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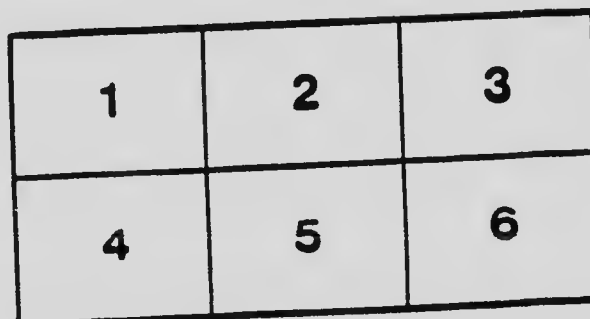
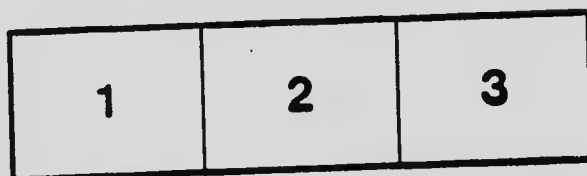
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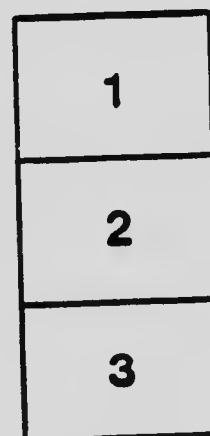
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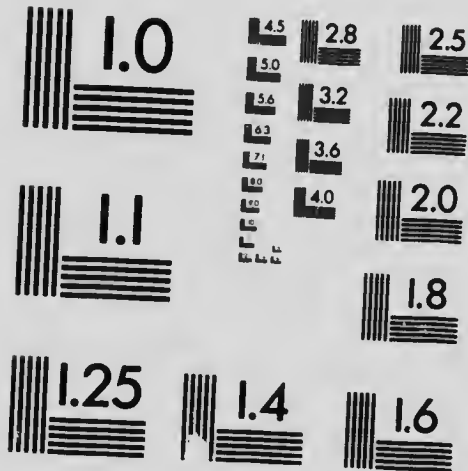
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# OBSERVATIONS ON RIDING

ADDRESSED BY AN OLD MAN  
TO A LAD

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[PRINTED BY REQUEST. FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY]



*"Equam memento rebus in arduis Servare."* —HOR.

"There is nothing so good for the inside of a man, as the outside of a horse." —OLD SAW.

---

Toronto: Christmas, 1901

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**I**F young men have not the means always to buy and keep a horse of their own, they profit thereby to this extent, that in a variety of mounts they find an endless variety of tricks, habits and characteristics with which, before they can be called good riders, they must know how to deal. Nobody is a good rider, who is not ready to manage and control a bad horse. Livery-stable hacks and borrowed screws have, therefore, their uses in the education of a rider. There are reasons why possibly the best judges of riding are those who break and train young horses for the purpose of selling them at a profit as "made" saddle horses. I have known men who have bought and ridden their own horses for forty years, and who were never good riders. Their experience was too limited.

It may be said of the saddle horse, "*nascitur non fit*," (this is a joke). Anyhow, when nature has turned out the animal with certain indispensable points of make and shape, the rider will find that there is yet a good deal of fitting to be done. It is true of race-horses that they run in all shapes. It is not true of the horse we are considering.

The ideal saddle horse must be handsome, intelligent and good tempered. He must be that sort of Anglo-Arab which is called "thoroughbred," or he must have one or more close crosses of this blood. In no other way can the oblique shoulder, length in front of the saddle, high croup, elasticity of movement, light and airy carriage, ambition and several other requisites be secured. This cross and its accompaniments are incidental alike to a pony of thirteen hands or to a seventeen hands hunter up to twenty stone with hounds, and to all heights and sizes between these extremes. Subject to make and shape I prefer a big horse.

