unexpected opportunity. ..and take what they can from the drawer.

Beforehand, paint the end of the key with a sticky paste...and then apply some aniline powder to this key...powder the square metre of floor directly in front of the drawer with the same product.

1- The rogue will coat his thumb, his index and his ring finger with a small amount of powder.

2- He will pick up some on his soles.

Return five minute later. The man will lick his tell-tale fingers. His lips will be green, his fingers will be green, his soles damp, and if you make him stand or wipe himself off under a lamp he will be spattered with green. You will be certain, and the man confounded. A little almost-invisible powder will show you a dishonest man, separating the guilty from the innocent.



## **In the Garden at Night**

One can be surprised at night by an opportunist  
in one's garden after a meal while in a daze or  
reading by lamplight after a meal.

Keep your composure. Stay collected.

Pick up a burning lamp and throw it into the  
criminal's face...

and head straight for the place where you can  
find your revolver

This will also work as well with a candle, the  
burning missile will confound the aggressor and  
the resulting darkness will leave him open to  
[several] methods of harm.



## **How to Carry a Large Knife in Public**

You would do well...to travel dark streets with a hefty weapon to hand. One should seek to get hold of a carving knife or, in its place, any large kitchen knife as a weapon as soon as possible.

But how to carry an object such as this without attracting attention, without scaring innocent passers-by, and without arousing curiosity in the watchmen who cross your path?

It's very simple. Roll the knife in a sheet of newspaper and walk down the street holding the tube firmly, the blade to the front, that's to say with the thumb exactly as one would carry a sword-stick.

If you have the bad luck to be attacked or challenged by a nefarious fellow he won't suspect a thing. If he should threaten you, you can strike him in the stomach easily without him suspecting a thing.

In all cases, this method of walking down the street with a weapon at hand gives complete assurance to those that use it.



## **Katana Trumps Boltcutters**

I want to discuss ...the Japanese sword...

At the onset of darkness, along with an umbrella, have it to hand. It will be at your wrist but will appear inconspicuous. Strike calmly in front of you, without method, but with brutality and rapidity, and with numerous blows.

The wrongdoer has only his knife or his bolt-cutters (these fellows, during daylight, are hesitant to carry a revolver as it may attract a crowd) and generally they use the work tools which they have to hand, that is to say bolt-cutters (a blow with a bolt-cutter is most grievous), cold chisels and lastly a knife. Against the last two our dear Japanese sword will easily triumph; though against a boltcutter it is better to advance upon them, because it is a very heavy tool which will hurt a lot when it hits.



## **How Not to Slip on a Banana**

It has been some years since the banana was imported...and a certain number of folk scatter the skin of this exotic fruit on the pavement.

Hundreds of people pass by and all are struck: *Pouf!* An old lady or an overweight gentleman places his foot on the slippery skin and tumbles over. It truly is very funny...a policeman approaches them, hails a cab and takes the unfortunate to the nearest hospital with a broken leg or arm, or both.

Do as I do...when you see a banana skin upon the ground, take 10 or 15 seconds to put this “avoidable danger” in the gutter. And you, my little disciples, who run errands and don't see beyond the end of your little nose, continue to eat your bananas but be wary that your lack of care doesn't send someone to the hospital and put your peel in the gutter.

Of course this also applies to oranges, mandarins &c...