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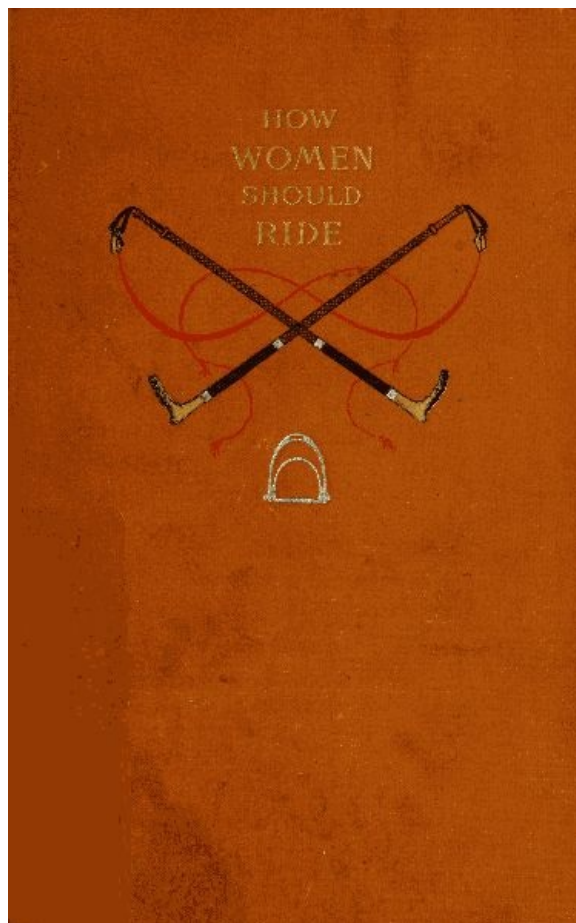
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HOW WOMEN SHOULD RIDE

BY

"C. DE HURST"

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
1892

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TO

E. E. F.

TO WHOM I OWE THE EXPERIENCE
WHICH HAS ENABLED ME TO WRITE OF RIDING

THIS BOOK

IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION

It has not been the intention of the author of this little volume to present the reader with elaborate chapters of technical essays.

Entire libraries have been written on the care and management of the horse from the date of its foaling; book upon book has been compiled on the best and proper method of acquiring some degree of skill in the saddle. The author has scarcely hoped, therefore, to exhaust in 248 pages a subject which, after having been handled on the presses of nearly every publisher in this country and England, yet contains unsettled points for the discussion of argumentative horse-men and horse-women. [vi]

But it happens with riding—as, indeed, it does with almost every other subject—that we ignore the simpler side for the more intricate. We delve into a masterpiece, suitable for a professional, on the training of a horse, when the chances are we do not know how to saddle him. We stumble through heavy articles on biting, the technical terms of which we do not understand, when if our own horse picked up a stone we probably would be utterly at a loss what to do.

We, both men and women, are too much inclined to gallop over the fundamental lessons, which should be conned over again and again until thoroughly mastered. We are restive in our novitiate period, impatient to pose as past-masters in an art before we have acquired its first principles. [vii]

Beginning with a bit of advice to parents, of which they stand sorely in need, it is the purpose of this book to carry the girl along the bridle-path, from the time she puts on a habit for the first attempt, to that when she joins the Hunt for a run across country after the hounds.

There is no intention of wearying and confusing her by a formidable array of purely technical instruction.

The crying fault with nearly all those who have handled this subject at length has been that of distracting the uninformed reader by the most elaborate dissertation on all points down to the smallest details.

This author, on the contrary, has shorn the instruction of all hazy intricacies, with which the equestrienne has so often been asked to burden herself, and brought out instead only those points essential to safety, skill, and grace in the saddle. [viii]

No space has been wasted on unnecessary technicalities which the woman is not likely to either understand or care to digest, but everything has been written with a view of aiding her in obtaining a sound, practical knowledge of the horse, under the saddle and in harness. [ix]

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I

A WORD TO PARENTS

Riding has been taken up so generally in recent years by the mature members of society that its espousal by the younger element is quite in the natural order of events. We can look upon the declaration of Young America for sport with supreme gratification, as it argues well for the generation to come, but we should not lose sight of the fact that its benefits may be more than counterbalanced by injudiciously forcing these tastes. That there is danger of this is shown by the tendency to put girls on horseback at an age much too tender to have other than harmful results. [3]

It is marvellous that a mother who is usually most careful in guarding her child's safety should allow her little one to incur the risks attendant upon riding (which are great enough for a person endowed with strength, judgment, and decision) without proper consideration of the dangers she is exposed to at the time, or a realization of the possible evil effects in the future. [4]

Surely parents do not appreciate what the results may be, or they would never trust a girl of eight years or thereabouts to the mercy of a horse, and at his mercy she is bound to be. No child of that age, or several years older, has strength sufficient to manage even an unruly pony, which, having once discovered his power, is pretty sure to take advantage of it at every opportunity; and no woman is worthy the responsibilities of motherhood who will permit her child to make the experiment. [5]

Dangers of Early Riding

Even if no accident occurs, the knowledge of her helplessness may so frighten the child that she will never recover from her timidity. It is nonsense to say she will outgrow it; early impressions are never entirely eradicated; and should she in after-life appear to regain her courage, it is almost certain at a critical moment to desert her, and early recollections reassert themselves.

The vagaries of her own mount are not the only dangers to which the unfortunate child is exposed.

Many accidents come from collisions caused by some one else's horse bolting; and it is not to be expected, when their elders often lose their wits completely, that shoulders so young should carry a head cool enough to make escape possible in such an emergency.

It is a common occurrence to hear parents inquiring for a "perfectly safe horse for a child." [6]

Such a thing does not exist, and the idea that it does often betrays one into trusting implicitly an animal which needs perhaps constant watching. If fresh or startled, the capers of the most gentle horse will not infrequently create apprehension, because totally unexpected. On the other hand, if he is too sluggish to indulge in any expressions of liveliness, he is almost sure to require skilful handling and constant urging to prevent his acquiring a slouching gait to which it is difficult to rise.

A slouching horse means a stumbling one, and, with the inability of childish hands to help him recover his balance, he is likely to fall.

Supposing the perfect horse to be a possibility—a girl under sixteen has not the physique to endure without injury to her health such violent exercise as riding. From the side position she is forced to assume, there is danger of an injured spine, either from the unequal strain on it or from the constant concussion, or both. [7]

If a mother can close her eyes to these dangers, insisting that her child shall ride, a reversible side-saddle is the best safeguard that I know of against a curved spine; but it only lessens the chances of injury, and is by no means a sure preventive, although it has the advantage of developing both sides equally.

Another evil result of beginning too young is that if she escapes misadventures and does well, a girl is sure to be praised to such an extent that she forms a most exaggerated idea of her prowess

in the saddle. By the time she is sixteen she is convinced that there is no room for improvement, and becomes careless, lapsing into many of her earlier faults. Parents should guard against this. It is often their affection which permits them to see only the good points of their daughter's riding, and their pride in her skill leads to undue flattery, which she is only too willing to accept as her due. [8]

Later I shall mention some of the principles a young rider should acquire, and it is the duty of those who have put her in the saddle when too young to judge for herself to see that she follows them correctly. The necessity of riding in good form cannot be too firmly impressed on her mind. One often hears: "Oh, I only want to ride a little in the Park; so don't bother me about form. I ride for pleasure and comfort, not work"—all of which is wrong; for, whether in the Park, on the road, in the country, or in the hunting-field, nothing is of more importance than to ride in good form. To do so is to ride easily, being in the best position to manage the horse, and therefore it is also to ride safely. [9]

The desire to attract attention often induces women to ride. Young girls soon learn to do likewise, and their attempts at riding for the "gallery" by kicking the horse with the heel, jerking its mouth with the curb, that she may impress people with her dashing appearance, as the poor tormented animal plunges in his endeavors to avoid the pressure, are lamentable and frequent sights in many riding-schools. [10]

Objectionable as this is in an older person, it is doubly so in a child, from whom one expects at least modesty instead of such boldness as this betokens. It is to be hoped that those in authority will discourage her attempts at circus riding, and teach her that a quiet, unobtrusive manner will secure her more admirers than an air of bravado. [11]

II [12]

GIRLS ON HORSEBACK

Notwithstanding these numerous reasons to the contrary, mothers will undoubtedly continue to imperil the life and welfare of children whom it is their mission to protect, and, such being the case, a few directions as to the best and least dangerous course to pursue may be of service to them. [13]

Sixteen is the earliest age at which a girl should begin to ride, as she is then strong enough to control her mount, has more judgment, is better able to put instruction into practice, more amenable to reason, and more attentive to what is told her. If the parents' impatience will not admit of waiting until this desirable period, it is their duty to see that the child has every advantage that can facilitate her learning, and to assure her such safety as is within their power. [14]

A common theory is that any old screw, if only quiet, will do for a beginner. Nothing could be more untrue. The horse for a novice should have a short but square and elastic trot, a good mouth, even disposition, and be well-mannered; otherwise the rider's progress will be greatly impeded. Even if the child is very young, I think it is a mistake to put her on a small pony for her first lessons, as its gaits are so often uneven, interfering with all attempts at regular rising to the trot. [15]

Ponies are also more liable to be tricky than horses, and, from the rapidity of their movements, apt to unseat and frighten a beginner. They are very roguish, and will bolt across a road without any reason, or stand and kick or rear for their own amusement; and, being so quick on their feet, their various antics confuse a child so that she loses her self-possession and becomes terrified. It is just as bad to go to the other extreme, as a large, long-gaited horse will tire the muscles of the back, and, if combined with sluggish action, require twice the exertion needed for a free traveller. Furthermore, it destroys the rhythm of the movement by making the time of her rise only half as long as necessary, thus giving her a double jolt on reaching the saddle. [16]

Having secured the right sort of horse, the saddle should be chosen with great care.

It is a shame that little girls are made to ride in the ill-fitting habits seen half the time. They must set properly, or the best riders will be handicapped and appear at a disadvantage. A child's skirt should not wrinkle over the hips more than a woman's, nor should it ruck up over the right knee, exposing both feet, while the wind inflates the superfluous folds. Above all things, a girl should not lace nor wear her habit bodice tight, as no benefit can possibly be derived from riding with the lungs and ribs compressed. [17]

It often happens that a child is put into the saddle before she has had the opportunity of becoming familiar with a horse, either by visiting it in its stall or going about it when in the stable. A more harmful mistake could not be made; the child is likely to be afraid of the animal the first time she is placed on its back, and nothing so interferes with tuition as terror. Many of the difficulties of instructing a little girl will be overcome if her familiarity with the horse she is to ride has given her confidence in him. She should frequently be taken to the stable, and encouraged to give him oats or sugar from her hand, and to make much of him. Meanwhile whoever is with her must watch the animal, and [18]

guard against anything which might startle the child. She may be lifted on to his back; and if he is suitable to carry her, he will stand quietly, thus assuring her of his trustworthiness and gaining her affection.

Before being trusted on a horse, a beginner should have the theory of its management explained to her; and here is another drawback to infantile equestrianism, as a young mind cannot readily grasp the knowledge. Nevertheless, she must be made to understand the necessity of riding from balance, instead of pulling herself up by the horse's mouth, and be shown the action of the curb chain on the chin, that she may realize why the snaffle should be used for ordinary purposes, so that in case of an emergency she may have the curb to fall back upon. She must know that if she pulls against him, the horse will pull against her, and therefore she must not keep a dead bearing on his mouth. Unyielding hands are the almost invariable result of riding before realizing the delicate manipulation a horse's mouth requires. A light feeling on the curb and a light touch of the whip will show her how to keep the horse collected, instead of allowing him to go in a slovenly manner. [18]

She must not try to make the horse trot by attempting to rise. Until the animal is trotting squarely she should sit close to the saddle, instead of bobbing up and down, as he jogs or goes unevenly at first. [19]

When wishing to canter, in place of tugging at the reins, clucking, and digging the animal in the ribs with her heel, the child should be told to elevate her hands a trifle, and touch him on the shoulder with the whip.

No habit is more easily formed than that of clucking to a horse, and it is a difficult one to cure. It is provocative of great annoyance to any one who is near, and who may be riding a high-spirited animal, as it makes him nervous and anxious to go, for he cannot tell whether the signal is meant for him or not, and springs forward in response, when his owner has perhaps just succeeded in quieting him. Thus can one make one's self an annoyance to others near by, in a manner which might so easily have been avoided in the beginning. [20]

After being familiarized with such rudimentary ideas of horsemanship, comes the time for putting them into practice.

It is a pity that there are not more competent instructors in the riding-schools, for it is of great importance to begin correctly; to find a teacher, however, who possesses thorough knowledge of the subject is, unfortunately, rare. Their inefficiency is amply demonstrated by the specimens of riding witnessed every day in the Park; and either their methods, if they pretend to have any, must be all wrong, or they are but careless and superficial mentors, as the results are so often far from satisfactory. [21]

There are, to be sure, plenty of teachers who ride well themselves, but that is a very different matter from imparting the benefit of their knowledge and experience to others. With the best intentions in the world, they may fail to make their pupils show much skill in the saddle. Skill, and the power of creating it in the pupil, is an unusual combination. [22]

If a young girl is to ride, she should be put in the saddle and not permitted to touch the reins. Her hands may rest in her lap, and the horse should be led at a walk, while the teacher shows her the position she must try to keep, and tells her what she must do when the pace is increased. As she becomes used to the situation, and understands the instructions, the horse may be urged into a slow trot, she being made to sit close, without, at first, any attempt at rising. Then a quiet canter may be given her, but on no account should the child be allowed to clutch at anything to assist in preserving her balance. It is that she shall not rely on the horse's mouth for balance that I have advocated keeping the reins from her, and it is a plan which men and women would do well to adopt. Dependence on the reins is one of the commonest faults in riding, and every one should practise trotting (and even jumping, if the horse be tractable) with folded arms, while the reins are left hanging on the animal's neck, knotted so they will not fall too low. If the importance of riding from balance above the waist were more generally recognized, the seat would of necessity be firmer, the hands lighter, and horses less fretful. [23]

Too much emphasis cannot be put on the importance of good hands. Good hands are hands made so by riding independently of the reins. Intuitive knowledge of the horse's intentions, sympathy and communication with him, which are conveyed through the reins in a manner too subtle for explanation, must accompany light hands to make them perfect. Such qualities are absolutely impossible with heavy hands, which are incapable of the necessary delicate manipulation of the horse's mouth. Light hands, therefore, should be cultivated first, and experience may bring the rest. A child, beginning as I have advised, will early have this instilled into her mind, and not be obliged to overcome heavy hands when from experience she has learned their disadvantages. [24]

After sitting close to the trot and the canter, the beginner must be told to rise to the trot. At first she will find it difficult to make her effort correspond to the action of the horse's fore-legs, but, having once caught the motion, she will soon have no trouble in rising regularly. When she rises correctly and without much effort, the reins may be given her. A snaffle will be the best to use until she is sure of not letting them slip through her fingers, or of not interfering with the horse's mouth. She should hold the reins in both hands, as this lessens the probability of sitting askew, [25]

although as she becomes more certain of her seat she may transfer them to the left hand, and carry a whip or crop in the right.

If a double bridle has been substituted for the snaffle, the instructor must show the child that the left snaffle rein goes outside of her little finger, the left curb between the little and third fingers, the right curb between the second and third fingers, and the right snaffle between the first and second.



CORRECT POSITION

Now, as the child begins to have confidence in herself, is the time to guard against the formation of bad habits, which would later, if uncorrected, be difficult to eradicate. [25]

If parents will take the trouble to make an impartial criticism of their daughter's riding, they can aid her by insisting upon her doing as she ought, which is beyond the authority of the riding-master.

They should see that her body is held erect, her shoulders squarely to the front and thrown back, head up, chin held back, arms hanging straight to the elbows, hands low and close together, her right knee immovable, as from there she must rise. Her left leg must be held quiet, and the heel away from the horse, the ball of the foot resting on the stirrup; but she must be kept from placing too much reliance on that support, by practising without it every time she rides, taking care that, in relinquishing that aid, she does not instead take hold of the horse's mouth. [26]

Position



INCORRECT POSITION

As the most trustworthy mount will at times be frisky or make a mistake, a child should be prepared for such a contingency, and know how to meet it.

Management

If a horse stumbles, she must sit well back and pull his head up. In rearing, the reins must be left loose and the body thrown forward. A tendency to back must be met with a sharp crack of the whip. In shying, she must try to sit close, and in case of a runaway she should understand that no good will come of throwing herself off. To stick close and try to direct him is all she can do, for she cannot hope to stop him when once started. If a horse falls with her, it is best to try and hold on to the reins, as then he cannot reach her with his heels; but if she cannot succeed in doing this, she must endeavor to get clear of him and as far away as possible, to avoid being rolled on or trampled upon as he makes his effort to get up.

[27]

When I consider the trials and dangers she must pass through, a girl who is allowed to ride before she is sixteen has my sympathy, while I look with indignation on the mothers who thus thoughtlessly expose children to all the evils attendant upon a too early attempt at riding.

[28]

[29]

III

[30]

BEGINNING TO RIDE

That riding is increasing in popularity is clearly attested by the crowded bridle-path of Central Park. It is greatly to be hoped, however, that with its growth in public favor a more than superficial knowledge of horsemanship will be sought for by those who desire to experience all the pleasure which may be derived from this sport. Women especially, laboring as they do under the disadvantages of a side-saddle and imperfectly developed muscles, should try to follow the most efficacious means of managing their horses, a result best attained by riding in good form.

[31]

Even those who consider themselves first-class horsewomen, and who are undoubtedly competent to manage an unruly animal, often have defects in form which destroy the grace and ease of their appearance, and prevent them, in case of an emergency, from employing the full amount of power of which they are capable. Besides this, there are so many benefits to be derived from the exercise—if one will take it in a common-sense manner—that every endeavor should be made to extract from it the full amount of good.

Form

[32]

This cannot be done with any undue strain on the muscles arising from either a poor saddle, a back bent almost double, the arms nearly pulled out by improper handling of the horse's mouth, or with that abomination—a tight waist. Sense in dressing and attention to form are the two indispensable attributes by which women can make riding a means to improved health. Under such conditions all the organs are stimulated, and good digestion, an increased appetite, quieted

[33]

nerves, better spirits, and sound sleep follow. With such advantages in sight, it is strange that more of an effort is not made to bring about these results by overcoming bad habits.