The saddle horse must have another essential attribute. He must be deep through the heart, and the necessary room for his organs of respiration must consist in depth rather than breadth under the girths. A broad-chested horse with blunt withers cannot be a good saddle horse. He is too wide between your knees, and does not carry the saddle safely or comfortably. Easy ~~across~~ the walk, trot and canter depend on right make and shape,



and these must come from a thoroughbred parent, or grandparent at furthest. Intelligence and good temper are denoted by a placid countenance, kind eye, and broad forehead. A little pricked ear is a thing of beauty. A donkey's ear is not. Activity is indispensable. He must be an Arab at both ends, muscular and compact, that is to say, with a comparatively short middle piece, short on top and with length underneath. His back must neither be hollow nor roached. It is well for his elbows to work quite free of his body, insuring liberty and freedom of movement. He must have good feet, neither flat nor mulish; his knees must not be back nor yet too much arched, nor "cut-in-under." He must stand firm and square on his legs, and not carry his hind legs too far behind him; nor should his legs be gummy, but the middle tendons (better called suspensory ligaments), must stand out clear and distinct. The knees and hocks must be big and strong. Disfiguring windgalls are said to be the result of using a horse too freely before he is in condition to stand the work. Nothing, short of being "knuckled," gives a horse such a second-hand appearance as bursal enlargements. He must go with, but not on his shoulders.

He must be sound as a matter of course, but on that inexhaustible subject it is unnecessary here to speak at any length. Nor need I dwell particularly on stable management and shoeing. Regular feed and regular exercise are absolutely essential and riding horses should be fed with hay and oats on the ground. If they take hay from a rack it falls into their ears, and besides their knees are injuriously affected. Avoid delicate horses. A good doer, who will manage twenty miles fast, and not be knocked off his feed is what you want. Transition from green to dry food should be gradual and *vice versa*; as also from out of doors to a stable, or from a farmer's barn to a city hot-house. Nine horses of every ten coming from the vendor's farm to a Toronto stable get an attack of influenza.

In every horse-book there are plates which show the "marks" of a horse's age by his teeth from one to seven years of age. Learn these. You can also learn to estimate pretty nearly the age of a horse being ridden at your side by his chin. The young horse's chin is round, full and plump. It gets flatter and flabbier with each succeeding year.

Also learn to measure a horse. Apply the standard to a dozen horses of various heights, and then "chin" them till you know

exactly what your chin with one, two, three or four fingers on top of it indicates. But you and the horse must be on a dead level in all cases. Not long ago I saw an English remount officer measuring a horse with a standard on the sidewalk. Now all our plank sidewalks slope enough to the street to shed water. A 100 ft. plank would measure an inch less on the upper than on the lower side of the planks, a fact which the Englishman could not be supposed to know. I ventured politely to tell him the horse should be stood across not along the sidewalk. The gallant Major's withering reply, growled from the very bottom of his boots, was, "I have measured horses before!" Still, even he did not "know it all," you see: for nobody does. There is always one thing a man doesn't know, and if it isn't that, why—it's something else!!

Now a word on saddle and bridle. Never ride in a saddle too big for you. Nothing looks worse than a man who is all over the saddle, or who sits back on it as if in a chair. The seat should be down into the saddle and not upon it. The English saddle should not be high, turned up, either at the pommel or the cantle, but as flat as is consistent with safety to the horse's back. And in front over the horse's withers place a square of felt for the saddle to press on, unless you use a hair numnah under the whole saddle. In our summer this and open plaited girths are very useful. The roll in front of your knees should be very small or dispensed with altogether. The stirrups must not be wide enough to let your instep through or so narrow as to jam the foot. In either case a fall may mean being dragged and killed. Never rise higher than you need in the trot, and the better time you keep the better for both horse and rider. The length of stirrup in the case of a young man for road riding should be just enough for him to "post" at ease in the trot with the ball of his foot pressing the flat of the iron. There is, however, no actual objection to riding with the feet "home." This should just carry his fork over the pommel, when he stands in the stirrups, as he may choose to do. Older men ride in a shorter stirrup, such as most men use all their lives for hunting and cross country work. Measure and remember your exact length of stirrup on your arm with the iron in your armpit, and have it right before you get up. At the same time remember the particular horse's shape may call for longer or shorter leathers than that which your own horse demands; and therefore learn to take them up or let them down a hole from your seat in the saddle.

