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LECTURES
ON
HORSEMANSHIP,
Wherein is Explained
EVERY
NECESSARY INSTRUCTION
FOR BOTH
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
In the Useful and Polite
ART OF RIDING,
WITH
EASE, ELEGANCE, AND SAFETY,
BY T. S.
Professor of Horsemanship.

LONDON:
1793.

[2]

Address to the Audience.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

PERMIT me to observe that the Horse is an animal, which, from the earliest ages of the world, has been destined to the pleasure and services of Man; the various and noble qualities with which nature has endowed him sufficiently speaking the ends for which he was designed.

Mankind were not long before they were acquainted with them, and found the means of applying them to the purposes for which they were given: this is apparent from the Histories and traditions of almost all nations, even from times the most remote; insomuch that many nations and tribes, or colonies of people, who were entirely ignorant, or had but very imperfect notions, of other improvements and arts of life; and even at this day^{3*} are unacquainted with them, yet saw and understood the generous properties of this creature in so strong a light as to treat him with fondness and the greatest attention, sufficiently to declare the high opinion they entertained of his merit and excellence; nay in various regions, and in the most distant ages, were so far from being strangers to the many services of which the Horse was capable, as to have left rules and precepts concerning them, which are so true and just, that they have been adopted by their successors; and as all art is progressive, and receives additions and improvements in its course, as the sagacity of man at different times, or chance and other causes happen and concur: so that having the Ancient's foundation to erect our building, it is natural to suppose that the structure has received many beauties and improvements from the experience and refinement of latter times.

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It is generally supposed that the first service in which the Horse was employed, was to assist mankind in making war, or in the pleasures and occupations of the chase. *Xenophon*, who wrote three hundred years before the Birth of *Christ*, says, in an express treatise which he wrote on Horsemanship, that Cyrus hunted on Horseback, when he had a mind to exercise himself and horses.

Herodotus speaks of hunting on Horseback as an exercise used in the time of *Darius*, and it is probably of much earlier date. He particularly mentions a fall which Darius had from his horse in hunting, by which he dislocated his heel: these and thousands of quotations more, which might be produced as proofs of the utility of the Horse, in remote ages, are truths so indisputably attested that to enlarge farther upon it would be a superfluous labour, and foreign to my present undertaking.

 ON MOUNTING YOUR HORSE.

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FIRST we will suppose your horse properly saddled and bridled. Take your Bridoun-rein (if you have Bit and Bridoun) your right-hand, shifting it till you have found the center of the rein; then with your switch or whip in your left-hand, place your little finger between the reins, so that the right rein lies flat in your hand upon three fingers, and your thumb pressing your left rein flat upon the right, keeping your thumb both upon right and left rein, firm upon your fore-finger; and in this position you ease your hand a little and slide it firmly down the reins upon your horse's neck, taking a firm hold of a lock of his mane, which will assist you in springing to mount: remember that when you attempt to mount, that your reins are not so tight as to check your horse, or to offend his mouth, so as to cause him to *rear*, or *rein* back, but that your action is smooth and light as possible.

Your horse being firmly stayed, you next take your Stirrup-leather in your Right-hand, about four inches from the stirrup-iron, and fix one third of your foot in the stirrup, standing square with your horse's side; next take a firm hold with your right hand on the Cantlet or back part of the saddle, rather on the off side of it, and with your left knee prest firm against the horse's side, spring yourself up perpendicularly, bending the small of your back and looking cheerfully up rather than down. The next move you make is to remove your right-hand from the Cantlet and place it firm upon the Pummel, or front of your saddle, bearing your weight upon it, at the same time bend your right knee, and bring your body round, looking strait over your horse's head, letting yourself firmly and easily down into your seat, with the shoulders easily back, bent well in your waist or loins, and your chest well presented in front, with a pleasant uncontracted countenance.

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You of course next recover or take your switch, which is done by putting your right-hand over your left, and with a quick firm motion take it in your right hand, holding the same perpendicularly.

Proceed us next to the adjusting the Reins, which is of the utmost use. Supposing you ride with Bit and Bridoun, being four in number, place them all even and flat in your left hand, exactly in the same manner as described in taking the Bridoun in mounting; that is to say, your four reins placed even, the one upon the other, remembering always to place your Bridouns on the outsides,

so that you may any time lengthen or shorten them at pleasure, without putting the whole into confusion, and cause the Bit to act alone, or Bridoun alone, or both Bit and Bridoun to act together.

I have observed before that only your little finger should be between the reins when only two, it is the same now four, so now your two reins on the right side of your horse's neck lie flat upon your three fingers in your left-hand, your two left reins placed flat upon the right, and your thumb pressed flat upon all four. This is the only sure method to keep your reins firm, free from confusion, and to cause them to act properly; which any lady or gentleman will be convinced of if they will only give themselves the pleasure to practise, as I cannot call it a trouble. [7]

If it should be demanded why the horse would not ride as well with only the Bridoun, without the Bit? my answer is that suppose your horse becomes hard and heavy in hand, on being rode by both Bit and Bridoun, where they have both acted together: you on this shorten your Bit-reins whereby they act alone the Bridouns becoming slack, your horse instantly becomes light in hand, as though touched by a *magick stick*, reining his neck properly, is immediately light before, gathers himself upon his haunches, and what appeared, but *now* a *garronly* sluggish beast wears the appearance of a well dressed horse.

