



The Dueling Sword

Claude La Marche

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Originally published in 1884, Claude La Marche's **L'Épée** was the first book ever written on the use of the épée, the dueling sword of the 19th century. The book in no way deals with the modern Olympic sport of épée fencing—rather, it covers in a passionate narrative style the rituals and techniques of combat dueling with the sword, "the war of surprises" that is the épée bout.

This first English translation of La Marche's masterpiece by fencing expert Brian House, **The Dueling Sword** delivers not only a valuable treatise on historical sword fighting but extraordinary insights into the psychological stress of individual combat. La Marche writes, "the art of the épée is essentially a psychological art," and in his book he provides a comprehensive, integrated system for producing stress in the opponent and conditioning one's self to stress during a duel. Through detailed instruction in the guards, attacks, parries, ripostes, and counters, La Marche drives the reader toward the goal of practical combative fencing: the well-directed, surprising thrust to the opponent's body.

The Dueling Sword is a pioneering work in the study of human psychology under stress and a fascinating manual on the traditional combat duel, "a meeting whose outcome is without appeal."

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