In most instances the faults come either from improper instruction, or vanity which will not permit or heed criticism. If her horse has been docile, and refrained from any attempt to throw her, a woman is sometimes so impressed with her skill that after a few lessons she no longer regards the advice of her instructor, and thinks she is beyond the necessity of heeding his admonitions. Having acquired so little knowledge, she will soon have numerous objectionable peculiarities in form, resulting from her imperfect conception of horsemanship.

Insufficient Training

[34]

Occasionally, too, a woman considers herself "a born rider, with a natural seat," and the result of this belief is a combination of pitiful mistakes, when, had her taste for the sport been properly trained and cultivated, instead of being allowed to run wild, she would probably have become a rider. There might yet remain hope of her acquiring a seat could she be convinced that there really is some knowledge on the subject that she has not yet mastered.

In reference to those who have been taught by incompetent masters, a great deal is to be said, both to enable them to adopt the right way, and to prevent those who are desirous of learning from falling into their mistakes.

Unfortunately it is almost impossible for a woman to mount without assistance, unless she be very tall and her horse small. In this case she can reach the stirrup with her foot, and pull herself up by the saddle. Sometimes the stirrup can be let down and used to mount with, then drawn up when seated in the saddle. But this can only be done when the stirrup leather buckles over the off flap, which is not usual. Another method is to lead the horse to a fence or wall, climb that, and jump on to his back; but all these methods require a very quiet horse, and even then are not always practicable.

Mounting

[35]

It is advisable to learn to mount from the ground as well as from a block. This is done by placing the right hand containing whip and reins on the upper pommel, the left foot, with the knee bent, in the clasped hands of the attendant, the left hand on his shoulder, and, at a signal, springing from the right foot and straightening the left leg.

Nine out of ten women, after mounting, first carefully adjust the habit, and have the stirrup or girths tightened before putting the knee over the pommel, while some even button their gloves before; and, as a secondary consideration, when everything else has been seen to, they take up the reins, which have been loose on the horse's neck. He might easily wrench himself from the groom at his head, and without her hold on the pommel she would fall heavily to the ground; or if she were seated, but without reins, the horse might bolt into a tree, a wall, or another horse. She would probably grasp the first rein at hand, perhaps the curb, and then the horse might rear dangerously, and if she did not relax her hold on his mouth at once would be likely to fall backwards with her—the worst thing that can happen to a woman on a horse. All this may be avoided by taking the reins before mounting, and upon touching the saddle, instantly putting the right knee over the pommel. The reins should then be transferred to the left hand, with the snaffle on the outside, and the curb inside, but loose. It will then be the proper time to arrange the skirt and the stirrup.

[36]

[37]

To dismount she must transfer the reins to her right hand, take her left foot from the stirrup, and lift her right knee over the upper pommel, making sure that her skirt is not caught on any part of the saddle. She must then take a firm hold of the pommel with the hand containing the reins and the whip, the latter held so that it will not touch the horse. If there is some one to assist her she may reach out her left arm, and by this she can be steadied as she dismounts. In jumping down she should keep hold of the pommel and turn slightly, so that as she lands she is facing the horse, ready to notice and guard against signs of kicking or bolting. Until she is fairly on the ground she must not let go of the reins or the pommel, for should the horse start she might be dragged with her head down, if her skirt or her foot caught, and without the reins she could not stop him.

Dismounting

[38]

It is well to discard the stirrup for some time during each ride, first at the canter, then at the trot, to make sure that too much weight is not rested on this support, and that the rise is from the right knee. If too much dependence is placed on the stirrup the seat is sure to be too far to the left, unless the leather is too short, when the body will be as much too far to the right, instead of directly on top of the horse.

Stirrup

[39]

If these directions are observed, a very firm seat will be the result, which gives a confidence that enables one to be thoroughly flexible above the waist without fear of going off, and dispels a dread that often accounts for a stiff or crouching position. A test as to whether one is sitting sufficiently close in the canter is to put a handkerchief on the saddle, and note if the seat is firm enough to keep it there.

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IV

[42]



INCORRECT LEFT LEG AND HEEL

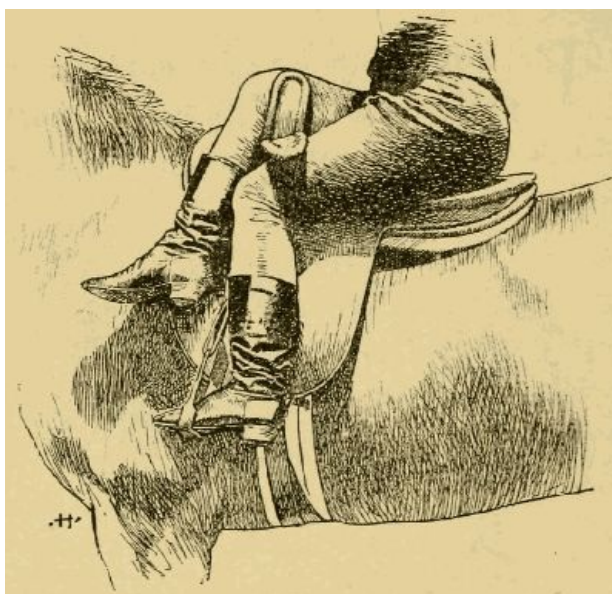
The first impulse of a novice is to grasp the horse with her left heel, while the leg is bent back from the knee so that it almost reaches his flank.

Below the Waist

Instead of this, the leg from the knee, which should not be more than half an inch below the pommel, must hang naturally in a perpendicular line, and the foot parallel with the horse, the heel being held away from his side and slightly depressed, the ball of the foot resting on the stirrup. This alters the grip entirely, and gives the greatest possible purchase, with the knee firmly in the angle between the pommel and the saddle flap, the thigh close to the saddle above, and the inside of the calf below, where one should be able to hold a piece of paper without having it fall out while trotting. The left foot will, of necessity, remain quiet—a most desirable point often neglected.

[44]

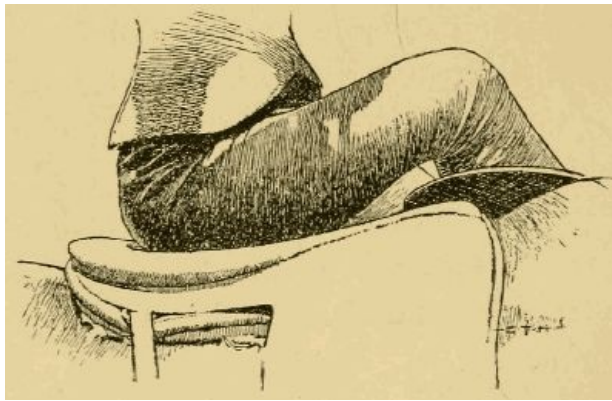
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CORRECT LEFT LEG AND HEEL

Now for the right leg. The first direction usually given is to grasp the pommel with it. That is all very well, but it leads to a grievous error. In the endeavor to obey the order, the right knee is pressed hard to the left—against the pommel, it is true, but in such a manner that there is considerable space between the leg and the saddle, extending from the knee half-way up the thigh. Thus the rider rises, owing to her grip being too high, so that a person on the right can often see the pommel beneath her.

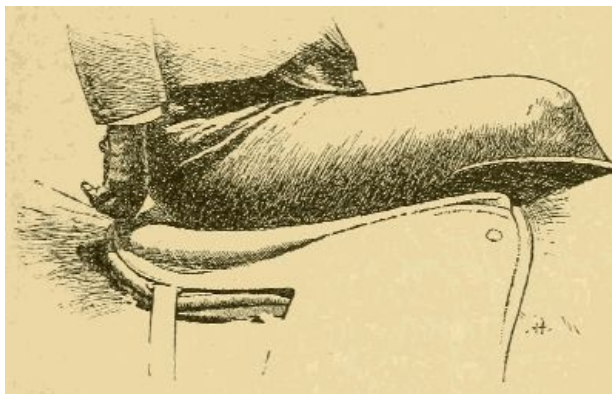
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INCORRECT RIGHT THIGH AND KNEE

The first thing to do is to sit well back on the saddle, with the shoulders square to the front, and press down from the hip to the knee until as close to the saddle as possible. Then, when sure that the knee is down, taking care that it does not leave the saddle in the slightest degree, grasp the pommel. It is from this knee that one must rise, and the most essential point is to have it absolutely firm, with a secure hold on as extended a surface as possible. From the knee the leg hangs straight, kept close to the horse, with the toe depressed just enough to avoid breaking the line of the skirt. It is seldom realized that the right leg below the knee should be held as firmly against the horse as the left, but such is the case.

[47]



CORRECT RIGHT THIGH AND KNEE

The body should be held erect at all times, the back straight while rising, instead of appearing to collapse with each movement, or rising from right to left with a churning motion instead of straight up and down; shoulders should be level—the right one is inclined to be higher than the left, as well as farther forward—well back and equidistant from the horse's ears, chest expanded, and chin held near the neck, as nothing is more unsightly than a protruding chin. The arms should fall naturally at the sides, bending inward from the elbow, but on no account to such an extent as to cause the elbows to leave the sides or form acute angles. All stiffness should be avoided.

Above the Waist

[48]

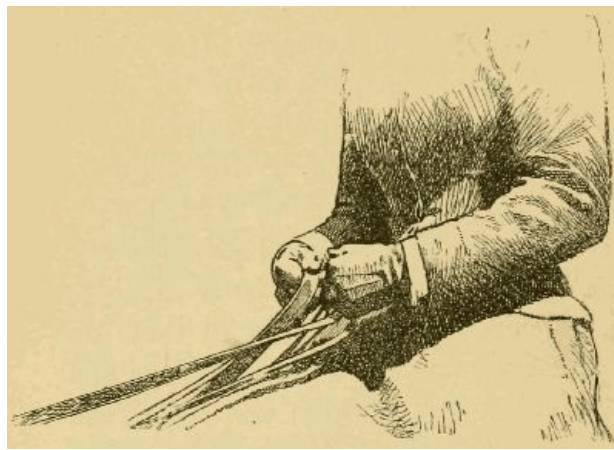
Some difficulty may be experienced at first, though, in attempting to relax the muscles above the waist while keeping the lower ones firm. A little practice will accomplish this, and, as a stiff carriage is most frequently the result of self-consciousness, it will be desirable to practise where there are no spectators. As the woman becomes more accustomed to riding she will lose some of her rigidity; but she must not go to the other extreme and be limp or careless in her way of holding herself. A woman's body should be at right angles to her horse's back, neither inclining backwards nor giving evidence of a tendency to stoop. Her anxiety to comply with these directions may render her conscious and awkward for a while; but if she will persevere, bearing them all in mind, they will become as second nature, and she will follow them naturally and gracefully.

[49]

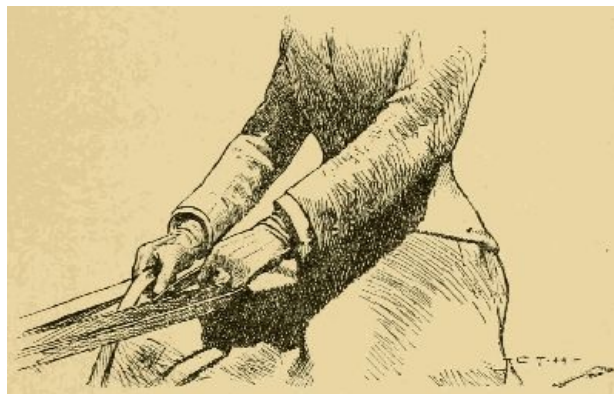
The hands should be held about two thirds of the way back between the right knee and hip, and as low as possible. They should be perfectly steady, and in rising never communicate the motion of the body to the horse's mouth. If the right knee is used to rise from, the seat will not need to be steadied by the reins. In the canter, however, the hands, as well as the body above the waist, should sway slightly with the horse's stride, but not more than is necessary; for that, and rising too high in the trot, give an appearance of exertion not compatible with grace.

Hands and Wrists

[50]



CORRECT KNUCKLES, SIDE VIEW

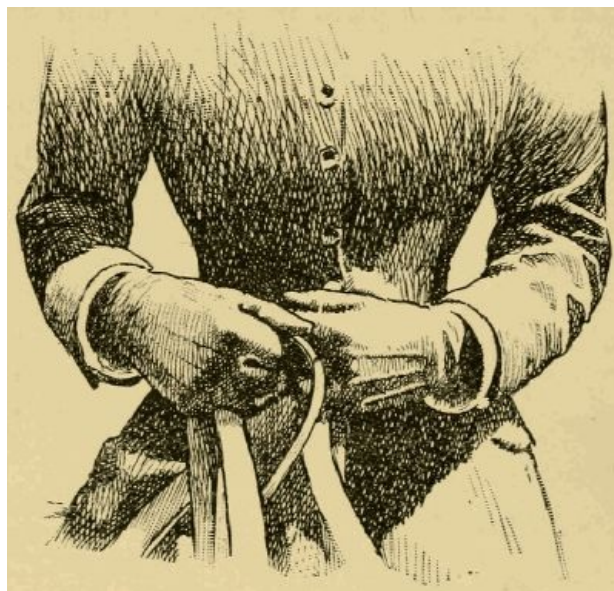


INCORRECT POSITION OF HANDS

The wrists should be bent so that the knuckles point straight ahead with the thumbs up, thus giving the horse's mouth play from the wrist, instead of, as is often the case, from the shoulder, the former admitting of much greater delicacy of handling, and the give-and-take movement being not so easily observed. Most teachers instruct a pupil to keep her finger-nails down, but this also necessitates all movement coming from the shoulder, or else sticking out the elbows.

[51]

[52]



HANDS IN GOOD FORM, FRONT VIEW

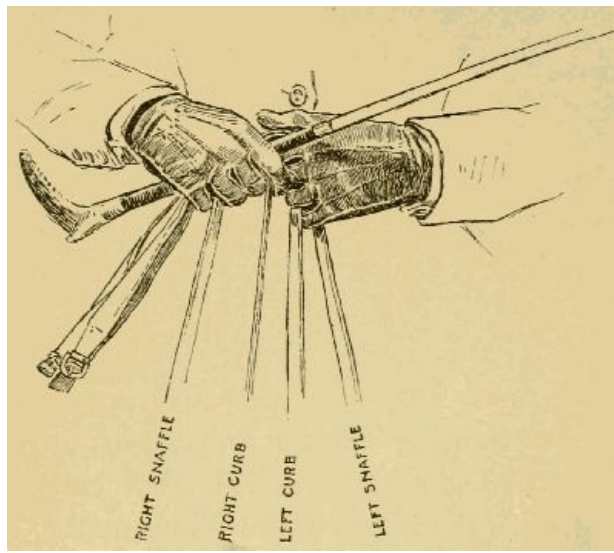
Many hold their reins in the left hand, allowing the right to hang at the side. This does not look well, and in case of an emergency, such as stumbling, the hand being so far from the reins precludes the possibility of rendering the quick assistance required. The reins should be held in the left hand, but the right should be on them, lightly feeling the horse's mouth, thereby anticipating his movements.

Reins

[53]

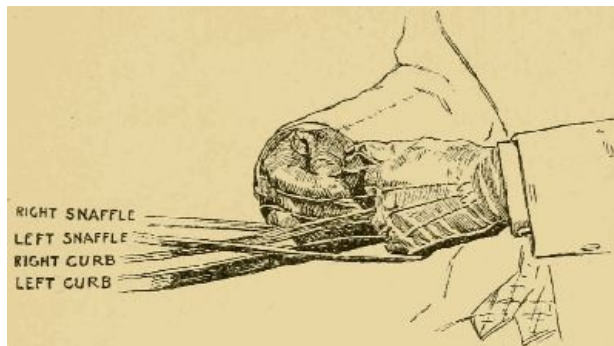
The left snaffle-rein should go outside of the little finger, the left curb between the little and third fingers, the right curb between the third and middle fingers, and the right snaffle between the middle and first fingers. They must all be brought through the hand, over the second joint of the first finger, where they must lie flat and in order, held there by the thumb. The third finger of the right hand should rest on the right snaffle, leaving the first and second free to use the curb if required, thus giving equal bearing on all four reins.

[54]



SNAFFLE OUTSIDE, CURB INSIDE, FRONT VIEW

If the use of the curb alone is wanted, the third finger of the right should release the right snaffle, the first and second retaining their hold on the curb, and the desired result will be produced. [55]



SNAFFLE OUTSIDE, CURB INSIDE, SIDE VIEW

If only the snaffle is desired, it may be brought to bear more strongly by keeping hold of the right rein with the third finger of the right hand, and reaching over on the left snaffle with the first finger.

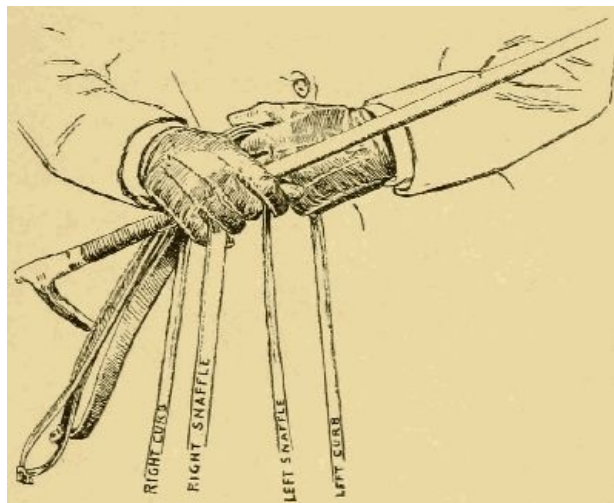
When this method is pursued there is no necessity for shifting the reins or hauling at them, and constantly changing their position and length. When a rein has slipped through the fingers of the left hand, instead of pushing it back from in front it should be pulled to the proper length from back of the left hand. [56]



**REINS IN TWO HANDS, SNAFFLE
OUTSIDE, CURB INSIDE**

It is quite correct, though inconvenient, to hold the reins in both hands; but the hands should be held close together, with the thumbs up, and always on the reins to prevent slipping. The little fingers then separate the reins, the left snaffle being outside of the left little finger, the left curb between the little and third fingers, with the reins drawn over the first finger; the right snaffle outside of the right little finger, the right curb between the little and third fingers, and these also drawn over the first finger, in both instances held by the thumbs. In this way the right reins may quickly be placed in the left hand by inserting the middle finger of the left hand between them without displacing the others. Sometimes the ends of the left reins are passed over the first finger of the right hand as well as of the left one, and carried on past the little finger, the same being done to the right reins, thus giving additional purchase should the horse pull.

