HINTS ON THE USE OF THE SADDLE HORSE AND SHOT GUN IN INDIA

WESTON

HINTS ON THE USE

OF

THE SADDLE HORSE

AND

SHOT GUN IN INDIA

WRITTEN FOR BEGINNERS

BY

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TO

James Gibb Malcolm,

SPORTSMAN AND GENTLEMAN,

THESE PAGES ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

MUCH of the matter contained in the following pages has appeared during the last ten years in the columns of "The Indian Field" whose Editor kindly allowed me to retain the right of republishing it. Much also is new or revised.

These essays are the result of questionless examination papers I set myself for the sake of occupation during winter evenings in camp away from men and books. My excuse for publishing them is that years ago I felt the want of a low-priced book on these subjects and the want, apparently, still exists.

I have not dwelt much on veterinary matters as the subject is beyond the scope of this work. My object is to show a beginner how to give a horse a good mouth and manners and how to overcome the initial difficulties met with in finding and killing small game.

PRITHIMPASSA :

W. V. W.

19*th March*, 1914.

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PART I.

HINTS ON THE USE OF

THE SADDLE HORSE

INTRODUCTORY.

First I would say that I strongly advise every Englishman in India who can keep a horse to join the nearest mounted volunteer corps. He will get practice and instruction in the riding school and assistance in the choice of a horse. Some corps have a "Charger Fund" from which the recruit can obtain an advance to assist him in his purchase, and as the horse so bought has to be passed by a board of officers he is not so likely to be "stuck" as he would be if buying on his own account. Apart from these considerations, it is the duty of every young white man to learn to ride and shoot, and to drill sufficiently to enable him to be of use in a row and not a hindrance and a danger to his fellows.

Beginners must not imagine that horses are dangerous animals. Some youngsters are nervous because the books lay down all sorts of methods of meeting all sorts of vices. Naturally an inexperienced reader is apt to imagine that such vices are to be found in groups in each horse and that he must learn to combat them all before he can venture abroad on horseback. The truth is that not one horse in a thousand is dangerous if he is properly broken and has enough work to do. It is your idle horse, like your idle man, that earns a bad reputation. Over

and over again I have met the "bad" horse which proved to be a trump when broken and exercised, and the fact remains that very few horses save those that jib and rear and a few inveterate shiers and buckjumpers are anything but quiet when in full, regular work. I am not now talking about racehorses in training, but of hacks and chargers. Racehorses are kept "above themselves" on purpose, and when a horse is bubbling with ener is apt to boil over.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHOICE OF A HORSE.

THE first thing to do when about to buy a horse is to make up your mind definitely as to what sort of horse you want and what you are prepared to pay for. This sounds axiomatic, but it is the exception rather than the rule to find buyers thus prepared. Beginners are apt to expect too much for their money, though few go to the length of a missionary who wrote to a friend of mine to buy him a horse which was to be up to weight, fast, quite quiet in both saddles and in harness, yet keen to work, and "about four feet high." The price was not to exceed twenty-five rupees. Others again go to look round the dealers' yards to see if they can find anything to suit them without a very clear idea of what does suit them. These people are apt to waste the dealer's time and to be sold anything they will buy by a man who sees regular customers waiting and who, perhaps, is desperately hungry after riding and driving horses since 5 o'clock in the morning. Many a man gets a horse that does not suit him because he has not shown consideration for the dealer.

The best way for a beginner to procure a horse is to get some good judge who is interested in him to buy one for him. If there is no such person available he may put himself in the hands of a dealer of repute, tell him of his inexperience, the purpose for which the horse is required, and his limit of price, and ask him to sell him or to buy for him an acclimatised and sedate animal which he will be able to ride,

It seems needless to say that having asked the dealer for his advice it is well to follow it, but some will decline the horse that the dealer has found for them, perhaps with a great deal of trouble, and then wonder that the man will not bother himself any more on their account, but will sell them anything he can induce them to buy.

It is a mistake for a beginner to buy a young and half-broken horse as he will only spoil it. His first horse should be thoroughly "made," and if it is past mark of mouth there is no harm done and it will be cheaper than a young one. If a horse is sound at nine or ten years old he will probably remain sound for a long time with fair treatment. If he had had a weak spot it would have made itself known earlier in his life. A horse that has been carefully treated is usually at his best at from nine to twelve years old. It does not matter much if he can only get a "practically sound" certificate if price is an object and he is otherwise suitable. A well-bred horse with a blemish is a far pleasanter conveyance than an under-bred one at the same money, provided always that the blemish does not interfere with his usefulness.

A beginner's horse should be bold and safe on its legs. Nothing destroys nerve more than a stumbling, falling brute, and a horse that shies badly is very trying to a man with a weak seat. If a horse that can be trusted with an ordinary lady rider can be got so much the better. If a horse is described as carrying a lady regularly it does not by any means follow that it is a beginner's horse though. Some ladies ride as well as any man. The beginner's horse should go straight and without hesitation at small jumps, for a beginner can do nothing with a refuser, and it should not have too light a mouth. It should not be too big for its rider. A big horse takes more holding together and is, other things being equal, for that reason more diffi-

cult to ride than a smaller one. Big horses are, however, often more sedate than their smaller congeners until something occurs to excite them.

It is a pity that country-bred horses have become so scarce in the ordinary market. They are practically all bought up young by remount agents for Government and for the Native States, and anything with pretensions to quality is rarely for sale in Calcutta. Country-breds stand the sun far better than other horses and are worth any money if really good. Unfortunately a good many of them, especially the mares, are bad tempered. Arabs are more docile than most breeds, though they are inclined to pull if not carefully broken. They do very well in Calcutta, but in other parts of Bengal south of Behar they are seldom seen owing to their liability to "go in the loins" in those districts. Walers' legs and feet stand Indian going better than those of English horses, I think, but otherwise there is little to choose between these classes for work. English horses are the handsomer and are, on the whole, "kinder" than Walers, though the rule is by no means without exceptions.

If the beginner is obliged to choose a horse for himself, I should recommend that he put action and temper before all else. He should have a good trial, of several days if possible, and should test the horse down hill. If he goes freely and feels perfectly safe at a trot and at a canter down a steep slope his action is all right. Failing a longer slope an embankment can be used for this test, but a longer slope is preferable. Of course, if a big price is to be paid a great deal more must be looked to, but in a cheap horse, and I do not advise a man to pay too much for his first mount, action and a flat forehead may be decisive. A bow-window forehead means temper every time. He should be tested for temper by being ridden to his stable after his

work and turned round from the door and ridden away again. If he has any temper about him he will show it then. "Pig-eyed" horses generally show temper and should be avoided.

A saddle horse should have a good, sloping shoulder with well developed withers, but I should not trouble too much about high withers if the shoulders are good, especially in the case of Arabs and country-breds. There should be a good girth measurement both before and behind the saddle, and the last rib should be as near as possible to the "round bone" which projects at the hip. This last means as a rule good loins, which should be short and flat. Mares are apt to be longer and lighter behind the saddle and lower in the withers than horses. Length in a mare is not necessarily a fault, but the shorter the back the better so long as there is plenty of length below.

The quarters should be long and the rump broad, with a ridge between the round bones for choice. The arms, thighs and second thighs should be big and muscular and the hocks straight-dropped.

Knees should be square and flat, hocks big and both alike, fetlock joints hard and free from puffiness, and feet broad and strong with open heels and well developed frogs. Windgalls do not as a rule matter much in old horses. These are capsule-like enlargements under the skin above the fetlock joints. Cotton-wool bandages and friction will often remove them and they rarely cause lameness. The elbows should be low down, well away from the body. Between the knee and the fetlock joint the front and back outlines of the leg should be parallel. If they are nearer together below the knee than they are lower down the conformation is faulty. The shorter they look the better. Behind the bone is seen the suspensory ligament and behind that the back tendon. These should be clearly defined

and well apart and they should feel quite clean and firm when the hand is run over them. A light touch reveals irregularities more readily than a heavy one. The projection of bone behind the knee should be well marked.

A wither too high and thin is difficult to fit a saddle to, and so is a hollow back. I find that Australian saddles fit these formations better than English ones. A roach back is uncomfortable to sit on. A saddle horse must have a back on which a saddle will rest so as to be comfortable both to horse and rider. Personally I should refuse a roach-backed horse or one hard to fit with a saddle. The latter are very likely to get sore backs and are always giving trouble.

The conformation of the head and neck have much to do with the rider's comfort. If when mounted the horse carries his head in the right place it does not much matter what he looks like at other times. A horse should carry his own head, that is to say, he should not lean on the bit, even after a long journey. To judge whether a faulty carriage of the head in a young horse can be corrected by breaking is hardly within a beginner's competence and it is better to look out for a good carriage to begin with.

The way in which a horse puts down and picks up his feet is of great importance. I like to see the feet picked up with a snap such as turns the shoes up skywards, and I like to see the heel come down first.

When viewed from in front or behind the fore and hind legs of one side should move in one plane, neither interfering with the other nor with its fellow. Some young and newly landed horses go in a very wobbly fashion from weakness. Their action improves with condition and schooling. Horses that brush should be avoided if much money is being paid, but I should not refuse to purchase a good screw merely because he brushed. Boots or a rubber

ring will prevent him from hurting himself. A horse that speedy cuts, *i.e.*, cuts itself just below the knee in its gallop, should be avoided. It is apt to fall when it hits itself at fast paces. There is usually a mark where the hit occurs and sometimes a bony enlargement. These should be looked out for. Horses which have been some time in the country and which interfere much behind may be suspected of *Kumri*, a fatal disease, though the trouble may come from a sprained back. In this form of brushing leg hits leg on or above the fetlock joint. From mere malformation or weakness the injury is usually a trifle lower and the blow is given with the foot. In the case of *Kumri* the blow is often given by the leg or fetlock joint.

Knuckling over behind is a hind-leg stumble caused by weak loins, by weak fetlock joints, by faulty action, by stiffness from a previous long journey, especially when in bad condition, and by bad shoeing. Before condemning a horse for this fault, it should be ascertained whether he does it when properly shod. Many a very good horse is apt to stumble behind if his toes are too long. Collected riding and schooling will do much to prevent this fault as well as the faults of overreaching and forging. All horses are apt to overreach if ridden carelessly over jumps or through mud, especially if they are tired. Collected riding is the only preventive, and is not a certain one. Horses while schooling over jumps should wear bandages to save them from injury in the event of their overreaching, a thing that young and unschooled horses are especially apt to do. If this precaution be neglected the loss of the horse may ensue from the shoe cutting into the back tendon. "Forging" is a bad and annoying habit some horses acquire of striking the fore shoe against the hind hoof of the same side. They seem to like the noise they make. Careful riding up to the bit with good leg pressure

will often stop it, and a tap of the whip to call the horse to attention may be given each time the noise begins. In a few horses the trick seems incurable, and in such cases it is probably due to faulty action. Well bred horses forge more than cobs and more when they are lazy than when they are fresh.

Many Arabs are in the habit of carrying their tails to one side, so that in the case of an Arab this means nothing, but beware of a Waler whose tail is carried thus. It means one of three things, *Kumri*, sprained back, or trouble in the urinary organs. Have nothing to do with such a horse. He is probably on the road to the Zoo to feed the tigers.

Country-breds are often cow-hocked, which means that their hocks are closer together than they ought to be, but in cases not due to overwork, I never found them any the worse for it save in appearance. I had a tat who was foaled in 1883, carried 13½ stone for six years, galloped a half mile with ten stone up in 58 seconds, could jump a four-foot bar, was till his 28th year carrying children, stood only 11 hands 3¼ inches high, lived until November, 1911, and was cow-hocked. If he had been let down like Ormonde he could not have done more than he did. I should think worse of this fault in other breeds than in country-breds. With the last named it is said to be due to their being ridden while too young, but I believe it to be often congenital, probably from being bred from many generations of cow-hocked parents. Some say that acquired characteristics are not transmitted, but a pony is as likely to be born with cow-hocks such as its progenitors acquired as a fox-terrier puppy is to be born with a short tail. Sickle hocks, or hocks too much bent, are also common amongst country-breds and are not a recommendation. Though I do not think they detract from the usefulness of a hack, they are mechanically a disadvantage where great speed is required.