It is not important to a man with which foot a horse leads. A lady's horse must lead with the off foot. To effect this draw his head a little to the near side, touching him with the whip on that side, and *vice versa*. A horse should never be turned, without first moving him a step forward.

Busy men often say that the time taken to dress for riding is an obstacle to the practice. But for road-riding a gentleman cannot be too inconspicuously accoutred. He is not out as a sportsman, but merely for a ride. The use of a wide double-buckled knee wrap of soft Russia leather enables you to ride in ordinary trousers and with the "feel" that you are in leather breeches. They are put on in two minutes. The old fashioned strap under the instep is objectionable. Leggings and long gaiters are admissible, but your get-up cannot be too distinctive from that of the man going fox hunting. Remember too that the horiest man afoot is very often the footiest man a horse, and don't emulate him. It may be deemed "horsey" to insist on proper terms in speaking of the horse: but all trades have their apposite phraseology. Thus, a horse has a near and off foot, a hind and fore foot. Right and left, and front are quite inadmissible; and only used by persons who speak of "the dogs barking" when they refer to hounds giving tongue. Similarly, the word ankle applied to the horse is out of place.

The stuffing of the saddle must occasionally be looked to, and worked over if lumpy or hard; for a sore back or a sit-fast is perhaps a very long job, and may throw a horse out of work for months; whether the trouble be on the withers or loin. Slide your stirrups up on the leathers, slacken the girths, and jerk the saddle up and down quickly for a minute or two, if you alight at a stable in the course of your ride; but don't take the saddle off. Rack him up short enough to prevent rolling. Take off the bridle at once, for the horse will not lose a moment in rubbing it along the edge of the manger, to the detriment of covered buckles.

When you come home dab a cold wet sponge over the horse's withers and saddle piece. This extracts inflammation and tendency to soreness. As to girth, the best, except in very hot weather, is the Fitzwilliam. It sits best and is kept more conveniently and more readily adjusted than separate girths. Very tight girthing is objectionable, and when you have learned to ride by

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

the time you are on his back. What says old Horace? *Equis frenato est auris in ore.* You should always gently signal him before turning a corner, so that his mind is prepared and his body balanced for the move. The bits should be so adjusted as scarcely to wrinkle the angle of the lips. They are generally too high in the mouth. You will keep his mouth sensitive and his speed and ambition subject to your easy control by never subjecting his mouth to unnecessary pressure and pull. The best mouth in the world can be hardened and spoiled by an ignorant, clumsy rider.

The secret of stopping a horse is beginning soon enough. You can nearly always feel that the horse is preparing for a bolt. He rounds his back, braces himself, straightens the reins, squirms, or gives other unmistakable signs of his intention. Watch his ears. You must begin as soon as he does. If he once succeeds in getting out of your hands no man on earth can stop him till he chooses; but any man can stop him at the beginning. Talk to him then. Later on you will have to watch for a chance if he lifts his head up, and if you catch that right he may choose to stop. Sawing and yanking a horse's mouth are indications of ignorance and cruelty. Such treatment makes the tender velvet of a horse's mouth sore, and each successive healing makes it harder. He then pulls at you because you have spoiled his mouth. A colt never pulls, he has to be taught it by man's thoughtlessness. A race horse, with a strong experienced man on its back, will sometimes get away at the post and run three or four times round a circular mile track before stopping. His rider's frantic attempts to stop him are quite useless; and the same is true of every runaway horse, in degrees. Racers are being urged to get away at the start, but in ordinary road riding there is no such chance for a horse to misunderstand your wishes. If he runs away it is from fright or vice.

The well-bred, sensitive, highly-strung horse is the most timid and easily "rattled" of all animals. Nervous apprehension is his general characteristic, and there are some ill-understood peculiarities in the focus of his vision which account, perhaps, for otherwise unintelligible fright at certain objects. That his instinct carries him back is proved by his alarm at a big boulder, which he undoubtedly takes for a pachydermatous animal that may rip him. Physically domesticated, he reverts on slight provocation

to innate timidity—shown in the aggregate by horses' readiness to stampede. He will shy at a newspaper in the road when he is twenty years old. Nature teaches him to trust to his heels, and when alarmed his first idea is to run away from the object. He does not show the sense and adaptability of a dog, nor does he approach so near reasoning power. There are great exceptions, depending on the animal's temperament and the pains taken by the teacher; but as a rule it must be admitted that even docile horses are unreceptive. The better they are fed the more prone to that silly affectation, which in default of hard work assumes the danger of habit. Freshness: the Canadian boy has a lot of it. Colts vary in disposition and temper as much as children do, and a vast deal depends on the first rider, after the colt emerges from the hands of the breaker. Conciliation is better than force. Still he must never get the best of you.

