

On Horsemanship

By Xenophon

Introduction by Jerry S. Williams

Introduction

On Horsemanship is a fascinating look into the past attitudes about horsemanship. As natural horsemanship students we have much to learn from the past masters. This book by today's standards is very simple, but within this short treatise are the seeds of what is we now call natural horsemanship. There are rudimentary references to horsemanship, desensitization, preparation, foundation training, and emphasis on the development of skills for the human.

Today things are more defined and refined but Xenophon's wisdom is like the uncut gems laying in the field like common stones ready to be picked up and cut to become jewels. Much of the advice that he gives for aspiring horsemen is as good today as the day he wrote it.

In Xenophon's day one of the primary uses for a horse was for war yet he still had a kind approach to his horses. Today we no longer use our horses for war but as a companion much the way dogs have shifted in the last 50 years. So as he talks about preparing a horse for war and selecting military equipment think in terms of what are you preparing your horse for and what equipment you might need.

Most scholars date Xenophon's birth around 431 B.C in Athens. He was a pupil of Socrates and a scholar in his own right. He was credited with preserving many of Socrates' sayings and writing a detailed history of Greece at the time. He marched with the Spartans, and found himself in an unpopular war and was exiled from Athens. He chronicled some of his battles as he and his army fought their way home. Their accounts later became the military textbook for Alexander the Great. Sparta gave him land

and property in Scillus, where he lived for many years before having to move once more to settle in Corinth. He died in 354 B.C.

In this book I have removed the greek footnotes for easy reading. I hope you enjoy this interesting peek into the past.

Jerry S. Williams

ON HORSEMANSHIP

Claiming to have attained some proficiency in horsemanship ourselves, as the result of long experience in the field, our wish is to explain, for the benefit of our younger friends, what we conceive to be the most correct method of dealing with horses.

There is, it is true, a treatise on horsemanship written by Simon, the same who dedicated the bronze horse near the Eleusinion in Athens with a representation of his exploits engraved in relief on the pedestal. But we shall not on that account expunge from our treatise any conclusions in which we happen to agree with that author; on the contrary we shall hand them on with still greater pleasure to our friends, in the belief that we shall only gain in authority from the fact that so great an expert in horsemanship held similar views to our own; whilst with regard to matters omitted in his treatise, we shall endeavour to supply them. As our first topic we shall deal with the question, how a man may best avoid being cheated in the purchase of a horse.

Chapter I Choosing a Horse; Conformation

Take the case of a foal as yet unbroken: it is plain that our scrutiny must begin with the body; an animal that has never yet been mounted can but present the vaguest indications of spirit. Confining ourselves therefore to the body, the first point to examine, we maintain, will be the feet. Just as a house would be of little use, however beautiful its upper stories, if the underlying foundations were not what they ought to be, so there is little use to be extracted from a horse, and in particular a war-horse, if unsound in his feet, however excellent his other points; since he could not turn a single one of them to good account.

In testing the feet the first thing to examine will be the horny portion of the hoof. For soundness of foot a thick horn is far better than a thin. Again it is

important to notice whether the hoofs are high both before and behind, or flat to the ground; for a high hoof keeps the "frog," as it is called, well off the ground; whereas a low hoof treads equally with the stoutest and softest part of the foot alike, the gait resembling that of a bandy-legged man. "You may tell a good foot clearly by the ring," says Simon happily; for the hollow hoof rings like a cymbal against the solid earth.

And now that we have begun with the feet, let us ascend from this point to the rest of the body. The bones above the hoof and below the fetlock must not be too straight, like those of a goat; through not being properly elastic, legs of this type will jar the rider, and are more liable to become inflamed. On the other hand, these bones must not be too low, or else the fetlock will be abraded or lacerated when the horse is galloped over clods and stones.

The bones of the shanks ought to be thick, being as they are the columns on which the body rests; thick in themselves, that is, not puffed out with veins or flesh; or else in riding over hard ground they will inevitably be surcharged with blood, and varicose conditions be set up, the legs becoming thick and puffy, whilst the skin recedes; and with this loosening of the skin the back sinew is very apt to start and render the horse lame.

If the young horse in walking bends his knees flexibly, you may safely conjecture that when he comes to be ridden he will have flexible legs, since the quality of suppleness invariably increases with age. Supple knees are highly esteemed and with good reason, rendering as they do the horse less liable to stumble or break down from fatigue than those of stiffer build.

Coming to the thighs below the shoulder-blades, or arms, these if thick and muscular present a stronger and handsomer appearance, just as in the case of a human being. Again, a comparatively broad chest is better alike for strength and beauty, and better adapted to carry the legs well asunder, so that they will not overlap and interfere with one another. Again, the neck should not be set on dropping forward from the chest, like a boar's, but, like that of a game-cock rather, it should shoot upwards to the crest, and be slack along the curvature; whilst the head should be bony and the jawbone

small. In this way the neck will be well in front of the rider, and the eye will command what lies before the horse's feet. A horse, moreover, of this build, however spirited, will be least capable of overmastering the rider, since it is not by arching but by stretching out his neck and head that a horse endeavours to assert his power.

It is important also to observe whether the jaws are soft or hard on one or other side, since as a rule a horse with unequal jaws is liable to become hard-mouthed on one side.

Or, "whose bars are not equally sensitive. "Again, a prominent rather than a sunken eye is suggestive of alertness, and a horse of this type will have a wider range of vision.

And so of the nostrils: a wide-dilated nostril is at once better than a contracted one for respiration, and gives the animal a fiercer aspect. Note how, for instance, when one stallion is enraged against another, or when his spirit chafes in being ridden, the nostrils at once become dilated.

A comparatively large crest and small ears give a more typical and horse-like appearance to the head, whilst lofty withers again allow the rider a surer seat and a stronger adhesion between the shoulders and the body.