Well and thorough broke horses with mouths made fine and to answer the nicest touch of feeling, are in general rode by the Bit alone, the Bridouns hanging loose and seem more for ornament than use; but yet in the hand of a skillful horseman are of the greatest utility; for by handling your right Bridoun-rein lightly with your whip hand at proper times; you can always raise your horse's head if too low, you may take the liberty of easing your Bit-reins at times, so that playing upon his mouth, as it were an *Instrument of musick*, you will always keep his mouth in tune. I cannot find a juster simile than, that the Horse is the Instrument and the Rider the Player; and when the horse is well broke and tuned properly, and the rider knows how to keep him in that state, he is never at a loss to play upon him; but if suffered to go out of tune, by the want of skill in the horseman, and to imbibe bad habits, the horseman not being able to screw him up, and tune him as before: the Instrument is thrown by as useless, or may be sold for a trifle, and by chance falling into able hands, that know how to manage and put him once more together; he again becomes as good as ever: and this I have often been a witness to. Thus much for the adjustment of the Reins in the Hand. [8]

THE HORSEMAN'S SEAT:

THE principles and rules which have hitherto been given for the horseman's seat are various, and even opposite, according as they have been adopted by different masters, and taught in different countries, almost by each master in particular; and every nation having certain rules and notions of their own. Let us see, however, if art has discovered nothing that is certain and invariably true.—The Italians, the Spaniards, the French and, in a word, every country where Riding is in repute, adopt each a posture which is peculiar to themselves: the foundation of their general notions is the same, but each country has prescribed rules for the placing the man on the saddle.

This contrariety of opinions which have their origin more in prejudice than in truth and reality, has given rise to many vain reasonings and speculations, each System having its followers; and as if truth was not always the same, and unchangeable, but at liberty to assume various and even opposite shapes; sometimes one opinion prevailed, sometimes another, insomuch that those who understand nothing of the subject, but yet are desirous of being informed, by searching it to the bottom, have hitherto been lost in doubt and perplexity. [9]

There is nevertheless a sure and infallible method, by the assistance of which it would be very easy to overturn all these systems; but not to enter into a needless detail of the extravagant notions, which the Seat alone has given rise to; I will here endeavour to trace it from principles by so much the more solid, as their authority will be supported by the most convincing and self evident reasons.

In order to succeed in an art where the mechanism of the body is absolutely necessary, and where each part of the body has its proper functions, which are peculiar to that part; it is most certain that all and every part of the body should be in a natural posture: were they in an imperfect situation they would want that ease and freedom which is inseparable from grace; and as every motion which is constrained being false in itself, and incapable of justness, it is clear that the part so constrained and forced would throw the whole into confusion; because each part belonging to and depending upon the whole body, and the body partaking of the constraint of its parts, can never feel that fixed point, that just counterpoise and equality, in which alone a fine and just execution consists.

The objects to which a master, anxious for the advancement of his pupil, should attend, are infinite. To little purpose will it be to keep the strictest eye upon all the parts and Limbs of his pupil's Body; in vain will he endeavour to remedy all the defects and faults which are found in the posture of almost every scholar in the beginning, unless he is intimately acquainted with the close dependance and connexion there is between the motions of one part of the body with the [10]

rest; a correspondence caused by the reciprocal action of the muscles, which govern and direct them: unless, therefore, he is master of this secret, and has his clue to the labyrinth, he will never attain the end he proposes; particularly in his first lessons, upon which the success of the rest always depend. These principles being established we may reason in consequence of them with clearness.

In horsemanship, the Body of man is divided into three parts; two of which are moveable, the third immoveable.

The first of the two moveable parts is the Trunk or Body, down to the Waist; the second is from the Knees to the Feet; so that the immoveable part is between the waist and the knees. The parts then which ought to be without motion are the Fork, or Twist of the horseman, and his thighs; now that these parts should be kept without motion, they ought to have a certain hold and center to rest upon, which no motion that the horse can make can disturb or loosen; this point or center is the basis of the hold which the horseman has upon his horse, and is what is called the SEAT; now if the seat is nothing else but this point or center, it must follow, that not only the true grace, but the symmetry and true proportion of the whole attitude depend upon those parts of the body that are immoveable.

Let the horseman then place himself at once, upon his Twist, sitting exactly in the middle of the saddle; let him support this posture, in which the Twist alone seems to sustain the weight of the whole body, by moderately leaning upon his buttock. [11]

Let the Thighs be turned inward, and rest flat upon the sides of the saddle; and in order to this let the turn of the thighs proceed directly from the hips, and let him employ no force or strength to keep himself in the saddle, but trust entirely to the weight of his body and thighs; this is the exact equilibrio: in this and this only consists the firmness and support of the whole *building*; a firmness which young beginners are never sensible of at first, but which is to be acquired, and will always be attained by exercise and practise. I demand but a moderate stress upon the buttocks, because a man that sits full upon them can never turn his thighs flat to the saddle; the thighs should always lay flat to the saddle, because, the fleshy part of them being insensible, the horseman would not otherwise be able so nicely to feel the motions of his horse: I insist that the turn of the Thigh must be from the Hip, because it can never be natural, but as it proceeds from the hollow of the hip bone.

I insist farther that the horseman never avails himself of the strength or help of his thighs, except he lets his whole weight rest upon the center, as before described; because the closer he presses them to the saddle, the more will he be lifted above the saddle on any sudden or irregular motion of the Horse.

Having thus firmly placed the immoveable parts, I now pass on to the first of the *Movables*, which is as I have already observed the body as far as to the waist. I comprehend in the Body, the Head, the Shoulders, the Breast, the Arms, Hands, Reins and Waist of the Horseman. [12]

The head should be free, firm and easy, in order to be ready for all the natural motions that the horseman may make in turning to one side or the other. It should be firm, that is to say, strait, without leaning to the right or left, neither advanced nor thrown back; it should be easy because if otherwise it would occasion a stiffness, and that stiffness affecting the different parts of the body, especially the back bone, the whole would be without ease and constrained.

The shoulders alone influence by their motions that of the breast the reins and waist.

The horseman should present or advance his breast, by that his whole figure opens and displays itself; he should have a small hollow in his reins, and push the waist forward to the pommel of the saddle, because this position corresponds and unites him to all the motions of the horse.

