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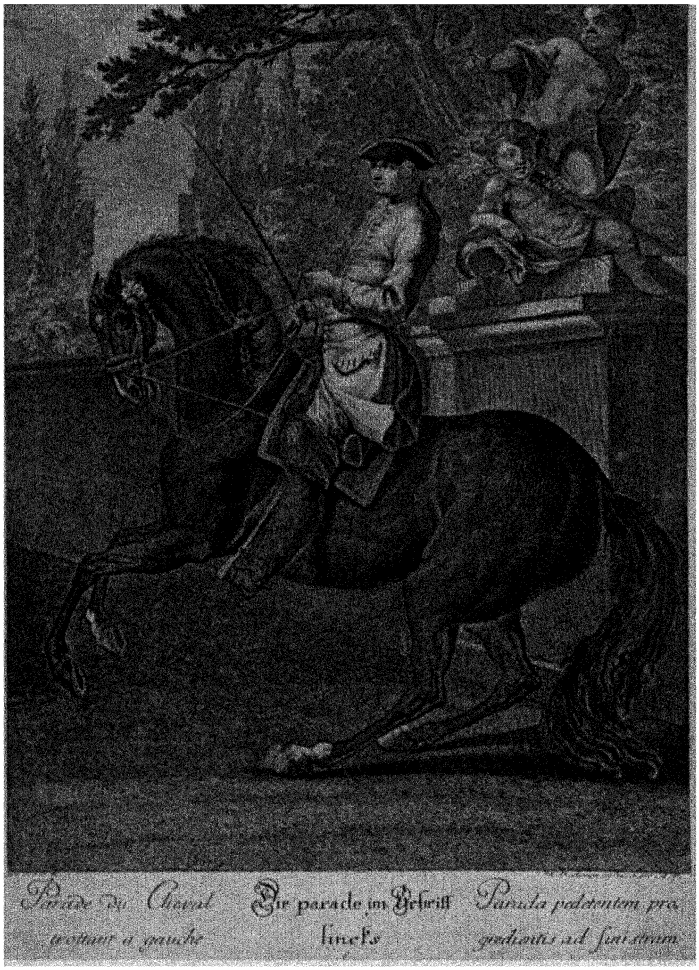
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HORSE-SENSE AND HORSEMANSHIP OF TO-DAY



AN EARLY CONCEPTION OF A BALANCED HORSE FROM AN OLD PRINT: VIENNA, 1730.

His powers of extension were expended in high action and pawing the air; his head maintained a fixed profile. His hocks so placed could propel his forehand upwards, but little else, as the horse's balance was fixed. Note the accentuated curve of the neck, the very lofty head carriage, his hind-limbs advanced to support the weight thus brought back and the consequent exaggerated head carriage. Such horses became practically muscle-bound and lost all powers of extension and speed.

Frontispiece.

HORSE-SENSE AND HORSEMANSHIP OF TO-DAY

ECONOMY AND METHOD IN TRAINING HUNTERS AND POLO PONIES

BY

GEOFFREY BROOKE

D.S.O., M.C., LT.-COL. 16TH/5TH LANCERS

CHIEF INSTRUCTOR, CAVALRY WING, EQUITATION SCHOOL, WEEDON

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY

GENERAL THE EARL OF CAVAN

K.P., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B.

AND

LORD WODEHOUSE, M.C.

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Dedication

THE Author respectfully dedicates this book to His Majesty the King of Spain, Colonel-in-Chief of the 16th/5th Lancers, a keen Sportsman himself and one who has always been interested in every form of sport connected with horses.

INTRODUCTION

By GENERAL THE EARL OF CAVAN
K.P., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B.

Alas! I am not an expert, but had this book been available forty years ago I might possibly have been a better horseman than I am.

Two chapters specially appeal to me:

Chapter IV. "The Rider's Seat over Fences."
Chapter IX. "A Lucky Day with Mr. X."

As regards the former, it is high time that some of our young enthusiasts were made to realise that there is a difference, or should be a difference, in the seat required for the five different objects for which they ride horses:

1. Schooling.
2. Hunting.
3. Point-to-point racing.
4. School jumping.
5. On parade.

I watched with great care that ill-famed drop fence in the Army point-to-point course at Arborfield, in 1922 and 1924. Not thirty per cent of the riders threw "the body back as the horse was about to land" (see page 33).

It would be equally distressing, if it were not for the sporting spirit displayed, to see a competitor at Olympia

attempt to complete that increasingly difficult course with a seat such as described on page 35, namely, that shown in photographs of the " National."

And now to Chapter IX.

I quarrel with the author on one point only of the great hunt he describes with such vivid imagination. Mr. X would never " look round " unless he were piloting a lady ! But how clear it is that the author enjoyed writing that chapter. " Not without a thrill of pleasure he remembers not only the fences he jumped, but also the lessons he learnt."

Yes, this book is for the young ; but the years go on, and in spite of some wonderful exceptions like Mr. Whitaker, first steeplechasing, then show-jumping, then point-to-point racing have to be given up and only hunting and hacking remain.

Then shall the old gentleman, brought up on the methods so simply advocated in this book, enjoy the perfect manners of his hunter and rejoice in the knowledge that produced them.

25th March 1924.

INTRODUCTION

By LORD WODEHOUSE, M.C.

After reading Col. Brooke's book, my only regret is that I had not the opportunity of doing so several years ago when I first started to play polo. The valuable information contained in the chapters dealing with choosing, training and riding polo ponies is so concisely and clearly put, that I feel that any one who carries out his instructions and follows his advice would without doubt be following the safest and surest method of making a first-class polo pony.

In spite of the amount of technical detail, I personally have found these chapters so explicit and interesting that I feel convinced that no one who cares about the game, from the oldest hand to the youngest novice, could fail to benefit by studying them carefully.

At the present moment there is an abnormal dearth of trained ponies, and for that matter a corresponding shortage of expert trainers. These conditions exist everywhere, though probably they are much less pronounced in America. The causes are undoubtedly due to the war and its after effects. There have been fewer suitable ponies bred in recent years, and even more limited is the number that have materialised into first-class tournament form. It must

be admitted that the expenses of the game are greater than in pre-war days, and though current expenses are gradually coming down, it is still evident that the question of finance will continue for some time to be the stumbling-block to many would-be enthusiasts. The problems we have to face are two. Firstly, the provision of enough trained ponies to keep the game going throughout the country. Secondly, the production of the very best type of highly trained polo ponies to enable this country to compete in International matches. Obviously those with limited purses cannot expect to be able to mount themselves on made ponies, which at present are very scarce, the best being very highly priced, as they always will be.

If we look further afield we find the same conditions.

There is a similar shortage in India, and I understand considerably fewer are being competently trained than in pre-war times.

Apart from the question of breeding, which is outside the scope of Col. Brooke's book, it appears to me that the first essential is to train on more polo pony trainers, who will work on scientific lines, by which means alone we can hope to deal with these two problems. The shortage in breeding will be largely compensated by fewer ponies being spoilt in training, and thus we shall have more tournament ponies in the market. The more expert trainers there are, the greater will be the number of International ponies appearing in the field. Owing to the phenomenal qualifications demanded of this class of pony, they must always be scarce and of very great value.

This book will be of the utmost assistance to many, in particular to those who are keen on the game and anxious to train their own ponies.

By working on the lines suggested, there will be less waste of horse-flesh, money and time. By this means we can hope to reduce failures to a minimum, and by enlarging the market of well-trained ponies, we proportionately increase the number suitable for International matches. Again, only if a man is a really good judge of young animals can he hope to obtain the raw material on which to work. The author has gone very fully into the details of purchase, and this chapter should enable the buyer to steer clear of many of the pitfalls and consequent disappointments.

We are most anxious to increase the numbers of our young players and keep infusing fresh blood into the game.

This book appears at a most opportune time, and I feel confident that it will stimulate the keenness and foster the knowledge of all recruits to the game. Possessed with the knowledge contained therein, they should be able to make their polo pay for itself, gradually increase the number and improve the standard of trained ponies, and incidentally vastly improve their horsemanship. It requires more than a superficial knowledge to compensate for the original outlay, and only the man who can select the right type of animal and train it to perfection will consistently meet with success. I agree most heartily with the author that even the most experienced players continually find there is something fresh to learn on the subject.

I have absolute confidence in recommending the book not only to my personal friends, but also to all lovers of horses.

November 1923.

FOREWORD

A GREAT deal that is contained in these chapters appeared some years ago, when the Author produced a book entitled *Training Young Horses to Jump*, 1913.

Since then the war has taken its toll of experienced horsemen. Fortunately, however, there are plenty of young men coming on who possess all the attributes of horsemen, but often miss the benefit of advice from the more experienced.

The Author has been influenced by the following reasons to publish this book :

1. That any experience of his own, such as it is, may be made available for those interested in the subject.
2. That frequent requests for the book *Training Young Horses to Jump* cannot be complied with, as the book is out of print, and no longer obtainable.
3. The absence of trained polo ponies is so conspicuous, that the experience of the writer may be of some value to beginners who wish to train their own ponies.
4. Recently there has been much discussion amongst theorists on the subject of riding horses over fences, not a few expressing their views in the *Field* and other sporting journals.

Some enthusiast is convinced that his is the only correct method of riding. He in turn is answered by an equally enthusiastic Nimrod holding entirely opposite views. Now which is right and which is wrong? Surely they cannot both be right? Perhaps they are both partly right and partly wrong. Extreme views are seldom right in such cases.

But without knowledge and experience, it is difficult for the beginner to arrive at reasonable conclusions.

The object of this book is to assist the novice.

Before the war, at the Cavalry School of Equitation, we aimed at making officers "finished horsemen"—which was interpreted as follows:

To be able to break in and train a young horse as a charger.

To train and ride a polo pony.

To ride creditably over fences when racing.

To ride with judgement to hounds.

To school a young horse over fences.

To ride show jumping.

To show a finished horse off to the best advantage.

To re-mouth and improve a badly broken horse.

This syllabus was sufficient to check any idea on the part of misguided individuals that they already knew all there was to be learnt.

The late John Porter, with his exceptional experience, used to say that the charm of horses was, that there was always something new to learn. Every horse has a different character and temperament, and each must be carefully studied and treated on its merits. The subject is undoubtedly a large one, and few have leisure to devote much

time to its study. It is for this reason that the following chapters deal mostly with principles, suggesting methods both tested and approved, which are based on these principles. Many possess a superficial knowledge of the subject, and perhaps, finding it humiliating to admit their ignorance, never progress further. Generally it is those who are most knowledgeable and least dogmatic who most readily concede their ignorance on the subject of horses. My advice is frankly to admit one's ignorance on a subject with which no one is wholly conversant. Like John Porter, remember there is always something more to learn. Then with an open mind, but having sound principles behind us, we can discuss different points of view, arrive at just conclusions and probably confirm our opinions or the reverse.

By means of discussion, an essential to learning, and with the possession of sound theoretical knowledge, we can avoid many mistakes in actual practice.

In these days (outside the army) the horse is gradually becoming more an animal of luxury than of general utility. But as long as hunting, racing and polo continue, there will always be many anxious to take part in all sport connected with the horse, in spite of much-diminished incomes.

The more knowledge a man possesses and the better he rides, the less his sport will cost him, and the more pleasure he will derive from horses.

The real lover of horses is a student of equine psychology, and finds in the horse those qualities so beloved by man—courage, unselfishness, fidelity. What more does one ask in a friend ?

The Author hopes that he may give a helping hand to the young enthusiast who wishes to make himself a finished horseman.

My thanks are due to Col. M. Borwick, M.F.H., and to Col. Lucas for their kind assistance and valuable suggestions: also to Col. P. Rodzianko, Capt. P. Bowden-Smith, and others for various illustrations that would otherwise have been most difficult to obtain.

Christmas 1923.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION BY LORD CAVAN vii

INTRODUCTION BY LORD WODEHOUSE—(Polo Ponies) . . . ix

FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR xiii

PART I

CHAPTER I

The rider's seat and hands 3

CHAPTER II

Theory—Jumping qualifications—Condition—Balance—Bits . 10

CHAPTER III

First lessons—Free jumping—Schooling in long reins—Circular manège 18

CHAPTER IV

Schooling mounted—Dispensing with wings—Presenting a young horse at a fence—Sticky fencers—Horses that rush at their fences—Horses that are unable to attain their correct balance when jumping—Martingales 24

CHAPTER V

The rider's seat over a fence—Action of the hands—Refusing horses—Amount of schooling a youngster may be given—Hunting . 30

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

Show jumping 47

CHAPTER VII

Hints for preventing some of the numerous troubles that occur with young horses — Bandages — Boots — Brushing — Blows, contusion, treatment—Bits, action of; curb and snaffle—Fitting of same—Colds and coughs—Cooling lotion—Clay—Cold water—Distribution of horse's weight—Exhaustion—Feeding and watering — Fresh air — Humour — One-sided mouth—Open joint — Overreach — Physic — Preparation of feet for shoeing—Shoes—Sprains (treatment)—Splints (treatment)—Sharp teeth—Spurs—Thorns—Wind: high-blowing, whistling, roaring, broken wind—Whisping—Wounds (treatment) . 51

CHAPTER VIII

Types—Deductions from measurements—The horse's mentality . 70

CHAPTER IX

A lucky day, or a hunt with Mr. X 75

PART II

CHAPTER I

Problems of purchase—Conformation of polo ponies and hunters—Balance—Collection—Symmetry—Quality—Stamina . . 93

CHAPTER II

Early training—Handling—Long reins 115

CHAPTER III

Mounted training—Theory—System of riding-school aids explained—Brain 121

CONTENTS

CHAPTER IV

PAGE

The walk analysed and training at the walk—Analysis of the trot—Exercises at the trot 128

CHAPTER V

The canter analysed—Leading with the desired leg—Change of leading leg—Training at the canter—The gallop analysed . 140

CHAPTER VI

Bitting 152

CHAPTER VII

Special training for polo ponies 158

INDEX 177

LIST OF PLATES

	FACE PAGE
An early Conception of a balanced Horse from an old Print: Vienna, 1730	*Frontispiece*
Captain P. Rodzianko on his Irish Horse "Coda Corta"	10
The Big Double at Punchestown	12
Jumping Water	14
Horse coming down a steep Slope	16
Horses landing over a Fence Different Method of Landing	18
Horse landing over a Drop Jumping Wire	22
Schooling over Fences without Wings A Horse that persists in jumping the Gap in a Fence	24
Assisting the Horse Assisting the Horse	28
The "Take-off Zone"	30
The Horse's Effort of Propulsion when jumping	32
An ill-balanced Horseman The Rider and Horse balanced correctly	34
Captain Bennett riding "Sergeant Murphy" over Beechers Brook, Grand National, 1923	36
The Forehand clearing a Fence	38
The Hindquarters clearing a Fence	40
A Fall	42
The exaggerated Show Jumping Seat	48
Action of the Bridoon Action of the Curb Bit	54

Type 1. A Brown Gelding
Type 2. A Bay Mare
Type 3. A Brown Pony Gelding
Type 4. A Brown Mare
Type 5. A Brown Gelding
Hunters (1). Captain Hobbs and "Jorrocks," Champion Heavy-weight Hunter, 1923
Hunters (2). Mrs. R. B. Brassey's "Parkstown"
Hunters (3). An excellent Type of Thoroughbred Hunter
} Following page 74

FACE PAGE
A Green Pony (1) 96
A Green Pony (2) 98
An Australian Pony 106
An Indian Country-bred Pony 108
Major H. Wernher's Chestnut Mare "Piave" 110
Major J. Harrison's "Perfection" 112
The Half-passage
Horse cantering } 142
Racehorses galloping (1)—The Zev-Papyrus Race
Racehorses galloping (2)
Racehorses galloping (3)
} Following page 148

FACE PAGE
Near-side Forward Stroke 162
Near-side Back-hander 164
Swinging a Pony right-handed to hit an offside Back-hander under its Tail 168
Pulling up 170
Stopping and turning 172

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE RIDER'S SEAT AND HANDS

MANY excellent books have been published on horse training and riding, and the author does not claim to propound any new theories.

This book endeavours to start the novice on sound lines, so that he can weigh in his own mind the views of different authors. He can then apply theory to practice, as experience is our best and most reliable teacher.

When I was at the French Cavalry School at Saumur I asked the Commandant whether their system of training was based on the same lines as Fillis', whom I had lately met at the St. Petersburg Cavalry School. I was answered by an apt reproach—"No," he said, "the training at Saumur is the product of the old *haute école* of France, progressively widened, improved and kept up to date. Should we find in Fillis or other exponents any new idea that might be worthy of acceptance, we might try it and perhaps accept it. But to accept in entirety the method of one man would be to forfeit our experience of centuries. The experience of centuries is a priceless heritage." His remarks are well worth remembering.

Space must necessarily prevent discussion on certain points which are open to argument. In such cases the

reader is asked to regard any assertions that are not proved to be such as are sufficiently obvious, or requiring too technical discussion for a book of this description.

No doubt there are many methods, other than those suggested in these chapters, which are possibly equally good or even better adapted to special circumstances.

In this book my endeavour has been to lay down a basis for training and riding on broad lines, so that the reader may have a sound idea as to how to start on an entirely unschooled horse or pony, and as to the best means of finishing one that has passed through the early stages of his training.

Personally, I have found the methods advocated successful and trust that any one following them may meet with equal success.

I shall deal first with the making and riding of a hunter, and then confine my attention to the choosing, training and riding of polo ponies.

Most men who ride sufficiently well like to make some of, if not all, their own horses and ponies. Certainly the horse or pony made by oneself, and which is in absolute sympathy with its rider, affords much greater pleasure than one trained by some one else. Unfortunately the process of training a horse requires so much time and patience that few can afford the time. But a sound knowledge of how the training should be carried out will ensure the owner against many disappointments.

General Remarks on the Rider's Seat and Hands

It is as well at this early period to consider certain points about the rider's seat. A good seat depends upon

balance and grip, and varies considerably in accordance with the particular form of riding required at the time.

It is at first essential for the beginner to get a good natural seat, which should be comfortable and strong, without being stiff. This is best obtained by a certain amount of riding without stirrups, as the rider will thus develop both his sense of balance and strength of grip.

First of all, sit square to the front and comfortably on the saddle with the muscles relaxed, then close the legs so as to grip with the flat of the thigh and the knee, keeping the lower part of the leg below the knee free and not stiff. The body should be supple from the hips, so that it should swing easily backwards or forwards as required, or lean over in the direction in which the horse is turning.

Ride as far as possible with a long rein, bearing in mind that a strong seat independent of the reins goes a long way in the direction of making good hands. The elbows should not be pressed to the side in a cramped fashion, so often taught, nor should the ugly habit of sticking out the elbows be allowed. The upper arm should normally be parallel to the body, so that the hands holding the reins come just above the front arch of the saddle. The reins, when held in both hands, should be held round the third or little finger, or, in the case of double reins, round both, viz.: If it is intended to ride more on the bit rein than the bridoon, the bit reins should be round the little finger, and the bridoon reins round the third finger, or *vice versa* if it is intended to ride more on the bridoon rein. The reason for this is that the little finger is more sensitive and consequently more sympathetic in acting on the bit in the horse's mouth. It is also more easy to manipulate the reins by a slight turn of the wrist. The back of the hand should be

turned towards the horse's mouth, and the wrist very slightly rounded. Thus, by turning the wrist more towards the body the reins are shortened. This allows for three degrees of power being exerted on the reins, giving the maximum amount of springiness and play between the rider's hand and the bit in the horse's mouth: (1) the fingers, (2) the wrist, (3) the forearm from the elbow. The sympathetic action of the above properly applied, in conjunction with a firm seat, constitutes good hands. The best horsemen invariably ride with the longest rein *compatible with the maximum amount of control.* Generally speaking, this rule applies to all forms of riding. Why do two-year-olds go better with some jockeys; polo ponies go kindly with some men and not with others; the young hunters go over a country with hardly a blunder? If one looks at the best horsemen, one will invariably see that they give their horses sufficient freedom of rein, though no more. To quote instances of this: watch S. Donoghue at the starting gate; J. R. Anthony over the National fences; W. Buckmaster in a polo match; S. Hames riding over Leicestershire. On the other hand, allowing the reins to flop about loosely does not indicate good hands. By practising riding without stirrups and learning from the start to apply the reins as described, the rider will cultivate a good *natural seat and good hands.*

Now it is necessary to modify the seat according to circumstances. This is really done by varying the length of the stirrup. The natural seat as described will normally be maintained when using stirrups for ordinary hacking, riding a charger, schooling a polo pony, or showing off a horse's paces. For riding over fences stirrups should be shortened—probably a couple of holes, or more according

to the length of the rider's leg. For show jumping and for steeplechasing probably shorter still, until one eventually gets to the extreme flat-racing seat.

Having attained our balance and grip by a certain amount of riding without stirrups, we want to make our seats stronger and securer with the assistance of the stirrups. For instance, except when riding very short, we can grip with the flat of the thigh. We can always grip with the knees, also with the upper and inner part of the calf, except when using the lower part of the leg to drive-on a horse. In each case we want to ensure utilising the stirrups to the best advantage.

The beginner often finds difficulty in keeping his stirrups, and to do so he will generally point his toe down and keep his heel up, which is wrong, and results in a weak and ugly seat. Once developed this is a difficult habit to get rid of, and the rider will probably shorten his stirrups, and by still keeping his toe down he will contract a cramped and ugly seat. He should keep his heels down but his toes raised, and then shorten his stirrups. Thus he will find—though perhaps he has shortened his leathers a couple of holes—that his knees and heels are still in the same place, but he is pressing down on his stirrup and he is able to retain it. For ordinary riding and even hunting, it is really easier not to ride with the foot quite home in the stirrup, but with the broad part of the sole of the boot on the stirrup. The toe should not be turned in but kept in a natural position as when walking, with the heels pressed down, and the rider's feet pressing on the *inside of the stirrup next to the horse.*

It will now be found that the more the rider brings pressure on his stirrups the closer his knees are forced

against the saddle, *i.e.* a strong seat. It must be remembered, however, that true balance is the first desideratum, and that a strong grip is only required to reinforce and strengthen the seat when especially required. By using the stirrups as described above, balance will emanate from the knees rather than from the stirrups. The latter is undesirable and a common fault amongst indifferent horsemen. A good rough rule for adjusting the stirrups for ordinary riding is to sit in the saddle without the stirrups, in a natural position, then adjust the leathers till the bottom of the stirrup is just level with the inside ankle bone. Remember, when mounted, that the length of the leathers should usually be altered without taking the feet out of the stirrup, and in this way can easily be done on the move. Before mounting one can judge the approximate length required as follows: The bottom of the stirrup to the top of the leather should measure from the tips of the finger to underneath the arm. But, as explained before, one must vary the length one rides according to what one intends to do.

The use of the hands and leg for applying the aids to control a horse are explained in the chapter on Riding School Work (Chapter III. Part II.).

Now it is well known that the rider's temperament reacts on his horse. A hot-headed, excitable rider will generally succeed in making most of his horses excitable, whereas a lazy rider will allow his horse to become sluggish. Thus one can counteract the temperament of a horse by the method employed in riding him. The lazy horse should always be well driven up to his bridle by the rider vigorously applying his legs. The keen excitable horse, which requires soothing, should be ridden with a loose rein, as far as

possible with a loose seat, and on no account be urged up to his work by too vigorous pressure of the rider's legs, except when he attempts to evade the control of the bit. Fuller details of the rider's seat when negotiating a fence are given in Chapter IV.

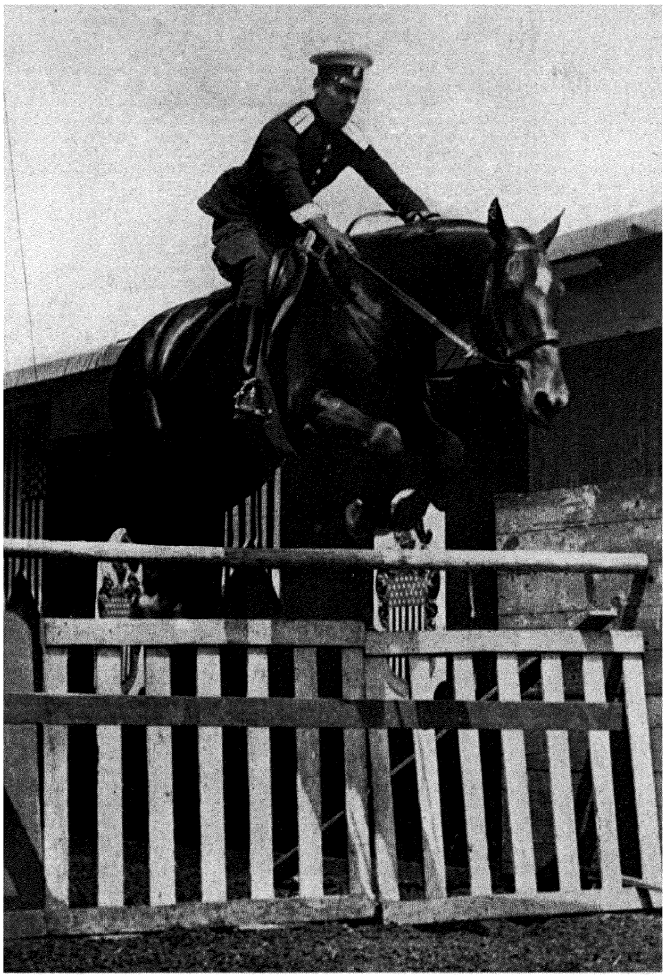
CHAPTER II

THEORY. BALANCE. BITS

THE riding of young horses is an excellent nerve tonic, and, besides improving one's horsemanship, helps to keep down the stable expenses if young horses remain sound and can be sold at a fair profit. Most men like to have at least one young horse to make or finish during the winter. No one would be presumptuous enough to suggest that we ride better than our ancestors. In fact we cannot but feel envious, as we see them in their pictures, riding with a free rein on their blood horses over a glorious grass country. But at the same time certain advancement in knowledge has enabled us to modify our methods. We now look askance at Dick Christian telling Nimrod how he liked his horses to land over their fences on their hind-legs. Again, instantaneous photography has taught us the true locomotion of the horse. Hence the now universally adopted flat-racing seat. To a certain degree this knowledge has modified our seat over fences.

SOME POINTS TO OBSERVE IN SELECTING A HORSE

It is not now proposed to discuss in detail how to choose a horse. Not all moderate-looking horses are necessarily bad performers, though one naturally prefers a good-looking



CAPT. P. RODZIANKO ON HIS IRISH HORSE "CODA CORTA."

This picture demonstrates the rider "going with" his horse. His weight is maintained approximately over the horse's centre of gravity; at the same time he is extending his arms with the lightest contact on the horse's mouth, thus enabling the horse to extend his head and adjust his balance as required.

To face p. 10.

one. (In Chapter I. Part II., on buying polo ponies, considerable detail is gone into on the good and bad points of a horse or pony.) It is, however, strongly recommended to the intending buyer to make sure that his contemplated purchase moves low and smoothly in his gallop, swinging freely from his loins and shoulders. Secondly, that, given a good take-off over a stiff though possibly a small fence, the horse gives its rider a good feel when jumping. If he fails in these two tests he will be neither a really big fencer nor a good ride. If owing to youthfulness or lack of training these tests must be dispensed with, the buyer has really to depend upon breed and looks (see Chapter I. Part II.). In any case, he should always see the horse walk and trot both towards and away from him in a straight line, and make certain that he has straight limbs, level action, and free movement of his joints without brushing. A free swinging walk generally indicates ability to gallop.

Condition

It is further suggested that, if possible, young horses should be bought early in the summer, or, better still, at the end of the previous winter. This will give sufficient time to condition and train them, and, if they have already been hunted, a better opportunity to correct their previous faults before the coming season. Age and condition are the first considerations that should be taken into account. It is necessary to bring a young horse on to hard food gradually, and his exercise must be in proportion to his condition. Plenty of slow exercise is essential (see p. 41). I cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of moderation with regard to conditioning and the amount of work

to be given to a youngster. His training must be progressive, but by no means hurried. Good manners are essential to all horses if they are to be a pleasure to the rider. Patience and common-sense are the guiding factors to attain these requirements.

Balance

We are shortly introducing into our Manuals of Horse Training in the Army the following definition of balance: "A horse is said to be *balanced* when his own weight (and that of his rider) is distributed over each leg in such proportion as to allow him to use himself with the maximum ease and efficiency at all paces.

"The head and neck form the governing factors in weight distribution, and it is by their position that the horse carries his weight forward or backward as his paces are extended or collected."

There is often such a misconception of this essential requirement in a horse's training that a few words here are necessary. A certain degree of balance is essential for all riding horses. Apart from jumping, balance makes a horse less likely to pull, more agreeable to ride, and more likely to stand the wear and tear of work. The Italians maintain that any attempt to lighten the horse's forehand is unnecessary, and advocate complete liberty of rein throughout the training. Their horses do far the greater part of their work on their forehands, and seldom have what we would consider a good mouth. We know that with their methods they produce wonderful fencers and show jumpers. Should we accept their theories on training in entirety? I think not, although I know many men who have done so both at home and on the Continent. To accept the Italian



[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

THE BIG DOUBLE AT PUNCHESTOWN.

This picture shows how a horse has to vary his balance and use his hocks when jumping a bank. Apart from racing, we find a snaffle the almost universal bit used in Ireland, and not without justification. Many of the horses being hunted are youngsters during the early part of their training, when a snaffle is the wisest and safest bit to use. Also riding over a country like Meath with wide ditches and high banks, which are jumped at a slow pace, a man must be very sure of his seat and hands if he is not to interfere with his horse's mouth. Naturally there is less risk of doing harm when a horse is ridden in a snaffle. Though some horses ride and bridle perfectly in a snaffle, they are comparatively rare. When in hard condition and fed on good old oats, such horses become even rarer. In English hunting countries, where the most finished hunter is in demand, we seldom find a snaffle used. Undoubtedly riding over fences in a double bridle requires more finished horsemanship and lighter hands.

To face p. 12.

theory would mean that one entirely fails to understand the true meaning of balance, although, as opposed to the old *haute école* idea of balance, the Italian method is obviously preferable. The former was attained in a riding school and produced permanent lightness in front in all movements. The head and neck were raised to the maximum height and then bent from the poll. The higher the carriage of the head the more accentuated became the curve of the neck. The haunches were continually kept under the horse to raise his forehand, and the head kept what was termed a fixed profile ; the horse became gradually muscle-bound in his loins and shoulders. Balance of this nature, or akin to this, prevented the horse from using his powers of extension, and accentuated the difficulty of propelling the body over a fence. Owing to the head being raised and bent at the poll, the muscle which extends the shoulder-joint and controls the free forward movements of the fore-limbs became contracted,[1] and consequently the horse's energy was spent in high action and pawing the air. It is practically correct to say that a horse at full gallop cannot place his feet down on the ground beyond a plummet line dropped from his nose. Obviously a horse balanced on the above lines becomes useless as a practical fencer. What is required is balance in a wider sense, namely, ability in the horse at one time to raise his head and bring his weight back, and at another time to extend his neck and lower his head and bring his weight forward. The former is required at the slower paces and when stopping,

[1] This muscle, which advances the fore-limbs, originates from the back of the head and the first four bones of the neck and runs down to the humerus or lower bone of the shoulder. When the neck is bent to any great degree this muscle is artificially shortened, and the action of the shoulder and the fore-limbs is contracted.

and the latter when extending himself and to assist him when jumping. To attain this kind of balance it is necessary to get the horse up in front and back on his haunches in moderation; at the same time giving him frequent periods of extended work with the free rein. In other words, it is a question of educating the horse's brain and teaching him to control his own muscles and centre of gravity. It will be necessary for him to work at all paces up and down hill. Let him jump small banks and small fences on the slope of a hill. This up and down hill work teaches a horse to balance and extend himself in a way that is unattainable on the flat, and with a young horse improves his shoulders very considerably. A horse jumping downhill will learn to land lightly without pitching forward. A sound understanding of balance is so necessary that these two examples will not come amiss. The action of jumping slowly on and off a bank clearly exemplifies what is meant. The particular effort required is the reason why most Irish hunters have a fair natural balance though they are generally unfinished. Coming up to the bank the horse, in steadying himself, brings his weight back and almost simultaneously raises his forehand to scramble up the bank. At the same time, it will be found that he has brought his hocks under him to propel himself upwards. When he has raised his forehand he extends his head to help him to bring his hind-legs on to the bank. On the top he collects himself again, then throws his weight forward to enable him to extend himself and get clear over the ditch on the far side of the bank. Thus it will be seen that he is learning to balance himself both in bringing his weight back and forward.

Again one should walk, trot, or canter down a hill, but

[*By permission of Capt. P. Rodzianko.*

JUMPING WATER.

This picture shows the extension of the head in conjunction with the fore-legs. A young horse will soon learn to jump a wide place with confidence if he knows that he is going to have sufficient freedom of his head.

To face p. 14.

preferably starting the practice at the slowest pace. Halfway down the hill one should feel the reins and raise the horse's head, closing one's legs against the horse's side, and leaning one's own body back. One will soon find that the horse will learn to bring his weight back, and that his hocks will come naturally underneath him going down the hill. Thus he raises his forehand and pulls up on his haunches in preference to pulling up so that his weight and the force of propulsion are borne on the fore-limbs. Trotting and cantering over rough ground and molehills is truly valuable training for a young horse. It teaches him to look out for himself and to have a " spare leg " when required.

It is hoped that the above simple examples will have proved both the necessity and the possibility of obtaining balance. Obviously the more perfect the conformation of the horse the more naturally is he balanced in all his paces. The symmetrical horse finds it unnecessary to vary his centre of gravity to any great degree.

Bits

The important point regarding the use of bits is the fact of the necessity of not interfering with a young horse's mouth when he is actually jumping. There is nothing better than a good snaffle for schooling a youngster in the early stages. For this reason we find it the almost universal bridle in Ireland.

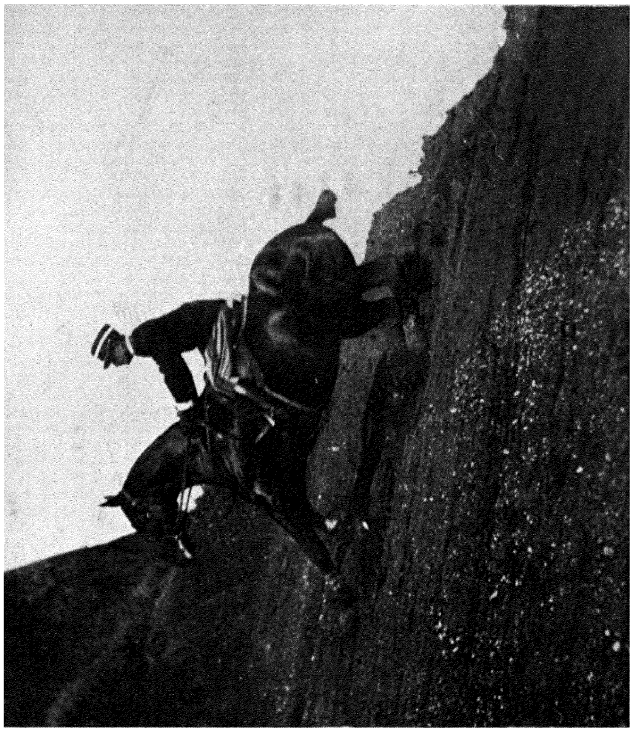
But though a snaffle is preferable for the early education of a jumper, one would seldom, except for racing, continue to ride a horse in a snaffle. Many people, chiefly through ignorance, believe that a snaffle is essentially the best bit for hunting, and no doubt it may be more suitable for a

rider with what Surtees described and John Leech admirably depicted as a "washball seat." But these conditions do not apply to the readers of this book.

I have seen a man ride over the biggest banks in a certain Irish hunt with his horse in a gag and a long cheek-bit. When he first appeared he was looked upon by the field as some mad or ignorant stranger. But after having had a good view of his heels in a fast twenty-five minutes they quickly changed their opinions, and doubtless some of them at any rate profited by the lesson. This particular horse was a charming ride, bitted as he was, but unwieldy and unbalanced in a snaffle. This example is quoted merely to show that one should have an open mind on this subject: at the same time, one should as far as possible avoid the use of strange fancy bits of a severe nature. The key to a young horse's mouth is not so much the particular type of bit, as the hands and patience employed in making his mouth.

Generally speaking, a medium double bridle is the bit one would like a young horse to go in when he is finished. This must not be understood as a hard-and-fast rule, for the severity of the bit must be in proportion to the lightness of the horse's mouth and the flexibility of his neck. There is undoubtedly a danger to horses that bridle too freely and are overbent, of becoming affected in the wind. Certainly cases occur of horses whistling in a double bridle but not in a snaffle, or at any rate they are at times more difficult to detect as whistlers in the latter bit.

The young horse must be gradually taught to face his bit. If he is not up to it, he will neither jump nor gallop freely when ridden in a double bridle, but once accustomed to it the advantages over the snaffle are many. The horse



[*By permission of Capt. P. Rodzianko.*

HORSE COMING DOWN A STEEP SLOPE.