The worst faults in a horse required for saddle work are badly put on head and neck, upright and loaded shoulders, badly shaped back for the saddle, weak loins, long, hollow back, narrow chest, weak second thighs, legs too light for the body, bad action and brushing, and last, but not least, bad feet. The old saying went "No foot no horse," and nothing could be truer. A small-footed horse is generally a bad performer through dirt and amongst clods, and that for very obvious reasons.

There are so many places in India where adequate veterinary opinion cannot be had that a beginner has often to trust to his own judgment as to the soundness of the horse he has chosen. He should have the horse in his own stable when on trial if possible and should watch him while feeding and resting. If he rests one leg more than another there is cause for suspicion. If he rests one leg only it is practically certain that he is lame in it. If he bends the knee and rests the toe of that leg on the ground he has probably got navicular disease, or it may be side bone. If he advances the foot considerably and rests the heel on the ground he has got laminitis. After giving the horse sharp work put him back in the stable until he is quite settled down and cool. Then have him turned smartly in the stall first to one side and then to the other, and then bring him out and have him trotted. If he has spavin he will show stiffness in the hocks. This stiffness will often wear off as he warms up, as will the lameness from slight navicular disease. Hence the importance of having the horse in your own stable to try. You can then be sure that he has not been "warmed up" before being shown. You should satisfy yourself that the horse can see by silently moving a finger near his eye. You should stand slightly behind his head so that the finger does not come within the range of vision of the other eye. A sound horse should walk and trot gaily

on the hardest ground. You should take him to the hard, high road and have him ridden and ride him yourself at a trot. The rider should be instructed not to rise to the trot and to leave the reins as loose as possible. Some keen horses will not show slight lameness if pressed right up to their bits. The horse should then be trotted in small circles to either hand. I knew a mare that trotted sound except when circled short to the right, when she showed slight lameness. She turned out to have navicular disease.

If during a week's trial a horse "favours" no leg in the stable, comes out sound when cooled down after work, trots out gaily on hard ground, turns normally to either hand, is not blind, does not "make a noise" in his air passages when galloped, has clean, healthy feet, backs freely when required to do so, and shows no heat or swelling about his legs, the beginner may buy him, knowing that he has done all that can be expected of him to secure himself from fraud. I have known a man and no beginner either, to buy a horse after riding it three times, only to find that it had a bad sore back! It was a month before he could put a saddle on it.

In Calcutta the buyer will not be allowed to keep the horse in his own stable during trial, but there veterinary advice is available, and if he is a member of the Calcutta Light Horse he will be able to get advice from his troop officer and from the Adjutant. Up-country when buying from native dealers a fairly long trial in your own stable should be insisted on. The dealers should not have access to the place. I remember one case in which they kept a very dangerous rearer quiet under the influence of drugs for a week in the buyer's own stable. When the horse was paid for and the drug stopped, the brute became so dangerous that they bought it back at a small price in

a few days. It put the buyer down eleven times in one morning and he was no weak horseman.

In choosing a horse I pay a good deal of attention to quality of muscle. I like a good hard development over the quarters and back, and it is essential that the suspensory ligaments should be hard and tense like harp strings. Flabbiness there should ensure rejection. Finally, I may say that the beginner should never buy a horse without a good trial carried out either by himself or by a competent and reliable friend. It is most dangerous to buy a horse by correspondence, either from an advertiser or a dealer.

CHAPTER II.

TO FIND THE AGE OF A HORSE.

THERE is considerable variation in the mouths of horses of the same age and it is hard to tell within a month or two the age even of a young one, but the following hints will be found of use. It will be noted that they largely refer to the upper corner incisor, a tooth which affords a better index of age than any other.

The corner milk teeth appear at about nine months of age, at sixteen months are in contact, and at a little over four years fall out. The tush in males appears at about four years as a rule.

The permanent upper corner incisors appear on the fall of the corner milk teeth. At five years of age they are on a level with the others and have a pretty straight lower outline. At six years the part of the tooth behind the lower corner incisor begins to project below the part in contact with that tooth. This is due to the teeth wearing each other away where they meet. At this age the "marks" disappear from the two middle lower incisors. At seven years the part of the upper corner incisor which is behind the lower one is longer from front to rear and also the projection before referred to is more marked and begins to resemble the nose of a cock salmon. The marks have generally gone from the pair of front lower incisors next the centre pair. At eight years all the marks in the lower incisors are gone and the angle these make with the floor of the mouth is getting markedly obtuse. This condition is still more apparent at nine when also the marks

are generally worn out in the two middle upper incisors. At ten years old a new guide appears in Galvayne's mark. This is a V-shaped depression on the outside of the upper corner incisor which fills with tartar and has a yellow appearance in consequence. This mark appears below the gum at ten years of age and grows down with the tooth until at twenty years it reaches its lower edge. After twenty years a gap is said to appear between it and the gum, but this I cannot assert of my own knowledge. At twelve and a half years the mark should reach a quarter of the way down the tooth, at fifteen half way, and at seventeen and a half years three-quarters of the way. Of course, these ages can only be approximately ascertained as horses' teeth grow at varying rates in different individuals, but the Galvayne's mark is no bad guide.

Generally one may rely on the facts that the older the horse the smaller the angle at which his upper and lower front teeth meet when viewed from the side, and the greater the length of the tooth as compared with its breadth when looked at from in front. Again, the "table" or grinding surface of the incisors in a young horse is much longer from side to side than from front to rear. This proportion changes as the teeth grow down and are worn out until the two measurements are the same or the teeth show tables almost round or triangular, and sometimes the measurement from side to side is less than that from back to front. If it is suspected that a horse has had his mouth "bishoped" (faked), to make him look younger than he is, a glance at the tables of the front lower incisors will tell the truth. If the measurement from side to side is not markedly greater than the other, the horse is an old one, and all the burnt in "marks" in the world will never deceive one who knows this.

A deceit practised by native dealers is to pull out the milk tooth to make out that a colt is older, and therefore more serviceable, than he really is. This cannot make much difference. The horse first shows four permanent teeth at about two and a half. At three years they still hardly meet. At three and three-quarters he gets two more pairs which meet at about four years, at which time also his tushes show (if a horse). At this time if the dealers pull out the corner milk teeth they make the horse look some few months older than he is.

CHAPTER III.

THE CARE OF THE HORSE.

A HEALTHY horse gives very little trouble if he is treated with ordinary care. His clothing should be suited to the temperature, his food should be of the best and varied at times, his stall and bedding should be kept scrupulously clean, and he should always have a supply of good water in his stall. Free ventilation, especially in the hot weather, is of the utmost importance. It is far better that the hot wind should blow through the stable than that the horse should be shut up to re-breathe his own breath over and over again. The windows should be sufficiently high to carry the current of air over the horses' backs and the doors should be open. Light can be excluded by *chiks* or *jhamps*. If light is not excluded to a certain extent the stable will be infested with flies. The windows should be provided with *chiks* as well as the doors. All *chiks* should be opened as soon as the flies go to sleep, which is about sunset, and should be left open all night except in very bad weather. In the cold weather give the horses extra clothing and bedding, but do not shut up the stable. Syces should have blankets given to them in the cold weather or they will rob the horses of their rugs as soon as they think there is no chance of their master returning to the stable that night. A surprise visit to the stable on a cold night would open the eyes of many horse owners.

Dung heaps should be as far from the stable as possible. They cannot but breed flies which worry the horses all day long if the heaps are near to the stables.

For food nothing is better than crushed oats with which may be mixed a small proportion of other grains to vary the flavour. The crushed food sold in Calcutta is usually very good, but it is very expensive and it is much more economical to crush one's own. Gram as a staple food is suitable only for country-breds. It is too heating for Walers, though a little may be added to their oats with advantage. A very good mixture for a big horse in full work is 9lbs. of crushed oats, 3lbs. of crushed gram, and 2lbs. of bran. The oats and gram should be crushed separately and mixed. The machine when set for gram will allow oats to pass through it uncrushed. Gram has muscle-forming properties, but it makes a horse terribly foul inside if given in large quantities or to a horse in light work. Barley should only be given parched, boiled or crushed. It is a staple food in some countries, but in India horses cannot digest it unless it is prepared as above. Boiled barley for the evening feed may be given to horses in poor condition. It should be boiled until it will swell no more in just the amount of water which it will absorb during the process. Salt should always be added to a boiled feed before it is given, and the feed should be well cooled. Country-breds will eat crushed maize, *kolai*, etc., etc., as well as paddy which is the principal horse food in Burmah. They will also eat the residue of the paddy when the rice is extracted and do well on it when a little grain of some kind is mixed with it. It is given wet and is the cheapest feed I know of. I do not think that its nutritive value can be very high and it is practically never used by Europeans.

So far as quantity of food is concerned, a fair rule is to give a horse a pound of corn for every mile of his normal day's work up to a maximum of 12lbs. for a horse not in training. To this may be added 2lbs. of bran. A minimum

would be about 7lbs. of oats for a big horse short of work. Of course, it is very bad for a horse to be laid up on short rations. Full work and full rations keep a horse fit and hard and unless he is both he is not of much use. Ponies do not require so much food as horses, nor will they eat so much. The ration of corn should be reduced in very hot weather by 25 per cent.

Oaten hay made from oats cut and dried when green and in ear is good when given chaffed to those horses that will eat it. An amount up to 4lbs. may be substituted for half its quantity of oats in the daily food. I have found that horses to which I gave 6lbs. a day of this chaff did not digest it well, but did well on 4lbs. a day with oats.

Horses in poor condition after a sea voyage or after an illness may be given molasses with their food. They are very fond of it once they become used to it and it is very fattening. It will not, however, make hard condition. I have given as much as 4lbs. a day in cases of great meagreness and debility. I think, however, that so large a ration is difficult of digestion and now I do not give more than 2lbs. a day.

Every horse should have a bran mash with linseed and salt in it once a week. The linseed should be boiled for some hours so as thoroughly to soften its tough skin. This mash should be given as the evening feed the day before the horse's weekly rest day. Horses in mere exercise can do without the weekly rest, but any horse that is really working should have at least one day off a week.

A horse should have salt daily. It should be mixed with each feed and in addition a lump of rock salt, of such a size that he will not try to swallow it, should be placed in his box.

It is a good plan to give horses a little gruel made of half a pound of *suttoo* and a quarter of a pound of *goor* in half a bucket of tepid water every evening about an hour before feeding. Twice this quantity in a full bucket of water is a capital thing to give to a horse directly he comes in from hard work. It gives his stomach something to go on with while he is being cleaned and will often prevent a jady one from going off his feed after an extra hard journey. It is a sound thing to let the horse eat grass or hay while being rubbed down after work. If this is not done he is apt to get very hungry and in consequence to bolt his oats without masticating them properly when feeding time comes. A little chaff mixed with the oats helps to make the horse chew his food as it is too harsh and dry to be swallowed whole.

Horses should always be watered before being fed if water is not always kept in the stall. It does a horse no harm to drink when he is heated by exercise, though he may get a chill from drinking a lot of cold water when half cooled down. In hot weather every opportunity should be taken of giving the horse a drink when on the march. The Cavalry Drill Book points out that many horses have died from the neglect of this precaution. If the horse is wanted to gallop on directly he has drunk he should only be allowed a small quantity, but if there is no hurry he may be allowed a good drink and then be walked for a mile or two before the pace is increased. A friend of mine whose work used to keep him out until 2 o'clock in the day in the hot weather used to give his horses as many buckets of water as they would drink when they came in, and then he would have four or five buckets of water poured over their heads. They used to relish this mightily and used to stretch out their necks so that the syces could reach their heads more readily.

Horses require green food and in places like Calcutta where fresh grass is not readily procurable, they should have lucerne grass or horse carrots, or should be allowed to graze on the lawn or maidan for a time daily. Oats or barley may be sown in the garden and cut green for the horses. Several crops can be cut from one sowing if it is well watered and is not allowed to grow too high before cutting. The less green food a horse gets the more important is his ration of salt.