Now only throwing the shoulders back, produces all these effects, and gives them exactly in the degree that is requisite; whereas if we were to look for the particular position of each part seperately and by itself, without examining the connection that there is between the motions of one part with those of another, there would be such a bending in his reins that the horseman would be, if I may so say, hollow backed; and as from that he would force his breast forward and his waist towards the pommel of the saddle, he would be flung back, and must sit upon the rump of the horse.

The arms should be bent at the elbows, and the elbows should rest equally upon the hips; if the arms were strait, the consequence would be, that the hands would be too low, or at too great a distance from the body; and if the elbows were not kept steady, they would of consequence, give an uncertainty and fickleness to the hand, sufficient to ruin it for ever. [13]

It is true that the *Bridle-hand* is that which absolutely ought to be steady and immoveable; and we might conclude from hence, that the left elbow only ought to rest upon the hip; but grace consists in the exact proportion and symmetry of all the parts of the body, and to have the arm on one side raised and advanced, and that of the other kept down and close to the body would present but an aukward and disagreeable appearance.

It is this which determines the situation of the hand which holds the whip; the left hand being of an equal height with the elbow; so that the knuckle of the little finger, and the tip of the elbow be both in a line, this hand then being rounded neither too much nor too little, but just so

that the wrist may direct all its motions, place your right hand, or the whip hand, lower and more forward than the bridle hand. It should be lower than the bridle hand because if it was upon a level with it, it would restrain or obstruct its motions; and were it to be higher, as it cannot take so great a compass as the bridle hand, which must always be kept over against the horseman's body: it is absolutely necessary to keep the proportion of the elbows, that it should be lower than the other.

The legs and feet make up the second division of what I call the moveable parts of the body: the legs serve for two purposes, they may be used as aids or corrections to the horse, they should then be kept near the sides of the horse, and in a perpendicular line with the horseman's body; for being near the part of the horse's body where his feeling is most delicate, they are ready to do their office in the instant they are wanted. Moreover, as they are an appendix of the thighs if the thigh is upon its flat in the saddle, they will by a necessary consequence be turned just as they ought, and will infallibly give the same turn to the feet, because the feet depend upon them, as they depend upon the thighs. [14]

The toe should be held a little higher than the heel, for if the toe was lowest the heel would be too near the sides of his horse and would be in danger of touching his horse with his spurs at perhaps the very instant he should avoid such aid or correction.

Many persons notwithstanding, when they raise their toe, bend and twist their ankle as if they were lame in the part. The reason of this is very plain; because they make use of the muscles in their legs and thighs, whereas they should only employ joint of the foot for this purpose.

Such is in short the mechanical disposition of all the parts of the horseman's body.

These ideas properly digested the practitioner will be able to prescribe rules for giving the true and natural Seat, which is not only the principles of justness, but likewise the foundation of all grace in the horseman, of course, the first endeavour of those who wish to become horsemen, should be to attain a firm and graceful seat: the perfection of which, as of most other arts and accomplishments depend upon the ease and simplicity with which they are executed, being free from affectation and constraint as to appear quite natural and familiar. [15]

Therefore the immoveable parts as before observed ought to be so far without motion as not to wriggle and roll about so as to disturb the horse, or render the seat weak and loose: but the thighs may be relaxed to a certain degree with propriety and advantage, when the horse hesitates and doubts whether he shall advance or not; and the body may likewise, upon some occasions, become moveable and change its posture to a certain degree, as when the horse *retains* himself, it may be flung back more or less as the case requires; and consequently inclined forward when the horse rises so high as to be in danger of falling backwards; what keeps a ship on the sea steady? BALLAST, by the same rule, what keeps the horseman STEADY? trusting to the weight of his body: it is for this reason that beginners are first made to ride without stirrups; for were they allowed to use them before they had acquired an equilibrio and were able to stretch their legs and thighs well down, so as to set firmly in the saddle, and close to it, they would either loose their stirrups by not being able to keep their feet in them; or the stirrups must be taken up much too short, in which case the rider would be pushed upwards from the saddle, and the Seat destroyed throughout; as the parts of the body like the links of a chain depending upon one another, safety likewise requires they should ride without them at first, as in case of falling tis less dangerous.

It is the general practice of those who undertake to teach horsemanship, when they put a scholar upon a horse, to mix and confound many rules and precepts together, which ought to be distinct and seperate; such as making him attend to the guidance of the horse, demanding an exactness of hand, and other particulars, which they croud upon him before he is able to execute, or even understand half of them. I would recommend a slower pace at first being likely to gain more ground at the ending post, and not to perplex the scholar with *Aids*, of the effects of the *Hand*, and more nice and essential parts of the ART: till the SEAT is gained and CONFIRMED. [16]

For this purpose let the seat alone be cultivated for some time, and when the scholar is arrived at a certain degree of firmness and confidence so as to be trusted, I would always advise the master to take hold of the longeing rein and let the pupil intirely leave the governing of his horse to him, going sufficiently to both hands holding his hands behind him.

This will, I insist upon it very soon settle him with firmness to the saddle, will place his head, will stretch him down in his saddle, will teach him to lean gently to the side to which he turns so as to unite himself to his horse and go with him and will give that firmness ease, and just poize of body, which constitute a perfect *Seat*, founded in truth and nature and upon principles so certain, that whoever shall think fit to reduce them to practise will find them confirmed and justified by it. Nor would it be improper to accustom the scholar to mount and dismount on both sides of his horse, as many things may occur to make it necessary, as well as that he cannot have too much activity and address, for this reason tis a pity that the art of *Vaulting* is discontinued.—And there is another duty too essential to be omitted, but hitherto not performed by matters, which is to instruct their pupils in the *principles* and theory of the *Art*, explaining how the natural paces are performed, wherein they differ from each other, and in what their perfection consists; which, by not joining theory with practice, are unknown to many, who may shine in a menage, but work as mechanically and superficially as the very horse thay ride. [17]

Having thus far said what with practice will be sufficient to form the seat of the Horseman, I

OF THE BRIDLE HAND.

