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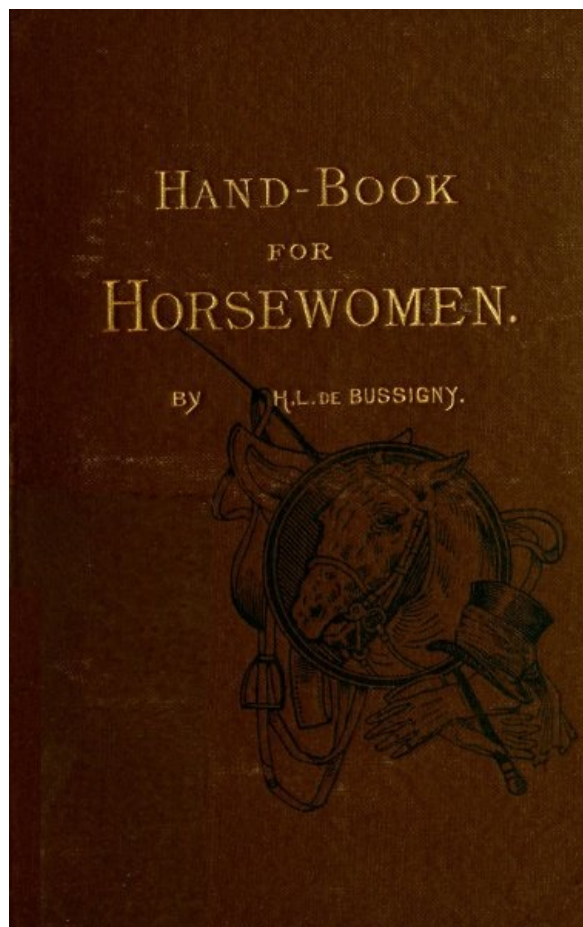
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HAND-BOOK FOR HORSEWOMEN.

BY
H. L. DE BUSSIGNY,

FORMERLY LIEUTENANT OF CAVALRY AND INSTRUCTOR OF RIDING

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PREFACE.

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For many years two styles of riding have prevailed in Western Europe—the English and the continental or school system. The two are usually supposed to be somewhat antagonistic, so much so that the followers of each are not unapt to regard the other with feelings of more or less dislike, not to say contempt; the one side being sneered at as pedants, the other despised as barbarians. To the unprejudiced both seem somewhat unreasonable.

The English method, originating in the national taste for field sports, has developed a race of horsemen worthy of that noblest of animals, the thorough-bred horse. The chief essential for the race-course and the hunting-field, however, being high speed on lines that are practically straight, the tendency of Englishmen is to leave their horses very much alone, provided they can gallop and jump and are sufficiently under control not to run away, the rider usually keeping a pretty even pressure on the bit and making comparatively little attempt to regulate the animal's action by the use of his own legs.

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The school, on the other hand, is the nursery of cavalry; and, for the army, speed is not so much needed as uniformity of movement and general handiness in rapid and complicated evolutions. Hence the great military riders of the continent have aimed at bringing the horse under complete control, and to this end they have applied themselves to the problem of mastering his hind legs, which are the propelling power, and therefore the seat of resistance. And it is precisely this subjection that horses dislike and try to evade with the utmost persistence. To accomplish the result, the rider is taught so to use his own legs and spurs as to bring the animal's hind legs under him, and thus carry him forward, instead of letting him go forward in his own way, as the English do. By balancing the effect of leg and spur upon the hind quarters, against the effect of hand and bit upon the mouth, the horse is brought into a position of equilibrium between the two, either at rest or in motion; he is then in complete subjection, and can be moved in any direction at his master's will. This is the basis of the whole manege system, and it is thus that horses are made to *passage*, to *piaffer*, or even to trot backward.

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The objection to the method is that, as equilibrium is gained, initiative is diminished, and this, together with the pedantry of the old-fashioned professors of the *haute école*, served to bring the whole theory into disrepute.

Looked at impartially, nevertheless, it must be admitted that each system is well adapted to accomplish its own peculiar objects, and thus it seems at least reasonable to suppose that ordinary people may be the better for learning something from both.

Amateurs, and especially ladies, do not expect to confine themselves to the silk jacket or even to the hunting-field, any more than they propose to give *haute école* exhibitions in the circus. What the majority of men and women need for the park, the road, or even for hunting, is well-bitted, well-gaited animals, with light mouths, broken to canter on either leg, and easily gathered for a jump.

But such horses when bought are not to be ridden off-hand. To begin with, the finer the training the more likely the beast is to turn restive if the rider leans on the reins. A seat independent of rein and stirrup is therefore the first requisite. Secondly, supposing the seat satisfactory, no one can know, by the light of nature, how to stop a highly-broken horse, to say nothing of making it change its leg or gather for a jump. A certain amount of the art of management must therefore be learned to make an accomplished rider.

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Now, beginners can get a seat in one of two ways. As children in the country they may be brought up on horseback, as they often are in the Southern States and in England, in which case the difficulty will quickly settle itself; and this is doubtless best if practicable. But supposing it to be impossible, a pupil may be well taught by exercises in the school, just as officers are taught at West Point or at Saumur. One thing alone is certain: seat can never be acquired by desultory riding or by riding exclusively on the roads or in parks.

Next, as to management. Without doubt the English dash and energy—in a word, rough-riding—is the first essential for any one who hopes to be either safe or happy on a horse. It is the foundation, without which nothing can avail. It means seat, confidence, and decision. Yet there is

something more that may be learned without at all impairing these qualities. To handle the horse rapidly and neatly, a control more or less complete must be established over his hind legs. In no other fashion can the thing be done. To attain this, it is not necessary or even desirable to go into all the niceties of the *haute école*. Horsemen want to arrive at certain practical results for their own safety and comfort, and the problem to be solved is, how to accomplish them by rational and gentle means.

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Ladies certainly do not care to *passage* in the streets, but they do want to know how to stop their horses cleverly when they take fright, to turn their corners neatly at the trot without danger of a fall, and to avoid instantly any obstacle they may unexpectedly meet. It is also well to understand something of the simpler methods of regulating gaits. All these things may be learned best by studying the rudiments of the school system, and it is with rudiments only that this treatise pretends to deal.

During the last twenty-five years many hand-books on equitation have been written for men, but few for women. This is the more remarkable as a woman's seat is such that she can not produce the same effects or use the same means as a man. Instruction for him is therefore largely useless for her. Men astride of a horse hold him between their legs and hands in a grip from which he can not escape, and can direct and force him with all the resolution and energy they possess. Women, sitting on the left side, must supply the place of the right leg as well as they can. They are, of course, obliged to resort to various expedients, all more or less artificial and unsatisfactory certainly, but still the best they can command. Yet it is for these very reasons far more important for women than for men to understand the art of management, since they must rely entirely on tact, skill, and knowledge, not only to overcome the difficulties of the cramped and unnatural seat imposed on them by fashion, but to supply their lack of physical strength. Still, there is no reason for discouragement, for that these obstacles can be surmounted by intelligence and patience, and that women can learn to ride on something like an equality with the best men, the number of undoubtedly fine horsewomen sufficiently proves.

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INTRODUCTION.

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It has been held by some professors of the art of horsemanship that it is impossible for a lady to ride with as much ease and as much control of her horse as a man, on account of the disadvantages of her high saddle and the absence of the right leg as a controlling agent; but the result of my experience has shown me that this is a mistaken opinion. Under the systems according to which riding was formerly taught, however, the judgment was a just one, because the object to be attained was the maintenance of the horse in what may be called a state of momentary equilibrium, or equilibrium of the second degree, by means of a double bit, curb and snaffle, aided by repeated slight pressure of the spurs. Under the more modern system the double bit is often replaced by a simple snaffle with one direct rein and one passing through a running martingale. The results obtained are more scientific and delicate, and the horse may be kept in a state of sustained equilibrium, or equilibrium of the first degree, in which condition he is entirely under the control of the lady who knows how to make a judicious use of her whip in place of the absent spur.

There are two very different ways of riding; the more usual, because the easier, consists in letting the horse go forward at a walk, a trot, or a gallop, the rider contenting herself with guiding him, and staying on his back; while, in the other, the will as well as the action of the animal is controlled, and he is *carried* forward in obedient and intelligent sympathy with his rider. This requires study, tact, and discretion; but the result well repays the labor, and, until it is reached, no lady, however well she may look on horseback, can be reckoned a horsewoman.

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I can not too strongly recommend to parents the greatest care in the choice of a teacher for their children, as in later years it always takes more time and trouble to correct bad habits than it would have done to acquire good ones in the beginning. As a general rule, riding-teachers are promoted grooms, or men of that class, who may be able to show boys how to become good rough-riders, but who are quite incompetent to teach a young lady the scientific principles by which alone she can obtain a thorough mastery of her horse.

And here I hope that my readers will allow me to offer them, with the deepest respect, a few suggestions in regard to dress, as years of teaching have shown me that much of a lady's power on horseback depends upon her feeling at ease in the saddle, and consequently free to give her attention to her teacher and her horse.

