

gives one, two, three, four, five, or six slight blows (varying the number with the *feel* of his adversary's sword) to his opponent's weapon, and then tries to get in a good blow, unless his opponent has anticipated him, by taking advantage of his change of blow from four to six, to make a rapid lunge just after he quits four and before he reaches six; and if the lunge be made with cat-like rapidity and in the nick of the proper time, it commonly reaches its destination. The action once engaged, lunge rapidly follows lunge for two minutes, and then, if no blood be drawn, both parties take rest, breathless and unable to hold up their swords, which seem as heavy as the best bower anchor of a man-of-war. When they recover breath and strength the second again crosses their swords, and the combat recommences. A duel rarely lasts longer than eight minutes, including all the restings. At last a lucky blow produces an abrasion of the skin of the little finger. The surgeon, by dint of hard and adroit pressure, contrives to squeeze out a tiny bead of blood. The code is homeopathic. That drop suffices to purge away smirch from esenteheen; "honor is satisfied." The adversaries shake hands, and vow themselves to be *desolated* that a misunderstanding should have occurred between them. Coffee is served.—*Scribner for February.*

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FRENCH DUELS.—The principals having been stripped to the waist, choice of position is decided by tossing a coin: "Heads or tails?" He who has choice of position elects one in which his back shall be to the sun; his adversary is placed opposite to him. It is commonly agreed to make boards, beyond which the respective opponents shall not retreat. This precaution is taken, partly to save the reputation of a nervous principal who might retreat till doomsday, and partly to prevent the duel from lasting too long a time. The instructions given a principal who is less skillful than his adversary are: "Always attack and continually retreat." The reasons of these tactics are, that it is easier to attack than to parry feints and blows, especially when they are rapidly delivered. Retreat is made with long strides; advance is slow and cautious, for during the advance one is powerless even for defense. The adversaries once in position they are armed. It is a tacit condition of every duel that neither of the principals shall have handled the weapons; one is twice as expert with a familiar as with a new sword. The swords are held straight, point up and overhead, the arm outstretched to full length, until the second of the principal who has won choice of position advances half way between each adversary, when swords are lowered till they cross. The second holds both at the junction, and asks each antagonist, (his principal last,) "Are you ready, Sir?" Upon receiving an affirmative answer, he waits an instant, that each adversary may feel on his guard; then removes his hand and exclaims, "*Allez, Messieurs,*" ("Go, gentlemen.") Usually, both principals spring in retreat at this word, in order to guard against surprise. The more confident or the more impatient adversary soon advances cautiously, until swords are joined again. He studies his adversary for an instant (the uninitiated can scarcely imagine how much is revealed by the *feel* of an adversary's sword and the sight of his hand,) then