THE knowledge of the different characters, and different natures of horses, together with the vices and imperfections, as well as the exact and just proportions of the parts of a horse's body, is the foundation upon which is built the theory of the art of horsemanship; but this theory will be useless and even unnecessary if we are not able to carry it into execution.

This depends upon the goodness and quickness of feeling; and in the delicacy which nature alone can give, and which she does not always bestow. The first sensation of the hand consists in a greater or less degree of fineness in the touch or feeling; a feeling in the hand of the horseman, which ought to communicate and answer to the same degree of feeling in the horse's mouth, because there is as much difference in the degrees of feeling in men as there is in the mouths of horses. [18]

I suppose then a man, who is not only capable to judge of a horse's mouth by theory, but who has likewise by nature that fineness of touch which helps to form a good hand; let us see then what are the rules which we should follow in order to make it perfect, and by which we must direct all its operations.

A horse can move four different ways; he can *advance*, go *back*, turn to the *Right* and to the *Left*; but he cannot make these different movements except the hand of the Rider permits him, by making four other motions which answer to them; so that there are five different positions for the hand. The first is that general position from which proceed the other four.

Hold your hand three inches breadth from your body, as high as your elbow, in such a manner that the joint of your little-finger be upon a right line with the tip of your elbow; let your wrist be sufficiently rounded so that your knuckles may be kept directly above the neck of your horse; let your finger nails be exactly opposite your body, the little finger rather nearer to it than the others; your thumb quite flat upon the reins, separated as before described, and this is the general *Position*.

Does your horse go forwards, or rather would you have him go forwards? yeild to him your hand, and for that purpose turn your nails downwards, in such a manner as to bring your thumb near your body, and your little-finger then from it, and bring it to the place where your knuckles were in the first position. Keeping your nails directly above the neck of your horse.—This is the second Position. [19]

Would you make your horse go backwards, quit the first position; let your wrist be quite round, your thumb in the place of the little finger in the second position, and the little-finger in that of the thumb, turning your nails quite upwards, and towards your face, and your knuckles will be towards your horse's neck.—This is the third Position.

Would you turn your horse to the Right? leave the first position; carry your nails to the right, turning your hand upside down, in such a manner that your thumb be carried out to the left, and the little-finger brought in to the Right.—This is the fourth Position.

Lastly, would you turn your horse to the Left? quit again the first position, carry the back of your hand a little to the left, so that the knuckles come under a little, that your thumb may incline to the right, and the little-finger to the left.—This makes the fifth Position.

These different Positions, however, alone are not sufficient; we must be able to pass from one to the other with readiness and order.

Three qualities are necessary to the hand. *Viz.* FIRM, GENTLE, and LIGHT: I call that a firm hand, or steady hand whose feeling corresponds exactly with the feeling in the horse's mouth, and which consists in a certain degree of steadiness, which constitutes that just correspondence between the hand and the horse's mouth, which every horseman wishes to find. [20]

An easy or gentle hand. I call that which, relaxing a little of its strength and firmness, eases and mitigates the degree of feeling between the hand and horse's mouth, which I have already described.

Lastly, the light hand is that which lessens still more the feeling between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth, which was before moderated by the GENTLE HAND.

The hand, therefore, with respect to these properties must operate in part, within certain degrees, and depends upon being more or less felt, or yeilded to the horse, or with-held.

It should be a rule with every horseman not to pass from one extreme to another; from a firm hand to a slack one; so that in the motion of the hand on no account jump over that degree of sensation which constitutes the EASY OR GENTLE HAND: were you once to go from a firm strong hand to a slack one, you then entirely abandon your horse; you would surprise him, deprive him of the support he trusted to, and precipitate him on his shoulders; supposing you do this at an improper time. On the contrary, were you to pass from the slack to the tight rein, all at once, you must jerk

your hand, and give a violent shock to the horse's mouth; which rough and irregular motion would be sufficient to falsify and ruin a good mouth; it is indispensably necessary, therefore, that all its opeperations should be gentle and light, and in order to this, it is necessary that the WRIST alone should direct and govern all its motions, by turning and steering it as it were, through every motion it is to make

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In consequence then of these principles, I insist that the wrist be kept so round that your knuckles may be always directly above the horse's neck, and that your thumb be always kept flat upon the reins. In reality were your wrist to be more or less rounded than in the degree I have fixed, you could never work with your hand but by means of your arm, and besides it would appear as though you were lame; again were your thumb not to be upon the flat of the reins, pressed hard upon your fore finger, they would be constantly slipping away, and lengthened, and in order to recover them you would be obliged every minute to raise your hand and arm, which would throw you into disorder and make you lose that justness without which no horse will be obedient and work with readiness and pleasure to himself.

It is nevertheless true, that with horses well dressed one may take liberties; these are motions called descents of the hand; either by dropping the knuckles directly and at once upon the horse's neck, or by taking the reins in the right hand about four inches above the left, letting them slide through the left, dropping your right hand at the same time upon the horse's neck, or else by putting the horse under the button as it is called: that is by taking the end of the reins in your right hand, quitting them intirely with your left hand and letting the end of them fall upon your horse's neck, these motions however, which give grace to the horseman, never should be made but with great caution, and exactly when your horse is well together and in hand; and take care in counterbalancing by throwing back your body, that the weight of the body lie upon his haunches.

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The Bit and Snaffle were they to be kept constantly in one place in his mouth, would of course dull the sense of feeling, and become benumbed and callous; this shews the necessity of continually yeilding and drawing back the hand to keep the horse's mouth fresh and awake. It is therefore self evident that a heavy handed horseman can never break a horse to any degree of nicety, or ride one which is already broke to any degree of exactness.