This picture demonstrates the use made of the hind-legs in descending a steep slope. The rider keeps the forehand straight with the reins and the hindquarters under control with his legs. The Italians have discarded the original practice of sitting back under the above conditions, as they found it put unnecessary weight on the hind-limbs and the horses grazed their hocks on the rough surface.

must ride lighter. He is more easily collected, more readily brought back to the hand, and his stride can, if necessary, be shortened, the bending of the neck at the poll mechanically shortening the stride. (For further particulars of bitting, see Chapter VII.; also Chapter IV. Part II.)

CHAPTER III

FIRST LESSONS

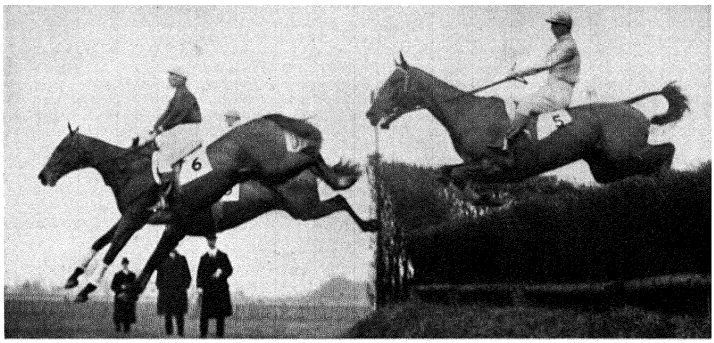
Free Jumping and Schooling in Long Reins

The first lessons may be given without a man on the horse's back. For free jumping several methods are useful. For the first lesson a small bank is almost the best obstacle.

The trainer should have his horse so that he will lead freely. An occasional mouthful of oats given to a young horse will soon induce him to follow kindly.

The trainer will then start by walking over quite a small bank, leading the horse on a cavesson or rein attached to the nose-band. If the horse is inclined to play up it may be necessary to attach the rein to the snaffle. Sometimes an assistant may be required to drive the horse on from behind. On no account must the trainer keep looking back towards the horse he is leading, or, in all probability, the latter will stop. After incredibly few times the horse will be found to negotiate the banks kindly and with ease. Each time he should be rewarded with sugar or oats.

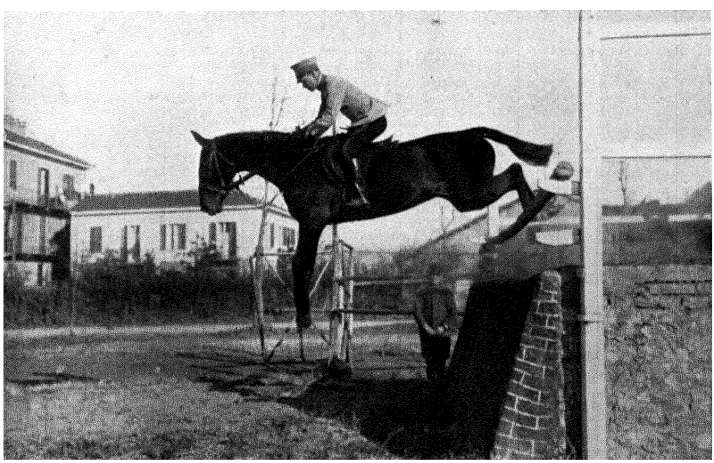
In this manner a horse can be led over all sorts of small obstacles, but at the commencement it is essential that they should be very small; for instance, a pole on the ground, which should only be heightened very gradually when the youngster shows sufficient ability and confidence.



[*Sport and General Press Agency.*

HORSES LANDING OVER A FENCE.

Number 6, a bold fencer, with the rider's weight in such a position that he can instantly adjust it to assist his horse galloping on without checking on landing. Also note that this horse has nice liberty of rein, which enables him to land well out.



NOTE THE DIFFERENT METHOD OF LANDING IN THIS CASE.

Both the horse's head and fore-legs are in a vertical line instead of being fully extended. This is a bad position, though probably in this particular case it is due to the horse catching his hind-legs on the rail.

To face p. 18.

It is the horse that has absolute confidence in himself that becomes the brilliant hunter.

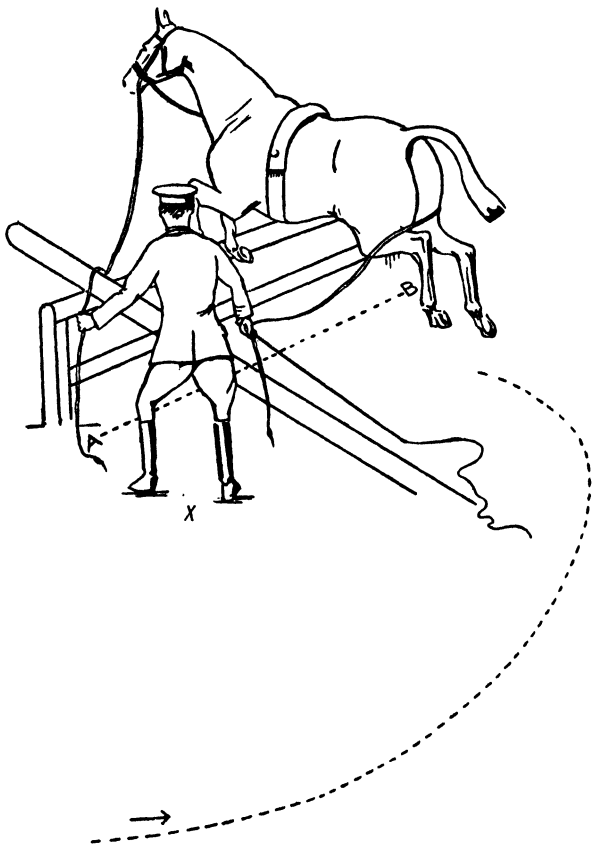
I have seen horses in Ireland being driven over banks in long reins, and very successfully too. But the driver himself must be sufficiently active to follow the horse without pulling on the reins, or he must let the reins go and trust to their being caught by an assistant on the far side of the fence.

Teaching the Horse to jump in the Long Reins

The following method may often be found more convenient than the last described. The fence is placed as in the sketch (page 20), with a wing at an angle to it along which the reins will slide as the horse jumps the fence. First of all the horse must be taught to go kindly on either circle in the long reins. When the trainer finds the horse has settled down quietly, for example on a left-handed circle, he will manipulate the reins so as to bring himself (the centre of the circle) to the position X. When he is standing at this point, the horse moving on the left-handed circle must cross the line AB. It is best to start the practice at a walk and let the first obstacle the horse encounters be a pole on the ground or something of that nature.

The long reins may be on the nose-band, but if the horse gets out of control it will be best to put the reins on the snaffle rings with the outer rein over the horse's neck. In any case, it will be wise to drive him over in this manner when he has learned to jump well with the reins on the nose-band. It is advisable to reverse the wing and make the horse jump whilst circling to the right as well as to the left. This will teach him to jump with equal facility

with whichever leg he is leading at a canter. His efforts should be liberally rewarded.



A Free Lane or Manège

A third method is jumping entirely free in a lane. Keen horses may learn to rush if schooled too much down a straight lane, though undoubtedly excellent results have

been obtained with a certain percentage of young horses trained in this way. On the other hand, if a free lane is used, I consider that an oblong or elliptical manège with no fixed jump, except possibly a ditch, is by far the best.

It is advisable not to have any upright jump at all in the manège for the first one or two lessons.

The horse must first understand what is required of him when he is put in the manège. For this purpose the trainer will stand in the centre with a long whip to keep the horse on the move. He must first be taught to go round the manège free at all paces to either hand, by which means he will soon learn to take the bends cleverly with either leg leading at a canter. During this time he will also learn to understand the words "walk," "trot," and "canter." The turns at both ends teach the horse to collect himself as he comes round into the straight and will soon prevent him from attempting to rush. If he tries to whip round, and not go on the required circle, he must be instantly checked. About the third day a jump can be put in. By degrees more numerous and larger obstacles can be placed at various distances from the turns, so that he obtains practice in judging his distance when suddenly coming on a jump.

It is necessary to commence with a small but solid obstacle so that the horse will not attempt more than once to chance a fence.

For a horse that takes off too close to a fence, a guard rail, just off the ground, will be found useful to correct this fault. Similarly a small ditch on the take-off side will teach him to stand back at his fences.

Young horses will sometimes be found, when jumping, to get their noses right down between their knees, at the

same time often failing to get their hocks sufficiently under them or to raise their forehand properly. Even if they jump big and well, with their weight very far forward, they are apt to overjump themselves. In both cases horses will be found to benefit by experience and gradually correct these faults themselves.

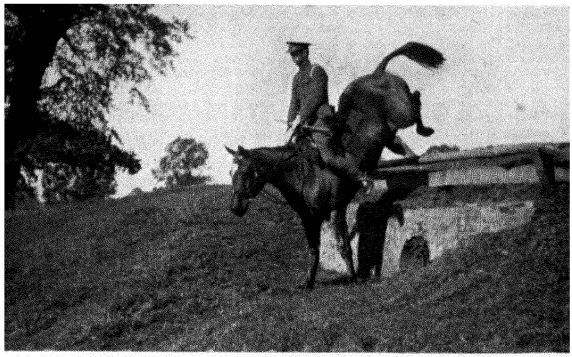
It is a good plan for those horses who appear to bungle their fences, and are unable to judge their distance properly, to place a bar one foot high at seven yards from the obstacle. The horse will then, whilst at the canter, have to jump the bar, take one stride and jump the obstacle.

It also helps to balance a young horse if one puts several bars at seven yards apart and perhaps one at four yards. In the latter space the horse will not take an extra stride, but will have to change his legs and jump.

In the early stages, and, in fact, throughout all the training, all possible excitement should be avoided. This is most important and can only be arrived at by starting with very small obstacles jumped at a very slow pace, even at a walk. As the horse's ability and confidence increase, the obstacles can be made correspondingly more difficult. If a young horse is refusing through nervousness the trainer must show the greatest patience and, if possible, lower the fence and reward the horse liberally when he eventually jumps it.

The idea is to teach the horse to like jumping, and to pop over a fence as quietly and kindly as he would go down a road.

Now, an old horse may often be useful to give a lead to a youngster jumping free, but this is by no means necessary if the schooling has been systematically progressive—in fact, it may even be harmful. The old horse will generally want to go faster than the youngster should



HORSE LANDING OVER A DROP.

As the horse has to move his fore-legs before the hind-legs can come down on the ground, there is obviously considerable risk of over-reaching in this position, especially if the landing is sticky. Horses jumping badly with the weight too far back, often due to the rider's bad hands, will land with their hind-legs behind their fore-legs, giving the impression of landing on all four legs simultaneously.



[*Sport and General Press Agency.*

JUMPING WIRE.

There is little difficulty in teaching a horse to do this. At first it may be necessary to hang something on the wire and after that to ride at the upright posts. Needless to say, horses must be allowed to have their heads free so as to look at the fence, and then be ridden quietly up to the fence. It is advisable to start by jumping free. Eventually horses take no more liberty over wire than if they were jumping stout timber.

To face p. 22.

at the commencement of his training, in which case the services of the former should be dispensed with.

The length of time that a young horse should be kept jumping free depends upon the following points :

(1) His condition and state of his legs.

(2) The state of the ground, good or otherwise.

(3) His age and the weight of the rider who is training him, and who is going to ride him in his schooling.

(4) Whether he has shown himself proficient when jumping free or the reverse.

Generally, if the horse is *fresh on his legs* and *fit* to carry his rider, there is no object in continuing to jump him free.

Personally, I would not jump some horses free at all, but one must make allowances for the above conditions.

If the youngster has been schooled free on the lines suggested, he should not have contracted bad habits, such as rushing at his fences, jumping out of his stride, getting his head lower than is required to balance himself properly over the fences.

The horse eventually has to jump with a man on his back, so he must necessarily learn to balance himself differently under these new conditions.

For this reason it is not advisable to continue free jumping longer than may be required by any special circumstances.

In the hands of a judicious trainer a young horse, provided he is fit and well, will always like jumping.

When he comes to be schooled mounted, every endeavour should be made not unduly to interfere with his balance, either by reason of the rider's weight in the saddle being wrongly adjusted or a heavy hand on the reins. The first lessons as far as possible should approximate to jumping free.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOLING MOUNTED

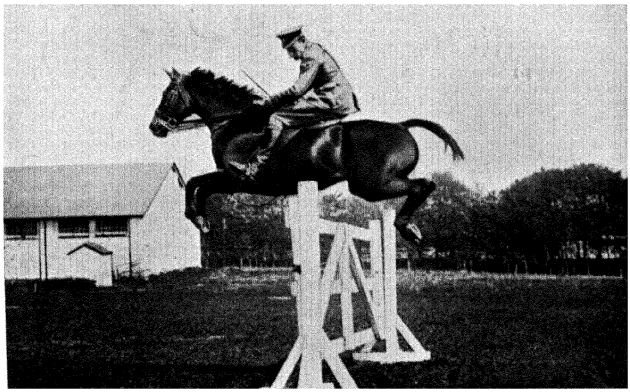
THE fences should be selected exactly on the same lines as for free jumping.

Never attempt a larger fence with a young horse if he has failed to jump a small one successfully and *with confidence*.

A horse, like a man, is unreliable when he has lost confidence in himself.

DISPENSING WITH WINGS

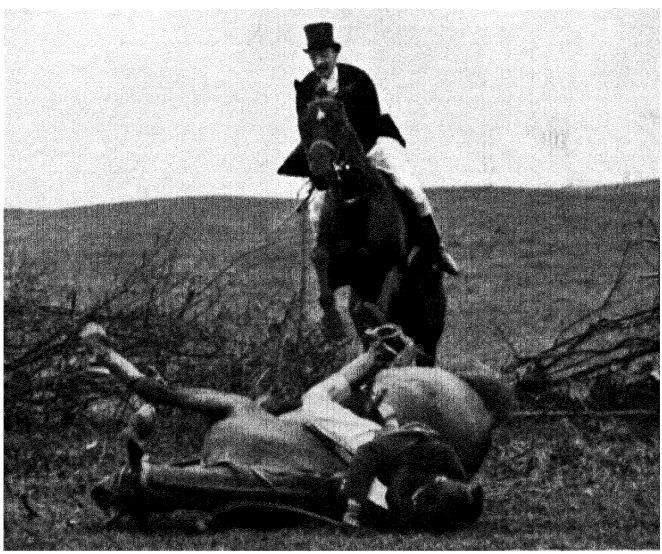
By *starting over small obstacles and only increasing the size as the horse becomes perfect*, it will be found quite possible to dispense with wings. They will be quite unnecessary, for now, when ridden up to a fence, the horse's inclination from habit will be to jump it. When driven into his bridle his inclination is to canter or gallop, and jumping is merely rather more exertion ; but he *must know* that the effort is *not* going to cause him any pain, and he must be confident of his own prowess. If schooled over fences without wings, your horse can be relied upon to jump exactly where you put him at a fence when he is out hunting. Often one observes the necessity for this. I remember once seeing a man knock down two unfortunates at two consecutive fences. One of them happened to be Captain



[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

SCHOOLING OVER FENCES WITHOUT WINGS.

Horses schooled in this manner can be relied on to jump exactly where the rider puts them at a fence. There is no difficulty in training them in this way.
At the moment of taking this photograph, the hindquarters have not quite reached the horizontal. On completion of the spring from the hind-legs and as the latter clear the gate, the upper line of the hindquarters will be above the horizontal. This is commonly called "a horse arching his back over a fence," and is the correct way for a hunter to jump.
Horses should be practised jumping without wings over very small fences to commence with; they will then take to it naturally.



[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

A HORSE THAT PERSISTS IN JUMPING THE GAP IN A FENCE.

The practice is not conducive to good fellowship out hunting. When horses are schooled without wings this should never occur.

To face p. 24.

Burns-Hartopp, who is rather large to be trifled with in this manner. The offender himself soon came to grief by jinking off into a gap that was wired, and so ended his exhilarating gallop.

I mention this instance as furnishing convincing proof of the necessity for a reliable straight jumper, and dispensing with wings when schooling is an excellent and certain means of attaining this end.

Probably we have all of us, when travelling in a railway carriage, chosen our own line and picked out places at the fences in an imaginary run, as the train goes through a hunting country: our imaginary horses never tire, falter or refuse, and we negotiate rails, banks, cut and laid fences and bullfinches with equal facility; even navigable rivers and canals are taken on in a manner that would do justice to the Spring Captains of Surtees.

Now the real thing is not quite so easy. As a small boy one was seldom, if ever, taught how to present a horse at a fence or how to sit over a fence. There was the inevitable golden rule which apparently never failed—" sit back "—so we sat back, and there was little moderation about it. Sometimes the youthful rider would commence to sit back half-way across the field, anticipating the unpleasantness of a fall. Often the horse would mistake the laying back for the signal to stop, and this he did when he got to the fence.

Sometimes we did not sit back far enough, and so got jumped off. Generally if our horses took off sooner than we expected we received a shock of surprise, and this shock reacted even more on our horse's mouth. Thus were generations of young foxhunters brought up in a somewhat haphazard school.

Presenting a Young Horse at a Fence correctly. Pace

We now approach dangerous ground, for, as Mr. Jorrocks said, "there was no young man wot would not rather have a himputation on his morality than on his 'ossmanship." In fact, he is sometimes rather flattered by the former.

Presenting a young horse at a fence for his *first lesson* should be done at a walk, then at a trot, over the smallest possible obstacles. When he shows absolute confidence, he can go at a collected canter, but to get confidence in himself he must always learn to jump slowly at first. He can easily be taught to go faster later, and if given a nice free head at a canter a young horse will soon learn to extend himself well over ditches, etc.

Slow jumping will teach him to jump off his hocks and arch his back over a fence as a hunter should do.

Sticky Fencers

In approaching the fence young horses may have one of two *faults*; either they may be inclined to be sticky, or to rush. If anything, the former is preferable and is the easier for the rider to deal with. It generally means that the youngster is careful and will look after himself. When coming to the fence he must be driven well up to his bit by the rider's legs, but on no account must his mouth be interfered with when actually jumping, otherwise he will be afraid to jump out when required.

The pressure, or more extreme use of the rider's legs, besides driving on the horse, will tend to keep his hocks under him. Thus a sticky horse will generally be found to

jump well off his hocks, propelling himself upwards as well as forwards over the fence. Such horses can easily be sharpened up, especially in company with others, provided the rider is fairly strong.

Horses that rush at their Fences

The case of the young horse that is inclined to rush at its fences is not quite so easy to deal with, but if its early training has been on the right lines this should seldom occur. The young horse generally rushes from nervousness ; possibly from the jump being something that he dreads and which he is anxious to get over. Light hands and considerable patience are necessary to correct this bad habit. Young horses that have been trained to jump wildly must be treated in a similar manner to those that have learned to rush from nervousness. In either case the rider must endeavour to regain the horse's confidence : let him understand that he will not be hit, nor will his mouth be interfered with, so that he has nothing to fear. He must be given plenty of jumping at a walk, to and fro over small obstacles, and in a short time he will cease to show undue excitement. At the trot or canter he must be circled round in front of the fence as though he was going to jump it, and then when he has settled down, he can be popped over once and circled round again. He must be taught to stand quietly in front of a fence, then be reined back a couple of lengths, and, if he still shows considerable excitement, slowly walked up to the fence again. The rider must be careful not to overtax the horse's temperament by reining back too often (once or twice is enough as a rule). Eventually, instead of walking up to the fence, he can be put to

jump it with the two lengths' run, which is quite sufficient for a small fence.

On no account must the horse be jumped over too big an obstacle if he is still inclined to rush at a small one. Very often this class of horse will try and jump without getting his hocks sufficiently under him.

Horses that are unable to attain their correct Balance when Jumping

The slower the pace (either at a trot or canter) at which he comes up to the fence, the more easy will it be for the horse to keep his hocks under him. Similarly, reining back puts a horse on his hocks before presenting him at a fence. Jumping slowly downhill will also teach him to keep his hocks under him when taking off at a fence. A series of small obstacles from one to three feet high at seven yards apart is useful for bringing horses back on their hocks, and tends to check them of the habit of landing with too much of their weight on their forehand.

Standing Martingales recommended to school in

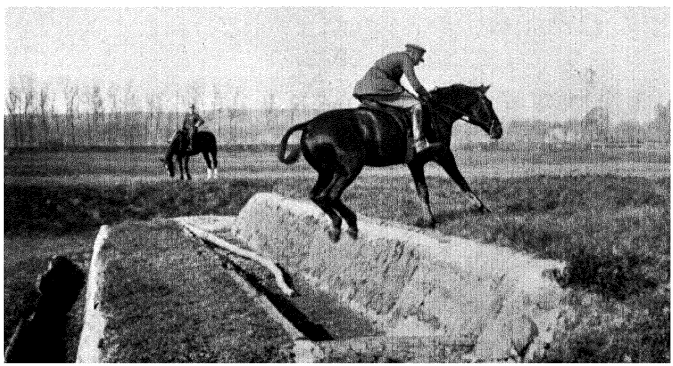
Not infrequently, on the other hand, one comes across a young horse that jumps with its head up and its weight too far back. Such a horse will often land on its hind-legs first; he cannot extend himself well, and will consequently leave his hind-legs in the ditches out hunting. The best treatment in this case is to school the horse for several days, or as long as is required, in a snaffle; and when a double bridle is resumed it must not be too severe and the curb chain must be fairly loose. It may sometimes even be



[*Sport and General Press Agency.*

ASSISTING THE HORSE.

The rider is keeping his weight off his horse's loins and "throwing" him the reins in an endeavour to get him to lower his head and raise his hindquarters.



ASSISTING THE HORSE.

Again the rider is keeping his weight forward after the horse has landed. In this case his endeavour is to enable the horse to pivot over his fore-legs and get them clear before the hind-legs come to the ground. If he had kept his weight back in the saddle the horse might possibly have dropped his hind-legs in the ditch. Note also he is giving his horse plenty of rein so that he can stretch his neck, lower his head and keep his weight forward, which is necessary under the circumstances.

To face p. 28.

necessary to school with a standing martingale on the noseband to keep the horse's head down (the nose approximately level with the withers).

The rider must also assist the horse to lower its head and get its weight forward. He can do this by giving the horse complete liberty of rein when jumping, and at the same time keeping his own weight forward off the horse's loins. The horse, relieved of the weight behind, will learn to bring its hindquarters higher, and, the head being free, will learn to extend it instead of lifting it up. He will thus soon attain his true balance over the fences and consequently land correctly.

Running Martingales

Running martingales assist in bringing a horse under control. They should not be too tight to interfere with his freedom. With a double bridle the martingale should generally be attached by the rings to the bit reins, and should have no bearing on the rein when the head is placed correctly.

The Value of up and down Hill Work

Work uphill puts muscle on behind the saddle, but much galloping uphill tends to shorten a horse's stride. On the other hand, if a horse is occasionally well-extended down a gentle slope, he will learn how to make full use of his shoulders.

CHAPTER V

The Rider's Seat over Fences

Before going further it is necessary to discuss the rider's seat over fences. For the man who hopes to make young horses successfully there are two considerations affecting the seat over a fence.

(1) Assistance to the horse, and

(2) The rider's own balance.

Let us try to picture a good horseman putting a young horse over a fence at a canter.

Most young horses require to be steadied on coming up to a fence.

Our rider will bring him up at a collected canter; by not allowing the horse to extend himself now he just keeps him back on his hocks. Two or three lengths from the fence the rider lowers his hands, giving the horse a freer rein, but of course keeping contact with its mouth. This enables the horse slightly to lower its head the more easily to judge the distance, and, if necessary, lengthen its stride. He gives the horse the so-called office to jump in accordance with its temperament. Experience alone can teach us the best method to employ with each horse. Young horses generally want a little driving the last length; in this case the rider will close his legs at the stride before the take-off and again deliberately at the take-off stride.

FIG. 1.

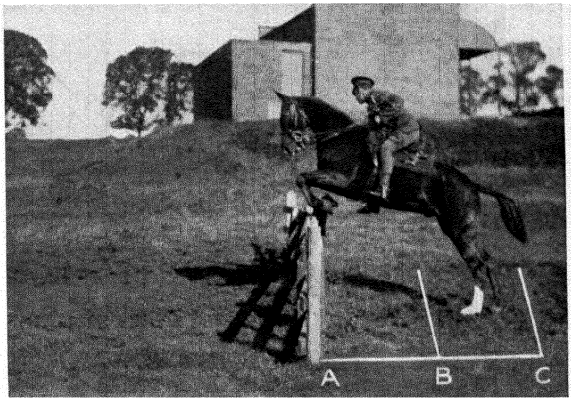
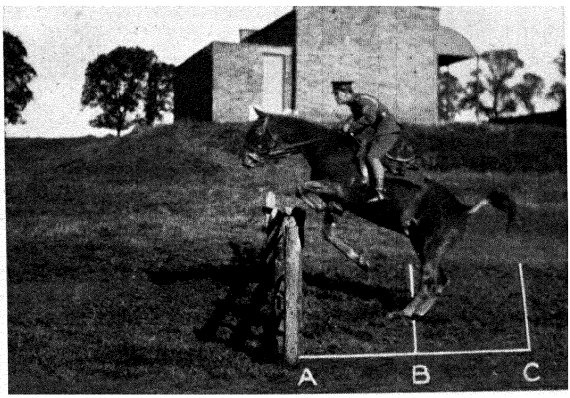


FIG. 2.



THE "TAKE-OFF ZONE."

Fig. 1.—Shows the horse taking off at the right distance from the fence, his weight on the straightened hind-legs, the forehand raised and supported by the muscles of the back and loins after the first lift from the ground by the fore-legs.

Fig. 2.—The horse has taken off too close to the fence, the hocks are not yet straightened, but in all probability he will be "on" the fence before he has time to lift his off-fore clear.

Approximately the distance a horse should take off from a fence is: not nearer than the height of the fence and not further than 8 feet away. Thus with a fence 4 feet high, he has a span of 4 feet from front to rear in which he can comfortably take off. This take-off zone is obviously reduced as the fence gets higher, and proportionately enlarged with a smaller fence.

Consequently accuracy in taking-off is more imperative with a very high fence.

Assuming that this fence is 4 feet high, then A to B is 4 feet. B to C, the take-off zone, is also 4 feet in this case.

Horses racing over fences can afford to stand rather farther back but not closer to their fences. A horse that is well collected and jumping off his hocks may successfully negotiate an upright fence even if he should get a little nearer than the prescribed zone. Also under these conditions he can easily put in a short stride if he is too far away. It is for the above reasons one rides slower at a gate or high wall. As explained elsewhere, in spite of going slowly, one need not lose impulsion if the horse is kept collected with his hocks under him.

To face p. 30.

Some horses require to be driven *well into their bridles* right up to the time they take off. Others merely require the rider to sit still and give them their heads. Thus the so-called "giving the office" varies with different horses. If the horse is likely to refuse, the rider may have to sit down in his saddle while driving his horse at the fence, and endeavour to lean forward as the horse takes off. This is not always easy, and the rider will at times be, what is called, "left behind," his horse appearing to jump away from him. He does not get forward in time with the "take off" of his horse and his weight is thrown back on the horse's loins. This lack of harmony between rider and horse will result in the horse getting a sudden pull on his mouth, unless the rider *allows the reins to slip through his hands.* The effect of being out of time with the horse can to some extent be minimised by the rider relaxing the muscles of his back and loins, and thus feeling less of the backward punch of the horse's spring. If the rider is confident that his horse will not refuse, he should be sitting upright, or even very slightly forward coming up to the fence: *i.e.* more approximately the rider's position at the gallop, and ready to lean forward as the horse rises off his forehand. The weight is thus off the back of the saddle and carried at a fixed point (roughly about the dees of the stirrup leathers). The rider should be holding the greater part of his weight on his thighs and knees, thus permitting the lower part of his leg to be free to drive on his horse if necessary. This is most important.

If the lower part of the leg is stiff it is lost as a means of propulsion to a young horse.

If the leg is kept forward and stiff, there are several disadvantages, especially if the rider is a long-legged man.

Firstly, on landing the greater part of the rider's weight is borne on the stirrup, which is forward of the centre of gravity, and consequently comes too much on the horse's forehand landing. Secondly, if the horse makes a bad mistake the rider may be thrown violently forward and, the pivot from the stirrup being longer than from the knee, the violence with which the rider's body is thrown forward is increased (with the leg stuck out straight) and he has less chance of recovery. In the case of a short-legged jockey these points are of small account. Thirdly, it is impossible for the rider to bring his weight forward when required, if the lower part of the leg is kept forward and the knee stiff.

As the horse raises his forehand our rider inclines his body forward with the movement of his horse, because he wishes to assist his horse. Any horse that has been schooled slowly can raise his forehand to a very considerable height. Note the ease with which all horses can rear up in front to a great height, but it needs a much greater effort for them to raise their hindquarters up to a similar height. As the hindquarters are raised the weight is still kept off the back part of the saddle to assist the horse, whose chief effort is to propel himself upwards with his hind-limbs, when the forehand is still in the air.

As the hind-limbs are coming up and the horse is in mid-air he is preparing and balancing himself to land.

Consequently he will now wish to extend his head for this purpose. Unless he is a horse that continuously holds its head out, the *rider must be prepared to give him more rein as he is landing.*

It is easier for the rider to permit of his doing this if he is now not sitting back. In fact, it is not necessary for



[*By permission of Capt. P. Rodzianko.*

THE HORSE'S EFFORT OF PROPULSION WHEN JUMPING.

This picture shows the horse in the act of propelling the body off the ground. First of all the forehand was tipped up by the bracing of the fore-limbs; the loins raise the forehand still further while the hind-limbs support the entire weight of the body. At this period the hocks are flexed to obtain the necessary spring. Then follows the straightening of the hocks and pasterns and the final propulsion given by the toes as shown above. The effort is borne from the loins downwards. The horse is assisted by the rider's weight being brought forward, which further enables him to "go with" his horse. A horse with weak loins cannot easily jump off his hocks at a slow pace, but requires the impulsion derived from speed to get him over a fence.

To face p. 32.

him to sit back till the horse is actually landing. Raising his weight off the back part of the saddle prevents the rider from feeling any concussion from the horse's efforts, should he have jumped awkwardly, and consequently he will not jerk his horse on the mouth—this is most important when schooling a youngster.

As the horse is landing, the rider can easily lean his body back; or, if he thinks his horse will drop his hind-legs in a ditch, he can still keep his weight forward to assist his horse. In either case his weight will not go beyond the horse's centre of gravity.

The hands should be kept low the whole time, and the horse should not be pulled up abruptly on landing, for fear he should mistake it for punishment.

Keeping contact with the horse's mouth is loosely talked of and seldom understood. In the case of a horse with a very light mouth and perfect balance, that can be pulled together with the slightest feeling of the fingers on the reins, contact is maintained by the weight of the reins, *i.e.* imperceptible contact. With a horse that is bit shy, behind his bit, or one inclined to land on his hind-legs, I should prefer to see the rider "throw the reins" at him, to impress on him that he can use his head and neck. Whereas, with a 'chaser taking a strong hold, a firm, level feeling of the reins must be maintained. His head is already stretched, galloping; to give him a free head and loose rein in this case would mean loss of contact and consequent unbalancing of the horse as he jumps.

It is advisable not to ride too long when schooling, as the seat is strengthened by riding rather on the short side. The stirrups, if used correctly, are a means of strengthening the seat. If the heel is kept down and the sole of the foot

turned very slightly outwards, it will be found that any weight on the stirrups will only assist to force the knees closer to the saddle. This argument may appear difficult to follow, but if, on the other hand, the soles of the feet are turned in towards the horse, and weight is put on the stirrups, it will be found that the knees are mechanically forced away from the saddle.

The important points with regard to the seat described are :

(1) The weight during the actual jump is fixed roughly over the horse's centre of gravity (this is of course only approximate, as the centre of gravity moves during locomotion), which helps the horse to balance himself. Under these conditions he should jump as well as when free.

(2) The lower part of the legs are free to be applied to the horse when necessary.

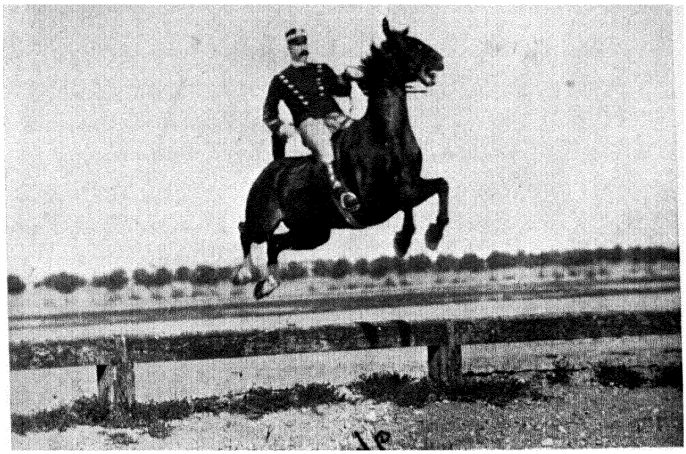
(3) It is easy to give the horse more rein if required ; also to give him the office at the right moment.

(4) There is small likelihood of interfering with the horse's balance by inadvertently touching his mouth.

(5) The horse's hindquarters are free ; he can easily raise his forehand if the *position* of the weight carried is constant.

(6) The rider can lean forward or back as required on landing.

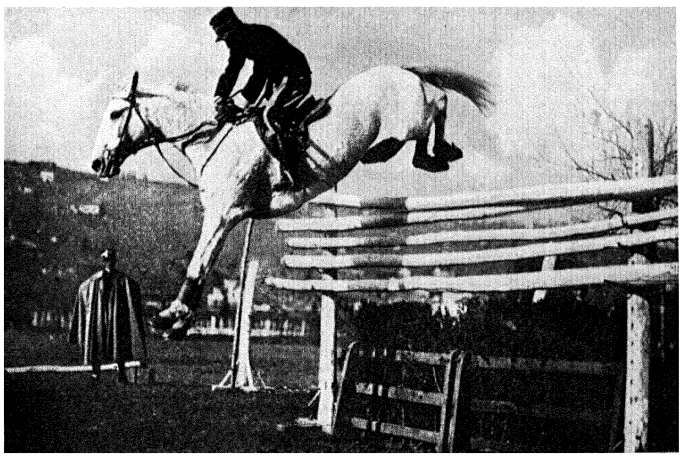
(7) He can never be jumped off or be unseated by a horse taking off prior to his anticipation. His seat being just off the saddle, he does not feel the concussion as he would if sitting down in the saddle.



[*By permission of* **Capt. P. Rodzianko.**

AN ILL-BALANCED HORSEMAN.

An unsteady seat over a fence reacts on a going horse's mouth and balance. Here both the rider's and the horse's weight are too far back. The former instead of "going with his horse" and giving him sufficient rein, has been "left behind," and is largely retaining his position by means of the reins, a sure method of inviting disaster. Note also the excessive effort on the part of the horse with his balance too far back. He will probably land on his hind-legs first, and over a ditch could easily break his back.



[*By permission of Capt. P. Rodzianko.*

THE RIDER AND HORSE BALANCED CORRECTLY.

Here we see the rider "going with his horse" and giving him ample rein. Note the difference in the horse's balance. His loins and quarters being unhampered are thrown up clear of the fence, and all the muscles of the forehand are braced to land with the fore-limbs well extended.

To face p. **34.**

Still, it is important not to exaggerate the forward seat, or it will, like the laying-back seat, be found to have its drawbacks.

I once asked a well-known officer after a race how he managed to fall at the first fence. He told me that he was trying the Italian seat. Of course it was rather a bad occasion to experiment with a new style; still, one does see it done in 'chasing nowadays, and always over hurdles.

Personally, I think people are apt to be misled by watching show jumping, when the rider sometimes brings his body *more forward* as the horse is *clearing the fence and coming down*, the reason being to get the weight well on to the forehand which is over the fence, and relieve the hind-quarters of all weight, so that the hind-legs may not touch the fence. How the horse lands in this case is quite a secondary consideration. The practice is therefore unpractical for general purposes.

On the other hand, one must not be misled by watching jockeys riding over the "National" fences. In photographs one observes them leaning back on their horses' quarters, with their feet stuck out by the point of their horses' shoulders. This is a natural though exaggerated effort on the part of the riders to stick on. There is no intention to help the horses. This position would be impossible if it were not for the tremendous impetus of the horses and the fact that they are taught to take a strong hold of their bits.

Horses that refuse

I need hardly say that the greatest care must be taken with regard to shoeing horses that have to jump. Long feet and badly fitting shoes will soon cause lameness.

Carelessness with regard to horses' feet is the origin of most lameness. If a horse is to be schooled and jumped in cold blood he must be fresh on his legs.

(1) Pain on landing is the most common cause of refusing, and not only is it brutal, but useless to insist on making a horse jump under such conditions. Never school a young horse if the ground is likely to jar him on landing, or if he shows the smallest symptoms of lameness.

(2) Some horses refuse from having had their mouths injured by heavy hands when jumping.