The bridle is the means of communication between the horse and rider, and the voice is more effective than whip or spur. The colt is very proud of acquiring knowledge, and nine out of ten start with an extreme desire to act as they are wanted to do. The trouble is that too many fall into the hands of incompetent masters. Therefore use the bridle to teach but never to hurt him. If he misbehaves wickedly or with set purpose, and you are sure he knows what it is for, thrash him; the harder the better. But kindness is preferable to severity as an ordinary measure. The breaker may want a martingale, but should turn out his horse so that you do not. The Dutch martingale, consisting of two rings, joined by a strip of leather, and through which the reins pass helps the control of a flighty stargazing horse and to keep his head where you want it; but a good mount needs no martingale.

A good saddle horse goes up to the bit without pulling a pound on your hands: free but not troublesome. His trot must be square. If you find his action becoming mixed—disunited—stop him. Riding in company is best deferred till you have taught your horse to go straight and well by himself. An experienced man in Temperance Street once told me that it took two years to make a good hack. *Perseverando* must be the rider's motto; and don't sicken and confuse the horse in an attempt to teach too much at any one time.

When out riding keep your eyes to the front. Watch for objects likely to alarm your horse, a cow rising out of the fern, a crow

*H. Anderson  
Smith*

springing from a bush, white "garments" on a clothes' line, a dog rushing out of a gateway, a pig lying in a puddle, a boy dropping off the top of a fence, a nurse with a perambulator, an old woman opening an umbrella, a snake gliding across the path, a man unfolding a newspaper; let another of your mottoes be "*semper paratus*." Sudden springs to the side are caused by such incidents, but the man who has his grip at the knee and his balance from the loins, ready for instant change, is not moved, especially if on the look-out. A highly nervous horse cannot stand the noise of an empty coal cart coming behind him at a trot on a brick road-way, and he is equally paralysed by a silent motor. He must be kept in hand on these occasions, and made to face the music: kindly but firmly. You should also see and by turn of the writs avoid stones, roots, holes, hummocks and things which a horse may stumble over. Most horses are so busy watching objects in the landscape (especially in strange places), with the view of noting and remembering what will assist them in finding their way back, that they fail to always watch their path. But the rider should never omit to do so. He should always be the one to place the horse to a nicety, exactly where he wants him to tread.

An incorrigible stumbler is, of course, a horse to sell, as is one that forges, cribs, balks, interferes, rears habitually or displays inveterate vice. Improvement may be made in animals so afflicted, but they are not to be depended on, and as riding is for pleasure it is better to let them go to the auction yard. I have seen a bad rearer treated both by pulling him over, and by breaking a bottle of cold water between his ears. Both plans are dangerous to the horse.

Good hands and good seat are inseparable. You are not likely to have one without the other. I have said that you must not use the reins to keep your seat. Your seat must be independent of the reins, but you must be sitting right to use the reins right. Seated on your crotch, down in the saddle, (Nelson on the Third had the best seat I ever saw), your knees tucked as much in as you can and held immovable at the grip, the leg below the knee should hang straight down loose, except for the tension required to keep the toe up and the heel down, and the foot straight with the line of direction. There should be no movement except from above the hips, where the small of the back should be a pivot, and every movement in unison with that of your horse, sitting naturally, neither in a slovenly attitude nor as stiff as a

amrod. A slight inclination of the head and shoulders forward grows on the best non-military riders, and I may here say that the military seat, so-called, and all the instruction gained of a military roughrider are an abomination. Very many military men are splendid riders; but it is off parade that they are so. The *haute école* is another ridiculous absurdity.