You cannot be too careful to see that fresh grass cut for the horses comes from suitable places. The best of all grass for horses is *dhoob ghàs* cut from high-lying lands. It grows also with great luxuriance in the bottoms of ditches and hollows after the rains, but grass from such places is very dangerous feeding and should never be offered to horses. It is more than suspected of carrying the germs of *kumri*, the fatal disease, far too common in Bengal, which causes the condition known as "gone in the loins," and grasscutters should never be allowed to go near such places. All grass for horses should be cut from lands which do not go under water in the rains. I dwell on this as it is of the utmost importance and requires personal attention. A grasscutter naturally likes to go to a dank ditch where he can get his thirty seers of grass in a short time rather than to the high lands where the grass is comparatively short and sparse and where he has to work hard to fill his sack. It is a good plan where it is practicable to have enough grass cut, dried, and stored in the hot weather to last one through the rains. Grass when brought in should be cleaned by being beaten with a stick. It never should be washed.

Horses are not very fond of dried Indian grass, which seldom ferments into hay, and few of them will eat more than about 12lbs. a day of it. Those accustomed to green

grass will sometimes refuse to eat it at first. Horses that are not in training for fast work may be given as much green *dhoob* grass as they will eat so long as they do not get paunchy. The grasscutters are hardly likely to bring in too much. Some greedy horses have to have their allowance of grass regulated carefully, and, as these frequently eat their bedding when deprived of grass, it may be necessary to muzzle them between meals. It does not do to take all the straw away from the stall during the day time. There should always be a little straw left for the horse to stale on. Some horses will retain their urine for a long time rather than splash their legs by staling on a hard floor and this retention is very bad for them.

Where straw is not available for bedding, or is very dear, dry sand may be substituted. Horses do very well on it. It should be deep enough to make a soft bed for the horse and the soiled portions should be replaced by clean, daily.

In connection with the subject of feeding there is one other matter that requires mention, and that is the tendency of some horses to get colic if by any chance their regular routine is upset. The causes are chiefly these :— Feeding unsuitable food, watering after feeding, working immediately after a full meal, and giving too much food to a tired and hungry horse. Food to which the horse is unaccustomed should be given sparingly until it is seen how he digests it. He should not be allowed to eat for at least an hour and a half before being called on for hard work, and after it he should be given gruel as recommended and be allowed to eat grass or hay while being cleaned, so that he may not be tempted to gorge himself with imperfectly masticated grain. The feed should be spread out thinly at the bottom of a broad box or manger or on

a blanket so that the horse cannot take much into his mouth at a time. If the feed be given in a bucket the horse will force his muzzle into it and fill his mouth back to the grinders. I have known an old and greedy Arab to cut his upper lip against his teeth by thrusting his head down into a thin layer of corn spread over the bottom of a box the first time this was substituted for the bucket he was accustomed to. Horses that are not accustomed to much grain, and newly landed ones, have to be brought on to a full ration very carefully. They should be fed on chaff with which a little grain is mixed and the proportion of grain should be increased very gradually as the horse comes into work. It is a good plan always to mix chaff with a greedy horse's food so as to oblige him to masticate it.

If a horse lies down after a large feed of corn and is unwilling to rise, especially if he lies stretched out on his side, a mild attack of colic may be suspected and he should be put on soft food for a day or two. If the horse lies down and gets up uneasily and especially if he looks round at his flanks he is probably in great pain and his condition is serious. Flatulent colic with great distention of the belly is, in the absence of a veterinary surgeon, extremely dangerous. In cases of colic there is no time to waste and immediate efforts should be made to empty the bowels. A ball of aloes, 4 drachms for a pony to 6 drachms for a 16-hand horse, should be dissolved in tepid water and given at once. It takes too long to act if given dry. Next the rectum should be emptied by backraking and the clyster. As a rule the pain will cease under this treatment in less than an hour. In bad cases the horse sometimes becomes very violent from pain and it is important to administer the medicine before this occurs. A ball of chloral hydrate will relieve pain, and, in the absence of other sedatives, a bottle of beer, warmed, and spiced

with ginger may be given. Three-drachm doses of carbonate of ammonia relieve flatulence and may be repeated at intervals of a few hours. An old remedy consisted of a bottle of linseed oil in which was mixed an ounce or more of turpentine. The turpentine prevents the formation of gas and the linseed oil is an aperient. I need hardly say that boiled linseed oil is not to be used as it would certainly kill the horse. I have known of a case of colic cured by a big dose of castor oil, but castor oil is dangerous in veterinary practice and should not be used if the drugs recommended are available. Good Barbado aloes should be kept in every horse owner's medicine chest.

After an attack of colic the horse requires very careful feeding for a time and should have a few days' rest from work. A few horses are subject to attacks of colic at more or less frequent intervals. They are a perfect nuisance and should not be kept.

Colic may possibly be confused with inflammation of the bowels. In inflammation of the bowels the pain is constant, pressure increases it, and the horse often screams dreadfully with pain. Opiates should be given and not purges. In colic the pain is intermittent. The horse will sometimes rise and nibble at its grass and then go into another spasm. In colic pressure over the bowels relieves the pain. Opiates should not be given as they check the vermisimilar action of the bowels which it is the object of the practitioner to excite. Fortunately cases of inflammation of the bowels in horses are rare as they are generally fatal.

Bad forage may cause colic and supplies purchased when in camp should be carefully examined. There is no excuse for having bad forage at headquarters.

Soaked gram is dangerous and should not be given.

CHAPTER IV.

LAMENESS AND SICKNESS.

NEVER ride a horse if he shews the least sign of lameness or stiffness until you can discover the extent of the injury. You will probably regret it if you do. A slight sprain may become a very bad one if the horse is worked on it. Of course, if it is a case of fetching a doctor to a sick man or some other great emergency, it may be necessary to work a lame horse as, under similar circumstances, you would work a lame man, but such cases are exceptions to all rules. Sometimes when you start for a ride on a horse that you know well, you will form the impression that he is going short or slightly lame. Your companion may not be able to see anything wrong and may say, "Oh! he's all right, come along." Don't listen. If you know your horse well and he gives you an unaccustomed feel, put him back and take another, or, if you have no other horse and cannot remove the cause of your horse's lameness, give up your ride. A rest in time may save all sorts of trouble. The cause may only be a stone or bit of brick in the hoof, in which case the lameness will generally go with its removal. I have known a cone or seed of the casuarina tree to lodge in a horse's foot and lame it badly till removed. Unusual action when first mounted may be due to a sore back. If neither of these causes is apparent heat should be searched for. A horse that is markedly lame in front nods his head as the sound foot comes to the ground. If in a hind leg the lame foot is on the ground for a shorter time than the

sound one. In cases of sprain there is swelling and heat. This is also usually the case with a splint, though sometimes splints are hard to locate. Stiffness in the hock indicates spavin as does dragging a hind toe. Curb is usually visible when it occurs, below the point of the hock. If the horse rests the lame leg by bending the knee and letting the toe only touch the ground navicular disease is probably the trouble, though it may be side bone. If the leg is advanced and the heel alone carries the weight laminitis is indicated. If the horse is lame in the shoulder he will bring the lame leg forward with an outward sweep and will drag the toe of it. Shoulder lameness is rare. If he is gone in the loins he will shew weakness behind when turned sharply about. He will not pick up his hind feet with the accustomed snap and will drag his toes behind, generally one more than the other. He may carry his tail to one side and will generally give to pressure over the loins. If the disease is at all advanced he will find difficulty in resisting lateral pressure against his quarters, and will be unable to step backwards without shewing a tendency to sit down. Straddling action behind with stiffness and dragging of the toes are signs of derangement of the urinary organs and this diagnosis will be confirmed if the horse spreads himself to stale with little or no result. If the micturition is normal the symptoms may be due to a sprain of the muscles of the back.

If the frogs stink there is no doubt thrush which causes considerable lameness when advanced. If after comprehensive examination you fail to locate the seat of the trouble, it is more likely to be in the foot than elsewhere. Rheumatism is often blamed for obscure lameness, especially for cases of slight chronic laminitis, but it is not a common disease amongst horses in India, whatever it may be elsewhere. I have known lameness from corns, due

to bad shoeing, attributed to rheumatism. These should be looked for.

Syces should be instructed to tell their masters directly they notice any lameness or soreness, heat or swelling, and especially every time the horse is at all off its feed. If it misses two feeds the beginner should satisfy himself that the grain is sweet and good, and if that is the case should call in a veterinary surgeon if one is available. If he cannot get advice he should have recourse to Captain Hayes's "Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners." He should seek professional advice if obtainable because his difficulty will be diagnosis, and even with the admirable aid mentioned, the treatment is hardly likely to be beneficial unless the diagnosis is correct. No doubt the symptoms of the various diseases are clearly laid down in the book, but it does not follow that the beginner will be able to find them when he wants them, and in any case he will probably waste a lot of time seeking for what a professional could tell him after one glance. It is far better to pay the veterinary surgeon's fee than to lose the horse or to let it lose condition. It is neither easy nor cheap to restore condition to a horse that has lost it, and it usually takes a long time.

If a horse's dung is small and hard, or bad coloured, or if his coat is dull, a safe remedy is three to six ounces (according to the size of the horse) of Epsom Salts mixed with his evening food every day for a fortnight. This will not purge him in ordinary cases (it should be stopped if it does) and the horse need not be laid up during treatment. The results are usually very satisfactory and the use of Epsom Salts with discretion has much to do with the good condition of the horses of experienced owners.

A good condition powder is the old one-two-three mixture. It is composed of one part by weight of antimony,

two parts of saltpetre, and three parts of sulphur. These ingredients should be ground separately and then mixed and bottled. One tablespoonful should be given to a horse every night for a week, then none should be given for a week, and then a spoonful every night for a week again. This completes the course. A smaller quantity suffices for a pony. The mixture should be given in the evening feed.

Walers often get liver in the rains. They go off their feed and the lining of the eyelids and the lips turns yellow as do the gums, while the breath smells badly, and the dung is slimy. Soft food, a bottle of freshly extracted linseed oil or a drench of Epsom Salts, and the exhibition of ipecacuanha are indicated. The ipecacuanha should be given twice daily in two-drachm doses for eight days or less if the symptoms disappear. It will cause salivation and the horse's mouth should be syringed regularly to mitigate the ensuing soreness. After recovery the grain ration should be a small one and should be supplemented with bran mashes and other soft foods, with which a chittack of bicarbonate of soda may be mixed, and exercise should be regular and gentle. In the rains a horse's oats should be strictly regulated in quantity by the amount of work he does. Overfeeding an idle horse is almost certain to upset his liver.

Nitre is useful as a diuretic and cooling medium. It is given in the food or dissolved in the drinking water.

Chiretta is a capital tonic. Horses will soon learn to eat it when mixed in their food. It is to be had in the bazar.

Bamboo leaves are good for cough and are a good forage, though said to be heating in the hot weather. 30 seers constitute a full ration.

Horses that are eating a lot of green grass and bamboo leaves will drop dark-coloured dung. It is not to be supposed on that account that they are not well. As long as the dung is of good size, free from slime, breaks when it falls, and is voided easily, there is not much the matter.

Some horses that are not used to much grain scour when given a full ration. The cure is to adapt their food to their requirements. Young Walers when first landed often give trouble in this way. They get all right in time and soon acquire the power of digesting a fair amount.

Other horses scour from excitement when out in company, but are all right in the stable. I know of no cure for these, but I have known some to lose their excitement by regular work in the riding school and so to become normal in the other respect. Plenty of bran mixed with the food, which should be well crushed, is likely to be of some service.

If a horse stamps continually in the stable, examine his feet well. He may have thrush badly with maggots in the cleft of the frog. Calomel will extract the maggots if blown well up the cleft and a solution of sulphate of copper may be poured in. Burnt alum is also a good dressing. Whatever is used, the cleft should be plugged with cotton-wool to prevent dirt and flies from entering again. The dressing should be repeated every 12 hours until there is no more discharge or smell. The stamping may only be due to flies worrying him. Sometimes these are attracted by edible oils used by the syces as hoof dressing. An admixture of creosote will make these repugnant to flies.