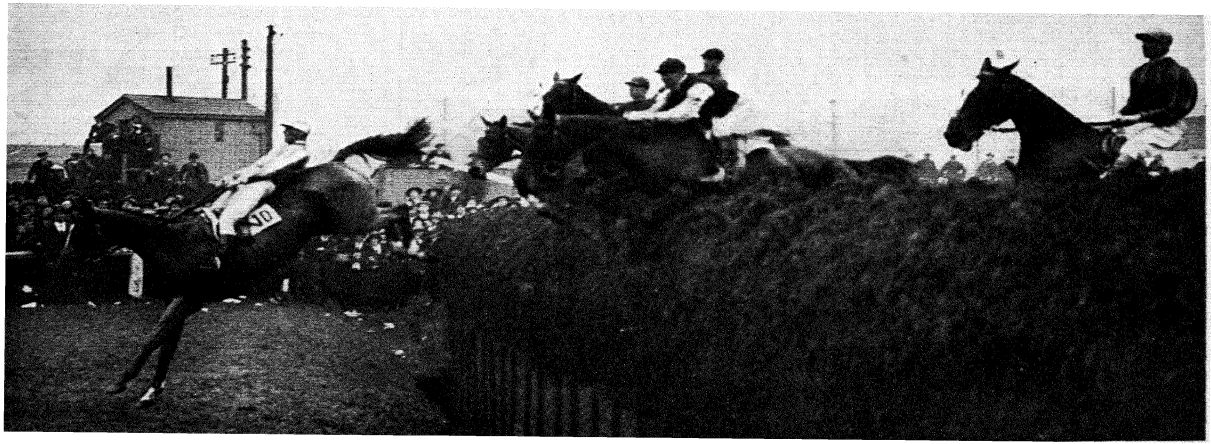
(3) Some are afraid of their bits, which may be too severe.

(4) Others refuse through fear of falling or lack of courage.

In each of these cases it is necessary to regain the horse's confidence. Take the horse in hand very quietly, and let him jump over quite small obstacles till he appears to have regained his confidence. This may take several days. If necessary, let him have a lead, and always let him have a free head when in the air. Avoid wearing spurs, and let the horse undergo no physical pain.

(5) Horses will refuse if they are continually asked to jump very big obstacles, which is a considerable exertion. On the other hand, they will not become stale if the fences are of a reasonable size and everything else is well with them.

(6) There are horses that refuse from temper, generally called "nappy horses," but the temper is always due to one or other of the above causes. One must try and discover the cause, and deal with each case in the manner most suitable.



CAPT. BENNETT RIDING "SERGEANT MURPHY" OVER BEECHERS BROOK, GRAND NATIONAL, 1923.

This picture shows "Sergeant Murphy" just landing. The fence is one of the most formidable in the National course. In addition to its size there is a very considerable drop. The rider is leaning well back to prevent his horse pitching on landing, and at the same time he is "slipping" his reins, to give his horse sufficient liberty of rein. Over a drop a horse must have freedom of his head to enable him to put his fore-limbs well out and keep on his legs. It is universally recognised that a large percentage of horses fall over this course from overjumping themselves. Under these circumstances the so-called "forward" seat increases the chances of a fall. Though it undoubtedly has great advantages over hurdles and on some of the Park courses, the first essential over the Liverpool course is to keep a horse on his legs. It does not necessarily follow that a horse will fall over a drop if the rider is not sitting back. In fact, if a horse is jumping timber and sees the drop, he adjusts his own balance accordingly, and it is even preferable for the rider not to alter the position of his weight. Also much depends upon the horse and his particular style of jumping. But one is well advised to sit back under the following conditions:

(1) With a horse that is inclined to overjump himself.
(2) When the landing is heavy.
(3) When the drop comes as a surprise, and the horse is not prepared to adjust his balance accordingly.

As the horse tops the fence the rider ought to be able to adjust his position and lean back. Quickness in getting away from a fence is undoubtedly handicapped if the rider is leaning far back on landing. On the other hand, there is more chance of recovery if the horse should make a bad blunder. But one must not be misled in supposing that this position (laying back) is applicable for schooling young hunters, when, as far as possible, the rider must vary the position of his weight as little as possible and keep light contact with his horse's mouth.

To face p. **36.**

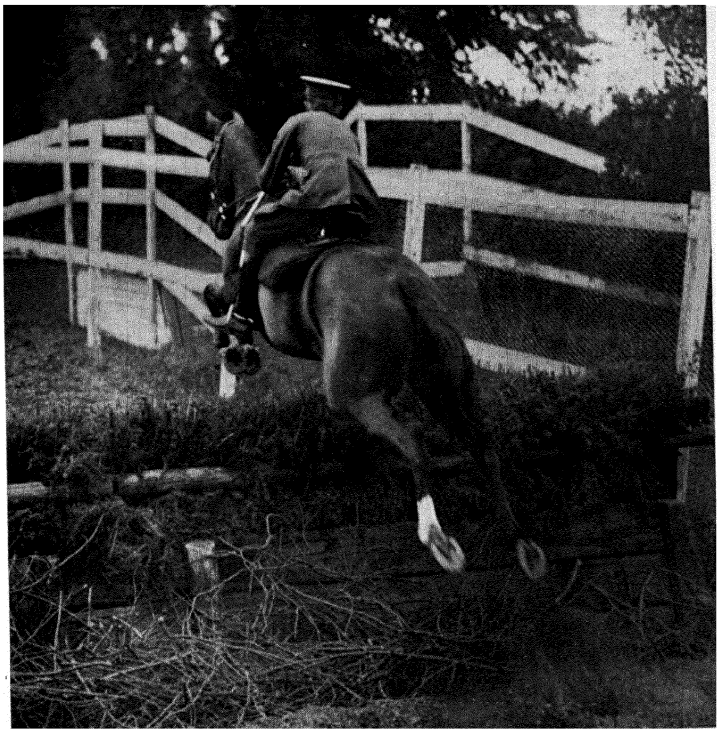
Horses that have become nappy from being ridden by bad horsemen are the most difficult to deal with. They are best in the hands of a quiet, determined horseman. It is advisable to humour such horses and get on good terms with them. Out hunting they are generally at their best if they get well away with the hounds and are kept with them. On the other hand, some may require a lead till they get warmed up In either case it is advisable not to try them too high till the rider feels that he and his horse understand one another.

The rider, by judicious riding, must endeavour to make the horse feel that on no account will it get the upper hand Thus, by starting such a horse off at an exceptionally big fence, the rider may defeat his object. If the horse refuses, he cannot hold it up to the fence and make it jump it at a stand, which he could do if the fence was quite small. It should be remembered that punishment is the last thing to be resorted to, because if this should fail the horse starts one up in the match between man and beast. If punishment is resorted to, it is essential that the horse should be got over the fence somehow: this, of course, will not be possible if the fence is a very big one. If a horse runs out, say, left-handed at a fence, never turn him round to the left before presenting him at the fence again, but rather turn him round to the right, or rein him quietly back for two or three lengths and then push him forward. When ridden in company young horses will seldom refuse, but the riders must bear in mind that slow jumping is the basis of good jumping. Unlike a 'chaser, a hunter must jump with equal ease at whatever pace he happens to be ridden at a fence. The sharpening up of a horse is easily accomplished in company with others, but the best 'chasers have

to learn to jump slowly at first. Unlike the latter, the hunter must learn to arch his back over a fence. I remember riding a young hunter several years ago who showed absolutely no aptitude for jumping in hunter form. However, he took to the other game, and since those days has won two Grand Militaries.

If it is desired to sharpen horses up over their fences for point to points or for 'chasing, there are certain rules to observe. Assuming that the horse has learnt to jump slowly and not go through his fences, our aim is to get him to gain as much ground as possible in the shortest possible time over his fences. In the first place, one must ride the horse in a snaffle and get him to take a nice hold by working him in company with other horses. For his first few schools let him have a good free jumper as schoolmaster, taking the fences about 40 or 50 yards in front of him. Also, for the first few schools, one should be content to go at a nice steady gallop. By degrees as the horse gets confidence the pace should be increased. Never jump the young horse when he is tired or blown, or he will take to chancing his fences.

As the young horse shows more confidence and jumps freely, he should be allowed to go on ahead of his schoolmaster and jump a fence or two by himself. At first the young horse may bungle the open ditches. If he does, he should be brought on at a nice pace behind the schoolmaster, with every encouragement to take a good hold of his bit; then, at about twenty lengths from the fence, the rider may just steady him enough to teach him that he can put in a short stride, so as to take off at a convenient distance from the guard rail. This gives the horse confidence, and soon he will learn to go at it all out.



[*Sport and General Press Agency.*

THE FOREHAND CLEARING A FENCE.

The position of the rider is excellent and in no way exaggerated. He is inclining his weight forward, bending from the loins, " going with " his horse and helping him in every way. The photograph depicts smoothness and motion. The horse is jumping easily and freely over a blind ditch and fence.

To face p. 38.

At the upright fences one wants to get him to stand back at his fence, and not get under it, then, as soon as he lands, get away in his stride without losing time.

The schoolmaster and pupil may now gallop side by side, keeping the young horse level, or even a little in advance. The latter should be driven well into his bridle, so that, instead of shortening his stride, he will extend himself as much as possible and stand back boldly from the fence. Both horses will probably land together, and the youngster will make every endeavour to get away level with his companion.

The rider can best help the young horse by varying the position of his own weight as little as possible, so that on landing his weight is poised over the horse's centre of gravity, where it is best placed for the horse to gallop on. As far as possible he should keep an even contact with the horse's mouth the whole time.

It is often difficult to arrange for a suitable water jump to school over, and many people consider it is not necessary to do so. Still, horses are liable to fall at the water. The simplest plan is to have a fence with a shallow ditch cut on the far side to the required proportions. The ditch can then be filled with gorse. Horses will not jump short after feeling the gorse prickles once or twice, and after this experience it is safe to say that they will jump the regulation water jump.

Some horses are apt to jump one-sided when going fast, generally left-handed. There are several reasons for this. They may have been badly ridden, they may prefer landing on a particular leg, or they may contract the habit when taking off too close to a fence. In the latter case, in order to give themselves more room, they jump at an angle to

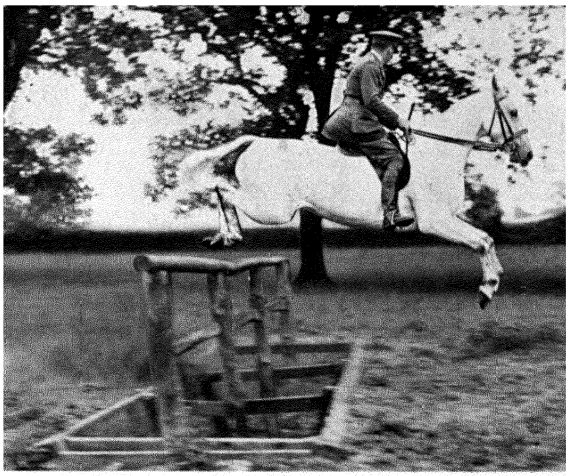
the fence instead of going straight. In the early stages this can be corrected by jumping them on a circle with the long reins, when a horse that jumps left-handed should be driven and jumped on a right-handed circle, and *vice versa*. When ridden they must be driven well up to their bits and held straight with the reins. This fault is more troublesome in the case of a steeplechaser than a hunter. The former may be got right in the hands of a strong rider, but with a weak horseman such horses will become a source of danger to the other competitors in a race.

The Amount of Schooling a Young Horse may be given

If the reader schools *on the lines I have suggested*, he can let his horse jump four days a week without any fear of his becoming stale. The action of jumping muscles a horse and helps to balance him. Poor Dugdale, late of the 16th Lancers, whose sad death took place while at the Italian Cavalry School, in a report he sent home, wrote: "It is impossible to lay down any rule about the rate of progression; at Pinerolo it seems extraordinarily slow, but the result is that all horses jump exceptionally well. Start with a bar on the ground, go over this at all paces until the horse has absolute confidence, and then raise the bar a notch at a time. For the first six weeks at Pinerolo the bar was never raised more than one foot from the ground. The Italian motto is 'Patience and Progression.' The final result is that no horse ever refuses or rushes."

This extract gives some idea of the pains that Continental riders take to reach perfection in training their horses.

As a rough guide, I state the following as my opinion as



THE HINDQUARTERS CLEARING A FENCE.

The horse has not yet straightened his fore-legs to land, but the rider has nice light contact with his mouth, ready to give him more rein as required. To be critical, one might say the rider is too stiff in his back. When riding over fences the back should not be hollowed, as it will result in rigidness of the body when suppleness is most desirable.

To face p. 40.

to a reasonable period required for schooling a young horse bought, say, in June:

July.—Commence with careful conditioning. Mouthing, balancing, quiet riding. This, of course, will be continued during the training.

August.—Free or dismounted jumping. If the horse is *fit* and *in the hands of a competent horseman*, mounted schooling is preferable in my opinion, but only under these conditions, and carried out on the lines previously suggested. During this month a riding school will be found most useful, as the "going" outside will be unsuitable for schooling.

September.—Further advanced schooling, the obstacles being varied as much as possible. Practice at opening gates. Should the *ground permit*, small obstacles, ditches, banks and natural fences may be jumped. The horse requires daily at least two hours slow work to condition him.

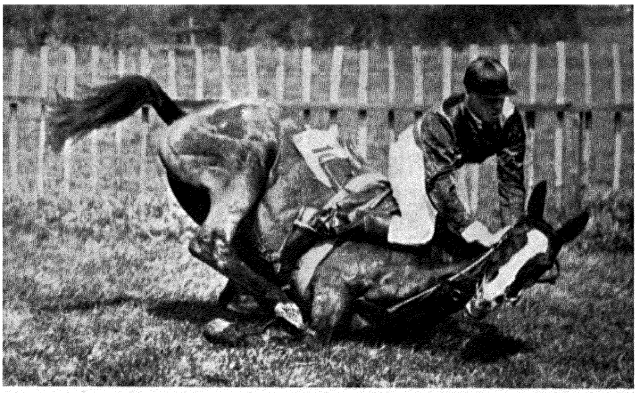
October.—Schooling with other horses out of doors. Jumping faster. He should be shown hounds. Dogs or goats kept in the stable will generally make young horses accustomed to hounds and prevent their kicking. With an excitable young horse, it is preferable that he should not be galloped the first few times with hounds. We want him to like hounds, but not to go mad with them. When he has been out several times, he should at a suitable opportunity be allowed to extend himself right out, after which, in all probability, he will come back willingly to your hand again. The rider, having careful regard to the temperament of his horse, must use his own discretion in introducing him to hounds.

November.—Two hours with hounds is quite sufficient for a young horse (five years old), and a Meet near by should be selected.

Now we will assume that our rider has got his horse reasonably accustomed to hounds during October cubbing, and an early frost has to some extent cleared the fences. He has previously, on several occasions, followed at the tail of the field, jumping the gaps and fences slowly and deliberately. The time has come for the youngster to be allowed to slip along in a hunt. It is no longer desired to hold him back, nor should it be necessary with his previous training. The young horse must get well away with hounds, so that he sees and hears them. He will soon be keen to keep with them. The music and sight of hounds redoubles a young horse's confidence in himself. A good scent makes a good fox and a good hunter too. With hounds in front, a good, fit young horse requires no lead at a strong, forbidding-looking fence. An inherent love to be with the hounds is born in every good horse. One finds it again in his later life, even as a doddering old cripple in a field. The music of hounds will make him prick his ears, snort and trot round the field, forgetting his old age, perhaps only remembering his first hunt with hounds.

But there is more required than a good start: the rider must at times steady his young horse and, whenever possible, save him in this his first hunt.

Opinions differ as to how the rider can best save his horse when he pecks badly. To stop a horse stumbling, we hold him up with the bridle and a pressure of the legs. This is to keep his weight back and to collect him. When a horse pecks on landing he is past this stage, and requires



[*Central News Agency.*

A FALL.

This picture shows the extraordinary position a horse can get into when falling. The points to consider are: Firstly, that a horse, to recover, must have at least one fore-leg out in front of him and his hind-legs in a position to support his weight. This horse has no fore-leg in front of him and cannot recover.

Secondly, he must have sufficient liberty of his head to further his chances of getting a leg out in front of him and eventually recovering.

Thirdly, once beyond recovery and committed to a fall, the horse's main object is to avoid coming down on his chin, in which position he is most liable to break his neck. He therefore tries to tuck his head into his chest, or, failing this, he will, as is more often the case, put his head on one side and roll over on one shoulder as shown in the photograph. Again freedom of his head will assist him.

To face p. 42.

entire freedom of his head to save himself. In fact, in recovering, he will invariably pull the reins through our hands. To pull at his mouth would not save him. It is best to slip the reins through the fingers and try to sit back, so as not unduly to hamper his forehand. It is, however, easier to say this than to do it.

With a ditch on the near side, or a fence leaning towards one, pace is a secondary consideration. He must look and see the ditch and judge his stride correctly. It is advisable to pick out your place where the edge of the ditch on the take-off side is clearly defined, and to steady your horse. He has previously been accustomed to having his head free before he reaches the fence, to enable him to look down and correct his stride. He will not forget that lesson now, and the rider will be repaid for the trouble he took in the early schooling. In the same way a young horse should be steadied at open water or rails: it will enable him to get into his proper stride and he will be less likely to slip when taking off. At the same time he must be given the office with determination when required. At all fences, but particularly at an upright fence or rails, a good take off is invaluable. It is preferable and safer to jump a large fence with a good take off than a small one where the near side is unsound or slippery. In fact, with horses jumping, as with men, seventy-five per cent of the difficulty lies in the take off. A young horse may also require to be helped, if he is dropping his hind-legs into a ditch, by the rider leaning his own weight forward on landing. This can easily be done with practice, and may even save a horse's back from being broken.

Perhaps I should add one word of warning. Though it may not be the rider's fault if he breaks his horse's

back, it certainly is his fault if he breaks his horse's heart and rides a youngster to a standstill. We may all have done it, but it is criminal. For the benefit of fox-catchers, I ask no excuse for quoting some of the verses from "The Dream of an Old Meltonian," by the late W. Bromley Davenport, M.P., which so admirably describes a hunt on a youngster:

He's away, I can hear the identical holla!
I can feel my young thoro'bred strain down the ride,
I can hear the dull thunder of hundreds that follow,
I can see my old comrades in life by my side.
Do I dream? All around me I see the dead riding,
And voices long silent re-echo with glee;
I can hear the far wail of the Master's vain chiding,
As vain as the Norseman's reproof of the Sea.

Vain indeed! For the bitches are racing before us—
Not a nose to the earth—not a stern in the air;
And we know by the notes of that modified chorus
How straight we must ride if we wish to be there.
With a crash on the turnpike, and onward I'm sailing,
Released from the throes of the blundering mass,
Which dispersed right and left as I topped the high railing,
And shape my own course o'er the billowy grass.

Select is the circle in which I am moving,
Yet open and free the admission to all;
Still, still more select is that company proving,
Weeded out by the funker, and thinned by the fall:
Yet here all are equal—no class legislation,
No privilege hinders, no family pride:
If the "image of war" show the pluck of the nation;
Ride, ancient patrician! Democracy, ride!

Oh! gently, my young one; the fence we are nearing
Is leaning towards us—'tis hairy and black,
The binders are strong and necessitate clearing,
Or the wide ditch beyond will find room for your back.

Well saved ! We are over ! Now far down the pastures
Of Ashwell the willows betoken the line
Of the dull-flowing stream of historic disasters ;
We must face, my bold young one, the dread Whissindine.

No shallow dug pan with a hurdle to screen it,
That cocktail imposture, the steeplechase brook :
But the steep broken banks tell us plain, if we mean it,
The less we shall like it the longer we look.
Then steady, my young one, my place I've selected,
Above the dwarf willow 'tis sound I'll be bail,
With your muscular quarters beneath you collected
Prepare for a rush like the " limited mail."

Oh ! now let me know the full worth of your breeding ;
Brave son of Belzoni, be true to your sires.
Sustain old traditions—remember your leading
The cream of the cream in the Shire of the Shires !
With a quick shortened stride as the distance you measure,
With a crack of the nostril and cock of the ear,
And a rocketing bound, and we're over, my treasure,
Twice nine feet of water, and landed all clear !

What, four of us only ? Are these the survivors
Of all that rode gaily from Ranksboro Ridge ?
I hear the faint splash of a few hardy divers,
The rest are in hopeless research of a bridge ;
Vae victis ! The way of the world and the winners !
Do we ne'er ride away from a friend in distress ?
Alas ! we are anti-Samaritan sinners,
And streaming past Stapleford, onward we press.

Ah ! don't they mean mischief, the merciless ladies ?
What fox can escape such implacable foes ?
Of the sex cruel slaughter for ever the trade is,
Whether human or animal—yonder he goes !
Never more for the woodland ! His purpose has failed him,
Though to gain the old shelter he gallantly tries ;
In vain the last double, for Jezebel's nailed him !
Who-whoop ! In the open the veteran dies !

No doubt some readers who have struggled through these pages will say, " All this schooling is quite unnecessary. Surely horses have always jumped well enough without all these theories and systems ? " But remember, there is many a horse that might have been a " top sawyer " if he had not been spoiled when young. Besides, hounds go faster and fences get bigger as we grow older. As a rule the horse is a kind and long-suffering animal, but there are exceptions. Whereas one horse will make it a point of honour actually to catch his rider rather than let him fall, another will give a good buck when he lands to ensure the opposite effect. It is hoped that these suggestions may be found applicable when dealing with the exceptions, and aid to successful results.

CHAPTER VI

SHOW JUMPING

In my opinion there is little to add with regard to the training of show jumpers. I believe that on the Continent they keep horses especially for show jumping, and this class of animal is never hunted. Personally, I can see little use or amusement in keeping a horse solely for this purpose, and would be very sorry to do so. A horse schooled on the lines suggested will probably not only be a good hunter but also a good show jumper. One often hears people say that a horse trained for show jumping is spoiled as a hunter. If this is the case, it must be due to some very exceptional training that it has undergone.

In the early training we were careful to teach our youngster in the end to jump fast and extend himself. Now this is not essential for an Olympia jumper: he can go up in the air, dwell there, and land almost on the same spot. Needless to say this class of show jumper is neither a pleasant nor reliable fencer.

As a rule I have found that the more highly trained jumper is the more brilliant fencer, and surely it is a pleasure, both to horse and rider, if he sometimes does jump a little too big. You feel that you have something in hand, and that you can always go the shortest way. You certainly have a better chance when you come to a

really big fence than the rider on a horse that barely jumps big enough. This is probably contrary to the opinion of most men, but I find it gives me more pleasure to ride a bold young horse, that feels like jumping the National course, than a safe old stager that has lost the elasticity of youth.

A horse that is to perform at Olympia, naturally, must be schooled in a riding school if possible, over solid fences, and the more peculiar the fences are in appearance the better.

It is ridiculous to expect the ordinary hunter to show his best performance in a school if he has not been used to it. In fact, if he is to be successful, he must in all probability start at the beginning and work up gradually like a young horse. He will then learn to jump quietly and go through the monotony of school jumping as a matter of course. He has to learn to jump slowly and with only a short run, to balance himself, to get his weight forward when required and to raise his hindquarters.

A standing martingale may often be found useful in training a show jumper that is inclined to jump with his head too high.

He will soon learn to correct this fault if the rider assists him by getting his own weight forward and giving complete liberty of rein when the horse is actually jumping. The rider will often find it necessary to carry these two principles to an extreme, appearing almost to throw the reins at the horse with an animal that appears to jump with its weight too far back, for the whole of show jumping for man and horse is an exaggerated effort.

The horse that rides with too much of its weight on its forehand is more likely to raise its hindquarters, but perhaps not its forehand, sufficiently. If he can be given one or



[*Sport and General Press Agency.*

THE EXAGGERATED SHOW JUMPING SEAT.

This was done by the officer in the picture to demonstrate the exaggerated position.

To face p. 48.

two falls free, he will soon learn that solid fences are not to be trifled with. If this treatment has little effect on him, and he continues to knock the fences with his fore-legs, the chances are that he is not worth training as a show jumper, provided always, of course, that he has had a fair chance, starting over small obstacles at slow paces at the commencement. Remember that a jerk on the horse's mouth when in mid-air will raise his head and down will go his hind-quarters, and down will come the *railway gates* or *sleepers*, etc.

In show jumping it is necessary always to ride the horse in the same way, otherwise he cannot consistently show his true form. I found this out from experience lately, when, owing to an injured leg, I was unable to ride my own horses in the manner to which they were accustomed. Consequently they lost confidence and failed.

For this same reason it is inadvisable to put strange riders on to horses when they are show jumping. No matter how good an individual may be, he and the horse will probably take some days to know each other's ways, and, until they do, the horse cannot be expected to jump in his best form.

Horses trained for show jumping may roughly be divided into two classes. (1) Horses that perform on their own, and on whom the rider is merely a passenger. Such horses are trained by incessant jumping, and generally take several years before they reach the top of their form. (2) Horses that are carefully trained to obey the rider's hand and leg. These can then be taught to jump in a comparatively short time. The rider can lengthen or shorten the horse's stride as he wishes, consequently *he watches where the horse is putting his feet, keeps him on his hocks*, and makes him take

off when he wishes. This helps the horse to measure the fence, and he will seldom make a bad blunder.

Personally, I prefer the latter class.

In this country, where most officers play polo, they cannot be expected to keep up hunters throughout the summer for show jumping, and most soldiers' horses require a well-earned rest after hunting. The only horses I have ever jumped at Olympia have been troop-horses. No doubt in every regiment there are a considerable number of horses that could be trained successfully for Olympia. The training entails very little time and trouble, and is in no way detrimental to the horses' military career.

CHAPTER VII

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

THE following chapter is mainly devoted to the prevention of, or to the manner of dealing with, some of the many ailments that young horses are heir to, at the first indication of trouble.

BANDAGES

Bandages: (1) Useful as protection from injury when at work; (2) to keep the legs warm; (3) cold-water bandages; (4) hot-water bandages.

(1) Put on from knee to the fetlock and are best made of stockinette. They must not in any way interfere with the joints.

(2) From the knees and hocks to the hoof. Should be made of wool and put on as loose as possible.

(3) Should be made of linen to keep the limbs cool if required.

(4) Should be made of wool. They should be put on fresh at frequent intervals to draw out any inflammation. This is a first essential.

Dry bandages in the stable should be removed at least twice daily to prevent injury from pressure.

How to put on Bandages

Starting from below the knee or hock, unroll sufficient bandage to make one turn round the leg, sloping very gradually down the leg. Keep the bandage close to the leg and allow it to unroll itself round and down the limb, as low as it is required.

From the fetlock or coronet it will naturally take an upward direction, and the unrolling will be continued till it reaches the first point where it was started. The tapes should be tied here (securely for work) on the *outside* of the leg, and the ends must be tucked in neatly. For working bandages it is advisable for extra security to turn down the corner of the loose end first applied, so that the next turn will hold it fast and prevent it from slipping. Cotton-wool inside working bandages prevents bandage soreness, supports the tendons and ligaments, and tends to minimise concussion if the going is hard. Bandages are sometimes used for sore shins. If used for hunting, bandages should be sewn on as well as tied, and cotton-wool placed doubly thick on each side of the leg over the suspensory ligaments to equalise the pressure.

Boots

Boots are recommended for schooling young horses. When worn, care must be taken that dirt does not get inside and cause irritation. Cotton-wool around the leg inside the boots will prevent this and give additional support to the tendons and ligaments.

Boots afford protection from splints and brushing.

Brushing—its Causes

This only occurs at the walk and trot and is due to :

(1) Want of condition.
(2) Fatigue.
(3) Ill-fitting shoes.
(4) Deformed limbs (especially turned-out toes).

Careful preparation of the feet for shoeing is essential. The inside of the shoes may require to be made deeper, and feather-edged shoes may be necessary (see Shoes).

Speedy-cutting is a more serious form of trouble that occurs at the gallop. It is due to faulty action and will cause unsoundness.

Blows, Contusions—Immediate Treatment Essential

Blows caused, when schooling, by stone walls, etc., should be immediately fomented and hot-water swabs kept on, covered over with oil silk to maintain the heat. When the inflammation is out, the enlargement can be reduced to the normal size by frequent hand rubbing. This must be done before the injury becomes hard and callous.

Bits—their Adjustment and Action

The different actions of the snaffle and the bit from a training point of view are often misunderstood. By proper adjustment we can prevent sore mouths and galls. A sound knowledge of their action will prevent bad mouths and lack of balance and control.

The Snaffle

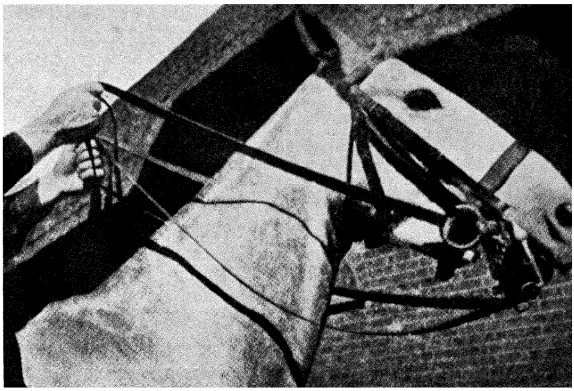
For training purposes the snaffle should be used to place and keep the horse's head up, and by being played in the corners of the mouth it will prevent a horse from hanging his head on the rider's hands. Some horses will bend to a snaffle, but they are comparatively few.

The Curb Bit

The bit acting on the bars of the mouth induces the horse to bend at the poll, and the lever action of the mouthpiece and the curb chain causes the jaw to be relaxed. This bending and relaxation of the jaw acts as a buffer between the impetus of the horse and the rider's hand. Much patience is often required to obtain this flexion. Young horses should be ridden with their curb chains quite loose at first or they will develop the tiresome habit of getting their tongues over their bits.

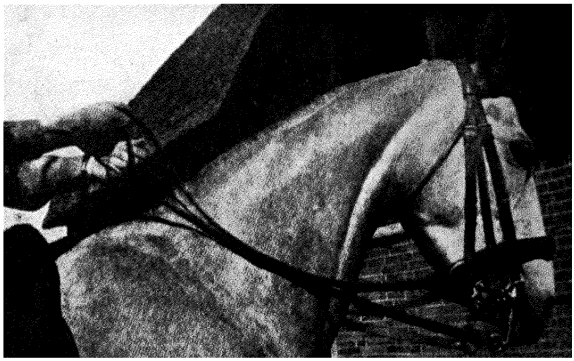
Young horses should be occasionally allowed to feed with their bits on in their stables. It teaches them to keep their tongues under their bits and also to mouth themselves freely. A horse that does not froth at the mouth will have a dead mouth, and instead of giving flexion to the rider's hand will pull and set its jaw.

From time to time there has been considerable discussion as to the relative length of the upper and lower branches of the curb bit. It is generally considered for the average hunter that the upper branch should be $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. from the bearing of the curb chain to the mouthpiece; with the normal cheek or lower branch of $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. To increase severity the lower branch is lengthened. The important



ACTION OF THE BRIDOON.

During the process of making a horse's mouth, the bit and bridoon reins may be divided by the width of the hands as shown above. The head is here shown raised on the bridoon or snaffle. To exemplify this the action of the hands is exaggerated.



ACTION OF THE CURB BIT.

The back of the hands are here turned downwards, the bit reins are felt, the head is bent at the poll, and the jaw relaxed. The action of the bit should be conveyed to the horse by degrees. He should never be forced into it suddenly, and compelled to obey through the severity of the bit. If this part of the training is hurried the mouth will be spoilt. Young horses when first ridden in a curb bit will often be inclined to draw their tongues back, in the attempt to get more freedom from the pressure of the bit in their mouth. Directly the tension of the reins is relaxed one will find they again lower their tongues. It is essential that the tongue should be kept under the bit when making a horse's mouth. Therefore never have a tight curb-chain when starting to train on the bit. The chain should hang loose below the chin-grove, until the horse has learnt that there is no discomfort when the tongue is kept in its place. Never keep a prolonged tension on the reins. Ride with a loose rein, then feel the bit when required with a light tension of the reins for a second or two, followed by riding with a free rein. Gradually the horse will bend at the poll and give his jaw, instead of remaining stiff and withdrawing his tongue or possibly poking his nose.

To face p. 54.

point about the upper branch is that it should be of such a length that when the bit is correctly placed in the horse's mouth the curb chain will rest and remain in the chin groove.

The careful fitting of bits on young horses is most important, though often neglected.

(1) The snaffle should just touch the corners of the mouth.

(2) The bar of the bit should normally lie midway between the corner teeth and the corners of the mouth, and should be level on both sides.

(3) The curb chain must come quite flat into the chin groove when the bit reins are felt. Carelessness or hastiness in putting on a bridle is no doubt the reason why one often finds curb chains put on incorrectly. If one were to examine all the horses out hunting in a large field one would find an extraordinarily large percentage of them badly bridled. The curb chains in most cases would be either hooked on wrong or they would require another twist before being attached to the curb hook. Correct adjustment of the curb chain is most important, because, if it is not quite smooth in the chin groove, there will be more pain felt below the jaw than above it; consequently, under these conditions, a young horse will resent lowering his head and relaxing his jaw.[1] If the curb chain comes above the chin groove it will cause soreness. A sound guide for judging how tight a curb chain should be is that, when the reins are felt sufficiently for the curb chain to have a bearing on the chin groove, the cheek of the bit

[1] On an old horse that is inclined to hang on the hands the curb chain may be worn rough. But this is not recommended for young horses.

should be at an angle of 45 degrees to the bars of the mouth. If the curb chain is looser, the bit will follow through and will not maintain its full lever action. If the curb chain is too tight, the bit becomes more severe and is more or less continuously bearing on the tongue and the bars. This will irritate a young horse, harden his mouth, and possibly make him keep his tongue over the bit.

(4) If the bit is too narrow it will bruise the sides of the horse's mouth and upset his temper.

(5) If the bit is too wide it may work to one side of the mouth so that the edge of the port may rest on one of the bars of the mouth ; this will cause an uneven pressure and a one-sided mouth. The curb chain, also, instead of having an even bearing all round the chin groove, will press on one spot and cause soreness.

(6) A long cheek and high port increases the severity of the bit. Too high a port may bruise the roof of the mouth. The tongue fitting into the port produces a stronger bearing of the bit on the bars of the mouth ; whereas with a straight bar bit a considerable amount of the bearing is taken on the tongue.

One-sided Mouth

Generally a horse is more comfortable with sufficient port to give freedom to his tongue. With a one-sided mouth the bit may be dropped a hole lower on the hard side (see Chapter VI. Part II.).

Colds and Coughs

Young horses coming in from grass to stables are liable to catch colds and coughs, especially if their stables are not well ventilated. The symptoms are a discharge from the

nostrils, and possibly a cough. If the cold is severe there may also be fever, and sometimes the horse may not be able to swallow his food. The horse's comfort should be attended to, and he should not be deprived of fresh air, but be warmly rugged, and the legs kept warm with dry bandages.

Steam the head to promote discharge. Rub the throat with embrocation or liniment. A paste of mustard and vinegar applied to the throat will generally relieve a cough. Soft food should be given. The bowels should be kept in a condition of free action. Also put ½ oz. of nitre daily in the drinking water for several days.

Fresh Air

Fresh air is essential for horses' health, though their coats will appear shiny in a badly ventilated stable, and for this reason grooms often like to keep stables at an excessive temperature with the windows shut.

Fresh air prevents and even cures coughs and colds, and consequently, owing to the healthy state of the lungs and the horse generally, his wind is less likely to become affected. Stables should never smell stuffy or feel hot. A draught, on the other hand, is of course to be avoided by every precaution. In winter extra food and clothing to maintain warmth is preferable to curtailing the supply of fresh air.

Cooling Lotion

For bruises and sprains and splints when forming. The lotion should be applied in the treatment of sprains after the first heat and tenderness have passed away. (See Sprains.)

A good cooling lotion which is always obtainable is :

Spirits of wine . . .	4 oz.
Water	8 oz.

Cold Water

Running cold water on to it is an excellent method of hardening and strengthening and keeping cold an injured part.

Clay

A bucket full of good wet clay is most useful in a stable. It is excellent for keeping the feet cool. If put on immediately there is any symptom of unusual heat, diseases of the feet may often be checked in the first instance.

An excellent treatment for polo ponies' legs after a hard game, and equally effective with horses that may have been galloped on hard going, is immediate application of hot-water bandages (a covering of oil silk will help to retain the heat), followed by clay plastered one-third of an inch thick on the fore-legs, and covered over with wet cold-water linen bandages, which can be left on for twenty-four hours with the bandages kept wet.

I had a bad case of sprained suspensory ligament that was treated with applications of wet clay throughout the summer. It was kept on permanently wet for three months. The horse's legs came out in the autumn like a two-year-old's, and he was never troubled again in that way.

Distribution of the Horse's Weight

A sound understanding of this subject will do much to prevent lameness and premature wastage, and therefore justifies inclusion in this chapter.

The fact that horses wear out their fore-legs, whilst the hind-legs are generally as good in an old horse as they were when he was six years old, is easily explained. When the fore-legs are put on the ground the limbs are straight the whole way down, whereas there is bending and unbending of the hock in the case of the hind-limbs. The excessive strain on the leading fore-leg at the gallop, as shown in the diagram on page 148, also accounts for lameness. Finally, in the average young horse the fore-legs take more than one-half, say three-fifths, of the total body weight. From 14 to 28 lb. is taken off the weight on the fore-legs if the head be raised from a vertical position to a higher one at which the front of the face makes an angle of 45 degrees with the ground. The horse standing normally with a rider on his back will have 66 per cent of the rider's weight on the fore-limbs and only 34 per cent on the hind-limbs. Obviously, if the fore-limbs are relieved of some of this excessive weight they will last longer. This can be done by putting the horse back on his hocks in moderation.

