

grip and balance combined it is wonderful how safely you can ride in a saddle quite loosely put on. But either extreme is wrong.

If your horse's back, withers and ribs be not so shaped as to carry a saddle naturally, get on from a mount, a stone, a chair or the like. This is better than pulling your saddle over and out of place. If you have a groom holding your horse, it is better for him to stand in front of the horse than be pulling down your off stirrup as a set-off to your weight mounting on the near side. Get up with your back slightly turned to the horse's head and be careful not to stick your toe into his ribs.

As to the bridle, the best to learn with is a plain snaffle with a single rein. The next step is to attach two reins to it. The plain snaffle is preferable to either a twisted or a double ringed one, because the novice cannot hurt the horse's mouth with it before he has learned the great lesson that under no circumstances must he ever depend on the reins for the retention or recovery of his seat. It is the one great cardinal rule, of which hereafter. Later on, a bit and bridoon, double bridle, is the best. A Pelham is frequently used, but should only be in very good hands. Nobody with a cast iron wrist can have good hands. Pliable, sensitive fingers, a supple wrist and delicate touch are essential. The snaffle and curb reins should not be held at the same length and therefore tension; unless a horse is misbehaving. A good rider will use the curb to "make" a horse, but after that process is over will very seldom find necessity for it. The snaffle rein should be divided by the third finger of left hand and the curb rein should be between the first and second fingers and outside the little finger. Then turn over the fist with thumb on top; loosen the curb rein an inch or two; then grasp the bunch with clenched fist and keep them as they are, re-inforcing the left by placing the right hand down in loop of the snaffle as occasion requires. Give and take with each step of the horse. Hold your reins very tight in your fist, but so move your fist that you only feel the horse's mouth. You will always save your horse in case of stumble if he cannot pull the reins through your fingers. It is immaterial in which hand you hold the reins, and you should practice with both. You should also accustom yourself to mount on either side.

All communications to the horse should be made by the wrist. Insensibly you will find yourself so talking by telegraph to him all