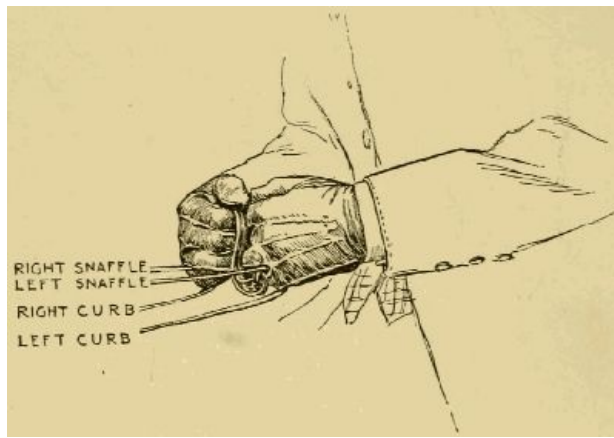
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**POSITION OF REINS AND HANDS IN
JUMPING, CURB OUTSIDE, SNAFFLE
INSIDE**

It is well to know several ways of holding the reins, and to practise them all. For instance, the positions of the snaffle and curb may be reversed; indeed, many expert riders always hold their reins with the curb outside and the snaffle inside, especially in jumping, where the curb is not used, and therefore requires a less prominent place in the hand.

[58]



**REINS IN TWO HANDS, CURB OUTSIDE,
SNAFFLE INSIDE, SIDE VIEW**

Another position of the reins is to have the middle finger of the left hand separate the snaffle and the little finger the curb, both right reins being above the left ones. However, unless a horse is [59]
bridle-wise this plan is not a convenient one, because the right and left reins alternate. A horse so
trained may be guided by a turn of the wrist. To turn him to the left the hand should be moved in
that direction, pressing the right reins against his neck, and to go to the right the hand should be
carried to that side, the thumb turned downward, thus pressing the left reins against the horse's
neck. [60]

V [61]

EMERGENCIES [62]

Although she may ride in good form, and, when her horse goes quietly, feel at home in the [63]
saddle, no woman can be considered proficient until she is prepared for any emergency, and
knows how to meet it.

Many horses show restlessness while being mounted, some carrying it to [64]
such an extent as to back and rear or swerve most unpleasantly. The
groom at his head should hold him lightly but firmly by the snaffle, or, Eagerness to Start
better still, the cheeks of the bridle; not lugging or jerking at him, but endeavoring to soothe him.
If the horse swerves from her, he should be made to stand against a wall. The woman must get [64]
settled in the saddle as expeditiously as she can, not taking any unnecessary time in the
arrangement of her skirt, which might augment the animal's uneasiness. Once mounted she must
walk the horse quietly for a few minutes, using the snaffle only, as his restlessness may have
come from expecting the spur on starting, as is customary with the horses of those who care for
display rather than good manners. Before long she should dismount, and, at a different place,
repeat the lesson without fighting him, even should he fail to show much progress at first. If he
rears, the attendant should let go of his head until he comes down; then, before starting, try to
make him stand a few moments. Each time the rider mounts she should increase the period of his
standing, doing it firmly while talking to him, but without force or harshness, and presently he [65]
will obey as a matter of course and without an idea of resistance.

The most common fault of a horse is shying, and though no one who has a [66]
secure seat should be inconvenienced thereby, its treatment needs some
discrimination. Shying often arises from defective vision. If, however, the
animal's eyes are in good condition, it may come from timidity, but in either case the horse
should be soothed and coaxed up to the object of his aversion and shown its harmlessness. If it is
merely a trick, then playing with his mouth and speaking in a warning tone when approaching
anything likely to attract his notice will usually make him go straight. As a rule the whip should
not be used, because the horse may learn to associate a blow with the object he has shied at, and
the next time he sees it is likely to bolt in order to avoid the impending chastisement—thus going
from bad to worse.

For the same reason, I object to a horse being punished for stumbling. [66]
Disagreeable as it is, the fault usually comes from defective muscular
action or conformation, or from not being kept collected by his rider. It is
not fair to punish the horse for these causes. The thing to do is to sit well back and give the reins
a sharp pull to bring his head up, and then keep him going up to the bit, for if the rider is
careless the horse will follow her example.



HANDS AND SEAT IN REARING

A rearing horse is not fit for a woman to ride. If she finds herself on one which attempts it, she must throw her weight forward and a little to the right, because she can lean farther forward on this than on the left side, to help the horse preserve his balance, as well as to prevent being struck by his head. If necessary she can clutch his mane, but on no account must she touch his mouth in the slightest degree. As he comes down, a vigorous kick with the heel, a shake of the snaffle, and a harsh exclamation may send him along. I cannot advocate a woman's striking him, for if he has a temper, it may arouse it to such an extent that he will throw himself back.

Rearers

[67]

Those with a strong seat have no reason to fear a horse that plunges, if it does not develop into rearing or bucking. They should sit close and urge the horse to a faster pace, as it stands to reason that if he is kept going briskly he cannot so easily begin his antics as he could at a slower gait.

Plungers

[68]

A woman is seldom if ever required to ride a horse which bucks, and if he is known to do it viciously she had better not try any experiments with him, as he will surely exhaust her in a fight. By bucking I do not mean the mild form of that vice which is usually found under that name in the East. Here an animal that plunges persistently and comes down hard is said to buck; while if his head is lowered, that settles the question in the minds of those ignorant of what a real bucking horse is capable. In encountering the Eastern variety of this species, the woman must elevate the horse's head, sit well back, and firmly too, for even the mild form of bucking is not easy to sustain undisturbed.

Buckers

[69]

The genuine article, the real Western buckner, is quite another matter. Newspapers have published instances of women who have managed to stay on one through all his various and blood-stirring antics; but such cases are in fact unknown outside of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and there the animals have been taught to perform to order. When the bronco bucks, he gives no preliminary warning by harmless plunging; he simply throws his head down between his knees, humps his back like a cat, and proceeds to business. He jumps into the air, coming down to one side of where he started, with all four feet bunched and legs stiffened, only to bound into space again. An occasional squeal adds to the general hilarity of the scene, and the alacrity with which that meek-looking mustang can land and go into the air again would astonish one not accustomed to the sight.

In riding a puller, his head must be kept in a correct position, neither low nor high, by lightly feeling his mouth until he gives to the motion. Should he have his head up and nose out, elevating the hands and drawing the snaffle across the bars sometimes causes the bit to bear in such a manner that the horse will drop his nose, and at that moment an effort must be made to keep it there. This method is exceptional, however, and should be resorted to only when other means fail, and the horse's head is so high, with the nose protruding, that the bit affords no control. Ordinarily, the hands should be low, one on each side of the withers, and quietly feeling the snaffle until he obeys its signal.

Pullers

[70]

If he pulls with his head down, almost between his knees, the curb must not be touched, but the snaffle should be felt and the hands held higher than usual and a little farther forward, playing with his mouth. This may make him raise his head; but if not, then several determined pulls, yielding the hand between them, given without temper and with a few soothing words, may stop him. If he has the bit between his teeth, quick give-and-take movements will probably surprise him into releasing it. It is useless for a woman to try to subdue him by force. [71]

It is well to have a horse's teeth examined for pulling, as one which has become displaced or sensitive causes excessive pain, and often results in this habit. When a horse shows a tendency to kick, by putting his ears back or a peculiar wriggle of the body, his head must instantly be pulled up and kept there, for in that position he will not attempt it.

A runaway nearly always frightens a woman so that she loses her head. Composure will best enable her to escape without accident. As the horse starts she must keep her heel well away from his side and her hands down, and instantly begin sawing his mouth with the reins; then a succession of sharp jerks and pulls should be resorted to—never a dead pull—and possibly he may be brought down. [72]

Once well in his stride, no woman can stop a horse. She must then be governed by circumstances, and, if in a crowd or park, try to keep him clear of all objects, and not exhaust herself and excite the horse by screaming. Some one will try to catch him; and as a terrific jerk will be the result, she must brace herself for it. If the horse runs where there is open country, and she is sure his running is prompted by vice, not fright, she should urge him on when he tires and keep him going up-hill or over heavy ground if possible, using the whip freely, and not permit him to stop until he is completely done. [73]

There are some good riders who advise pulling a horse into a fence to stop him, but there is always a chance of his attempting to jump it, while, as the rider tries to prevent this, the horse may be thrown out of his balance or stride and fall over the fence. If he is driven at a high wall or other insurmountable obstruction the horse will stop so suddenly that the rider is likely to be precipitated over the animal's head, even if she have a good seat. Again, the horse may miscalculate the distance and run into the object, perhaps seriously hurting himself and his rider. If this method is to be employed, a grassy or sandy embankment should be chosen, if possible, as there will then be fewer chances of injury. [74]

Others believe in throwing the horse, which may be done by letting him have his head for a few strides, then suddenly giving a violent tug at the reins. If he can thus be made to cross his legs, he will go down. Another way is for a woman to put all her strength into pulling one rein, and if she can use enough force he may be twisted so that he will lose his balance and fall. Then the danger is that a woman will not get clear of him before he regains his footing and starts off, in which case she might better have remained on his back than risk being dragged at his heels. If some one else's horse is running instead of the one she is on, and it is coming towards her, a woman should instantly, but quietly, wheel her horse, and keep him as much to one side of the road as possible; and if she is sure of her control over him, a brisk canter will be the safest gait. Thus, if the runaway strikes her horse, it will not be with the same force as it would had they met from opposite directions. Besides, it is almost impossible to tell which way a frightened horse may turn, and in endeavoring to avoid him, if they are facing, a collision may result. [75]

If a horse falls, from crossing his legs for instance, to keep hold of the reins must be the first thought, and then to get clear of him as quickly as possible and out of his way if he seems likely to roll. If the rider retains her hold on the reins, he cannot kick her, as his head will be towards her; nor can he get away, leaving her to walk home.

Punishment of a horse should never be begun without the certainty that what has given displeasure is really his fault, wilfully committed. Even then a battle should always be avoided, if possible, for it is better to spend a half-hour, or even much more, gently but firmly urging a horse to obedience than to fight him. It sometimes drives him to such a state of excitement and temper that the effects of it will be perceptible for days, sometimes weeks, in a nervous, highly strung animal, and he will, perhaps, prepare for a combat whenever the same circumstances again arise. That which comes from misconception on the part of the horse is often treated as though it were vice, and such unjust chastisement, without accomplishing its object, bewilders and frightens the unfortunate victim. Therefore one should know positively that it is obstinacy or vice, not dulness or timidity, which has made the horse apparently resist his rider's authority. A horse with much temper may only be made worse by the punishment he undoubtedly deserves; therefore, forbearance and ingenuity should be exercised to bring him into submission. Discipline must be administered at the time of insubordination, or it loses its meaning to the horse. It is folly to postpone punishing him, for then he fails to connect it with the act of resistance which has provoked it. [76]

Another great mistake, and one to be strongly censured, is that of venting one's impatience or temper on the poor brute, which may be doing its best to understand the clumsy and imperfect commands of a cruel taskmaster.

Having calmly decided that the horse requires punishment, it should be given in a firm and temperate manner, no more severity being employed than is necessary. However, the whip should fall with force and decision, or it is worse than useless; and if a moderate amount of whipping or spurring does not result in victory, it must be increased, as, once begun, the fight must end in the conquest of the animal, or the woman on his back will thenceforth be unable to [77]

control him. It must be done dispassionately and continuously, and no time allowed him to become more obstinate by a cessation of hostilities when he might be about to give in. At the first sign of yielding, he should be encouraged, and the punishment cease, until he has had an opportunity to do what is desired of him.

While using the whip, the right hand should never be on the reins, as that necessitates jerking the horse's mouth and hitting from the wrist, a weak and ineffectual method. The blow should fall well back of the saddle and with the force given by the full swing of the arm. A woman usually expends her energy in hitting the saddle-flap, making some noise, to be sure, but not producing the desired effect.

If these suggestions are followed, there will be comparatively little trouble in learning to properly handle a horse that he may be kept up to the mark. Until having laid a solid foundation for one's self, it is useless to hope to obtain the best results from the horse, which will surely appreciate and take advantage of any incompetency on the part of the rider. Even if not aspiring to more than ordinary park riding, attention to these hints will add so materially to the comfort and safety of both horse and woman that it will be a subject of wonder to the latter how she could have found the wrong way pleasant enough to admit of any hesitation in giving the correct one at least a fair trial.

VI

CHOOSING A MOUNT

Much of a woman's comfort will depend on the horse she chooses. She is too often inclined to procure a showy one, which pleases the eye, even though she cannot control his antics, rather than a trustworthy and less conspicuous mount.

In choosing a horse, she should not rely exclusively on her own judgment. Few women are aware of the artifices resorted to by dishonest dealers to render presentable some animal which in its natural condition she would at once reject; therefore she should enlist the services of some man in whose knowledge of horse-flesh she has reason to place confidence, and of whose disinterestedness she is certain. When a horse is found which appears to fulfil her requirements, she should insist upon a trial of him herself; for, although he may go well and comfortably with her friend, a woman might not possess the qualities which had assured success in the former trial by the man. The horse would recognize the difference, take advantage of her inexperience or lack of skill, and act as he would not think of doing under an expert. Furthermore, gaits which would suit a man are often too hard for a woman, and a horse which he might think merely went well up to the bit would to her weaker arms seem a puller.

After being approved of by her friend, the woman should try the animal herself, outside, alone and in company. If he proves satisfactory, she should endeavor to have him in her stable for a few days, and during that time to have him examined by a veterinary surgeon, obtaining his certificate of the horse's soundness. An animal absolutely sound and without blemish is a rare sight; but there are many defects which do not lessen the horse's practical value, although their presence lower his price, and may enable her to secure something desirable which would otherwise have been beyond her means.

Such a horse should be accepted only after a thorough examination by the veterinary, and upon his advice. It is well to avoid purchasing a horse from a friend, unless one is perfectly familiar with the animal, as such transactions frequently lead to strained relations, each thinking bitterly of the other. Some, having pronounced their horse sound, would take offence should a veterinary be called; while if he were not consulted the horse might go wrong, and the purchaser would perhaps think the former owner had disposed of him with that expectation, or at least knowing the probability of it, yet their social relations would prevent accusation or explanation. Furthermore, a difference of opinion as to the price is awkward, and altogether it requires more tact, discretion, and liberality than most people possess to make a satisfactory horse-trade with a friend.

Having decided as to whose advice she will take, a woman should not be influenced by the comments and criticisms of others. If she waits until all her friends approve of her choice she will never buy a horse. However, by listening to what the best informed of them say, she may gain much instruction and knowledge. As a woman may wish to know what points are desirable in a horse, and what to look for, a general idea of this may be welcome. It is only by comparison that she will learn to distinguish whether certain parts are long or short, normal or excessive, therefore she should critically notice horses at every opportunity, and observe in what they differ from one another.

If a woman could have a Park hack made to order, the following points would be the most prominent: A horse should always be up to more weight than he will have to carry; and as, in the Park, appearances are of importance, a woman should buy a horse on which she will look well. Much will depend upon her mount being of an appropriate size and build. A woman of medium size will look her best on a

horse of about 15.2. No exact height can be fixed upon, as the present system of measurement is so incomplete.

[88]

A horse standing 15.2 at the withers, where it is always measured, may be much higher there than anywhere else, his quarters being disproportionately low. On the other hand, the withers might be low and the rump high, giving the strength, power, and stride to a horse of 15 hands which might be expected in one of several inches higher. In races and shows it enables low-withered horses to run and compete against those which, although high at the withers, have not the posterior conformation to justify their being in the same class. The more common-sense and accurate method of measurement, if it would only be generally adopted, is to take the height at the withers and also at the rump, average it, and call that the size of the horse. For instance, a horse 15.3 at the withers and 15.2 at the rump should be registered as measuring 15.2½. The fashionably bred trotting horse often measures higher at the rump than at the withers, while the properly proportioned saddle horse should measure as high, or highest, at the withers.

Measurement

[89]

In a saddle horse there are other points than height to be considered. If the woman is stout, the horse should be of substantial build, very compact, and like a cob. If she is slight, she will look best on a horse of light build and possessed of quality.

In my opinion, three quarters, or a trifle more, thoroughbred blood makes the pleasantest mount for a woman. Five to seven is a good age at which to buy a horse, as he will then have been through the early ailments of young horses and be just entering his prime.

As to his points, his head should be small and clear-cut, with delicately pointed ears, prominent eyes, a fine muzzle, full nostrils, clean-cut angle at the throttle, and the head carried somewhat less than vertical to the ground; the crest curved, and the neck thin and supple, but muscular and well set on to broad shoulders. These should be long and oblique, thus reducing the concussion and making the horse easier to ride as well as safer, because his forelegs are proportionately advanced, giving less weight in front of them to cause a fall should he trip. The true arms (commonly called lower bones of the shoulders), extend from the points of the shoulders to the elbows, and should be short, or the forelegs will be placed too far back. The forearms, extending from the elbows to the knees, should be large and muscular and rather long. Broad, flat knees are indicative of strength, and they should have considerably more width than the forearms or the shanks.

Conformation

[90]

[91]

Below the knees and to the fetlocks the legs should be rather short, flat, deep, and fine, no swelling to prevent one from feeling distinctly, especially near the fetlocks, the tendons and ligaments quite separate from the shanks or cannons and the splint-bones. The fetlock-joints much developed give evidence of overwork, therefore any undue prominence is not desirable. Long, slanting pasterns give elasticity to a horse's gait and prevent disagreeable concussion; but if the length is excessive, there will be too much strain on the back tendons. The fetlocks reach to the coronet, below which are the feet, which must be of good shape and absolutely sound.