A "double spine," again, is at once softer to sit on than a single, and more pleasing to the eye. So, too, a fairly deep side somewhat rounded towards the belly will render the animal at once easier to sit and stronger, and as a general rule better able to digest his food.

The broader and shorter the loins the more easily will the horse raise his forequarters and bring up his hindquarters under him. Given these points, moreover, the belly will appear as small as possible, a portion of the body which if large is partly a disfigurement and partly tends to make the horse less strong and capable of carrying weight.

The quarters should be broad and fleshy in correspondence with the sides and chest, and if they are also firm and solid throughout they will be all the lighter for the racecourse, and will render the horse in every way more fleet.

To come to the thighs (and buttocks): if the horse have these separated by a broad line of demarcation he will be able to plant his hind-legs under him with a good gap between; and in so doing will assume a posture and a gait in action at once prouder and more firmly balanced, and in every way appear to the best advantage.

The human subject would seem to point to this conclusion. When a man wants to lift anything from off the ground he essays to do so by bringing the legs apart and not by bringing them together.

A horse ought not to have large testicles, though that is not a point to be determined in the colt.

And now, as regards the lower parts, the hocks, or shanks and fetlocks and hoofs, we have only to repeat what has been said already about those of the fore-legs.

I will here note some indications by which one may forecast the probable size of the grown animal. The colt with the longest shanks at the moment of being foaled will grow into the biggest horse; the fact being--and it holds of all the domestic quadrupeds--that with advance of time the legs hardly increase at all, while the rest of the body grows uniformly up to these, until it has attained its proper symmetry.

Such is the type of colt and such the tests to be applied, with every prospect of getting a sound-footed, strong, and fleshy animal fine of form and large of stature. If changes in some instances develop during growth, that need not prevent us from applying our tests in confidence. It far more often happens that an ugly-looking colt will turn out serviceable, than that a foal of the above description will turn out ugly or defective.

Chapter II

Starting a Horse

The right method of breaking a colt needs no description at our hands. As a matter of state organisation, cavalry duties usually devolve upon those who are not stinted in means, and who have a considerable share in the government; and it seems far better for a young man to give heed to his own health of body and to horsemanship, or, if he already knows how to ride with skill, to practising manouvres, than that he should set up as a trainer of horses. The older man has his town property and his friends, and the hundred-and-one concerns of state or of war, on which to employ his time and energies rather than on horsebreaking. It is plain then that any one holding my views on the subject will put a young horse out to be broken. But in so doing he ought to draw up articles, just as a father does when he apprentices his son to some art or handicraft, stating what sort of knowledge the young creature is to be sent back possessed of. These will serve as indications to the trainer what points he must pay special heed to if he is to earn his fee.

At the same time pains should be taken on the owner's part to see that the colt is gentle, tractable, and affectionate, when delivered to the professional trainer. That is a condition of things which for the most part may be brought about at home and by the groom--if he knows how to let the animal connect hunger and thirst and the annoyance of flies with solitude, whilst associating food and drink and escape from sources of irritation with the presence of man. As the result of this treatment, necessarily the young horse will acquire--not fondness merely, but an absolute craving for human beings. A good deal can be done by touching, stroking, patting those parts of the body which the creature likes to have so handled. These are the hairiest parts, or where, if there is anything annoying him, the horse can least of all apply relief himself.

The groom should have standing orders to take his charge through crowds, and to make him familiar with all sorts of sights and noises; and if the colt shows sign of apprehension at them, he must teach him--not by cruel, but by gentle handling--that they are not really formidable.

On this topic, then, of training, the rules here given will, I think, suffice for any private individual.

Chapter III

Purchasing a Horse

To meet the case in which the object is to buy a horse already fit for riding, we will set down certain memoranda, which, if applied intelligently, may save the purchaser from being cheated.

First, then, let there be no mistake about the age. If the horse has lost his mark teeth, not only will the purchaser's hopes be blighted, but he may find himself saddled for ever with a sorry bargain.

Given that the fact of youth is well established, let there be no mistake about another matter: how does he take the bit into his mouth and the headstall over his ears? There need be little ambiguity on this score, if the purchaser will see the bit inserted and again removed, under his eyes. Next, let it be carefully noted how the horse stands being mounted. Many horses are extremely loath to admit the approach of anything which, if once accepted, clearly means to them enforced exertion.

Another point to ascertain is whether the horse, when mounted, can be induced to leave other horses, or when being ridden past a group of horses standing, will not bolt off to join the company. Some horses again, as the result of bad training, will run away from the exercising-ground and make for the stable. A hard mouth may be detected by the exercise called the {pede} or volte, and still more so by varying the direction of the volte to right or left. Many horses will not attempt to run away except for the concurrence of a bad mouth along with an avenue of escape home.

Another point which it is necessary to learn is, whether when let go at full speed the horse can be pulled up sharp and is willing to wheel round in obedience to the rein.

It is also well to ascertain by experience if the horse you propose to purchase will show equal docility in response to the whip. Every one knows what a useless thing a servant is, or a body of troops, that will not obey. A

disobedient horse is not only useless, but may easily play the part of an arrant traitor.

And since it is assumed that the horse to be purchased is intended for war, we must widen our test to include everything which war itself can bring to the proof: such as leaping ditches, scrambling over walls, scaling up and springing off high banks. We must test his paces by galloping him up and down steep pitches and sharp inclines and along a slant. For each and all of these will serve as a touchstone to gauge the endurance of his spirit and the soundness of his body.

