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LESSONS OF THE DECADE APPLIED.

No. VI.

BY A VOLUNTEER CAVALRYMAN.

(From the United States Army and Navy Journal.)

We continue our extracts from the Lessons of the Decade Applied, which have been omitted for several weeks:

Horsemanship will be taken up the fifth week, as soon as squad drill is learned up to dismounted skirmish drill, so that the regiment can be put to use in the field at once if necessary. Men who can ride are to be preferred for cavalry. Men who have to be taught never become free horsemen. Military equitation is best taught to men who already possess good seats.

The saddle will be the McClellan tree, bound with brass at pommel and cantle, with no furniture on except stirrups of iron, hooded and a breast strap. It will be fastened with a surcingle of brown leather, eight inches broad, fastening with two D rings, and a long narrow strap or thong. The saddle blanket should be red, of the pattern furnished the Artillery at present.

For active service a cylindrical canvas grain-bag a yard long and six inches broad, to hold thirty pounds of grain will be issued. It will have a strap riveted to each side longitudinally, with nine equidistant copper saddler's rivets. A pair of strong canvas wallets will be supplied for rations, the uniting band going over the seat of the saddle, with a girth to connect them under the horse's belly, about eight inches or a foot back of the surcingle, and lightly girthed. The wallets will be each as large as the present infantry haversack. In winter a horse cover to reach to the hocks, weighing ten pounds, and four leg bandages are issued to each horse.

At the sound of "Boots and Saddles," the saddle blankets will be doubled lengthwise, and then folded three times across, so as to make six folds, the sleeping blanket being folded in eight and placed between the folds.

Lay the saddle blanket on the horse, lifting it up forward, and smoothing down the hairs on the animal's back. Take up the saddle, cantle to the right. Strap the grain bag to the cantle, passing the middle strap first through the interstices left between the rivets, and taking care that it be high enough to clear the horse's back.

Roll up the shelter tent and poncho, and put them on the saddle pommel with the spare underclothes inside. Approach the horse on the left side and put on the saddle. Throw over the breast strap, right stirrup,

and off side of the surcingle; pull down the near side of the same. Go around under the horse's head to the right, and see that everything hangs straight. Come back. Buckle the near side of the breast strap to the ring in the saddle bow. Pass the girth through the loop of the cross strap. Pass the girth strap through the D rings twice. Haul taut enough to secure the saddle, but not to make a girth gall or distress the animal, and then bestow the end of the strap in a slip knot as instructed. Pull down the left stirrup. Throw on the saddle wallets and girth them lightly.

In winter, after saddling and packing, turn back the horse cover at both ends and secure it in a roll at the pommel and cantle by means of the holes left for that purpose in the cover. The leg bandages are put inside the roll. The bottom of the cover is doubled back under the saddle blanket before girthing tight.

The bridle will be made of 1st, the collar; 2nd, the cheeks; 3rd, the bit; 4th, the reins. The bit will be the Pelham bit, reins buckling. The collar is made of leather, broad and strong, and fits just behind the ears, being secured there by the frontlet. It is used as a halter when unbridled.

To BRIDLE.—Take the left cheek piece in the left hand, the middle of the reins in the right. Throw the reins over the neck, approaching from the left side. Pass the hand up and seize the forelock, bringing the head down gently. Snap the hook of the cheek piece into the outside D ring in the collar, at the junction of the frontlet. Put the bit in the mouth with the left hand, holding it up by the right cheek piece. Pull the head down and around. Slip the left hand up the right cheek piece and snap the hook on the other side. Hook up the curb chain. In winter always warm the bit first.

The men being saddled and packed, at the sound of "to horse" will lead up their horses to the assembly, and fall into line holding their horses with the right hand, which holds both reins six inches below the bit.

The instructor now commands, *From the right—COUNT FOURS*, Executed as prescribed.

Prepare to—MOUNT.—At this command Nos. 1 and 3 in each set lead their horses to the front to gain room; 2 and 4 stand fast. Each man lets go the right rein, faces to the right, makes two steps to the right with the right foot, sliding the hand along the left rein. Gathering both reins in the right hand, he claps the hand to the off side of the pommel of the saddle. With the left hand he takes the stirrup and lifting the left foot engages it therein. He transfers the left hand to a lock of the mane high up.

MOUNT.—At this command spring from the right foot and raise the body till standing in the stirrup beside the horse, leaning on the right hand. Pass the leg over the croup and seat yourself quietly.

Lift the right hand letting the reins slip through it. Then take them in the left the little finger dividing the reins, which pass up through the closed hand and are thrown to the front over the knuckles, the nails inwards, and close to the belt plate, the reins feeling the bit.

SEAT.—The head is erect and the chin drawn in; the back is hollowed and the shoulders thrown back; the stomach is drawn in and the chest expanded; the body is placed on the fork in the centre of the saddle; the legs and thighs hang naturally, as in the barebacked seat, the knees being turned inward so as to grasp the horse with the flat inside of the thigh; the toes are parallel to the horse, hanging an inch down and a little out, if the conformation of the body compels it.

Nos. 2 and 4 ride up alongside of 1 and 3 and dress up without further orders.

The ranks being formed and dressed, the instructor commands, *Rein—IN*. Draw the bridle hand inwards, and close the legs, bearing steadily on the bit. Keep the hand stiff by the belt plate and keep on pressing both legs till the horse arches his neck and champs the bit.

If the horse throws up his head to resist bring the right hand to help the left, and keep steady; after awhile he will bring his head in and find it easier. Do not pull again for a little while. Always close the legs at the same time, and give spur if he pulls too hard.

When a horse's neck is arched he is "in hand" and in no other position. The instructor must caution the men against throwing the horse on its haunches, and watch them carefully. They are supposed to be able to stick on already. If not they never will make cavalrymen.

The horses being in hand the instructor commands, *By Fours—MARCH*. At the same time pointing to the flank from which he wishes to break the line. At the word "march" the designated flank four moves to the front, and others following as fast as their flanks are uncovered. He next commands, *By Twos—MARCH*, when the right hand two of each set of fours trots out to the front, followed by its flankers in succession till the whole column is strung out, when the "halt" and "forward" are sounded and the walk resumed.

In the same manner the instructor next commands, *By File—MARCH*. Executed on the same principles, each set of fours re-