The thorax must be either broad or deep and full, so that the lungs and heart may have plenty of room to expand. It should be well supplied with muscle where the forelegs are joined to it, and these should be straight, with the feet pointing straight ahead. The toe should be under the point of the shoulder. High withers are preferred to low ones, but if they are too high they place a side-saddle at an uncomfortable angle, which needs an objectionable amount of padding at the back to rectify the fault. The back should not sink perceptibly, but it may be somewhat longer in a woman's horse than in a man's, as her saddle occupies so much more space; but the ribs should be long in front and short back of the girth, running well up to the hips. This conformation will prevent the saddle from working forward; a tendency to slip back may be checked by using a breast-plate.

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A horse should be broad across the loins; if these are strong, and the horse well ribbed up, there will be no unsightly sinking of the flanks even in front of hips that are broad, as they should be. The thighs extend from the lower part of the haunches or hips to the stifle-joints, and these and the haunches are covered with powerful muscles, which, when well developed, form strong quarters. A well-placed tail, carried at a correct angle, adds greatly to a horse's appearance. From the stifles to the hocks are found the lower thighs, and these should be long and strong. The hocks should be prominent, clearly defined, and free from all puffiness or swelling. From the hocks to the fetlocks the leg should descend perpendicularly, neither bent under him nor back of him. The same rule applies to these fetlocks as to the fore ones; and the same may be said of the feet, but the latter are too important to dismiss without further comment.

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The hoofs when on the ground should be at an angle of about forty-five degrees from the toe to the coronet. Any unevenness or protrusions on the wall of the hoofs, or a sinking-in at the quarters, should be viewed with suspicion. Breadth is desirable at the heels, and the bars should not be cut away. The frog should be nearly on a level with the shoes, and the soles should be slightly concave.

If a hunter is to be chosen, looks are not of so much importance, although I like him to be almost if not quite thoroughbred. However, if the animal can gallop and jump, has good staying qualities and a strong constitution, a kind disposition and a light mouth, good manners and plenty of power, he should not be discarded because he lacks beauty. A large head, ewe neck, ragged hips, rat-tail, poor coat, and other such ungainly points, are not bad enough to condemn him if he has the other qualities I

Hunter

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have mentioned; and often a peculiarly shaped animal will out-jump a horse of the most correct conformation.

After carefully looking over the horse, a woman should have some one trot and canter him, to see that his action is what she wants. A Park hack should have free, easy gaits, with good knee and hock action, and travel evenly and without brushing, cutting, interfering, dishing, or showing any such irregularities of gait. She should watch him from in front, from behind, and at the sides; and, after his trial by a man, the woman should ride him, and find out what his faults are under the saddle. His manners should be perfect: no sign of bolting, or rearing, or other vices; nor should he be a star-gazer, nor lug on the bit, as a good mouth is very essential to her comfort.

Gait and Manners

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However, if he is green—that is, unaccustomed to his surroundings and to being ridden—he should not be rejected without a fair trial, to ascertain whether his cramped gait, shying, and other such failings are the result of inexperience under the saddle, or are established traits. The most desirable points are a light but not over-sensitive mouth, even gait, with swinging (not jerky or shuffling) action, a kind disposition—with which quality considerable friskiness need not condemn him—good manners, and freedom from tricks and vices. He should be practically sound and of correct conformation—a more valuable attribute for safety and ease than high action.

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DRESS

Simplicity is the rule for the habit. It should be of Thibet cloth—black, dark brown, or blue for winter, tan or a medium shade of gray for summer. All conspicuous colors and materials are to be avoided. It is well to have the skirt made of a heavy-weight cloth, which will help to make it set properly without the assistance of straps; while the bodice may be of a medium weight of the same cloth, that it may fit better and be less bulky. For very warm weather in the country a habit made of heavy gingham or white duck is cool and comfortable, and will wash. The skirt and bodice may be of the same material, or a silk or cheviot shirt and leather belt may be worn with the skirt. A straw sailor-hat completes this convenient innovation, but it should be reserved for use out of town.

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The skirt should reach only far enough to cover the left foot, and be too narrow to admit of any flowing folds. Fashion and safety both demand this. A skittish horse is often frightened by a loose skirt flapping at his side.

Skirt

I should be very glad to see the safety skirt, which is worn in the hunting-field, adopted in general riding. Its advantages are manifold. Although it appears the same, less cloth is used, therefore it is cooler; there is nothing between the pommel and the breeches, thus improving the hold, and in case of accident it is impossible to be dragged. There are several kinds in use, but the less complicated the more desirable it is. The simplest is made like any other skirt, except that where the pommels come there is a large piece of the cloth cut out, extending in a circle at the top, and then straight down, at both sides, so that there is no cloth near the pommels or where it could catch in case of a fall. This leaves enough to extend under both legs when in the saddle, and looks like an ordinary one. Under the right knee, where the skirt is rounded out, a small strip of cloth buttons from this point on to the piece which is under the leg; this and an elastic strap on the foot keep it in place; but neither is strong enough to stand any strain, therefore would not be dangerous in a fall.

Safety Skirt

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Another pattern has eyelet holes made on each side from where the cloth has been taken, and round silk elastic laced through them, thus preventing the possibility of disarrangement. Both of these skirts loop at the back, and can be kept from appearing unlike others if the wearer will immediately fasten them on dismounting. An ordinary skirt may be made safer by having no hem.

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We hear a great deal now of the divided skirt, and the advisability of women riding astride. The theory is good, as having a leg each side of the animal gives much greater control over his movements.

Divided Skirt

For most women, however, it is impracticable, since they cannot sit down in the saddle and grip with their knees as they should, owing to the fact that their thighs are rounded, instead of flat like a man's. It might be possible for a lean and muscular woman to acquire a secure seat, but not for the average one. Being short is another drawback to a strong seat against which most of them would have to contend. This is particularly trying, as so much of her weight is above the waist, making it difficult to ride from balance, which might otherwise replace the deficient leverage of the short thigh. Again, if on a large or broad horse, the constant strain on the muscles necessary when astride him must be injurious.

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Aside from any physical reasons, the position for a woman is, in my opinion, most ungraceful and undignified, while few of them possess the strength to profit by the changed seat in forcing the horse up to his bridle or keeping him collected; and I cannot blame those who think it open to the charge of impropriety.

The bodice should be single-breasted, long over the hips, reaching almost to the saddle in the back, and cut away in front to show a waistcoat, the upper edge of which makes a finish between the collar and lapels of the waist and the white collar and Ascot or four-in-hand. The waistcoat gives more of an opportunity for the exercise of individual taste. The most desirable, I think, has a white background, on which is a black, brown, blue, or red check. It may be all tan or a hunting pink, plain, figured, or striped, so long as too many colors are not combined; but, as a rule, something quiet and simple will be the most desirable. In summer a piqué waistcoat is worn, or something similar, that is light, cool, and will wash. A black or white cravat always looks well, or one which, without being glaring, harmonizes with the waistcoat.

Bodice

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Waistcoat

Sense, health, and comfort all demand that the waist shall not be laced to the painful extent endured by many foolish and vain women. They would let out an inch or two if they could realize that the blood is forced from their waists to their faces, making them scarlet at any exertion, while they have difficulty in conversing except in gasps, and are compelled to walk their horses at frequent intervals to catch their breath.

Corsets

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It is so invigorating to feel the lungs expanded by a long, deep breath, and the blood, quickened by the motion of the horse, coursing unrestrained through all the veins, while the muscles of the back and abdomen are allowed full play, that those who go along panting and aching lose half the beneficial effects of riding, and more pleasure than they can possibly derive from trying to make people believe that they have small waists. The corsets are of great importance and must be of good quality and not very stiff, small bones being used instead of large ones or steels. They must be short in front and over the hips, that the movements may not be unnecessarily restricted, or the skin become raw from rubbing against the ends of the bones. A plain corset-cover should be worn over them, as the lining of the habit-waist sometimes discolors the corsets if this precaution is not taken.

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Considerable latitude is permitted a woman in the choice of what she shall wear under her skirt. Boots and breeches are considered better form than shoes and trousers; but there is no reason why the latter should not be used, especially if the shoes lace. Boots and tights, however, are the most comfortable of all. Breeches are made of stockinette, re-enforced with chamois skin, and reach half-way down the calf, where they should button close to the leg—the buttons being on the left side of each leg, that the right may not be bruised by the buttons pressing against the saddle. Chamois skin is sometimes used to make breeches, but it is not very satisfactory. At first they are soft and pliable, but after being worn a few times they become stiff and unyielding, and rain will render them hard as boards.

Boots, Breeches, Tights

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Tan box-cloth gaiters, extending from the instep almost to the knee, are sometimes worn with breeches and shoes. They are made exactly like those for men, and take the place of boots. Boots may be of calf-skin or patent leather, with wrinkled or stiff legs, the tops reaching a few inches above the bottom of the breeches. In warm weather tan boots are often worn; but, of whatever variety they may be, they should always be large, with broad, thick soles and low, square heels.

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Trousers are of the same material as the skirt, and are also re-enforced. Elastic bands passing under the shoes keep the trousers down. Tights should be of the color of the habit, and fit smoothly without being stretched. They come in different weights, and either silk, cotton, or wool may be worn. They should have feet woven on them, thus doing away with the necessity for all underclothing below the waist.

When breeches or trousers are worn, tights may advantageously be substituted for the other usual garments worn under such conditions. If tights are not worn, whatever replaces them should fit snugly and be without starch or frills. The stockings should be kept up from the waist, as garters chafe the knee when it presses the pommel, and often interfere with the circulation. Some women wear union garments, which are practically tights extending from the neck to the feet, taking the place of shirts. However, when a shirt is worn it will be most comfortable if of a light-weight wool. This absorbs the perspiration, and is therefore pleasanter to wear than silk, and more likely to protect from a cold. Outside of this should be the corset.

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When it is cold a chamois-skin waist with long sleeves should be worn under the bodice, as this is much better than a fur cape, which is often used, and which confines the arms. A covert coat is the most convenient, but the former is more readily obtained. A wool shirt, short corsets, plain corset-cover, and tights are all the underclothing needed for riding. Some women wear a linen shirt, with collar and cuffs attached, like a man's, except that it is narrowed at the waist. With this the corset-cover is not needed.

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Separate collars and cuffs are more generally used, and the scarf should be pinned to the collar at the back, as these have a way of parting company that is most untidy. To make it more certain, a clasp or pin such as men use to hold a four-in-hand tie in place should fasten the ends of the scarf to the shirt-front or corset-cover, thus securing it against slipping.

Collars and Cuffs

The cuffs should not be pinned to the sleeve, as the lining of the coat will be torn, and the pin will catch on the habit and stretch and roughen it in places. A small elastic band put over a button at the wrist of the sleeve, and attached to the cuff-button, will answer every purpose.

Gauntlets should be discarded, and gloves worn large enough to admit of the muscles of the hand being used freely. Dogskin of a reddish shade of tan is the best material for gloves. The stitching is such as to form slight ridges of the glove itself on the back of the hand, the red stitches being scarcely perceptible at a little distance. It is difficult to find women's gloves broad enough for comfort in riding, and it is a good plan to buy boys' gloves, which give the desired freedom. They have only one button, an advantage over women's, which have two or three that are in the way under the cuff.

Gloves

[111]

Should the wrists need more protection from the cold, wristlets may be worn, as they take up but little room. For cold weather, gloves come in a softer kid, like chevrette, and have a fleecy lining, very warm, but too soft and light to make the gloves clumsy. Flowers and jewelry are decidedly out of place on horseback, and a handkerchief should never be thrust into the front of the bodice. It should be put in the slit on the off saddle-flap, or in the pocket at the left side of the skirt where it opens.

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The hair should be firmly coiled or braided on the neck, and not worn on top of the head. A top hat is correct, especially on formal occasions, but it should not be allowed to slip to the back of the head. However, I prefer usually a derby, as being more comfortable and looking more business-like. It should be kept on by an elastic which fastens under the hair. Pins through the crown are an uncalled-for disfigurement, and a hat may be made just as secure without them. In fact, they will be of but little use if the hair is not done high. A large hair-pin on each side should pin the hair over the elastic; and if the wind or anything else causes the hat to become displaced, it will not come off entirely, forcing some one to dismount and restore it to the woman, who cannot get it alone. Hair-pins should be long and bent half-way up each prong, so that they will not easily slip out.

Hair and Hat

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When a veil is worn, it should be of black net or gauze, never white or figured, and the ends should be neatly pinned out of sight, instead of being allowed to float out behind, like smoke from a steam-engine. If a whip is carried for use, it should be a substantial stiff one, held point down, not a flimsy thing that a sound blow will break, nor should it be made absurd by a bow or tassel being tied to it. If for style, then a crop is the correct thing, with the lash-end held up. The handle should be of horn, rather than silver or gold, and the stick quite heavy and somewhat flexible. Short bamboo sticks are in favor just now, and are often tipped with gold, and have a gold band a few inches from the end where it is held.

Veil

Whip or Crop

[114]

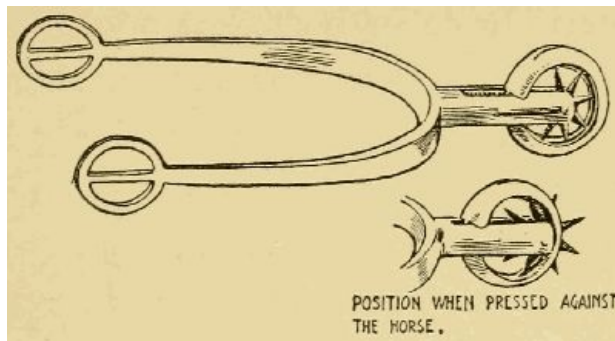


CROP

I do not approve of a spur for women, as it is difficult to use it just right, and its unintentional application often has disastrous results, while should she be dragged by the foot, it will keep hitting the horse, urging him faster and faster. In mounting, the spur sometimes strikes the horse, making him shy just as the rider expects to reach the saddle, and a nasty fall is the consequence. Where a man would use it advantageously, a woman cannot produce the same effect, having it only on one side. Moreover, a horse suitable for her to ride should not require more than her heel and her whip.

Spur

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A GOOD SPUR

Some horses are very cunning, and will shirk their work if they discover that there is no spur to urge them, but such may be taught that a whip in skilful hands is quite as effective. In a crowd a spur is of value, as it may be applied noiselessly, and without danger of startling other horses, as a whip will do. In leaping, a spur on one side of the horse and the whip on the other form a combination which will often compel him to jump when, from sulkiness or indolence, he has been refusing. [116]

It requires some practice, however, to use it in the right place and at the right moment; a woman's skirt has an unhappy faculty of intercepting the spur when it should strike him, and her heel of hitting the horse when it should leave him alone. For these reasons I am in favor of women riding without a spur when it is possible, for, although it looks well as a finish to a boot, its adoption by inexpert riders may lead to sad results.

If a spur is to be worn, there are several kinds from which to choose. I prefer a box-spur with a rowel, such as men use, but having a guard, which prevents it from catching in the habit, and lessens the probabilities of its unintentionally punishing a horse. When it is applied with force, the rowel comes through the guard, which works on a spring, and upon releasing the pressure the guard again protects the sharp rowel. They may be of the kind that fit in a box which has been put in the heel of the boot, or they may have straps and buckle over the instep. [117]
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VIII

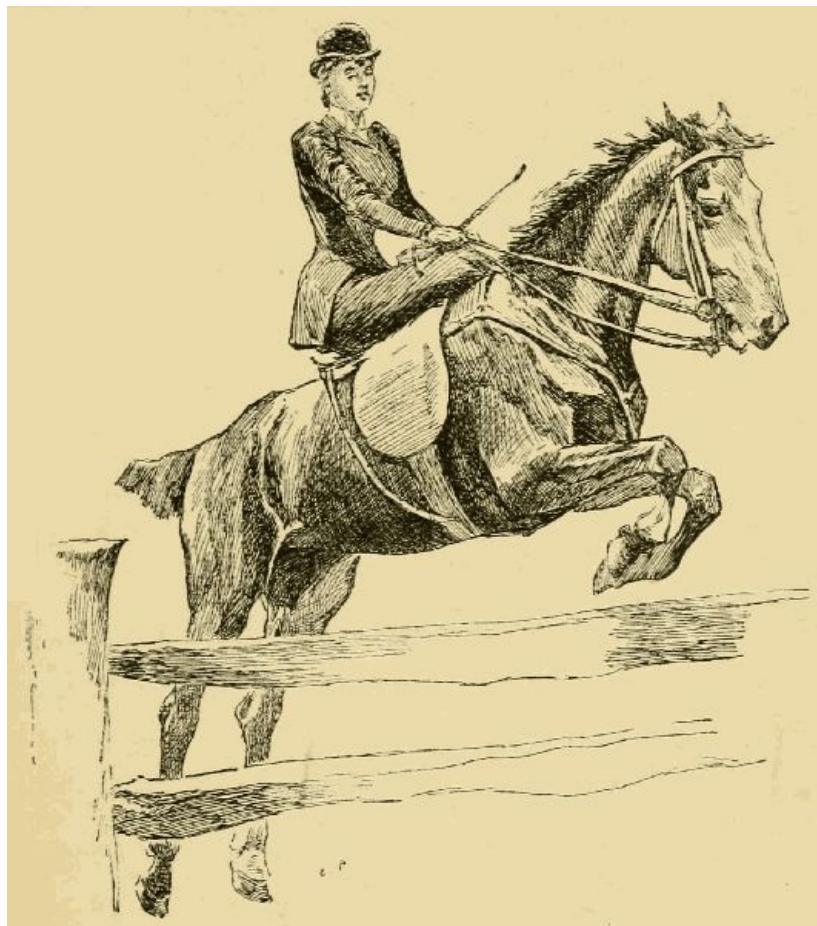
LEAPING

When a woman has attained some degree of proficiency in the saddle, she will probably desire to perfect herself in riding by learning to leap. Her equestrian education cannot be considered complete without this, but she should not attempt it until she has learned thoroughly how to ride correctly on the road. A secure seat, light hands, a cool head, quick perception, judgment, and courage form a combination which will enable her in a short time to acquire skill in jumping. Few women possess all these qualities, but an effort should be made to obtain as many of them as possible before trying to jump. [120]
[121] Requirements

The first lessons should be on a horse which has been well trained to this work and requires no assistance from his rider. He should inspire confidence, and jump easily and surely rather than brilliantly. I think it is well to begin in a school over bars, as there the rider is not under the necessity of choosing a good take-off or landing, and is thus free to give undivided attention to herself. [122] In the Ring

Three feet is high enough to put the bars at the start; or they may be even lower should the rider feel timid. As she approaches the jump she must sit firmly in the middle of the saddle (not hanging either to the right or to the left, thereby upsetting the horse's balance), and she must look straight at the obstacle, with her head up and her body thrown a trifle back. The reins should at first be held in both hands, for several reasons. It lessens the chances of sitting crooked, and it prevents throwing up the right arm as the horse jumps—a common and unsightly practice, calculated to frighten him and distract his attention from his work, and to jerk his mouth, while it has no redeeming features. In addition to this, when the horse lands, the reins are not so liable to slip through two hands as through one. [123] Approaching Jump

Approaching the jump, the horse should break into a moderate canter, and the only rule his rider will be likely to remember at the first trial will be to "lean back as he jumps and give him his head." As she becomes accustomed to the action, her attention must be called to details. While nearing the jump, she must keep her hands low, and just feel her horse's mouth with the snaffle without interfering with it or shifting her hold on the reins. Quiet, steady hands are indispensable to success. [124]



TAKING OFF

By watching his stride one can tell when he will take off. At that moment he will stretch out his neck; then she must, by instantly pushing them forward, let her hands yield to his mouth. This must be accurately calculated, for should the pressure on his mouth be varied too suddenly and at the wrong time, it would throw him out of his stride by letting go of his mouth when he needed steadying. Some advocate leaning forward before leaning back as the horse takes off, but the slight involuntary motion communicated to the body by thrusting the hands forward will be sufficient to precede the backward movement. Before he has finished his effort, she must lean back just enough (but no farther) to avoid being thrown forward by the action of his quarters or by the angle at which he comes down. Her left heel should not come in contact with him after he has taken off, although she may strike him with it to urge him on if he goes at the jump too slowly. Below the waist she must be firm and immovable; above, yielding and flexible. As the horse lands, she regains her upright position, and should be careful that he does not pull the reins through her fingers. Under all circumstances she must have too firm a hold on the reins to admit of such an occurrence. If the horse stumbles at the moment of landing, he needs the support of her hands; or should he bolt, it must not be necessary to pull in the slack rein before being able to check him.