I am far from saying, indeed, that because an animal fails to perform all these parts to perfection, he must straightway be rejected; since many a horse will fall short at first, not from inability, but from want of experience. With teaching, practice, and habit, almost any horse will come to perform all these feats beautifully, provided he be sound and free from vice. Only you must beware of a horse that is naturally of a nervous temperament. An over-timorous animal will not only prevent the rider from using the vantage-ground of its back to strike an enemy, but is as likely as not to bring him to earth himself and plunge him into the worst of straits.

We must, also, find out of the horse shows any viciousness towards other horses or towards human beings; also, whether he is skittish; such defects are apt to cause his owner trouble.

As to any reluctance on the horse's part to being bitted or mounted, dancing and twisting about and the rest, you will get a more exact idea on this score, if, when he has gone through his work, you will try and repeat the precise operations which he went through before you began your ride. Any horse that having done his work shows a readiness to undergo it all again, affords sufficient evidence thereby of spirit and endurance.

To put the matter in a nutshell: given that the horse is sound-footed, gentle, moderately fast, willing and able to undergo toil, and above all things obedient--such an animal, we venture to predict, will give the least trouble and the greatest security to his rider in the circumstances of war; while, conversely, a beast who either out of sluggishness needs much driving, or from excess of mettle much coaxing and manouvring, will give his rider

work enough to occupy both his hands and a sinking of the heart when dangers thicken.

Chapter IV

Care of Your Horse

We will now suppose the purchaser has found a horse which he admires; the purchase is effected, and he has brought him home--how is he to be housed? It is best that the stable should be placed in a quarter of the establishment where the master will see the horse as often as possible. It is a good thing also to have his stall so arranged that there will be as little risk of the horse's food being stolen from the manger, as of the master's from his larder or store-closet. To neglect a detail of this kind is surely to neglect oneself; since in the hour of danger, it is certain, the owner has to consign himself, life and limb, to the safe keeping of his horse.

Nor is it only to avoid the risk of food being stolen that a secure horse-box is desirable, but for the further reason that if the horse takes to scattering his food, the action is at once detected; and any one who observes that happening may take it as a sign and symptom either of too much blood, which calls for veterinary aid, or of over-fatigue, for which rest is the cure, or else that an attack of indigestion or some other malady is coming on. And just as with human beings, so with the horse, all diseases are more curable at their commencement than after they have become chronic, or been wrongly treated.

But if food and exercise with a view to strengthening the horse's body are matters of prime consideration, no less important is it to pay attention to the feet. A stable with a damp and smooth floor will spoil the best hoof which nature can give. To prevent the floor being damp, it should be sloped with channels; and to avoid smoothness, paved with cobble stones sunk side by side in the ground and similar in size to the horse's hoofs. A stable floor of this sort is calculated to strengthen the horse's feet by the mere pressure on the part in standing. In the next place it will be the groom's business to lead out the horse somewhere to comb and curry him; and after his morning's feed to unhalter him from the manger, so that he may come to his evening meal with greater relish. To secure the best type of stable-yard, and with a view to strengthening the horse's feet, I would suggest to take and throw down loosely four or five waggon loads of pebbles, each as large

as can be grasped in the hand, and about a pound in weight; the whole to be fenced round with a skirting of iron to prevent scattering. The mere standing on these will come to precisely the same thing as if for a certain portion of the day the horse were, off and on, stepping along a stony road; whilst being curried or when fidgeted by flies he will be forced to use his hoofs just as much as if he were walking. Nor is it the hoofs merely, but a surface so strewn with stones will tend to harden the frog of the foot also.

But if care is needed to make the hoofs hard, similar pains should be taken to make the mouth and jaws soft; and the same means and appliances which will render a man's flesh and skin soft, will serve to soften and supple a horse's mouth.

Chapter V

Grooming Your Horse

It is the duty of a horseman, as we think, to have his groom trained thoroughly in all that concerns the treatment of the horse. In the first place, then, the groom should know that he is never to knot the halter at the point where the headstall is attached to the horse's head. By constantly rubbing his head against the manger, if the halter does not sit quite loose about his ears, the horse will be constantly injuring himself; and with sores so set up, it is inevitable that he should show peevishness, while being bitted or rubbed down.

It is desirable that the groom should be ordered to carry out the dung and litter of the horse to some one place each day. By so doing, he will discharge the duty with least trouble to himself, and at the same time be doing the horse a kindness.

The groom should also be instructed to attach the muzzle to the horse's mouth, both when taking him out to be groomed and to the rolling-ground. In fact he should always muzzle him whenever he takes him anywhere without the bit. The muzzle, while it is no hindrance to respiration, prevents biting; and when attached it serves to rob the horse of opportunity for vice.

Again, care should be taken to tie the horse up with the halter above his head. A horse's natural instinct, in trying to rid himself of anything that irritates the face, is to toss up his head, and by this upward movement, if so tied, he only slackens the chain instead of snapping it. In rubbing the horse down, the groom should begin with the head and mane; as until the upper parts are clean, it is vain to cleanse the lower; then, as regards the rest of the body, first brush up the hair, by help of all the ordinary implements for cleansing, and then beat out the dust, following the lie of the hair. The hair on the spine (and dorsal region) ought not to be touched with any instrument whatever; the hand alone should be used to rub and smooth it, and in the direction of its natural growth, so as to preserve from injury that part of the horse's back on which the rider sits.

The head should be drenched with water simply; for, being bony, if you try to cleanse it with iron or wooden instruments injury may be caused. So, too, the forelock should be merely wetted; the long hairs of which it is composed, without hindering the animal's vision, serve to scare away from the eyes anything that might trouble them. Providence, we must suppose, bestowed these hairs upon the horse, instead of the large ears which are given to the ass and the mule as a protection to the eyes. The tail, again, and mane should be washed, the object being to help the hairs to grow--those in the tail so as to allow the creature the greatest reach possible in brushing away molesting objects, and those of the neck in order that the rider may have as free a grip as possible.