At slow paces, walk, trot and canter, the horse can be taught to move with his head carried high and bent at the poll, while the hocks are kept well under him to assist in carrying the weight. It is worse than useless to raise the head and let the hocks go farther back instead of being well under the horse. The placing of the head has been shortly explained under "Bits"; the keeping of the hocks under the horse is done by the rider's legs, with which the horse is pressed well up to his bridle during the process of placing the head.

Horses will keep sounder on their fore-limbs if they are taught to keep their weight well back on the hocks, but of

course this is impossible at fast paces, when the weight must be brought proportionately forward to gain impetus.

Exhaustion

When the horse is overtired, the whole system is overtaxed, and he will be unable to digest his normal feed. When brought in in an exhausted condition the horse should be well bedded down in a large box, warmly clothed and bandaged, given a warm bucket of oatmeal gruel with some brandy in it (2 to 4 oz.), and later a warm mash. A pint of porter in a bucket of chilled water will help a tired horse on his way home, and is obtainable almost anywhere.

Feeding

The principle of feeding young horses is: small quantities and often. Avoid overloading the stomach. Give a liberal allowance of chaff in the feed: this will increase mastication, and so help digestion. Crushed oats have this advantage that, in its whole state some of the grain may escape mastication and thus not be properly digested, but if the oats are crushed this defect is obviated.

Oats are a good muscle-producing feed, and for a young horse coming on to hard food about 4 to 8 lb. a day will be found sufficient for the first few weeks. This can be gradually increased according to his work and condition. If there is any sign of humour breaking out, it is advisable to cut down the supply of oats and replace with bran mashes and green food. When on a small oat ration, young horses should have a liberal supply of bran and good hay to provide the necessary bulk, as these are both good bone-producing foods.

Boiled linseed, from ½ to 1 lb. daily, is a good fat-producing ration for thin horses, and should be mixed with their ordinary feeds. Linseed also has a good effect upon their coats.

Beans and peas are not recommended for young horses ridden in most hunting countries where they are liable to pick up thorns. The thorns are often poisonous, and heating food will only increase any inflammation and cause further trouble. However, if they are given, they should always be split and should be a year old.

Lucerne and carrots are both excellent cooling foods.

Gratings of carrots mixed in the ordinary food will often tempt poor feeders to eat up their feeds.

Rock salt should always be in the manger. For horses that bolt their food three or four pieces can be placed in the manger, which will prevent their eating too quickly. Young horses often look about and listen to noises all day, but will generally feed up at night, a fact which should be taken advantage of. Shy feeders will often eat up if their food is put in four boxes, one in each corner of the loose-box.

Nervous young horses should be allowed boxes that they can look out of, and they will become used to the various sights and sounds.

Water must be fresh, and preferably soft. In cold weather it may be chilled.

Horses should if possible always be watered at least half an hour before feeding, so as not to interfere with the gastric juices that aid proper digestion of the food. Young horses that are really poor may be given a gallon of milk a day until they begin to thrive. A wineglassful of cod-liver oil, mixed with twice the amount of treacle in the night feed, will help the digestion and bring a horse into condition.

Humour

This shows itself by lumps appearing under the horse's skin, and they may become aggravated by friction or pressure of the saddle. The cause is too much hard food and the fact of the blood becoming heated. A small amount of Epsom salts may be given in the feeds; oats must be reduced, and bran mashes and green food substituted.

Physic

Grooms, generally, are anxious to physic horses on every occasion. Horses coming up from grass on to a hard diet will generally require physicking, otherwise it is recommended to have professional advice before administering a physic. Horses should be prepared for physic, *i.e.* put on soft food forty-eight hours before a dose.

Overreach

Overreaches occur when jumping or galloping, and are caused by the hind-shoes striking into the fore-limbs. Concave hind-shoes with the inner edge of the ground surface rounded off are the least likely to give a serious overreach. Overreach boots may be necessary for some horses. An overreach into the back tendon is generally caused by landing in boggy ground, with the result that the horse is unable to get his fore-limbs out of the way before the hind-limbs come down. (See Wounds.)

Shoes

Fullered shoes give a horse a better grip on the ground; calkins on the hind-shoes also assist horses in jumping. Concave fullered shoes should be used for hunters. The

inner edge of the hind-shoes should be rounded off and the toe set well back to prevent overreaching. It is sometimes necessary to have frost nails put in the shoes for show jumping if the take off is very slippery, but in this case the shoe should not be too light to hold the studs or frost nails.

Preparation of the Foot for Shoeing

The foot requires careful preparation for shoeing: when reduced to the proper proportions the front of the wall should make an angle of 50 degrees with the horizontal. Commence with light shoes on youngsters, and avoid using too many nails, as the early training does not take place in heavy going.

Carefully examine every day for any indications of bruises, especially when actual jumping commences. On no account should the frog or sole be pared away. The ground surface of the wall should be rasped to make the foot level. If the feet are allowed to get too long there will be undue strain on the back tendons, especially during fast work.

The frog should be as near as possible level with the ground surface of the shoe, as the former helps to counteract the jar of concussion. The natural use of the frog coming in contact with the ground will help to develop and keep it healthy; otherwise the frog will deteriorate, and fail in its office as an anti-concussion mechanism.

Skill and experience are necessary to know the exact amount to lower the wall, and how to obtain an even-bearing surface when shoeing, but the toes must be well rasped down, and the heels scarcely touched.

Horses pricked whilst shoeing should have the shoe removed and the foot poulticed with bran.

In dry climates, or when horses and ponies have to work on very hard ground, the wall, frog and soles of the feet may be dressed with castor oil. It will prevent the feet getting brittle and the frog hard. The foot then retains a certain amount of elasticity which will partially counteract jar. It allows for fractional expansion of the foot, preventing inflammation after fast work on hard going. In my own experience I have found no ill result, but undoubted benefit, from this treatment.

Sprains

These are in fact rupture of some of the fibres of the tendon or ligament, causing heat, pain, swelling and great lameness. Accuracy in locating the lameness is essential. Common causes of sprains are :

(1) Want of condition—muscle not braced to take the shock of landing over a jump.
(2) Galloping suddenly from soft on to hard going (misapplication of the muscular bracing of the fore-limbs).
(3) Uneven landing—twisting the ligaments.
(4) Faulty preparation of the foot—wall lowered more on one side than another ; toes too long, heels too low, putting an extra strain on the tendons.
(5) Fatigue.

Treatment.—Hot-water treatment to draw out pain and inflammation.

If taken early—pressure bandage, hand rubbing, cold applications. Avoid powerful liniments and blisters until all inflammation has subsided. (See Clay, p. 58.)

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

On the first indications of lameness, soreness or heat in the feet and legs, stop work, reduce the corn ration by three-quarters, substituting with bran mashes, and a tablespoonful of Epsom salts in the night feed.

Splints

Inflammatory growth on the cannon-bone, usually inside. As a rule, they only cause lameness when developing in young horses, but when of great size are liable to be hit by the opposite foot, and may cause periodical trouble throughout the horse's career. In jumping-horses they are mostly caused by too early work and by concussion on landing, though a large percentage of splints are originated by knocks, in which latter case boots will prevent the formation of splints.

Treatment for Splints.—Rest. Cold water. Work in cotton-wool and bandages.

If persistent seek professional advice, as punch firing may be the only effectual remedy. Remedies professing to cure while the animal is at work are best avoided, as horses may in this way become permanently lamed by developing chronic periostitis.

Spurs

Sharp spurs should, if possible, never be resorted to when schooling youngsters. It upsets a great many horses, whilst others rush or take off erratically if ridden in sharp spurs. A well-trained horse should come up to his bit with a pressure of the legs, in which case spurs, other than blunt ones for appearance, will be found unnecessary.

Sharp Teeth, Swollen Gums

All horses should have their teeth looked to periodically. The molar teeth are apt to become sharp at the edges on the outside of the upper and inside of the lower jaw. This will prevent proper mastication, and the edges must be rasped smooth. Lampas or swelling of the gums, which may prevent horses eating, is best treated by bathing with a solution of alum ($\frac{1}{18}$) and water, and soft food for a day or two.

Thorns

After hunting, or schooling over natural fences, the legs should be carefully examined for thorns. The thorns must be extracted immediately, that is to say, before any swelling appears. Bathe with warm water, cover with clean wool and a bandage. An obstinate thorn that has not been extracted may be drawn by an application of "Antiphlogistine" kept on for forty-eight hours, according to the directions.

Horses' Wind

Respiration.—In a horse the air is drawn through the nostrils only.

It is as well to be a confident judge of a whistler, as disputes on this point are not uncommon. Any one who is slightly deaf will often fail to detect a slight whistler.

High Blowing.—High blowing must not be confused with whistling. The former is a noise caused by the air passing through the nostrils, and is more pronounced in some horses than others.

Whistling.—Whistling is the noise made during ex-

cessive breathing, when one or both sides of the larynx are paralysed. It is easily detected by experience. It may be either a shrill or a low-toned whistle emanating from the throat. It can generally be heard when a horse is cantering slowly on a small circle. In some cases it is more noticeable after a good gallop. Affections of the wind are much more common with large horses over 16·2 hands. It has been found that the nerve of the larynx in the large horse is the same size as that of a 14·2 hands pony, although all the other organs of the former are proportionately developed. Consequently, with the extra strain on the nerve of the larynx of the large horse, cases of whistling and roaring are not uncommon. The defect is undoubtedly hereditary.

Roaring.—Roaring is the more aggravated form of whistling, and generally develops from the latter.

Broken Wind.—This is an affection of the lungs, and the horse's expiration takes place under considerable difficulty. It is easily noticeable on watching the flanks. Affections of the wind are due to many causes, such as, for instance, to breeding from unsound parents, overwork when out of condition, indiscreet feeding, sudden change of diet, badly ventilated stables; they may also be the result of chills, influenza, etc., possibly from horses being overbent, or they may arise from climatic conditions, this latter cause alone being beyond human control.

Whisping

Whisping indirectly helps a horse's digestion, and may keep off chills. It is essential for conditioning a horse. It stimulates the skin, invigorates the circulation and has

a healthy effect on the oil-glands. It is a form of massage, and will make the coat glossy and increase the muscle.

Wounds

General Treatment.—Ensure absolute cleanliness. Small scratches should merely be washed clean and dressed with healing antiseptics and left to the open air. Antiseptics, such as boracic acid, sulphate of zinc, solution of Jeyes' fluid (1-10), should be kept handy. Carbolic acid, if used, must be frequently applied, as it evaporates rapidly.

In more serious cases, after washing clean it may be necessary to stop bleeding by pressure above and below the wound (if it is a deep cut), or a simple pad and bandage may suffice. Wounds from wire must be allowed to drain out the poison before healing. Boracic lint fomentations should be applied to draw out the poison. All discharges indicate an unhealthy condition of a wound. When a wound is dressed it should be covered with a piece of antiseptic lint and bandaged.

Open Joint

Wounds near joints should be touched as little as possible with the hands, nor should they be poulticed or fomented. Where there is an open joint (*i.e.* condition where there is escaping joint oil), which is serious, the wound should have a constant stream of cold running water over it till relieved.

Overreach

In the case of an overreach the wound is caused by a downward blow, possibly even resulting in the cutting of

the back tendon. There is, consequently, an underlip of skin hanging down, and when bandaging care should be taken that the lip is kept in correct position, when it will heal. If the lip is merely held on by a small tissue of skin it should be cut off at the outset. The overreach should be treated with antiseptics and bandaged from below upwards to keep the edges of the cut in position, as described above. Pads of tow should be placed under the bandage to prevent undue pressure on the injured part.

CHAPTER VIII

TYPES OF HORSES

In Chapter I. it was stated that good fencers were to be found in all shapes. The following photographs of five horses are selected for three reasons: (*a*) Not one of them was high-priced as a young horse; in fact, two of them were bought by Colonel Wood for troop-horses. (*b*) Yet each was an exceptional jumper in his or her own way. (*c*) Each represents more or less a different type of horse from the point of view of conformation.

It will be noticed that the balance of each horse is mentioned. Balance is the basis of a good mouth: a good mouth does not merely infer that a horse does not pull, as is often believed, but means a mouth that admits of free flexion to the bit, thus enabling the rider to get the maximum of control. By this I mean that he can almost place his horse's feet where he wishes. As explained in Chapter II., the degree of flexion of the neck reacts on the extension of the horse's four legs proportionately. This is commonly called "coming back to the hand." The more highly the horse is trained the finer is the adjustment of the limbs produced by the bit when in sympathetic hands.

Of the five selected horses, those with the best balance had the best mouths, and nearly always came right at their fences, or could easily be made to do so: whereas those

with less finished mouths were more erratic in taking-off. This peculiarity does not apply at all to racing, when the boldest and best natural fencers are those that find their right stride consistently at their fences; but I think it is generally the case with a finished hunter who is required to collect himself and arch his back over a fence. In a young horse good natural balance is of great assistance in jumping. Foreign buyers in Ireland invariably look for this qualification, and consequently breeders pay particular attention to it.

An aptitude for jumping is hereditary in horses, and this characteristic can nearly always be relied on in breeding, a fact that should not be forgotten by buyers. Mares, from their conformation, can afford to be longer in the back than geldings and yet jump equally well. Excessive length behind the saddle in a gelding generally denotes weakness, which is reflected in his jumping. In the photographs of mares it is noticeable that each is longer in the back than the geldings.

Recently some fairly exhaustive measurements of good jumpers at the Equitation School at Weedon produced the following deductions. Actual measurements in inches may lead to false impressions, as they can only be comparative, and must necessarily vary considerably with horses of different heights.

The following points can only be said to indicate a capacity for jumping and are not necessarily factors conducive to speed.

1. Shortness from the croup to the withers.

This intimates that the dorsal muscles over the loins are powerful, strong and short. They are required to retain

the weight of the forehand when lifted by the bracing of the fore-limbs, and raise it higher as required for jumping.

It must not be supposed, though it is difficult to prove this theoretically, that the forehand lacks the ability to produce upward propulsion. This ability is clearly demonstrated by a horse when bucking, because the body is thrown up in the air without any forward movement. Also one feels the same effort being made by a horse when he takes off under a fence. Again it can be noted in the gallop, when the leading leg propels the body upwards as well as forwards. (See illustration of Zev and Papyrus galloping.)

2. A long and horizontal pelvis.

This can be explained by the diagram opposite. In (*a*) it will be seen that, with a long pelvis and short femur, there is more mechanical advantage in the pull of the muscles than in (*b*), which shows the reverse, a short pelvis and long femur. This is especially the case in the muscle marked ×, which pulls back the lower bone in creating propulsion. On the other hand, the theory of the horizontal pelvis as opposed to the oblique for jumping ability is questionable, and by no means borne out in practice. There are possibly fewer jumpers, but some, at any rate, that are equally good with an oblique pelvis.

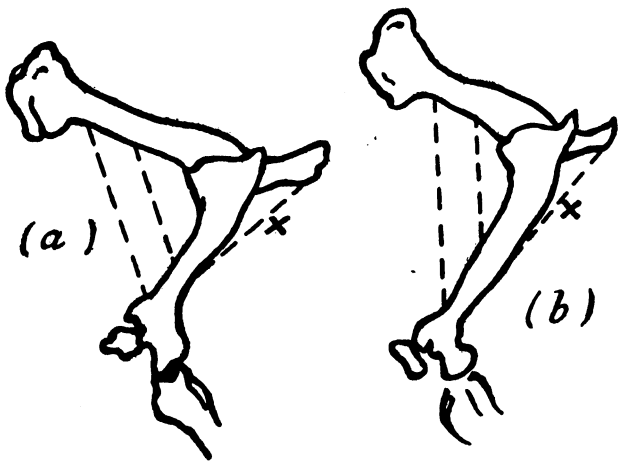
3. Long distance from the stifle to the hock, and the hock consequently nearer the ground.

In this case, with the greater length of the tibia and the nearness of the hock to the ground, the efficiency and pull of the contracting muscles is increased in power.

4. Powerful muscles of the thigh and gaskin are neces-

eary to get the fullest propulsion in the action of the lever. These muscles develop with jumping.

These points are not easily detected by eye at short notice, but no one will find much difficulty in appreciating whether a horse gives him a good feel over a fence, and if



(*a*) Long pelvis and short femur, with the muscles actuating on the backward and forward pull of the latter.
(*b*) Short pelvis and long femur, with the same muscles at a mechanical disadvantage.

he does, it is safe to say that the horse will make a good jumper.

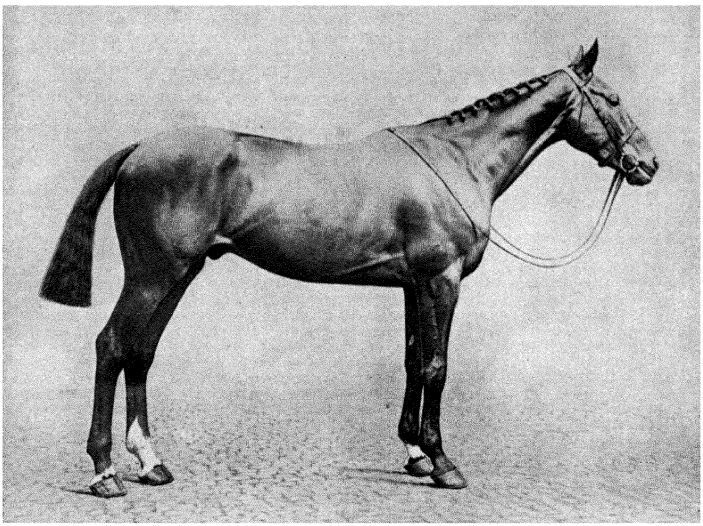
There are also the incalculable factors of nervous energy and courage, and on these depend as much as on anything whether we find ourselves at the end of a good hunt.

In a good grass country a well-bred horse is an absolute necessity, or one can never hope to live with hounds in a quick thing; and needless to say, as will be explained later, good sloping shoulders will save many a fall.

The Horse's Mentality

The horse's brain is practically devoid of reasoning power, although he may have natural cunning. At the same time he is endowed with an excellent memory. This fact should always be borne in mind when making young horses.

From experience, we know that training by means of gaining a young horse's confidence and repeatedly teaching him one simple lesson after a previous one is thoroughly learnt, is preferable to exacting obedience by subjection to hasty and harsh treatment. The former results in permanent and reliable obedience; the latter will, in most cases, produce merely temporary obedience. The horse may become nervous, sulky, or, in the case of a high-couraged youngster, he may become vicious, and put up a defence which his natural cunning tells him may defeat his trainer's endeavours to control him. No two horses are exactly similar in character and temperament. Endless patience and progressive training are therefore essential if one wants to get the very best results. It is a sound rule that, if a young horse is not going smoothly in his work at each of his paces, the reason is that his education has been hurried, and he must not be pushed on to a more advanced stage of his training till he has acquired smoothness at the previous stage.

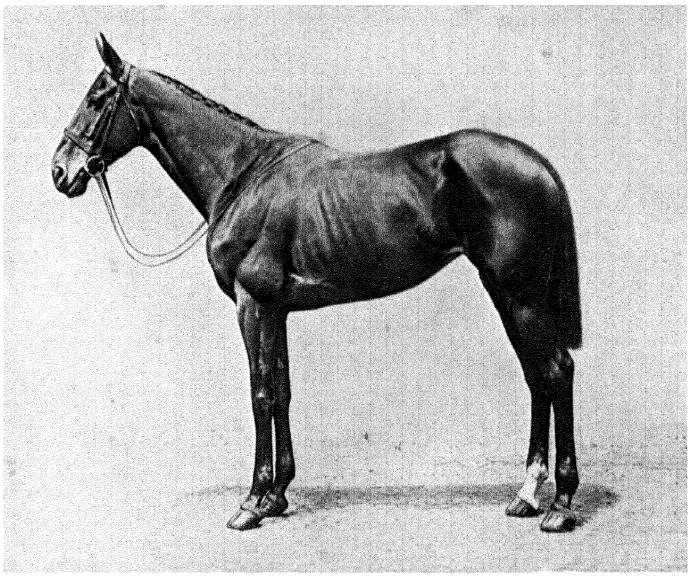


[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

TYPE 1.—A BROWN GELDING.

Perfect balance. A beautiful fencer. A horse that never came wrong at his fences and landed like a feather. He liked jumping at a pretty fast pace and never found it necessary to put in a short stride. However, as his head denotes, he had a sulky temper that did not decrease with age. A kind head and eye should be looked for when buying a young horse.

Following p. 74.

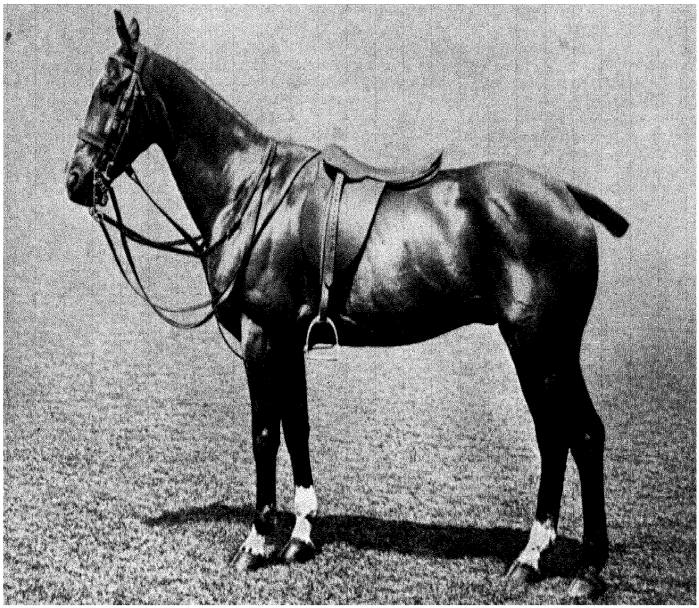


[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

TYPE 2.—A BAY MARE.

Very fair balance. An excellent fencer with a charming disposition. She came from a stone wall country where she had been hunted as a four-year-old. She had at first a tendency to buck over her fences, and liked jumping slowly, at which pace she could extend herself over a wide place with ease. She had a long stride, and did not quite come back freely to the bit, so at times might take off too close under a fence, but never with ill results. Pushed into her bridle at racing pace, she would stand back boldly. She was never known to fall.

Following p. 74.



[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

TYPE 3.—A BROWN PONY GELDING.

Balance perfect. Only 14·3, but could jump any country fast or slow with consummate ease. In his prime one could not wish for a better ride in a really fast hunt. If he had been bigger his place might easily have been over the Aintree fences.

Following p. 74.

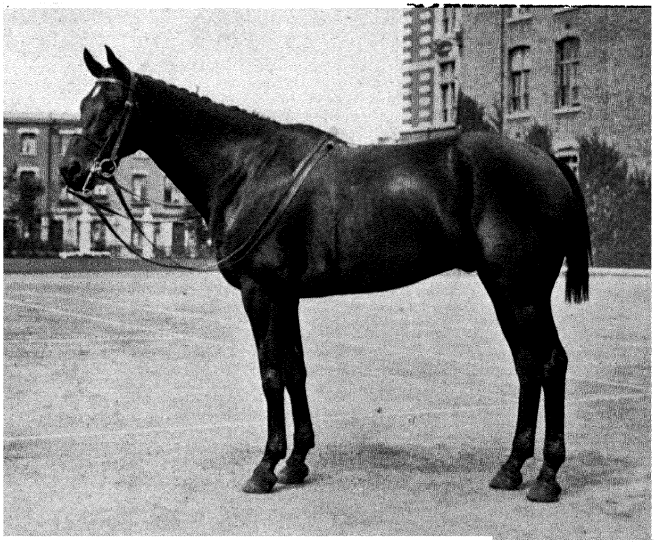


[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

TYPE 4.—A BROWN MARE.

Balance perfect. Winner of innumerable jumping prizes and a really brilliant hunter. She could jump any sort of fence, fast or slow, and with her perfect mouth and balance she would always take-off right. A most intelligent mare and never seemed to lose the elasticity of youth. She was sent home from France at the latter part of the War, having been badly wounded on several occasions, and it was intended to breed from her. Unfortunately she was kicked when out at grass with other mares, broke her leg, and had to be destroyed.

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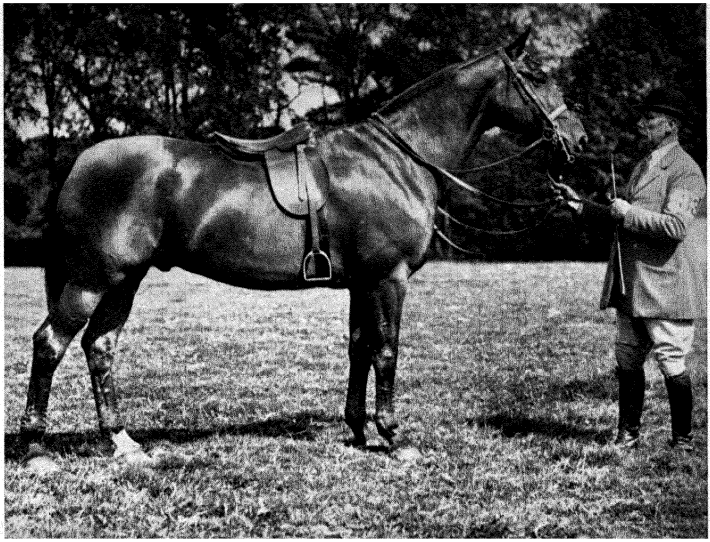


[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

TYPE 5.—A BROWN GELDING.

Balance perfect. Winner of several championships, jumping at Olympia, and an exceptional hunter that rode like a polo-pony. He could easily be put in his right stride at his fences. Being of rare intelligence and character he was not difficult to train, but might have been easily spoilt if he had been knocked about. He was taught to look at and come right at his fences, and though he might possibly touch a fence he never made a bad blunder. He was hunting up to the age of twenty-five. He and the mare in the previous picture both went through the War and were always together every night. On one occasion in 1914 he was put in a loose-box away from her. The unaccustomed separation was too much for him, he jumped out over the lower half of the door and at about 3 A.M. was seen by a sentry galloping across the German lines. Having been stabled when it was quite dark he missed his bearings. He was away for two days, and when he returned to the farm it was then occupied by a field ambulance. In spite of the fact that his loss had been actually published in the Army Orders of the day, they did not recognise him, but when they attempted to put him in harness, he showed his intense indignation by kicking the ambulance to pieces. Later he was fortunately discovered and claimed by his owner.

Following p. 74.

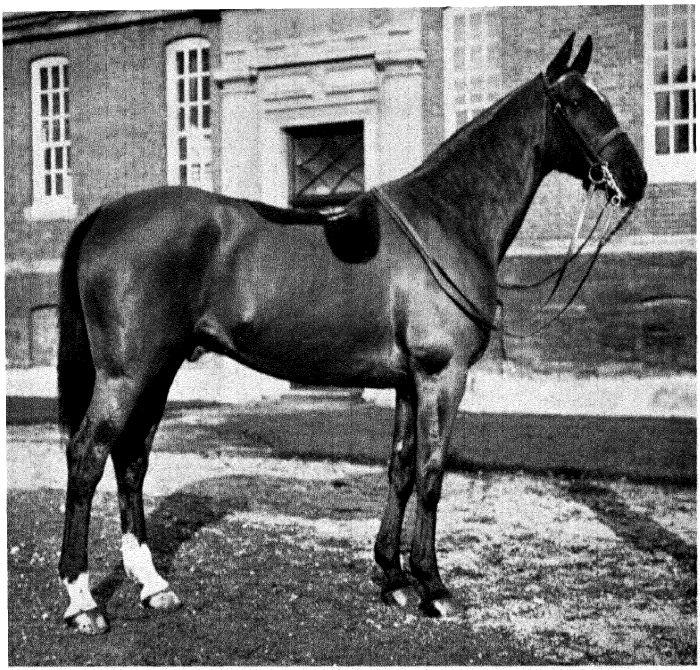


[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

HUNTERS (1).—CAPT. HOBBS AND "JORROCKS," CHAMPION HEAVY-WEIGHT HUNTER, 1923.

An ideal type of hunter up to any weight, possessing substance, quality, balance, and pace.

Following p. 74.

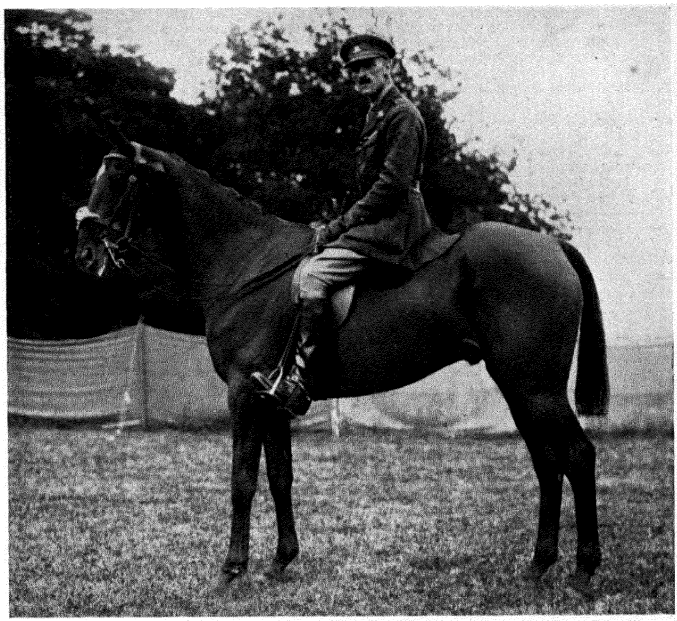


[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

HUNTERS (2).—MRS. R. B. BRASSEY'S "PARKSTOWN."

A rare type of heavy-weight hunter, who does not belie his looks, as he is a first-class performer over a country.

Following p. 74.



[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

HUNTERS (3).—AN EXCELLENT TYPE OF THOROUGHBRED HUNTER.

Showing quality, depth, and symmetry, and consequently perfect balance, and a really good performer. A winner in the show ring and over fences.

Following p 74.

CHAPTER IX

A LUCKY DAY, OR A HUNT WITH MR. X

BEFORE we finally leave the subject of hunters we might have a hunt with, let us say, Mr. X, the same whom we watched when he was schooling a young horse over fences (Chapter V.), and see if we novices cannot pick up some useful hints from him. X is an artist on a young horse over a country, and at the same time he takes the most infinite pains in schooling, mouthing and balancing his horses.

On this occasion he is on a clean-bred five-year-old that he has hitherto been riding quietly out cub-hunting, but to-day he means to let him slip along in a hunt. Both rider and horse are immaculately turned out; at the same time they look undeniably businesslike.

It chances to be one of those lucky days when everything goes right for X and his horse, but apart from any element of luck, much is due to the painstaking care he has bestowed on his pupil during the previous months.

On the morning in question the glass is rising steadily, the wind, slight as it is, has veered round to the north, and on the way to the Meet the fences, already cleaned by early November frosts, look black in the clear, calm atmosphere.

There should be a scent?

Jogging quietly to the Meet, his horse the while playing with the bit in his mouth, X observes to himself, "Hounds will likely run to-day."

At the Meet it appears from their keen and alert expression that hounds have the same idea.

X allows his horse to walk quietly about, and on moving off, places himself behind the hunt second horseman. He is intent on letting his youngster have every chance and a good start, and is anxious to get into a position from which he can reconnoitre and prepare for it. He establishes himself at a gate outside the small but thick thorn covert which hounds are drawing, and slightly on the down-wind side of it.

The Master holds up the rapidly increasing field at this point.

X's position is excellent should the fox go away on this side, and, by the chorus inside the covert, it seems that he has been right in his surmise of a scent, for hounds can really push their fox even in this dense black thorn. But their joyous music makes our friend's young horse restive, added to which he is alongside a fidgety and probable kicker, a not uncommon occurrence in a crowded field, but rather a trying situation when riding a high-mettled youngster. He has to make up his mind whether he shall stop where he is or move clear of the crowd now pressing round his horse.

He reasons that if the fox should break the other way he will not be too well placed, while every minute his horse is getting more eager and restive as he hears the cry of hounds in the covert. If he moves away and the fox breaks this side, he must jump the fence adjoining the gate. He should be able to do this even with horses going through the gate on his right, because he has always schooled his

youngster to jump without wings and with others beside him. Can he rely on him now?

He decides to get clear of the crowd and selects his place in the fence, should he have to go that way. A momentary pause, then shrill through the cold air rings out Jack's, the first Whipper-in's, "gone away" signal.

What commotion, cramming on of hats, snatching at bridles, as the huntsman comes galloping round and slips through the gate amidst cries of—"Huntsman, please, Huntsman——" Twang! twang! twang! sounds the horn, and hounds come streaming out of the covert.

X, clear of the turmoil, collects his horse and pops him over the fence, feeling justly elated that he never even thought of swerving towards the gate.

Striding over the grass, with the thud of galloping hoofs all round, the youngster shows all the natural symptoms of keenness and excitement only to be expected from his aristocratic breeding, but his perfect mouth and balance make it an easy matter for such a finished horseman to steady him.

What a wonderful sensation—a thoroughbred under one—that consciousness of power behind the saddle—that absolute smoothness of action, fore-legs extended right out in front—a nice level feeling on the reins—the glorious rhythm of his paces over the sound springy turf—the rush of chill air against our face, as we gallop across a fifty-acre field.

So far all is plain sailing, and X steadies his horse as he approaches the next fence, a thorn hedge with a rail through it, but leaning away. He clears it just after the huntsman, landing well out in the next field.

"All on, sir," he hears Jack say to the huntsman,

and all three settle down to ride alongside of the pack, which is running well and together across a big grass field.

X has got his start and is riding down wind of the pack about two hundred yards to the flank, just abreast of the last hounds. Each hound is racing and striving for mastery, and with a breast-high scent it will be a stout fox that can thwart them to-day.

The next fence, a stake and bound, is not such child's play, though luckily for X the ditch on the near side is clean; nor is the fence too high, but the take off slopes down towards the ditch. He steadies his horse almost to a trot, just keeps him collected so as not to lose the impulsion of his hind-legs, and they arrive in the next field safely and well—"Nicely off his hocks" is X's mental comment.

Hounds are now running well, over a country of mixed pasture and arable, fenced with low stiff hedges and occasional small flights of rails, but no ditches. They seem to be flying over the small fences like a covey of driven partridges skimming a low hedge. There is nothing to check the pace, and X's young horse, with his ears pricked, and an eye on the hounds racing on his flank, is near to paying the penalty of inexperienced youth.

After jumping a series of cock-fences, the next one, without any visible warning to rider and horse, has a wide ditch beyond. He stands back boldly, but it is just this boldness that is so near his undoing. The experienced hunter, having learnt his lesson, is always expecting a ditch on one side or the other of a fence; if it is not on the take off, he anticipates it on landing. Our youngster lands short in the ditch, which is shallow but heaped up with brambles. X gives him his head to have every chance of

recovering, which he does with a snort and a scramble. "Well, it's a lesson to him, and the sooner learnt the better," mutters X to himself, and, no doubt, the prickly brambles scratching his thin silky skin bring the lesson home. X gives him a sympathetic pat on his neck to show that he does not really blame him, making due allowance for his anxiety to do the right thing.

After all the blunder was excusable. As is so often the case over small fences, competition had been keen. Each side and abreast of him horses were jumping, and a runaway bay, with his tongue over the bit, had just pulled across him.

X is most careful to ride up the furrows of the plough, and where the ridge and furrow on the grass is most pronounced, he turns down, when possible, to ride the headland along the fence.

It looks like being a real good thing, and it is vitally important to save every ounce of strength in a young horse. If he gets through this hunt without mishap he is practically a made hunter, five years old and yet a veteran.

We can now see X in absolute sympathy with his horse, standing up in his stirrups, just holding him together over a badly drained field, and gently curbing his impetuosity at the small fences. A blood-horse has a tendency to jump in 'chasing form: that comes naturally to him, and X, realising the fact, seems bent on making him jump collectedly and arch his back over his fences. He has done it at home, and he is settling down now and fencing in the finished style of a perfect hunter with absolute freedom, yet collecting himself and jumping off his hocks each time.

X has just landed over some broken rails with a ditch beyond, at which he has allowed his horse to slip along and

spread himself well over, when he sees, what he knew he would have to face sooner or later, a blind ditch in front of a rather formidable-looking fence. Quick as lightning he selects the weakest-looking place, but the take off here as elsewhere is undefined. He steadies first to a canter, then to a trot, and keeping his legs to his horse and the lightest contact with his mouth, he presents him at the fence. The youngster recognises his master's aids and appears to realise that some special effort is required of him. He lowers his head, hesitates for a fraction of a second as to whether he should put in another short stride, when he feels his rider's legs vigorously applied behind his girths, then jumps, and jumps well enough to give X a sensation of intense satisfaction, not to say relief.