It is not possible for some men, born with a pelvis that does not accommodate itself to the seat I have sketched, to be pretty riders, but they acquire firm seats of a kind, and learn to balance themselves. These may and do cling to the saddle with the calf of the leg, but it is absolutely wrong, where avoidable, as it is by men with flat or hollow thighs. Such men should ride without spurs. Going over bad, uneven ground collect your horse, see that his legs are all under him, and then interfere with his head as little as you can. He will want it loose for balancing himself. At the same time have all the reins so firm in the fist, thumb on top, that if he blunders you can help him. The reins should be held with the hands low, very little in front of your body, and this you will find gives room for all necessary play. The elbows must be in.

Your weight must more or less govern your choice of a horse to ride. But a fourteen hands cob, if made right, and standing square on his legs, can carry a heavy man satisfactorily. It is a question of build rather than height. But a tall man looks best on a tall horse. A horse 15.3, if properly put together, is the best for general use.

If you have to face a fall double your head under your shoulders and alight on the back of your shoulder if you can't pitch on your feet. Hang on to the reins unless your horse falls too. Then keep clear of him. He will not get up as quickly as you can, if you are not hurt. If you are hurt, it does not matter where he goes. There is a great knack in falling. I may say that I have been riding all sorts of horses for over half a century, and have had numberless falls under all sorts of conditions, and I have never yet broken a limb. Sprains, bruises, cuts and wounds must be taken as they come; and even broken collar bone and "concussion." I have several times twisted and nearly broken my neck, and that I take to be the principal danger in riding, whether the fall be at a walk, trot or gallop. A sure-footed horse, who can see where he is stepping in addition to watching the country, and looking for objects of alarm, is a treasure. Some never place a foot wrong, others never miss an opportunity of doing so. You



can rouse a horse to lift his knees and avoid inequalities of surface, and stumbling-blocks of all kinds ; but you are earning your passage and your ride is not enjoyable. If a horse will lob along the side of a road taking all the inequalities as they come, shortening or lengthening his step to meet requirements, never get rid of him.

The steadier a man is in the saddle, and the more he accommodates himself to the movements of his horse, and becomes in fact a balanced part of him, the less likely he is to give him a saddle sore either fore or aft. There is not the slightest need for either. Yet look at the number of horses with white patches on their backs ; saddle galls they are called ; they are really evidences of bad horsemanship. A breast-plate is regarded by some people as setting off a horse ; and there are horses so shaped as to require one. You might say the same of a crupper. But as a general thing don't use one unless you have found it to be required. Spurs may be dispensed with till the rider knows his business thoroughly. In some cases they are more useful than any other stimulus, but are generally superfluous, if your hack is a good one.

Accustom your horse to the frequent change of the whip from one hand to the other, and to the laying it on him gently and in a friendly way "all over." It will be useful in fly-time. Young men should ride young horses. It is only by practice and experience that a lad can learn to be a good rider. A troublesome horse is a good teacher. An actual "plug" is likely to get him into idle habits, and will teach him absolutely nothing, after he has learned the first rudiments, as you have already done. Dexterity will serve a man nearly as well as courage ; but he should have both. There is nothing a horse finds out sooner than the rider who is afraid of him ; and nothing he recognizes sooner than the magnetic touch of a master hand, and a masterful seat.

Of cross-country riding I say nothing. It comprises all I have written, and something more, which can be discovered by trying.

Remember it is easy for a good judge to recognize a good rider, the moment he is in the saddle. It does not need any difficult problems of equestrianism to determine a man's riding ability. He shows it, or the want of it, the moment his right foot is in the stirrup and the reins in his grasp. When you expect a horse to swerve throw your body the way he will go. There is a natural inclination the other way. If taken quite unawares the retention of your seat will depend on the grip at the knee and on your power to change your balance instantaneously. If a horse is given

to bucking, he will do it at the start before you are warm in the saddle. Sit tight, and balance yourself; but he may last longer than you can. It is quite an exhausting process.

If your horse goes lame he will show you which foot is concerned by dropping his head and ears as the sound foot touches the ground. The natural tendency is to think just the opposite.

If, owing to fatigue, bad shoeing, or other cause, your horse should brush a fetlock, don't use a leather boot and strap; but tie on a Yorkshire boot, made of a strip of blanket and turned down over the tape.