Mane, forelock, and tail are triple gifts bestowed by the gods upon the horse for the sake of pride and ornament, and here is the proof: a brood mare, so long as her mane is long and flowing, will not readily suffer herself to be covered by an ass; hence breeders of mules take care to clip the mane of the mare with a view to covering.

Washing of the legs we are inclined to dispense with--no good is done but rather harm to the hoofs by this daily washing. So, too, excessive cleanliness of the belly is to be discouraged; the operation itself is most annoying to the horse; and the cleaner these parts are made, the thicker the swarm of troublesome things which collect beneath the belly. Besides which, however elaborately you clean these parts, the horse is no sooner led out than presently he will be just as dirty as if he had not been cleaned. Omit these ablutions then, we say; and similarly for the legs, rubbing and currying by hand is quite sufficient.

Chapter VI

Handling Your Horse

We will now explain how the operation of grooming may be performed with least danger to oneself and best advantage to the horse. If the groom attempts to clean the horse with his face turned the same way as the horse, he runs the risk of getting a knock in the face from the animal's knee or hoof. When cleaning him he should turn his face in the opposite direction to the horse, and planting himself well out of the way of his leg, at an angle to his shoulder-blade, proceed to rub him down. He will then escape all mischief, and he will be able to clean the frog by folding back the hoof. Let him clean the hind-legs in the same way.

The man who has to do with the horse should know, with regard to this and all other necessary operations, that he ought to approach as little as possible from the head or the tail to perform them; for if the horse attempt to show vice he is master of the man in front and rear. But by approaching from the side he will get the greatest hold over the horse with the least risk of injury to himself.

When the horse has to be led, we do not approve of leading him from in front, for the simple reason that the person so leading him robs himself of his power of self-protection, whilst he leaves the horse freedom to do what he likes. On the other hand, we take a like exception to the plan of training the horse to go forward on a long rein and lead the way, and for this reason: it gives the horse the opportunity of mischief, in whichever direction he likes, on either flank, and the power also to turn right about and face his driver. How can a troop of horses be kept free of one another, if driven in this fashion from behind?--whereas a horse accustomed to be led from the side will have least power of mischief to horse or man, and at the same time be in the best position to be mounted by the rider at a moment's notice, were it necessary.

In order to insert the bit correctly the groom should, in the first place, approach on the near side of the horse, and then throwing the reins over his head, let them drop loosely on the withers; raise the headstall in his

right hand, and with his left present the bit. If the horse will take the bit, it is a simple business to adjust the strap of the headstall; but if he refuses to open his mouth, the groom must hold the bit against the teeth and at the same time insert the thumb of his left hand inside the horse's jaws. Most horses will open their mouths to that operation. But if he still refuses, then the groom must press the lip against the tush; very few horses will refuse the bit, when that is done to them.

The groom can hardly be too much alive to the following points * * * if any work is to be done: in fact, so important is it that the horse should readily take his bit, that, to put it tersely, a horse that will not take it is good for nothing. Now, if the horse be bitted not only when he has work to do, but also when he is being taken to his food and when he is being led home from a ride, it would be no great marvel if he learnt to take the bit of his own accord, when first presented to him.

It would be good for the groom to know how to give a leg up in the Persian fashion, so that in case of illness or infirmity of age the master himself may have a man to help him on to horseback without trouble, or, if he so wish, be able to oblige a friend with a man to mount him.

The one best precept--the golden rule--in dealing with a horse is never to approach him angrily. Anger is so devoid of forethought that it will often drive a man to do things which in a calmer mood he will regret. Thus, when a horse is shy of any object and refuses to approach it, you must teach him that there is nothing to be alarmed at, particularly if he be a plucky animal; or, failing that, touch the formidable object yourself, and then gently lead the horse up to it. The opposite plan of forcing the frightened creature by blows only intensifies its fear, the horse mentally associating the pain he suffers at such a moment with the object of suspicion, which he naturally regards as its cause.

If, when the groom brings up the horse to his master to mount, he knows how to make him lower his back, to facilitate mounting, we have no fault to find. Still, we consider that the horseman should practise and be able to mount, even if the horse does not so lend himself; since on another

occasion another type of horse may fall to the rider's lot, nor can the same rider be always served by the same equerry.

Chapter VII

Riding Your Horse

The master, let us suppose, has received his horse and is ready to mount. We will now prescribe certain rules to be observed in the interests not only of the horseman but of the animal which he bestrides. First, then, he should take the leading rein, which hangs from the chin-strap or nose-band, conveniently in his left hand, held slack so as not to jerk the horse's mouth, whether he means to mount by hoisting himself up, catching hold of the mane behind the ears, or to vault on to horseback by help of his spear. With the right hand he should grip the reins along with a tuft of hair beside the shoulder-joint, so that he may not in any way wrench the horse's mouth with the bit while mounting. In the act of taking the spring off the ground for mounting, he should hoist his body by help of the left hand, and with the right at full stretch assist the upward movement (a position in mounting which will present a graceful spectacle also from behind); at the same time with the leg well bent, and taking care not to place his knee on the horse's back, he must pass his leg clean over to the off side; and so having brought his foot well round, plant himself firmly on his seat.

To meet the case in which the horseman may chance to be leading his horse with the left hand and carrying his spear in the right, it would be good, we think, for every one to practise vaulting on to his seat from the right side also. In fact, he has nothing else to learn except to do with his right limbs what he has previously done with the left, and vice versa. And the reason we approve of this method of mounting is that it enables the soldier at one and the same instant to get astride of his horse and to find himself prepared at all points, supposing he should have to enter the lists of battle on a sudden.