For full dress, such as park-riding, no hat is so distinguished as a plain high silk one; but in the riding-house, or in the country, the low Derby shape, or a soft felt, is now generally worn. If the shape is stiff, it should be carefully fitted to the head, for greater security and to avoid the risk of headache, and in any case an elastic should hold it firmly in place. Little girls usually wear their hair flowing on their shoulders, which saves trouble; but older riders should braid it closely to the back of the head below the hat, and pin it very securely, as the motion of the horse is apt to shake it loose, and a teacher can scarcely expect much attention from a pupil whose hat vacillates on her head at every step, or who is obliged to stop her horse in order to replace rebellious hair-pins.

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It may be laid down as a rule that ornaments of every kind, and even flowers, charming as they are at other times when worn by a lady, are out of place now that horsewomen have deigned to copy in their dress the simplicity of the sterner sex. Rings are especially to be avoided, as they are apt to cause the fingers to swell, and thus hinder a firm grasp of the reins.

The best gloves are of thin, flexible dog-skin, and they should be a size larger than those usually worn, to allow the hand and wrist as much freedom as possible.

If a lady does not object to sacrificing appearances, she will find great benefit from riding sometimes without gloves. A horse's mouth is often a very delicate instrument, and the vibrations which it gives to the reins are felt much more readily by the bare hand.

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Tailors almost always try to make a habit very tight fitting, especially at the waist; but a lady's position on horseback is at best an artificial one, and unless she is at ease in her habit she will never look at home on her horse. The constraint caused by a tight collar or arm-hole soon becomes intolerable, and the chances are that a tight waist will give the rider a pain in her side if her horse leaves a walk.

Whether trousers or breeches are worn, they should fit closely, and no seams should be allowed where they will come between the wearer and the saddle, for a seam, or even a fold, is apt in a short time to mean a blister. Trousers should be kept in place by straps of cloth about two inches wide, which pass under the feet. Gaiters are warm and comfortable for winter; but care must be taken to have very flat buttons on the outside of the right leg, as that presses against the flaps of the saddle; and, for the same reason, when breeches and boots are worn, the buttons which fasten the former above the ankle should be on the inside of the right leg. It is better to wear laced boots instead of buttoned, with trousers, because the Victoria stirrup, which is now generally used, is liable to press against the buttons and catch them in a way that is uncomfortable, and may be on occasion even dangerous.

Woven merino under-clothing will be found more comfortable than linen, as that is apt to get into folds and wrinkles, and ladies may also find it convenient to have their collars and cuffs attached to a sort of shirt, as that will remove the necessity for pins and elastics, which are always likely to get out of place.

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Although her single spur is at times a most valuable adjunct to a lady, it should never be worn by beginners, nor until its use has been thoroughly taught in the course of study.

It is with regret that I see the riding-whip becoming superseded by the handle of the English hunting-crop, as this is neither rational nor practical, being too short and light to replace the right leg advantageously or to give efficient punishment if it is needed. A good whip, flexible, without being limp, rather long than short, not too heavy, but well balanced, is best, especially in the riding-school.

I would strongly recommend to parents that, when a daughter begins to ride, it should be on her own saddle, made on her measure, or at least amply large for her, as riding on a short saddle leads to a cramped and ungraceful seat. The correct size should allow the space of three fingers between the end of the saddle and the base of the spine, when the right knee is round the second pommel. Some teachers recommend that the saddles of young pupils should be covered with buckskin, and this is often very useful; but when a firm and well-balanced seat is once acquired, there is nothing like pig-skin.

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The third pommel, or leaping-horn, is an important and now almost invariable addition to a lady's saddle, and should be so placed that it does not press, nor even touch, the left leg, while it is not needed, and yet so that its aid may be obtained at any time by slightly drawing up the left leg. It should stand out enough from the saddle to cover the top of the thigh, and be slightly curved but not too much. I have seen this pommel made so long and so sharply curved that the left leg was fairly inclosed, and this may be dangerous. As it is movable, a pupil need not be allowed to become dependent on it; nor should it be too tightly screwed into place, as, during a long ride or lesson, it is sometimes a relief for a lady to be able to turn it slightly. The slipper stirrup is often used for children and beginners, and has the advantage of being warm in winter, but the disadvantage that a habit of pushing the foot too far home is easily acquired, and not so easily got rid of when the Victoria, or, better still, a plain, open stirrup, is used later.

The material and workmanship of a saddle should be of the best quality, and the less stitching and ornamentation the better. Style on horseback depends on simplicity.

Girths seem to hold better if crossed—that is to say, if the girth which is buckled to the forward strap on the right side of the saddle is fastened to the second strap on the left; and the saddle should be so firm in its place that a lady may hang for a moment by her hands from the first pommel on the right side, or the second on the left, without causing it to shift its position. The stirrup-leather should pass under the horse outside the girths, and be connected with another strap on the right side of the saddle, in order to counterbalance the pressure on the stirrup. I may as well say here that a lady's saddle is well placed when there is a space, of the breadth of four fingers, between the right side and the upper end of the shoulder.

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I am accustomed to use for my pupils a simple snaffle with double reins and martingale, as by this means beginners do less harm to the mouth; and my own experience, as well as that of many others who have given it a thorough trial, is that this bit is preferable to any other for the riding-school, the road, or perhaps even for hunting, both on account of the simplicity of its effects upon the horse and of its mildness, so much greater than that of the curb, which often irritates and exasperates a spirited animal. No horses are more ready to bolt than the thorough-breds on the race-track, yet jockeys never ride with anything but a snaffle. They allow their horses to gain a pressure on the bit, and, as the jockey pulls, the horse quickens his pace. If you do *not* permit your horse to bear on the bit, you will gain by its simple means all those "effects of opposition" of which I shall speak later, and which are difficult to master, especially for beginners. I am aware that this opinion is contrary to that usually held both here and in Europe, as it certainly is to the teaching of Mr. Baucher. Yet, as it is the final result of many years of experience, I venture to submit it to the public, although I can hardly hope that it will win general assent. It may be necessary to add that success with the snaffle presupposes a fine seat and some experience, as tact and skill must replace the loss of leverage. I consider the "Baucher" snaffle the best, as the bars on either side prevent it from slipping into the horse's mouth under a strong lateral pressure.

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Almost all riding-teachers have been educated in the army, where the reins must be held in the left hand, to leave the right free for the saber, and they continue to teach as they were taught, without considering that in civil life the right hand is practically unoccupied. When the horse is moving in a straight line, it is easy to gather the reins into one hand; but when the rider wishes to turn him to the right or left, or make him give to the bit, two hands are just twice as good as one, and I can see no reason for always riding with the reins in one hand.

I have been often asked at what age a little girl should begin to ride, and I should suggest eight years as a reasonable time. If a child begins thus early, it is as well that she should take her first half-dozen lessons in her jacket and trousers, as the correct position of the legs is of great importance, and it is, of course, much more difficult for a teacher to judge of this through a skirt.

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Riding lessons are best begun in the autumn, as winter is apt to be cold for beginners, who are not able to keep themselves warm by trotting, and in summer flies often make the horses nervous, which may disturb young or timid pupils.

The duration of the first lesson should be from twenty-five to forty-five minutes. The older the pupil is the shorter the lesson ought to be, although this rule is not without exceptions.

The usual proportion is: From 8 to 12 years, 45 minutes; from 12 to 20 years, 30 minutes; after 20 years, 25 minutes.

After the first five or six lessons they may be gradually lengthened, day by day, until an hour is reached, and one hour in the riding-school under instruction, if the pupil holds herself in the correct position, is sufficient. When the lesson is over, the pupil should rest for a short time before changing her dress, and walk about a little in order to re-establish a free circulation of the blood. It is always wise for a lady to walk her horse for at least ten minutes before she dismounts, both for his sake and her own.

The morning after her first lesson the pupil will feel tired and stiff all over, especially in the shoulders, legs, and arms. The second day the stiffness will be worse, and on the third it will be at its height, after which it will gradually wear away—that is to say, if she continues to ride every day; but if she stops between her lessons the stiffness will come back after each one.

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If a child has any organic weakness, the teacher should, of course, be told of it, in order that he may allow intervals for rest during the lesson; and it is probably needless to add that a child should not be allowed to ride during digestion. Here I should like to say a few words to the pupils

themselves.

Never hesitate to ask your teacher to repeat anything you are not certain you understand. Teachers often take too much for granted, and in riding all depends on mastering the rudiments.

Have confidence in your teacher, and do not be disappointed if your progress is not perfectly regular. There are days in which you may seem able to do nothing right, and this is discouraging, and may last for several days at a time; but, on looking back at the end of a week, or, better still, a month, you will see how much ground you have gained.

Remember that upon your teacher rests a grave responsibility. Other instructors are only brought into contact with one will, and that one harmless; while the riding-master has to deal with two: that of the pupil, which is dangerous from inexperience, and that of the horse, which is dangerous from his strength, consequently he is often obliged to speak with energy in order to keep the attention of the horses as well as their riders. To ride well on horseback is to place yourself, or cause yourself to be placed, upon a saddle; to remain there at ease in a position which has been calculated and regulated by certain rules, and to make your horse go when, where, and as you will. You cannot learn to do this if you are impatient of correction or sensitive to criticism, even though sometimes severe.

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CHAPTER I.

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Mounting—Dismounting—The position on horseback—Manner of holding the reins.

MOUNTING.