The understanding was evidently mutual. It looked as if the horse had just felt the ditch, a very blind one, with one fore-leg but not with both. But his hocks were well placed ready to jump, when the question was asked, and thus save a fall. At the pace hounds are running a fall would have meant irretrievable disaster, whereas this achievement definitely confirms our friend's opinion of the pace and manner to ride at a really blind place.

Hounds are now racing uphill, and the pace is beginning to tell even on a fit blood-horse. To X's relief, he perceives a herd of cattle in the next field, and he also sees the leading hounds beginning to check. Quickly and quietly he pulls up his horse and allows him to stand with his head to the wind. But the respite is only too short.

Two couple of hounds are feathering along the fence in the corner of the field; first Rapid, then Melody, throw their tongues, when they are immediately joined by the rest of the pack, and with noses to the ground they carry the line

through the fence, right-handed down the road, and then through a gap into the field on the far side. X, who is handy to the gate, unhitching the latch on the right with his whip in his left hand, holds it open for the huntsman, then quietly follows him out on to the road and over the fence on the far side. As he does so he sees a horse and rider slip up on the road on his right. Both are on their legs again, but the pace is too good to inquire further. With one eye on hounds, X instinctively selects his place in the fence on the far side of the field. At the same time a lesson learnt in boyhood crosses his mind: namely, when you jump into a road, intending to turn on landing, or if other people are riding down it, always jump the fence at an angle, or your horse will most probably slip up when turning sharply on the road: with the modern tarmac road it is a practical certainty.

Hounds industriously work out the line over the next three fields, which carry a bad scent, having been recently dressed with chemical manure. Some of the field, pressing on hounds, are severely censured by the Master, but X holds back and is content to keep pretty wide on the down-wind side of the pack.

By degrees there is more assurance in the cry of the leading hounds, then all join in the chorus as they carry the line in and out of a grass lane, part of the famous old Roman road that stretches straight across the country. The next moment they can be seen in the field on the far side racing away from us with tremendous drive. There is no time to lose, yet without any apparent hurry X jumps very deliberately in and out of the lane. He holds his horse straight at the fence into the road and lands on the grass. He is ready to check instantly any tendency to turn

down the road, and using his legs firmly, keeps his youngster both collected and straight up to the fence out of it: then gives him the office and leans slightly forward. The horse jumps without hesitation, and lands clean over the ditch and fence into the opposite field.

The line of pollards now in sight clearly indicates a well-known brook, and there is no bridge within a mile. But by this stage of the hunt both rider and horse have complete confidence in one another. It will not be the fault of either if this formidable obstacle is not successfully negotiated. Hounds are in and scrambling up the opposite bank. X wisely selects his place where there is a bush growing on the bank and probably a sound take off. Between forty and fifty yards from the brook he steadies his horse, and does not attempt to put on steam till he is about fifteen yards from the near bank. There is thus less chance of his misjudging the take off, and in fact they clear it by three feet, the glint of blue water flashing under them as they sail through the air.

As X looks round he sees the numbers of his companions considerably reduced; the brook apparently has taken its toll of some less fortunate sportsmen—"Nothing like blood when it comes to spreading themselves," he remarks to himself.

But the very next fence is almost his undoing. It is thick and impenetrable, with, probably, a ditch beyond, and he presents his horse at it with his accustomed skill and care. He first pulls him together about twenty yards from the fence to ensure having his hocks well under him, then lets him go, just giving him a squeeze with his legs as he takes off. In mid-air he realises that there is a big drop and possibly a sticky landing too. That they did not fall was probably due to X's quick adjustment of his seat, as

well as to his horse's grandly sloping shoulders. He leans well back and lets the reins slip through his fingers. If the horse is to save himself he will want all the freedom of his head that he can get. He does peck, and his nose and one knee meet the wet ground. But he has that spare leg of the clever fencer and liberty to use it too. Having got him on his legs again, X just nurses him and holds him together over the heavy going. Hounds swing left-handed towards him, and, easing up, he turns with them and jumps the next fence out of a trot. Perhaps it was a mistake in this instance, as there is a much wider ditch on the landing side than he reckoned with. He probably misled his horse, seeing that it has been his wont to urge him on with more speed when it was obviously necessary to spread himself. But here again good shoulders and a proper use of them saves a fall. In mid-air X feels his horse make an effort to extend his fore-legs to the utmost, so that, at any rate, they shall clear the ditch, while he himself leans forward in his saddle so as not to hamper his horse's loins and quarters unnecessarily, should they drop short. All is well: there is just a bit of a scramble, and, no doubt, if he had not kept his weight forward, both rider and horse would have slipped back in the ditch.

Hounds hunt their fox on through Bingley Wood, and X trots down the centre ride. He feels sure they are close on their quarry and dares not lose sight of them, as he knows the earths here are stopped. But he does not gallop up the middle of the holding ride; he hugs his horse as it were, keeping on the side that appears to be the soundest going, holding him together, conserving all possible energy and retaining up his sleeve, as it turns out, enough "go" to enable him to continue to the end.

Clear of the wood we are out of our country, and our stout fox appears to be heading for the Lime Kyln Hangings. X sees a man waving his hat, and wishing to save his horse, canters across the sound turf of Slangton Park in that direction, thus cutting off the arc that hounds are running round the home-farm. The man calls out that the fox is just ahead, very muddy and tired, that it ran through a sheep-foiled pasture, where hounds have just thrown up. X watches them make their own cast. First Rhapsody owns it, and, confirmed by old Energy's glorious note, the whole pack drive on. He will indeed be a lucky fox if he reaches the Hangings before hounds catch him.

Nevertheless he does. He is a stout old customer that has baffled hounds more than once before. But a bitch pack like this hunts for hunting's sake, and though they richly deserve their fox, they are, should they lose him, if possible, even more eager to catch him next time.

Ere they reach the Hangings there are two further incidents that add to the stock of knowledge in the education of our friend's young horse. Hounds were not expected in these parts to-day, and the huntsman and X ride up to a gate only to find it locked. There is no jumpable place in the fence and hounds are running on, now a field ahead.

The huntsman rides at the gate, but there is a nasty poached take off and his horse refuses. Though they can hear their cry they can no longer see hounds, who are over the fence beyond, and if one may judge by the crows hovering above indicating his course, their quarry is not far ahead of them.

"Can you give us a lead, sir?" exclaims the huntsman. X, who is twenty yards from the gate, presses his horse up

to his bit, comes up to the gate at a collected canter and just "gives to" his horse's mouth as he lowers his head, still pressing him with his legs. Both are now conscious that they are placed just right to take off, and, to confirm this, X again closes his legs, leaning forward as his horse rises, and giving him the rein he requires as he lands. Nothing could be better, and the assurance with which the youngster clears the gate is apparently conveyed to the huntsman's horse, who is soon following in his wake.

The country hounds are now running over is bullock grazing land, well-drained pastures, but with big ugly fences to meet at the end of a hunt.

X makes up his mind that it will be foolish to try his horse too high at this juncture, and keeps an eye for handy gates to use if necessary. Just on his right the Master takes on an undefined-looking fence, but it is the only place that looks jumpable and X is prepared to follow him. It turns out to be a biggish bottom, a boundary fence between adjoining estates. Our Master is down, but clear of his horse as he rolls over on his side. X pulls up—"Are you all right, Master?" he shouts. "Yes, thanks, but it's a nasty place," comes back the answer, and X with good judgement canters across to a gate, even though it is a bit out of his line. He then trots down a grass lane—no sign of hounds. He pulls up to listen—all is silent. Hullo, that sounds like the horn! No, it is only a bullock lowing in a distant field. His horse impatiently paws the ground, and X gives a shake of his bridle to keep him quiet, the more easily to catch any possible sound or signal. Is that a holloa? No, a train engine whistling. What tricks one's imagination plays! X suspects the fox has been headed by the man with the

team of horses hauling timber from the wood and turned right-handed. Then he observes a blackbird fly screeching out of the fence running at right angles to the lane. Later the deep note of a hound electrifies him and his horse, and the pack, still invisible, immediately join in the chorus. Next instant the dry brittle fence vibrates and bends with their weight as with increased melody the whole pack bursts into the adjoining field, each hound striving and racing for mastery. Imagine X's delight as he spots first Mermaid, then Modesty, leading, two of last year's entry that he had walked as puppies.

He is now joined by the huntsman cheering them on, and together they canter down the grass lane.

Unfortunately, before they have gone very far, the line that our fox has taken diverges from the lane. X pulls up at a gap on his right. It is not too nice a place, as it necessitates first sliding down a precipitous embankment, then popping over a ditch at the bottom into the same field as hounds. He makes his horse walk through the gap, then slide down the grassy slope on his hind-legs. As long as he keeps him straight they cannot fall, and to ensure doing this he holds his horse's forehand straight with the reins, and his hindquarters well under control with his legs. There are two long parallel tracks cut deep in the turf by his horse's hind shoes. Just as he approaches the ditch at the bottom he gives his horse a vigorous squeeze with his legs, and together they land in the field, just in time to catch a glimpse of the tail hounds entering the wood and making the welkin ring with their chorus.

No day's sport is complete without some reflections, be they surmise or fact, on the doings of our hunted fox.

It was a fine old dog-fox that hounds roused this morning

in the thorn bushes, and being of an independent turn of mind, instead of taking the accustomed line from this covert to the Riplowe Hills, he headed straight for Bingley Warren. He guessed by the noise and eager excitement on the part of his pursuers in covert that it was one of those evil days when scent helps the hunter. So, after ascertaining which sides of his covert were free of his larger though less musical enemies, he slipped quietly away, and just twenty seconds later heard Jack's holloa behind him.

Off he goes, ears pricked, head extended and his fine brush carried clear of the rough wet grass, moving at a good steady pace, determined to get in wind and seize every opportunity of shaking off his pursuers. Anxious not to be pressed at the start, he tries the few arable fields more or less in the line of his point, in the hopes that they will not carry such a good scent as the pasture. But he cannot get clear of their merciless chorus, and he realises he had best make the shortest course for the warren. Espying some cattle in the corner of the field he has just entered, he turns towards them, pops through a gap in the fence, turns sharp right-handed down the main Market Risboro road for a hundred yards, and then crosses it. He knows there is something peculiar about the next few fields, because on a recent marauding expedition only a few nights past he was mystified by the fact that even the outlying rabbits seemed immune from the danger of being scented. He slips quickly across the field so as to minimise any chance of being viewed from the road, then pauses for a moment. No sound of hounds, but experience has taught him not to leave anything to chance, and the sooner he makes Bingley Warren the better.

The refuge he has selected is down in the vale alongside

the Bragstone Brook, and as he approaches it he sees a man with a steam plough—an innovation in these parts—at work on the outskirts of the wood.

It is one of his maxims not, if he can avoid it, to be seen entering a covert. He is pretty sure the man has not seen him yet, so, trotting along in the lee of the hedge, he makes up his mind to put the stream between him and his pursuers and try his luck at the earth in Bingley Wood, in preference to the Warren. Though the up-to-date ploughman noticed what he thought was a moorhen crossing the stream, he would, if he had been nearer, have recognised that it was really a little red mask, with a black muzzle and ears laid back, floating down stream so as not to land opposite his point of entry, thereby delaying if not misleading his pursuers.

On landing he trots over some rank grass and through a narrow osier bed, flushing a solitary snipe, which, with shrill discordant note, zigzags down the valley into the far distance. This incident, to an observant eye, might have given away the presence of the fugitive. He now makes straight for Bingley Wood, where, to his extreme annoyance, he finds the earth stopped. He pauses for a moment, listening with one foot in the air, and in the distance hears the eager cry of the hounds getting nearer. There is no time to waste if he is to shake off his enemies, he must keep moving on. His mother, the most sagacious of vixens, had brought up her litter on one golden rule—When hunted, always keep moving on; make as much distance as you can between yourself and your pursuers, be they hunting fast or slow.

He quickly decides that his best chance now will be the badger's earth in Lime Kyln Hangings, another one and a

half miles farther on. He takes his bearings from the wood, decides to leave Slangton Park home-farm on his left, traverse the field which was inhabited by some turnip-fed sheep the last time he passed through, drop down into the big bottom beyond, run along it for fifty yards, then straight up the slope heading for the Hangings to take refuge in his friend the badger's earth.

Our bold fox carries out his plan, though hounds are desperately close on him. He must have come near on six miles, and this last mile and a half means putting out all his energy, only allowing himself an occasional pause to listen for a moment from some point of vantage.

Once he thinks he has shaken them off, yet again he hears their clamour and puts his best foot forward. What an implacable enemy! What ruthless determination! Confident of baffling them again, he trots on at a good steady holding pace for his fairly safe harbour of refuge, for he is none too sure of his host's welcome.

Lime Kyln Hangings are situated on the side of a hill, and the light sandy soil is thickly grown with beech and stunted oak trees. It is underneath one of these that he stops at the mouth of the badger's earth. For a second he stands listening with ears pricked, scenting the air; then hears the cry of the hounds below. Without more ado he scrambles into the earth.

The old badger is at home and asleep in the far depths of the earth, but fortunately there are several underground passages, offshoots from the main work of excavation, and turning down one of these our fox crouches and waits.

Not any too soon, he thinks to himself, as a few minutes later he hears the venomous note of the hounds, who have

marked him to ground, soon followed by the huntsman's "who-whoop" reverberating through the wood.

Here we may leave him in safety; but, if we had watched that evening, we should have seen the old badger first come out to reconnoitre, followed soon after by our friend, who, seeing all clear, trotted off, a little stiff, but contented, to make his way back in the moonlight to his own country.

It was a great hunt, a five-mile point, full seven as hounds ran: time, 55 minutes to ground. Having run out of our country, there is no question of digging, and, with few exceptions, most of us agree that a good fox is saved to give us another such a hunt.

X has dismounted, has loosed his girths and shifted the saddle slightly, is looking round his horse's feet and legs, and picking out some thorns.

While the much-reduced field is jogging back to draw and pick up second horses, X mentally rides the hunt over again in his mind and concludes that all the months spent in careful schooling and conditioning have been amply repaid by even one such ride as this, and generously concedes that each blunder they made was really due to himself. When he eventually finds his second horseman, he gives instructions for the young horse to be taken quietly home, one stop only being allowed, and that for as short a time as possible at the first handy place, to give him a bottle of porter mixed in a chilled drink of water.

That night, bedded deep in his straw, and having finished his warm feed, the young horse also runs over the hunt in his mind; and not without a thrill of pleasure he remembers, not only the fences he jumped, but also the lessons he learnt.

PART II

CHAPTER I

CONFORMATION OF POLO PONIES AND HUNTERS

In Xenophon's Treatise on Horsemanship he writes regarding the Greek cavalry : " It is surely becoming to young men to attend to the good management of themselves and the art of horsemanship." The same advice is truly applicable to the young men of to-day. The following pages, it is hoped, may be of assistance to them, not only in training polo ponies, but in general horsemanship and ability to buy horses and ponies for themselves. It is as well to repeat here our definition of " balance " and add that of " collection," as a knowledge of these two essentials is required for the proper schooling and selection of ponies suitable for polo.

Points in the conformation of a hunter are similar to those of a polo pony. If a man is competent to select the right type of polo pony for himself, he should be equally capable of selecting his hunters, and *vice versa.* Generally speaking, the latter should stand about six inches higher, with a frame and limbs proportionately larger.

Definitions

Balance

" A horse is said to be *balanced* when his own weight (and that of his rider) is distributed over each leg in such

proportion as to allow him to use himself with the maximum of ease and efficiency at all paces."

The head and neck form the governing factors in weight distribution, and it is by their position that the horse carries his centre of gravity forward or backward as his paces are extended or collected.

Collection

" A horse is said to be *collected* when his head is raised and bent at the poll, the jaw relaxed and his hocks brought well under him, so that he has the maximum control of his limbs, and is in a position to respond instantly to the least indication of his rider."

In the truly made and symmetrical animals we find natural balance, and these are the easiest to train as polo ponies. The more perfect a pony's conformation, the more easily he is extended and collected.

In a polo pony we demand the highest possible degree of handiness and the utmost speed and boldness. Realisation of these essential points will keep us on the right lines when buying ponies, particularly young ones, and prevent our wasting both labour and money on animals unsuitable for fast polo.

Ponies may be bought either green, half made, or finished tournament ponies ; or again, what are known in India as Station Game Ponies. We will only deal with the first three classes.

Unbroken Ponies

The buying of green ponies requires a good deal of experience, and the novice will probably pay a lot for this experience if he has not got an old hand to help him. It

is by no means easy to judge young animals in the rough, and one must expect some disappointments. There are certain points he must try to get definitely into his mind, and then, by training his eye to appreciate the good points in high-class animals, he will in time make himself a reliable judge. With careful study, he should get confidence in himself, and eventually get to a stage where he will find, as long as he is not persuaded to go against his own judgement, that he will not make many mistakes. First of all we must know in our own mind what we want and the stamp of animal we are trying to buy. With raw ponies we shall, as a rule, only have their looks to go by and possibly their breeding, which, unless they are clean bred, is generally of doubtful value. Sometimes they may have been ridden enough to have been spoilt, and we shall not infrequently be disappointed over ponies that we find, unfortunately, have already been ridden in a rough and ready way.

The size of the young pony will depend on the buyer's own weight and build and whether he is a strong rider or not. If he is slight and not very strong it is wisest to limit himself to a 14·3 pony, and be content with a light-weight pony (13 stone and under). At the same time he must not be persuaded into buying a pony obviously too small for tournament polo. He should remember, if he is going to take the trouble to train a pony himself, that it is only worth while starting to work on one that has the quality and substance for first-class polo. Nevertheless, the greater the quality the pony possesses the smaller it can afford to be. Exceptional speed, handiness, and stamina rather than size are the qualities to be looked for. If the buyer is a tall and pretty strong horseman he can

reasonably select bigger ponies, with an approximate limit to 15 hands when standing naturally. But the important point is that he wants to buy a pony, not a horse. We require the pony head, and not an animal with a big heavy horse's head out of proportion to its size; this should be avoided, as it entails a much greater effort for the pony to balance itself. All the equine virtues are required in first-class ponies, consequently they are rare, though many might have been good ponies had they not been spoilt by bad training. We require:

(*a*) Substance. Good bone. That is, a pony which appears to have the necessary carrying powers to withstand the strain of fast galloping, turning and stopping, with the rider's weight on his back.

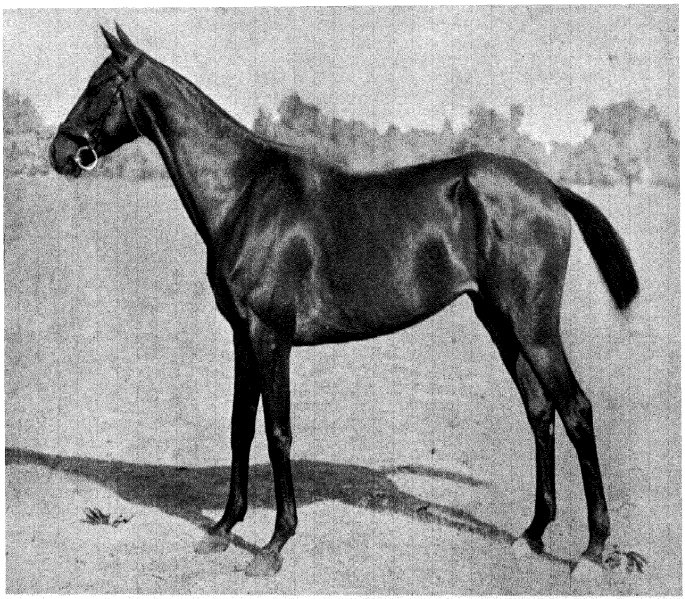
(*b*) Quality, breed and looks. That is the necessary galloping power, speed, smoothness of action, good neck and shoulders, and natural balance.

(*c*) Stamina. The indications of a good constitution. Good frame on which to develop muscle. Depth through the heart. Well sprung, round ribs, and good loins well coupled up: all indications of staying power.

(*d*) Soundness. Good feet, absence of malformation in joints and limbs. Good eyes and wind.

(*e*) Temperament. Apparent docility, with an intelligent head and eye.

We will now endeavour to put precept into practice. Let us suppose that we have entered a dealer's yard where there are a large number of raw ponies collected. It is easy to find out the current price for young ponies, which obviously depends upon whether you are buying on an Argentine *estancia*, in Australia, in Ireland, or from a



A Green Pony (1).

A four-year-old thoroughbred mare up to 13 stone. She shows quality and compactness with all the appearance of good natural balance. Good head and neck. Her shoulders appear to be a shade on the straight side and hocks rather far away, but this is largely due to the pose of the photograph. Her shoulders will undoubtedly improve with age. Good depth through the heart and well-sprung ribs. Light forearm, but good flat leg below the knee. Good slope and length of pastern. Small second thigh, though it should improve with development. Good clean bony hocks. Rather keen racing temperament, probably the real difficulty to contend with.

To face p. **96.**

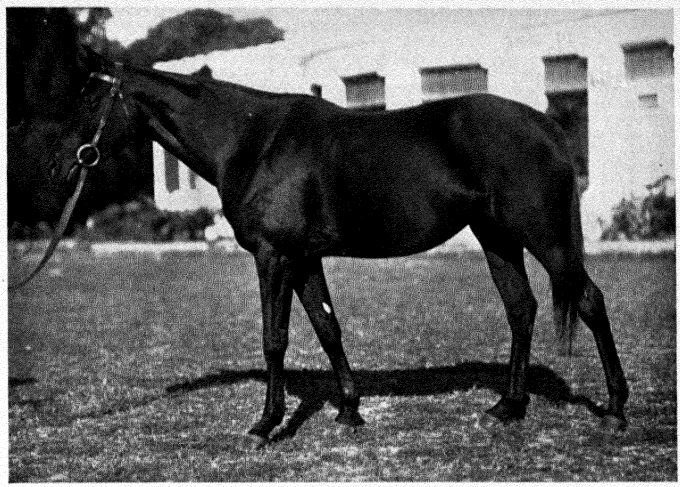
ship-load of Australian Walers just landed in India. In each case the process to be adopted is practically the same. Try always to get early information as to when a fresh lot of ponies is in, or you will find yourself with merely the cast-offs to choose from. Imagine yourself coming down to buy from a boat-load of ponies just landed from Australia. With some eighty ponies to choose from it becomes no light task. However, you will have decided in your mind's eye on the stamp of pony you are looking for. Let us say that six ponies up to 13 stone or more, are required. We will first concentrate on eliminating those not up to the *required weight* and *quality*. When first of all selecting ponies to be picked out from the herd for more careful inspection, look out for quality as shown by their movements, head, legs, feet and general conformation. Remember that Australian and Argentine ponies of the second generation, bred in those countries, often show lack of quality about their heads. With regard to substance, when looking on animals in a herd it is comparatively easy to note the degrees of size, substance and bone amongst different ponies.

With regard to character, have a preference for the ponies that like to lead the herd and show courage and independence. A sulky head and eye can easily be spotted under these conditions, though one must expect a wild look in the eyes of an unbroken pony when it is first caught and brought up for your closer inspection. Try and get your preliminary selections led out, say ten at a time, make them walk round you in a circle, and proceed to divide the geese from the swans. Turn out any that you dislike, that are obviously misshapen, too big, too small, lame or bad walkers, in very poor condition, too common, or obviously

bad tempered. By the time you have been through the lot you may average three out of each batch, which will give you about twenty or more from which to make your final choice. By going through these again you can probably reduce your number to twelve or so. Up to now your selection has been by comparison, and thus comparatively easy. It now becomes more difficult to select from a fairly level lot of twelve, and each pony must be examined individually with great care. The process will be as follows :

Each pony is led up to you and then away from you in a straight line, first at a walk, then at a trot. This enables you to detect faulty action ; soundness and speed depend on true action. Discard any pony that turns a toe in, and in its action swings a leg out (called dishing). This infers lack of speed and undue strain on the faulty limb. A pony that turns its toes out will equally have faulty action and knock itself. Avoid a pony that goes too close in front or behind, as this denotes general weakness and lack of stamina, and a tendency to brush. Also avoid a pony that goes too wide in front, generally with too prominent a shoulder and too heavy a chest and consequent lack of speed, as no very wide-chested animal has proper freedom of its forehand.

Having decided that your pony's action is free, trot him past you sideways to see that he has no exaggerated knee action. If he has, he will probably gallop high and lack speed. Do not waste time on any that fail in the above tests. Then notice—if you have not already done so—how the pony walks past you. He should have a long swinging action, putting his fore-legs well out in front of him and bringing his hind-legs well under him, placing



A Green Pony (2).

A very good type of thoroughbred mare up to 14 stone. Judged as a green pony it would be difficult to fault her. She has the appearance of robustness with quality. Good head and neck and a shoulder that should carry a saddle well. Short back, powerful loins and quarters, great depth with well-sprung round ribs, very good forearm, and legs with correct slope of pastern. Good hocks. A very promising pony with charming disposition, and should be quite first-class.

To face p. 98.

them down in advance of the spot where he puts down his fore-legs. This will indicate his capacity to gallop, which may not otherwise be easily ascertained in a dealer's yard, when looking at raw ponies.

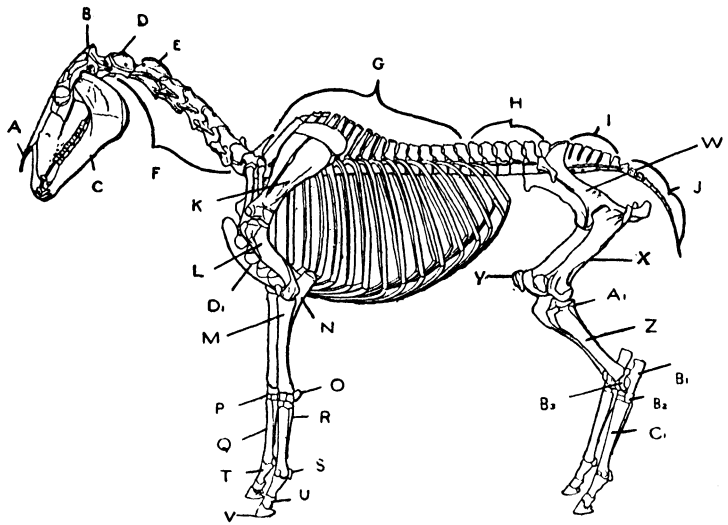
Let us assume that we are satisfied with the tests up to date. It is necessary now to examine each pony in detail.

Head

His head should be small and show quality similar to an English thoroughbred. As said before, in the case of Argentines and Walers, we must make some allowance for a more common head in an otherwise well-bred-looking pony, as this is a characteristic of these breeds. But even in such cases have a preference for a small well-bred head. Look out for a kind and intelligent eye. A small evil-looking eye generally denotes bad temper, and is not worth the risk of buying. Width between the eyes is good. On the other hand, a prominent forehead denotes a sulky disposition. Width between the lower jaws is necessary for easy flexion of the head in answering the bit. See that you can fit the back of your hand across the knuckles, between the lower jaws under the neck. Considerable thickening from swollen glands behind the jaw will similarly tend to militate against a good head carriage. Look at the bars of the mouth; generally a pony with thick coarse bars to the mouth will not have such a light and sensitive mouth as one of a finer nature.

Now try and get the pony to stand with his head up, and picture to yourself whether his head is put well on to his neck. If he appears to have a natural tendency to poke his nose, especially in conjunction with any suspicion

of a ewe neck, he will never bridle well. If you feel convinced of this fault, discard him. When standing naturally the angle between the axis of the neck and head should be

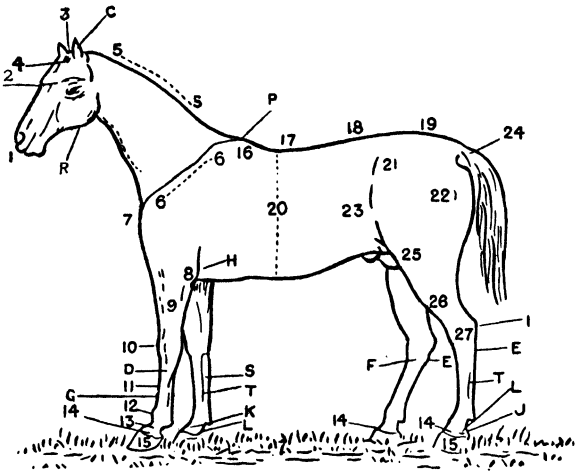


SKELETON OF THE HORSE

A, Nasal bone.
B, Occipital bone.
C, Lower jaw.
D, Atlas bone.
E, Axis bone.
F, Cervical vertebræ.
G, Dorsal vertebræ.
H, Lumbar vertebræ.
I, Sacral vertebræ.
J, Coccygeal vertebræ.
K, Scapula.
L, Humerus.
M, Radius.
N, Ulna.
O, Pisiform bone.
P, Knee bones.
Q, Large metacarpal bone.
R, Small metacarpal bone.
S, Sesamoid bone.
T, Suffraginis.
U, Corona.
V, Pedis.
W, Pelvis.
X, Femur.
Y, Patella.
Z, Tibia.
A_1, Fibula.
B_1, Calcis.
B_2, Cuboid.
B_3, Astragalus.
C_1, Large metatarsal bone.
D_1, Sternum.

between 100 and 90 degrees. A considerably greater angle denotes weakness and a bad mouth. A smaller angle indicates liability to unsoundness of wind, and likelihood of the pony being over-bent when trained.

CONFORMATION OF POLO PONIES



Points and Common Ailments of the Horse

The seats of ailments (where possible) are shown by letters.

POINTS

1. Muzzle.
2. Forehead.
3. Poll.
4. Forelock.
5. . . . 5. Crest.
6. . . . 6. Shoulder blade.
7. Point of shoulder.
8. Elbow.
9. Forearm.
10. Knee.
11. Cannon-bone.
12. Fetlock.
13. Pastern.
14. Coronet.
15. Hoof or foot.
16. Withers.
17. Back.
18. Loins.
19. Croup.
20. Girth.
21. Hip.
22. Quarter.
23. Flank.
24. Dock.
25. Stifle.
26. Gaskin.
27. Hock.

AILMENTS

Mouth { Lampas. / Sharp teeth.
C = Poll evil.
D = Splint (any leg).
E = Curb.
F = Spavin (bone or bog).
G = Sore shins.
H = Capped elbow.
I = Capped hock.
J = Cracked heels.
K = Ringbone.
L = Sidebone.
Feet { Laminitis. / Navicular. / Corns. / Thrush.
P = Sore withers.
R = Strangles.
S = Sprains—Back tendon.
T = Sprains—Suspensory.

Neck

Now we come to the neck, which must be looked at in conjunction with the head. We have turned down a pony with a ewe neck—we want a neck that presents a nice natural and fairly high carriage of the head. A pony that is in fat condition may appear to have too coarse a neck, but one need not be put off by this if he appears to carry his head well on the move. The length of neck should be in proportion to the general size of the pony. As far as possible, it should be wide, when looked at from above, and should appear to be a column that gains strength where it is set in to the shoulders. The neck that is set too low into the trunk, and gives the appearance in conjunction with the shoulders of being heavy in front, should be discarded. Avoid a neck that is quite out of proportion to the rest of the pony, *i.e.* too long, especially if it appears to be put in upside down, or too short or thick. We want a forehand with a nice long rein, having a firm neck with a tendency to taper towards the head. A weak neck—or one that gives the impression of bending from the shoulders —is bad. Such ponies when trained have so-called rubber necks, and instead of turning their whole body when required, merely turn their necks round towards you.

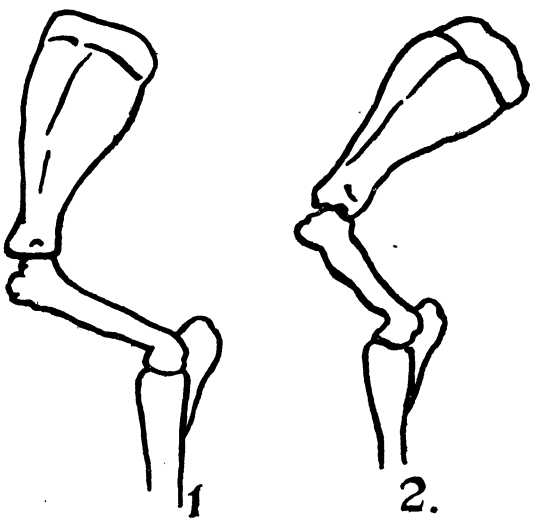
Naturally the condition of the pony must be taken into consideration, and here experience alone can help us.

Withers

The withers should be well defined and not too flat or wide and fleshy. As the muscles that hold up the head and neck are attached to the withers, it is preferable that the withers should be well developed.

Shoulder

The scapula, or upper part of the shoulder, should be lean and muscular, and laid well back from the point of the shoulder to the withers. With regard to the humerus, there is much discussion as to whether this bone should be long and upright, or short and oblique. The angle between



1. Upright scapula, or shoulder blade, and somewhat horizontal humerus: consequently a loaded and straight shoulder.
2 Laid-back scapula and more upright humerus. In this case we get a long sloping shoulder, that is preferable for all types of riding horses, especially jumpers.

the two bones of the shoulder varies only to a very small degree, so that we find that, where the scapula is well laid back at a good angle to the withers, the humerus will proportionately be more upright. The supposition is that a long and upright humerus gives more play and freedom to the fore-limbs, but this cannot be taken wholly as a fact,

for without doubt the freedom of the fore-limbs depends largely upon the entire shoulder. Furthermore, unlike other speedy animals, the horse has to gallop with weight on his back. Now the more oblique the shoulder blade, the longer it must be, and, in conjunction with a fairly long and upright humerus, at any rate at such an angle as to get a well-placed fore-leg, we obtain conditions that permit of the full play of the fore-limbs.

It is argued that with the more upright humerus above the fore-arm there must be increased jar. But it is very doubtful if this is correct, when we take into consideration the angle of the fore-leg at the point of impact with the ground when galloping, the restricted radius of action of the humerus, and the fact that the jar is felt most nearest the point of impact, at the end of the column of bones forming the fore-leg. It is here where we find the ill effects of jar, and where Nature provides her anti-concussion mechanisms, namely, the frog and the slope of the pasterns.

If the humerus is more inclined to the horizontal, we get a less obtuse angle formed by the two bones of the shoulder. The placing of the leg will to a certain degree be dependent on the length of the humerus, but the shoulder itself will be prominent and loaded. In addition there are shorter muscles and more tissue within the angle formed by the shoulder bones, which militate against speed ; obviously this type of shoulder is undesirable.

But if we accept the theory of the long and upright humerus being conducive to great extension of the fore-legs, there are other factors we must also consider.

We know that the leading fore-leg, besides being a weight bearer, is also a propeller in the gallop (*vide* illustration, page 148). Mechanically, it is easiest for the fore-leg to

complete its stride and for the effort of bracing the limb if the two shoulder bones are at an angle of 90 degrees. With a larger angle a greater effort is necessary, which fact may account for some of the best sprinters with exceptional stride failing to stay, especially in heavy going.

When they begin to tire, the muscular effort at this particular period of locomotion is greater for them than for the shorter striding horse, assuming both to have equally good lung accommodation. From the above arguments the conclusion we must arrive at is to avoid either of the extremes, the too horizontal or the too upright humerus, though the latter condition is not one that is often met with in polo ponies or hunters. One thing is quite certain, namely, that the greater the length of the scapula and the more it slopes back, the better a pony will ride. Heavy prominent shoulders, such as are seen in draft horses, are most undesirable for riding.

The whole mechanism of the horse's forehand is so complex that one is often surprised after riding an animal, and not infrequently one is forced to reverse the judgement previously formed from an examination on foot.

Elbow

The elbow should be well developed and should have plenty of free play from the body. This can easily be discerned by turning the pony round, when you can notice whether his elbow turns naturally out from his body, and has not the appearance of being tied in to it.

Chest

Depth and a certain width are essential for staying and weight carrying, though a too wide and heavy chest, in

conjunction with rather heavy shoulders, denotes lack of speed. On the other hand, too narrow a chest, one from which both fore-legs appear to come out of the same place, is bad, and denotes lack of stamina. Seventy-eight inches would be good girth measurement in a heavy weight hunter. Zev and Papyrus as three-year-olds measured 70 and 73 inches respectively. These figures are merely an approximate guide.

The Fore-arm

The fore-arm should be as long as possible with good muscular development. The muscles should have more of lengthy than bulky appearance.

Knees

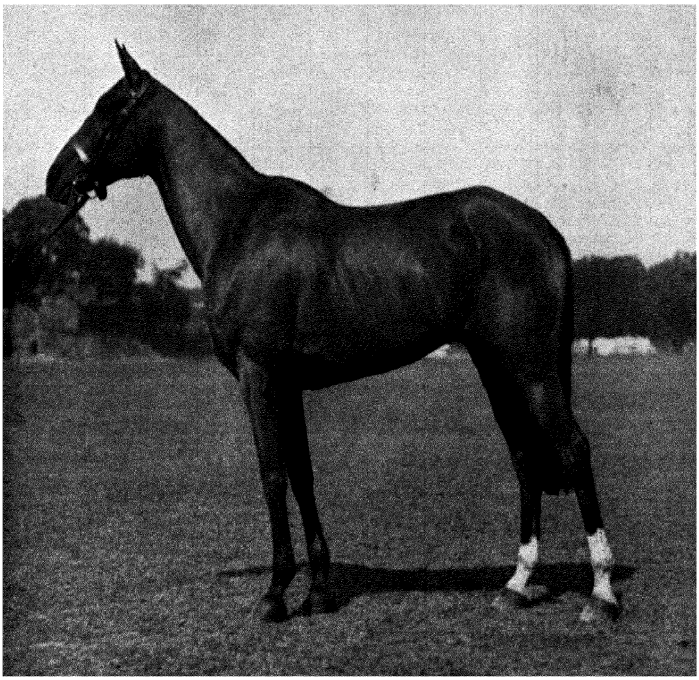
The knees should be big and flat in front, and the pisiform bone at the back of the knee should be well developed and prominent.