But now, supposing the rider fairly seated, whether bareback or on a saddle-cloth, a good seat is not that of a man seated on a chair, but rather the pose of a man standing upright with his legs apart. In this way he will be able to hold on to the horse more firmly by his thighs; and this erect attitude will enable him to hurl a javelin or to strike a blow from horseback, if occasion calls, with more vigorous effect. The leg and foot should hang

loosely from the knee; by keeping the leg stiff, the rider is apt to have it broken in collision with some obstacle; whereas a flexible leg will yield to the impact, and at the same time not shift the thigh from its position. The rider should also accustom the whole of his body above the hips to be as supple as possible; for thus he will enlarge his scope of action, and in case of a tug or shove be less liable to be unseated. Next, when the rider is seated, he must, in the first place, teach his horse to stand quiet, until he has drawn his skirts from under him, if need be, and got the reins an equal length and grasped his spear in the handiest fashion; and, in the next place, he should keep his left arm close to his side. This position will give the rider absolute ease and freedom, and his hand the firmest hold.

As to reins, we recommend those which are well balanced, without being weak or slippery or thick, so that when necessary, the hand which holds them can also grasp a spear.

As soon as the rider gives the signal to the horse to start, he should begin at a walking pace, which will tend to allay his excitement. If the horse is inclined to droop his head, the reins should be held pretty high; or somewhat low, if he is disposed to carry his head high. This will set off the horse's bearing to the best advantage. Presently, as he falls into a natural trot, he will gradually relax his limbs without the slightest suffering, and so come more agreeably to the gallop. Since, too, the preference is given to starting on the left foot, it will best conduce to that lead if, while the horse is still trotting, the signal to gallop should be given at the instant of making a step with his right foot. As he is on the point of lifting his left foot he will start upon it, and while turning left will simultaneously make the first bound of the gallop; since, as a matter of instinct, a horse, on being turned to the right, leads off with his right limbs, and to the left with his left.

As an exercise, we recommend what is called the volte, since it habituates the animal to turn to either hand; while a variation in the order of the turn is good as involving an equalisation of both sides of the mouth, in first one, and then the other half of the exercise. But of the two we commend the oval form of the volte rather than the circular; for the horse, being already sated with the straight course, will be all the more ready to turn, and will be practised at once in the straight course and in wheeling. At the curve, he

should be held up, because it is neither easy nor indeed safe when the horse is at full speed to turn sharp, especially if the ground is broken or slippery.

But in collecting him, the rider should as little as possible sway the horse obliquely with the bit, and as little as possible incline his own body; or, he may rest assured, a trifle will suffice to stretch him and his horse full length upon the ground. The moment the horse has his eyes fixed on the straight course after making a turn, is the time to urge him to full speed. In battle, obviously, these turns and wheelings are with a view to charging or retiring; consequently, to practise quickening the pace after wheeling is desirable. When the horse seems to have had enough of the manege, it would be good to give him a slight pause, and then suddenly to put him to his quickest, away from his fellows first, and now towards them; and then again to quiet him down in mid-career as short as possible; and from halt once more to turn him right-about and off again full charge. It is easy to predict that the day will come when there will be need of each of these manouvres.

When the moment to dismount has come, you should never do so among other horses, nor near a group of people, nor outside the exercising-ground; but on the precise spot which is the scene of his compulsory exertion there let the horse find also relaxation.

Chapter VIII

Practice for Battle

As there will, doubtless, be times when the horse will need to race downhill and uphill and on sloping ground; times, also, when he will need to leap across an obstacle; or, take a flying leap from off a bank; or, jump down from a height, the rider must teach and train himself and his horse to meet all emergencies. In this way the two will have a chance of saving each the other, and may be expected to increase their usefulness.

And here, if any reader should accuse us of repeating ourselves, on the ground that we are only stating now what we said before on the same topics, we say that this is not mere repetition. In the former case, we confined ourselves to advising the purchaser before he concluded his bargain to test whether the horse could do those particular things; what we are now maintaining is that the owner ought to teach his own horse, and we will explain how this teaching is to be done.

With a horse entirely ignorant of leaping, the best way is to take him by the leading rein, which hangs loose, and to get across the trench yourself first, and then to pull tight on the leading-rein, to induce him to leap across. If he refuses, some one with a whip or switch should apply it smartly. The result will be that the horse will clear at a bound, not the distance merely, but a far larger space than requisite; and for the future there will be no need for an actual blow, the mere sight of some one coming up behind will suffice to make him leap. As soon as he is accustomed to leap in this way you may mount him and put him first at smaller and then at larger trenches. At the moment of the spring be ready to apply the spur; and so too, when training him to leap up and leap down, you should touch him with the spur at the critical instant. In the effort to perform any of these actions with the whole body, the horse will certainly perform them with more safety to himself and to his rider than he will, if his hind-quarters lag, in taking a ditch or fence, or in making an upward spring or downward jump.

To face a steep incline, you must first teach him on soft ground, and finally, when he is accustomed to that, he will much prefer the downward to the

upward slope for a fast pace. And as to the apprehension, which some people entertain, that a horse may dislocate the shoulder in galloping down an incline, it should encourage them to learn that the Persians and Odrysians all run races down precipitous slopes; and their horses are every bit as sound as our own.

Nor must we omit another topic: how the rider is to accommodate himself to these several movements. Thus, when the horse breaks off into a gallop, the rider ought to bend forward, since the horse will be less likely to slip from under; and so to pitch his rider off. So again in pulling him up short the rider should lean back; and thus escape a shock. In leaping a ditch or tearing up a steep incline, it is no bad plan to let go the reins and take hold of the mane, so that the animal may not feel the burthen of the bit in addition to that of the ground. In going down a steep incline the rider must throw himself right back and hold in the horse with the bit, to prevent himself being hurled headforemost down the slope himself if not his horse.