The custom which prevails in many riding-schools of allowing pupils to mount from steps or platforms seems to me not only unscientific, but irrational, unless, indeed, the pupil is too small, too old, or too stout to be mounted in any other way; unscientific, because there is a correct and prescribed method of mounting from the ground, and irrational, because, if a lady dismounts away from the riding-school, and has not been taught this method, she will be obliged to go to the nearest house in search of a chair or bench, or at least must find a fallen tree-trunk or a big stone before she can mount again.

The pupil should advance to the left side of her horse, which is supposed to be standing quietly with a groom at his head, to whom she will hand her whip, taking care not to flourish it in such a manner as to startle the animal. She should then turn and face in the same direction as the horse, let her skirt fall, and put her right hand on the second pommel of her saddle, her left hand on the right shoulder of her assistant, who is stooping in front of her, and her left foot, the knee being bent, into his left hand. She should then count three aloud: at one, she should prepare to spring, by assuring herself that she is standing squarely on her right foot; at two, she should bend her right knee, keeping the body straight; and at three, she should spring strongly from her right leg, straightening also her left as she rises, and steadying herself by a slight pressure on the shoulder of her assistant, who rises as she springs. She must be careful not to push his hand away with her left foot, as this weakens his power to help her, and as she rises she should turn her body slightly to the left, so that she will find herself, if she has calculated her spring rightly, sitting on the saddle sideways, facing to the left. She will then shift her right hand from the second to the first pommel, turn her body from left to right, lift her right leg over the second pommel, and put her left foot into the stirrup. Afterward she will arrange her skirt smoothly under her with her left hand.

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Two elastic straps are usually sewn on the inside of a riding-skirt to prevent it from wrinkling. The right foot is intended to be slipped into the upper one, the left into the lower, and, if possible, the pupil should do this just before she mounts, as it will save her and her assistant time and trouble after she is in the saddle. As soon as she can mount with ease, she should also learn to hold her whip in the right hand, which rests on the second pommel. These are trifling details, but they help to render a lady self-reliant, and it may happen to her at some time to ride a horse who will not stand patiently while straps are being arranged and a whip passed from hand to hand.

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I offer here a few suggestions for the use of any gentleman who may wish to assist a lady to mount. He should stand facing her at the left side of the horse, his right foot slightly in front of his left. He should then stoop and offer his left hand for her foot. Unless the lady is an experienced rider, he should place his right hand lightly under her left arm to steady her as she rises. He should count aloud with her, one, two, three, and at three he should straighten himself, giving a strong support for her left foot.

There are two other ways of helping a lady to mount: the first consists in offering both hands, with the fingers interlaced, as a support for her foot; and in the second he appears to kneel, almost touching the ground with his left knee, and holding his right leg forward with the knee bent, in order that she may step on it and mount as if from a platform. Both these ways seem to me to be dangerous, as, in case the horse moves his hind-quarters suddenly to the right, as the lady rises, which is not uncommon, she will be suspended in space, with nothing to steady her but her hand on the pommel, and may fall under the horse's feet.

If a lady wears a spur she should always tell her assistant, who will then be careful that her left heel does not touch the animal's side. I have often been asked if it is possible for a lady to mount alone; and it is certainly possible, although not very convenient. She may either avail herself of a fallen tree, a stump, a fence, or any slight elevation, which is, of course, as if she were to mount from a platform in the school; or she may let down her stirrup as far as she can by means of the strap on the right side of the saddle, take firm hold of the second pommel with her left hand and the back of the saddle with her right, put her left foot into the stirrup, and give a quick spring with her right leg, which, if she is active, will land her in the saddle, after which she can shorten her stirrup-leather. A lady will probably never in her life be called upon to mount alone in a flat country, but she can never have too many resources, and it is easy to make the attempt some time when riding alone in the school.

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DISMOUNTING.

The horse having come to a full stop, the pupil may let the reins fall on his neck if he is very docile, slip her left foot out of the stirrup and both feet out of their elastic straps, pass her right leg over the second pommel, and sit sideways on her saddle for an instant; then give her left hand to her assistant, who stands at the side of the horse, and let herself slip to the ground. If she should be very stout, or if her feet are cold, or she is tired, it will be easier for her to drop both reins and to place her hands on the shoulders of her assistant, who can steady her arms with his hands.

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A lady may, of course, dismount without help by keeping her right hand on the second pommel and slipping down; but she must be careful not to jerk her horse's mouth with the reins, which she should hold in her right hand.

I strongly recommend teachers and parents to insist that these exercises of mounting and dismounting be practiced frequently, as their usefulness is great.

THE POSITION ON HORSEBACK.

It has often surprised me to see the indifference of parents to the manner in which children carry themselves and manage their bodies and limbs, whether standing, walking, or sitting.

Although they have sometimes more than enough of science, literature, and music, their physical culture has been neglected, so that they are not conscious of the bad habits into which they have fallen, and which become deeply rooted and almost second nature. At last the riding-master is called upon to render graceful the bodies which have been allowed for years to acquire ungraceful tricks. If a lady wishes to ride really well, and to look well on her horse, she must be supple and straight, without stiffness, as rigidity precludes all idea of ease and elegance, to say nothing of the fact that no horse looks at his ease under a stiff rider.

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During the first lessons a pupil is apt to have a certain unconscious fear, which causes a contraction of the muscles; and it is in order to overcome this fear, and consequent rigidity, that the following gymnastic exercise is recommended:

The pupil should be mounted on a very quiet horse and led into the middle of the school, where the teacher, standing on the left side, takes in his left hand her right foot, and draws it very gently, and without any jerk, back toward the left leg; the pupil should then place her left hand in his right, and her right hand on the first pommel, and, thus supported, lean back until her body touches the back of the horse, straightening herself afterward with as little aid from the teacher as possible, and chiefly by the pressure of the right knee on the second pommel. This movement should be repeated, the pupil leaning not only straight back, but to the left and the right, the teacher holding the right foot in place and making the pupil understand that it is to the fixity of contact between her right knee and the pommel that she must look for the firmness and consequent safety of her seat on horseback. When the pupil has acquired some ease in this exercise, the teacher will allow her to practice it without his hold on her right foot, and will afterward withdraw the support of his right hand, until finally she becomes able to execute the movements while the teacher leads the horse at a walk in a circle to the left, his right hand being always ready to replace her foot in position if she should extend it forward.

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This exercise will indicate at once to the teacher any muscular rigidity on the part of the pupil, which he can therefore correct by the following movements: Stiffness of the neck may be removed by flexions to the right, to the left, back and to the right, back and to the left, straight forward, and straight back, always gently and without any abruptness. For stiffness in the spine, the pupil should lean far forward and then backward, bending easily at the waist and keeping the shoulders well down and back. If the shoulders are stiff, the pupil should keep her elbows close to her body, the fore-arm being curved, and the wrists on a level with the elbow; then let her move her shoulders as far forward, backward, up, and down as she can, first separately, then together, and at last in different directions at the same time. Very often rigidity in the shoulder comes from stiffness in the arm, when the following flexion will be found useful: The arm should be allowed to fall easily by the side, and afterward lifted until the wrist is on a level with the elbow, the fingers being shut. The elbow should then be moved out from the sides and raised until it is on a level with the shoulder, with the fore-arm horizontal; after which the wrist should be raised in the air, keeping the elbow bent at a right angle, and the fingers in front, the arm being afterward stretched to its full length perpendicularly, and finally returned to its place by

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the side, after going through the same motions in reversed order. This exercise should be done first with one arm, then the other, then with both together; it is somewhat complicated, but no force of habit can resist its good effect.

Another simpler flexion consists in first raising and then lowering the arm, stretching it out in front and behind, and at last turning it round and round, the shoulder acting as a pivot. It is impossible to see whether a pupil has too much stiffness in the knees, but she can ascertain for herself by stretching out both her feet in front and then bending them as far back as they will go, and she may also correct the same fault in her ankles by turning her feet from left to right, from right to left, and up and down, without moving the leg.

All this gymnastic practice must be done slowly, quietly, and patiently, however tiresome it may seem, as the result in the future will be of the greatest importance, and it must also be done intelligently, for the object is not to learn a certain number of movements, but to gain flexibility and ease throughout the body.

Parents can help a teacher considerably by making children go through these flexions at home; and it seems scarcely necessary to add that the greatest care and discretion must be used in order not to fatigue pupils, especially young girls.

When the teacher is satisfied that his pupil has overcome all nervousness and stiffness, so that she feels at home in the saddle, he should explain to her the details of the position during motion, and should insist that she correct her faults without help from him, in order that she may learn the quicker to take the initiative and be responsible for herself.

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Experience has shown me that it is easier for a pupil to keep her shoulders on the same line, and sit square, if she holds a rein in either hand; therefore I recommend this method. And I have also found that to learn by heart the following rules produces excellent results, especially in cases where ladies really wish to study, and to improve any bad habits into which they may have fallen:

The head straight, easy, turning upon the shoulders in every direction, without involving the body in its movement.

If the head, being at the end of the spinal column, is stiff, this stiffness will be communicated to all the upper part of the body; if it can not turn freely without making the shoulders turn also, the stability of the seat will be impaired each time that the head moves.

The eyes fixed straight to the front, looking between the horse's ears, and always in the direction in which he is going.