Never expect hard work of your horse when he is shedding his coat. He is as much out of sorts as a moulting canary.

Don't let your horse's legs be washed. The feet may be; but not the legs. Let them dry and then brush off the dirt. In turning a horse use pressure of your leg behind the girth. This twists his head the right way. Nothing looks much worse than a man pulling round his horse's body by the rein. Bridle-wise horses are not of any use to people who have both hands at liberty. When you have the reins fast in your left fist, as I have described, and you want your horse to go to the right, move your fist to the left and *vice versa*. You thereby shorten the rein on the side you wish to go, and press the snaffle-ring on opposite side, which shows the horse the direction you wish him to take. There is no need to help with the right hand. The natural inclination is precisely the opposite of this.

Very little strength is required for the right management of a broken horse. A weak young girl can manage nearly any horse that has not been already spoiled by brutality. The minimum of force and the maximum of art are required. In the minimum of resistance the maximum of art may lie.

Choose a horse not straight in the neck, and with the curve of his neck on top. A ewe-necked one is seldom a nice horse to ride. Look out for the ordinary self-evident blemishes, as splints near the knee, or near the tendon, spavins, blindness, ringbones, sidebones, sand-cracks, etc. Try his wind by riding him on grass. If he has interfered he is likely to do so again. If he shies persistently, don't have him. If he lugs or bores down on the reins you won't enjoy him. If he kicks, other people will avoid you. A curl on the hind leg is unsightly and spoils his value, but is seldom a real detriment. Straight pasterns will jar you at every step. A horse should be good both to meet and to follow. If he turns out

a fore-foot or winds it in the delivery, his value is greatly affected. Avoid either a cow-hocked one, or one who goes with his hind legs straddled. Too much knee action is as objectionable as too little. The one is tiring, the other dangerous. Take care he has not a hip down. Look out for marks of speedy cut inside the cannon-bones, which should be short, for this also insures his hocks being well set down. Back him, in search of stringhalt, or turn him short. And then, when you have sufficiently indulged your own judgment get a veterinary surgeon to examine him before you buy. A jumped-up horse, short in his body and high on his legs is very uncomfortable. A good looking horse is one with all his parts in proportion. The better looking, therefore, the more likely to be a good saddle horse. This, however, no more includes a peacock than it quite excludes a plain one. A long back generally indicates a straight shoulder. Ragged hips are ugly but not detrimental, which can also be said of a crooked tail, a rat tail, a Roman nose, carped hocks, shoe-boils, and even of a slight stringhalt, and it is an old saying that a good horse cannot be of a bad color. Yet many people share my objection to a bay horse with bay legs. Let a bay horse have black points: not that I mean to say it is essential.

As to age, a horse may be broken and ridden gently when he is three: a little harder when he is four: and with some freedom at five: but he must be six before you do really hard work with him. An immature animal will soon show signs of the machine having been too severely taxed. The pastern joint is the first to show enlargement and prominence, getting to look like a soda-water bottle: and he is on the way to be a "has been." Therefore buy a six-year old when you can. He is over many troubles that beset the earlier years of his life: and is at his best, if he has been judiciously used.

As a general thing when in trouble the inexperienced rider is apt to get forward towards his horse's neck. He had better lean back, for except in case of rearing he will be in a better position to meet what may be coming. A saddle horse should be told and taught to walk when that pace is desired, and not allowed to jog. A single word is the best method of instruction. "Over," "Back," "Whoa," "Walk," are indispensable. Diminutives of "Whoa" are applicable to a soothing or pacifying policy, "Who-oo-boy" and the like; but a decided "Whoa" should cause a horse to stop,

not only to reduce his speed, but stop dead. Many a life has been saved by a horse having been so taught. If you approach a horse in a stall always speak, saying "over" and placing a hand gently on his quarter. But be sure not to show any hesitation. If you want to lift a horse's fore-foot, don't pull at it by the hair, and say "lift"; but when you want to raise his near fore-foot, place your left hand flat on his near shoulder above the elbow, lean your weight on it and lift with your right hand. The foot comes up "like a shot." It has to do so because the horse's weight has been pushed on to the other leg, and *vice versa*. Few, if any grooms are aware of this.