It is a correct principle to vary these exercises, which should be gone through sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, and should sometimes be shorter and sometimes longer in duration. The horse will take much more kindly to them if you do not confine him to one place and one routine.

Since it is a matter of prime necessity that the rider should keep his seat, while galloping full speed on every sort of ground, and at the same time be able to use his weapons with effect on horseback, nothing could be better, where the country suits and there are wild animals, than to practise horsemanship in combination with the chase. But when these resources fail, a good exercise may be supplied in the combined efforts of two horsemen. One of them will play the part of fugitive, retreating helter-skelter over every sort of ground, with lance reversed and plying the butt end. The other pursues, with buttons on his javelins and his lance similarly handled. Whenever he comes within javelin range he lets fly at the retreating foeman with his blunted missiles; or whenever within spear thrust he deals the overtaken combatant a blow. In coming to close quarters, it is a good plan first to drag the foeman towards oneself, and then on a sudden to thrust him off; that is a device to bring him to the ground. The correct plan for the man so dragged is to press his horse forward: by which action the man who

is being dragged is more likely to unhorse his assailant than to be brought to the ground himself.

If it ever happens that you have an enemy's camp in front, and cavalry skirmishing is the order of the day (at one time charging the enemy right up to the hostile battle-line, and again beating a retreat), under these circumstances it is well to bear in mind that so long as the skirmisher is close to his own party, valour and discretion alike dictate to wheel and charge in the vanguard might and main; but when he finds himself in close proximity to the foe, he must keep his horse well in hand. This, in all probability, will enable him to do the greatest mischief to the enemy, and to receive least damage at his hands.

The gods have bestowed on man, indeed, the gift of teaching man his duty by means of speech and reasoning, but the horse, it is obvious, is not open to instruction by speech and reasoning. If you would have a horse learn to perform his duty, your best plan will be, whenever he does as you wish, to show him some kindness in return, and when he is disobedient to chastise him. This principle, though capable of being stated in a few words, is one which holds good throughout the whole of horsemanship. As, for instance, a horse will more readily take the bit, if each time he accepts it some good befalls him; or, again, he will leap ditches and spring up embankments and perform all the other feats incumbent on him, if he be led to associate obedience to the word of command with relaxation.

Chapter IX

Quieting a Spirited Horse

The topics hitherto considered have been: firstly, how to reduce the chance of being cheated in the purchase of a colt or full-grown horse; secondly, how to escape as much as possible the risk of injuring your purchase by mishandling; and lastly, how to succeed in turning out a horse possessed of all the qualities demanded by the cavalry soldier for the purposes of war.

The time has come perhaps to add a few suggestions, in case the rider should be called upon to deal with an animal either unduly spirited or again unduly sluggish in disposition. The first point to recognise is, that temper of spirit in a horse takes the place of passion or anger in a man; and just as you may best escape exciting a man's ill-temper by avoiding harshness of speech and act, so you will best avoid enraging a spirited horse by not annoying him. Thus, from the first instant, in the act of mounting him, you should take pains to minimise the annoyance; and once on his back you should sit quiet for longer than the ordinary time, and so urge him forward by the gentlest signs possible; next, beginning at the slowest pace, gradually work him into a quicker step, but so gradually that he will find himself at full speed without noticing it. Any sudden signal will bewilder a spirited horse, just as a man is bewildered by any sudden sight or sound or other experience. I say one should be aware that any unexpected shock will produce disturbance in a horse.

So if you wish to pull up a spirited horse when breaking off into a quicker pace than requisite, you must not suddenly wrench him, but quietly and gently bring the bit to bear upon him, coaxing him rather than compelling him to calm down. It is the long steady course rather than the frequent turn which tends to calm a horse. A quiet pace sustained for a long time has a caressing, soothing effect, the reverse of exciting. If any one proposes by a series of fast and oft-repeated gallops to produce a sense of weariness in the horse, and so to tame him, his expectation will not be justified by the result; for under such circumstances a spirited horse will do his best to carry the day by sheer force, and with a show of temper, like a passionate man, may contrive to bring on himself and his rider irreparable mischief.

A spirited horse should be kept in check, so that he does not dash off at full speed; and on the same principle, you should absolutely abstain from setting him to race against another; as a general rule, your fiery-spirited horse is only too fond of contention.

Smooth bits are better and more serviceable than rough; if a rough bit be inserted at all, it must be made to resemble a smooth one as much as possible by lightness of hand.

It is a good thing also for the rider to accustom himself to keep a quiet seat, especially when mounted on a spirited horse; and also to touch him as little as possible with anything except that part of the body necessary to secure a firm seat.

Again, it should be known that the conventional "chirrup" to quiet and "cluck" to rouse a horse are a sort of precept of the training school; and supposing any one from the beginning chose to associate soft soothing actions with the "cluck" sound, and harsh rousing actions with the "chirrup," the horse could be taught to rouse himself at the "chirrup" and to calm himself at the "cluck" sound. On this principle, at the sound of the trumpet or the shout of battle the rider should avoid coming up to his charger in a state of excitement, or, indeed, bringing any disturbing influence to bear on the animal. As far as possible, at such a crisis he should halt and rest him; and, if circumstances permit, give him his morning or his evening meal. But the best advice of all is not to get an over-spirited horse for the purposes of war.

As to the sluggish type of animal, I need only suggest to do everything the opposite to what we advise as appropriate in dealing with an animal of high spirit.