In the rains when horse flies abound a mixture of one part of kerosine oil to two parts of cocoanut oil may be smeared on the belly and inside the legs of the horses.

This keeps off flies to a certain extent. Neat kerosine blisters, and kerosine and water dries too quickly and becomes ineffective.

For mange apply a mixture made of Turpentine, 2 oz., Kerosine Oil, 2 oz., Cocoanut Oil, 2 oz., Mustard Oil, 3 oz., Sulphur, 1 oz., Indigo, 2 oz. This was given me by a friend who very highly recommended it and it is probably as good as any of the other bazar-made remedies. Another treatment I have found useful is alternate daily dressings of Tincture of Iodine and of Quin's Mange Specific; but these are rough and ready methods and are not intended to take the place of the recognized prescriptions such as Corrosive Sublimate ½ drachm, Prussic Acid (Scheele's), 2 drachms, water, one pint (Hayes). This is too poisonous to be readily obtainable. Sulphur and oil is useful.

Horses are sociable animals and do not like to be alone. If two men with only one horse each can arrange to keep them together in one stable both the animals will benefit by the arrangement.

If a horse takes to rubbing his tail against the wall try tying two pieces of tape round it, one about six inches from the root of the tail and the other two or three inches lower down. This confines the hairs and prevents them from tickling and irritating the hairless parts below. If this fails treat with Harvey's Worm Powders and insert a little mercurial ointment into the anus with the finger.

Some horses are always rubbing themselves against the walls, especially in the rains and when short of work. The only way to prevent this is to cover the walls with thorny branches of the bér or wild plum. Do not use *babul* thorns.

CHAPTER V.

GROOMING.

HALF the trouble of grooming is saved by regular clipping. A well-clipped horse is readily dried and does not run nearly so much risk of taking cold as does one whose long coat, saturated with sweat, takes an hour or more to dry. When a horse comes in he should have a sheet or rug thrown over him at once unless the weather is so damp that there is no fear of chill from evaporation. His girths should be loosened, his curb chain undone, and he should be led to the stable. Here his bridle should be removed and a halter put on and he should be given as much water as he will drink. In the cold weather or if the water is from a deep cold well the bucket of water should be left in the sun while the horse is out so that it may not be too cold. When he has finished his drink his feet should be picked out to see that no stones have lodged in them. Then his nose, eyes, dock, and sheath, in fact all the hairless parts, should be washed carefully and dried. Next his throat and neck should be dried and then the rug may be removed and the rest of him dried save that part which is covered by the saddle. When this is done, and not before, the saddle may be removed and the horse's back dried at once. It is a good plan to smack the back repeatedly where the saddle was to restore the circulation in the skin which the rider's weight will have checked. When the horse's body is dry, a sheet can be thrown over it if the weather is cold and the legs can then be dried and cleaned. If the legs and belly

are covered with mud it should be left to dry and should be then brushed off. If it is very hard it can be loosened with the curry-comb which should otherwise only be used to clean the body brush on. The practice of washing off mud with water has long been abandoned in well-managed stables as it is the sole cause of "mud fever." Besides the cleaning a horse receives before going out and after work, he should be thoroughly groomed every afternoon or at some other time if then at work. This grooming should be a serious business and should last at least an hour A thorough massage all over is what the horse requires daily if he is to be at his best. He should be rubbed with the whole forearm from the hand to the elbow, and the syces should be made to work until they sweat again. I hate to see a dandyfied syce leisurely going over a horse with his coat on. Proper grooming is hard work. Cleanliness and massage are the objects of grooming and without them the horse will not do well.

Manes and tails should be combed daily, and tails are the better for frequent washing with soap. Unless the fleshy part of the tail, the dock, is kept clean it will itch, and then the horse will rub it against any convenient object until he has rubbed the hair off it and made himself look like a mule. Manes should never be cut, but when too long the longest hairs should be pulled out until the mane is even and of the proper length. Switch tails should also be trimmed in this way.

Heels should not be washed as a rule. If white heels become soiled and have to be washed they should be very carefully dried, as should the feet after having become wet in work. To leave the heels damp is to invite such diseases as cracked heels and grease. Wet in the rains does not do so much harm as at other times because the air is so loaded

with moisture that evaporation hardly takes place at all. It is the chill due to evaporation that causes the trouble.

When a horse comes in very hot a lot of trouble is avoided if the sweat is scraped off him with a scraper. These are generally sold made of brass, but a very efficient one can be made of a broad slip of bamboo. After the sweat has been scraped off straw can be used to dry the horse, and after that a wisp of hay such as is used in the Army gives a fine polish to the coat. The method of making a wisp will be found in "Animal Management, 1908," a Government publication sold in Calcutta at Re. 1-5 and worth ten times the money to owners of saddle and pack animals, or it can be learned from the nearest British Cavalry regiment. The hay or straw is twisted into a rope about 10 feet long and is then plaited into a pad in a way that is hard to describe without a diagram or two.

CHAPTER VI.

RIDING.

Seat.

IT is important that the beginner should be put on his horse properly to begin with and an experienced rider should be asked to shew him the proper length for his stirrups and how to sit and hold his reins. The beginner's instincts when he is put on a horse for the first time lead him to do exactly what he should not do. This should be explained to him before he mounts. Directly the horse moves he will want to lean forward so as to be able to grip the pommel of the saddle or the mane with his hands in case of emergency. This is all wrong. No man can maintain his seat on a rough one in this way. The shoulders should be behind the centre of gravity rather than in front of it. The toes should not be turned out, as to turn out the toes means to turn the knees out also. When in the saddle this is easily proved. Turn in your toes and your knees will turn in. Turn out your toes and your knees will go away from the saddle. The feet should be parallel with the horse's sides and the legs below the knee should hang free, no grip being taken with the calves of the legs. The legs are used in the control of the horse as will be explained later, but they are useless for this purpose if the rider depends on his calves for his seat.

The seat in a saddle is quite different from a seat on anything else. The beginner will find it a little hard to sit on the right part of his body. If he will sit down on the front edge of a chair, the very edge, and throw himself

back in it, and will then slowly raise his shoulders, without moving his seat at all, until the upper part of his body is nearly perpendicular, he will get a fair idea of what his position in the saddle should be. He will find that the lower part of the spine is curved down to the last bone and that the last bone is practically in contact with what he is sitting on. The buttocks should be well under one and well forward in the saddle and should never be protruded towards the rear. The upper part of the spine should be straight and the shoulders well back. Nothing looks worse, or gives rise to more ridicule, than riding on the fork with the shoulders forward and the nose between the horse's ears. Also few things are more annoying than a crashing blow on the nose from a horse's head.

If the horse kicks when the rider is sitting in the manner advised, the latter's shoulders will naturally fall back and his balance will be preserved. If he be sitting as if he were sitting upon a throne and the horse kicks, he will lose his balance and may go over the horse's head. In the same way when the rider is sitting properly his shoulders fall back as the horse takes off at a jump without effort on his part. If the horse rears or is taking off at a jump from the walk or trot, all that is necessary is to accentuate the curve of the lower part of the spine sufficiently to keep the upper part of the body perpendicular, in other words, to preserve the balance. Of course, a good grip with the thighs and knees is necessary and will come with practice as the muscles harden to the work, but with it there must be balance, and balance is obtained by the almost mechanical working of the hinge formed by the curve of the spine between the waist and seat, aided in emergencies by the hip joints.

A very good rider tells me that the way to sit a buck-jumper is to "lean back and look at your feet." Try this

position in a chair, sitting on the front edge, and you will find that it resembles that described above.

An excellent practice is to get on a quiet horse, put down the reins, and lean back until the shoulders touch the horse's croup, slowly regaining the original position. On coming up the rider will find himself in the proper position for sitting a horse. The practice should be repeated several times daily as it gives flexibility in the saddle.

I have several times been asked by beginners whether they should ride with the ball of the foot on the stirrup iron or with the foot thrust home, and I have heard them debating very heatedly as to which is right and which wrong. So far as that goes, I think there is nothing in it. When hacking about it looks better if the ball of the foot is on the iron and there is no doubt that the play of the ankle when the foot is thus placed saves the body a certain amount of jar while trotting or when a horse is jogging instead of walking quietly. On the other hand, when galloping at polo or across country one is likely to lose his stirrup if he ride with it dangling about his toes so the foot is thrust home. It is purely a matter of comfort and convenience and has nothing to do with skill in horsemanship.

Of far greater importance is the length of the stirrup leathers. It is better for a beginner to err on the side of shortness. A long stirrup is more likely to slip from his foot, and it is unquestionably harder for a beginner to hold a pulling horse with too long a stirrup than with too short a one. If when standing up in the stirrups the fork just clears the pommel the length will be about right, but no exact rule can be laid down that will suit all shapes of men. I have holes made through my leathers between the holes usually provided. I find that half a hole makes all the difference to my comfort, and I can take up and let

out my leathers to suit the difference between thin and thick breeches, thick or thin soled boots, loss or gain in condition of my horse, etc., etc.

Short stirrups give more control than long ones, especially to a tall man on a pony, but, on the other hand, if too short they are hard to sit a rough horse in. It is the jar of the stirrup that sometimes determines the conflict in favour of the horse, specially if the knees be straight as is the case when the stirrups are too long.

The beginner should practice riding without stirrups. There is nothing like trotting without stirrups for giving a man a firm and graceful seat. The stirrups should be crossed in front of the rider and he should trot for half a mile without them. The distance should gradually be increased until he can ride ten miles without stirrups. To sit comfortably at a trot without stirrups the rider must lean well back and must make no attempt to rise to the trot.

Hands.

Hands depend so much on Seat that they cannot exist without a certain amount of strength in the saddle. A horse's mouth may not be such a delicate instrument as a violin, but it is too delicate to be successfully played on by a man who cannot sit moderately still. The rider should be careful not to use more strength than is necessary and in no way to hurt the horse's mouth. Tact is the essence of good hands, and few horses will pull with a good man up for any length of time.

If a horse pulls with him the beginner must be careful not to be dragged forward in the saddle. His elbows should be close to his sides and should be bent. If he has his arms straight from his shoulders to the horse's mouth

the horse can pull his shoulders forward, and that is just what he must not be allowed to do.

To hold a puller a man must sit down in his saddle. His stirrups should not be too long and his feet should be a little forward rather than drawn back. His position should be such that when his elbows are close to his sides and bent, a pull on his arms rather tends to telescope his spine on to its base and to pull him into the saddle than to pull his shoulders forward and so drag him out of it. If the horse puts his head down the rider should raise his hands, and if the horse's head is held high the rider's hands should be as low as possible, one on each side of the withers and not too far apart. On an excitable horse the rider should be as quiet as a mouse and should keep his heels away from the horse's sides. I have seen a man lean forward, take a short, strong hold of the reins, draw both heels into his horse's sides, and then give out that he had been run away with when the horse took him for a gallop. He had unconsciously given the horse the "aids" for the gallop and so the obedient horse galloped, though very much against his will, for the road was metalled. Fortunately, he was none the worse for it save that his hoofs were a good deal chipped. He went for two and a half miles and then fortunately stopped when he saw a cart blocking the road. This was a very sensible, well-broken horse, one that had carried a lady for two years regularly, yet it was maligned as a runaway by the one who was really in fault.

Very few horses will pull if they are properly broken and well ridden. Racehorses, of course, are taught to pull and often take a good deal of riding school before they are sobered enough to make pleasant hacks or chargers. But even they can be given nice, light double-bridle mouths in time unless they belong to the Most Noble Order of Impossible Hacks. Even these sometimes come to hand,

and I had one recently that after a year of riding school was as pleasant a mount as one could wish for. She did not pull even out hunting and she had been a bad one in her racing days. She was broken by the method which will be described later.

It is no good hauling at a horse that has got away and has his head up in the air or between his knees. The rider will only wear himself out. The horse will not keep his head in an abnormal position unless he is pulled at, so, if a good rugging and sawing at the mouth will not stop him, the best plan is to relax the pull. As soon as the absence of strain induces him to put his head in the proper position, and so brings the bit on to the bars of his mouth, the rider can take another pull with a good chance of stopping him. The young rider need not, however, fear being run away with if he will learn to ride in a riding school until he has some inkling of what is expected of him. Very few horses are bolters and not many hacks pull so hard as to get away even with a beginner once he has learnt to sit back in his saddle with his elbows close to his sides and bent. Until then he should be in a school or on some old crock guaranteed not to gallop.