Taking off

Landing

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One of the most erroneous theories extant is that it is desirable to "lift" a horse at his fences. Doing so only necessitates carrying the weight of his rider's hands on his mouth, and risks pulling the horse into the jump, while he is hindered from stretching his neck, as he must to land safely and correctly. Hanging on to his mouth is often the cause of a horse's landing on all four feet at once, or dropping too close to the jump. The pull on the reins holds him back, thus inducing these bad habits, and will often make him refuse or dread to jump, knowing that it entails a sharp jerk on his sensitive mouth. To a casual or ignorant observer it sometimes looks as though a good rider were "lifting" his horse; but it only appears so because, knowing intuitively at just what instant his hands must yield, he so accurately gives to the animal's mouth that the action of the horse's mouth and the rider's hands is simultaneous.

Lifting

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ABOUT TO LAND

After some practice in the ring, a woman may try jumping out-of-doors, for inside there is not a sufficient variety of obstacles; and she should then have a breast-plate attached to her saddle. By this time she should, in jumping, hold her reins in one hand, the snaffle inside, curb outside, and quite loose. As she goes towards a jump, her right hand should be placed in front of the left on the snaffle to steady the horse. In this way she can remove it without leaving an uneven pressure on the horse's mouth, as would be the case if, as is customary, her hand had rested on the two right reins, then been suddenly withdrawn in order to urge the horse with the whip, or to protect the face from overhanging branches.

Out of Doors

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The most favorable conditions under which a woman may begin jumping in the country are when she can go across fields with a capable pilot to give her a lead over some easy timber or walls. She must never forget to see that the horse in front of her is well away from the fence before she jumps, or she will risk landing on top of him if he makes a mistake; or if he refuses, her horse, if too near, would be forced to do likewise. She should not allow herself to become dependent on the services of a pilot, or let her horse become accustomed to jumping only when he has a lead; therefore she must learn to choose a panel of the fence for herself.

Pilot

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Supposing the fences to be moderate, she must decide, as she canters towards the first, where she will jump, and there are a number of considerations by which she must be governed. First, to find a panel which is low, for in riding across country it is wise to save one's mount, as all his strength may be needed at a big place later on. Then the take-off must be looked to, sound level turf being chosen if possible; and if the landing is plainly visible, so much the better. A moderately thick top rail is often safer to put a horse at than a very thin round one, which is liable to be a sapling, that will not break if a horse tries to crash through it, as he is sometimes tempted to do by its fragile appearance.

Selecting a Panel

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It is well to send a horse at the middle of a panel; for, should he hit it, this, being the weakest spot, may break, while should he hit nearer the end, where it is strong, he may be thrown. Such details as these she will observe instinctively with a little practice. Having decided where she will jump, her horse's head must be pointed straight at the place, and her mind must not waver. If the rider is determined to go, and has no misgivings, the horse is sure to be inspired with the same confidence.

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Having once put him at a panel, she should avoid changing her mind without good reason, as her uncertainty will be imparted to him. A fence such as described is jumped just as are the bars in the ring; safely over it, the next obstacle must be examined.

If it be a stone wall, it may often be taken in one of two places—either where it is high and even, or where it is lower and wide, because of the stones which have fallen from the top. In the first instance it should be jumped in a collected manner, but at a slower pace than the second requires. At the latter some speed is necessary, as the horse must jump wide enough to avoid the rolling stones on both sides.

Stone Wall

Few riders remember that it is as important to keep a horse collected when going fast as at any other time. When he is hurried along, no chance

In Hand

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is given him to measure his stride or get his legs well under him, but he is nevertheless expected to take off correctly and clear the obstacle.

A good rider will always have her horse well in hand, and never hustle him at his fences, even if she goes at them with considerable speed.

If the take-off looks treacherous, or is ploughed or muddy, the horse should be brought to it at a trot, well collected, and allowed to take his time at it.

Trappy Ground and Drops

When the ground approaching the jump is uphill, or descending, the same tactics should be pursued, and unlimited rein given the horse. On encountering a drop on the far side of a fence or wall, a woman must lean back as far as possible, leaving the reins long, but ready to support the horse's head as he lands. At a trappy place, where, for instance, there might be a broken-down fence among some trees, overgrown with vines and bushes, the horse must be taken quietly and slowly and made to crawl through the gap. His rider will even then have enough trouble in keeping her feet clear of the vines, and in preventing the branches from hitting her face, which she could not do if a jump were made with a rush. If her horse carries his head high, she can probably pass where it has been without injury by leaning forward over his withers, to the right, and raising her right arm to ward off the branches with her whip or crop.

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Sometimes she will not notice a limb or other obstruction until almost under it, when it will be necessary for her to lean back, resting her shoulders on the horse's quarters. Under these circumstances it is most important that her right arm should guard her eyes from pieces of bark or other falling particles. Where two fences are within a few feet of each other, forming an "in-and-out," the pace needs to be carefully regulated. If the horse goes very fast, he will jump so wide that he will land too close to the second fence to take off as he should. Therefore if he is rushing, his stride must be shortened and his hind-legs brought well under him.

In-and-out

[133]

On the other hand, he must not go so slowly that all impetus for the second effort is lost, as he would then be likely to refuse. It is difficult to turn him in so short a space and get him into his stride before he is called upon to jump.

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At a ditch or stream considerable speed is needed to gain the momentum necessary to cover the distance, and the horse must have plenty of rein given him.

A picket fence is usually regarded as a very formidable obstacle, but if negotiated properly it is no worse than others. It should be taken at a good rate of speed, for the danger is that the horse will get hung up on it and be cut with the points by not having enough impetus. It is not so dangerous to hit this fence in front, for it is frail and the top of the pickets will snap off at the binder if hit with force. A slat fence is more to be dreaded, on account of the ledge on the top of it formed by the binder. This should be taken with deliberation, as the thing to be guarded against is having the horse hit his knees on the ledge which protrudes a couple of inches beyond the fence. The lower slats give way easily if they are approached from the side where the posts are; if from the opposite direction, they are braced against the posts and offer great resistance.

Picket and Slat Fences

[135]

Any fence that has wire on it should be avoided if possible, unless the horse has been trained to jump it. When it extends along the top of a fence, the horse should be made to jump a post, as it is not safe to count on his seeing the wire. If the fence is made of strands of wire, with only a binder of timber, it should be taken slowly, so that the horse will not attempt to crash through it, under the impression that it is a single bar.

Wire

A stone wall having a rail on top must be taken in the horse's stride, for considerable swing is required, as there is width as well as height to clear. When a ditch is on the near side of a wall or fence, the horse should be allowed time to see it. When it is on the landing side, he should be sent at it fast enough to carry him safely over.

Combined Obstacles

[136]

Thus far I have been supposing that the horse has gone without a mistake. Under these circumstances he should not be struck—just to encourage him, as some maintain—or he will grow to dislike jumping if associated with a blow.

No woman who rides much can expect to be always so perfectly mounted; therefore, a few suggestions as to what she should do in emergencies may be of practical value.

The most common fault of the jumper is refusing, and it must be dealt with according to its cause. If it arises from weakness in the hocks, the horse hesitating to propel himself by them, or from weak knees, or corns that cause him to dread the concussion of landing, he should not be forced to jump—it is both cruel and unsafe. If he be sound and well, and the fence not beyond his capabilities, the rider must know whether the disinclination to jump comes from timidity or from temper. She will soon learn to distinguish between the two, but it is difficult to lay down any rule for recognizing the difference. If she thinks it is for the former reason, the cause may be that he was not in his stride when he should have taken off, and was allowed to sprawl as he cantered. She should take him back and keep him well collected, making him take short, quick strides in the canter, measuring the distance, and giving him his

Refusing

[137]

Timidity

head when he should take off. If he seems inclined to swerve or hesitate, the whip, applied just when he should rise, will often prevent his stopping. When over, a caress and a word of praise will greatly encourage him. [138]

Temper is a very different and a very difficult thing to manage. Coaxing and ingenuity may accomplish something; turning him short at another place will often surprise him into jumping before he realizes it. The human voice has great power over animals, and a few loud, sharp exclamations, with a quick use of the whip, may make him take off when otherwise he would have refused. A really obstinate horse, having made up his mind not to jump, needs such a thrashing as a woman is seldom able to give him. If she begins it, she must keep it up until she has conquered him, or he will try the same trick constantly. [139]

As a horse almost invariably turns to the left when he refuses, a sharp crack on the near shoulder, being unusual and unexpected, sometimes prevents his turning. When, in one way or another, he finally has been forced to yield, he should be rewarded by a few words of approval. At the next fence a firm hold, keeping his head straight and his legs well under him, will be of more service than a whip, unless he refuses again, when the lesson must be repeated. [140]

At least half of the refusals are the fault of the rider, and it is most unjust to punish a horse at such times. Unfortunately, conceit is such a common failing that few of us are willing to acknowledge ourselves in the wrong, therefore the poor horse suffers for our error. The timid rider sends the horse at an obstacle in such a half-hearted way that he does not know whether he is expected to jump or not; or, feeling his rider waver, he imagines there must be unknown dangers connected with the place, and so hesitates to encounter them. One of a woman's frequent failings is shifting the reins as she nears a jump. This form of nervousness is very disconcerting to a horse, and takes his mind from the work in front of him. [141]

Lack of skill makes one lug at a horse's mouth just as he is getting ready to jump, thus throwing him out of his stride and frustrating his effort. After one or two refusals, a woman often puts her horse at the place in a mechanical way, fully expecting the animal to stop, and doing nothing to guard against such an occurrence. If she would instead then summon all her courage, and determine to go either over or through the fence, and ride at it with resolution, the horse would be infected with her spirit and probably clear the obstacle, as he would have done at first had his rider's heart then been in the right place. In such cases it does not seem fair to punish a horse for our own want of nerve. [142]

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LEAPING—(*Continued*) [144]

On a horse which rushes when put at a jump, the use of the whip will only make matters worse. This habit of rushing comes most frequently from the horse having been frightened while being taught to jump, either by extreme harshness and punishment or from having hurt himself severely. Even if it comes from viciousness, quiet, kind treatment will do more to eradicate the tendency than coercive measures. [145]

Such a horse should be walked towards a fence until within half a dozen strides of it. This can best be achieved by not indicating that he will be expected to jump, but by approaching it as though by chance. Otherwise the restraint will make him the more unmanageable when he does start. He should be induced to stand a few moments, while his rider strokes him and talks to him in a soothing way. The snaffle should then be gradually and quietly shortened until there is a light but firm feeling on the reins, when a pressure of the leg (not of the heel, which might suggest a spur) will put him to a trot. If the hands be held low and steady and the voice be soft and pacifying, they will probably prevail upon him to trot all the way, although he may break into a canter a stride before the jump. When over it he should be gently, not sharply, pulled up, and coaxed to walk again, or, better still, to trot slowly. When he has learned to jump from the trot he will soon do so from a slow canter, which will be more trying for him, as it has a closer resemblance to the gait at which he has been in the habit of rushing, and he will therefore be inclined to return to his old failing. [146]

Sometimes a horse will not go near a fence, and on being urged will back or rear. If he persists in backing, his head should be turned away from the jump, and when he finds his movements only bring him nearer the fence, he will stop. If then he is made to wheel suddenly, and can be kept going by whip or spur, he will be likely to jump. Should he, instead, face the direction in which he should go, and rear whenever an attempt is made to urge him forward, the whip only inciting him to rear higher, the woman who hopes to triumph over him must resort to strategy; she must not whip him, at the risk of his falling back on her. [147]

A ruse which may prove successful is to occupy his attention by playing with his mouth while he is allowed to go diagonally towards the fence. He will be apt to concede this point, in the hope of [148]

bolting alongside of it; but when he has been inveigled into a closer proximity to the jump, even if he be parallel to it, and before he has time to divine his rider's intention, he should be turned sharply to the fence. He must be ridden at it resolutely and with a firm hand, while a determined swing of the body, corresponding to his stride, conveys to his mind the impression that he will be forced to jump. If he can be kept moving forward, he cannot rear; therefore, should he attempt to swerve or bolt, a blow from the whip will keep him straight, and when he should take off, another will guard against a refusal.

A sluggish animal calls for constant watching, as he cannot be trusted at small places any more than at large ones. He is always liable to rap, or even fall, at his fences, because of the careless, slovenly manner in which he moves. He should be forced up to the bit, and kept active by the whip, the noise of which is desirable in his case, as it will assist in rousing him. If his laziness or sulkiness is such that he will endeavor to crash through fences, he is not suitable for any woman to ride. He may miscalculate his power and come in contact with a rail which withstands his weight, when a fall will ensue.

Sluggards

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In this case the lunging-rein should be resorted to, and, either in a ring or out-of-doors, the horse should be put over some stiff bars, that he may learn he will be hurt if he touches them. I do not approve of intentionally throwing him by pulling him in the jump; there are too many chances of his being injured, even though he has no weight to carry. The bars should be strong enough to sustain his weight, without breaking, so that if he hits them hard he will have a tumble and a lesson. The top bar should, if possible, be covered with straw, to protect the knees from sharp edges. Some forcible raps and a few tumbles will teach the horse the necessity of exerting himself, and how to bend his knees and lift his hind-legs over a jump.

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A fall is, at the best, a dangerous and often a disastrous affair for a woman, whose very position on a horse lessens the chance of escape from such a predicament without injury. A safety skirt will prevent her being dragged; but much harm may result from the fall, even though she be clear of the horse when he gets up. If she is not hurt, there is still danger that the shock to her nerves will weaken her pluck. Should such symptoms appear, she should remount at once; for the longer she waits the greater will be her apprehension, and it might end in her never regaining her nerve. She should make as light of the casualty as possible, and not regard it seriously if she has been only somewhat bruised or shaken up.

Falls

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It is marvellous how many and what ugly falls one can encounter without being any the worse for them; nevertheless, no precaution should be neglected to prevent exposure to them. When a woman has experienced several, she will know instinctively what to do; but at first she should try to bear in mind some points which may help her on such occasions.

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A rider not accustomed to jumping will probably lose her seat if the horse hits a fence with much force; as she feels herself going she should try to grasp the animal's neck, and not attempt to keep on by the aid of the reins, for by so doing she might throw him. Even if she has gone farther than the saddle, if she can fling her weight, above the waist, to the off side of the horse's neck, she will balance there for a moment, and that will give her time to grasp the saddle and pull herself back. Should she find herself beyond that, then as she slips off she can keep her head from the ground by seizing hold of the breast-plate with one hand, but without letting go of the reins.

These must always be retained, as their possession renders it impossible for the horse to reach her with his heels, and precludes the chance of his getting away.

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If the horse bungles the jump, or comes down on his knees without disturbing his rider's equilibrium, and seems likely to fall, a woman cannot disentangle herself from him in time to get away. If he should go down, therefore, she must sit evenly, leaning back, that her weight may be taken from his fore-legs, while he is allowed plenty of rein. He may thus regain his balance or his footing after a scramble; but it will be impossible, in a slow fall like this, for a woman to be thrown clear of him. As he will not roll immediately, the closer she sits the better; so that if he tumbles on his near side, the force of the blow will be broken by the pommels, which, if she be sitting close, will hit the ground first, thus protecting her legs from the concussion. Moreover, if she were half out of the saddle, the pommels might strike her chest or crush a rib, and she would be more likely to be kicked.

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As the horse makes an effort to get up, she must be ready to extricate herself from him and scramble as far away as possible, as the danger then is that he will not regain his feet, but will sink down a second time and thus roll over his prostrate rider.

If he should fall on his off side, a woman must strive to get clear on that side as he lands, and not where the horse's feet are.

Where a ditch has caused a fall, it is usually from unsound banks; therefore, in attempting to climb out, firmer ground should be chosen. If the woman has been thrown and the horse has landed on top of her, the ditch being deep or narrow, she must try to keep his head down until help arrives, so that he cannot strike her, as he might do, because of the limited space, in his struggles to get up.

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In a stream, if she has preserved her seat, she must keep the horse moving, or he will be inclined to lie down.

If she has been thrown into the water, she must obtain a hold on the saddle and the reins, but use only the former to support herself until the horse reaches the shore.