The Cannon-bone and Fore-legs

The lower part of the limb should be very carefully noted. It should be short and flat, with the ligaments and tendons having a whip-cord appearance. It should feel clean and hard to the touch. Faults to be noted are :

(1) Diminution in measurement of the shank, especially near the knee. This is known as " being tied in below the knee." It denotes lack of substance, weakness of ligaments and tendons, and consequent unsoundness.

(2) Lightness of bone below the knee in proportion to the size of the pony and the weight he will have to carry. Though the bone of a thoroughbred may be smaller than



AN AUSTRALIAN PONY.

A really high-class tournament pony; fast, bold, wonderfully handy, and easy to play. Though not in show condition his good points are quite apparent. Most noticeable are his short back, powerful loins, and great depth through the heart.

To face p. 106.

that of a coarser bred horse, it is of a much harder texture and capable of carrying more weight in proportion to that of the coarser bone in less well-bred animals. In a thoroughbred the size of the ligaments and tendons are in proportion to the size of the bone, so when we talk about an animal being light below the knee, it is understood that not only the bone but the attendant ligaments and tendons are also small and weak.

(3) Coarse, puffy, soft-looking legs should be discarded, though this condition is often only temporary. But a dealer generally will not show an animal in such a condition if it is possible to fine down the legs.

Calf knees, *i.e.* a tendency to bend inwards, are bad.

Fore-legs that are back at the knee (when looked at from the side this is easily discerned) should be discarded, as undue strain is thrown on the back tendons.

"Standing over at the knees," though a disfigurement, is not an indication of unsoundness. St. Simon reproduced this in his stock. It may possibly be due to a weakness above the knee, and undoubtedly increases with age.

The fetlock joints in a young pony should be clean looking, without any appearance of lumps or swelling.

The pasterns should be what can only be described as normal, *i.e.* not too long and sloping, thus putting extra strain on the back tendons, nor too short and upright, resulting in increased jar on the hard ground. Of the two, a long sloping pastern is preferable for a polo pony that must gallop on hard ground.

Just above the coronet is the junction of the long and short pastern bones; there should be no roughness to the touch when handled here.

The Feet

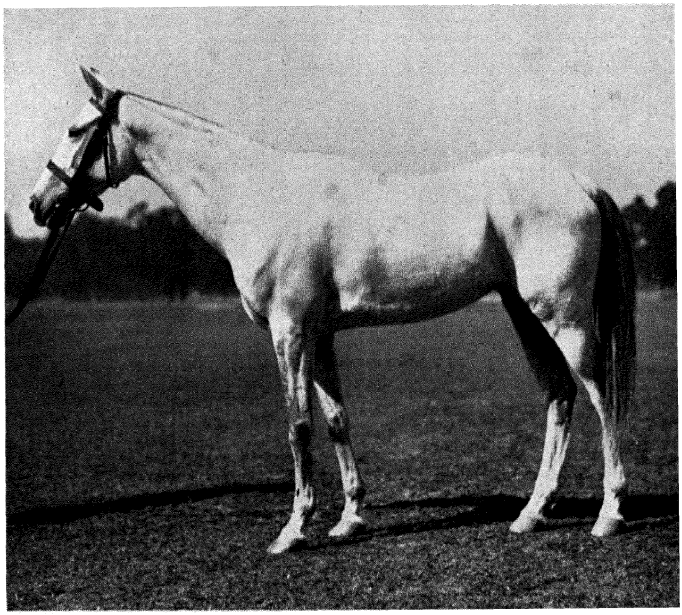
Good feet are essential. One might say that 50 per cent of polo pony lameness is in the feet, and 30 per cent is caused by bad shoeing. The slope for the fore-feet, when a pony is properly shod, is 50 degrees, and that of the hind-feet, between 55 and 60 degrees. In a healthy foot (1) the frog is large and comes well down on to the ground, thus acting as a buffer in diminishing the effects of concussion on hard ground; (2) the sole is thick, strong and arched, and when pressed does not give at all; (3) the weight-bearing surface of the foot is composed of the frog, wall, bars, and outer portions of the sole.

When examining ponies' feet discard any with the following faults:

(*a*) Odd or uneven feet.
(*b*) Small boxey feet that appear too small for their natural functions.
(*c*) Contracted heels.
(*d*) Any tendency to a weak wall and sand crack.
(*e*) Large flat feet with a tendency to dropped soles.
(*f*) Feet that turn in or out.

Body

We want to visualise how the pony will carry its saddle, seeing that we require plenty of scope in front of it. Now the saddle is prevented from slipping forward by a well-laid back shoulder, sufficiently pronounced withers, and the natural groove under the belly for the girth. Let us mentally put a saddle on the pony and, with the above points to guide us, we can fix fairly accurately where the



AN INDIAN COUNTRY-BRED PONY.

This pony shows a strong strain of Arab, but at the same time he possesses exceptional speed. A very nice type of light-weight pony.

To face p. 108.

saddle would come. If we then have the impression that one would be riding right on the pony's forehand, he has obviously bad shoulders, and will be an indifferent ride. At the same time one must remember that animals that have not been fed on corn in their early years develop and improve their shoulders even up to seven years old. Behind the withers and shoulders we require as much depth as possible for the expansion of the lungs.

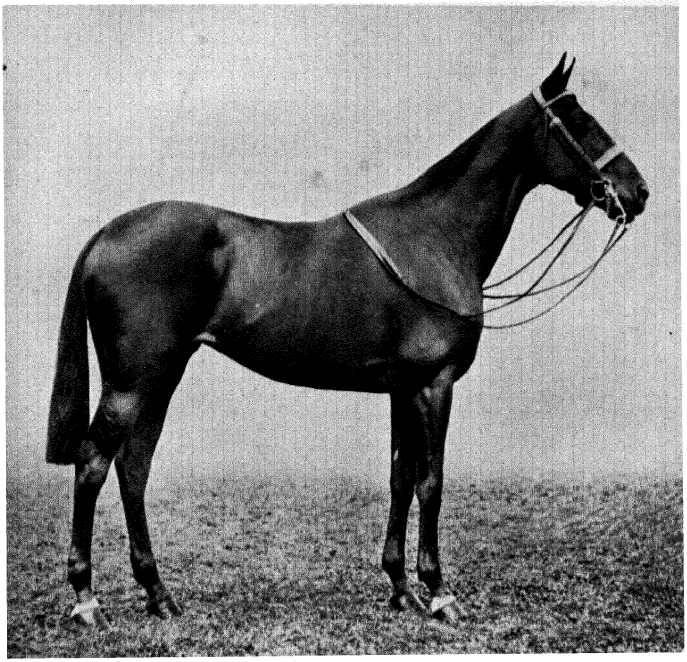
Immediately behind the elbow the body should appear flat, as this gives free play to the action of the fore-limbs. When we look back towards the hips, the ribs should appear to be well sprung and rounded, coming well back into the loins, with only a small gap between the last rib and the hip. Looking back from the withers the back should appear short and well coupled up to the loins. Although the forehand of a well-bred animal may be narrow in front, the back and loins should be wide with an appearance of strength. It may generally be taken that depth through the girth indicates staying power, and good round back ribs the sign of a good constitution. Avoid what appears to be unnecessary length behind the saddle, especially if there is any appearance of weakness there. Discard a pony that runs up light in the stomach and appears slack over his loins, as though requiring another back rib.

Here again condition affects the general appearance of a horse or pony, and unless one has considerable experience of judging animals in the rough, one may often discard a good one in this way. Flat ribs in place of well-rounded ones denote lack of stamina and should be avoided. Depth and well-sprung round ribs allow for free expansion, so that the heart and lungs will not be cramped during great exertion. Looked at from the front, the pony must not be too

narrow or he will not carry weight, and may cross his legs in play. At the same time a bulky appearance of the chest and fore-legs too wide apart certainly indicate lack of speed. It is the normal and symmetrical animal that is required.

Hindquarters and Hind-limbs

The hindquarters looked at from the side should be long, with an appearance of scope; the tail should be set on fairly high, and there should be a well-placed high stifle joint—the latter should appear to turn slightly outwards. This indicates speed and freedom of the hind-limbs to swing well forward under the body at the gallop. For the same reason it is also desirable to see good length from the hip to the hock. Very sloping quarters (goose rump), though ugly, are not bad. Similarly, when the top bone of the quarters is much developed (sometimes called a jumping bump), though unsightly, this really signifies good bony development, advantageous for attachment of muscles. Quarters that appear cut away and small in proportion to the forehand are bad. Regarded from behind, the hindquarters should appear to be round over the top, and generally filling out with muscle on both sides as one looks down. The pony should not be split up behind. The second thigh or gaskin, between the stifle and the hock, should show good muscular development. Also, viewed from behind, the hocks should appear quite symmetrical, not being turned out nor turned in (cow hocked). Hocks that are turned out are distinctly weak, and cow hocks, though not an actual sign of weakness, produce high hock action when galloping, with consequent loss of speed, and



[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

MAJOR H. WERNHER'S CHESTNUT MARE "PIAVE."

A rare type of light-weight pony. She has all the appearance of perfect balance, full of quality, well-set-on head, good shoulders, depth of girth, short back and well-placed hocks. In addition, she has the perfect temperament for a first-class pony.

To face p. 110.

are generally found associated with rather mean hindquarters. If the cow-hocked appearance is only very slight and the hocks are otherwise good, this fault can be disregarded. Again, viewed from the side, the outline of the quarters should not have an appearance of being cut in, but should drop with a gradual curve from the rear extremity of the pelvis to the hock. The hocks should be so placed that when the pony is standing square the point of the hock and the hind-limb would just come inside a line dropped from the rear extremity of the hindquarters. By that is meant that the hocks should not appear to stand too far back from the pony, as such animals, though they may have great propelling power, will have more difficulty in using their hocks to pull up and turn. The same may be said of animals that appear to be rather higher in their quarters than their withers.

The hock itself should be big, clean, and well developed, with a bony appearance, wide in front, and with a good prominent point. In the same way that the fore-arm to the knee should be as long as possible, so should the hock be comparatively straight and let down as low as possible, which is essential for the varied tasks demanded of a polo pony and hunter. Sickle hocks, *i.e.* too bent, rather in the shape of a sickle, are bad. Hocks that have a tendency to curbs, which is more common with sickle-shaped hocks, should be avoided. What are described as coarse puffy hocks are undesirable for polo ponies, because so much strain has to be placed on the hind-limbs. The limb from the hock to the fetlock should be broad and flat, and perpendicular to the ground.

The fetlock joints and pasterns of the hind-limbs, as in the case of those of the fore-legs, should be normal. It is

essential for a polo pony to have good strong well-placed hocks, as he has to do all his stopping and turning on them. If they are weak he will never stop well, and will also overtax his fore-legs, which, in any case, will be put to great strain when galloping all out on hard ground. If a pony has weak hocks, it will generally be found that he will not give his mouth when any strain is imposed on his hind-legs.

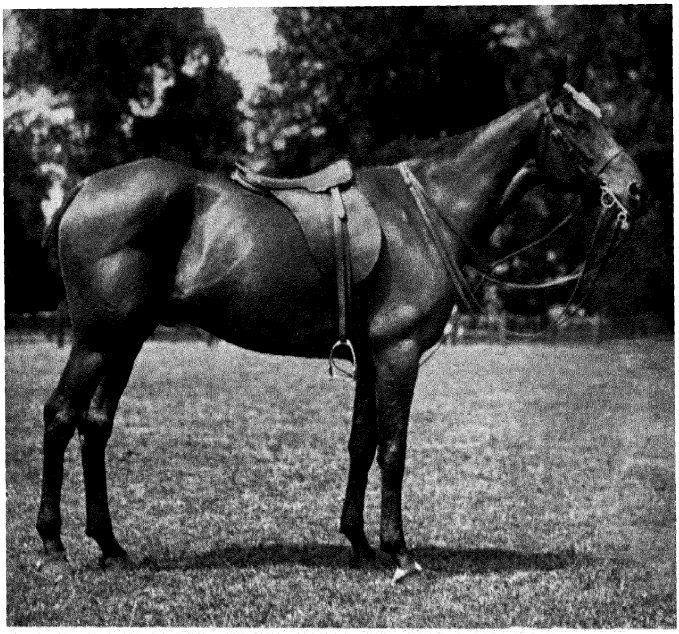
It will be gathered from the above that the perfect article is very difficult to find, whether one be choosing a hunter or a polo pony. The same characteristics pretty well apply to both, though undoubtedly more is demanded of a polo pony. We must therefore content ourselves with those animals that have none of the bad faults to any great degree, and as many of the good points as possible, as the latter generally counteract defects to a considerable extent.

It is advisable though, when buying young animals, to turn down any pony that has any of the bad points in a really marked degree, and never be tempted to buy one with faulty action. Any pony that can be shown with saddle and bridle on should be seen and ridden under these conditions, as it helps the buyer in deciding points that he might have been doubtful about, and he can feel how the pony moves.

When watching young animals galloping free, select those that get their hind-legs well under them and put their fore-legs out straight without exaggerated knee action.

Half-made Ponies

When buying half-made ponies it is always as well to see them in hand first of all. One then has the further



[*W. W. Rouch & Co.*

MAJOR J. HARRISON'S "PERFECTION."

An ideal type of heavy-weight pony that does not belie his looks, as he is a first-class performer. He shows both quality and substance to a very marked degree.

To face p. 112.

advantage of riding them. Half-made ponies may be described as those trained up to various stages, short of to playing in fast games. Here again, consider all the points as you did in the case of the green pony, and if you are satisfied so far as make, shape and movement, your next problem is to find out whether the pony has been spoilt, and if so, how badly. Remember that a pony that has been spoilt is very difficult to re-make. What we chiefly have to consider is mouth and temperament. An experienced player can generally tell whether a mouth has been spoilt or is merely unmade, and he may take the risk of the latter. If you are not sufficiently experienced, it is wiser to leave the pony alone, as one of your chief reasons for buying a half-made pony is that his mouth should be made, and he should be balanced, and light in hand, and consequently capable of playing polo much sooner than an entirely unbroken pony. If, on the other hand, he has only been ridden in a snaffle, and has a good natural balance, it is pretty safe to say that his mouth has not been spoilt. But even if you are satisfied with his mouth and balance you have still got to consider his temperament. If he is obviously very excitable, or on the other hand really sluggish, he will not be an easy pony to play, and therefore not what you are looking for. Be quite satisfied in your own mind that he rides like a pony and not a horse, and has the really smooth gallop of a well-bred animal. A young pony that is said to require some mysterious or very severe bit should be avoided.

If the pony is supposed to be ready to play in games, he should, of course, be tried with a stick and ball. It is then possible to ascertain whether he has any tricks, such as shying off the ball, or stopping on a back-hander. When

possible try the pony in company with others, to see if he will face another pony, and not get upset by being galloped past from behind. You may thus get some idea of his speed and temperament.

Buying a first-class tournament pony is comparatively easy, provided the owner will sell at a price you can run to, but remember that what suits one man may not necessarily suit you, so, whenever possible, try the pony in a really fast game. Then if you are satisfied, and the vet's opinion is satisfactory, it is merely a question of the credit at your bank. If in principle the same rules are observed in buying a hunter, the purchaser will avoid most of the pitfalls. It is a disconcerting but generally recognised fact that, in horse dealing, moral elasticity is phenomenal. There are some who believe that there is a fool born into the world every day and that it is their job to find the fools. The wholly ignorant would be best advised to put themselves in the hands of a reputable dealer. But even this is not always entirely satisfactory. Human nature being what it is, under these circumstances the buyer must be prepared to pay a pound for his pound of flesh. In most walks of life, the value of every article, whether it be fine art or horse flesh, is what you can get for it. So one must either have knowledge oneself or be prepared to pay for the knowledge of the seller.

CHAPTER II

EARLY TRAINING, HANDLING AND LONG REINING POLO PONIES

We can now discuss the early training of a young pony which we will assume is entirely unbroken. The first essential is for the trainer to get on good terms with the youngster, so that he looks upon him as a friend and has nothing to fear from him. He should be led about and gently handled, and made much of generally. For the first week the youngster should be just led about on a cavesson, and allowed to graze and look about, and see strange objects. He should then be lunged both on a right-handed and left-handed circle. This should be done first at a walk and later at a trot. At first an assistant may be necessary to walk behind the pony to make him move on a circle round the trainer at the full length of the rope from the cavesson. Later the assistant can be dispensed with and, by holding a whip behind the pony, it will be found that he soon goes kindly to either hand. Before backing him, it is as well to give him some driving in long reins, as this enables him to get condition before any weight is put on his back. Long rein driving has many advantages, but if incorrectly used long reins are a source of danger and a pony can soon be spoilt. It is as well for the trainer to practise the use of long reins first of all on a trained horse that is quiet and obedient in long reins. It is recommended

that all the early training should be done on the cavesson, so as to run no risk of spoiling the pony's mouth. In any case, the lighter the reins that are used the better. Generally speaking, this period of driving in the long reins should extend over six weeks. After the first week or so spent in lungeing, a second rein may be attached to the cavesson, so that when the pony is moving in a circle the inner rein comes direct to the hand of the driver, and the outer rein comes over the pony's neck. After the first week a surcingle should be put on the pony, as this is the first stage of putting on a saddle. This should be put on very carefully, and then girthed up very gradually. When he is thoroughly accustomed to the surcingle it may be replaced by a saddle with stirrups on, but these must not come below the flap of the saddle. We can now, when driving on a circle, put the outer rein through the stirrup, keeping the inner rein direct to the hand of the trainer. When changing from one circle to another the reins will require to be altered so as to have the outer one through the stirrup, and the inner one straight to the trainer's hand. Finally, the outer rein may go through the stirrup and round the hindquarters, and the pony may be driven on a circle in this manner. Only when the pony goes absolutely quietly should he be driven with the inner rein through the stirrup.

So far we have not attempted to put a bit in the pony's mouth, but after the first three or four weeks a snaffle may be put in his mouth and attached to a dumb jockey. There should only be the slightest bearing on the mouth, more as an inducement for the pony to play with the bit than any attempt to force his head into any particular position. During all this part of the training the pony should be encouraged to learn by ear certain words of command, such

as " whoa " when he is wanted to stop, " walk," " trot," and " canter." On no account should the pony be allowed to work on too small a circle—in fact, one may say the larger the circle the better. If the circle is too small it will certainly result in his action becoming contracted. When the pony readily obeys each word of command he should be rewarded by sugar, or a handful of corn.

If he is in fair condition and appears to have reasonable control of his limbs at the trot, he may be allowed to canter on both the right- and left-handed circle. Though it is possible to drive with the reins attached to the snaffle, there is, at the same time, considerable risk of spoiling the pony's mouth, and for this reason it is recommended that he be driven almost entirely on the cavesson. The dumb jockey with the lightest tension on the pony's mouth will teach him to make his own mouth when on the move. The reins of the dumb jockey should be frequently undone, and the pony allowed to stand with his head perfectly free, so that there may be no possible risk of his learning to hang on the bit. We want him eventually to carry his head naturally, so that his nose is about level with his withers and the head at an angle of 60 degrees to the ground.

It must be borne in mind that any undue haste in the process of raising and placing the pony's head will cause physical discomfort and must therefore be carefully guarded against.

The reason for driving with the outer rein round the hindquarters is that this method tends to keep the hind-legs in the same track as the fore-legs when moving on a circle, and, at the same time, has a disciplinary effect on the youngster. Great care must be taken to insure that the pony is driven as much on one circle as the other.

Whenever there is any trouble and the pony attempts to break away, the trainer must always hold on to the inner rein and let the other go free. It is not advisable to attempt to change a pony from one circle to another on the long reins without halting him first, then changing the reins through the stirrups, as described above, and making him start off afresh on the new circle. Later he may be trained to rein back a few steps, when an assistant may be required at his head, and the trainer must use his voice. Also, when the trainer is standing behind him with an assistant on one side, the pony can easily be taught to passage a few steps one way or the other, and be made to turn on his haunches, the assistant tapping him on the shoulder with a stick, whilst the trainer keeps the reins along his flank and hindquarters.

Gradually the pony will learn to appreciate that the pressure of the rein against his flank and hindquarters is a form of control or aid in making him move to one side, or prevent his haunches flying out on a turn.

The long whip should be used by the trainer with discretion, so as not to frighten a nervous animal. It should be employed, in conjunction with the voice, to make the horse move at the desired pace, and also to keep him at the required distance from the driver when on the move. As far as possible the pony's head should be kept just bent from the poll in the same direction as it is circling. Discretion should be used in enforcing this bend when driving on the long reins.

Five minutes at a time is quite long enough to keep the pony on either circle. At the canter, whenever the pony starts off on the wrong leg, or disunited, he must be instantly stopped and started again till he moves correctly (see

p. 141). He will soon learn that it is easier to canter with the correct leg leading. The risk of contracting a horse's action by working on too small a circle, and also that of spoiling his mouth, is considerable with the long reins in the hands of an inexperienced trainer. Not only should the trainer use the full length of the long reins, but he should move with the horse and so increase the diameter of the circle.

Ponies that do not keep their mouths wet should be driven with a mouthing snaffle, which will make them play with the bit and keep their mouths moist. When a pony's mouth becomes dry it loses its sensitiveness. By immediately giving it something to eat, with the bit in its mouth, it is encouraged to play with the bit and keep its mouth wet. It is very important to look out for this defect, which, unless corrected in good time, will certainly result in a bad mouth.

From one to two months is considered the normal length of time required for a youngster to be driven in the long reins, but this again largely depends upon his condition, and, during the process, preliminary handling, picking up his feet, and saddling may be carried out. Whilst still in the long reins he should be mounted. The steps up to this should be done gradually, commencing by just putting weight on the saddle, and leaning on the stirrups. The mounting should be done at the end of the day's work, when the pony is not fresh. When the rider is up, the pony should be led forward for a few paces only, and he should then dismount. In the case of really difficult animals, blinkers should be put on, and it will be found that there is little trouble in mounting them after this. It should seldom be necessary to strap up one of the forelegs to subdue a pony when mounting. If found necessary,

this can easily be done by two turns of a stirrup leather round the pastern, the foot then being raised and strapped close under the fore-arm just below the elbow. Strapping up the leg, or the use of blinkers, should only be necessary when exceptional discipline is required with a very wayward animal.

The advantages of long rein driving are :

(1) The horse can be worked and trained up to a point without any weight on his back.
(2) He can be made absolutely obedient and get used to a saddle.
(3) He learns to obey the voice, and
(4) To canter collectedly with the correct leg leading.
(5) All the time, to a certain extent, he is making his own mouth.

Even trained ponies which are awkward about their mouths can often be improved by putting them in the long reins, but this will necessitate driving on the snaffle instead of on the cavesson, and the greatest care must be taken to have very light reins and to handle their mouths very lightly. It will often be found that, without any weight on their backs, they will begin to bridle more kindly.

The placing of the pony's head through the medium of a dumb jockey should be more in the nature of suggestion than that of forcing it into the fixed position, and any improvement must be gradual. Throughout the whole of the training the driver should reward his pupil liberally immediately the latter appreciates what is required of him and obeys.

The long reins should be in two separate pieces, each 20 to 22 feet long, and as light as possible. Ordinary plough reins are a good size and weight and do not cut the hands.

CHAPTER III

MOUNTED TRAINING—RIDING-SCHOOL AIDS, ETC.

Free Forward Movement

We will now assume that the pony has been mounted and take up the next stage of its training. For the first three weeks little should be done beyond attempting to get the pupil to walk out and trot out freely on straight lines, working over undulating ground if possible. Gradually we must start what is known as "School Training." An elementary knowledge of so-called "School Training" is valuable to all horsemen. For the proper training of polo ponies it is essential. We will here deal with the simple aids that are required to make a pony handy and ride collectedly. After the two months in the long reins, followed by three weeks of work on straight lines, the next period of training should consist of about six months of progressive riding-school work.

Handiness

The rider having realised the necessity for perfect balance must learn how to apply the principles of balance and collection so as to obtain the highest degree of handiness in his pony. This is attained by a process of certain

muscling and suppling exercises, which, at the same time, teach the pony to obey the rider's leg and the rein. It will be found that most of these school exercises tend to collect a pony, and consequently contract his action. They must therefore continually be varied with periods of walking and trotting out with a free rein to prevent this. In this way the pony will gradually be educated to go from collected to extended movements with ease and kindness from the beginning of his training. Later his extended paces will be increased to a gallop. Collection signifies that a pony is moving with his weight, as far as possible, evenly distributed on all four limbs, the head carried high and bending at the poll so as to produce an angle of approximately 60 degrees with the horizontal, the jaw relaxed to the pressure of the bit, the hocks being kept well under him to support the weight brought back from the forehand. When collected, the pony is in a position to pull up instantly, which should be done by bringing his hocks well under him, and bringing his centre of gravity back; to turn to either side, which should normally be done by making the forehand pivot round the hindquarters; to passage to either hand, which is very necessary for riding off, and generally it implies keeping the pony's hindquarters under control; to break instantly from one pace to another, and start at any pace from the halt; to rein back under control; indeed, obedience generally. Thus it will be seen that collection is essential for polo ponies, and to a certain degree for hunters, but on the other hand at all costs it must not be obtained at the expense of free movement and extension. At one time one saw many horses spoilt by over collection, somewhat as the example shown in the frontispiece to this book.

Riding-school "Aids": the System explained

(1) Before attempting to carry out riding-school training the rider must thoroughly understand the principles on which this form of training is based.

The pony is taught obedience to the will of the rider by the use of so-called "aids." Common-sense use of certain riding-school exercises, enforced by the application of these aids, produces both instant obedience and handiness, and at the same time educates the pony's brain, so that he comes to realise instantly what is in the rider's mind.

Immediate appreciation of the rider's wish, and instant obedience to it, is the real test of a perfectly trained animal.

Any horseman who knows the simple aids, and how to apply them correctly, can immediately ride any pony trained to obey the aids. Both rider and horse will understand each other from the start.

Yet the training of a polo pony must go one step further, and for this reason. In a fast game a player, even if he knows the aids, cannot always apply them correctly at all times. Consequently a pony's brain must be so educated that he instinctively knows what is in the rider's mind, and, having been taught the correct way to comply with his wishes, does so in the easiest and most efficient manner. The most willing and obedient animal will therefore be useless if he has not been *taught how* to turn, stop and change his legs, etc., at all paces.

Perfection can only be obtained by long and patient training. All polo players know that the most perfectly trained young pony does not always appreciate instantly what is in the rider's mind in the same way as does the veteran who can almost read the rider's thoughts. In

training we must be content to teach one thing at a time, and that by frequent repetition. Only when we get perfection in the elementary stages should we gradually go on with more advanced work.

There are two factors which necessitate that all training shall be slow and progressive. (*a*) Physical condition: handiness calls for the gradual strengthening and suppling of different muscles. (*b*) The fact that the pony's brain only assimilates knowledge little by little. By constant repetition of any movement, followed by frequent reward, he gradually becomes perfect. He cannot reason for himself, but once he has learnt a lesson he never forgets it.

(2) The pony having learnt to obey by ear certain verbal commands and the effect produced by the whip, we need have little difficulty in teaching him to understand the regular aids applied by the rider's hands and legs. All over a horse's body are what are called "sensory nerves" which, when touched, send a current to the brain where the sensation of feeling expresses itself; thence the current, or message, is conveyed to that part of the brain known as the centre of memory in a horse (the centre of reasoning in a man). The message is then passed to that part of the brain known as the centre of motion, which controls other nerves of the body known as the motive nerves. These nerves actuate the movements of the different muscles and produce locomotion.

Example a.—The rider is mounted and he closes both his legs and at the same time says "Walk." As soon as the pony moves he releases the pressure of the legs. What happens in the pony's nervous system and brain is this: The sensory nerves convey the message of feeling to the brain and the centre of memory has heard the command

"Walk." A message is sent to the motive nerves to put the legs in motion to walk, and the sensory nerves inform the brain that the pressure is released. By repetition the centre of memory realises that by instantly walking on pressure is relieved, and thus we obtain movement and impulsion. Impulsion to more accelerated paces is gradually taught in the same way by increased pressure of the legs, using the voice to assist in teaching the lesson. Thus the first lesson in the aids, the application of both legs to obtain direct impulsion, is taught first of all. In the same way the rider's hands controlling the reins and bit act on the sensory nerves in the horse's mouth.

Example b.—The feeling of both reins and the word "Whoa" convey the message to the brain which controls the muscles required to stop movement.

Next we come to the effect of the combination of the rider's hand and leg in applying direct aids, as opposed to lateral aids which will be explained later.

The hands, through the medium of the reins, control the pony's forehand, and the rider's legs his hindquarters.

The hands and legs used together control the whole mass.

Example c.—The rider wishes to collect his pony at a trot and make him pull up to a halt collectedly (*vide* definition of collection). The pony must, of course, have learnt the first lesson of impulsion, and he is trotting out with a loose rein. The rider now feels the reins, and, as he does so, he presses the pony up to his bit vigorously with his legs.

In so doing he gives impulsion to the hind-legs, but the consequent extra propulsion of the whole mass is restrained by the feeling of the reins, though not enough to halt the pony. The result is that the forehand is raised by the

snaffle, and the weight brought back is taken by the hind-limbs that are brought up by the pressure of the rider's legs. (If the rider had a curb bit, he would also make the pony bend at the poll and relax his jaw.) The forward movement is checked though there is increased impulsion; consequently the pony's knee action will become exaggerated and he will move with his weight more or less equally distributed on all four legs. Now, if the feeling of the reins is increased, the pony will halt collectedly with his weight back on his hind-legs, for the rider will have maintained the pressure of his legs to keep the pony's hocks under him. The rider must also keep his own weight back when halting.

We can now consider the effect of lateral impulsion. The pony after being handled in his stable will have learnt to come over from one side to the other, his groom for instance pushing him over with his hand. It is the same effect on the sensory nerves, which convey the message through the brain to the motive nerves. He has learnt that, if he moves to one side, the pressure will cease. We have also taught him, you will remember, with the help of an assistant, to passage a few steps in the long reins.

We now want to produce the same result by the application of the aids carried out by the rider's legs and hands.

Example d.—The rider feels the right rein and leans the left rein against the pony's neck. Result: Control of the forehand which turns to the right whilst the hind-quarters probably turn to the left.

If the rider puts on his left leg he will check the hind-quarters turning out to the left and the pony will turn on its haunches.

If, on the other hand, the rider closes his left leg strongly

while he leads the forehand to the right, the whole mass will move sideways to the right, though, for some strides, the forehand may lead, and then the hindquarters, so that we fail to get a level lateral movement.

To check this unevenness the rider must use the left rein as required to control the direction of the forehand, and use his right leg to check the hindquarters and keep the pony up to his bit. Whether passaging or half passaging the forehand must always lead slightly, and the horse must be kept collected with his weight back ready to pivot the forehand round the hindquarters.

The above examples are sufficient to show the results produced by the aids, and the necessity for applying the hands and legs together. The rider must be quite clear in his own mind that his hands control the forehand and his legs the hindquarters. Whenever he wishes to control both simultaneously, his hands and legs must work together.

CHAPTER IV

TRAINING EXERCISES AT THE WALK AND TROT

Riding-school Work at the Walk

It is as well to study the following exercises in conjunction with the various paces of the horse, which are analysed diagrammatically:

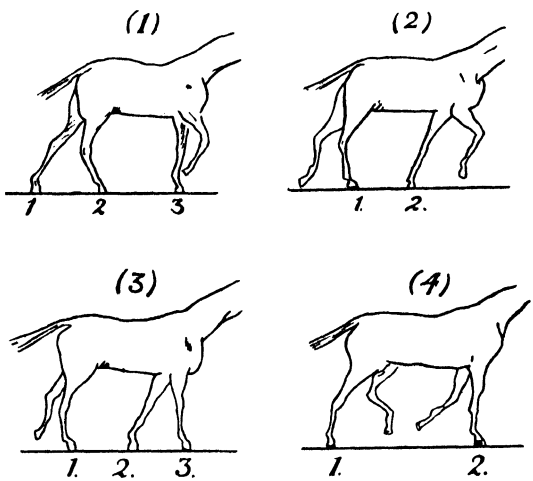


Diagram of the Walk.

Walk

(1) The off fore lifted up.

(2) Moving forward; the near hind is being raised from the ground.

(3) As the off fore meets the ground the near fore is in the air and the horse is again on three legs.

(4) The near fore is moved in time to make place for the near hind, which will come down on the same spot, or slightly in advance of it, when a horse is walking out. The horse is now on two lateral legs.

From Fig. 4 the cycle of movement is repeated as in 1, 2 and 3, except that the horse is now leading with the near fore. It will thus be seen that the walk is a somewhat complicated movement, and, except in extreme cases, unsuitable for detecting lameness. At the walk the horse exercises his muscles and limbs more or less equally, which is not quite the case in other movements; walking out is therefore good exercise for a horse.

School Exercises at the Walk

The first lessons in the use of leg pressure should be taught at the walk, *i.e.* "direct impulsion," by equal pressure of the rider's legs on the pony's sides. A tap with the whip will soon indicate to a dull pony what is required of him. He will realise that if he does not move on as a consequence of the pressure of the legs something more forcible will be employed to convey to him what is required, and so he will soon learn to move forward obediently when the rider closes his legs. Impulsion to a faster pace is produced by increased pressure of both legs. The sensitiveness to this leg pressure varies with each animal, but with a little careful training in the form of progressive lessons, all ponies can be made reasonably sensitive and obedient, and sharp spurs should never be required unless in the case of an exceptionally sluggish animal.

Having taught the pony to move forward by these means, his movements and carriage are further controlled by the reins. Impetus can be retained, and he can be collected by keeping his head raised and his weight back by means of the snaffle, and, when he does this kindly, the head can be bent at the poll and the jaw relaxed by a springy feeling of the curb bit on the bars of the mouth. The rider's legs and hands should be used in harmony, being carefully applied in accordance with the temperament of the pony.

Important points at this part of the training are :

(1) Not to attempt too much at first, but to let the pony understand and obey each lesson, and to be sure that he realises at the conclusion that he has done what is required of him.

(2) A pony that is very sensitive to the leg will normally be very sensitive to the bit, and in such cases both the rider's legs and hands should be used with the utmost caution and in complete sympathy with the pony.

(3) In the early training one should only keep the pony moving for a few strides collectedly at the walk, as it is a strain on his muscles. As he progresses he will be able to walk, trot, or canter collectedly for any reasonable length of time.

(4) Teach a young pony to walk out boldly on a straight line.

For practical purposes we require a free walker; the collected walk is merely a means to an end, *i.e.* to teach the horse to alter his balance and to move, or to come back to a collected pace (trot and canter when required). A pony should always be trained to halt collectedly with

its weight well back and its hocks well under it and supporting its weight. This necessitates that the rider should close his legs as he feels the reins in order to stop his horse. Reining back is merely the reverse of direct impulsion. The horse is brought back step by step by a feeling of the reins and the pressure of the legs, *i.e.* the legs press him up to his bit, and, as the rider's hand does not yield, he reins back from the bit; the rider's legs are then used to check him, keeping him straight, and making him halt collectedly. The first lessons in reining back may be taught when dismounted, and the voice should be used. The pony should not be taught to rein back till he goes forward freely. He must never be allowed to, what is called, "run back against the leg." This means that he is disregarding the impulsion that the rider's legs are endeavouring to produce, and generally evading obedience and getting behind his bit.

During the early part of the training the pony should be taught simple turns. These should be made very gradually so as not to throw him off his balance, and by degrees they can be made sharper. The hind-legs should follow round in the track of the fore-legs, the rider using his leg to keep the hindquarters from flying out. This brings us on to the next stage:

Lateral Impulsion

Having mastered the effect of direct impulsion by the pressure of both legs, the pony may now be taught the effect of increased pressure of the leg on one flank. No pony can be really handy unless properly trained in this way. What is required is to train the pony to move away

either diagonally or laterally from the pressure of the leg, during which process we control his hindquarters with our legs and the forehand with the rein. The first lesson in lateral impulsion may be given dismounted; a tap with a stick on the flank or the pressure of the clasped hand behind the girth will give the pony the first indication of what is required. Then, mounted, we can at the halt teach him to move his hindquarters away from the pressure of the leg behind the girth. This again is merely a means to an end. We do not wish the pony to turn by pivoting the hindquarters round the forehand, a practice common enough in badly-broken ponies. We are now merely getting gradual control of the hindquarters.

