



The Footpad and The Cane

EX-CHIEF OF POLICE WITTMAN once remarked, "It is strange how few men who carry a cane are held up."



To Break Single Hand Hold

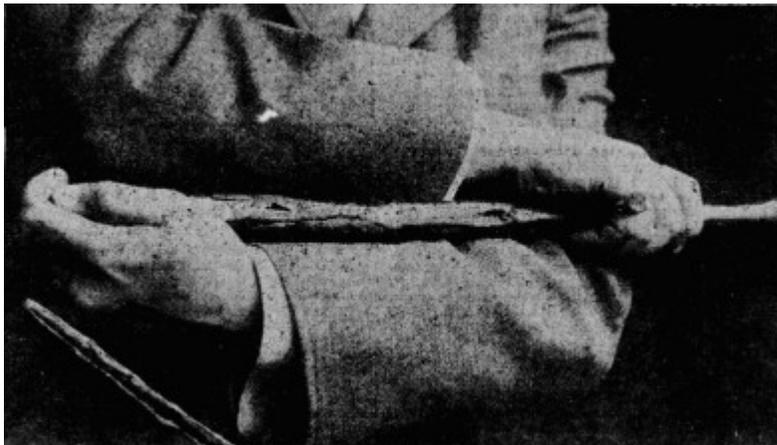
There is something about a good stout stick that commands respect. From time to time articles have been written about the proper use of the walking stick in self-defense. In practically every case the pupil has been told to wield his cane as he would a sword. But once let his opponent, by this method, get a hand on the stick he will have an enormous leverage by which to disarm its wielder.

It is, however, to the Emerald Isle that one must look to get instructions on the ways in which the cane can be most successfully brought into use as a weapon of self-defense.

The vivid literature of boyhood tells how at the fairs at Donnybrook and places as well known the fights of the factions were the delight of the countryside and the number of broken heads the criterion of the fair's success. There is more truth than fiction in some of those accounts, for years ago the shillelah played a most interesting part in the country festivities.

By using a cane as a son of Ireland would use a blackthorn you can put nine out of every ten ruffians bent on a holdup out of business. And before they are aware you have commenced to defend yourself.

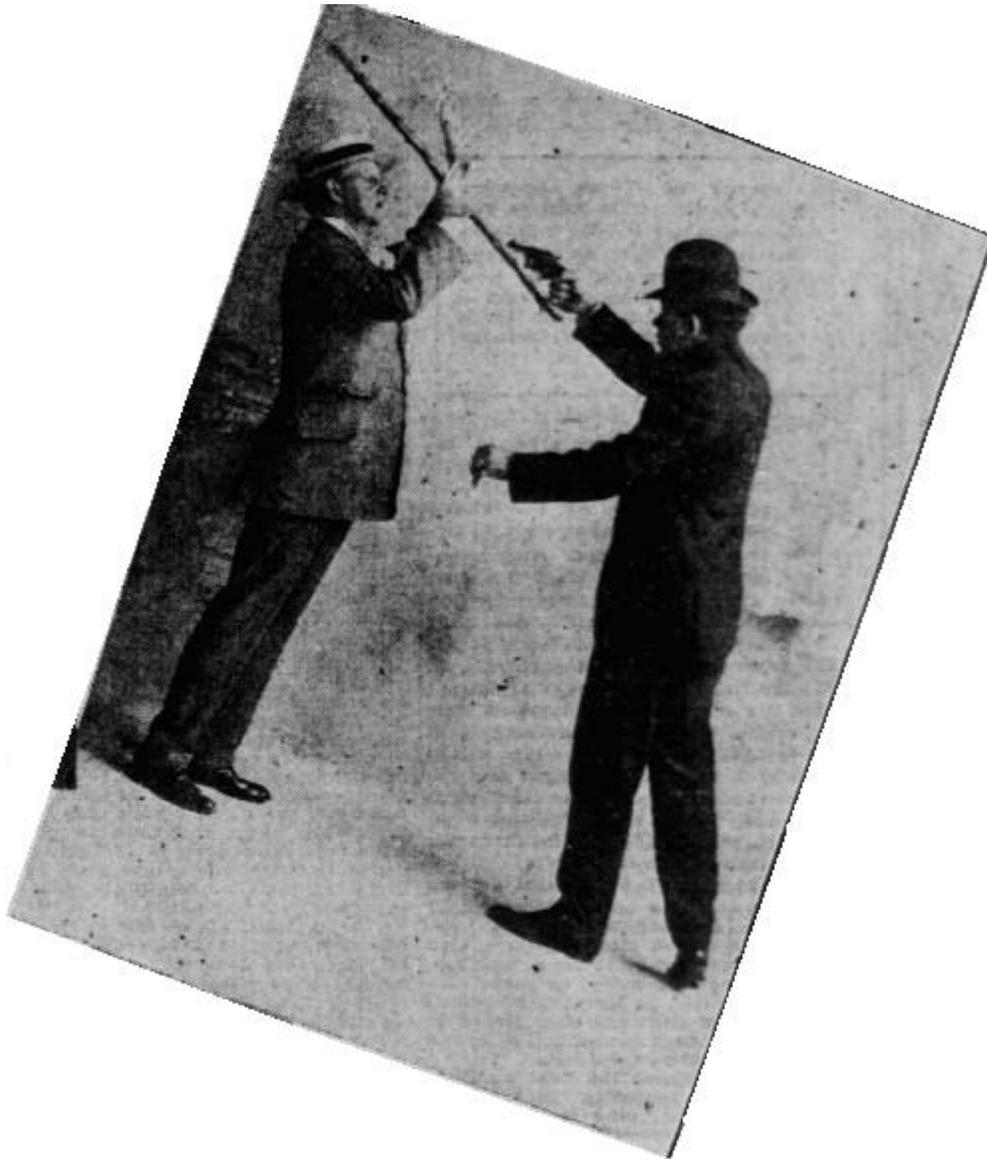
The cane, when used this way, is far preferable to either the knife or pistol. But to use the walking stick successfully one must practice with it. Instead of taking lessons with the foils, if you are a member of any of the athletic clubs, try a light stick the length of a cane. Put on the broadsword mask and coat and a heavy glove to protect the hand, then play "Donnybrook."