Chapter X

Engaging Your Horse

But possibly you are not content with a horse serviceable for war. You want to find him a showy, attractive animal, with a certain grandeur of bearing. If so, you must abstain from pulling at his mouth with the bit, or applying the spur and whip--methods commonly adopted by people with a view to a fine effect, though, as a matter of fact, they thereby achieve the very opposite of what they are aiming at. That is to say, by dragging the mouth up they render the horse blind instead of alive to what is in front of him; and what with spurring and whipping they distract the creature to the point of absolute bewilderment and danger. Feats indeed!--the feats of horses with a strong dislike to being ridden--up to all sorts of ugly and ungainly tricks. On the contrary, let the horse be taught to be ridden on a loose bridle, and to hold his head high and arch his neck, and you will practically be making him perform the very acts which he himself delights or rather exults in; and the best proof of the pleasure which he takes is, that when he is let loose with other horses, and more particularly with mares, you will see him rear his head aloft to the full height, and arch his neck with nervous vigour, pawing the air with pliant legs and waving his tail on high. By training him to adopt the very airs and graces which he naturally assumes when showing off to best advantage, you have got what you are aiming at--a horse that delights in being ridden, a splendid and showy animal, the joy of all beholders.

How these desirable results are, in our opinion, to be produced, we will now endeavour to explain. In the first place, then, you ought to have at least two bits. One of these should be smooth, with discs of a good size; the other should have heavy and flat discs studded with sharp spikes, so that when the horse seizes it and dislikes the roughness he will drop it; then when the smooth is given him instead, he is delighted with its smoothness, and whatever he has learnt before upon the rough, he will perform with greater relish on the smooth. He may certainly, out of contempt for its very smoothness, perpetually try to get a purchase on it, and that is why we attach large discs to the smooth bit, the effect of which is to make him open

his mouth, and drop the mouthpiece. It is possible to make the rough bit of every degree of roughness by keeping it slack or taut.

But, whatever the type of bit may be, let it in any case be flexible. If it be stiff, at whatever point the horse seizes it he must take it up bodily against his jaws; just as it does not matter at what point a man takes hold of a bar of iron, he lifts it as a whole. The other flexibly constructed type acts like a chain (only the single point at which you hold it remains stiff, the rest hangs loose); and while perpetually hunting for the portion which escapes him, he lets the mouthpiece go from his bars. For this reason the rings are hung in the middle from the two axles, so that while feeling for them with his tongue and teeth he may neglect to take the bit up against his jaws.

To explain what is meant by flexible and stiff as applied to a bit, we will describe the matter. A flexible bit is one in which the axles have their points of junction broad and smooth, so as to bend easily; and where the several parts fitting round the axles, being large of aperture and not too closely packed, have greater flexibility; whereas, if the several parts do not slide to and fro with ease, and play into each other, that is what we call a stiff bit. Whatever the kind of bit may be, the rider must carry out precisely the same rules in using it, as follows, if he wishes to turn out a horse with the qualities described. The horse's mouth is not to be pulled back too harshly so as to make him toss his head aside, nor yet so gently that he will not feel the pressure. But the instant he raises his neck in answer to the pull, give him the bit at once; and so throughout, as we never cease repeating, at every response to your wishes, whenever and wherever the animal performs his service well, reward and humour him. Thus, when the rider perceives that the horse takes a pleasure in the high arching and supple play of his neck, let him seize the instant not to impose severe exertion on him, like a taskmaster, but rather to caress and coax him, as if anxious to give him a rest. In this way the horse will be encouraged and fall into a rapid pace.

That a horse takes pleasure in swift movement, may be shown conclusively. As soon as he has got his liberty, he sets off at a trot or gallop, never at a walking pace; so natural and instinctive a pleasure does this

action afford him, if he is not forced to perform it to excess; since it is true of horse and man alike that nothing is pleasant if carried to excess.

But now suppose he has attained to the grand style when ridden--we have accustomed him of course in his first exercise to wheel and fall into a canter simultaneously; assuming then, he has got that lesson well by heart, if the rider pulls him up with the bit while simultaneously giving him one of the signals to be off, the horse, galled on the one hand by the bit, and on the other collecting himself in obedience to the signal "off," will throw forward his chest and raise his legs aloft with fiery spirit; though not indeed with suppleness, for the supple play of the limbs ceases as soon as the horse feels annoyance. But now, supposing when his fire is thus enkindled you give him the rein, the effect is instantaneous. Under the pleasurable sense of freedom, thanks to the relaxation of the bit, with stately bearing and legs pliantly moving he dashes forward in his pride, in every respect imitating the airs and graces of a horse approaching other horses. Listen to the epithets with which spectators will describe the type of horse: the noble animal! and what willingness to work, what paces, what a spirit and what mettle; how proudly he bears himself--a joy at once, and yet a terror to behold.

Chapter XI

Showing Your Horse

If, however, the wish is to secure a horse adapted to parade and state processions, a high stepper and a showy animal, these are qualities not to be found combined in every horse, but to begin with, the animal must have high spirit and a stalwart body. Not that, as some think, a horse with flexible legs will necessarily be able to rear his body. What we want is a horse with supple loins, and not supple only but short and strong (I do not mean the loins towards the tail, but by the belly the region between the ribs and thighs). That is the horse who will be able to plant his hind-legs well under the forearm. If while he is so planting his hind-quarters, he is pulled up with the bit, he lowers his hind-legs on his hocks and raises the forepart of his body, so that any one in front of him will see the whole length of his belly to the sheath. At the moment the horse does this, the rider should give him the rein, so that he may display the noblest feats which a horse can perform of his own free will, to the satisfaction of the spectators.

There are, indeed, other methods of teaching these arts. Some do so by touching the horse with a switch under the hocks, others employ an attendant to run alongside and strike the horse with a stick under the gaskins. For ourselves, however, far the best method of instruction, as we keep repeating, is to let the horse feel that whatever he does in obedience to the rider's wishes will be followed by some rest and relaxation.