If a horse is pulling hard and shakes his head it is a sign that he is about to give in. As soon as he does give in, he should be held with the least exertion of strength that will suffice. He will soon learn to connect obedience with absence of pain in his mouth. The object of a horse that does not yield to the bit in carrying his head too high or too low is to save his mouth. If he raises his head he transfers the pressure of the bit from the bars to the corners of the mouth which are much less sensitive, and by putting down his head he transfers a good deal of the pull to the top of the headstall, especially if that part of the cheek of the bit which is above the mouthpiece is too long. Most

of these tricks are easily cured in the riding school and by the use of the long reins, and the horse should be taught to save his mouth by yielding to the bit rather than by adopting them.

An annoying trick that some horses have is that of raking, especially when going at fast paces with other horses. A horse is said to rake when he suddenly, and with great force, thrusts his nose down towards the ground in an attempt to wrench the reins out of the rider's hands. If a man be sitting properly on his horse with his arms close to his sides and his elbows bent, the worst that can happen is that he has to straighten his arms for the moment, bringing them back to their former position as soon as possible. If he be riding with his arms straight, the rake will certainly bring him forward in his saddle and he runs a risk of being raked clean off. Sometimes a horse will give up raking if the hands are allowed to go with him instantly as he rakes so that he feels no resistance and has nothing to pull at. This should be tried in the first instance, and if it is unsuccessful the rider may try resisting the rake as much as is consistent with the maintenance of the proper position in the saddle. Raking is a fault of imperfectly broken horses and can be cured in the riding school in time, though if the habit has become confirmed the horse will sometimes revert to it if very excited.

When a horse is galloping kindly the elbows should give automatically to his movements so as to save his mouth a jar. The wrists and hands should aid in this, but the reins should not be allowed to slip through the fingers.

Too long a rein is a mistake. If a man is riding with a very long rein it is likely to be a loose one also, and if the horse suddenly requires control, the recovery of the slack is apt to end in a jab in the mouth for the horse. The ideal handling gives an even feel to the rein which

is never allowed to be quite loose and is never tighter than is necessary to effect the desired object. The beginner should pay great attention to this handling of the reins from the first, especially to attaining his object with the least possible degree of force. On a well broken horse the merest hint should be sufficient.

There is a certain amount of difference of opinion amongst good riders as to whether the bit or the bridoon rein should be on the outside when using both hands on a double bridle. I think the bit rein should be on the outside, the little finger between the reins, and the slack passing through the full of the hands. The bit rein should be just so much slacker than the bridoon rein that when the latter is feeling the horse's mouth and the knuckles are at right angles to the way the horse is going there is no tension on the bit. When this proportion is observed the horse is easily brought on to the bit rein when necessary by merely turning the little fingers in towards the body, and is brought on to the bridoon rein again by returning the hands to their former, that is to say, their natural position. The whole thing is so simple and effective that it is hard to imagine any improvement on it. From the position described to take all the reins into the left hand, pass the left hand over the right, place the forefinger of the left hand between the reins where the little finger of the right hand was, and take the slack into the full of the left hand crossing the slack of the other reins. To take the right reins into the right hand again, pass the right hand over left, place the little finger between the reins as before, and draw the slack out of the left hand. No other method is so simple or so quick.

When the horse is going freely the hands should be on about a level with the withers and about nine or ten inches apart. They should be a little higher in the case of a horse

that carries his head too low, and a little lower if the horse is inclined to get his head up. When merely hacking about at a trot or canter the hands may be held higher as raising the hands tends to raise the horse's head and to make him carry himself more collectedly. The reins should be of such a length that when the horse is pulled up and comes to a balanced halt with his neck arched the hands should lightly touch the waistcoat.

A horse is said to be thoroughly balanced or collected when his neck is arched, his hocks are under him, and he is all alive and ready to turn, twist, or spring off in any direction at the will of his rider. This may be seen in great perfection in a well made charger or tournament polo pony. Every horse should be thoroughly made and schooled, but it is not suggested that he should always be ridden in this collected manner. He would soon be tired out and would go in the hocks. It is sufficient that he should be capable of being collected when necessary. Even when very fresh a schooled horse can be collected and cantered quietly in circles and figures of eight until he gets his back down when, if allowed to get his head away, he might be very hard to sit. A thoroughly schooled horse will have learned that he must do as he is bid and that villainy will not pay, and he will rarely attempt anything very outrageous, even if he has been in the stable for some time.

If the horse does not go kindly up to his bit, pressure with the legs will bring his hocks under him and send him into his bridle. The legs have a great deal to say to hands as will be explained when the riding school is treated of. Some horses if not ridden up to their bits by means of pressure from the leg get behind their bits and are not being ridden at all. They are simply carrying their riders and are in a position to rear, jib, or shy, if it is their pleasure

to do so. On the other hand, a horse ridden properly up to his bit is at a disadvantage if he wants to play the fool. He must free his head from control before he can do much, and any idea of villainy he may form is telegraphed up the reins to the rider who is thus able to forestall his efforts.

CHAPTER VII.

"MAKING" A YOUNG HORSE.

THE beginner may find himself in possession of a horse that is green and disobedient, or he may like to undertake the making of a young one for himself as soon as he has gained confidence in the saddle.

The methods herein described, though not those of the advanced high school riders, are all that are required for the education of the polo pony or charger. The best means of teaching them manners and of bringing them under discipline is to drive them in the long reins. These may be cheaply made of *newar*, the webbing used on native bedsteads, doubled to half its width and sewn lengthwise along the edge to keep it so. With these should be used a half-moon snaffle with large rings, and a leather or rubber disc about four inches in diameter on the snaffle on each side of the mouth to prevent the rings from bruising the lips. A jointed snaffle is not suitable for this purpose. A short leading rein, a bit of *newar* about a foot long with a knot at the end will do, should be attached to each ring of the snaffle. The reins should be each about 25 feet long for a big horse and 18 feet for a pony. They should be separate so as not to catch in anything and to admit of one of them being released in an emergency, and they should have a knot at the end to prevent their slipping out of the hands. The method of using them is quite simple though a little practice is required to use them to the best advantage. The horse should be saddled, the stirrup irons firmly bound to the girth with strong twine, and the reins

passed from the snaffle through the stirrup irons to the driver's hands. Or a driving pad can be used and the reins passed through the shaft tugs. The driver should not be behind the horse but to one side and, by keeping the rein nearer to him shorter than the other, should cause the horse to walk round him with its hind feet following in the tracks of its forefeet. If the horse is circling to the right the right rein will thus be held a good deal shorter than the left which will come from the stirrup iron round the horse's quarters and above his hocks to the driver. This outer rein should not be allowed to be slack, as if it is the horse will throw its quarters out and will then be getting no value whatever from its labours. If the horse refuses to move at first a syce may lead it on. He should be on the opposite side of the horse to the driver and should from time to time let go of the short leading rein to see if the horse will continue to advance by itself. As soon as it does so, the syce may be dispensed with. Sometimes, but very rarely, with a very green horse, it is necessary to have the rein next the driver coming straight to him from the horse's mouth. The outer rein should pass through the stirrup iron as in the former case. This entails passing the reins into and out of the stirrup irons every time the horse is turned round and is therefore very troublesome. After a few lessons however the rawest horse will go with the reins as at first described. As soon as the horse walks quietly to one hand he should be halted, turned about, and circled on the other rein. This is effected by drawing in the outer rein and giving out the inner one, great care being taken to see that the latter is paid out very smoothly so as not in the least to jar the horse's mouth as he turns. This is of the first importance. If the horse gives trouble when turned, as they often will at first, the syce may again assist. If the horse shews the slightest sign of resisting authority by putting his head up a standing

martingale attached to the noseband should be employed. This should be so arranged that the horse can raise his muzzle to the level of his withers but no higher. By the end of the first lesson the horse should be walking fairly kindly to either hand and turning round and halting when required. Each time the horse is turned it is well to use the word of command *Change* (*i.e.*, from one rein to the other) as the signal to turn is given with the reins. The horse will connect this word with the act of turning and it will come in very useful when driving the horse later at the canter. Two short lessons a day are better than one long one. One does not want to tire a young horse out and repetition fixes the lessons in the horse's memory, his strong point.

If the horse play up much he should be kept on as small a circle as possible. If he is too green to circle close to the centre the driver should move on a smaller concentric circle, still keeping him on a short rein. The shorter the reins the greater the control always. If he pulls, turn him smartly about until he gets tired of trying to rush, but be careful not to get straight behind him with both reins of the same length as he then has you at a disadvantage and may try to break away. If the reins were not separated he would probably succeed, but even under disadvantageous circumstances you can always hold him by letting one rein go and hanging on to the other. In driving with the long reins as in riding one should never have the horse at the end of a straight arm. The elbow should always be bent so as to ensure plenty of play. If the horse tries to break away and you are forced to abandon one rein, which should only be done as a last resource, pass the hand holding the remaining rein behind your body, grasp the rein with the other hand in front of you so as to make the rein follow the curve of your body, and lean back. I will

defy any horse to get away under these circumstances. If, on the other hand, your hand is in front of you and your arm straight the horse can pull you on to your nose and depart at his pleasure.

If, instead of pulling, the horse tries to stop we should instantly make a movement as if to get behind him, shew him the whip, and shout at him. If we remain where we are in the middle of the circle it is just as easy for the horse to run backwards as forwards. Any tendency to get behind the bit should be checked instantly. There is no greater vice than jibbing and none harder to cure, once its practice has become established. Be careful then that the horse is always up to his bit and watch carefully for any tendency to hang back with a view to overcoming it immediately. If you keep the horse up to his bit you will not have much trouble, but if you are contented to let him loaf round the circle as he pleases, he can stop and play up whenever he chooses to do so. This should always be remembered.

In a very few lessons it will be found that the horse will circle to either hand at a trot without putting up any fight whatever. I like a horse to fight at first. The result is only to shew him that he is helpless and the sooner he realises it the better. When he shews fight, the best way of overcoming his temper is to turn him outwards about until his hocks ache. He should be kept turning for twenty or thirty times and then tried at his lesson again. If he still resists, the discipline should be repeated. Every time he tries to pull he should be turned sharply round. He will soon desist. We should be very careful that a horse knows what we want him to do before punishing him. He should not be asked to do difficult things until he is quite perfect at the easy ones. By trying to proceed too quickly we only lose time and we should only proceed

to such complicated exercises as passaging when we have secured the unquestioning obedience of the horse in the simple lessons. A horse has not begun to learn anything until he will halt directly he is required to do so. If he will not halt rug his mouth lightly.

A horse should early be taught to rein back and the exercise should be repeated daily. It is of great value in collecting a horse and getting his hocks under him and can be taught without difficulty with the long reins as soon as the horse has learned to halt. After collecting the horse, the command should be given " Rein Back " and a gentle pull should be made at the reins like the pull one would use to uncork a bottle of '63 port. The pull should be a little, but very little, stronger on the rein on the side of the leg we wish to move first, at first the more advanced of the forelegs, afterwards the leg opposite to that which moved last. The instant the horse steps back the pull should be relaxed entirely and he should be allowed to halt. If he continues to step back after the tension is relaxed he should be sent up to his bit like a shot with a crack or touch of the whip. He must never be allowed to act on his own initiative. If the horse will not move his feet but only leans back when the pull is given an assistant may touch the leg we wish him to move below the knee lightly with a switch or whip. This will make him raise it. If he is obstinate and starts serious fighting, turning him about as recommended will make him obedient in almost every case. In any case he must never be allowed to remain the winner of a fight or we shall be able to do nothing with him in future. It is for this reason that we should be very careful not to ask the horse to do more than we can explain to him. We cannot force a horse to do what he does not know how to do and are sure to get into trouble with him if we try. Fortunately the horse has very little intellect and does not always realise what he is fighting about, so

that it is quite possible to begin a fight on one point and to finish it by conquering him on another, but at the same time we cannot be too careful and quiet in introducing him to new work.