Measuring the Cane for Grip

After a few weeks of this kind of work one will find that he has acquired a lightness and speed that are the perfection of grace. For, in order to successfully defend one's self under this system he must keep perfect poise.

For outdoor use get a good stout stick, one that has some weight and can stand a battering. A good bit of oak with the bark on is the best. Grip the cane in the center, laying it along the forearm. With the left hand push the cane through the right hand until the end just extends beyond the elbow, which will give the right balance. It will be found that the other end, toward the ferrule, will be a little longer than that measured off.



Upward Blow That Reached the Pistol

The only hold is with the thumb, index and center fingers. It is the same grip that is used with the foil. Never grasp the cane with all the fingers, not even for a straight blow. In this case the third and little fingers are merely held lightly around the cane to steady it.

The first practice should be with this hold, going through shadow work of the defense and offense order.

When the muscles have become sufficiently strong then take on an opponent. It may be a little monotonous to begin this way but if the muscles are not accustomed to the play it is very easy to strain them so that the hand cannot be used for some time.



Aimed at the Point of the Chin

The reason for this grip is that it gives perfect freedom of movement to the wrist, which plays the most important part in the whole defense.

The blow that does the most effectual work is an upward or straight cross, which is struck with

that portion of the cane that is measured off along the elbow. It is started either by throwing the hands upward or as if to strike a blow, bringing the hand across the face of the opponent.

The cane rests on the heel of the hand and the force of the blow comes from all the muscles and the full weight of the body along the forearm. The other blow is with the ferrule end and is the blow ordinarily struck by one if he were holding the stick at the end.

Now that one has heard how to hold a cane the next thing to be considered is how to put it into practice.

Take, for instance, the case of a footpad who suddenly sticks a gun into your face and commands "Hands up!"

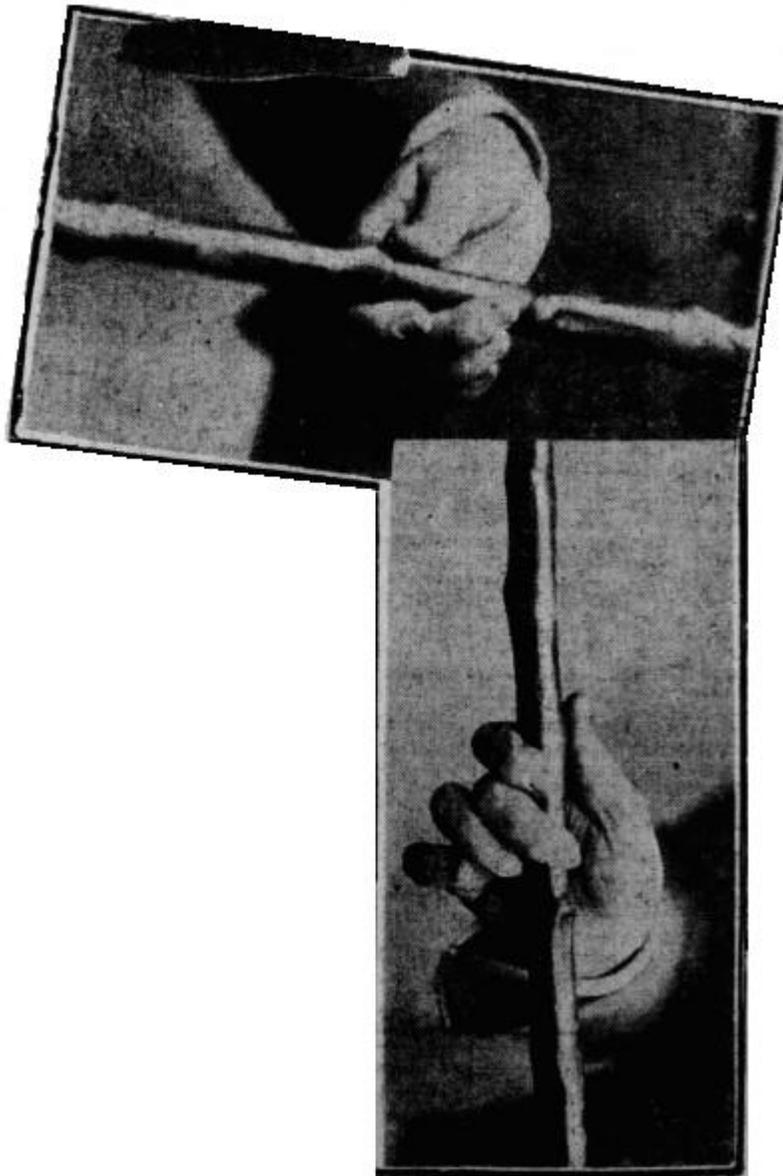
You don't stop to discuss the matter, but up go your hands. If the gun is within four feet of you it means that he is standing at least six feet from you.