You will often be told, when your horse shows symptoms of lameness in front, that it is in the shoulder; that is to say, when the cause is not obvious. Whether your informant be a Vet. or not, don't believe him. In nineteen cases out of twenty he is wrong. In most cases the trouble is in the foot. In some cases it is from a very small incipient splint, which has begun to stretch the periosteum of the shin and cause pain. Gombault's Christie Balsam is the thing for a splint. After two applications it becomes flattened or absorbed, and the sheath then passes over it without causing pain. Very few horses are quite free from splints, and every splint hurts a horse while it is growing. Shoulder lameness is possible, but extremely improbable where no known accident has occurred to cause it. The seat of lameness behind is seldom in the foot: but nearly always in the hock. Much driving spoils a saddle horse, but not an occasional trip in the shafts.

To clip or not to clip is a vexed question—and, subject to few exceptions, I record my vote against it,—in the case of saddle horses; after many years' study of the pros and cons. To keep the mane and tail full and looking their best the brush is preferable to the comb. Loose bandages over a wrapping of cotton batting are very useful after hard work or in sickness. They keep the extremities warm. Tight bandages are harmful. Few Canadian horses are groomed as they should be. Never let your groom administer "oils" or other medicines, which "he knows all about" and "did at his last master's," to your horses. Do not permit any medicines to be kept in the stable, but have them under lock and key in the house. If your horse goes wrong give him rest and time. These are the best remedies for five out of every six casualties or ailments to which horseflesh is heir. Simples and

treatment under veterinary direction must be had recourse to occasionally, no doubt: but depend on it, Nature left to herself is a great hand at repairs. Doctors find difficulty in treating human patients who can answer questions and so assist diagnosis. The treatment of a horse is far more speculative. The recovery of human beings is prejudiced by past bad habits and errors of diet. Horses brought up on hay, oats and cold water have less to contend with. Yet are they very poor fighters against sickness: and the stoutest Saccumb where a frail human being would pull through. A man, too, can stand more privation and fatigue than a horse, and can beat him for endurance.

A horse's eyes are so set in his head that he can see behind him with a straight neck. A man's head is so set on his neck that it must be turned to look behind him. Remember the difference when you are handling a young'un.

All saddlery should be kept scrupulously clean, and all steel free from rust and dirt. The foretop should be left long and thick and be placed outside, not under, the browband. The throat latch should never be tight. The curb chain should never pinch. The mane should lie on the off side and be pulled thin from underneath. The shoes should be moved every three weeks, and renewed every other time. In summer they should be light and flat, and the bars in the corners of the heels, meant to keep the heels expanded, should never be cut away, nor should frog pressure be rendered impossible by cutting away the surface. Blacksmiths, ignorant of anatomy, and of the cause of contracted feet, want to make what they call a neat job, and in so doing injure the sole and are apt to ruin your horse. Rubber shoes, Charlier tips and all sorts of devices have their advocates and opponents. Circumstances decide their respective advantages. Sharp caulking for winter riding is apt to blemish the coronets, if a horse steps backwards suddenly from alarm. When the snow is suitable horses go well barefoot. Too many changes pull the crust of the foot to pieces: so choose your fad and stick to it.

Only hunters and cobs with big round quarters should be docked. The tail of a saddle horse should be squared from two to six inches below the dock. Have colic medicine and Friar's Balsam always on hand. Don't singe out the horse's ears. Don't keep him in a dark stable. Don't stifle him with ammonia. Sprinkle gypsum, plaster of Paris, in the stall every day. A loose box is the best

for him, but if kept in a stall it should only slope just enough for water to run down it slowly. A horse is less likely to be "cast" in a narrow stall than a wide one. If you hear a noise in the stable go there at once. Keep a piece of rock salt in the manger, or within reach. See that the horse does not eat his litter in the day time, and put a muzzle on at night if he is a ravenous one; or litter him in shavings. Twelve pounds of hay and six quarts of oats are enough for a horse not doing hard work; five pounds of hay night and morning, and two pounds only at midday. Water before feeding. Bran mash and carrots in moderation. Putting a horse in condition for sale is generally putting him out of condition; so apt are people to estimate horses by the pound; and to take full advantage of the fallacy. Flabby and washy with food, such a horse is a long disappointment to his purchaser.