Besides these rules, there are others not less just and certain; (but whose niceness and refinement is not the lot of every person to taste and understand) my hand being in the first position, I open my two middle fingers, I consequently ease and slacken myright rein; I shut my hand, the right rein operates again, resuming its place as before, I open my little finger and carrying the end of it upon the right rein, I thereby slacken the left and shorten the right; I shut my hand entirely and immediately open it again, I thereby lessen the degree of tension and force of the two reins at the same time; again I close my hand not quite so much, but still I close it.

It is by these methods and by the vibration of the reins, that I unite the feeling in my hand with that in the horse's mouth, and thus I play with a fine and MADE mouth, and freshen and relieve the two bars in which the feeling resides.

Therefore, it is that correspondence and sensation between the horse's mouth and the hand of the rider, which alone can make him submit with pleasure to the constraint of the bit.

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Having thus explained the different positions and motions of the hand, permit me in a few words to shew the effects which they produce in horsemanship?

The hand directs the reins, the reins operate upon the branches of the bit; the branches upon the mouth-piece and the curb, the mouth-piece operates upon the bars, and the curb upon the chin of the horse.

So far for the management of the bridle hand upon thorough-broke and well-dressed horses. But in breaking young horses for any purpose, the reins in all cases ought to be separated, nothing so unmeaning, nothing so ineffectual as the method of working with them joined or held in only one hand, this is very evident in the instances of colts, and of stiff necked, and unworked horses of all kinds, with them it is impossible to do anything without holding a rein in either hand, which rein operates with certainty and governs the side of the neck to which it belongs, and surely this is a shorter way of working than to make, or rather attempt to make the left rein determine the horse to the right, and the right guide him to the left. In the above instances of stiff awkward horses this can never be done; and altho it is constantly practised with those which are *Drest*, yet it is certain they obey, and make their *Changes* more from *docility* and *Habit*, than from the influence of the *outward* rein, which ought only to act, to balance and support, while the inner bends, inclines, and guides the horse to the hand to which he is to go.

[24]

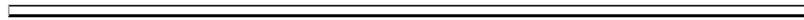
This can never be done so fully and truly with the reins joined, as when they are separated into each hand, and if double or *Running* reins were used instead of single as with a snaffle or [24*](#) *Meadow's* bit, they would afford more compass and power to the horseman to bend and turn his horse.

The manner of holding the reins high as condemed by some writers, possessing themselves with a notion that they ruin the hocks of the horses. For my own part I do not know what those writers mean, unless by them we are to understand the haunches; and then this method instead of ruining, will work and assist them, for the head and fore quarters are raised up, his weight of course is thrown upon his haunches, for one end being raised the other must be kept down.

It is nothing more than a natural cause, which will always produce a natural effect, for instance, ballance a pole upon a wall so that it acts in equilibrium, only raise one end, the other of course must be lowered, it is the same with a horse, as you cannot rise his fore parts but by bringing his haunches more under him. I would here wish to remark that horses should never be compelled by force until they know what you wish from them, for let them be however disobedient in their disposition, yet are all of them more or less sensible of good and bad usage from their masters; the best method then to convey your intention to them so that they shall understand you, is to reward them when they do well, and to punish them when disobedient, this rule though contained in few words yet is of universal use in horsemanship. [25]

And Xenophon, who wrote a treatise on Horsemanship, more than two thousand years ago, among other notable remarks, when speaking on horse-breaking, wherein he concludes thus: "But there is one rule to be inviolably observed above all others; that is, never approach your horse in a passion; as anger never thinks of consequences and forces us to do what we afterwards repent."

Begging pardon for this short but useful digression, I again observe that such are the principles upon which the perfection and justness of the aids of the hand depend; all others are false and not to be regarded.—Thus far for the bridle hand, and its effects.



[26]

LECTURE ON HORSEMANSHIP. Addressed to the Ladies.

AMONG all the various writers on the art of horsemanship, notwithstanding, side-saddles have been known and in use in England more than six hundred years ago, even in Richard's time, for in the reign of this prince side-saddles were first known here, as it will appear from the following anecdote, by a Warwick historian, in which he says.

"And in his days also began the detestable custom of wearing long pointed shoes, fastened with chains of silver, and sometimes gold, up to the knees, likewise noble ladies then used high heads, and robes with long trains, and seats or side-saddles on their horses, by the example of the respectable queen Anne, daughter of the king of Bohemia, who first introduced this custom in this kingdom: for before, women of every rank rode as men do, with their legs astride their horses."

Thus says our Warwick historian, so that side saddles appear to have been used many centuries ago, and that formerly the female sex took the fashion of riding like men, for which they are reprehended, by a Greek historian, and hard indeed is the equestrian situation of the ladies, for if they are to be accused of indelicacy for riding after the manner of men, they are greatly to be pitied in hazarding their safety as they do, in riding after the *manner* of *Women*. [27]

However as no one hath ever yet lent a helping hand in putting pen to paper on the subject, by way of adding, if possible, to the ladies, elegance, ease and safety on horse back; I shall without any other apology then assuring those ladies who may please to read what I write on the matter, is well meant, and are such ideas that have occurred to me in many years study, and practice in the manage.



DIRECTIONS IN MOUNTING.