The upward movement of the hands in compliance with his command will bring the heavy end of the cane in contact with the pistol and knock it out of his hand or destroy his aim.

A quick downward blow brings the other end of the cane over to catch him on the top of the hand. By this time you will be able to seize the gun with the left hand and keep out of range, while with the ferrule end you can jab him in the face or eyes.

It should be remembered right here that this article is not published for the benefit of those who, even if they had a cannon, would give up their valuables.

The most important factor in self-defense is courage. Fully half of the hold-ups would not be successful if those held up would make a stand. A little bravery will do more than all the work of the Police Department to lessen the profits of the knights of the road.



The Grip

A jab in the eye or a kick will take all the fight out of footpad. He will let you have his gun and will do his best to get out of the neighborhood. He is not going to stand quietly and let you do all this, but will be just as busy as you. Your advantages lies in that you have taken him by surprise with your cane. You must follow it up quickly. Your practice will stand you in stead here, for after gaining your first point, you will spring other blows in rapid succession that will keep him looking continually to a defense.

Take the ruffian that tackles you on the street. In most cases he is larger and more powerful than you are. Toughs very seldom tackle any one who is a match for them in size or strength.

When your adversary tries to grab you the same upward movement can be brought into play. Only this time it is aimed at the point of the chin. It is surprising how slight a tap with a stick on

this point will do the trick. More than one person has taken the count when this trick has been illustrated, the blow seeming hardly to touch the chin.

There are times when the attack will be made so suddenly or the opponent will close in so that the upward movement cannot be made. It is then that the straight cross comes into play. You give your opponent the force of the heavy end on the jaw. This, if it does not put him out, will stagger him.

Then straightening out the arm the second movement of the blow is given which brings the ferrule end across the other side of the jaw. This will generally be enough to drop him. If not, it can be repeated and the next will catch the point of the chin as his head is turned.

A defense comes into play when attacked by a person who also has a cane or stick. If the blow is aimed horizontally at the right side or downward on the right a mere raising of the right arm, laying the cane along the forearm as when measuring, will catch the blow and it will glance off. You will then be free for your stick play. By straightening out the arm you can stick the ferrule end in your opponent's face.

The left side guard is with the ferrule end. As the blow glances off you can whip in a hard back-hand blow that will cut him across the face. This will give you time to step in for close quarter work.

Then there is the low guard, which is the same for the right or left side. The blow is taken on the heavy end. For a person to strike low he must step in. The moment the blow is struck you send the cane upward and in almost every case you will reach the face.

Now for the holds. Supposing your opponent grasps the ferrule end. A quick step forward will bring the cane across your stomach and strengthen your hold. At the same time a left back-hander will do the trick on the point of the chin.

If your opponent should see the movement coming and should throw up his hand to block the blow, shift your foot behind his and the pressure of the outstretched left hand will throw him off his balance. But your opponent may have taken hold of the end of the cane with both hands, which would make it impossible to use the single-hand break. Both your hands now come into play. Quick as a flash you turn, bringing the cane over the shoulder, giving you the long leverage. It takes but the left hand to hold while the elbow of the right arm goes into your adversary's stomach.

This play is like the famous shift of Bob Fitzsimmons. It is speed that counts. Done slowly, you are lost. Another hold break is when your opponent grabs each end of the cane. Both your hands grasp the center and you shove upward, which will bring your opponent close to you and you can give him the knee.

Exit opponent.

These are but a few of the tricks in this kind of stick play. Every one who practices will find that they form unique defense and offense work, which is thoroughly practical.

But it must be remembered that without lots of practice and courage nothing can be done in the way of self-defense with a cane.

Source: The San Francisco Sunday Call, 20-Aug-1905.