In all of these events a cool head and presence of mind will be of the greatest assistance; but when a horse turns completely over at a fence, or falls heavily and without warning, to drop her stirrup, relax her muscles, and get clear of him as best she may is all a woman can do.

Occasionally, after a number of jumps, the girths become loosened and the saddle begins to turn. In such an emergency the horse's mane should be firmly grasped and the foot taken out of the stirrup. The horse should be quieted and stopped, if he is not too much startled by the turning saddle. With a breast-plate it will probably not turn all the way, and her hold of the mane will enable a woman to keep her head up until some one comes to the rescue. [156]

It will probably be a long time before such a variety of contingencies as I have mentioned will happen to any one rider. A well-mounted woman may jump a great deal and escape with only a few tumbles. If she perseveres, there will be so many delightful experiences to counterbalance each mishap that she will gladly risk the consequences of indulging in a sport which, to so great an extent as leaping, develops her nerve, skill, and self-possession. [157]

X [158]

RIDING TO HOUNDS

Whether hounds are running on the scent of a fox or a drag, a woman who is following them should always remember certain points to guide her in her conduct and in the management of her horse while in the field. [159]

Many a beginner renders herself objectionable by striving to take a place among the hard riders of the first flight. [160]

Courtesy

It is not to be expected that a woman without experience in the hunting-field can keep up with those who have followed hounds for several seasons; and should she attempt it, the probable result would be a fall not only endangering herself and her horse, but compelling some man to come to her assistance, and thereby perhaps lose the remainder of the run. Even though too well mounted to have this occur, there are countless ways in which a novice, in endeavoring to keep on even terms with the leaders, may unwittingly call down anything but blessings on her head from those for whose good opinion she most cares. It is a mistake for her to suppose that people are watching her, ready to admire her pluck and dash, when she crashes through fences because her horse was not collected, or rides so close to the hounds as to risk hitting them. If she flatters herself that she is cutting out the work, it is pretty certain she has no business to be so far forward, and that she will add to the number of men who consider the hunting-field no place for women. [161]

A beginner should be content to stay behind the first flight until, by experience and skill, she has earned the right to take a better place. At first she should find out which of the men go straight, yet ride cautiously and manage to keep the hounds in sight. Such a one she should choose as her pilot, rather than a reckless rider or one who shirks his fences. Unless she is very well acquainted with him, a woman should not let a man know that she is following him. It annoys him to think that some one is "tagging on behind," or that he is responsible for the jumps she takes. Above all things, she must invariably give him or any one in front of her time to get well away from a jump before she takes it. This is of the utmost importance, and is a point neglected by men and women alike in the excitement and impatience of a run. [162]

If she desires to be looked upon otherwise than as a nuisance, she must be as unobtrusive and cool-headed as possible, always courteous to and considerate of others, patient when waiting for her turn at a narrow place, and not try to take jumps that well-mounted, hard-riding men deem impracticable.

Women seldom need to be urged on in the hunting-field; they require rather to be cautioned and restrained. If they are new at it, they do not know the dangers to which they are exposed, so go recklessly; if they appreciate the chances they take, they grit their teeth and go desperately; if they are timid they nevertheless resolve not to be outdone, and, trusting all to their horse, go blindly, even closing their eyes at a critical moment. Therefore hard riding does not prove that a woman has either pluck or skill. She is an exception who goes straight and keeps with the hounds without taking foolish risks, unnecessarily tiring her mount, or interfering with others, for this requires judgment, discretion, skill, and nerve. [163]

Hard Riding

An undesirable trait observed in many instances is jealous riding. This cannot be too strongly condemned, not only for the unsportsmanlike spirit it betrays, but because it often threatens the safety of others than those who ride in that manner. A jealous rider crowds past people, jumps too close to them, and is constantly trying to be among the first, regardless of the consequences to those he or she hurries by. The motive that usually actuates a woman in such a case is vanity. She cannot bear to see

Jealous Riding

another woman ahead of her, so she dashes along unmindful of the rules of etiquette and the hunting-field, until by pushing, crowding, and taking big chances for herself and against others, she reaches the object of her jealousy, thinking to wrest from her the admiration of the field. If the other woman is of the same mind and objects to being passed, a steeple-chase will ensue that may end in accidents, disabled hounds, and bad feelings. Admiration is far from the minds of the spectators, who do not fail to see that jealousy and vanity, not eagerness for sport, are the incentives to such hard riding. [164]

When a woman begins riding to hounds, she should already have had some experience in larking a horse across country, and be acquainted with the way to take the different kinds of jumps she will encounter during a run. If she starts with a good seat and hands, pluck and nerve, a little time and practice will add composure, judgment, and discretion, and the experience necessary to cross a stiff country without mishap. She may then discard the services of a pilot and ride her own line. [165]

When hounds are thrown in, she must watch them, and, although not interfering with their work, be ready to get away on good terms with them when they begin to run. [166]

Indecision at the first two jumps may cost one dearly, for during that moment of hesitation hounds slip away, horses crowd one another and begin to refuse, while the few who make the most of their opportunities ride on ahead with the hounds. Much hard galloping may retrieve the lost ground, but a stern chase is always disheartening to horse and rider. By getting away in front, both are encouraged, and start with mutual good-will and satisfaction—relations which should always exist between a hunter and his rider. [167]

If, after pointing her horse's head at a certain part of a jump, she thinks another place is more inviting, she must not change her course, unless certain that she can do so without inconveniencing some one else who may have been going straight at it. [168]

It is inexcusable to turn from one place to another by cutting in ahead of following riders. It throws their horses out of their stride, and may force them to pull up in order to avoid a collision. Therefore, in suddenly changing her direction, a woman must assure herself that she is at least half a dozen lengths in front of her follower, who is going straight, or she must wait until she has been passed. [169]

When a horse refuses, the rule is that the rider shall immediately pull out and give the next a chance to jump. This is so often overlooked in the field, that a few words seem desirable to impress its importance upon the minds of those who hunt. [170]

Women particularly seem to consider themselves privileged to keep their horse at a fence while he refuses at each trial, blocking the way, if there is no other place to jump, of those in their rear. Frequently, when her horse refuses, his rider thinks there is time to try it again before the next one reaches the place; she puts him at the fence, in her hurry turning him so short he could not jump if he wanted to, and the result is that he stops just as the other horse arrives, whose rider is thereby obliged to pull up. [171]

Had the woman pulled to one side in the first place, and waited until her follower had given her horse a lead, which would probably have induced him to jump, both would have been in the next field much sooner than her impatience in the first instance eventually permitted.

A horse should not be ridden behind one that is likely to refuse, or he may be inclined to imitate the misdoings of his predecessor. [172]

In the same way, it is injudicious to take a horse to a place where others are refusing, either from their own or their riders' timidity. He is liable to be infected with their faint-heartedness; for it needs an unusually sensible, reliable horse to be the first to jump out from a crowd at a place that has stopped those in front of him.

It is far better for a woman to choose another way of reaching the hounds than to risk adding to the number of refusers, unless she be so well mounted as to be sure of giving the rest a lead. [173]

A hot-headed, excitable horse will go more quietly if he can be made to think he is ahead of the others. Therefore his rider should choose a line for herself, apart from the others, and if he is a good performer it will be safer to put him at a big jump where he can take it coolly than to trust him at a smaller place where other horses are crowding and goading him into a state of such impatience that in his anxiety to overtake any one in front of him he will jump without calculation, and endanger all in his vicinity by kicking, rearing, or rushing. [174]

A sluggish horse, on the contrary, should be kept near others, that their lead and example may arouse his ambition and keep up his heart. It will not do to allow such a horse to fall far behind, as he will probably get discouraged and refuse to jump without a fight, at the end of which the hunt may have disappeared in the distance. [175]

It is never wise to ride on the line of hounds, but rather to the right or left of them. Horses directly behind them frighten the hounds and interfere with their hunting. It also makes a few run very fast to keep from being [176]

galloped over, while many others sneak away or get behind the horses, of whose heels they stand in terror.

It is a nuisance to be obliged to stop and give some slow hound a chance to get by, or, if not considerate enough to do this, no rider likes to see a hound going through a fence with the probability of having a horse jump on him, should he pause for a moment on the other side. [171]

A woman will escape these occurrences if she will keep to one side of the pack. In this position it is permissible to ride farther up than when so doing would bring her too near the pack; but the leading hounds must be watched closely, and should always be allowed plenty of room to turn sharp to the side where she is, without bringing them in contact with her horse. The instant they check, or even hover, for a moment, a woman must stop, and for two reasons:

In the first place, because she does not want to be in the way should it be necessary to cast the hounds in her direction; and, secondly, because she should seize every opportunity of giving her horse a few moments' respite, which she can afford to do if well enough up to notice what the hounds are doing. [172]

She must be guided as to her course by the character of the country over which she is riding.

Choosing a Line

If the hounds run over a succession of small hills, much unnecessary exertion may often be spared the horse by galloping around the base of them, instead of over their crest. But the hounds must not be lost sight of too long, or a sharp turn may hide them from view and conceal the line they have taken.

When a very steep hill is to be descended, it should be done by going down sideways in a zig-zag course, so that in case of a slip or stumble the horse will not roll over, as he might if attempting to make the descent in a straight line. [173]

If the going is rough or through furze or some low growth of underbrush, a woman should sit well back in her saddle, and although guiding her horse, allow him plenty of rein to stretch his neck and see where he is putting his feet. Should he stumble or step into a hole, she will in this way have the best chance of keeping her seat, and he of regaining his balance.

If riding in a district where wire is extensively used for fencing, it will not do for a woman to go very far to one side of the hounds or to try to cut out a line for herself, unless she knows the country. Otherwise she may get pocketed by the wire, which few horses here are trained to jump, and which, therefore, should not be ridden at. In this case she would have to go back the way she came until she could get clear of it. [174]

In jumping towards the sun, extra precautions should be taken. A horse is often quite blinded, and unable to accurately gauge the size of the jump he is to take, especially if it is timber. When the rays are directly in his eyes, the best thing to do is to walk him up to and alongside of the fence for a few yards, giving him a chance to measure it, then take him back and put him at it. This must not be done where it will interfere with any one else, but in any case such a jump must be approached slowly.

Wide ditches and streams are probably shirked as often as any kind of jump. Too much preparation for them excites the horse's suspicions and makes him hesitate, then refuse. A horse must be kept collected, yet sent along too fast to admit of any faltering on his part, and there must be no involuntary checking of his stride as the rider tries to see the depth or width of ditch or stream. When such are in sight, it is well to quicken the horse's pace, that he may reach the place before he sees any horse refusing, or before the banks have been made unsound by the jumping of the others. Each horse will probably widen the distance as the ground gives way beneath him, so a woman must use her own judgment in deciding where she will jump, instead of following some one else. [175]

A bog or swamp is a most disagreeable place in which to be caught, and calls for calmness to get out without a wetting or fall. To quiet the horse is the first thing, and prevent his plunging into it deeper and deeper, as he will with every struggle. Should he be sinking, his rider must get off, keeping hold of the reins, for, although their combined weight would cause the bog to give beneath them, they might separately be able to keep on the surface, and quietly and gradually work their way to firm ground. [176]

Whenever one comes upon something that cannot be seen at a distance, such as a hole, a drop, or a wire, the first person who discovers it should warn those behind by shouting back what it is, and, if possible, motioning where it is, that those in the rear may avoid it, each person cautioning the next one. [177]

XI

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SYMPATHY BETWEEN HORSE AND WOMAN

The advantages derived from the existence of sympathy between horse and rider cannot be too highly estimated. When a woman gives her horse to understand that he will be ruled by kindness, [179]

he is very certain to serve her far more willingly and faithfully than if she tried to control him by force. If he has learned to be fond of her voice, it will calm and reassure him in moments of excitement which might otherwise result in a runaway; it will stimulate him to expend his best energies at her command, when force or punishment would fail, and will do more to establish a mutual understanding in a few weeks than would be gained in as many months of silent control. [180]

A horse soon learns to distinguish the intonation of words of praise from those of censure, terms of endearment from admonition, and will often respond to them more readily than to severe discipline.

Few horses are so dull as not to be susceptible to kindness, or so vicious as not to be influenced by gentle treatment.

I do not approve of a woman, once she is in the saddle, entering upon a lengthy address of endearment to her horse if she is riding with friends. They may care for a little of her attention themselves; it is just as well not to show them the horse is the more interesting, even if she feels so. [Talking to Horse]

Moreover, incessant chatter becomes after a little time so familiar to the animal that the voice loses its power when intended to convey a definite meaning, and he fails to distinguish the difference between commands and idle pettings. [181]

It is only necessary to reprove him, to give words of command, such as "walk," "trot," "canter," "whoa," which he may easily be taught to obey, and a few words accompanied by a caress to soothe, encourage, or command him when the occasion presents itself.

When living in the country, with a stable near the house, a woman is afforded the most favorable opportunity of making friends with her horse.

A good way to begin will be to dismount at the stable after a ride and take off the saddle and bridle.

It is very simple, for it is only to unbuckle the outside leather girth, stirrup leather, two inside girths, and perhaps a balance strap, and take off the saddle, unfasten the throat latch, lip strap, and curb chain on the bridle, throw the reins over his head, and take hold of the headstall, when he will withdraw his head. [182]

She must have his halter ready to put on at once, or he might pull away.

This will give him a pleasant impression of her, which is an important point gained.

Should she through some mistake find no one in the stable, and the horse in a heat at the end of her ride, she should not hesitate to scrape him herself, brush the mud off his legs, put a light blanket on him, give him only a mouthful of water, and put him in his stall with a little hay. If she will rub his ears, and sponge out his mouth, it will be a great relief to him.

All this should be accomplished in a quiet manner, nothing done to alarm or excite him; and she may talk to him most of the time, and thus become quite friendly with him. [183]

When she visits him in the stall, she should always speak before touching him or entering, otherwise he might be startled and kick or plunge from fright. [In the Stall]

If in a standing stall, entrance should always be made at the near side of the horse.

I greatly prefer a loose box in which the horse may turn at his pleasure. If he eats too much of his bedding, it is better to keep a leather muzzle on him than to tie his head up.

Before opening the door of the box, he should be induced to face it, to avoid the possibility of his kicking. This can be managed by offering him some sugar, carrots, or oats, which he will come for, held quietly on the palm of the hand, with the fingers out of his reach. [184]

It is well for a woman, at first, to keep a light hold of the halter, so that he cannot crush her against the wall or hit her with his head. She should never put her head above his, or a severe knock may be the result. She should pet him, avoiding all sudden movements, and accustom him to her voice; when it has become familiar to him, he will listen for it, and neigh at her approach.

If he seems inclined to kick, the closer she keeps to him the better, as then she will receive only a shove, instead of the full force of the blow. If he shows a tendency to nip or bite, from play or mischief, he should be muzzled until, by coaxing and kindness, he has been made to give it up.

To strike him would be to turn his playful though dangerous prank into a vicious habit. [185]

In petting him she should begin by stroking his neck, and gradually work down and backwards with a firm, light touch, until he does not resent being handled. He must be taught to let her lean on any part of him, and not to fear her skirts. This is often of value in case a woman is thrown and her habit catches on the saddle; for if the horse were accustomed to her weight and skirt being against him, he would not become frightened. Knowing her voice, he might be quieted by it, and had he learned the important lesson of stopping at the word "whoa," she might escape being dragged.

If in the course of a ride a woman dismounts at a house or stable, she should always be sure that

a light blanket is immediately thrown over her horse. She should not start for a ride until some time after her horse has been fed, or his digestion will become impaired, as would hers under similar circumstances. After mounting, it is always well, by a light hold of the snaffle, to make a horse walk a short while; it is most annoying to have him start with a series of plunges or an inclination to bolt. [186]

On the Road

If he is so fresh that he will not walk without restraint likely to irritate him, perhaps spoiling his temper for the rest of the ride, it will be better to let him indulge in a brisk trot, after which he may be brought back to a walk. The next time, if having had more work, he will walk at first, while had his mouth been jerked the previous time, or a fight ensued, he would remember it, and prepare for a repetition of the performance.

A horse should not of his own will be allowed to change his gaits, but his rider must think to vary them; for if the horse is kept on one too long, it tires him unnecessarily and causes him to travel carelessly. Whatever gait she makes him adopt, it should be distinct and regular, and he should be kept collected and not urged beyond the pace at which he can comfortably travel. [187]

A jog-trot, trotting in front and cantering behind, and other such eccentricities, should not be permitted in a park hack.

Cautions

In turning a corner, the horse should always be somewhat supported, and have his hind-legs brought well under him, or he will be liable to slip. He should never be cantered around a corner unless leading with the foot towards which he will turn.

He should not be pulled up abruptly, unless to avoid sudden obstacles, but his pace should be gradually decreased until it is as required. A sharp stop entails considerable strain on the back tendons and hocks, and if done too often would be apt to make the horse throw a curb. [188]

In going downhill, a walk is the gait which should be taken, or the horse's fore-legs will suffer. Should the ground be uneven and rough, or covered with rolling stones, the horse ought to be permitted to walk. His head should not be held too tightly, or he will be unable to see where he is going, while if the reins are slack he will appreciate that he must pick his way, and then will seldom put a foot wrong.

It is most undesirable to canter where there is a hard road; nothing will more quickly use up a horse than pounding along, each stride laying the foundation of windgalls and stiffness, if nothing more serious results from this ill-advised practice. [189]

If a horse is at all warm, he must never be allowed to stand in a draught; five minutes of it might founder him, so that he would be ruined, or thrown into pneumonia. If, while on her ride, a woman should be forced to wait, she must keep her horse moving in a circle or any other way, keeping his chest from the wind as much as possible. Before reaching home, the horse should be walked for some time, so that he may enter the stable cool, and not be endangered by draughts if not attended to at once.