To quote a dictum of Simon, what a horse does under compulsion he does blindly, and his performance is no more beautiful than would be that of a ballet-dancer taught by whip and goad. The performances of horse or man so treated would seem to be displays of clumsy gestures rather than of grace and beauty. What we need is that the horse should of his own accord exhibit his finest airs and paces at set signals. Supposing, when he is in the riding-field, you push him to a gallop until he is bathed in sweat, and when he begins to prance and show his airs to fine effect, you promptly dismount and take off the bit, you may rely upon it he will of his own accord another time break into the same prancing action. Such are the horses on which gods and heroes ride, as represented by the artist. The majesty of men

themselves is best discovered in the graceful handling of such animals. A horse so prancing is indeed a thing of beauty, a wonder and a marvel; riveting the gaze of all who see him, young alike and graybeards. They will never turn their backs, I venture to predict, or weary of their gazing so long as he continues to display his splendid action.

If the possessor of so rare a creature should find himself by chance in the position of a squadron leader or a general of cavalry, he must not confine his zeal to the development of his personal splendour, but should study all the more to make the troop or regiment a splendid spectacle. Supposing (in accordance with the high praise bestowed upon the type of animal) the leader is mounted on a horse which with his high airs and frequent prancing makes but the slightest movement forward--obviously the rest of the troop must follow at a walking pace, and one may fairly ask where is the element of splendour in the spectacle? But now suppose that you, sir, being at the head of the procession, rouse your horse and take the lead at a pace neither too fast nor yet too slow, but in a way to bring out the best qualities in all the animals, their spirit, fire, grace of mien and bearing ripe for action--I say, if you take the lead of them in this style, the collective thud, the general neighing and the snorting of the horses will combine to render not only you at the head, but your whole company down to the last man a thrilling spectacle.

One word more. Supposing a man has shown some skill in purchasing his horses, and can rear them into strong and serviceable animals, supposing further he can handle them in the right way, not only in the training for war, but in exercises with a view to display, or lastly, in the stress of actual battle, what is there to prevent such a man from making every horse he owns of far more value in the end than when he bought it, with the further outlook that, unless some power higher than human interpose, he will become the owner of a celebrated stable, and himself as celebrated for his skill in horsemanship.

Chapter XII

Arming Your Horse for Battle

We will now describe the manner in which a trooper destined to run the risks of battle upon horseback should be armed. In the first place, then, we would insist, the corselet must be made to fit the person; since, if it fits well, its weight will be distributed over the whole body; whereas, if too loose, the shoulders will have all the weight to bear, while, if too tight, the corselet is no longer a defensive arm, but a "strait jacket." Again, the neck, as being a vital part, ought to have, as we maintain, a covering, appended to the corselet and close-fitting. This will serve as an ornament, and if made as it ought to be, will conceal the rider's face--if so he chooses--up to the nose.

As to the helmet, the best kind, in our opinion, is one of the Boeotian pattern, on the principle again, that it covers all the parts exposed above the breastplate without hindering vision. Another point: the corselet should be so constructed that it does not prevent its wearer sitting down or stooping. About the abdomen and the genitals and parts surrounding flaps should be attached in texture and in thickness sufficient to protect that region.

Again, as an injury to the left hand may disable the horseman, we would recommend the newly-invented piece of armour called the gauntlet, which protects the shoulder, arm, and elbow, with the hand engaged in holding the reins, being so constructed as to extend and contract; in addition to which it covers the gap left by the corselet under the armpit. The case is different with the right hand, which the horseman must needs raise to discharge a javelin or strike a blow. Here, accordingly, any part of the corselet which would hinder action out to be removed; in place of which the corselet ought to have some extra flaps at the joints, which as the outstretched arm is raised unfold, and as the arm descends close tight again. The arm itself, it seems to us, will better be protected by a piece like a greave stretched over it than bound up with the corselet. Again, the part exposed when the right hand is raised should be covered close to the corselet either with calfskin or with metal; or else there will be a want of protection just at the most vital point.

Moreover, as any damage done to the horse will involve his rider in extreme peril, the horse also should be clad in armour--frontlet, breastplate, and thigh-pieces; which latter may at the same time serve as cuisses for the mounted man. Beyond all else, the horse's belly, being the most vital and defenceless part, should be protected. It is possible to protect it with the saddle-cloth. The saddle itself should be of such sort and so stitched as to give the rider a firm seat, and yet not gall the horse's back.

As regards the limbs in general, both horse and rider may be looked upon as fully armed. The only parts remaining are the shins and feet, which of course protrude beyond the cuisses, but these also may be armed by the addition of gaiters made of leather like that used for making sandals. And thus you will have at once defensive armour for the shins and stockings for the feet.

The above, with the blessing of heaven, will serve for armour of defence. To come to weapons of offence, we recommend the sabre rather than the straight sword, since from the vantage-ground of the horse's position the curved blade will descend with greater force than the ordinary weapon.

Again, in place of the long reed spear, which is apt to be weak and awkward to carry, we would substitute two darts of cornel-wood; the one of which the skilful horseman can let fly, and still ply the one reserved in all directions, forwards, backwards, and obliquely; add to that, these smaller weapons are not only stronger than the spear but far more manageable.

As regards range of discharge in shooting we are in favour of the longest possible, as giving more time to rally and transfer the second javelin to the right hand. And here we will state shortly the most effective method of hurling the javelin. The horseman should throw forward his left side, while drawing back his right; then rising bodily from the thighs, he should let fly the missile with the point slightly upwards. The dart so discharged will carry with the greatest force and to the farthest distance; we may add, too, with the truest aim, if at the moment of discharge the lance be directed steadily on the object aimed at.

This treatise, consisting of notes and suggestions, lessons and exercises suited to a private individual, must come to a conclusion; the theory and practice of the matter suited to a cavalry commander will be found developed in the companion treatise.

The End