Passaging in the long reins should be begun very gradually and a very slight divergence from the straight should content the driver at first. It is hard to get the horse to understand that you want him to move without either advancing or reining back. By being content with a little at first, you will soon get him to understand that there is an alternative. To obtain a slight amount of passage the outer rein should be slightly shortened so as to turn the horse's quarters slightly into the circle and his head a little out of it. His forefeet will thus describe a circle slightly larger than that described by the hind feet. The divergence from the true circle may be as small as you please in the first lesson and should be gradually increased until you get the full passage in which the horse moves sideways to the right or left, the fore and hind feet making parallel tracks and the following feet passing in front of and clear of the feet on the side to which he is passing. If the feet do not pass clear the pace is not being correctly executed. The horse should be taught to turn his face slightly in the direction to which he is passaging, but this is more easily accomplished in the riding school when mounted than in the long reins. Directly the horse obeys he should be allowed to walk quietly round as a reward. Do not go on worrying the horse to repeat once he has obeyed until he has had a respite. He will soon realise that he has done well and that the respite is the result of his obedience. Always begin the passage from the walk with a young horse and never from the halt until he is quite steady. Half the unsteadiness at the halt of badly schooled horses is due to neglect of this rule. Directly such a horse is collected at the halt he begins to passage about.

One of the hardest things in connection with the long reins is to get some horses to canter properly in them. They want either to rush or to trot. As one's object is to get them to canter as slowly as possible, the temptation to break into a trot is too great for the less active horses and they sometimes give an infinity of trouble. Whips are all very well as long as the sight and sound of them will get what one wants out of the horse, but blows with the whip are worse than useless except when a horse strikes out at one. Then he should be hit instantly, as he strikes, on the offending leg. A sharp touch of the thong may do all that is required, but if a horse resists on being whipped the probability is that the more you whip him the worse he will get. Certainly this is the case with mares, and for the reason that mares take punishment so unkindly I am strongly of opinion that a man should not undertake to break in a mare until he has broken in a gelding or two. If a flick about the hocks will not make a horse canter, it is better to put the whip away and make up one's mind to a long and weary bit of work. Some horses will canter if a second man follows them with a whip, some have to be mounted before they will canter at all. Generous, well-bred ones rarely give much trouble, and an impetuous horse is always easier to break and to ride than a slug. At first the horse may be allowed to canter rather too fast if he wants to and he should not be discouraged by being swung round if he pulls a little. By degrees he can be induced to canter more slowly without breaking by reducing the size of the circle, and when we have taught him to canter slowly we can teach him to change his legs when turning without going back to a trot. Here the value of the word of command "Change" which the horse has been accustomed to from the beginning comes in. The horse will soon learn to canter with the inward leg leading when you have got him to canter in a small circle. This

he will do for his own convenience and comfort. The object is to get him to change on to the other directly he gets the signal for change of rein. One can haul him round so sharply that he must either change his leg or run the risk of a fall, but that is not a wise thing to do as one may sprain his fetlock and injure his mouth. If he has been taught always to turn at the word "Change," he will naturally go outwards about also at the canter on hearing the command and getting the aid. He should be well up to his bit in these lessons or he may break back to a trot in order to change. As the horse is turned at the canter for the first few times the driver should take a pace or two towards him so as to give him plenty of rope and room to turn in. This will not be necessary later when the horse learns to turn quickly and well. Even if the horse does not change his leg in turning at first, he will soon learn to do so as the turns are made more quickly, for it conduces much to his own comfort and safety. If he does not change his leg he is apt to cross his legs and fall. It is very important that the horse is cantering correctly and not playing up during the lesson, and the slower he is going the better so long as he is up to his bit. He will soon learn to change at the word of command without waiting for the aid unless the aid is given with the command. When this happens the word of command should be dispensed with. When the horse will canter slowly in a small circle, change his leg when he turns at the canter, rein back freely, and passage to either hand without protesting, all of which can be taught him in quite a short time if too much haste is not made, his education is nearly complete so far as the long reins are concerned, it only remaining to teach him to jump. This will be treated of later. The horse is ready for the riding school and, even if he has never been mounted in his life, is obedient to the rein and is capable of being ridden.

The great advantage of this system of breaking is that the horse is never in a position to gain the mastery over the man as he may easily be if his education is begun by mounting him. He may then fling his rider off or run away with him. In the long reins he can neither get away from the man nor throw him down, and must give in in time. He can be driven up to things he is afraid of and held there until he gets used to them. He cannot shy away from them. If he is afraid of the whip he can be held in the long reins while he is gentled all over with it until he no longer resents it. To hold the horse in this way the driver should be standing just opposite the stirrup and about five feet from the horse with a firm even feel on both reins. The horse can do practically nothing. This holding of a horse and gentling it all over with things it does not like gives it an idea of helplessness as nothing else does and makes it quiet, obedient, and unapt to shy. The horse should be well advanced in his long rein training before this gentling is undertaken, as the more he is convinced of your power over him beforehand, the less he will fight when the whip is run over him.

After being driven in the long reins for some time horses show no inclination to kick if the rein gets under their tails. Some of them kick a great deal at first when this happens. The best way to get the rein out is to leave it loose as the horse will then generally raise his tail in time and so drop the rein.

To get the finest possible results another form of mouthing should supplement the work in the long reins. This form of mouthing is that used by Mr. Fillis, the great high school rider. Its object is to "free" the horse's lower jaw so that he yields his jaw immediately to the least pressure on the bars of his mouth. A bit and bridoon should be used and the horse should be led about

until he is accustomed to the feel of them in his mouth. When he is quite quiet with them the bridoon reins should be brought in front of the horse's face and grasped in the left hand a few inches from it. The horse's head should be well raised and he should be led forward at a free walk by means of these reins. While he is walking forward the bit reins should be taken in the right hand a few inches behind the mouth and by a gentle upward and backward movement of the hand the horse should be induced to "give" his lower jaw to the rein. He must not be allowed to stop under any circumstances. It is of the first importance that he continues to go forward. At first he will probably refuse to open his mouth. The action of the right hand must be very gentle, a mere suggestion of what is wanted. A few minutes of this every day will, in time, induce the horse to open his mouth and to "give" his lower jaw to the feel of the rein. Once he does this readily, whenever asked to, his mouth is practically made. A horse so made is delightful to ride.

Next the horse may be taught to "bend" his head from side to side. The head must be held high and the bend must come from the poll and not from the neck. The horse's face should be nearly perpendicular and his muzzle as high as he can be induced to raise it subject to this condition. The result of this training, which is fully described in Fillis's book translated by the late Captain Hayes, is to give a very perfect balance to the horse. It is very useful in a charger, but I doubt whether a hunter is any the better for being "bent" too much. I think he becomes too much inclined to rely on his rider and to think too little for himself, unless he is allowed to find his way across country occasionally without any hints or assistance from his rider.

CHAPTER VIII.

"MAKING" A YOUNG HORSE—*contd.*

The Riding School.

IT is now time that the horse should be put through all his lessons mounted in the riding school. It is not very likely that one will be asked to break in a horse in India that has never been backed. All country-breds and Arabs are ridden when quite young and nearly all Walers have been backed either in Australia or at the Indian port of landing. Still, one sometimes comes across a horse that declines to be ridden and the way to deal with him is this :—Tie his head to his tail and draw his head round so that he can only walk in a circle. If you pull it too far round he will fall down, but it should be pulled round a good way. A short leading rein should be attached to the outer side of the bridle and an assistant should hold this to prevent the horse from running round too fast and to stop him when necessary. If he goes round too fast, he may get giddy and fall. A surcingle should be put round the saddle outside the rope joining head to tail. This when tightened draws the rope to the horse's side and enables the rider to sit in the saddle in comfort. It is extraordinary how soon a horse realises his helplessness when tied up in this way. He should be allowed to walk round and round in a circle and should be occasionally stopped and sent on again until he shews by halting and going on when he is told that he is no longer fighting. He may then be carefully and quietly mounted, he can do nothing, and should be led until he becomes accustomed to the weight upon his back

and no longer resents it. Then the rope may be let out a few inches at intervals until his head is free. If at any stage he plays up the rope can be tightened again. He is not likely to fight for long. Fortunately horses requiring such drastic treatment are not very common now-a-days. Young horses, in fact any horses that are "curly" when first mounted, should be saddled about half-an-hour before they are required. A cold saddle suddenly pressed down on the back by the rider's weight has been the cause of many a fall. Wait until the saddle has had time to warm up before mounting. Avoidable falls do no good to either man or horse, the latter especially getting harm from the knowledge that he can put a man down. A horse should never be given the chance of playing the fool while he is in breaking.

The ordinary method of mounting is not suitable to young horses, I think. The best method is to take the reins in the left hand and to take hold of a lock of the mane about half-way down the neck with them, or to rest the hand holding them about half-way down the neck if the mane is hogged. The right hand should be on the pommel of the saddle instead of on the cantle. If the cantle is grasped the hand must be moved to the pommel before the rider can sit down and if the horse make an unexpected movement at the moment the hand is moving the rider may lose his equilibrium. It is better to take hold of the pommel at first. Mr. Fillis, the great school rider, takes the left snaffle rein in the left hand and the right rein in the right hand. He is therefore able to control the horse's movements even while mounting. He has the reins just so tight that he can lightly feel the mouth while grasping the mane with his left and the pommel with his right hand. If the horse is inclined to swing his quarters away from you the right rein should be felt more strongly than the left, and the left more strongly than the right, if the quarters are

swung in towards you. If the horse will not stand, take the reins in the left hand and also grasp in it the cheek and brow pieces of the bridle where they join, and take the pommel in the right hand. The horse can only walk round you as long as you hold the bridle thus and is very easily mounted. A bad horse can be made quite quiet to mount by means of the halter twitch to be described later.

When mounting care should be taken that the toe does not touch the horse's side until he has been taught not to resent pressure from it. The rider should rise slowly on the stirrup, pause for a moment to be sure that the horse is steady, and then pass the leg smoothly over and sit down quietly in the saddle. A young horse should be mounted and dismounted several times in succession until it stands quite steadily to mount. Obedience in this respect should be insisted on. When in the saddle the rider should allow the young horse to stand still, or make it do so, for a minute or so before moving off, and when he does start should do so very quietly. To leap at a horse and come down with a bump, like a monkey getting on a dog, and then to move off at a fast or uncollected pace, will unsteady any horse, even an old stager.

The young horse should be mounted first in the school, if there is one, and should be walked quietly round it. It is important that he should be kept moving forwards. He cannot do anything very serious as long as he is going to his front. If he runs backwards he should be turned round, and to turn a horse round and round is a very good defence as long as he is trying to rear or buck. He cannot rear if his hind legs are moving. The horse that has been well schooled in the long reins is not likely to make any fuss as long as the rider sits very quietly and does not ask him to do anything much until he has got used to the weight on his back. It is good to have a trained horse to lead the young one at first, as he is almost sure to

follow quietly. The first lessons should be short to avoid any danger of hurting the young horse's back or galling him with the girths. A young, soft horse galls very readily. As soon as the horse carries his rider quietly he may be ridden in large circles and turned from one rein to the other, a trained horse going in front if available.

The young one should be taught to do his riding school work in the breaking snaffle first. When he works well in the snaffle he can be bitted. The curb chain should be loose at first and gradually tightened as the horse becomes used to it.

At first a rein should be taken in each hand and no attempt should be made to ride with both the reins in one hand until the horse obeys the two-hand aids.

For the first few days the horse should be put through his lesson in the long reins before being ridden and should not be mounted until his back is down. This saves any amount of fighting and trouble.