LET the ostler or servant being on the off side the horse, with right hand holding the bridoun reins, to properly stay the horse, and his left hand on the part of the saddle called the crutch, by this method both horse and saddle will be kept firm and steady, it is the riding master's duty to examine the bridle whether it is properly placed, the curb, chain, or chin chain in due order, the saddle in a proper place, and the girths sufficiently tight, &c. Direct the lady then to take her whip, or switch in the right hand, the small end of it turned towards the horse's croup, then with the right hand take a firm hold of the pommel of the saddle standing upright with her right shoulder square, and in a line with the horse's left, she then bending the left knee pretty much, the master or gentleman who assists her standing facing the lady, he stooping a little receives the lady's left foot in his hands being clasped firm together, the lady must then be directed to straiten her knee, being now bent, with a firmness and elasticity pressing her left hand on the man's left shoulder, making a little spring at the same time, by which the riding-master, gentleman, or servant, if permitted, by paying due attention to these rules will spring the lady on the saddle with the greatest ease and safety. *The method of adjusting the petticoats*; I then place the lady's foot in the stirrup tho' it is a wonder if a proper length, being guess work, as we are [28]

now to suppose this to be the first lesson, and the stirrup cannot be properly fixed, till the lady is in her seat, I say I then give her the stirrup, directing she may take a firm hold with the left hand of a lock of the horse's mane, at the same time she having a firm hold of the crutch with the right, by which means she rises herself up from the saddle, standing firm in the stirrup, looking rather over the off side of the horse's neck, the intention of this is that the attendant shall adjust the coats so as they sit smooth and easy, by pulling them round a little to the right, then on returning to the saddle, or seat, and while in coming down she must put her right knee over the pommel of the saddle, and by these simple rules she will find all comfortable and easy; in regard to the adjustment of the bridle reins, and the managing and directing the horse by them, pay strict attention to those set down in the first lecture addressed to the gentlemen; let the whip be placed firm and easy in the right hand, with the taper or small end downwards, and the arm hanging carelessly down without contraction, and when the whip is made use of, let it be by means of the wrist, without lifting the arm from the body, and be careful not to touch the horse with the whip too backward as many of them will kick on their being flogged in that part, which if it should not occasion a fall, would much alarm the young scholar, before she has acquired any degree of ballance.

[29]

DIRECTIONS FOR THE LENGTH OF THE STIRRUP.

THE Stirrup should be such length as when the lady sits upright and properly on her seat, with the knee being easily bent, the heel kept back, with the toe raised a little higher than the heel, so that the heel, hip and the shoulder, are in a line and as upright as when walking along, for if otherwise it is unjust and not agreeable to nature; for suppose you are riding along the road with the foot stuck out and so forward as the horses front of his shoulder, as is not uncommon to see girls riding in this manner along the road in the country, as tho' they were directing with their foot which road their horse should take, I say this method is not only very unbecoming but very unsafe, for instance if riding carelessly along the road with the foot and leg in this attitude being to pass some stubborn or inflexible object on the left or near side, perhaps before you are aware or apprised of the danger you might have your foot and leg sorely bruised, nay even dragged from your horse, I have seen similar instances to this, happen more than once, even when the foot has been in a good situation by ladies who unthinkingly have endeavoured to pass objects to the left when they could as easily have passed those objects to the *right*, which ladies should make an invariable rule so to do at all times, if possible; for reasons which must be plain to any one, who will think one minute on the matter; another inconvenience will frequently arise by suffering the leg and foot to be in this horrid form, which is, the stirrup leather will frequently press against the leg, so as to hurt it very much, this I have often had beginners complain of, by saying the buckle of the stirrup hurt them, when behold I never use a buckle to my stirrups on the left side, as they are always fastened and buckled on the off side, for *two* particular good advantages which arise from it; the principal of which is, that as the pressure or bearing coming from the off side, it greatly assists in keeping the saddle even, especially with those ladies through a bad habit who accustom themselves to bear hard on the stirrup which is nothing more than a habit, and want of learning to ride the right way at first.

[30]

The other reason is, you can lengthen or shorten the stirrup at pleasure, without disturbing the lady at all, and without even dismounting yourself, if you are riding on the road, as the business is done on the off side the horse, nay I have altered the stirrup often without stopping at all.

I insist upon it therefore if the stirrup does not hang perpendicular, or the same as when left to itself and no one on horseback, the end is totally destroyed, for what the stirrup was designed; which is in the *first* place to carry the weight of, and only the weight of the rider's leg, without which support it would soon become fatigued and tired: and *secondly*, if you accustom yourself to carry your foot properly, as before directed, that is your heel in a line with your hip and shoulder, letting your foot rest even in the stirrup, carrying only the weight of your leg, with the toe a little raised, it will never fail to assist you in your balance, if you happen to lose it to the left, it is also ready to save you if you should happen to lose your balance to the right, by pressing the calf of your leg strongly and firmly to the side of your horse, and being always near your horse's side it is a quick aid in supporting him, and to force him forward, it is also of the greatest use, by pressing it strongly to his side, in assisting to turn your horse to the left, and likewise in throwing your horse's croup off when you wish to make him go into a canter, by which means he will be forced to go off with the right leg foremost.

[31]

And *lastly*, it is of the utmost utility in supporting you in the continuance of the Spring Trot, a pace now greatly in fashion, and should be practised by all who accustom themselves to ride any length of journies, as it enables them to make some degree of speed, and by changing their paces often from walk, to trot, and gallop, their journey becomes less tedious to them.

[32]

In the first place I would strongly recommend a large seated Saddle, very high on the cantlet or back part, and a regular sweep from thence to the front or pommel, for some saddles, more shame be it spoken, are so small, and the seat so rounded in the middle, that to sit on them is next to balancing themselves on a round pole, a comfortable situation truly for a lady! I say again let me recommend a large seated saddle; I mean let it be large in proportion to the size of the lady, and high in the cantlet, nay I am confident that they might be contrived to advantage, were they constructed with peaks, and the peak carried on from the back part of the saddle to within four inches of the front on the off side; this with the addition of a Burr, as it is called, to support the left knee, would greatly assist the lady in keeping the body on a good balance and sufficiently back: which might prevent many accidents.