After these first lessons in lateral impulsion dismounted and mounted, we teach the pony the half passage mounted, *i.e.* further control of the whole forehand and hindquarters. A riding-school is in no way necessary, because the horse can be taught to do this when walking down a road. First of all get him walking collectedly, and then cause the head to be bent very slightly from the poll in the direction you wish to half passage—in this case to the right. Then close the left leg strongly, whilst retaining the pressure of the right leg to make the horse walk forward, and to keep his head placed in the correct position. Having diagonally crossed the road, release the pressure of the left leg, and check him simultaneously by a slightly increased pressure of the right, followed by an even pressure of both legs, and an equal feeling of both reins, to make him walk forward from direct impulsion. Reverse the aids to make him half passage diagonally back to the opposite side of the road again. The horse will all the time be suppling and balancing himself. The fact that he is moving sideways

will prevent him from pulling, and he will learn to bend freely from the poll and relax his jaw as he moves. Later we can teach him to move directly from the right half passage to the left half passage. In this case the aids on arriving on the right side of the road are: Immediately change the bend of the head from the right slightly to the left, applying a stronger pressure of the right leg, not merely to check him but to urge him diagonally left-handed, at the same time retaining some pressure of the left leg to make him move forward up to his bit, as well as diagonally, with his head correctly placed.

It is as well to note the cycle of movement of the legs at the half passage at the walk, for instance to the right: The near hind-leg moves forward in advance of the off hind, then the near fore and off hind move almost simultaneously diagonally forward, the near fore moving forward in advance of the off fore. Finally, the off fore moves diagonally forward, when the cycle of movement commences again. It will be shown later how this repetition of movement is similar to that of the legs in the canter, and how the training in the half passage is used to make a horse canter with the desired leg leading. In the half passage at the trot the diagonal legs move simultaneously.

Full Passage

This is taught and carried out similarly to the half passage, the difference being that the horse moves directly to a flank with his forehand slightly in advance, instead of moving diagonally; consequently the aids are more accentuated than in the case of the half passage. In this case the fore- and hind-legs move on parallel lines, the diagonals moving simultaneously, but in each case the rider has

control of the hind-limbs. Whether passaging, or half passaging to the right, he ensures that *the near hind-leg is brought forward before the opposite hind-leg can move.* An inexperienced horseman must take care not to overdo these exercises, or he may make the pony fidgety, moving with a cramped action instead of with smoothness. The pony must always lead slightly with the forehand in advance with his weight back, so that any turn is made by the forehand pivoting round the hindquarters.

Turns

We have taught the pony to move away from leg pressure; it now remains to teach him the effect of leg pressure when turning. For all practical purposes, the horse when on the move should turn on his hindquarters; the faster the pace the more essential this becomes. He may turn on a circle, but obviously if he is fully extended he cannot turn on a small circumference, nor make a short turn without slipping up. As all polo players know, turning on the forehand is equally dangerous, and what we require is a pony that takes his weight on his hocks and pivots his forehand round them. A horse turning like this will never fall, nor will he jar his fore-legs. Also he makes his turn collectedly, with his hocks under him, and is ready to propel himself in whatever direction the rider may wish. Turns on the haunches must be taught at the walk first of all. They may be made from the halt or while passaging. In either case the aids are practically the same. For example: The horse is passaging to the right, we have got him obedient to the leg, and he has learnt that on no account must he move "against the leg." We wish to turn him on the haunches to the right. This is done as follows:

Lead the forehand round with the right rein, keeping the horse's head slightly bent in that direction; press the left rein against his neck, only retain sufficient pressure of the right leg to keep the horse up to his bit, but at the same time maintain a strong pressure of the left leg, so that the horse, instead of naturally turning the forehand to the right and the hindquarters to the left, will pivot the forehand round the hindquarters. If he shows a tendency to let the hindquarters fly out against the leg, he should be made to passage slightly away from the leg while making the turn, in which case the hind-legs will describe a small circle, the fore-legs describing a larger circle outside that made by the hind-limbs. To begin with, the trainer should be content to make only a quarter of a turn at a time. When this is, after practice, made perfectly, the angle of the turn should be increased until eventually the horse is capable of making a complete circle on its hindquarters.

When turning on the haunches, the rider should have his body leant slightly back and towards the side to which he is turning.

Lateral Bending of the Head

A pony should invariably bend his head in the direction he is going: *i.e.* when half passaging or turning to the right the head should be bent at the poll slightly to the right. On no account should the neck bend from the shoulders. The neck should be a firm column strengthening towards the shoulders, and bending from the fourth vertebra, the flexibility laterally and directly increasing towards the poll. Extreme flexibility in conjunction with free relaxation of the lower jaw constitutes a good mouth.

If this flexibility of the neck extends down to the shoulder instead of increasing in firmness at this point, we shall find that in place of the whole forehand being turned, the neck alone will turn. In short, we merely control his neck and not his movements. This applies equally to both direct and lateral flexions. Later, when we come to analyse the horse's paces at a canter and gallop, we find that if the horse's head is bent to the right it slightly contracts the freedom of the extension of the off fore-leg, and *vice versa.*

For a slight incline to the right or left at a gallop we do not want to check the extension of the leading leg on the side to which we are inclining, and therefore we merely carry the hand over to the required side, and the pony simply turns away from the rein without turning his head. But if we wish to turn at right angles or more, we check impulsion with the reins, producing flexibility of the neck and jaw, then carry the hand over to the side we want to turn (right), and at the same time apply the left leg to control the hindquarters. Now in this case the pony's head should be bent from the poll to the right, thus checking the freedom of the off fore-leg, and we gain propulsion from the near hind-leg, which has been brought up owing to the application of the rider's left leg. The above facts should be clearly understood by the rider, and the pony should be trained on these lines.

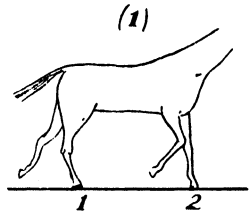
Exercises at the Trot

Analysis of the Trot

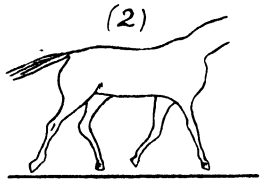
At the trot a horse propels himself upwards and forwards from one diagonal, then follows a period of suspension when all the feet are off the ground, which in turn is followed

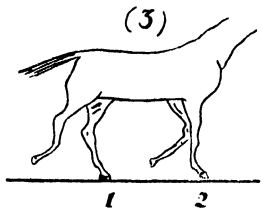
by the body coming on the ground supported by the opposite diagonal.

In the diagram (1) the horse is on the left diagonal, *i.e.* near fore and off-hind; (2) in the air with no feet on the ground; (3) landing on the right diagonal off fore and near hind, whence he would complete the cycle of movement in the air and drop again on the left diagonal. It is an easy pace at which to detect lameness on any particular leg, as the horse will appear to drop when he puts the sound foot to the ground.



When riding at the trot, the rider bumps on one diagonal as follows: he drops, say, as the horse is coming on to his left diagonal, which, as it throws the horse up, also throws up the rider, who rises in his saddle; his seat is off the saddle while the horse is in the air and also when he comes on to his right, the opposite diagonal, but comes down again on to the saddle as the horse lands on his left diagonal. He is again thrown up with the action of the horse as it propels itself from this diagonal.





For the purposes of training, the trot may be divided into—

(1) Collected trot. Trotting at 5 miles an hour.

(2) Extended trot. Trotting out at 12 miles an hour.

(3) Normal trot. Trotting at about 8 miles an hour.

The difference between each, by constant repetition, must be conveyed to the horse's brain.

(1) When collected the horse should move with his head well raised, and when more advanced in his training he should be bent at the poll and his jaw relaxed. He should be pressed more up to his bit, and his hocks should be kept well under him by the pressure of the rider's legs. His stride is then contracted, and action somewhat accentuated. He should be taught to passage, turn, halt, and rein back when collected. He should only be kept thus collected for a short period, as it is a strain on his muscles, and one does not wish this collected pace to be adopted as his normal gait.

(2) Teaching him to trot out after being collected conveys to him the necessity for an alteration in his balance and gives him freedom of action.

(3) He should learn to adopt the normal trot as being the least tiring and most comfortable to adopt. It is essential that he should learn to trot on a loose rein, without increasing the pace because his head is free. He should be taught, at the trot, all the school exercises that he has already learnt at the walk.

Steady trotting up hill is good conditioning exercise for a horse, and will put on muscle behind and over his loins. He should learn to pull up on his hocks when trotting down the side of a steep hill. It will be found that the steeper the hill the more naturally his hocks will be placed under him in the position where they are best placed to take the extra weight thrown on them.

As previously explained, the rider when riding on one diagonal at the trot, puts more exertion on that particular

diagonal. It not only receives his weight as it drops in the saddle, but throws him up again, so that the rider's seat is off the saddle while the opposite diagonal is propelling the horse. To ride persistently on one diagonal will, to some extent, affect the horse's action and, to a certain degree, his mouth. This should be counteracted by the rider, who ought occasionally to change the diagonal so as to ride equally on both. He can easily learn to do this at the trot by bumping twice in the saddle instead of once; he will find that this puts him on to the opposite diagonal to which he has been riding. If he finds any difficulty in this method, he can stand up in the stirrups and, if he wishes to ride on the right diagonal, drop down in the saddle just as the off fore is coming to the ground. Reverse this to change on to the left diagonal.

Again, note well that the pony should be made as perfect in all the school exercises at the trot as he was at the walk.

CHAPTER V

TRAINING EXERCISES AT THE CANTER—ANALYSIS OF THE CANTER AND GALLOP

THE canter is essentially a collected pace, the horse moving as shown in the accompanying diagrams.

It is a pace of three time.

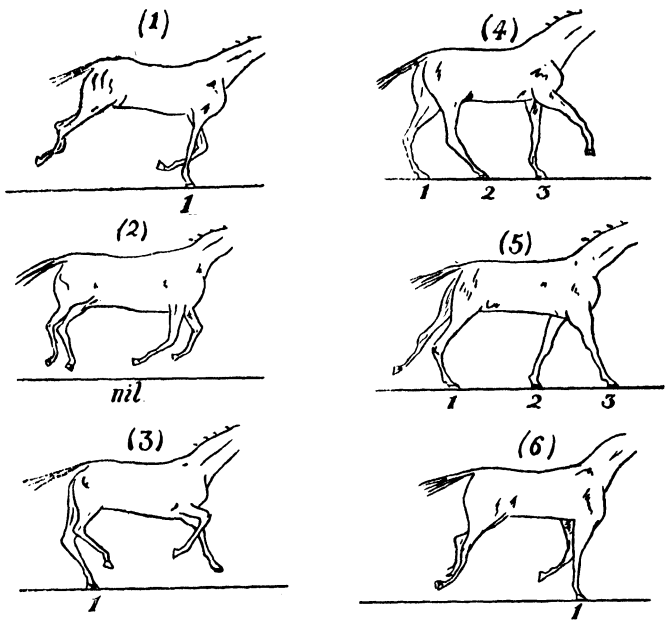
In the diagram, Fig. 1 shows the horse on the off fore which is leading. The body is pivoting over on the limb which is straight. With the final muscular bracing of the limb as the body rotates over the foot, it is thrown forward so that all the legs are off the ground (Fig. 2). The next leg that comes on to the ground is the opposite hind-leg, in this case the near hind. It does not come so far forward as the centre of gravity, though the more collected the animal, the more forward this leg will come. This leg gives the primary propulsion of the hind-limbs, propelling the body forward on to a diagonal, in this case the left off hind and near fore (Fig. 4), when there are three legs on the ground. The body then moves forward when the off fore, the leading leg, comes to the ground (Fig. 5), and as it does so, the near hind is raised, thus leaving the body again supported on three legs. Further movement is produced by the body rotating over the leading leg (Fig. 6), and the cycle of movement is repeated as in Figs. 1 and 2.

The rhythm of three time is obtained as follows: Fig. 3, near hind-leg striking the ground; Fig. 4, the left diagonal

legs meeting the ground simultaneously; Fig. 5, the off fore or leading leg coming to the ground.

From the above it will be seen that the leading leg is really the last leg to leave the ground before the period of suspension shown in Fig. 2.

Leading with the near fore-leg is merely the reverse of



the above. Thus it will be seen that if the horse commences propulsion with the near hind, he will lead with the off fore at the canter, and *vice versa.*

At the canter the horse's hocks are kept under him to support the weight of the neck and head, which has been raised.

There are at least three different methods of teaching a

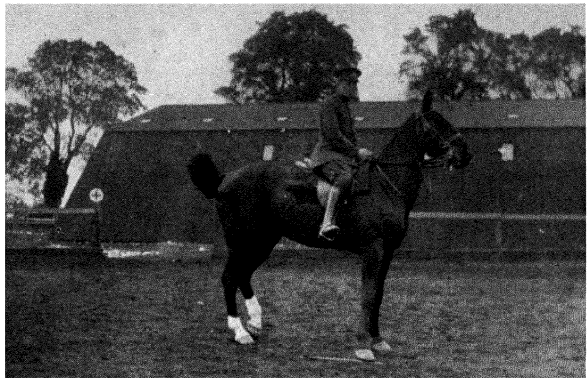
pony to lead at the canter with the required leg. Each will have the desired effect and, owing to the great degree of handiness demanded of a polo pony, he should be taught all three. For example, let us take the canter with the off fore leading (the aids merely being reversed if he is required to lead with the near fore). Each aid should be taught, to commence with, from the trot, and afterwards from the halt.

Aid No. 1.—Collect the pony, slightly bend the head to the left, close both legs, the left leg the stronger. Result: by bending the head to the left the freedom of the near fore-leg is contracted, causing a natural tendency for the pony to lead with the off fore; the pressure of the rider's legs promotes impulsion. The rider's left leg supplying stronger pressure indicates that the near hind must be brought down first to give primary propulsion. The gait is as follows:

Near hind brought down, left diagonal, off fore leading. There is, however, a tendency when applying this aid (*a*) for the hindquarters to swing out to the right; (*b*) for the head to be bent in the opposite direction to the line of progress. Therefore, as we shall often require our pony to be making a full turn to the right in conjunction with the change of the leading leg to the off fore, it is obvious that the faults described in "*a*" and "*b*" are undesirable.

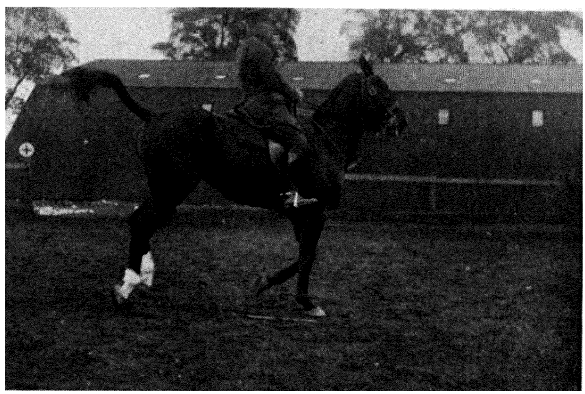
We can correct "*a*" by using the following aid:

Aid No. 2.—Trot on right-handed circle, collect the pony, close both legs strongly, bend the pony's head slightly to the left, the rider keeping his weight back and slightly to the left. With the increased impulsion the pony will break into a canter and, being on the turn with the rider's outward leg strongly applied, the haunches will not fly out, which otherwise they would have a natural tendency to do.



THE HALF-PASSAGE.

The horse is commencing the half-passage to the right and must needs move his near-hind before the off-hind in order to put it across and in advance of it. If at this moment the horse is pressed forward into a canter he will commence propulsion from the near-hind and canter with the off-fore leading.



HORSE CANTERING.

The exact moment when the aids to change the leading leg should be applied at the canter.
The horse is here cantering, off-fore leading, with his hind-legs and the near-fore in the air. By keeping the horse collected and applying the aids to canter near-fore leading, he will bring down the off-hind first, start propulsion from this leg and lead with the near-fore.

To face p. 142.

He will lead with the off fore, moving smoothly on the circle in the way in which it is most easy for him to canter.

We can now correct "*b*" by using the following aid:

Aid No. 3.—Collect the pony, carry the hands over the withers to the left, and, with an increased feeling of the right rein, slightly bend the pony's head to the right; close both legs, the left leg the stronger; press the pony up from a trot into a canter. Result: The pony feels that the aids being applied are practically those for the half passage, with increased impulsion, which forces him into a canter; the near hind is brought up under him to give primary propulsion. As he breaks from a trot to a canter he will go on to the left diagonal and finally lead with the off fore-leg.

It will be remembered that when we were discussing the half passage and the passage it was shown how the rider obtained control of the hind-limbs and how it is possible to ensure making the pony bring up one particular hind-limb to start propulsion; then how, by increasing the pace from a trot to a canter, he starts the cycle of movement for the canter with the required leg leading. With this last aid it may, at first, be necessary to take six strides or so at the half passage before the pony breaks into a canter, but this, with practice, will soon be reduced to two or three, and later he will immediately strike off with the required leg leading. Eventually he will strike off with the off fore leading if the rider merely applies the left leg more strongly than the right when he pushes him into a canter, or *vice versa.* This is really what is required of a polo pony, because propulsion is obtained from the hind-legs first, and the rider's legs control the hindquarters, whilst the hands are free to swing or control the forehand, as required. The pony's brain has been educated at the same time. He has

learnt instantly to lead with the right leg because the rider closed his left leg the stronger. He has also learnt to lead with the off fore, yet, having his head slightly bent to the left, which will be the case if the rider carries his hand over to the right, making him neck rein, and incline to the right. In this case we do not want to contract his stride to the right, but merely to gallop fully extended in the required direction. He has also learnt to lead with the off fore leading and his head bent to the right, which he will be required to do if the rider wishes him to make a full turn to the right or to turn about. In short, he has learnt what to do under all circumstances, both changing his legs and controlling his balance at the same time. To lead with the near fore, the aids given above are merely reversed.

To change at the canter from one leading leg to the other, it is first necessary to pull up to a trot for several paces, and apply the aids for cantering, with the new leg leading. The number of paces at the trot will be gradually reduced till eventually the change is made direct from one canter to another. The trainer must remember never to try and make a young pony change its leading leg by throwing his weight forward on the side of the leg he wants to lead with. This will merely result in the pony changing in front and not behind—a very bad habit and difficult to correct. The change must always be made first with the hind-legs, which really start the cycle of movement and give primary propulsion. The psychological moment to actually apply the aid to change the canter from *the off fore* to *the near fore* leading is as follows : When the leading leg comes to the ground the hind-legs are already in the air, and the stronger pressure now of the rider's right leg indicates that propulsion is required by the pony's off hind, which will

come down first after the period when all the legs are off the ground, and start a new cycle of movement, viz. off hind, right diagonal, near fore leading.

It must be remembered that a polo pony cannot be given very elaborate aids in a match. He has got to obey the slightest indication from his rider. He has got to learn that if he is swinging or turning in any particular direction it is easier for him to be leading with the leg on the same side as the direction of his turn. A pony that changes its legs in a rough manner, or that requires very forcible aids, is very little use as a polo pony.

There are also two supplementary aids that may sometimes be useful at first with awkward ponies who resist the ordinary aids owing to a preference for leading with one particular leg. To canter with near fore leading—

(1) Trot along the side of a hill, uphill side on your left, push the pony into a canter by increasing the pace and he will lead with the near fore.

(2) Keep your weight well back and ride on the left diagonal, trot out, increasing the pace to a canter, and the pony will be inclined to lead with his near fore.

Never keep a young pony too long at a collected canter, owing to its tendency to contract freedom of action; let him have his head periodically and increase the pace for a few strides. All school exercises that have been taught at the trot should similarly be taught at the canter.

Riding Off

The riding-school or closed manège is the best place to teach a young pony to ride off. He has been taught to swing and to half passage at a canter, leading with the

correct leg as he does so. Bring in an old pony and make both ponies be ridden at a canter round the school, the youngster on the outside, the rider keeping its shoulder slightly in advance of the old pony, then let the young pony ride into the old by being swung into him, or by half passaging at the canter. The young pony will have all the advantage on his side, for the old pony, at each turn, must throw his weight inwards, or away from the youngster, whilst the latter throws his weight against the old pony. Also when coming round both ponies are leading with the inner leg, which means that they can only throw their weight inwards. The young pony's weight is thrown against the old pony's, who, as long as he leads with the inward leg, is unable to resist. Under these conditions the young pony soon gets confidence, and realises that to ride off with success he must get in advance of the opposing pony's shoulder, and lead with the leg on the side at which he is required to ride off.

Young ponies must be taught to canter kindly on small circles, so that they can be turned like this in a game when it is not necessary to turn sharp round on the haunches, as the latter is a greater physical strain. To ensure quickness in turning and avoidance of collisions, proper turns on the haunches are essential.

The Gallop

Extended pace.—Though actual galloping will not be included in this period of training, the young pony must learn to extend himself as the basis of the next period of his training, which will be mostly performed out of doors.

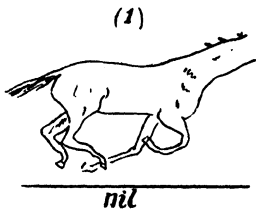
Although a riding-school is of great advantage for school

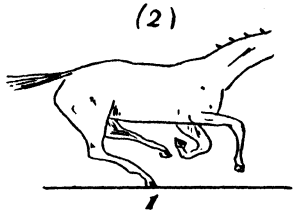
training, it is not essential. In any case, all exercises done in the school should also be carried out in the open. As far as possible, after teaching a lesson indoors, repeat it outside before returning to the stables.

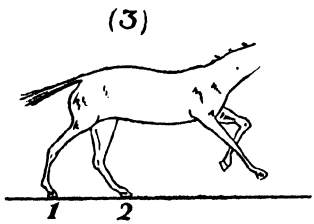
If a pony is kept indefinitely doing collected work in a school he will lose his powers of extension and will not be able to gallop. A thorough understanding of the analysis of the paces of the gallop is of great importance.

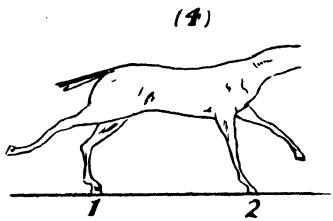
The Gallop—Near Fore leading

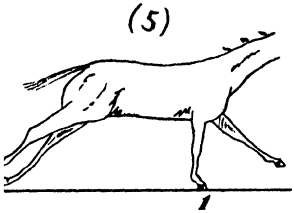
Fig. 1 shows the horse during the period of suspension with all its legs in the air. Fig. 2 the off hind-leg has come to the ground and is placed close under the horse's centre of gravity. The whole limb, from the pelvis, is brought as far forward as possible. After taking the weight of the body coming to the ground, the hock is straightened, thus giving primary propulsion, the toe of the shoe finally leaving the ground. Before actually doing so the near hind comes to the ground as in Fig. 3. As the off hind is raised and extended out behind, the off fore comes to the ground so that the horse is supported by the right diagonal legs (Fig. 4). As the near hind completes its propulsion the body rotates over the foot of the off fore which is rigid, and the near fore, the leading leg, is fully extended (Figs. 5 and 6). As the near fore comes to the ground the off fore is raised (Fig. 7). The body now rotates over this foot with the limb rigid all the way down to the fetlock. Finally, by a muscular bracing of the leg, the body is propelled forwards and upwards to the position in Fig. 1, when all the legs are off the ground and the cycle of motion is repeated.

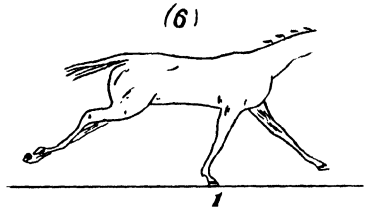

(1)
nil

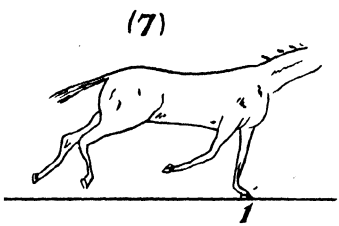

(2)
1

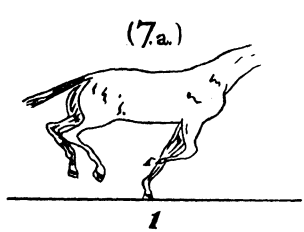

(3)
1
2

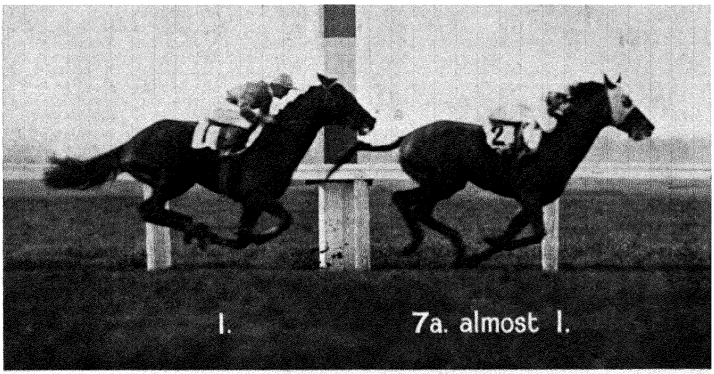

(4)
1
2


(5)
1


(6)
1


(7)
1


(7a.)
1



[*Central News Agency.*

RACEHORSES GALLOPING (1). THE ZEV-PAPYRUS RACE.

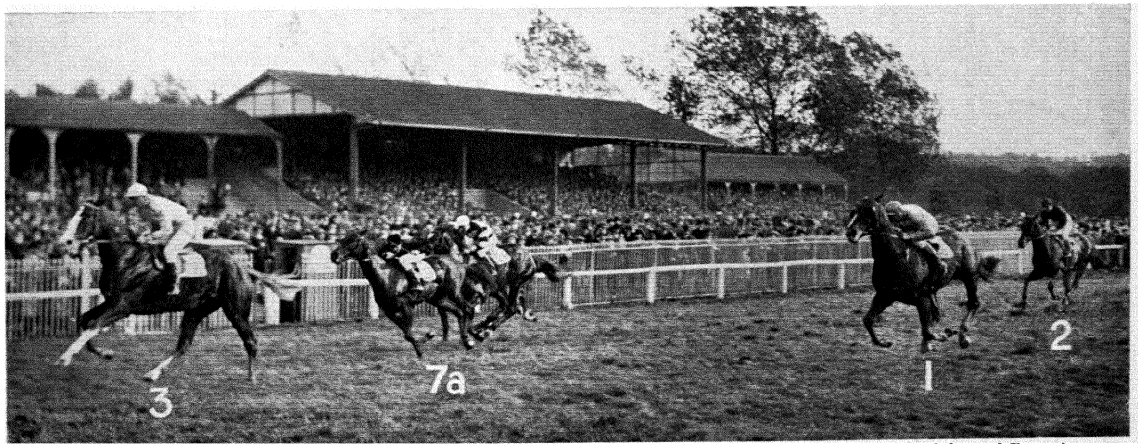
If we study the above and the two subsequent illustrations we can pick out most of the stages in the diagram of the gallop. The numbers marked on the photographs correspond with the same positions and numbers in the diagram. 5 and 6 do not appear, but 4 clearly indicates the process of locomotion which finally ends in the leading leg taking all the strain of impact and impulsion alone. It has been calculated that the force of impact of a horse's fore-leg with the ground when fully extended at the gallop is equal to fifteen tons. If this is correct, or even approximately so, it is surprising that cases of split pastern bones do not occur more frequently on hard going.



[*Sport and General Press Agency.*

RACEHORSES GALLOPING (2).

To face p. 148.



[*Sport and General Press Agency.*

RACEHORSES GALLOPING (3).

To face p. 148.

Thus we see the exceptional strain taken by the off hind and the near fore-legs.

The hind-leg not only takes the shock of the body coming to the ground but gives the primary propulsion by contracting and straightening the hock. From its shape the hind-limb is well adapted for this purpose, and the hock, coming midway between the point of impact with the ground and the junction of the leg with the body at the pelvis, has the greatest strain upon it and is the chief seat liable to injury in the hind-limb. In the case of the leading fore-leg the strain is even greater, as it has to propel the whole body forwards clear of the ground. There is no lever to actuate, as in the case of the hock, but an extraordinary muscular bracing of the leg gives the final propulsion. Added to this, there is considerable jar owing to the limb being rigid on impact with the ground. It is on account of this great strain that we get lameness; and horses commonly break down on their leading leg at the gallop. Unlike the case of the hind-leg we get sprains below the knee and lameness from jar nearest the point of impact at the end of the rigid bony column where the jar is most felt. For this reason we find Nature's anti-concussion mechanism here, namely, the frog and the slope of the pastern, the angles of the shoulder joints above and below the humerus acting as a further buffer. The frog meets the ground first and, if allowed to deteriorate, jar is consequently increased.

We find that horses are liable to break down when galloping from hard on to soft going or *vice versa*; also on sand. This is probably due to a misapplication of the bracing of the fore-limb.

The tracks of a galloping horse will be found to be

almost in a straight line; the faster the pace the more marked this becomes. Apart from the actual difference in locomotion as compared with the canter, the head is carried lower and more extended, resulting in a lower and more extended action, with the centre of gravity further advanced. If the photographs be compared with the diagrams we can find nearly all the different stages of locomotion at the gallop. The Americans were the first to appreciate the degrees of effort borne by the different legs at the gallop, and Tod Sloan was the original exponent in this country of the modern flat racing seat. It is realised that the leading fore-leg probably makes the greatest effort, and for this reason a tired horse changes its legs. The modern racing seat also reduces wind resistance to a minimum. Again, weight is carried over the centre of gravity, which is advanced, and what is even more important, over the pivot of the leading fore-leg, thus reducing its effort to a minimum. The farther the weight is put back, the greater the effort required and the more it tends to bring the horse's body prematurely down to the ground, preventing the full impulsion derived from the hind-leg which first meets the ground (*vide* Fig. 2). The picture of Sande and Donoghue in the Zev-Papyrus race clearly exemplifies these points.

There are certain points that must be recognised with regard to the gallop, from a training point of view. In the first place, the horse must shift his centre of gravity forward with free extension of his head and neck to get proportionate extension of his fore-limbs. At the same time the rider should relieve the horse's loins of as much weight as he can to enable him to bring his hind-legs as far forward as possible. As the tracks of a horse galloping are practically in one straight line, one hoof-mark behind

the other, it is obvious that with the extreme impulsion of the gallop, and the centre of gravity being well advanced, he is unable in this position to stop quickly, or to turn sharply to either hand. Any sharp turn would probably mean the crossing of his fore-legs, and to pull up rapidly necessitates coming from this extended movement to a collected one—that is, with the weight brought back on to the hocks. It is therefore largely a question of training the pony's muscles and educating his brain how best to come from an extended to a collected pace. Later we will go further into exercises at the gallop which cannot be truly termed " school work."

CHAPTER VI

BITTING

We cannot leave the question of riding-school training without discussing certain points with regard to bitting. The action and adjustment of the bit have been already explained in Chapter VII., Part I. There are, however, certain general principles regarding the bitting of polo ponies that must be thoroughly understood. In the first place, a pony should complete and be perfected in all his riding-school work on a snaffle before he is bitted. Then the question arises: Is the pony ready to be bitted or not? Generally a green pony requires from six to eight months' riding on a snaffle. This means actual riding, not inclusive of any period of sickness. Ponies will from weakness carry their heads low. With time, condition and good hands the head can gradually be raised while the hocks are brought more underneath to take the weight thus brought back. It may be accepted as a rule that as long as a pony is down on the hands he is not ready for a curb bit. When he places and carries his own head correctly on a snaffle, and has done all his riding-school exercises proficiently, then he may be bitted. A pony with a naturally good head carriage can be bitted sooner than one with less perfect conformation, but in any case he should be taught to do his work perfectly on a snaffle first of all.

Ponies that are too light in front may be bitted sooner than those that have a tendency to be down on the hands. It is always advisable first of all to put only a mild curb bit on a pony, and then to go through all his previous school work, commencing at the slow paces in the same way as one did with the snaffle. This gives the pony ample opportunity of understanding the action of the bit and obeying it. When a double bridle is first put into a pony's mouth it is as well to teach him the action of the bit without any rider on his back. The simplest way is as follows: The trainer takes the bridoon reins over the pony's head in his left hand, and leads him forward, holding his head up in the right position. As the pony moves forward he slightly " feels " the curb reins, which he holds under the pony's chin in his right hand. In doing this it will be easier if he leads the pony forward on the near side, and has a wall or something of the sort on the right of the pony. An assistant may be necessary to drive the pony on from behind. As soon as the pony bends his head and yields his jaw to the feeling of the bit the trainer should release the tension on the bit reins. Gradually, by frequent repetition and continual reward of sugar, etc., the pony will understand what is required of him when the bit reins are felt, and, after a week or so, it will be found that most ponies obey the bit quite kindly.

The trainer can then proceed to ride the pony in a double bridle. The curb chain should only be gradually tightened up, and, as far as possible, one should continue to use a curb guard and thus prevent rubs from the curb chain. A piece of thin leather, well oiled and sewn up cylindrically so as to fit over the curb chain, is as good as any other method.

Mounted once more, the pony must gradually be taught to bend from the poll and flex his jaw to the pressure of the bit, without lowering his head (see illustration facing page 54). One must be content with very little progress at a time. A pony will often attempt in several ways to evade the control from the bit. The following are common examples:

(1) Lowering the head towards the chest instead of keeping the head up and bending at the poll.

Cure.—This necessitates the use of a double bridle, using the snaffle to keep the head up while the bit reins are "felt" in order to get the required bend (by degrees) whilst the pony is pressed up to his bridle by the rider's legs. (See illustration facing page 54.)

(2) Generally refusing to face the bit, *i.e.* behind it.

Cure.—This will generally be the case at first, though it may denote too severe bitting and indicate that the curb chain is too tight. The rider must get proper impulsion by actively using his legs and pressing the pony up to his bit, but very gradually once he has obtained sufficient impulsion. Doing extended work on a snaffle will be found to improve ponies who are inclined to be behind their bits. They must not be hurried in their schooling, but hacked about to get used to their bits, and not turned or stopped at short notice.

(3) On feeling the bit the pony will often poke its nose upwards. This may be due to bad conformation, and therefore cannot always be entirely cured.

Cure.—If it is merely a question of hurrying the

pony too much before he understands the action of the curb bit, the cure is obvious—more patience. Otherwise, a martingale attached to the nose-band will be of assistance, but it must not be too short and upset the pony's balance and throw his weight on his forehand. He should be able to just raise his nose to the level of his withers. In extreme cases a curb chain may be sewn inside the nose-band. The trainer should, as far as possible, always ride with a loose rein, and not attempt to retain a pony's head in a bent position for any length of time. He should educate the pony to understand that he may carry his head in the most comfortable position his conformation permits, but that he is required to bend and give his jaw for short periods to stop or check his pace. One must always be sure that the pony is not poking his nose from unnecessary discomfort. Sometimes it may be found that extra work and reduction of corn will have a good effect. As the pony gets tired he will gradually drop his head, and immediately he does so, the rider should relax the pressure of the bit. In time the pony will realise that there is complete comfort when he drops his nose, even though by so doing he surrenders control to the rider.

(4) Another fault is taking the bit only on one side of the mouth. It will often be found that ponies' mouths are one-sided, and in most cases left-sided. This is due to being led, turned, bridled and handled on the near side.

Cure.—Prevention is the first essential. Have your ponies led equally, or perhaps it is safer to

say, more on the off side than the near, as the common leading on the near side is often the root of the evil. If a young pony has already contracted the habit he should be worked double the amount on the side on which he resists the bit. Finally, he must be taught what are termed *Lateral Flexions when moving on a straight line.*

This is carried out as follows : The rider places the pony's head correctly and walks him forward on a straight line, retaining an equal feeling on the snaffle ; at the same time he feels the bit on the hard side of the pony's mouth, pressing him well up with his legs, and thus preventing him from turning away from the straight line. In time it will be found that the pony will relax his jaw on the one side as freely as he will on the other. He should not be allowed to turn when carrying out these lateral flexions until the rider carries his hands over to one side and lays the rein against the pony's neck, when he should turn in the normal way, namely, away from the rein.

(5) Getting the tongue over the bit, or back behind it. This is generally due to too hurried training, and once contracted the habit is difficult to correct.

Cure.—Immediately this tendency is noticed, a tongue snaffle should be put on the pony, and he should be ridden with a very light rein until he learns to drop his tongue under the snaffle. He should in addition be allowed to feed with the snaffle on, so that he gradually learns that it is more comfortable to keep his tongue underneath it.

Where the habit is more or less confirmed, the cure may be effected by tying a bit of string or tape from the joint of the snaffle, or the centre of the bit, leaving two long ends, which, in turn, should be tied round the corners of the pony's mouth and over his nose. In extreme cases it may be necessary to tie the tongue, which should be done as follows :

A bit of three-inch tape folded over three times should be tied round the tongue with a double knot, after putting the bit in the pony's mouth. The tongue is then tied to the roof of the mouth by attaching the ends of the tape to the nose-band. Tying the tongue down to the lower jaw is generally useless and requires a very tight slip knot, whereas with the above method the tongue need not be tied at all tightly.

Although one may have heard very often that there is a key to every pony's mouth, and that provided one can find the correct bit all will be well, experience proves this to be a fallacy, as it is really a question of " hands " during the training rather than any particular bit that produces a good mouth.