The horse should be made to walk out in the riding school and a slow school walk should not be adopted until the horse has acquired the habit of striding out freely. The school trot and canter are necessarily slow paces so as to ensure handiness and control. The horse should be quite steady and correct in his turns and circles at the walk before he is asked to do them at the trot, and at the trot before he is promoted to the canter. In all turns the outer leg should be applied more strongly than the inner one which should be used to keep the horse from passaging away from the outer leg and to preserve the pace. The preponderance of pressure will vary at every turn. The two legs are used to keep the horse on the course chosen and to keep him right up to his bit and enough pressure for that purpose must be used. The idea of the leg aids is that the horse can be taught to give way to a spur,

whip, or pressure applied to his side. Hence if I wish my horse to pass to the right I, in addition to the other aids, apply my left leg to his side. If he tries to pass to the right and I do not wish him to do so, I "hold him up" by pressure of the right leg. If he takes no notice of the pressure, I apply the spur. By drawing back the leg before applying the pressure I affect the haunches more than the forehand. An intelligent appreciation of these principles will soon enable the beginner to use his legs with great benefit to his control over his horse. Again, the application of one's weight has a great deal to do with horsemanship. If I wish a young horse to passage to the right I lean over to the right. This has the effect of upsetting his equilibrium and he puts out a leg to restore it. But my weight is all on his right shoulder, so it is easier for him to pass his left leg across first, before moving his right, and this is exactly what I want him to do. As my right rein pulls him to the right, my left rein pushes his neck towards the right, my weight pulls him over to the right, and my left leg pushes his quarters towards the right, he moves to the right in one piece. I lean forward if I wish my horse to advance or to increase his speed and I lean backwards if I wish him to stop. In the same way when sending a horse along a man "goes with his horse," that is to say, that he leans forward a little and allows his weight to lengthen the horse's stride by throwing his centre of gravity further forward. If my horse is galloping and I wish to stop him, I lean further back and I oppose my weight as much as possible to the forward thrust of his quarters, letting my weight go further back instead of further forward at each propulsion, and thus make his limbs act at a mechanical disadvantage. A horse who is always ridden in this way will slacken his speed as soon as the weight is thus opposed to him and, if not excited, will pull up without any further aids. It is by such means

that the young horse must be controlled and educated in the riding school. If no regular school is available a manège marked out on the grass of the local *maidan* is all that is absolutely necessary. The size of a full school is sixty yards by twenty. The width should not be materially reduced, but the length need not be more than forty yards for a small number of horses. The main points are that the manège should not be too large and that it should be remote, if possible, from traffic or from anything likely to distract the horses' attention from their work.

The turns and circles in the school at the walk and trot are extremely simple, but none the less great care should be taken to see that they are correctly executed before going on to the work at a canter. If it is a polo pony that is being trained he should not be worked at the trot once he has been promoted to cantering work, as a polo pony should not be encouraged to trot at all. For chargers a great deal of the work should be at the trot as it looks very bad if a charger breaks on parade when the regiment is trotting. When the horse is first started at a canter care should be taken that he leads with the leg which is next the middle of the school. If your left side is next the wall you are said to be on the right rein because from that position all turns must be made to the right. When you are on the right rein your horse should be leading with his off foreleg. To make him start off with this leg we should first collect the horse and get him well up to his bit at a walk. To do this, we must press him up with the legs. Then we carry the hands a little to the left with slightly more tension on the right than on the left rein, slightly retire the right shoulder, and at the same time apply extra pressure with the legs, the left leg pressing harder than the right and being drawn a little further back. These are the correct aids, but sometimes the horse will disobey them and start off on

the wrong leg, "cantering false" as they say in the schools. If this occurs pull him up, steady him at the walk, and set him going again. As soon as he starts correctly make much of him and after a turn or two round the school let him walk for a little. This should be practised on both reins until the horse will start with whichever leg is required of him. If he disregards the drawn back leg opposite to the side from which the lead is required the spur should emphasise the pressure. Having obtained the lead with the proper leg we should keep the horse from changing without orders by maintaining the feel on the inner rein and the pressure by the outward leg, and should keep the horse on a rather small circle.

To change from one rein to the other correctly so as to make the horse change its legs as it turns, we should act as follows: Say one is circling to the left, one should be leaning over slightly to the left with the left shoulder retired, feeling both reins but the left one rather more strongly than the right, the right leg drawn back and feeling the horse as much as the particular animal requires, and the left leg preventing the horse from getting behind its bit or passaging to the left. One wishes to change on to the right rein and to make the horse change his leg at the same time, so, simultaneously, one makes the following movements just as the horse completes one of his strides: One slightly increases the feel on both reins, transferring the major pressure from the left rein to the right one, carries the hand holding the reins a little to the right, throws the weight of the body over to the right by leaning over to that side and retiring the right shoulder, and applies the drawn back left leg. The right leg should hold up the horse and prevent it from overdoing the turn. A little practice will shew the beginner the moment at which these changes of aids should be made. They should come the instant one stride is completed, so that the change is made

between that stride and the next. In a short time the horse will change at a mere suggestion of the aids if he is kept in practice, and I have had a horse that would canter a figure of eight with the correct changes of leg by means of the leg aids only, the reins lying on his neck.

After the horse has learned to change correctly on the turn, he should be taught to change without diverging from the straight line. This is done by giving the signal for the change and by holding him up with the inner leg so as to prevent his turning as he changes. This requires a little skill and the beginner should be *au fait* at the changes on the turn before undertaking it. The horse, too, should be well advanced, for this practice excites raw horses a good deal for some reason or other and even so-called trained ones are apt to increase their pace when first instructed in it. If the horse becomes excited bring him back to a walk, steady him, and start again.

In the riding school the pace should be a very collected one. Eight miles an hour is the maximum for the riding school trot or canter, but the slower the canter the better. By degrees the horse can be got back to a canter of five miles an hour and some very well shaped ones can be taught to canter four. These last can be taught to perform any military riding school evolution whatsoever. It is this very slow canter which collects a horse and gives him a mouth and carriage. It cannot be attained all at once, but it comes by degrees and with it come manners and handiness.

I have heard people say :—" Why should I teach my horse to canter slowly ? I don't want to canter slowly." This shews an entire misconception of the idea of schooling. The idea is not to make a horse slow, but to make him handy. If you cannot collect your horse your control over him is limited to getting him to go more or less where you

want him to, at more or less the pace you prefer. With a schooled horse you put him exactly where you choose, at exactly the pace you demand of him, provided that it is within his powers. The idea that schooling will make a horse a slow hack is wrong. A tournament polo pony is not troubled with the slows and he has had schooling enough. No horse will canter at five miles an hour unless he is made to. It is tiring to his hocks and rearing muscles. But the thoroughly schooled horse will go at any pace desired by his rider on the slightest hint. He will stop by word of command or on the exhibition of the proper aids and will turn "on a six-pence," while your unschooled horse requires as much room to stop in as a goods train and has the turning circle of an omnibus.

The beginner will find it tiring enough to get a slow, collected canter out of his horse at first. If he does not send him well up to his bit by leg pressure he will drop into a trot. The constant use of spur or whip to keep the horse up to his bit is a mistake. Pressure of the legs is the proper aid and the spurs should only be used if the horse disobeys the pressure. When they are used they should be applied just behind the girth in such a way that the horse may not require their application again for some time to come. They should be used to inflict punishment for neglect of the leg aids rather than as aids in themselves. The high school riders have to use them as aids, as the difficult feats they demand from their horses can only be obtained by means of the spur, but for all ordinary riding purposes a well-bred, active horse will often go for a year at a time without needing a touch of them. Spurs should always be worn when pigsticking as they often help to twist a horse out of a pig's way, but it should be remembered that some horses will stop and lean against a spur pressed into them and so get cut by the boar. A quick jab and not a prolonged pressure is what is required.

A short man should use short-necked spurs. His legs are so close to his horse's sides that with a long-necked spur he may touch the horse unintentionally. On the other hand, a man with long legs will hardly be able to reach the proper spot, just behind the girths, with a very short spur.

In the riding school the whip is used but little as all the aids are given with hand and leg. In breaking a horse for a lady to ride the pressure of the whip should be used instead of that of the right leg in all the school exercises, otherwise its use is confined to tapping a leg to make the horse move it or to exercises on foot such as making the horse circle round the breaker who holds his head. This last exercise is used to teach the horse to pass away from the whip instead of leaning against it as raw horses are apt to do.

The improvement from day to day in a young horse while going through the riding school is generally marked. He may seem no better at the end of one lesson than he was at the beginning of it, but, if he is being worked in the right way, he will be more amenable on the next occasion. If a horse is rough and troublesome, I like to put him through his lesson in the long reins first and then try to get him to repeat it mounted. If he is still troublesome, back he goes into the long reins, is turned outwards about some thirty times, and is then put through his lesson again. He rarely refuses to repeat it when mounted after this discipline, provided he clearly understands what is required of him. Patience and equanimity are of the first importance combined, of course, with firmness. If a horse finds that you will put up with nonsense, he will give you plenty of it. If you do not bully him a bit he will bully you.

New work should always be taken in hand at the end of the school and cessation of work should reward obedience,

It is better to repeat a lesson at frequent intervals than to go on worrying a young horse with it after he has obeyed. Often a young one will take say four paces at the passage and fight at the fifth. He must then be fought with until he gives in and unnecessary friction and ill-feeling is caused, whereas had the breaker been satisfied with three or four paces and made much of and dismissed the horse there would have been no trouble in the next lesson.

To succeed we must take up new work only after making sure of what has already been taught and must be quite sure that the horse understands what is required of him and that our aids are correctly given. Obedience should always be rewarded with a pat on the neck given instantly.

As I have said, I am against striking mares and it is not necessary to do so if full use is made of the discipline of the long reins. To cure coltishness in a gelding a good licking with a stout stick is considered good practice by some. If you make up your mind that the horse requires punishment, go at him so vigorously as to frighten him. Shake him up with the reins, spur him hard just behind the girths, "shout" into his ear, and lay into him. You should endeavour to scare him out of resistance. If a horse starts rearing or bucking he is certainly the better of a thrashing, but the thrashing should, if possible, be administered by a man behind him with a whip or cane rather than by the man on his back. The horse will try to get away from the man behind him and to do that must stop rearing or bucking. His readiest way of getting away from the man on his back is to buck him off. "Shouting at" a horse that shews signs of stopping to play up or of cutting a fence is sometimes efficacious.

The whip should not be used heavily to urge a horse on. The least touch of it should suffice for this purpose, and if it does not the spur is the proper aid to use. After an

application of the spur a threatening movement of the heel will probably suffice. If the horse is regularly severely whipped he will fear the whip and probably also the sword, spear, and hunting crop. A horse should be trained to fear nothing that his rider carries or uses, but this result can hardly be attained if the whip is used with severity. If a young horse is punished for naughtiness such as trying to hump his rider off, he knows what he is licked for and takes it like a man if he is not knocked about at other times. I cannot repeat too often that this does not apply to mares which will not put up either with the whip or spur to any great extent. It is for this reason that the great school riders never attempt to break in mares for their work.

A horse should not be whipped for stumbling. He should be collected with bridle and leg pressure and then kept "awake." To hit him is bad, because fear of the whip makes him start forward before he has collected himself after stumbling, so that he is very likely on rough going to scramble, stumble again, and fall.

It is also bad to hit a horse for shying. He will only shy worse next time, and will dislike the object he shied at more than ever once he connects it in his mind with a thrashing. A horse tries to look at a thing he is afraid of preparatory to clearing out if it should prove to be dangerous. He therefore tries to turn his head towards the object and his quarters away from it. The rider should frustrate his efforts by drawing his head gently away from the object and pressing with the leg furthest from the object to prevent him from swinging out his quarters. He should not be roughly forced up to anything he is afraid of, but if he can be induced to go quietly up and smell it, so much the better. In the long reins he can be driven up to anything, and it is a good plan to drive the young horse within sight of street traffic in them until he gets used to it.

The young horse should always be ridden in a standing martingale until his mouth is made, and afterwards if he tries to get his head up. Many Arab polo ponies would be unplayable but for the martingale.

Running reins are of great value when first riding young horses. They can be made of folded *newar* like the long reins. They should be attached to the front Ds or to the girth tugs of the saddle, passed through the rings of the bridoon, and brought back to the hand. They are to be used in addition to the other reins and only if required to keep a horse's head up or to make him bend his neck inwards or to either hand, or to prevent his running away. With them a horse cannot get his head down to buck. If a horse is very stubborn in refusing to bend his neck the running reins can be turned into side reins by being secured to the saddle when tightened sufficiently to make him bend his neck a little. He may then be led about or may be left to play with his bit for a time. With the side reins a snaffle with a bunch of keys tied to the middle of the mouth-piece gives good results as the horse plays with the keys and thus mouths himself. Special mouthing snaffles can be purchased in Calcutta with the necessary attachment to take the place of the keys.