If the eyes are dropped, the head will tend to droop forward, and little by little a habit of stooping will be acquired, which will destroy the balance and steadiness of the seat; while, if the rider does not look out ahead, she may not be able to communicate with her horse in time to avoid accidents—as he is not supposed to know where he is going, and the responsibility of guiding him rests with her.

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The upper part of the body easy, flexible, and straight.

If the upper part of the body is not easy, its stiffness will extend to other parts which should be free to give to the motion of the horse, and thus avoid any shock; if it is not straight, the effect is lost of the perpendicular line upon the horizontal one of the horse's back, which corrects the displacement of equilibrium when the animal is in motion.

The lower part of the body firm, without stiffness.

If it were not firm, the spine would bend forward or back from the perpendicular, and derange the center of gravity, with dangerous results in case the horse made a sudden bound; but there must be no stiffness, as that detracts from the ease and suppleness indispensable to a good seat.

The shoulders well back, and on the same line.

Well back, in order to give the lungs full space to breathe, and to prevent stooping. The most common fault among ladies who ride is, that the right shoulder is held farther forward than the left, which is not only ungraceful, but bad for the horse, as the rider's weight does not come evenly on his back.

The arms falling naturally, the elbows being held close to the body without stiffness.

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If the arms are held as if tied to the body, or if the elbows are stuck out, the wrists and hands can not guide the horse with ease.

The fore-arm bent.

Forming with the upper arm a right angle, of which the elbow is the apex, in order to give the wrist an intermediate position, whether the hand is held high or low.

The wrists on a level with the elbows.

Because, if the wrists are held too low, the rider will get into the habit of resting her hands on her right knee, and will consequently neglect to occupy herself with her horse's mouth.

Six inches apart.

In order to give the rider a fixed intermediary position between the movements of the hands forward, to the left, or to the right, by which she governs her horse: if the wrists are held farther apart, the elbows will appear pinioned to the sides; if nearer together, the elbows, on the contrary, will stick out in an angle.

The reins held in each hand.

I attach great importance to this disposition of the reins, as it gives a novice confidence, makes it easier for her to sit square in the saddle, and easier also to manage her horse.

The fingers firmly closed, facing each other, with the thumbs extended on the ends of the reins. [Pg 33]

The fingers should face each other, because, if they are turned up or down, the elbows will get out of position; and the reins must be held firmly and kept from slipping by the thumb, as the horse will be quick to take advantage if he feels the reins lengthen whenever he moves his head.

The right foot falling naturally on the panel of the saddle, the point forward and somewhat down, and the right side of the leg held closely to the saddle.

As the firmness of the seat depends greatly upon a close hold of the pommel by the muscles of the right knee, it is important that they should have as free play as possible; and, if the foot is turned outward, not only is the effect ungraceful, but the muscles soon become fatigued and the whole position constrained, even that of the right shoulder, which will be held too far forward.

The left foot in the stirrup, without leaning on it.

If a lady leans her weight on the stirrup, her natural tendency will be to sit over too much to the left, which may cause the saddle to turn, and is very hard on the horse's back; besides, as she is out of equilibrium, any sudden movement will shake her loose in her seat.

The point of the foot turned slightly to the right, and the heel held lower than the rest of the foot.

If the point is turned somewhat in, the whole leg will rest more easily and closely against the saddle; and, if the heel is lower than the ball of the foot, additional contact of the leg will be gained, which is important in managing a horse, and, when a spur is worn, it will not be so apt to touch him at a wrong time. [Pg 34]

The part of the right leg between the knee and the hip-joint should be turned on its outer or right side, and should press throughout its length on the saddle; while, on the contrary, the inside of the left leg should be in permanent contact with the saddle. The knees should, in their respective positions, be continually in contact, without any exception. The lower or movable part of the leg plays upon the immovable at the knee-joint, the sole exception being when the rider rises to the trot, at which time the upper part of the leg leaves the saddle.

This position on horseback may be called academic, or classical; and, from the beginning, a lady should endeavor to obtain it, without, of course, becoming discouraged if, for some time, she fails to attain perfection.

I have met with excellent results by allowing my pupils to leave this correct position, and then resume it again, at first standing still, then at other gaits progressively. "Progression" in horsemanship means the execution of a movement at a trot or gallop after it has been learned and practiced at a walk. In this way pupils soon become conscious both of the right and the wrong seats, and the difference between them, and it is consequently easy to correct any detail in which they may find themselves defective. I have done this in accordance with a principle in which I firmly believe, i. e., that the best teacher is he who soonest makes his pupil understand what is expected of her, and how to accomplish it. The former is theoretical, the latter practical horsemanship, and there is a great difference between them. [Pg 35]

If the teacher finds it hard to make a pupil understand the foregoing position, he may help her in the following manner: He should take her right foot, as indicated in the flexions, and, going as far back as he can, place his right elbow on the horse's croup, with his fore-arm perpendicular, and his fingers open and bent backward. He will then request the pupil to lean back until she feels the support of the teacher's hand between her shoulders, and to allow her head and shoulders to go back of their own weight, when it will be easy for him, by pressure of his hand, to straighten the body until it is in the correct position. Some teachers adopt the Hungarian method of passing a round stick through the arms and behind the back; but this is only practicable when a horse is standing still, or at a walk, and even then great care should be used, as the rider is quite helpless. It has also the disadvantage of making tall and slender persons hollow their backs unduly. [Pg 36]

Pupils should be warned to avoid, as much as may be, clasping the pommel too tightly with the right knee, as a constant strain will fatigue them and take away the reserve force which they may need at a given moment; indeed, a rider should be taught from the first to economize his strength as much as possible.

As soon as the pupil can sit her horse correctly, at a walk, holding the reins in both hands, she should practice holding them in the left hand only, in case she should wish to use her right hand

during the lesson.

The English method of holding the reins of a double bridle is, to bring all four up straight through the fingers; for instance, the curb-reins, being outside, go outside the little finger and between the first and second fingers, while those of the snaffle come between the fourth and middle and the middle and first fingers.

In France and in this country the reins are crossed, the curb being below, outside the little finger, and between the third and middle fingers, while the snaffle comes between the fourth and middle and the second and first fingers.

The latter method seems to me preferable, as it is easier to separate the reins, and also to regulate the amount of tension required on one pair or the other. In either position, the hand is held in front of the body, with the palm and shut fingers toward it, and the reins are held firmly in place by the pressure of the thumb.

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The teacher should explain that, as the curb is a much more severe bit than the snaffle, its effects must be used with delicacy, and he should give his pupils plenty of practice in taking up, separating, and reuniting the reins, in order that they may learn to handle them quickly and with precision at any gait.

CHAPTER II.

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Exercises of pupils in private lessons—Words of command—Walking—Turning to the right or left—Voltes and reversed voltes—Trotting.

Although private lessons can not begin to take the place of exercises in class, it is advisable that the pupil should have some lessons by herself first, in order that she may learn to manage her horse to some extent at the walk, trot, and canter.

Words of command in the riding-school are of two kinds; the first being preparatory, to enable the pupil to think over quickly the means to be employed in order to obey the second or final order. Example: "Prepare to go forward"—preparatory. "Go forward"—final order, given in a loud voice, with emphasis on each word or syllable. Between the two orders, the teacher should at first explain to the pupil what is wanted, and the means of obtaining it, and later should require her to repeat it herself, so that she may learn it by heart. The teacher commands the pupil, the pupil demands obedience from the horse, and the horse executes the movement; but this triple process needs time, all the more because a novice is likely to hesitate, even if she makes no mistake. By giving the pupil time to think, she will gain the habit of making progressive demands on her horse, through means which she has calculated, and she will thus gradually become a true horsewoman, able to make her horse know what she wants him to do; for, in almost every case, obstinacy or resistance on the part of the horse comes from the want of due progression between the demand made of him and its execution.

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When the teacher is satisfied that the pupil is in a regular and easy position, before allowing her to go forward, he will give her the directions necessary to stop her horse, and will make sure that his explanation has been understood. To stop: The horse being at the walk, to stop him, the pupil should place her leg and whip in contact with his sides, lift her hands and bring them close to the body, and lean her body back, drawing herself up. When the horse has come to a stand-still, she should resume the normal position. To go forward: The whip and leg should be placed in contact, the hands moved forward, and the body inclined also forward.

When the pupil has a clear idea of these movements, the teacher will give the orders:

1. *Prepare to go forward.*—2. *Forward.*

And, after some steps have been taken,

1. *Prepare to stop.*—2. *Stop.*

While making his pupils advance at a walk, the teacher will explain succinctly the mechanism of locomotion.

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The horse at rest is said to be square on his base when his four legs are perpendicular between two parallels, one being the horizontal line of the ground, the other the corresponding line of his back. If his hind legs are outside of this square, he is said to be "campé," or planted, because he can neither move forward nor back unless he changes this position. If his fore legs are outside this line, he is "campé" in front, as, for instance, when kicking; if, on the contrary, his fore legs are inside his base, he is said to be "under himself" in front; and it is a bad sign when a horse takes this position habitually, as it shows fatigue or weakness in those limbs.