If these hints should strike any lady or gentleman as being reasonable, and should they be inclined to have a saddle so constructed, I should think myself happy in explaining myself more fully on the subject.

Now in regard to the Seat for a Lady, I sincerely wish I was able to prescribe a more firm *one* than the present fashion will admit of, however I will do my endeavour to handle it in the best manner I can; and first let the whole weight of the body rest firmly upon the center of the saddle, leaning nei her to one side or the other, with the shoulders easily back, and the chest presented well forward; a lady cannot be too nice and circumspect, in accustoming herself to sit upright, without contraction, in any part, *nothing so graceful, nothing so safe as ease of action*; do not let the stirrup carry more than the weight of the leg, except in case of the Swing Trot, or when assisting to keep the Ballance.

[33]

Two material disadvantages arise from Ladies accustoming themselves to bear heavy in the stirrup, and loll about, constantly twisting themselves to the near or left side of the horse: first it destroys their whole figure, making the same appear deformed and crooked; and if they were to continue in the habit of riding would confirm them in such deformed attitude, in its becoming second nature, by constant use; this is a truth too frequently witnessed, by practising without the right method.

Secondly, the other disadvantage most materially affects the horse; for by their so constantly leaning themselves to the near side, the side-saddle being so pulled and pressed against the withers or shoulder of the horse on the off side, keeping up a continual friction, and this being the case, I defy all the Sadlers in the kingdom to prevent the saddle from wringing and galling the poor beast, especially in the heat of the summer; the only remedy is to take away the cause, by sitting properly, and the effect ceases of course.

The notions which some Ladies have entertained, as to fear to let their daughters be taught to Ride, least it should make them grow crooked and awry, I insist that they are false, and quite the reverse; the cause is, as before observed, by their contracting bad habits of their own, and not being instructed on approved principles, so that the effect is caught hold of, while the cause lies unsought for; from my own knowledge and experience I could relate several instances wherein young Ladies instead of growing crooked by learning to ride, have been greatly relieved from those complaints, and even quite eradicated by the practice of riding, I will here beg leave to mention an instance or two which will serve to prove what good effects may arise from this pleasant and healthful exercise.

[34]

A young Lady about Seventeen years of age who had been afflicted for twelve months with a stiffness in her neck and shoulders, and it was observable that the right shoulder was grown much larger than the left.

She on coming to the riding house to observe her fellow scholars take their lessons, of which she became much pleased, and wished much to learn to ride.—The governess consulted me on the matter, but said she feared it might make her grow worse as she had been told that riding sometimes caused Ladies to become crooked, however, by my reasoning the matter with her she was convinced in her own opinion and caused the young Lady to write to her parents in Jamaica, and had permission by return of packet to ride according to my directions, which were briefly as follows, being in the month of March, and of course rather a cold piercing air, I advised new unwashed flannel every time she took a lesson to be worn next the skin on the part affected, *she rode*, of course a strong perspiration took place, she was much fatigued for the first six or seven Lessons, however after then as she began to be acquainted with the use of her bridle hands, as I made her use both; and give great part of the Lessons, in small circles to right and left; the consequence was that by persevering in this method for two successive months the parts became naturally relaxed and pliable, and by continuing to practice she entirely recovered her alacrity and spirits, and also became acquainted with the art of Riding, which I hope she may long live to practice with ease and safety to herself in her native country.

[35]

Another young Lady from the same school had a particular habit of leaning her shoulders and neck forward, I have frequently heard it called pokeing, and all the dancing-master's instructions had for years been ineffectual. I believe she was more fond of riding than dancing instructions, for the governess of the young lady before-mentioned often asserted that the Riding Master had done more in setting her scholar upright and keeping her shoulders easily back, in the space only of two months, than the Dancing Master, though capable in his profession, had been able to accomplish in three years.

I hope to be pardoned for this little digression, not doubting but those Ladies who will give

themselves time to consider the foregoing, will be convinced that it is agreeable to reason and nature.

Now to say some little more of the *SEAT*, which cannot be too much attended to, being in a great measure the foundation of safety to a lady when on horseback, and as such I would strongly recommend the lady being in the menage, or in any proper place, the horse being very quiet and to be trusted to; then let the lady seat herself properly on the saddle as before directed, *only* without the stirrup, and not to take the reins, leaving the direction of the horse to the Riding Master, or to whoever she can with safety trust the government to; and in this manner take half an hour's practice every day, as nothing will so greatly assist in acquiring a good and just balance. [36]

I do not advise this method to be gone rapidly about, as she may make use both of stirrup and reins at first, and when she has acquired a firmness and ballance in some degree, may first quit the stirrup, and in a lesson or two, the reins, remembering to go to right and left circle alternately and progressively, viz. from *Walk* to Trot and Gallop; I hope I need not say that the horse should be remarkably steady, and properly broke to go in circles to right and left by the longeing rein.

I say this method will settle and give the scholar a firmness not to be acquired by any other means, will teach them to unite themselves with their horse, and go along with him, it will bring about that confidence, firmness, ease, and just poize of body which serves to constitute what is called a perfect *Seat*, acquired by the rules of art, and agreeable to nature, and I here beg leave to quote a few lines which the great Berringer observes applicable to this subject, "It is astonishing to think how this work so immediately necessary could have been deferred so long, that while rewards were given, public trials appointed, and laws enacted to promote an useful and generous breed of horses, no step should have been taken on the other hand to qualify and instruct the youth of the kingdom, of both sex in the superior art of riding; for the getting on the back of an horse to be conveyed from one place to another without knowing what the animal is enabled by nature, art and practice to perform, is not *Riding*, the knowledge and utility of which consists in being able to discern and dexterous to employ the means by which the horse may be brought to execute what the rider requires of him with propriety, readiness and safety, and this knowledge in the rider and obedience in the horse should be so intimately connected as to form one *perfect whole*, this union being so indispensably necessary that where it is not, there is no meaning, the rider and horse talk different languages, and all is confusion, while many and fatal mischiefs may ensue, the rider may be wedged in the timber which he strives to rend, and fall the victim of his own ignorance and rashness." [37]

I have now observed such rules which with practice will form as good and perfect a *Seat* as the customary mode of riding will admit of. It remains now with practice and perseverance to make perfect.