When riding with others, their horses should be regarded; and as the woman sets the pace, she should not make it faster than that which her companions' horses can easily maintain. [190]

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XII

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PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE STABLE

The woman should visit her horse in the stable, and there she cannot talk to him too much. If it be a private one, I assume that it is constructed on hygienic principles; but as horses are frequently boarded at livery-stables, a woman should not leave the choice of a stall to her groom. She should see that of those procurable it is the best drained and ventilated, though free from draughts, and well lighted. If these conditions are not obtained, sickness and incapacity may be looked for in the horse. She should notice the feed occasionally, and see that her horse is supplied with all he requires, and of the best quality, and that he has an abundance of good bedding. A frequent or indiscriminate use of physics is to be deprecated. Pure air, good food, careful grooming, and regular, moderate exercise are the best tonics. [193]

Stabling

She must learn to pick up her horse's feet, as she should examine his shoes personally, and ascertain that they have been made to fit the feet, instead of the horn being rasped away to fit the shoes. The soles must be pared, but the frogs and bars should not be interfered with. She cannot expect to have the shoes on more than a month; although, if the horse has not had enough work to wear them down, they may be removed and put on again, for were they worn too long, corns and inflammation, causing lameness, would be the result. Another reason for knowing how to lift his feet is that he might pick up a stone on the road, and if alone she would be obliged to take it out, or run the risk of seriously laming him. While a woman is playing with him is an excellent opportunity for her to look at her horse's feet, which should be taken up in the following manner. [194]

Picking up Feet

She must stand on his near side, a trifle back of his fore-legs, and facing his hind ones. She

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should run her left hand from his knee to his fetlock, behind, and inside of his near fore-leg, grasping just below his fetlock, with the fingers on the coronet and the thumb above on the pastern. A horse which has been broken will yield his foot, bending his knee at once, but sometimes with such force that she must keep her head held up, so that there be no chance of contact with his heel. With the right hand she can examine his foot, after which she may pass to his off fore-foot, and then to the near hind-leg.

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For this she must stand close to his side, and stroke him firmly from the quarters to the hock. Passing her right hand under his hock to his fetlock, and grasping his foot as she did the fore one, she must raise it, letting the hock rest in the angle of her arm, while with her right hand she turns up the foot for inspection. She must not lean too far over or get back of the horse, or she is likely to be kicked if he offers any resistance.

Then, too, she may unfasten the roller and throw back his blanket, that she may be sure the saddle has not rubbed his back. A slight abrasion of the skin, if treated at once, will require only a day or two to heal; but if neglected for some days, the time will be greatly prolonged. If any soreness is detected, the saddle should be looked to immediately and the cause of the trouble remedied.

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A shining coat is not positive proof that the horse is properly groomed. The hair should be rubbed the wrong way, and if the skin leaves a whitish deposit on the fingers, it will be well for the horse's owner to watch the groom the next time the horse is dressed, and to insist upon its being thoroughly done.

Grooming

Much of what seems to be vice in a horse comes from his having been imperfectly bitted when young, or from subsequently having his mouth roughly handled. He should always be ridden in as easy a bit as possible, as some horses go well and quietly in a plain snaffle, and will pull, bolt, or run in a curb or any severe contrivance. No rule can be given as to what bit will best control certain tendencies. Experimenting with each kind will be the only means of finding out, but pulling is as likely to arise from an over-sensitive mouth as from a hard one, in which case a rubber snaffle might prove efficacious where a Chifney would fail.

Bitting

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Sometimes certain parts of the mouth become callous, and a bit bearing on a different place might produce the desired result. Most horses will go well in a bit and bridoon, varied to suit their peculiarities by the height of the port, the length of the branches, and the pressure of the curb-chain. There are certain points which should always be regarded. The mouth-piece must fit the horse's mouth exactly, being neither so narrow as to pinch him, nor so wide as to lose its power. The port should be the same width as the tongue-channel, and no higher than required to leave room for the tongue. The curb-chain must be sufficiently tight to furnish leverage for the branches, yet not so tight as to pinch the jaw when no force is applied.

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Clipping horses in winter I have heard objected to on the ground of its being unsafe to deprive them of the thick coat which affords protection from the cold. If their coat is thick and long, it is, in my opinion, much wiser to clip them, and for several very good reasons. Their work is rarely continuous, and the alternating of the heated with the cooling-off condition is very liable to work more or less injury. A heavy-coated horse which has been driven until very warm, and then left for half an hour to stand outside of a shop or house and become chilled by the wind striking the heavy wet coat, which frequently does not dry for hours, is likely to become a subject for the veterinary.

Clipping

On the other hand, if the horse is clipped, he does not get so warm in the first place, and, in the second, would cool off more quickly and without danger of becoming chilled. In very cold weather quarter blankets will furnish all the protection necessary, and prevent the wind from striking the horse while standing.

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With saddle horses, although not so important, it is an advantage to have them clipped, because a cold day is certain to make the rider go steadily to keep warm, and the horse, becoming overheated (if his coat is heavy), is in great danger of taking cold if permitted to stand for a moment in a draught.

No woman who rides should be without a practical knowledge of how to saddle and bridle her horse, as the groom often turns him out imperfectly bitted or girthed; and unless she knows how to do it herself, she will not perceive that anything is wrong until too late to prevent mischief. She should learn to hold the bridle by the headstall, in her left hand, as with the right she slips off the horse's halter, and throws the reins over his head. Then change it to the right hand, putting her left on the bits, which she gently inserts between his jaws. With the right she must pull his ears under the headstall, and then turn her attention to fitting the bridle.

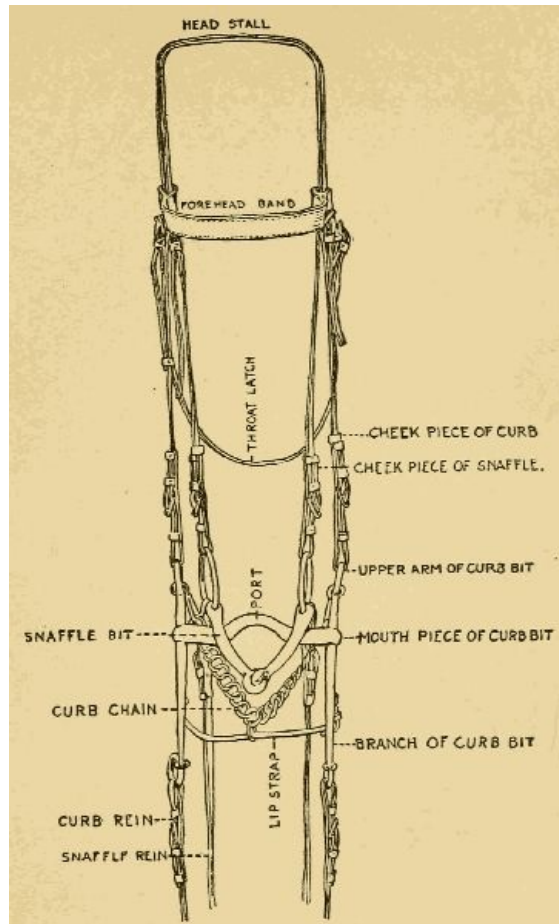
Bridling

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She must see that the headstall fits, that the forehead-band is not too tight, and that there is plenty of room between the throat-latch and the throat. The snaffle-rein is fitted by the buckles of the cheek-piece, and should fall a trifle below the angle of the mouth. The curb needs careful adjustment, that the mouth-piece may rest exactly on the bars of the mouth. Then the chain must be hooked when quite flat on the chin-groove, but not tight enough, unless used vigorously, to inconvenience the horse. The lip-strap should pass through the small ring attached to the curb-chain, thus keeping it in place. I like a bridle with buckles, or billets as they are called, rather than one which is stitched to the rings. In the first place, it is frequently desirable to change the

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bits, especially in a large stable, and being sewed would necessitate a bridle for each bit. Furthermore, when the bits are washed, the leather gets wet, and the stitching is apt to become rotten, and unexpectedly give way at a critical moment, when some unusual strain is put on it.



DOUBLE BRIDLE FOR GENERAL USE

A noseband furnishes additional control over a horse; but it should not be attached to the bridle, or it may interfere with the action of the bit. It should have a headstall and cheek-pieces, and be buckled tight enough to prevent the horse from opening his mouth too wide, but it must not restrain his breathing.

Noseband

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If a martingale is used, I much prefer a running to a standing one. It is useful with star-gazers or horses that get their noses out too far. Some horses need one to steady them in hunting, but the running martingale is the only one which should be tolerated in jumping, and then not be used unless necessary. It is attached to a girth, and at the two upper ends are sewed rings through which the snaffle passes. With a running martingale there must be a stop on each snaffle, considerably larger than the rings of the martingale; otherwise there is danger of these rings getting caught in the bits, frightening the horse, and making him rear or back, as there is no way to release the pressure thus brought on his mouth. The length should be carefully regulated, so that it will keep the horse's head at the desired height. This admits of considerable play to the horse, but within control of the rider, while with a standing martingale no liberty is attainable. Once mounted, the rider cannot influence its bearing; and should the horse trip, he cannot fling up his head, as he must to regain his balance.

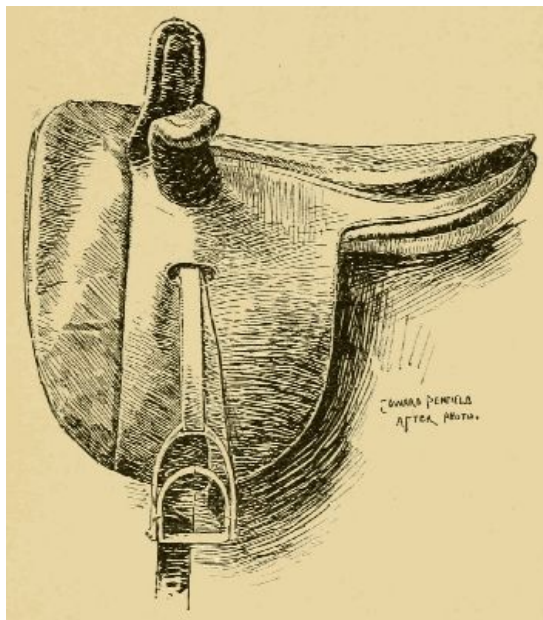
Martingale

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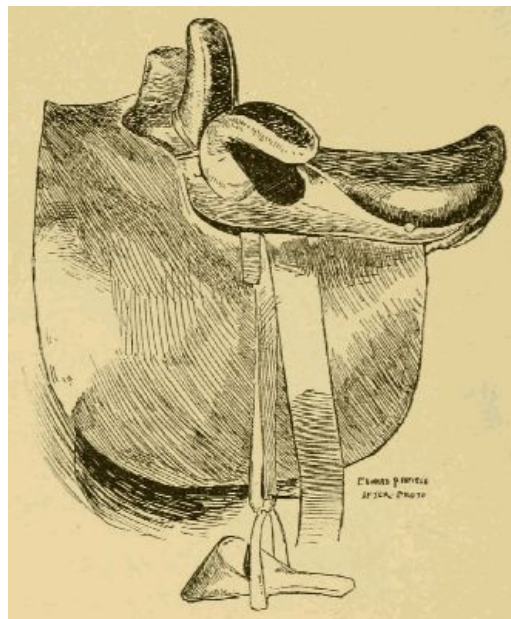
For ordinary riding a breast-plate is not always used, but in hunting it is almost indispensable, and is always a safeguard against a woman's saddle slipping back. It is put on over the horse's head with the reins, and one strap passes between his fore-legs, through the loop of which one of the girths passes. Two other ends buckle, one on each side of the saddle, near the horse's withers, and it should be loose enough to admit of free movement in galloping and jumping.

Breast-plate

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CORRECT SADDLE



UNDESIRABLE SADDLE

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The saddle should be very plain in appearance. It must have a level seat, which can only be obtained in those having the tree cut away above the withers; otherwise, the saddle must be so elevated in front that it is sometimes six inches higher than the cantle, placing the knee in an awkward and fatiguing position, and it is impossible to rise without an unusual amount of exertion, which will lead to arching the back, thrusting the head forward, and probably galling the horse's withers. There should be no third pommel, such as there formerly was on the right side of the saddle, bending to the left over the right leg.

The Saddle

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The two pommels must fit the knees exactly, or the circulation will be impeded, and a cramp brought on which renders the muscles powerless to grip the pommels. The seat must extend about an inch beyond the line of the spine, and, although I usually object to it, for a child the seat should be covered with buckskin. No more padding should be used than is required to fit the horse's back, as it looks badly for the top of the saddle to be several inches above the horse. Moreover, the nearer one is to the animal's back, the greater will be the control. It enables one more readily to detect the stiffening of the muscles when mischief is contemplated, and to be prepared to thwart it. It should not have any superfluous straps, stitching, or attempts at ornamentation: the simpler the style the better; even the slit on the saddle-flap for the pocket is now frequently dispensed with. A safety pommel-band is sometimes fastened from the extreme upper forward end of the right saddle-flap to the top of the right pommel, thence to the left. This lessens the likelihood of a skirt becoming caught.

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On no account should a slipper stirrup be used, but a safety stirrup without any padding, and one which does not work by having the bottom drop out, as these are apt to come to pieces when least desired, leaving the foot without any support. The best kind have the inner half-circle jointed in the middle and working on a hinge at both sides, so that it can open only on being pulled from below, as in case of a fall. Next to this in safety comes a plain, small racing stirrup.

Stirrup

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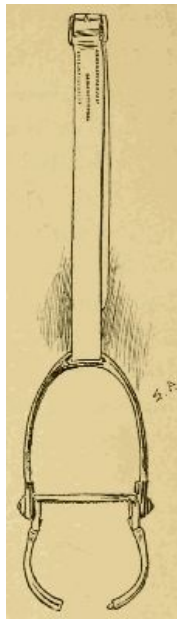


**SAFETY
STIRRUP,
CLOSED**

The Fitz-William web girths are the best for a woman's saddle, white being used in preference to darker shades. There are braided raw-hide and also cord girths, the former being very serviceable, but they do not look so well as either of the others.

Girths

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**SAFETY
STIRRUP,
OPEN**

When the saddle is in position, free from the play of the shoulders, the first girth is taken up, then the back one, and kept clear of the horse's elbows, that his action may not be impeded. Although pulling the girths excessively tight is to be avoided, it will not do to leave them loose, as a woman's unevenly distributed weight might cause the saddle to turn. Any wrinkles in the skin caused by the girthing should be smoothed away by passing the fingers between the girths and the horse. Then the stirrup-leather is buckled, after this the outside leather strap that keeps the saddle-flap in place, and finally the balance-strap, which must be fairly tight, assists in keeping the saddle in position. Before mounting she should always glance at the saddle and bridle, and be sure that they are properly put on; otherwise her ride may be rendered uncomfortable, if not dangerous.

Saddling

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XIII

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SOMETHING ON DRIVING

Ninety-nine women out of every hundred are firmly convinced that instruction is by no means necessary to their driving safely and in good

Desirability of

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form. Four men out of five labor under the same delusion. It is a sad error, that leads to numberless failures, and many accidents which might so easily be avoided if the services of a competent teacher were employed at the beginning. Having seen others drive without any apparent difficulty, the novice conceives the notion that there is nothing to learn which cannot be mastered without assistance after one or two attempts. If such a one escapes a bill of damages, it should be credited to the ministering care of her guardian angel. She may indeed escape accident; she may learn to start without dislocating the neck of every one in the trap, and get around the corner without an upset; but she will never learn to *drive*. There is something more for her to know than that she must pull the off rein to turn to the right and the near one to go to the left, though this appears to be the extent of knowledge deemed necessary.

Instruction

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Women, even more than men, require a thorough understanding of what they are doing, for they lack the strength to rectify a miscalculation at the last moment. The ignorance, indecision, and weakness frequently displayed by women in driving are what so often render them objects of apprehension to experienced whips.

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It is folly for any woman to flatter herself that she needs only a little practice, and that the rest "will come." If she has not begun correctly, practice will only wed her to the faults she must have acquired.

Assuming, however, for the sake of argument, that, after having discounted her call on an all-protecting Providence and stricken with terror her long-suffering friends, she manages to guide the family nag along the turnpike without the aid of a civil escort to clear the road before her—what of it? She hasn't learned anything; her form is execrable; and in case of an emergency she is quite as unprepared as when she took up the reins weeks before, with the ill-conceived notion that she was not of the common clay, and that, a whip, rather than a rattle, had been the insignia of her infantile days.

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How much better, safer, and more sensible to acquire good form than by its neglect to become an object of ridicule to those who, by their knowledge of driving and exposition of superior horsemanship, are entitled to criticise others who have disregarded proper instruction, and, wise in their own conceit, relied on their ignorance for guidance.

Some women there are who drive only because they consider it the "proper thing." Absorbed in the opportunity for display, and ignorant of the fitness of things, they array themselves in the treasures of their wardrobe, more likely than not to be a gay silk, and, with every discordant ribbon and flounce of their *bizarre* costume loudly challenging the attention of the on-lookers, they sally forth perched on the box of a spider phaeton, Tilbury, or dog-cart, indifferent to, because ignorant of, the incongruity of their turnout, unconscious of the signal they have flung to the breeze, which unmistakably proclaims their lack of early instruction.

Vulgar Display

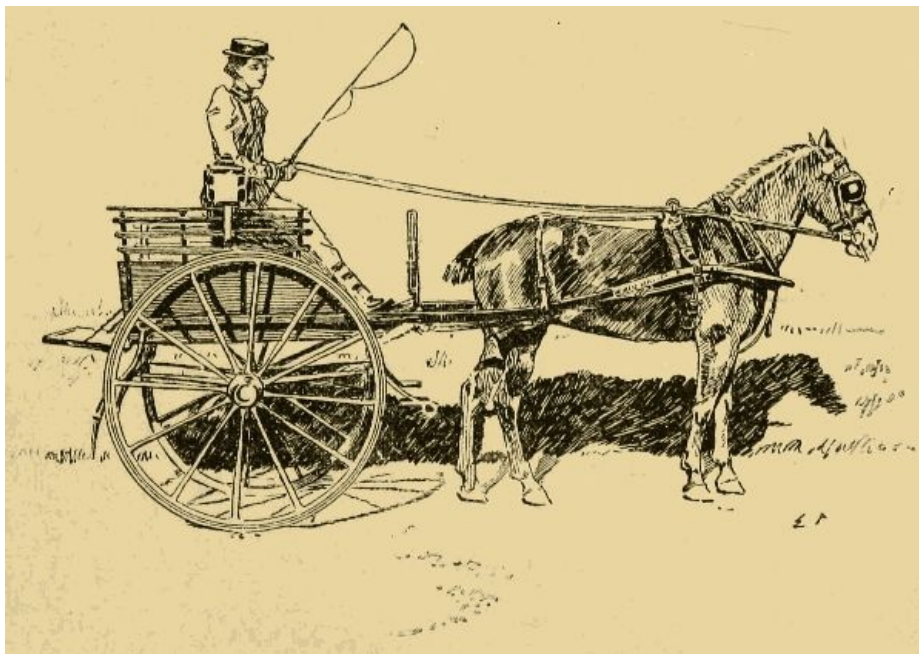
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These are they who in the handling of their animals instantly call to mind the puppet-shows of our childhood days, and fill us with an almost irresistible desire to look under the box-seat and discover who is working the invisible wires. Every movement is spasmodic—the arms work as though an alternating electric current were constantly being turned through them—the hands finger the reins nervously; and if the vehicle happens to be a two-wheeler, the unhappy driver looks as though every jolt of the poorly balanced cart would send her into the road from her very insecure seat.