Severe bits may appear satisfactory when first put on, but will invariably result in sore mouths and fractured jaws after playing in several tournaments. The following bits will be found the most suitable—at any rate when dealing with young ponies : a medium cheek double bridle, or a short cheek Ward Union bit ; a Rugby Pelham ; a military reversible bit ; a 9th Lancer bit ; a Banbury double bridle, and on occasion a gag snaffle. All the above are comparatively mild bits and, as a general rule, one or the other will be found suitable.

CHAPTER VII

SPECIAL TRAINING FOR POLO PONIES

In addition to the school training described in the previous chapter, there are many and varied practices useful in training a polo pony. At each stage in the pony's training one should consider carefully in what particular way he is backward or awkward. For instance, if a pony pulls up well but is sluggish, one should not persist in making him pull up, but give him a lot of sharpening up work. On the other hand, with a sharp pony with a tendency to run on instead of pulling up, one should reverse one's methods. So one often finds in the case of a pony which is being trained by a man who is not going to play it, that the trainer is inclined to go on doing whatever the pony does best, and to show it off on these lines, instead of concentrating on the defects of the animal's training. The trainer must always be careful not to over-tax a young pony's strength. If this is done, the pony, instead of obeying, will hang on the rider's hands, and very soon learn to pull, which is the opposite to what is being aimed at, namely, that it should obey smoothly and immediately, without necessitating the least effort on the part of the rider. During the school training the pony should have been taught to carry himself properly, for a good head carriage is essential. Once a pony has acquired the habit

of carrying his head correctly, he should always be ridden with a nice free rein ; he can then use his head and neck to the best advantage to assist him in all movements. *A first-class pony must be under absolute control in fast polo when ridden on a loose rein.*

This must not be confused with what is called " being behind the bit " or " bit shy." In the latter case the pony rides with a loose rein, but when the rider feels the reins it does not understand that it must give its jaw and obey the bit ; whereas a pony that is " behind the bit " will not start quickly. Throughout the entire training it must be borne in mind that it is the pony's brain that has to be educated. Patience will always give the best results. If we made up our minds to spend two years on the training of each pony, and never pushed him too fast in his work, there would be remarkably few failures.

Trouble always arises when a pony is put too soon into fast games. He is neither physically nor, in many cases, temperamentally ready for this severe test. What is the result ? Very much the same as in the case of a two-year-old that gets a gruelling race early in its career.

If the pony is inclined to be excitable he becomes more so, and his heart beats with excitement every time he comes on to a polo ground. He inevitably loses his head, and does not apply his brain to the intricacies of the game. Consequently he has to be put back in his training to sober him down, or he will very soon learn to pull if he has not done so already.

If he is physically unfit he gets tired, his legs refuse to obey, he loses heart, hangs on his bit, his mouth gets dead, and he does not care what happens so long as he can manage to struggle through to the end of the chukka. To

continue playing a pony under these conditions will very soon spoil any chance he may have of being a brilliant performer. Look on your pony as a human being and you will realise what he has to go through under these circumstances.

Put a pack on your back and a rifle in your hand and double about for ten minutes as fast as you can run before you are in condition, and you will soon realise whether that sort of amusement appeals to you.

It takes very much longer to get horses fit than many people realise, and it normally takes from eighteen months to two years to get a pony really fit and supple for fast play. Generally speaking, with a young pony the time devoted to his training may be divided up as follows :

The first two months. In the long reins, handling, conditioning, training the pony to obey the voice, and commencing to make his mouth.

Then three weeks mounted. Free walking out and trotting.

The next six to eight months. Riding school work, suppling, conditioning, bitting, balancing, ready obedience to the aids, general education of the pony's brain, hacking. Make your pony a good smooth quiet hack, used to all sights and sounds. Give him experience to broaden his outlook on life. Try and teach the pony to appreciate what is in your own mind. For instance, in riding over a field, mark down a tuft or plant, and see that you can ride your pony so as to place him just right for you to hit it with a stick as you pass. By this means you will both get to understand each other. Put your pony within an inch of where you want to, and he almost unconsciously will obey. This will help both later, when it comes to placing a pony to hit a ball at the easiest angle.

The next six months. Knocking about with a stick and ball, which may have commenced towards the end in the previous period. It is generally advisable to start this early, even if only at a walk. When the pony is in poor condition he will get accustomed to a stick and ball, whereas if put to it later, he may play up and waste valuable time. Work with other ponies in a ride, learning to ride off, etc. Practise loose rein work with occasional gallops. Playing in slow chukkas, and during the latter part of this period playing in fast chukkas but not matches, so that the pony need never be overtaxed or sickened.

During the final six months, which will lapse into the next polo season, the pony will be ready for fast polo and tournaments. Of course in India, where polo is played all the year round, ponies come on rather faster than in England, but the secret of success wherever you may be is, in any case, never to hurry a pony in its training. Thus is the risk of unsoundness and failure diminished. The motto of the old Cavalry School at Netheravon was "Patientia et Scientia." It was a very sound one.

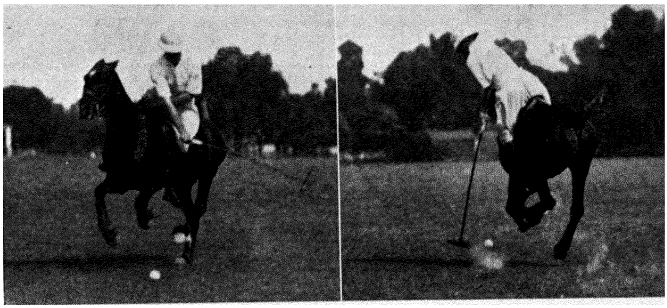
Let us now consider the different phases of this period of the training in detail.

(1) Knocking about with a stick and ball. The pony should have already been accustomed to having a stick swung on him on both sides. Occasionally some ponies will be nervous of this for some time, and will require particular attention. In such cases blinkers are often of great assistance to start with, as they prevent the pony anticipating that the stick might hit him. It may be necessary with a nervous pony to put some polo balls in his manger, and to hang sticks up in his box, to accustom him to both. Practice with a small Eton football is also

excellent, as the pony soon gets used to it and realises that it will not hurt him, and very soon he will get confidence and begin to enjoy this part of the training. It is best to begin at a walk and always with a loose rein. When the pony shows no further signs of nervousness, the blinkers can be dispensed with, and later the football replaced by a polo ball. Then get several ponies on the ground to knock about together, as this prevents their getting bored and having the inclination to get off the ground to where other ponies may be standing. Have plenty of balls on the ground, so that if you miss one you do not have to stop each time, or the pony may get into the habit of stopping before you hit. Teach him to follow the ball, *i.e.* hit to the right or left, and then just give him the smallest hint to follow in that direction; he will soon learn to do it naturally. A common mistake is to hit a back-hander and turn at the same time. Never do this with a young pony, but make him go straight on and turn when you give him the necessary aid. This will prevent his getting in the habit of turning too soon and causing the rider to misjudge his stroke, or fail to get the required direction with his back-hander.

A pony can very easily be taught later on to turn as you hit a back-hander, should you wish to hit one under his tail to the flank.

(2) The following exercises can be carried out with two or three ponies, but as many ponies as ten, if possible, can be put in a ride, so that they can do steady drill. This tames them down, and teaches them not to pull when up alongside other ponies. Keeping their place in the ranks also makes them bold, and used to other ponies bumping up against them.



(1) (2)

NEAR-SIDE FORWARD STROKE.

The above and subsequent plates should be studied from the points of view of (*a*) the action of the rider, (*b*) that of the pony both mental and physical.

In figs. 1 and 2. (*a*) The rider is in the act of striking the ball on the near side. His body is turned round to the left and he is leaning over on that side. He gives his pony a free head and is careful not to carry his bridle hard over to the left.

(*b*) The pony, realising that its rider is going to hit the ball on the near side, gallops with a free head without checking so as to pass the ball on the required side. In spite of the fact that the rider is leaning over to the left, the pony has had no indication from the reins that it must do otherwise than gallop straight on in the required direction. This it does by adjusting its own weight to counterbalance the displacement of that of its rider. Under the above conditions it is easier for both, if the pony is leading with the near fore-leg, which is the case. When each photograph was taken it was on the off hind-leg and will consequently be leading with the near-fore.

To face p. 162.

(*a*) Come out in single file, then form ride on either the right or left of the leading pony, the ponies in rear coming up at a trot or canter, depending whether the leading pony is walking or trotting. The same thing can be done in half sections (*i.e.* two abreast).

(*b*) Your ride is now in one line; number off from the right: even numbers halt: odd numbers move on first, at a walk or faster pace: even numbers now get the order to advance at an increased pace and move through the gaps in the odd numbers; when they are ahead make the odd number do the same thing, moving up through the gaps in the even numbers.

(*c*) Carry out similar practices, making the odd and even number face one another and ride past each other through the gaps; the riders can have sticks which they swing as the opposing numbers pass each other. When they have passed, make them halt, turn about on their haunches to right or left by verbal orders, and pass through again.

This makes ponies bold when meeting each other.

(*d*) Form your ride into line, do some wheels at different paces, making the ponies keep their places in the ranks.

The first lessons in riding off have already been given uring the riding school period. Similar lessons can be ırried out in a ride.

(*e*) Again in line, knee to knee, incline and passage to the right and left for a few paces, making each pony push against the one on the flank to which

the incline is made, he in turn being pushed by the pony on the opposite side. By repeating this practice and changing the position of ponies, each will learn to ride off, get confidence in his efforts, and take to it naturally.

(*f*) Put your ride in two ranks if you have eight or more, otherwise one rank is sufficient, each pony being two horses' length from nose to croup and from knee to knee. Do turns and inclines in any direction and at all paces, taking care that each pony canters or gallops on the correct leading leg when he is turning. Halt, rein back two paces, forward at a canter on whichever leg the order is given to lead with.

(*g*) Put your ride in single file at a walk, if desired on a large circle with two horses' length from nose to croup. The leading file turns about and moves through the gaps in rear, passing successive ponies on alternate hands. If done at a canter by each pony as it becomes leading file, the leg should be changed as it turns to the right or left in passing each pony in rear.

These and similar practices will soon bring on a young pony.

Never let a pony turn except by swinging his forehand with the reins or by halting and turning on the hindquarters. Let all work be done on a loose rein.

(3) Perhaps most important of all is the education of the pony to come from an extended pace (gallop) to a collected pace (canter). He must use his brain and learn that, when the aids to check him in his gallop are applied,

FIG. 1.

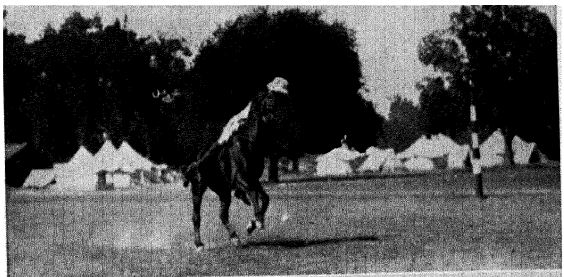


FIG. 2.



NEAR-SIDE BACKHANDER.

Fig. (1) Cutting the ball out to the right with a near-side backhander towards the goal.

Fig. (2) Completion of the same stroke.

(*a*) The rider is turned round to the left facing the ball and leaning over on that side. At the same time he is bending his pony's head slightly to the right by a feeling of the right rein.

(*b*) The result is that the pony, feeling no indication to swing left-handed, which would be necessary if it was desired to pull the ball under its tail, keeps on in the required direction. It flexes its head to the right to give the rider more freedom to make this stroke. Again it adjusts its equilibrium to counterbalance the rider's weight thrown left-handed and does not diverge from the direction indicated by the reins. Also with a near-side stroke it is leading with the near-fore.

The only time when it is necessary for a pony to gallop on the actual line of the ball is when it is required to hit it at right angles or pull it across the pony's front. It is quite easy to teach a pony to do this, provided the rider leans well forward so as to hit the ball right in front of his pony's fore-legs.

To face p. 164.

he must contract his stride, bring his weight back and keep his hocks well under him. This should be taught gradually; if the rider is violent, the pony will not do it with that smoothness which is so essential in a polo pony. The collected pace should be considered the *intermediate stage* between the gallop and the halt. So we teach him this intermediate stage first, *i.e. extension*, free rein, gallop, centre of gravity forward—then we feel the reins, give slight pressure of both legs with our body back: result, *collection*, *i.e.* stride contracted, jaw relaxed, hocks kept well under the centre of gravity, which is brought back.

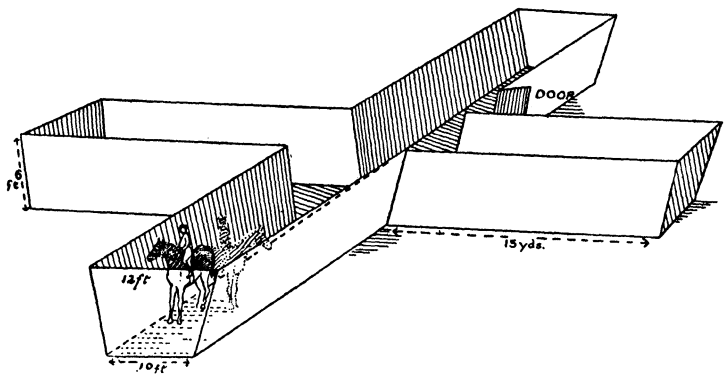
At the latter (the collected pace) we have the pony ready to stop easily, for he has already learnt to halt smoothly from a canter. By degrees we reduce the number of collected paces till he stops directly from the gallop. But before attempting this, we must get him to understand what is required and to change quietly from extension to collection and back to extension again without attempting the direct halt from the gallop. This is a mental and physical exercise for a pony, and, once he has thoroughly mastered it, he is very far on the road to proficiency. It is as well to practise this exercise in company with a trained pony, as a youngster will thus learn from example what is required of him; but the trained pony should not be an excitable animal, or he will more than probably have a bad influence on the young pony and make him hot-headed.

(4) Teaching a pony to stop is really the education of his brain. I can call to mind three animals that, when racing, would take quite a useful hold. Put them on the polo ground in a game, and they were entirely different rides. They realised that what was required of them was to be handy, to gallop, to turn, and stop on a loose rein,

and they each of them did so. That to me was convincing proof that it is the animal's brain which one must always consider and remember when training a pony.

From the commencement he should have become accustomed to the voice, and learnt to understand the words, walk, trot, canter, whoa.

So often the latter word is used on all and any occasions



DIMENSIONS OF MALTESE CROSS MANÈGE.

This manège is only used for mounted work. The rider should ride down the left-hand side of the passages if he wishes to turn about on the hocks to the right, and *vice versa*. It will be found that if the pony tries to turn on the forehand or centre, he will hit his hindquarters against the sides of the manège. With a little practice he will soon learn to pull up and whip round on his hocks perfectly. He should then be made to do the same thing in the open, the rider using his voice with the same intonation, and applying the same aids in each case.

by grooms that it loses its value and conveys anything or nothing to the pony's mind.

If he understands the voice from the start it helps in a wonderful way as progress is made in the training. We have taught the pony to stop quietly at slow paces, but, as we put him to faster work, we must keep him up to the mark in pulling up. There are several points one must

remember : always close the legs when stopping, so that he has his hocks under him ready to support his weight. This will become second nature to him. When a pony is nervous of using his hocks, take him on to a steep hill, *walk down* it and *halt* several times. It will be found that he has to have his hocks under him. Let him stand there and learn that he can comfortably support himself on his hocks. By degrees increase the pace and halt coming down the hill, and it will very soon be found that he will think little of it. So often one finds a rider galloping up a hill to teach his horse to stop.

What is commonly called a Maltese Cross Manège is quite useful for making a pony stop and turn about on his haunches. But for such training to be of any use, the pony must be taken out immediately afterwards and made to stop and turn on his hocks while the lesson is fresh in his mind, and whilst he still associates the manège training with the same practice in the open.

(5) It may be found at this period of the training that the pony, in doing faster work, is getting his weight too much down in front. This may be due to weak loins or weak hocks, or to lack of condition, and to being pushed too fast in his training. If it is not due to bad conformation this can be corrected. He should be put back for a period in his training and ridden in a snaffle. Though he must learn to get his weight forward to gallop, he must equally learn to bring his weight back to collect himself. It is easier to raise the neck and bring the weight back in a snaffle. As his training may conceivably have been pushed in advance of his condition, he will probably come right if a little more time is given him.

(6) On the other hand, the trainer may find his pony

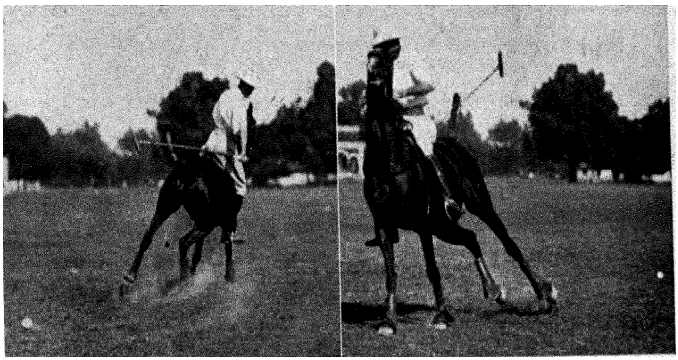
too light in front, behind the bit, and inclined to go in the air. This may be due to insufficient exercise and too much corn. The obvious cure is increase of the former and reduction of the latter.

Possibly it may be due to conformation, as in the case of a so-called peacocky type of pony, which is inclined to prance and bound instead of "using himself properly." Or it may be due to too much "collection" during early training; by the head being raised too much, or the rider using his legs too strongly, and forcing the pony's hind-legs continually under him, and thus spoiling his flexibility and freedom of action.

In either case it is best corrected by giving the pony regular three-furlong gallops in a snaffle, so teaching him to shift his centre of gravity forward, get down to his work, and face his bit.

It may be argued that, if a pony is excitable, this will only make him worse; but it is not really so. There is no worse form of excitable pony than one galloping up in the air and inclined to bound. Teaching him to get his weight forward will make him more rideable, and as soon as he shows a tendency to get his weight down, he should be put on to the extension and collection exercises mentioned in paragraph 3 of this chapter.

(7) Turning, changing the leading leg, riding off. Quite a common mistake made by inexperienced trainers is to think they should turn a pony with their leg. This is a point one should be quite clear about. The rider's legs only control the pony's *hindquarters*, while the reins control the forehand. Application of both on the same side will move the whole mass to a flank (passaging) or effect a turn on the haunches. Now one can turn the



(1) (2)

SWINGING A PONY RIGHT-HANDED TO HIT AN OFFSIDE BACK-HANDER UNDER ITS TAIL.

Figs. 1 and 2 show an offside back-hand stroke when hitting the ball under the pony's tail.

(*a*) The rider turns his body and leans back right-handed so as to take his back-hander late and just clear of his pony's hind-legs. To further assist him, he swings his pony right-handed by leaning the left rein against his neck. He does not apply his left leg to check the hindquarters flying out, as in this case the pivot of the turn is the centre of the pony's body, the forehand coming round to the right and the hindquarters swinging left-handed to keep clear of the stick and ball.

(*b*) The pony realises all the indications to swing right-handed as applied by the rein and the rider's weight combined. He consequently conforms. At the same time, not feeling any pressure on his left flank and realising the stick is going to come round his hind-legs, he swings them clear as shown in both photographs.

To face p. 168.

hindquarters round the forehand with the pressure of the leg, but it is most undesirable to turn a polo pony on the forehand.

Except to square a pony up in line when the ball is thrown in, turning on the forehand is a most pernicious habit.

When on the move the pony must always be turned by the forehand being swung in the required direction, or he must be pulled up and made to turn on the haunches.

Now the forehand is controlled by the reins. By carrying the hand to right, for example at the gallop, the pony should swing to the right without reducing his speed. He feels the left rein against his neck, but at the same time, the left rein being " taut," his head tends to bend slightly to the left, which conveniently gives rather more freedom to the extension of the off fore-leg. At the same time he moves his centre of gravity through the medium of his neck to the right, thus directing his impulsion towards the right. If the incline to the right is sufficiently pronounced he will change his leading leg to assist him. This is the simple process of swinging a pony by means of the reins, the pony having already learnt in his school training to turn his forehand away from the rein on his neck.

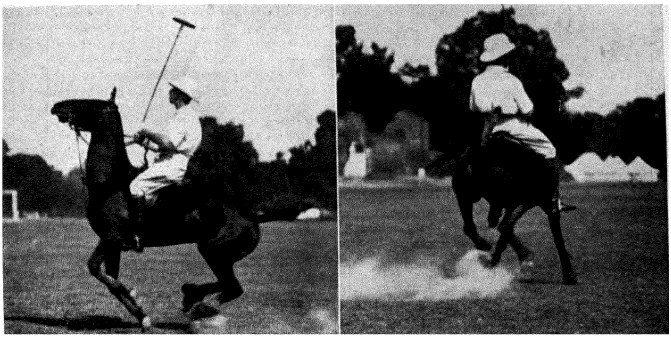
If the turn to the right is to be more pronounced than an incline, *i.e.* at right angles or more, this necessitates checking the forward propulsion of the pony ; then swinging him round on the haunches with the reins, at the same time closing the leg on the side you are turning from to control the hindquarters and make them the pivot of the turn.

In this case, as the pony is checked, he should relax his

jaw, bend his head in, and he will probably want to turn his head to the right as well as shift his centre of gravity by means of his neck, in this direction. As he is required to check his pace and turn to the right or right about, there is no immediate necessity for freedom of extension of the off fore-leg, but rather the reverse. It will be remembered that the pony was previously taught, when collected, to turn with his head bent in the direction he is turning. Now, having been pulled up on his hocks (collection) and almost simultaneously turned on his haunches, he will bend his head (with his jaw flexed) in the direction he is turning, keeping his neck stiff except at the poll.

There is no more tiresome habit due to bad training than when a pony thinks it has to turn as soon as it feels the rider's leg on its flank. This class of pony is always all over the place and does nothing smoothly. This fault should never occur, if it is quite clear in the mind of the trainer as well as the pony that, by the aids employed, the reins control the forehand and the rider's legs the hindquarters.

One cannot express too strongly, even at the expense of repetition, the absolute necessity for smoothness in all movements of the pony. Too hurried training will soon have the opposite results. It is essential for a polo pony to have (1) flexibility of neck and jaw; (2) the ability to adjust its centre of gravity as required; and (3) control of its limbs. The latter (3) is dependent upon the former (2). If the pony during its school training has been taught to change at a canter behind, before changing in front, *the change will become practically simultaneous*, and there will be no disunited gait either at the canter or gallop.



(1) (2)

PULLING UP.

Fig. 1 shows the head raised and the forehand tipped up instead of being propelled forward by the fore-legs. The hind-legs are brought up close under the centre of gravity and take the weight, the hocks being kept bent to check propulsion, which would otherwise be obtained by straightening them. Great strain is put on the loins which must hold up the forehand supported on the ground by the hind-legs. The pony in the picture appears to be inclined to poke its nose and has not relaxed its jaw, but otherwise is using itself to the best advantage. Fig. 2 shows the dust made by the hind-legs cutting up the ground while checking forward momentum, the fore-legs being placed so as to prevent the body pivoting over them as in the gallop.

(*a*) The rider feels the reins, closes his legs, and leans his own weight back.

(*b*) As the result of (*a*), the pony instantly knows it has to check its gallop, and can judge by the degree of leg pressure and feeling of the bit applied by the rider when a complete halt is demanded. By the action of its fore-legs and adjustment of its centre of gravity by raising its head, it puts the extra weight on the hind-legs which support it. By the hocks being kept bent as depicted above, they also act as a brake in the same way that men use their feet and legs when pulling in a tug-of-war.

To face p. 170.

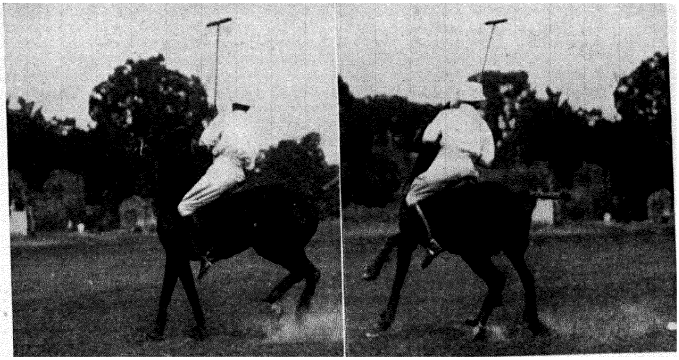
The aids for starting with, or changing on to a particular leading leg, are the same at the gallop as at the canter. It must be realised, however, that at the gallop in a match correct aids by both the rider's hand and leg are not easy, and will often be applied in the most haphazard manner. Under these conditions the careful mental as well as physical training of the pony will be of the greatest value. We taught the pony to obey certain aids, in the first place, in order to exact easy and immediate control, and, in the second, that he should use his balance and limbs in the way most suited to help him in his effort.

For example: The pony is galloping fully extended down the ground *off fore leading*. The rider suddenly swings him to *the half left*. The natural tendency is for the pony to throw out his near fore to support his weight in that direction, with the result that he is disunited. But he knows from experience that he has always been trained to change behind before he changes in front, and his brain has appreciated the advantages. In the first place, he will not be disunited, and secondly, he requires the primary propulsion of the off hind-leg the more easily to gallop in a left-handed direction. At the same time, by changing in front he does not risk crossing his legs, and the near fore becomes not only the leading but, automatically, the directing leg. The change of legs is really made simultaneously when all the legs are off the ground.

Again, we know from the analysis given in the previous chapter that at the gallop each leg is put down in turn and appears in front of the other. The centre of gravity is forward and the limbs are fully extended, each giving

forward propulsion in turn. Obviously, under these conditions, the pony cannot turn suddenly to the right or left at an angle of 90 degrees or more. He is bound to overbalance and fall. Hence the rider must feel the reins and close his legs to check the impetus, applying his outer leg the stronger, whilst swinging the pony in the required direction with the reins. These aids are applied almost simultaneously, but, if the pony has been trained correctly, he will not only immediately understand the aids, but appreciate the easiest and safest course for him to take. He immediately brings his weight back and his hocks underneath him to check his forward propulsion. The stronger pressure of the outward leg is not an indication to turn on the forehand, because he has never been allowed to do that; but it plainly shows him that on no account must the hindquarters fly out in that direction, whilst the forehand is brought round by the reins. In other words, he must check forward impulsion, turn on his hocks, and commence galloping from the hind-leg on the side on which the rider is strongly applying his leg. His weight and impulsion become diverted left-handed; the near fore becomes the leading and directing leg.

One more example to show the need for the pony to use his brain as well as obey the indications of the rider. Your pony is galloping up the ground, off fore leading, and an opponent's pony comes up on the left. You wish your pony to ride the latter off. It may be possible to swing into the opponent's pony, but, if there is not room, it will necessitate half-passaging left-handed into the other pony. Your pony, if correctly trained, not only understands whichever aid is applied, but he also realises that he can only throw his weight in the direction of his leading



(1) (2)

STOPPING AND TURNING.

Figs. (1) and (2) show a pony stopping and turning simultaneously. The strain of the effort exerted is almost entirely borne by the hind-legs and the pony's loins.

(*a*) The rider, besides applying the aids explained in the two previous plates, leans over to the right, carries his bridle hand over to the right so that the left rein is against the pony's neck, and at the same time maintains a strong pressure with his left leg.

(*b*) The pony realises that in conjunction with stopping it must turn as quickly as possible to the right or right about. In sympathy with the rider's hand and assisted by his weight, the pony throws the weight of its forehand backwards and right-handed. Feeling the pressure of the rider's leg on its left flank, it does not let its hindquarters fly out in that direction. It uses the off hind-leg as a brake or drag, the near hind-leg being brought up as shown, first to assist in checking forward momentum, then to propel the body right-handed, and finally enable the pony to lead with the off-fore. This leg is thrown out to the right to support the weight which is being displaced in that direction, when it becomes the leading and directing leg.

To face p. 172.

leg. To ride off in this case he must change from the off fore to the near fore leading in order to push left-handed. He will also realise that he must push against the other pony's shoulder and that he must be slightly in advance of the other, for failing that he will make little impression on the other at a gallop.

But this is a question of speed as well as courage, and consequently we find that a smaller pony, at the gallop, can ride out a bigger pony, provided he is faster than the latter and sufficiently sturdy.

(8) The real object of slow chukkas for young ponies is to give them confidence ; not to practise one's own hitting. It allows ponies to jostle together, stop, and turn and ride off without getting excited. No one should be allowed to hit hard under these circumstances, and it is preferable to limit players to two consecutive hits. Hitting goals and hitting out from behind is a waste of time and should be discountenanced. The whole idea is to initiate ponies into the game without exciting them, so that they may get confidence and enjoy it. The practice of bringing in a trained pony, possibly because he pulls in a fast game, and then to monopolise the ball at the expense of the young ponies, should be firmly repressed.

The young pony must be eventually introduced into fast polo, but one should avoid doing this at the expense of other people's polo.

It is generally best when first playing a pony to put it in at No. 1 or back, and lie a bit out of the game. This will not spoil the chukka, and will allow your pony a bit of extra time and not overtax his ability.

Always look very carefully at your bit before playing, to ensure it being correctly fitted, and that the curb chain

is suitably adjusted. Also, after a chukka, look to see if there are any signs of rubbing or bruising.

The author does not attempt to go beyond the question of the training of ponies and how to ride them, and does not aspire to even the most cursory remarks on playing polo. Only the most able exponents of the game should attempt that.

There is, however, one point to bring before the novice, and that is, that he should see that his trained ponies are not too fresh. All stud grooms like to see their charges looking like racehorses, big and fit. Any one with even small experience knows what a racehorse feels like when he is fit and well—full of vitality, unfettered impulsion, and ready to take a really strong hold : always fresh and just above himself. Not infrequently unfortunate owners find themselves riding their ponies under similar conditions. Their most expensive purchases appear unmanageable, and are eventually sold at considerable loss. Later they wonder why their pony, recently sold to some one as unmanageable, is now playing so well. The new owner, master in his own stable, soon solved the problem—more exercise and less corn for the new pony.

This brings us to the end of the subject of choosing, training and riding young ponies. A limited amount of the training given to a polo pony is most beneficial to a hunter also. It makes just the difference between a high-class hunter with perfect manners, and one that is rough and tiring to its rider and, as likely as not, a nuisance in a crowd.

" Horse-sense " and " commonsense " are synonymous terms, and the man who treats his horses as he would treat human beings will seldom be amiss in his judgement.

" Horse tact " is that rare quality that enables a horseman instantly to put himself on the best of terms with whatever horse he may bestride.

Both may be acquired with study and experience by any one who has a love of horses.

INDEX

"Aids," riding-school, 123-7, 142-145
Ailments, prevention and cure, 51 ff.
Anthony, J. R., 6
Argentine ponies, 97, 99
Australian ponies, 97, 99

Balance, 8, 12-15, 70, 71
  definition of, 12, 93
  Italian theory, 12-13
  Haute école, 13
Bandages, 51, 58
  how to put on, 52
Bits, 15-17
  adjustment and action, 53
  for polo ponies, 152-7
  curb, 54-6, 152, 153, 154, 155
Blinkers, 161, 162
Blowing, high, 66
Blows, treatment of, 53
Boots, 52
Brushing, causes of, 53
Buckmaster, W., 6
Burns-Hartopp, Capt., 25
Buying horses and ponies, 93 ff.

Canter, the, 140-45
Castor oil (for feet), 64
Cavalry School, at Saumur, 3
  at St. Petersburg, 3
  Italian, 40
Cavalry School, at Netheravon, 161
Cavesson, 18, 115, 116, 117, 120
Clay, in stable, 58
Colds and coughs, 56
  treatment, 57
" Collection," 94, 122, 165
Control, attempting to evade, cures for, 154-7
Contusion, treatment of, 53
Curb bit, 54-6, 152, 153, 154, 155

Donoghue, S., 6
  in Zev *v.* Papyrus race, 150
Draughts (in stable), to be avoided, 57
Dumb jockey, 116, 117, 120

Equitation School, Weedon, 71
Exhaustion, treatment of, 60

Feeding, 60
  chaff, 60
  oats, 60
  bran, 60
  hay, 60
  linseed, boiled, 61
  beans, 61
  peas, 61
  lucerne, 61
  carrots, 61
  rock salt, 61

Feet, faults in, 108
  castor oil for, 64
Fence, 26
  presenting young horse at, 26
  pace, 26
  sticky fencers, 26-7
  rushing at, 27-8
  balance, 28
  " National," 35
  horses that refuse, 35 ff.
Flat racing, the modern seat, 150
Food, bolting, 61
Fox-hunting, day with a young horse, 75 ff.
  the fox's tactics, 84, 86-90
Free forward movement, 121
Free jumping, in long reins, 18-19
Free lane, or manège, 20 ff.
Fresh air, essential for health, 57

Gallop, the, 146-51
Gums, swollen, 66

Hames, S., 6
Handiness, 121
Haute école, 3
  theory of balance, 13
Head, lateral bending of, 135-6
Health, fresh air essential for, 57
Hill work (up and down), value of, 29, 138, 167
Humour, 60
  cause and treatment, 62

Impulsion, direct, 129
  lateral, 131-2
India, polo ponies in, 161
Italian Cavalry School, 40
Italian theory of balance, 12-13

Joint, open, 68
Jumping, free, 18
  in long reins, 18-19
  free lane or manège, 20 ff.
  aptitude for, 71 ff.

Lameness, causes of, 35-6, 59
  to prevent, 58-60
Long reins, free jumping and schooling in, 18 ff.
  advantages of long rein driving, 115 ff., 120
  period of training, 119
Lotion, cooling, 57-8

Manège, 20 ff., 145
  Maltese Cross, 166, 167
Manger, rock salt in, 61
Martingales, standing, 28-9, 48
  running, 29
Mentality, 74
Mouth, condition of, 12, 70, 113, 117, 119, 135
  keeping contact with, 33
  one-sided, 56, 155

" Nappy horses," 36-7
" National " fences, 35
Netheravon, Cavalry School, 161

Olympia, training for, 47, 48, 50
Open joint, 68
Overreach, occurrence of, 62, 68-9

Papyrus, 72, 106
  v. Zev race, 150
Physicking, 62
Pinerolo, 40
Polo ponies, 93
  buying, unbroken, 94
    good points, 95, 96
    size, 95-6
    selection, 96-9

Polo ponies (*contd.*)—
buying, unbroken (*contd.*)—
character, 97
head, 99-100
neck, 101-2
withers, 102
shoulder, 103-5
elbow, 105
chest, 105-6
fore-arm, 106
knees, 106
cannon-bone and fore-legs, 106-7
feet, 108
body, 108-10
hindquarters and hind-limbs, 110-12
buying, half-made, 112-14
tournament, 114
bits for, 152-7
special training, 158 ff.
period of training, 160 ff.
in India, 161

Racing seat, modern, 150
Reining back, 131
Riding off, 145-6
Riding without stirrups, 5-6
Roaring, 67
Rock salt, in manger, 61

St. Petersburg, Cavalry School, 3
Sande (in Zev *v.* Papyrus race), 150
Saumur, French Cavalry School, 3
Schooling, in long reins, 18 ff.
amount of, for a young horse, 40 ff.
"School" training, 121
to attain handiness, 121-2
principles explained, 123-7
the walk, 128-9
exercises at, 129
direct impulsion, 129
"School" training (*contd.*)—
the walk (*contd.*)—
important points in training, 130
reining back, 131
turning, 131, 134-5
lateral impulsion, 131-2
half passage, 132-3
full passage, 133-4
lateral bending of head, 135-6
the trot, 136-7
exercises at, 138-9
the canter, 140-41
exercises at, 142-5
riding off, 145-6
the gallop, 146-51
Seat (good), how to get, 4 ff.
modern flat racing, 150
Selection, some points to observe, 10-11
condition, 11-12
"Sensory" nerves, 124-5, 126
Shoes, 62-3
preparation of foot for, 63-4
Sloan, Tod, and modern flat racing seat, 150
Snaffle, 15-16, 54, 116 ff., 130, 152 ff., 167, 168
Speedy-cutting, 53
Splints, causes and treatment, 65
Sprains, causes of, 64
treatment, 64-5
Spurs, 65
Stable, ventilation, 56, 57
draughts to be avoided, 57
clay in, 58
Stirrups, riding without, 5-6
adjusting, 6-8, 33-4
Stumbling, to prevent, 42-3
Surcingle, 116

Teeth, sharp, 66
Temperament, rider's, 8-9

Thorns, examination for, 66
Trot, the, 136-9
Turning, 131, 134-5

Ventilation of stable, 56, 57

" Walers," 97, 99
Walk, riding-school work at, 128-129
Water, cold, on an injured part, 58
Water jump, 39
Weedon, Equitation School, 71
Weight, distribution of, 58-60
Whip, 118
Whisping, 67
Whistlers, 16, 66-7
Wind, 66
  high blowing, 66
  whistling, 16, 66-7
  roaring, 67
  broken wind, 67
Wings, dispensing with, 24-5
Wood, Colonel, 70
Wounds, treatment of, 68
  open joint, 68
  overreach, 68-9

Zev, 72, 106
  v. Papyrus race, 150

THE END