WHEN RIDING ON THE ROAD.

WHEN a lady has taken sufficient practice in the menage or elsewhere, so as to be able to steer and guide her horse, and particularly can stop him firm and well upon his haunches, and also knows by practice how to unite herself to the horse, provided he should stop suddenly by his own will, an instance which frequently happens, therefore it is essential that the rider should become sensible of every action of the horse by that kind of sympathy of feeling which should subsist between them, so as to know his intentions as quick as thought, in this and all other actions he may be inclined to, which are likely to offend and endanger the rider, or himself; I would earnestly recommend the lady to make herself acquainted with every help so as to guard and defend herself on all occasions, such as her horse stumbling, shying, starting, running away, running back, rearing, kicking, and plunging; yet horses addicted to any of those vices are by no means fit, or should have ladies set upon knowingly, but as a lady cannot always be so fortunate as to get the possession of one of those hackneys we call a nonpareil, tho' every dealer you enquire of for one will say he can sell it you, therefore place not too much confidence in him you purchase your horse from, or the horse himself, even after you have rode him some time, for you scarce ever can be certain but he may play you some of those tricks, especially if his keep is above his work, as I have always found the best lady's hackneys require constant practice to keep them in tune. [38]

It is necessary the lady should have a sharp eye upon the road she is travelling, taking care by the gentle assistance of the bridle hand to steer and guide her horse into the best, to avoid all stones and uneven places, and never to ride near the edge of any deep ditch or sudden precipice, for altho, heaven be praised, accidents very seldom happen, yet if for the want of a little care and due management one should happen in one hundred years, that one would be one too many: the lady should pay great attention to the horse when going down a steep hill, and endeavour to put him together and upon his haunches, and to perform this, she must feel his mouth lightly and firmly with the bridle hand, at the same time making use of some of the helps used to force him to go forward, such as clicking with your voice, a gentle touch with the whip, or the heel, so she stays him a little by the bridle hand at the same time he is forced forwards by the other helps or [39]

aids and if properly timed, by doing enough without over doing, he will be put together, and of course kept on a light proper action which must be in the real action of a trot, that is with his two corner legs in the air at one time and two on the ground, by such means the horse will always be kept on a sure ballance and never be in danger of falling, on the other hand if the horse is suffered to go loose and unasisted by the bridle hand, and the other aids as before described, when going down a steep hill he will most commonly go into that unnatural pace called the amble which is moving his side legs together instead of his corner legs, this pace is very unsafe notwithstanding the ancients used arts in breaking the horse to the amble, on account of its being so much easier than the trot, but as it is a known maxim in physic that giving ease and performing a cure are two different things, so here an easy pace and a safe one are as diametrically opposite, and that the amble is an unsafe pace is easy to be conceived by the horse losing so large a portion of his ballance, to prove which only try these simple experiments. Take a wooden horse let his two corner legs be taken away and he will stand, but take away his two sides leg and he falls, again one often sees at a farrier's shop when a horse is wanted to be shod in haste, two smiths can work at the same time, by taking each of them a corner leg, therefore how careful should we be to keep our hackneys on a safe action, and awake under us on all occasions. [40]

The lady should endeavour to make herself acquainted with those objects which horses are most subject to be alarmed at, and first of all is a windmill in full sail, next some can never be brought to go comfortably by a tilted waggon, especially if meeting it, others dislike asses very much, some dislike to face a man wheeling a barrow or an umbrella extended, an arch drain which is frequently seen to carry the water away thro the banks in a turnpike road, its laying low and of course presents itself very suddenly, will sadly alarm some, and any object suddenly presenting itself is almost sure to affright and alarm any horse in spirits, I once saw a lady get a fall, by a cow suddenly presenting its head over a hedge, yet a more steady animal never was, as I used her four years and never knew her start either before or after; let it be remembered that horses are more apt to be shy or start in the dusk of the evening than in broad day light, horses with bad eyes are almost sure to start, yet starting is not a sure sign of bad eyes, as many imagine it, I mention these few observations in regard to starting because horses which are most free from those faults, it may happen to some times; as horses like men are not alway in the same temper: never ride on a fast pace by any lane's end, or in turning any sudden or short turn, for two reasons; first, that it is unsafe as the horse might be subject to fall for want of being supported, and put together by shortening his pace, and secondly by your not being able to discern the objects which might present themselves to you so as to disturb and alarm your horse: these little hints kept well in mind may be the means of preventing many accidents.

FINIS.

[3-*](#) Such as the Wild Arabs, Indians, &c.

[24-*](#) Used by Sir Sidney Meadows.

Transcriber's Note

The following errors have been maintained.

Page	Error	Correction
4	particulatly	particularly
10	dependance	dependence
11	iregular	irregular
12	seperately	separately
14	apendix	appendix
14	higher then	than
14	purpose,	purpose.
16	seperate;	separate
16	croud	crowd
17	thay	they
20	opeperations	operations
21	to make	to make.
22	myright	my right
24	condemed	condemned
24	upona	upon a
24	untill	until
26	more then	than
27	occured	occurred
27	manage	menage
28	asists	assists
30	more then	more than

33	nei her	neither
33	Ballance,	Ballance.
36	the reins.	the reins,
36	progressively.	progressively,
38	gaurd	guard
39	unasisted	unassisted
39	wooden horse	wooden horse,
40	spirits,	spirits.

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