The horse goes forward, backward, trots or gallops, by a contraction of the muscles of the hind quarters, the duty of the fore legs being to support his weight and get out of the way of the hind ones; and the whole art of riding consists in a knowledge of the means which give the rider control of these muscular contractions of the hind quarters. The application of the left leg and of

the whip on the sides of the horse serve to make him go forward, backward, to the right or left, and the reins serve to guide and support him, and also to indicate the movement required by the whip and leg.

1. *Prepare to turn to the right.*—2. *Turn to the right.*

To turn her horse to the right, the pupil should draw her right hand back and to the right, incline her body also to the right, turning her head in the same direction, and use her whip lightly, without stopping the pressure of her left leg. When her horse has turned far enough, she will cease pressure on the right side, and carry her horse straight forward.

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In the beginning, regularity of movement is not so important as that the pupil should understand the means by which she executes it; that is to say, that she disturbs the equilibrium of her horse by carrying the weight of her body to the right; and, while her hand and whip combine on that side, the left leg prevents him from stopping or straggling over the ground.

Riders in a school are said to be on the right hand when the right side of the body is toward the middle of the ring; and this is the easier way for inexperienced pupils, because they are less shaken when their horses move to the right, as they sit on the left side of their saddles.

It follows, naturally, that to be on the left hand is to have the left side toward the middle; and, when riding on the right hand, all movements are executed to the right, and *vice versa*.

The teacher must watch carefully that pupils do not allow their horses to turn the corners of their own accord, as a regular movement to the right should be executed by the pupil at each corner when riding on the right hand, and to the left when going the other way.

If left to guide himself around a school, the horse will describe a sort of oval, rounding the corners, instead of going into them, and thus much valuable practice is lost to the rider.

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The pupil being at a walk, and on the right hand, the teacher will give the word of command:

1. *Prepare to trot.*—2. *Trot.*

To make her horse trot, she must advance her wrists, lean the body forward, and use the leg and whip, resuming the normal position as soon as her horse obeys her.

In order not to fatigue the pupil, the teacher will only allow her to trot a short distance, and will remind her to keep her right foot well back and close to the saddle, and to sit close without stiffness. He will also take care that she passes from the walk to the trot gradually, by making her horse walk faster and faster until he breaks into a slow trot.

Each time that a pupil changes from a slow to a faster gait, she should accelerate the former as much as possible, and begin the latter slowly, increasing the speed gradually up to the desired point; and the same rule holds good, reversing the process, if she wishes to change from a fast to a slower gait.

As the pupil gains confidence, and feels at home in the trot, the teacher will let her practice it at shorter intervals, and for a longer time, taking care, however, that she does not attempt to rise to it; if she loses the correct position, she must come to a walk, and, having corrected her fault, resume the trot.

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In the intervals of rest, in order not to lose time, the pupil should repeat at a walk the movements which she has learned already, the teacher becoming gradually more exacting in regard to the correctness of the positions and effects, adding also the three following movements, which are more complicated, and which complete the series, dealing with changes of direction.

The volte is a circular movement, executed by the horse upon a curved line, not less than twelve of his steps in length. The pupil being at a walk, and on the right hand of the school, the teacher will say:

1. *Prepare to volte.*—2. *Volte,*

explaining that the pupil should direct her horse to the right, exactly as if she merely meant to turn him in that direction, continuing, however, the same position, and using the same effects, until the twelve paces have been taken, which will bring her to the point of beginning, when she will resume the normal position, and go forward on the same hand.

The half-volte, as its name implies, comprises the first part of the movement, the pupil coming back to her place by a diagonal line.

1. *Prepare to half-volte.*—2. *Half-volte.*

The pupil uses the same effects as in the volte, but, when she has described half the circle, she returns to her starting-point by a diagonal, using the same effects, but with much less force, since, to regain her place by the diagonal, she will only have one fourth of a turn to the right to make; then, at the end of the diagonal, she must change her effects completely, in order to execute three fourths of a turn to the left, which will bring her back to her track, but on the left hand.

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1. *Prepare for the reversed half-volte.*—2. *Reversed half-volte.*

To make her horse execute a reversed half-volte, the pupil uses the same means and effects as in the preceding movement, exactly reversing them at the end; that is to say, when on the diagonal, about six paces from her track, she makes a half-circle to the left, following the rules prescribed for the volte.

The teacher must be careful to explain that, in the voltes, the pupil does not change the direction in which she is going, because she describes a circle; but in the half-volte, if she is on the right hand at the beginning, she will be on the left at the end. He must also see that her horse executes all these movements at a steady pace; and, if she will practice faithfully these different changes of direction, with the positions and effects which govern them, she will, in time, acquire the habit of guiding her horse promptly and skillfully in any direction.

To go backward.—The pupil, being at a stand-still, the teacher will give the word of command:

1. *Prepare to back.*—2. *Back.*

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Explanation.—To make her horse go backward, the pupil should draw herself up and lean back very far, using her leg and whip together, in order to bring the horse's legs well under him, and at the same time raise both wrists and bring them near the body. As soon as the horse has taken his first step backward, the pupil should stop the action of her leg, whip, and hands, only to resume them almost immediately to determine the second step; to stop backing, she will stop all effects, and resume the normal positions.

After a few steps, the teacher should say:

1. *Prepare to stop backing.*—2. *Stop backing.*

The movement is only correct when the horse backs in a straight line, and step by step. If he quickens his movement, he must be at once carried vigorously forward with the leg and whip.

When the pupil begins to have a firm seat at the trot, the teacher will gradually let her pass the corners at that gait, and, at his discretion, will also let her execute some of the movements to the right and left. To do this, she will use precisely the same means as at the walk, the only difference being that, as the gait is quicker, the changes of equilibrium are greater for both horse and rider, and the effects should be lighter and more quickly employed and stopped.

I have given most of the movements to the right, to avoid useless repetition, but they should be frequently reversed; and care must always be taken to avoid over-fatigue.

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When the teacher is fully satisfied that his pupil has advanced far enough to profit by it, he may begin to teach her to rise at the trot; but he must not be in too great a hurry to reach this point, and he must make her understand that to rise is the result of a good seat, and that a good seat does *not* result from rising.

For the last fifteen years I have looked in vain, in all the treatises on riding, for the reason of that rising to the action of the horse known as the "English trot," and yet I have seen it practiced among races ignorant of equestrian science, who ride from childhood as a means of getting from one place to another. The Arabs, Cossacks, Turks, Mexicans, and Apaches, all employ it, in a fashion more or less precise and rhythmical, rising whether their stirrups are short or long, and even if they have none. It is certain that this way of neutralizing the reaction spares and helps the horse; and it was calculated, at the meeting of the "Equestrian Committee" at Paris, in 1872, that each time a rider rises he relieves the horse's back of one third of the weight which must rest on it permanently if he sits fast; and since that time rising at the trot has been practiced in all the cavalry of Europe.

After the siege of Paris, in 1871, I was obliged to undertake the training of the horses of my regiment, which was then stationed at Massy. These horses were all young and unbroken; and, as a result of their youth and the fatigues they had undergone, they were in poor condition, and nearly all had sore backs. I directed all the teachers who were under me, and the men who rode the horses during their training, to rise at the trot; and, three months later, the young horses were in perfect health, while their riders, who had been exhausted by a severe campaign, had gained on an average seven pounds in weight; and it was this experiment which was submitted by me to the "Equestrian Committee."

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I was tempted to make this digression, which I hope will be forgiven me, because I have heard in this country a great deal of adverse and, in my opinion, unjust criticism of the English trot, which I ascribe to the neglect of teachers, and the indifference of ladies brought up in the old school of riding to prefer horses which cantered all the time, or were broken to artificial gaits, like racking and pacing.

The rider who wishes to rise to the trot should be careful that the stirrup is not so short as to keep her left leg in constant contact with the third pommel, or leaping-horn, as, unless there is the space of three or four fingers between the pommel and the leg, the latter may be bruised, and the rider forced down too soon.

In order to explain this movement, the teacher may proceed as follows: Placing himself at the left side of the horse, he will ask the pupil to take the reins in her left hand and put her right hand on

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the first pommel, with the thumb inside and the palm of the hand on the pommel; he will then take her left foot in his left hand, in order to prevent her from pushing it forward, explaining that, by pressing on the stirrup, she will develop the obtuse angle formed by her leg, of which the knee is the apex; whereas, if she pushes her foot forward, the angle will cease to exist, and she can not lift herself. With his right hand placed under her left arm, he will help her to lift herself perpendicularly; while she is in the air he will count one, will let her pause there for a short space of time, and will then help her to let herself slowly down, continuing the pressure on the stirrup, and, when she has regained her saddle, he will count two; then he will recommence the movement of rising, and will count three while she is in the air, and four when she is again seated; and this may be continued until he sees that she is beginning to be tired. The foot must only be one third of its length in the stirrup; for, if it is pushed home, she will lose the play of the ankle, which will tend to stiffen the knee and hip. When the pupil begins to understand, the teacher will let her go through the movement rather more quickly, still counting one, two, three, four; then he will allow her to practice it without his help: all this preparatory work being done while the horse is standing still. It is important that she should not drop into her saddle, but let herself down by pressing on the stirrup; and on no account should the right knee cease to be in contact with the second pommel, as this is the sole case in which the lower part of this leg is motionless while the upper part moves. As soon as the pupil can rise without too much effort, and tolerably quickly, she may practice it at the walk, and then at the trot, counting for herself, one, two, three, four; and she must put a certain amount of energy into it, for all the theory in the world will not teach her to rise in time with the horse unless she also helps herself. The theory of the rhythmical cadence is easy enough to give: the rider rises when the horse takes one step, and sinks back at the second, to rise again at the third; but the cadence itself is not so easy to find; and to rise at the wrong step is like beginning on the wrong beat of a waltz. Many young persons get into the bad habit of lowering the right knee when they rise, and lifting it when they regain their seat; but this is a mistake, as the right knee should be immovable, and in constant contact with the second pommel.

