

**SCHOOL TACTICS FOR THE  
USE OF SCHOOLS AND  
GYMNASTIC  
ASSOCIATIONS**

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School Tactics for the Use of Schools and Gymnastic Associations by WM. A. Stecher

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**WM. A. STECHER**

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BY

WM. A. STECHER.

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*ILLUSTRATED.*



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## PREFACE.

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Conducting English classes in gymnastics during a number of years at schools and seminaries in this city, and seeing that all the books and manuals of gymnastics that were at my disposal did not offer those movements, nor give the commands necessary for school tactics, I was prompted to translate, arrange, and write out such tactical exercises as are used in the "Seminary of the Gymnastic Associations of North America," and of such as offered themselves to me during class work in the gymnasium.

The following movements with their commands have been used and tested by me in girls' and boys' classes as well as in classes for grown persons.

In this book, the different movements of one person (scholar) are first described, and then those of a number of persons in all connected forms. The descriptions of the various movements are held in a general manner, so as to cover all the forms under each respective head, while, in the examples given, each form is more closely described and illustrated.

In the appendix are several "Marches" and "Reigen" (partly adapted) that can be used in the given form on all occasions where it is desirable to have a number of persons come into a position by a variety of movements. When, at an exhibition, etc., a class is to show the results of its work in tactics, the movements it has learned can be grouped together according to the manner of one of these "Marches" or "Reigen."

Accompanying these movements with music or singing greatly adds to their attractiveness, and is recommended to all schools and societies that have music or singers at their command.

WM. A. STECHER.

Cincinnati, O., 1887.



## SCHOOL TACTICS.

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*Tactics* are movements performed by a person, or by a number of persons, according to a certain law.

They embrace the turning and change of position of a single person, as well as the forming and change of position of a body of persons. They can be performed either "in place" (while standing), or "from place" (while marching, running, etc.).

The single person is the base of all tactical movements. We distinguish in him the *length* (height), *breadth* (diameter from shoulder to shoulder), *depth* (diameter from sternum to spine), and the *oblique* (a line drawn from the right front to the left rear, or the reverse). Also the *front* (face), *rear* (back), right and left *flank* (side).

A person facing a given point is in the *front position* to the same; then, according to that part of a circle which he describes while turning about his longitudinal axis, we distinguish, after a half turn (half circle), the *reverse position*; after a quarter turn (quarter circle), the *flank position*; after an eighth turn (eighth circle), the *oblique position*.

### COMMANDS.

There are two kinds of commands, the *preparatory* and the command of *execution*. The preparatory command explains or indicates the movement to be executed, while the command of execution causes the execution of this movement. The preparatory command is given slowly and distinctly, while the command of execution is given in a firm, sharp tone.



## FACING.

The commands for the turns leading to the above named positions are: For a half turn, "RIGHT" or "LEFT ABOUT—FACE!"; for a quarter turn, "RIGHT" or "LEFT—FACE!"; for an eighth turn, "HALF RIGHT" or "LEFT—FACE!" All facings are executed on the left heel.

## MARCHING.

The direction taken by a person while marching is either forward, backward, sideward, or oblique. We further have a marching "in place" (marking time).

A "*line of march*" is that straight, curved, or angular line along which a person moves when marching forward, backward, sideward, or obliquely. The direction of marching can be changed by an eighth, a quarter, three-eighth, or half turn.

Marches (excepting "sideward to the right") are begun with the left foot. Other exceptions will be noted further on.

In school tactics, two kinds of step are generally used, namely, the "*common step*" and the "*quick step*." Of the former, 95, and of the latter, 120 steps are taken in a minute. (In running, 145 steps are taken in a minute.) The command for marching is: For boys, "FORWARD—MARCH!"; for girls, "FORWARD—WALK!" The command for running is: "FORWARD—RUN!"

NOTE.—The following abbreviations will be used:

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| fw. for forward, | l. for left,    |
| bw. " backward,  | obl. " oblique, |
| sw. " sideward,  | o. " or,        |
| r. " right,      | & " and.        |

According to the relative positions of persons in order, all tactical exercises are divided into three groups, namely: I. *The Rank*, II. *The Body* (of ranks), and III. *The Colonnade* (a series of lines or columns).

## I. THE RANK.

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Two or more scholars standing in a manner common to all, form a rank. According to the position they hold to each other, we speak of a front, flank, or oblique rank, or a front or flank circle.

### FORMATION OF RANKS.

*Front rank.* At the command "FALL IN!" or "FORM IN RANK!", all scholars will form in order at a given place in the gymnasium, the tallest standing at the right end, the others standing left of him, ranked according to height, and facing to the front. The elbows of the scholars should touch slightly. The scholar standing at the right end (flank) is called the right leader, the one at the left the left leader.

*Flank rank.* The teacher commanding the scholars to form a flank rank, they will form, one behind the other, in such a manner that the tallest is at the head, the smallest at the foot of the rank. The scholars should not stand so as to be crowded, but must have room enough to turn. The tallest will be the front, the smallest the rear leader.

A half turn (r. o. l. about) will reverse this order of leaders in front or flank.

*Oblique rank.* The scholars formed either in front or flank will, after an eighth turn (half r. o. l.), stand in oblique.

*Circle.* Upon command, all scholars will form in a circle, standing according to height. According to the position of the scholars, they either looking toward the centre of the circle or away from it, we speak of a front circle facing inward or outward. A quarter turn r. o. l., when in a front circle, gives us a flank circle l. o. r., according to which side is turned inward.

## ALIGNMENT.

*Front rank.* The scholars being ranked, the teacher will see that, upon the command "IN POSITION—STAND!", they all stand side by side and in a perfectly straight rank.

NOTE.—"Position" of scholars in order: From the "resting position," (that is, one foot forward, and arms crossed on breast or back,) in which the scholars stand when first formed in a rank, the scholars form in "position" by drawing the foot placed forward to the stationary one, at the same time dropping the arms to the sides of the body. Shoulders are thrown back, chest forward, head erect, eyes looking fw., and the weight of the body on the balls of the feet.

The bringing scholars into a straight rank and proper distance is called "dressing," and can be done by the r. o. l. flank, the centre, or any scholar in rank. Command: "R. (L.)—DRESS!" At this command, all scholars except the right leader turn their heads to the right, and with short but quick steps fw., sw., or bw., move into their correct positions. Satisfying himself that the rank is "dressed," the teacher commands "FRONT!", at which the scholars again turn their heads to the front.

NOTE.—While "dressing," the teacher must pay particular attention that the scholars stand erect, do not bend head or body fw., or, as many are apt to do, move the l. o. r. shoulder fw. while turning the head.

Another command for "dressing" is often used when the rank is but slightly out of order, or when marching fw. in a front rank. It is: "EYES RIGHT (L.)—TURN!", and, to again look fw., "EYES FORWARD—TURN!"

*Flank rank.* The scholars being formed one behind the other, the rank is "dressed" by looking straight fw. and moving with small and quick steps into position exactly behind the first, so that each can see the back of only the scholar in front of him. The rank is dressed when all stand in a straight rank, and the distance between the scholars is only enough to allow them to execute a quarter turn and stand "dressed" as a front rank. Command: "COVER—FILES!"

The "dressing" of an *oblique rank* will easily be understood by the foregoing.

A *circle* is "dressed" when its members stand, as its name indicates, in a true circle, either in front or flank.

## COUNTING OFF.

*Front rank.* A front rank "counts off" ("tells off") from the r. to the l. leader, or the reverse. At the command "COUNT!", beginning with the r. leader, one after the other the