Bad Form

Another harrowing spectacle is that of the woman leaning forward, a rein in each hand, with her arms dragged almost over the dash-board by her horse's mouth, a look of direful expectancy in her eyes, and a much be-flowered and be-ribboned hat occupying unmolested a rakish position over one ear, where it has fallen during her hopeless struggle with the reins.

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A WELL-BALANCED CART

It is strange women should not have a sufficiently clear idea of the fitness of things to realize that elaborate toilets of silks, laces, and flowers, and large hats, although appropriate in a victoria, are inconvenient and totally out of place when driving a sporting-trap, such as a dog-cart.

Costume

A plain, neatly fitting, but not tight cloth suit, with a small hat, which will not catch the wind, is far more serviceable and in better taste. However, she should avoid the other extreme affected by the woman who desires to appear masculine and "sporty," and who, showing a large expanse of shirt front, wears a conspicuous plaid suggestive of a horse-blanket.

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This specimen of feminine "horsy-ness" invariably drives with her hands held almost under her chin, and her whip in as vertical a position as herself. She is as powerless to control her animal as is the one who leans over the dash-board.

This is the sort of woman who compels her groom, if she have one, to wear a cockade in his hat, in ignorance of the fact that we in this country have no claim to its use. In Great Britain it is the distinguishing mark of either the royal family or the military, naval, or civil officers of the government; but used here it is only a meaningless affectation.

Cockade

To achieve success, and to obtain a business-like appearance in driving, a woman must possess confidence in her power to control her horses, and it must be the confidence derived from knowledge and skill, and not that born of ignorance or fool-hardiness.

Confidence

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She must know what to do, and how to do it promptly, under all circumstances, and this necessitates a thorough comprehension of the sport she is pursuing.

It is to be hoped she will gain this from competent instruction, and that she will embrace every opportunity of adding to her information on the subject.

A quiet, steady old horse, such as one might expect to see doing farm-work, cannot always be recommended even to a beginner, for he generally requires so little management that when he does occasionally become unruly it is so unusual that the woman is taken unawares.

The "Family-Horse"
Fallacy

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Moreover, it makes one careless and slovenly always to drive a horse which goes along in a leisurely manner, without any display of life.

A woman who has been accustomed to such an animal will be at a loss to manage a spirited pair, should she be called upon to do so. If she begin with a horse which goes well into his collar and does his work generously, she will learn twice as much as she would in the same time with a lazy horse, and will sooner be able to drive a pair.

The position on the driving seat should be comfortable and firm, which cannot be the case when it is used merely to lean against, instead of to sit upon.

On the Box

From the knee down, the leg should be but slightly bent, with the feet together and resting against the foot-rail.

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The elbows should be held near the body, and the reins in the left hand, with the little finger down, and the knuckles pointing straight ahead, about on a line with or a trifle below the waist, and in the middle of the body.

Whether driving one or two horses, the manner of holding the reins is the same; but more strength and decision, as well as the judgment which, of course, experience will bring, are required for the pair.

The near rein belongs on top of the first finger, held there firmly by the thumb, and the off rein should be between the second and third fingers.

Position of Reins

The gloves should be large, broad across the knuckles, and long in the fingers; otherwise cold, stiff hands will result from the impeded circulation.

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The right hand, close to the left, should contain the whip, which must be held at an angle of a little less than forty-five degrees, and at the collar, about eight to ten inches from the butt, so that it balances properly.

When about to start, the reins should be tightened, to feel the horse's mouth, and a light touch of the whip will suffice to send him forward. The hand should then yield, so that as he straightens the traces there will be no jerk on his mouth.

Handling Reins

In turning to the right or to the left, the reins must not be separated.

The right hand should be placed on the rein, indicating the desired direction, until the turn has been made; but a slight pressure on the opposite rein should keep the horse from going too near a corner.

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The left hand must not relax its hold, so that when the right is removed the reins will be even, as they were before.

In stopping, the body is not to be bent backwards, suggestive of an expected shock, and the hands raised to the chin.

It cannot be too strongly impressed on the woman's mind that the less perceptible effort she makes, the more skilful will she appear. Therefore, if she take hold of the reins with her right hand as far in front of the left as she can handily reach, and then draw them back, she will have accomplished her purpose in a quiet and easy manner.

Driving a pair is much the same as driving one horse; but allowances should be made for the peculiarities of each, and they should not be treated as though machines of identical construction.

A Pair

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Frequently a woman driving a nervous horse with a quiet one will hit them both with the whip, when, should she touch the quiet one only, the sound of it would urge the other as much as the blow does the dull one.

Here is another objection to clucking to horses: one of them needs it much more than the other, yet they hear it with equal clearness, and simultaneously; therefore the high-mettled horse increases his pace sooner and more than his sluggish companion, and does more than his share of the work. Several noiseless touches of the whip, administered in quick succession to the laggard, will do more to equalize their pace than would a sharp, loud cut or any amount of clucking.

Sometimes a woman will experience great inconvenience from not having her horses properly bitted and harnessed. This should always be seen to, either by herself or some one who is competent to judge for her. When she has more than one horse to control, she will soon become tired if one of them pulls and the other will not go into his collar.

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A judicious readjustment of the curb-chain and the coupling-rein will often make the difference between discomfort and ease.

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XIV

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SOMETHING MORE ON DRIVING

While a horse is doing his work in a satisfactory manner he should not be irritated by having his mouth jerked and the whip applied for the driver's amusement. It is a pity all women do not realize that a horse will accomplish, with less fatigue, much more work when taken quietly than he will if fretted and tormented by needless urging or restraint. Constant nagging affects an animal in the same way as it does a human being; and though a horse is usually subjected to such treatment through want of thought, it is none the less exasperating to him.

Management

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One result of this ordeal is that it prompts him to break into a canter as he becomes restless; and then he must be brought back to a trot by decreasing the speed and keeping the hands steady.

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A stumbling horse must be kept awake and going at a medium rate of speed. In either a very fast trot or a slow one he is likely to trip, and unless his driver is prepared for it, and ready to keep him up, he will

Stumbling

probably fall, and she may be pulled over the dash-board.

A bearing-rein may assist in keeping him on his feet, but an habitual stumbler can never be considered safe. Such a horse must not be driven with loose reins, as a feeling on his mouth is necessary at all times.

When a horse persistently backs, there are two great dangers: first, he may upset the carriage, unless it cuts under; and, secondly, he may back into something or over an embankment.

Backing

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If the road be level, a woman must try to keep the horse from backing to one side, although in case of a steep declivity it may be necessary to pull him sideways, and risk an overturn rather than a fall over a bank. In all events, the whip should be vigorously applied, in the hope of starting the horse forward; if the woman have a groom with her, he should go to the horse's head at once and lead him.

Occasionally, backing may arise from sore shoulders caused by an ill-fitting collar; but if there is no such excuse for his action, and it should become a habit, the horse is not suitable for any woman to drive.

If desirous of making a turn in a narrow lane, it will often be necessary to back off the road, between trees or on to a foot-path, to obtain room. Some horses will not back under these circumstances, nor from a shed where they have been tied. In most instances all that will be required is to get out, take the horse by his bridle, and by lightly tapping one foot make him raise it, at the same time pushing him back by the bit. The other foot should be moved in the same way, and this repeated until he has gone far enough. After a few steps the woman may resume her seat, with the probability of the horse backing without further resistance.

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If the horse is nervous, the pull at his mouth may make him back so fast that in his excitement he will rear. In this event the reins should be loosened a moment and the animal quieted, after which the backing process may be continued.

Rearing and Kicking

If the rearing comes from temper, and takes place when he has been going forward, there should be no weight on his mouth while he seems in danger of falling backward, but a cut of the whip administered as he comes down may prevent his trying it again. It is important to feel his mouth at this juncture, as the whip will make him plunge forward, and the hold on his mouth must be firm enough to keep the traces loose as he lands; otherwise there would be a sudden strain on them, and consequently an unpleasant jerk, which might bring the carriage on to his hocks, as he stopped to gather himself for another effort, and, even if it did not make him kick or run, he would probably be bruised.

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A determined kicker needs to have his head kept up, and for this purpose a bearing-rein will be found of great service. He should be driven with a kicking-strap, but it must not be too tight, or it will induce the habit it is intended to cure. He may kick if the crupper is too tight, so this also should be looked to.

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When a rein gets under the tail of a horse, under no circumstances should an attempt be made to pull it away. It should be pushed forward, and the horse spoken to in a reassuring manner.

Rein under Tail

If he does not then release it, a slight cut of the whip may divert his attention; he will whisk his tail, and at this instant the rein must be allowed to fall to one side, as were it pulled directly up, it would be likely to be caught again. If these methods do not prove efficacious, a woman must try to keep the horse straight, and prevail upon him to walk until some one sees her predicament and comes to her assistance. In some traps she might be able to reach forward and remedy the difficulty, meanwhile watching for any symptoms of kicking. But whether she does it herself or directs some one else, she must see that the tail is lifted, instead of an effort being made to pull the rein away.

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Many mishaps come from this seemingly trivial occurrence, and a horse frightened by improper treatment is liable to bolt or run.

It is always an excellent plan to have a horse trained to stop short at the word "whoa!" This expression is usually misapplied, being made to do duty for "steady" or "quiet," and it will be difficult to teach a horse its true significance unless he is never driven without this end in view, and the term employed only when it is meant.

In the event of a horse bolting, the chances are very great against a woman's checking him. If she can do it at all, it will be by sawing his mouth, and giving a succession of sharp jerks, while endeavoring to control his course.

Bolting and Running

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The most dangerous and irrational thing she can do is to jump out of the trap.

Severe injuries almost invariably attend such a proceeding; and if it be possible to stay in, she should do so, never relinquishing her hold on the reins. If from the swaying of the carriage she seems in danger of being thrown out, a woman must make sure that her skirts are not caught on anything, and that her feet are clear of the reins.

Men sometimes pull a runaway horse into a ditch or up a steep bank, which stops him; but a smash or an overturn is inevitable; and should a woman attempt this, there is great danger of her being unable to extricate herself from the tangle. She is handicapped by her skirts, which are more than likely to cause her to be dragged should the horse manage to start off again. Besides this, after a struggle such as she will have had, a woman will seldom have enough strength left to force a horse from the direction he has chosen. [239]

In whatever pranks horses indulge, the dangers are multiplied and intensified when encountered by a woman who ventures to drive in a crowded park or avenue during the afternoon. Crowded Driveways

Women of culture and refinement, realizing this, and wishing to avoid making themselves conspicuous on public highways, are content to be driven at this hour, reserving the mornings for the pleasure of handling the reins themselves. [240]

Some women there are who drive better than most coachmen, and a few of these may desire to display their skill and their well-appointed traps when the spectators are most numerous. They may be competent to make their way through such a maze as one finds on popular carriage roads, but they do it in defiance of the condemnation they will receive from people of more refined ideas.

The majority of women who drive are unable to control their horses, and they need not flatter themselves that their immunity from accidents is the result of their skill. They owe their safety to the fact that men, appreciating the uncertainty of their movements, give them plenty of room, and keep as far as they can from anything driven by a woman. [241]

Such women would be less objectionable if they were more considerate of others. For example, they should keep on their own side of the drive, and, if they are going slowly, as much to the right of it as possible, that those who desire to pass may not have their way blocked. Road Courtesy

Again, they should remember that some one is behind them, and that they should not endeavor to turn or stop abruptly without having intimated their intention to those in the rear.

Another heedless thing they do is, in passing a leading trap to turn in ahead of it so sharply that a more careful driver is forced to pull up rather than endanger his horses by having the wheels swing against them.

Women seem to forget now and then that they must always pass to the left of a vehicle in front of them, and not try to get through a small space on its right. If they would only take a few lessons in driving, pay attention to the instruction they receive, and cultivate consideration for others, their presence on the box might be welcomed more frequently and with greater warmth than it now is. [242]

It would be well if equestrians rode with more regard for the convenience of those who are driving. When a bridle-path is provided for them, there is no reason why they should usurp any of the road intended for carriages. They would feel outraged, and justly so, if one vehicle should appear on their road; yet swarms of them daily use the drive, occupying much-needed space, and clattering and darting along, unmindful of startled horses and the narrow escapes of their own mounts from collisions with many wheels. [243]

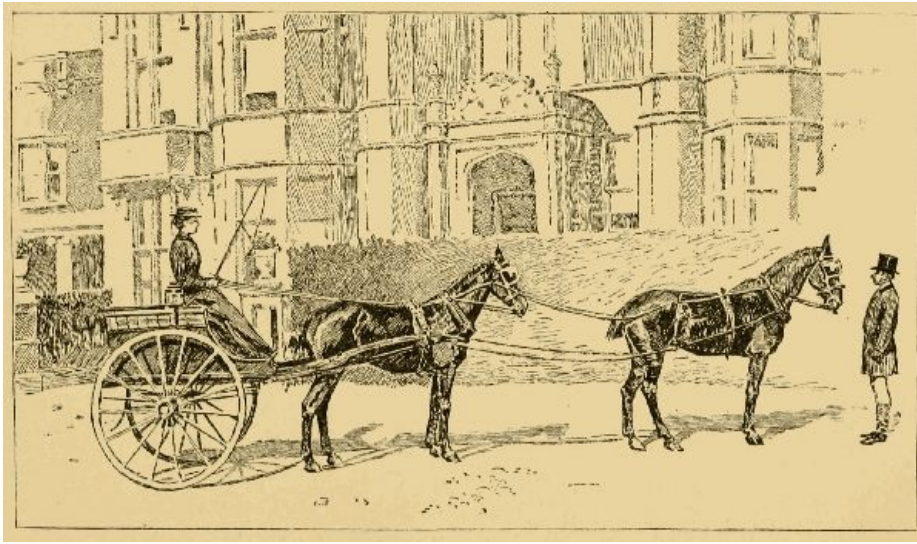
Comparatively few women are so fortunate as to have an opportunity to drive tandem or four-in-hand. If they are so situated that they would be likely to do so frequently, they should not hesitate to take lessons, as otherwise they would slowly learn from many dangerous and costly experiences what a trustworthy teacher could have shown them with safety and expedition. However, it is well to be prepared for all contingencies, and therefore many women may desire to know something about these branches of driving, in case they should in some unforeseen manner have an opportunity to essay them. Tandems and Teams

If, for instance, she were driving with a friend who offered to let her take the reins, a woman would not be expected to look to the harnessing and biting, but there are a few points she might be glad to know. [244]

The reins are held the same in tandem and team-driving. The first finger separates the leaders' reins, and the second those of the wheelers, with each near rein above the off one. Thus over the first finger will be the near leader, under it the off leader, and between this rein and the second finger the near wheeler, with the off wheeler between the second and third fingers. The right hand must be free to hold the whip and to manipulate the reins. Reins

The off-wheel rein will often need attention, as the third finger is not so strong as the other two used, and therefore this rein will more readily slip through.

In changing a rein it must always be done by pushing it back from in front of the hand, instead of pulling it through from behind.



POSITION IN TANDEM

The correct handling of the whip can be mastered only after much patience and constant practice, but its proper use is of paramount importance. [245]

Women will find driving tandem easier than driving four, because, although it requires more skill to keep the horses straight, it does not call for the amount of muscle needed to manage four horses, the brake, and whip.

At first the weight alone of the reins would tire her, and of course there are more chances of mishaps with four horses than with two. In the latter the leader has no horse at his side to steady him; but if well trained he will travel straight, and not attempt to turn around and join the wheeler. Should he do this, and not respond to the reins, the whip should hit his neck with force sufficient to make him change his mind. [246]

Unruly Leader

As a last resort, the wheeler must be turned to follow him, and then they must both be made to proceed in the direction desired by the driver. If the leader, instead of being exactly in front of the wheeler, gets too far to the right, his near rein should be shortened; but the wheeler must be made to meet him half-way by pulling his off rein at the same time. In the opposite case the off-lead and near-wheel reins must be shortened.

To turn a corner, say to the left, with a tandem or a four, the near-lead rein should be looped by taking up several inches, pushing it back of the forefinger, and holding it there in this shape with the thumb. The right hand must be placed on both off reins, to guard against the turn being made too sharply, and the cart or coach being brought into contact with the corner. To turn to the right, the reverse tactics are employed, but it is more difficult to loop the off rein. [247]

Turning

When the corner has been successfully rounded, the right hand should be taken away and the left thumb raised, thus leaving the horses in a position to go straight.

In going downhill all the reins should be shortened, and care taken that the leaders' traces particularly are loose, or they may pull the wheelers down when these should be holding back the coach.

The wheelers should always, if possible, start and stop the load.

In going uphill the leaders must do their full share, and on the level each horse must be kept up to his work.

An unnecessary nervous fingering of the reins should be avoided, as, besides being most unworkmanlike, it irritates the horses. [248]

It is the height of folly for a woman to attempt to drive a tandem or a four-in-hand until she is thoroughly familiar with one horse and a pair. She may understand the theory of it, but until she has had some practice under proper instruction she should not take the reins, unless some one is near to assist her, or she will endanger not only her own safety, but jeopard that of those who may accompany her.

FINIS

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Transcriber's Note

Obvious typographical errors were corrected.

Hyphenation variants were retained as in the original.

Illustration List: "Hands and Seat in Rearing ... facing P. 66." The illustration was actually facing P. 64; it has been moved to P. 66.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HOW WOMEN SHOULD RIDE ***

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