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As soon as the pupil has struck the cadence (and, once found, it comes easily afterward), she should discontinue the use of her right hand on the pommel, and the teacher may be more exacting as to the regularity of her position than is necessary in her first efforts. During rising to the trot, the upper part of the body should be very slightly bent forward; and, if the teacher notices that the pupil is rising from right to left, or left to right, instead of perpendicularly, he should make her put the fingers of her right hand on the top of her saddle behind, and thus give herself a little help in rising, until she gets used to it. Each time that the rider wishes to make her horse trot, she should sit close while he changes from a walk to a trot, and until he is trotting as fast as is necessary, because he does not arrive at that speed instantly, but by hurrying his steps, so that there is no regular cadence of the trot to which she can rise; and she should follow the same rule when she makes him slacken his pace before coming to a walk.

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The teacher must be careful to see that the hands do not follow the movements of the body, as they must keep quite still, the arms moving at the elbow.

There is not, nor can there be, any approximate calculation of the height to rise, as that depends entirely upon the gait of the horse. If he takes short steps, the rider must rise oftener, and consequently not so high; but, if he is long-gaited, she must rise high, in order not to get back into the saddle before he is ready to take his second step.

CHAPTER III.

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Classes—Successive and individual movements—The gallop—Leaping—
Suggestions for riding on the road.

When the pupil has taken from ten to fifteen lessons, she ought to be able to execute the movements she has studied with a certain degree of correctness, and to remain a full hour on horseback without fatigue; and she should then, if possible, be placed in a class composed of not less than twelve nor more than twenty-four members. Children in a class should be of the same sex, and, as near as may be, of the same age and equestrian experience. It is not necessary that the class should meet every day; it may come together one, two, or three times a week, under the guidance of the same teacher, and this need not prevent a pupil who is in it from coming to the school at other times to practice the various movements by herself.

All concerned should do their best to have all the members of the class present, and the school should be kept clear of other riders during such classes. The presence of spectators is objectionable, particularly where there is a class of young girls. Granted that they are the parents, for instance, of one or two of the pupils: to the rest they are strangers, who cause constraint, as the teacher is obliged to criticise, correct, and, in a word, instruct, in a loud voice, so that the observation made to one may serve as a suggestion to all.

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The difference of progress between classes and individual pupils is so great that one may calculate that, after one hundred private lessons, a pupil will not ride so well as if she had taken fifty lessons in class. In a class she is obliged to keep her horse at a certain distance from the others, and in his own place, and, in her turn, go through exercises directed by a will other than

her own, while the constant repetition of principles by the teacher fixes them in her memory. On the other hand, the private pupil takes her time to make her horse go through a movement; and, that movement once understood, there is no reason for the repetition of the explanations which can alone make the theory and principle of riding familiar. I am certainly not an advocate for theory without practice; but I insist that a rider must know what she ought to do before she can do it really well, as all good results in riding are obtained by long practice, based on a rational theory.

The teacher should choose out of his class the four most skillful pupils, whose horses are free and regular in their gaits, to serve as leaders, one at the head and one at the end of the two columns, which should be drawn up on the long sides of the school, each rider having a space of at least three feet between the head of her horse and the tail of the one in front of her, the heads of the leaders' horses being about six feet from the corner of the school. While the columns are standing still, the teacher should explain distinctly the difference between distance and interval, and he had better be on foot at the end of the school, facing the columns.

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By "distance" is meant the space between the tail of one horse and the head of the next in the column.

"Interval" is the space between two horses who are standing or going forward on parallel lines.

All movements are executed singly or in file: in the first case each pupil goes through the movement, without regard to the others; in the second, the pupils execute the movement in turn after the leaders of the column.

A movement in file, once known, may be repeated individually, but only at a walk in the beginning, in order to insure attention. The columns should both be on the right hand; consequently the head of one will be opposite the end of the other as they are drawn up on their respective sides. First order:

1. *Prepare to go forward.*—2. *Go forward.*

When the final word of command is given, the pupils will advance simultaneously, each one using the same effects as if she were alone, and being careful to preserve the correct distance.

The two leaders should so regulate the gait of their horses as to pass the opposite corners of the school at the same moment, and this gait should be uniform. If a pupil loses her distance, she should regain it by making her horse walk faster; but she should try to keep her place, as the whole column must quicken its pace when she does, and all suffer from the carelessness of one.

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When the columns are on the short sides of the school, the teacher should give the order:

1. *Prepare to halt;*

and when they are on the long side,

2. *Halt.*

When they are again going forward, always on the right hand, the order should be given:

1. *Prepare to turn to the right.*—2. *Turn to the right.*

At the final order each pupil will turn to the right on her own account, and according to the rules already prescribed; at the end of this movement all will find themselves on parallel lines, and about twelve feet apart; they should then turn the head somewhat to the right, in order to see that they are on the same line, and cross the width of the school in such a way that the columns will meet and pass each other in the middle. When they have reached the opposite side, they will turn to the right without further order, the leaders at the end of the column being now at its head. This movement should *never* be executed except at a walk.

To replace the columns in their accustomed order, the teacher should have this movement executed a second time. When the columns are going forward on the right hand, the order will be given:

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1. *Prepare to volte in file.*

In this movement the same principles and the same means are used as in a private lesson; the leaders, however, describe a larger circle proportionate to the length of their columns, and at the end their horses' heads should be about three feet behind the tails of the last horses in their respective columns. The other pupils then, in turn, execute the movement upon the same ground as the leader. The leaders having moved two thirds down one of the long sides, the teacher will order:

2. *Volte in file;*

and, when the columns are again going forward on the right hand,

1. *Prepare to half-volte in file.*

The leaders turn to the right, describe their half-circle, and go forward on a diagonal line ending

just behind the last rider in the column; once there, they turn to the left and fall into line, being duly followed by each pupil over the same ground.

When the leaders are about eighteen feet from the corner of the school, the teacher will order:

2. *Half-volte in file.*

The next order should be:

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1. *Prepare for the reversed half-volte in file.*

The leaders must execute diagonals proportional to the lengths of their respective columns, in such a manner as will enable them to begin their half-circles when about thirty feet down the long sides, and thirty-five or forty feet before the turn or corner, followed in turn by the other pupils, as in the foregoing movements.

As soon as the leaders are on the long sides, having passed the second corners, the teacher will order:

2. *Reversed half-volte in file.*

The columns being on the long sides, and on the right hand, the next order should be:

1. *Prepare to back.*—2. *Back.*

And, to execute this movement correctly, each pupil will make her horse back as she would in a private lesson, being careful to keep in a line with her companions.

When the class can execute these movements correctly at a walk, the teacher will allow them to be practiced at a trot, insisting, however, that the pupils shall stop rising as soon as the preparatory order is given, not to begin again until they have returned to the side of the school at the end of the movement. When there is a full class, it is better not to allow turns to the right or left to be attempted at a trot, as the riders may strike one another's knees in crossing.

When these movements in file, at the walk and the trot, have given the pupils the habit of controlling their horses with decision and regularity, the teacher should explain to them the difference between these and individual movements. The column being at a walk, and on the right hand, the teacher will say:

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1. *Prepare to volte singly.*

Each pupil leaves the line at the same moment as the others, executes a circular line of twelve steps as in a private lesson, and takes her place in the line again.

2. *Volte singly.*

Next in order comes:

1. *Prepare to half-volte singly.*

This is done exactly as in a private lesson, the pupils taking care to do it in time with one another, in order to reach their places at the same moment.

2. *Half-volte singly.*

1. *Prepare for the reversed half-volte singly.*

The pupils leave their places simultaneously by a diagonal line, and return to the same track; but, on the other hand, by a circular line of six steps.

2. *Reversed half-volte singly.*

These movements are here given on the right hand; but they may, of course, be done equally well on the left hand by reversing the terms.

I recommend teachers not to keep their pupils too long on the left hand, but to seize that opportunity to rectify any incorrect positions of the feet.

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When the class can execute the foregoing movements correctly at the walk and the trot, the teacher may explain to them the canter or gallop.

A horse is said to "lead" at a canter with his right foot when the lateral movement of his right foot is more marked than that of his left. This causes a reaction from left to right, which makes this lead easier for a lady, who sits on the left side, than that of the left foot, where the reaction is from right to left. When a horse who is leading with his right foot turns to the left, he must change his lead, and *vice versa*.