Teach your horse to stand till when you mount, and not to move till you allow him. This is very useful when you dismount for any reason out of door. Pat and make much of your horse when he pleases you or obeys a lesson. There is no animal so susceptible of flattery and approbation. You can make him your friend by little presents of apple, carrot, biscuit or sugar, when you visit his box. It all helps.

There will be a few men of your acquaintance to whom you can lend your own little horse without scruple. I should not choose to do this at all. Lending a horse to a borrower from myself, nor yet a clumsy uneducated rider. Experience has shown me that there is nothing to be gained in keeping your own horse for your own self. Exercise of a horse, when you are away from home, or temporarily laid up, may turn out to be more injurious to him than standing in his horse box.

A horse whose legs get "stocked" in the stable, has generally a poor digestion. If you see him pointing one foot in the stable, he has good reason to get his weight off that leg. But that subject is too long to be taken up here. If your horse gets a corn, get him well, and then get rid of him. It is, of course, the result of pressure and bad shoeing; that is to say, a horse going barefoot will never have a corn.

Refrain from ever showing off: be natural and unaffected, and keep your horse quiet. A horse may be made permanently restive and fidgetty by his rider's unwise incentives to prancing and

cutting capers. Never look admiringly at your own legs, and beware of watching your reflection in shop windows. Don't bucket your horse about on hard city streets. Keep fast riding for soft roads, if you would keep your horse's legs fresh. Do what he may, never lose your temper with him, or mess him about till he doesn't know what you want, and you don't know yourself. His faculties become benumbed. He is aware that his rider is behaving unreasonably, and loses confidence in him.

There are a thousand other things to know and to do; but the trouble is that when a man knows the majority of them, he is drawing very near the end of his riding days. Nothing, however, is so likely to lengthen his days as persistence in equestrian exercise. We share a great advantage, my young friend, in living at Parkdale, where the best of ground can be got close to our homes. We so escape the three miles' ride from and back to the heart of the city, an infliction which, would I think be enough to prevent me from ever crossing a horse again.

In England her prominent men in politics, law, the church and all walks of life take their daily exercise on horseback. Lord Palmerston thought nothing of riding forty miles on his back when he was near eighty years old. The famous H. B. sketches of the leading statesmen and dignitaries of William the Fourth's reign and of the early Victorian era represent them all on horseback. Wilberforce, bishop of Oxford, rode his cob every day and—broke his neck off it at a walk. Lord Russell and Sir Frank Lockwood, celebrated lawyers, who in their lifetime visited Toronto, were any day to be seen on horseback, and their lives were of the busiest. Our present Governor-General is one of the best horsemen in the world; but his Ministry, so far as I know, have yet to be converted. There are votaries of equestrianism in all ranks and professions here in Toronto; but where there is one there should be a dozen. And there is every prospect of a great change being seen in this respect, when the rising generation come to their inheritance. The old Romans thought it as disgraceful in a man not to know all about riding, as to be lacking in literary education.

The above are mere practical hints—odd scraps—thrown together carelessly, unclassified, and without order, for your own use, and at your father's request. If there is a plum in all this Christmas pie do as Jack Horner did, and pull it out. It is not claimed that

hints

there is anything new in them ; or that the opinions expressed are incontrovertibly right ; but the length of these " observations " would have been impossibly extended, if I had given you the reasons for all I have said. That I will do, whenever you tell me that my accuracy in this, that or the other statement is challenged. They are not addressed to vets or professional horsebreakers, nor to anybody who knows more than I do, and to whom you may say *si quid novisti rectius istis Candidus imperti : si non, his utere mecum*. Such as they are, they are based on actual experience ; mostly acquired in the course of finishing colts of my own breeding, or in the making of cheap and " likely " horses, bought with the hope of selling them at a profit. And in both pursuits I have had as much success as the limited time at my disposal would warrant me in expecting.

T. C. P.

To Master J——— L———,  
Melbourne Avenue,  
Parkdale.