To make her horse lead at a canter with his right foot, the rider must put her left leg very far back to act in opposition with her whip, which should make very light attacks, incline the upper part of her body forward, and lift her hands, without, however, drawing them nearer her body. When the horse has obeyed, she will resume the normal position for hands and body, renewing

the pressure of her whip and leg from time to time to keep the gait regular. During the canter or gallop the right foot should be held well back, close to the saddle, without rigidity, and the rider should sit firm in her saddle, while allowing the upper part of her body to give freely to the motion of the horse, in order to neutralize any shock. To change his lead from right to left at a gallop, the horse pauses for an imperceptible space of time, immediately puts his left hind leg in front of his right, and, by the contraction of the muscles of his left leg, projects his body forward to the left, his equilibrium being again disturbed, but in a new direction; to compensate which, his left fore leg comes at the first step to support the weight by putting itself before the right, which, until then, has been carrying it all.

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It requires a great deal of tact, the result of long practice, to make a horse change his feet when he is galloping in a straight line, and I therefore recommend teachers to proceed with their classes in the following manner:

The column being at a gallop, each pupil should execute a half-volte in file, turning at the gallop, coming down to a trot on the diagonal, and resuming the gallop when she is on the opposite track and on the other hand. As the horse is galloping with his right foot, the rider will calculate the movement of his right shoulder by watching it without lowering her head, and, when she sees that shoulder move to put down the right leg, she must instantly change her effects of leg and whip, and lift her hands, the right rather more than the left, to support the horse while he pauses with his right shoulder, while an energetic action of her leg will make him bring his left hind leg under him and put it in front of the right; and, if she holds her left hand low, the left fore leg will be free to take its place in front of the right. Care must be taken not to throw a horse while he is changing his feet, that is to say, he must not be turned suddenly to the right in order to be jerked suddenly to the left; and, during the short time which it takes him to change his feet, the rider should sit close in order not to disturb him by a shifting weight.

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When the pupils can make their horses change their feet by changing their gait, they should be made to execute half-voltes and reversed half-voltes in file, at a gallop, without changing to a trot; and, when they can do this, they may execute them individually, according to the rules already prescribed.

I must again recommend great prudence, that accidents may be avoided, and plenty of pauses for rest, that the horses may not become discouraged.

A lady's equestrian education can not be considered complete until she can make her horse leap any obstacle which is reasonable, considering her age and experience and the capacity of her horse. When her seat has become flexible and firm at the walk, trot, and gallop, when she is mistress of her horse in changes of direction, of gait, and of feet, the teacher should allow her to leap a hurdle not less than two nor more than three feet high.

The class being formed into a single column, close together, each rider should make an individual turn to the right on the long side of the school opposite where the hurdle is to be placed, as she can thus see for herself any faults which may be committed by her companions. Leaping should be practiced by the pupils one at a time, at a walk, a trot, and, finally, a gallop. The class being drawn up in line, the teacher will proceed to explain to them the animal mechanism of the leap.

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If a horse is at a walk, and wishes to jump over an obstacle, he draws his hind legs under him to support his weight, pauses for an instant, then lifts his fore legs from the ground, thus throwing all his weight upon his hind legs; whereupon, by a powerful contraction of the muscles, these latter project his body forward and upward, and it describes a curve through the air, alighting on the fore legs, braced to receive the shock, the hind legs dropping on the ground in their turn, only to contract again sufficiently to form a forward motion.

The pause before a leap is more noticeable at a walk than at a trot, and least of all at a gallop. The most favorable gait for leaping is what is known as a hand-gallop, which is an intermediate pace between a riding-school canter and the full gallop of the race-track, as, while he is at this gait, the horse is impelled forward with his hind legs constantly under him.

In order to aid and support her horse at a leap, the rider should bring him straight up to the obstacle at a slow and regular gait, and should put her own right foot very far back, that she may make her seat as firm as possible; at the moment when he pauses she should lean back and lift both of her hands a little, in order to enter into the slight approach to rearing, without encouraging it too much; then, as soon as she feels the horse project himself forward, she must give her hand, straighten herself, and lean back as the horse goes over, lifting her wrists with energy as soon as he touches the ground. When he has begun the motion of rearing, a simultaneous action of the whip and leg will help to determine his leap.

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It may be noticed that I use the words "aid" and "support" instead of "*make*," and also that I indicate first the positions of the body, next of the hands, and last the effects of the leg and whip, to the end that the pupil may not be confused as to the very short time in which these latter may be rightly used. Before leaping, the teacher may allow the pupils to practice their positions in the following manner:

He should make them count one, leaning the body and drawing the wrists backward; two, the body and wrists forward; three, the body and wrists backward again. This series, slow in the beginning, may be quickened little by little until it is as near as may be to the speed necessary in these movements during the short duration of a leap.

When the pupils have gone through these motions intelligently, the teacher will take his place in front and to the right of the hurdle, facing the wall. The hurdle should always be placed in the middle of one of the long sides; and ladies prefer to jump on the left hand, in order to avoid touching the wall with their legs if the horse should go too near it. Notwithstanding this, if the horses are free jumpers, and the school well arranged, I prefer the right hand, because a fall to the right is then clear of the wall. This is a case in which an instructor must depend upon his own judgment.

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The teacher stands as I have indicated above, holding a whip with a long lash, not to strike the horses, but to prevent refusals.

One after another the pupils should leave the line, and advance at a walk, until they get on the side of the school where the hurdle has been placed, when they will canter, but without any excitement; and they will find it useful to count one, two, three, until the three movements of the body have become mechanical from practice.

During the course of the more advanced lessons, it will still be useful to practice some flexions, in order to be sure that pupils keep supple. They should also learn to take the foot out of the stirrup at any gait, and replace it without stopping, and to rise at the trot, the foot being out of the stirrup, which is not so difficult as it appears. They should also be drilled to walk, trot, or gallop by twos and threes, to learn to accommodate their horses' gait to that of a companion. The teacher should be sure that, at the end of their lessons, the pupils can trot or gallop for at least a mile without stopping; and, to gain this result, he must proceed by degrees, with the object of developing the lungs and giving a freer respiration. Nothing is more ridiculous than to see a rider, who has proposed a trot or canter to her companion, obliged to pull up after a few steps, puffing and panting for breath. She is apt to ruin her own horse; and gentlemen who have spirited animals are likely to avoid riding with her. Except in the prescribed effects of the whip and leg, there is no definite position in which a lady is obliged to hold her whip, and she should learn to carry it as suits her best. She should be able to arrange her skirt while at a walk, without assistance, and also to shorten or lengthen her stirrup by the strap on the right side of the saddle, without taking her foot out.

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From the very beginning of the lessons the teacher should suppress all the little chirpings and clackings of the tongue, which, however useful they may be to a coachman or a horse-trainer, are out of place in the mouth of a lady. I was once invited to accompany a lady in Central Park, in New York; and, as I had been told that she rode very well, I did not hesitate to ride Général, a noble animal, whose education in the *haute école* I was just finishing. We started. She managed her horse with her tongue as an effect on the right side, instead of using her whip. The consequence was, that my horse, hearing these appeals, and not knowing whether they were meant for him or not, remained at the *passage* all the way from the gate to the reservoir, where I took it upon myself to beg her to do as she chose with her own horse, but to allow mine to be under my own control.

I recommend not giving dainties to horses before mounting, unless they are allowed time to eat them. If a horse has a piece of sugar or apple in his mouth, the bit will be worse than useless; it will irritate him, as he can not open his mouth without dropping the delicacy, and he can not swallow it if he gives his head properly.

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I have noticed that most gentlemen riding with ladies place themselves on the right side; but this seems to me a mistake, where the rule of the road is to pass to the right, because it is the lady who protects her companion, and not he who shields her. Besides, he takes the place where his horse is most likely to be quiet, as no one has the right to pass inside him. Still further, should the lady's horse become frightened, he will be seriously embarrassed on the right side, with the reins in his left hand; and, if she should fall, what can he do? He can only transfer his reins to the right hand, and endeavor to push her into her saddle with his left; and, if they are going fast, this will not be easy.

I may say here, that in ninety-five cases out of a hundred the lady falls to the right. If the gentleman is riding on her left, he gives up to her the best place, and protects her legs; she can use her whip more freely; he has the use of his right hand to stop or quiet her horse; he can arrange her skirt, should she need his help; if she falls, he has but to seize her left arm, and draw her toward him, calculating the strength which he employs, and he may even lift her from the saddle.

CHAPTER IV.

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Resistances of the horse.

In all the best riding-schools of Europe two posts are firmly fixed into the ground, parallel with and about twenty paces from one of the short sides of the school. These are called pillars, and between them is fastened a horse who is trained to rear or to kick at command, in order that the teacher may explain to his pupils what they must do when they encounter one or other of these resistances. These pillars are almost unknown in riding-schools in this country, and the reason of

their absence may be found, I think, in the moral qualities of the American horse, which are really astonishing when looked at from the point of view of animal character.

A teacher should, however, give his pupils some instructions about the most common tricks or vices of the horse, which are usually only defensive action on his part. Before any active form of resistance, the horse always makes a well-marked pause; for instance, in order to rear, he stops his motion forward, draws his hind legs under him, throws his weight on them, and lifts his fore legs from the ground, holding his head high. When he is almost upright on his hind legs, he stands for a longer or shorter time, moving his fore feet as if beating the air, and then either comes down to earth again or falls backward, which is acknowledged to be the most dangerous thing which can happen on horseback. If the rider feels that her horse is on the point of going over with her, she must instantly slip her foot out of the stirrup, loosen the hold of her leg on the pommel, and lean as far to the right as she can, turning her body to the left in order to fall on the right of the horse, who almost always falls to the left, and, as soon as she is on the ground, she must scramble away from her horse as quickly as possible.

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The best way of preventing a horse from rearing is not allowing him to stop; and, if it should be too late or too difficult to manage this, all effects of the hands should stop at once, and the rider should attack his right flank with her whip vigorously. If a horse rears habitually, he should be got rid of.

In order to kick, on the contrary, the horse braces himself with his fore legs, lifting his hind quarters by a contraction of his hind legs; and, when his croup is in the air, he kicks as hard as he can with his hind legs, and brings them suddenly to the ground again, holding his head low and sticking out his neck meanwhile.

An inexperienced rider may be frightened by the shock of this movement, which is very disagreeable, besides being dangerous to people behind; but, with calm presence of mind and a little energy, this trick may be fought without too much annoyance. In this case also the great thing is to hinder the horse from stopping, by keeping his head up; and, if, in spite of the rider, he gets it down and his legs braced in front of him, she should lean very far back and strike one or two vigorous blows with her whip on the lower part of the neck where it joins the chest, trying at the same time to lift the head with the reins.

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Some teachers recommend using the whip on the flank, as in rearing, and I usually do this myself; but I have always noticed that the horse kicks again at least once while going forward; so I do not recommend this for a lady.

In bucking, the horse puts his head down, stiffens his fore legs, draws his hind legs somewhat under him, and jumps forward, coming down on all four feet at once, and jumping again almost immediately.

Without being particularly dangerous, this vice is very unpleasant, as it jars the rider terribly. To neutralize the shock, therefore, as much as she can, she must sit very far back, lean her body back, lift her hands vigorously, and try to make her horse go forward and slightly to the right.

When a horse refuses to slacken his pace, or to stop when his rider wishes it, he is running away with her, and he does this progressively—that is, if he is at a walk he will not stop when he feels the bit, but shakes his head, quickens his pace to a trot, throws his head into the air, or holds it down, bearing against the bit, breaks into a gallop, and goes faster and faster until he is at full speed; and, once arrived at this point, he is quite capable of running straight into a wall or jumping over a precipice.

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Some high authorities maintain that this state of the horse is one of temporary insanity; and this theory is admissible in certain cases where, when the animal is stopped, the nostrils are found to be very red and the eyes bloodshot; but, in most cases, horses run away through sudden fright, or from fear of punishment, or because they are in pain from one cause or another. When a horse is subject to this fault, his rider should give him to a man, either a skilled amateur or a professional rider, as I have seen very few ladies who could undertake the proper treatment without danger.

Such a horse being put into my hands for training, I take him to some place where the footing is good and where he can have plenty of space, which means plenty of time for me; and, once there, I provoke him to run away, in order that I may find out why he does so. If he fights against my hand, shuts his mouth, or throws his head in the air, as soon as he has stopped I carefully examine his mouth, his throat, his breathing, his sight, his loins, and his houghs. Sometimes the mouth is without saliva, the lips are rough and irritated, the bars are dry, bruised, and even cut; and in that case I try to see whether the bad habit does not come from severe biting, or too tight a curb-chain, or perhaps the teeth may be in bad order. A few flexions of the jaw and neck will tell me at once if the mouth is the cause of the trouble; but I must make sure that this bad state of the mouth is the cause, and not the consequence.

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The sight of a horse is often defective; the sun in his eyes dazzles and frightens him; or else a defective lens makes objects appear larger to him than they really are; or he may be near-sighted, and consequently nervous about what he can not see; and a moving bird, or a bit of floating paper, is enough to make him bolt.

Sometimes the throat is sore inside, and then the horse suffers from the effect of the bit on the extremity of his neck when he gives his head. Bolting is often caused by suffering in some internal organ; and in that case the breathing is apt to be oppressed.

But in seven cases out of ten the cause of a horse's running away is to be found in his hind quarters. The loins are too long, weak, and ill-attached, so that when he carries a heavy weight the spinal column feels an insupportable pain. What man would not become mad if he were forced to walk, trot, and gallop, carrying a weight which caused him frightful suffering? The remembrance of an old wound made by the saddle is sometimes enough to cause a nervous and sensitive animal to bolt. The legs are sometimes beginning to throw out curbs or spavins, or they may be too straight and narrow, lacking the strength necessary to carry the horse at a regular gait; so he suffers, loses his head, and runs away.

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We will suppose the horse to be well-proportioned, with his sight and organs in a normal condition, his mouth only being hurt as a consequence, not as a cause. I change the bit, and substitute an easier one, treating the mouth meanwhile with salt, or alum, or marsh-mallow; and yet my horse still runs away. In that case it is from one of two reasons: either it is from memory and as a habit, or else it is the result of ill-temper. If the former, I take him to some spot where I can have plenty of space and time, preferably a sea-beach with soft sand, or a large ploughed field; and there I let him go, stopping when he stops, and then making him go on again, and in this way he soon learns that submission is the easiest way for him. If he should be really ill-tempered, I would mount him in the same place with sharp spurs and a good whip, and before long his moral condition would be much more satisfactory.

But often a horse takes fright and runs away when one least expects it. Allow me to say that nothing which a horse can do should ever be unexpected. On horseback one should be ready for emergencies; and the best way to avoid them is to prevent the horse from a dangerous initiative. Besides, the horse does not get to his full speed at once; and, if the rider keeps calm, she will probably be able to master him before he reaches it. But, if, in spite of herself, her horse is running at a frightful pace, what should be done? In the first place, she must try to see that he does not slip and fall; and, in any case, she should take her foot out of the stirrup, let her whip drop if necessary, choose at once a straight line, if that be possible, and give to her horse with hands and leg, calming him with the voice, and speaking loud, in order that it may reach his ear. She should endeavor to remain calm, and to take long breaths; then, when his first rush is over, she should lift her wrists, holding the reins short, lean very far back, and saw his mouth vigorously with the bridle, two reins being in either hand. "Sawing" is the successive action of the two hands acting separately on the mouth of the horse, and, by pulling his head from side to side, it throws him out of his stride and checks his speed. I can not say too often that it is easier to prevent a horse from running away than it is to stop him when he is once fairly off.

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It would be very difficult to foresee all the possible defensive actions of the horse and the means of counteracting them; but, as the rider gains experience, she will get to recognize these actions from the outset, and counteract them so naturally that she will scarcely think about it. To a good rider there is no such thing as a restive horse. The animal either knows what to do, or he does not. If he knows, the rider, by the power of her effects, forces the horse to obey; if he does not know, the rider trains him. If a horse resists, there is always a cause; and that cause should be sought and destroyed, after which the horse will ask no better than to behave himself.

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If a horse fidgets and frets to get back to the stable (which is a common and annoying trick), he should be turned round and walked for a moment or two in an opposite direction, away from home, and in a fortnight he will have lost the bad habit.

Horses often have a trick of fighting the hand by running out their heads and trying to pull the reins through the fingers of their riders. This comes from stiffness in the hind quarters, and will stop as soon as the horse has been taught, by progressive flexions, to keep his hind legs under him.

A timid horse may always be reassured and quieted by a persevering rider, provided his sight is not bad; and he should never be punished for shying, as that comes from fright; he should be allowed time to get used to the sight or sound of a terrifying object, and, when he is convinced that it will not hurt him, he will disregard it in future, as, although timid, he is not a coward. For instance: if a horse shies at a gnarled stump in a country lane, his rider should stop and let him come slowly up to it, which he will do with every appearance of fear. She should cheer him with her voice, and caress him with her hand; and, when once he has come near enough to smell the dreaded shape, he will give a contemptuous sniff, and never notice it after.

If a horse should fall with his rider, she should at once slip her foot out of the stirrup, lift her right leg over the pommel, and turn her body quickly to the left. If the horse falls to the right, she will fall on him, which will deaden the shock, and, as his legs will be on the left, she can get away from his feet easily; if he falls to the left, she must try to let her head fall to the right, and, if she has time, she will attempt to fall to the left, on her knees, and must get away from the horse on her hands and knees with all speed.

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If she should be thrown from her saddle, she must not stiffen herself, and must keep her head as high as possible.

CONCLUSION.

Before closing this slight treatise, I would most respectfully say a parting word to the ladies for whose use I have prepared it.

The principle of the proper control of a horse by a lady may be thus roughly summed up: Keep him well under your control, but also keep him going forward; *carry* him forward with the

pressure of your left leg and with the whip, which must take the place of the right leg. Never let a horse take a step at his own will; and, as soon as he shows the first sign of resistance, try to counteract it. Great care and tact must be used to avoid sudden changes of gait, which irritate a horse by throwing him off his balance and measure; and he should never be teased with the whip and spur in order that he may prance and fidget, for such foolishness on horseback proves nothing, and is only fit to amuse ignorant spectators.

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Be prudent; accidents always happen too soon. Be calm, if you wish your horse to be so. Be just, and he will submit to your will. Remember that, in riding, the greatest beauty consists in being simple in your means of control; do not appear to be always occupied with your horse, for you and he should seem to have the same will.

Do not read or study one method only; there is good to be found in all.

THE END.

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