But all these appliances are required in exceptional cases only. The long reins and the riding school will make almost any well bred and well shaped horse pleasant to ride. Breeding is half the battle or more. Personally, I never keep a horse which is not thoroughbred. Horses that are not fast enough to win are often to be picked up for a mere song from racing stables and make far and away the best mounts for a poor man, provided he is a moderate weight and has the skill, time, and patience to teach them manners. They are, of course, hardly beginners' mounts to start with, but they must be real bad ones if the methods

of training mentioned above do not bring them to hand at last. They should first have a dose of physic and when well cleaned out should be put on to soft food and not ridden for a month or so in order that they may grow fat and lazy and that their mouths may become tender. They should then be put into the long reins and gradually broken as though they had never been ridden before in their lives. Just as much care should be taken as with a colt. I have broken lots in this way and have never had a failure, though I must admit that I like to buy them as quiet as possible to begin with. The worst I ever tackled had not been ridden for eight months and was as wild as a hawk when I got her. She is now a trained Cavalry charger, but she was nearly six months breaking of which the first two were entirely in the long reins, and she was a year in the riding school before being finally dismissed. At first she bucked, pulled, and shied very badly, but when I sold her she was quite quiet and a grand hack. Another of mine will do her riding school work without a bit in her mouth, being guided by reins buckled to the rings of the halter. I bought her with the reputation of being too excitable for anything but hacking, and she is now a charger and one can play polo on her, though she is too big for a match.

CHAPTER IX.

A RIDING SCHOOL COURSE.

I GIVE here an example of an ordinary school for two or more horses. The course should not be strictly adhered to as horses soon learn the order in which the commands are given and obey them without waiting for the aids. Every effort should be made to prevent the horses becoming what the school riders call *routiné*. For instance, if a horse changes his leg before receiving the aids, even if a change of legs is required, he should be put back again on to the other leg. Riders should have this explained to them and a wide latitude should be allowed them to fall out of the ride if necessary for this purpose. No doubt the ride looks better if all are in their places and work together, and when the ride is for the instruction of recruits who are riding trained horses uniformity should be insisted on. When, however, the ride is for the instruction of the horses everything else should be subordinated to this object. It is best that a trained horse should lead the ride and another be in rear if sufficient horses and riders are available. The ride should fall in outside the school facing the entrance and should be numbered off from the right.

Ride, File in.—No. 1 advances, followed by the others in order at half a horse's length distance, files into the school, and proceeds round the school left side to the wall or on the right rein, going well into the corners.

Leading File, Circle.—The leading file guides his horse in a circle of the diameter of the width of the school, the remainder following.

Leading File, Change.—The leading file turns sharply across the middle of the circle, changes to the other rein in the middle of the circle, and, on reaching the other side, turns to the other hand and proceeds round the circle in the opposite direction to that formerly taken. The remainder follow. Repeat an odd number of times so as to *go large* on the left rein.

Go Large.—The leading file proceeds round the school as at first, followed by the remainder.

Down the Centre.—The leading file, followed by the rest, turns down the middle of the school and turns to the same hand again on reaching the end.

Leading File, Left Incline.—The leading file inclines across the school at an angle of about 50° followed by the remainder. They are now again on the right rein.

Right Turn.—Each turns his horse sharp to the right and crosses the school keeping careful dressing, and on reaching the wall turns to the right again. Repeat until done correctly.

Circle Right.—The whole, keeping their dressing, turn out into school and describe a half circle of a diameter of half the width of the school. This brings them to the middle of the school where they cover the rear man who is now in front. They follow him until he gives the signal with his head, when all continue the circle together until they reach the wall of the school again. They then proceed in the original direction. The signal to continue the circle should be given by a jerk of the head towards the side of the school directly the horses have taken four paces down the middle. Repeat until properly performed.

Right Incline.—Each inclines his horse and proceeds across the school keeping the dressing so that all arrive at the side of the school together. They are now on the left rein.

Left Turn.—As for *Right Turn*, reversed.

Circle Left.—As for *Circle Right*, reversed.

Left Incline.—As for *Right Incline*, reversed.

Ride, Trot.—All trot off together.

Right Turn.—As at the walk.

Circle Right.—As at the walk.

Circle and Change.—As Circle Right, save that on approaching the side of the school the whole change on to the left rein together and proceed round the school right side to the wall.

Left Turn.—As at the walk.

Circle Left.—As at the walk.

Circle and Change.—As from the right rein, reversed.

Ride, Canter.—All canter together with the off fore leading as the ride is on the off rein.

Leading File, Circle.—As at the walk.

Leading File, Change.—As at the walk. Repeat till on the left rein. The horses should change their legs at the middle of the circle and so come on to the other rein.

Go Large.—As at the walk.

Down the Centre.—As at the walk.

Half Passage.—The whole half passage across the school together endeavouring to reach the other wall at the same time. In the half passage from right to left the weight of the body should be well over to the left. The left rein should be used so as to lead the horse across the school by carrying the left hand well out to the left, the right rein should press against the horse's neck, the drawn back right leg should press the horse hard, and the left leg should be used to steady the horse as requisite. On completing the half passage the horses should be made to change their legs as they now come on to the right rein.

Right Turn.—As at the walk.

Circle Right.—As at the walk.

Short figure of Eight.—Describe a half circle to right to middle of school, then on signal of man in front make the horses change their legs and perform half circle to left to opposite side of school, then, on signal, half circle to left to middle of the school and, on signal, change legs and half circle to right to original side of school and proceed in original direction.

Half Passage.—As above, reversed.

Left Turn.—As at the walk.

Circle Left.—As at the walk.

Short Figure of Eight.—As from the right rein, reversed.

Serpentine.—The leading file describes a serpentine course from side to side down the school and back again, making his horse change his leg in the middle of the school at each change of rein. The remainder follow.

Ride, Walk.—All the horses should be brought to the walk together.

Ride, Left Turn.—As above and as the ride nears the side of the school.

Ride, Halt.—All halt together and remain at attention.

Make much of your Horses.—All pat their horses on the neck in time, one long beat and two short ones.

Rein Back, March.—The whole rein back together, two steps back and a momentary halt, two steps and halt, two steps and halt, etc., etc. The legs are closed to obtain the rein back and their pressure is removed to obtain the halt. The feel on the reins increases with the leg pressure and ceases with it.

Halt.—The horses should be halted instantly and should not be allowed to back another inch after the order.

On the Haunches, Right about Turn.—The horses should be turned in such a way that the forehand circles round the hind feet which should not leave their ground. To effect this the weight of the body should be thrown back

and to the right. The right rein should lead the horse round, the pull being out to the right and not back towards the rider. The left rein should press against the horse's neck. The drawn back left leg prevents the horse from throwing his quarters to the left while the right leg keeps up sufficient pressure to prevent the horse from stepping backwards. At first this turn should be made in two parts, first right turn and then right turn again. It is not easy for the horse to learn, and like all the other turns must be taught with a rein in each hand before the horse can be taught to do it by the reins in one hand. The horse should on no account be hurried, as the turn cannot at first be made from the halt at a fast pace without moving the hind feet off their ground.

Rein Back, March.—As above.

Halt.—As above.

On the Haunches, Left about turn.—As above, with the aids, reversed.

Rein Back, March.—As above.

Halt.—As above.

At a Canter, Forward.—All canter off together and turn to the same hand to which they last turned, in this case the left, on reaching the side of the school.

Ride, Walk.—All walk together.

Down the Centre.—As before.

Take one horse's length distance.—Those in rear check their horses until the man before them is a horse's length ahead. Keeping them in the middle of the school the following may be given :—

Halt. On the forehand, Right about turn. Forward. Halt. On the forehand, Left about turn. Forward. Halt. On the Centre, Right about turn. Forward. Halt. On the Centre, Left about turn. Then letting them proceed round the school, *Head to the Wall, Right Pass. Forward.*

Head to the Wall, Left Pass. Forward. Tail to the Wall, Right Pass. Forward. Tail to the Wall, Left Pass. Forward. Make much of your horses.—Remember that all passaging should be done from a walk. Never, until a horse is trained thoroughly, should he be asked to passage from the halt. This is of the very first importance.

When the horse has passed in all the above he may be taught to circle in the corners of the school, the circles being gradually made smaller and smaller and the horse sent right into the corner so that he has to make almost a square turn. This is very difficult and may be regarded as the end of the horse's education. Few horses do it well.

Movements should be carried out as quietly as possible and the horses should be allowed to settle down after one before beginning another. The ride should be halted occasionally and the men dismounted to rest the horses.

After the lesson in the school the horses will enjoy a short canter in the open at a less collected pace.

CHAPTER X.

JUMPING.

AS soon as the horse is obedient in the long reins his education in jumping may begin. There is no better obstacle for the first lesson than a round log or the body of a fallen tree. This was recommended long ago by Dick Christian on the grounds that the horse cannot get a leg into it or break it, and must peck over once he goes at it. If such a log is not available, a bamboo lapped round with straw rope, plastered with mud, and whitewashed, may be used. At first it should be laid on the ground in the circle in which the horse is accustomed to be exercised and he should be driven over it in the long reins. If he jumps over it or steps over it without making a fuss, well and good. In subsequent lessons, which should follow immediately on the ordinary work in the long reins, while the horse has the sense of discipline still strong on him, the bar may be raised a little daily. If he will not cross the bar at first, even when the whip is cracked behind him, the crupper leading rein may be utilised to take him over. To make this, take a long rope and double it. Knot the two together about a foot from the doubled end and again about thirty inches further up. The loop at the doubled end is put over the horse's dock, the two loose ends are passed from behind through the rings of the snaffle, and the knot thirty inches from the loop rests on the horse's back and prevents the rope from dangling about his sides. The breaker should take the loose ends in his hand and walk forward without looking back. If the horse hangs back he finds a drag at the root of his tail and almost always

follows at once. He may be accustomed to the use of the crupper leading rein early in his training. It is a capital contrivance for sharpening up a horse which is lazy when led, and is most valuable for inducing a horse to go into a horsebox or steamer. I am indebted to Captain Hayes for my knowledge of it.

As soon as the horse jumps the bar freely he should be schooled over other obstacles. It is a good plan to have three jumps, say a bar, a bank and ditch, and a hurdle, in a large circle. The breaker can then walk round a smaller concentric circle and drive the horse over them. If the horse tries to rush his jumps he can be turned about just as he starts to rush. This will soon teach him to go up to his fences in a temperate and balanced way. It is of the very first importance that the reins should not catch in the fences and thus give the horse a jab in the mouth. A plan to avoid this is to have a smooth arch of bamboo at right angles to the fence between it and the breaker, the middle of the arch at, and higher than, the fence. The reins will slip up one side, over the top, and down the other side without jarring the horse's mouth. As the horse should not be allowed to rush in approaching his jumps, so also he should not be allowed to rush after landing. The reins must be very carefully handled as the horse lands, for if he gets a jab in the mouth then he is very likely to refuse the jump next time.

When the horse does his lesson in really good style he may be sent round with a man on his back. At first the breaker should have the long reins and drive the horse as before. The rider can take hold of the breastplate to maintain his balance if necessary. If the horse goes well thus the ordinary reins may be put on and the horse ridden over the jumps in the ordinary way. It is a curious thing that we may drive a horse backwards and forwards over the same jumps in the long reins as much as we please and

he will not get tired of it, in fact, he seems to like it, but as soon as we begin to ride him over jumps, we find that he will get sick of continually jumping the same thing and will very likely refuse it. We should therefore take the horse afield as soon as possible. It is a good plan to take him in the long reins for a walk in the evenings and to put him over any likely obstacles we see. As soon as he gets clever at them we can ride him over them. He should be taken at small places until he gains confidence and he should be allowed to take his time over them at first as he may get frightened if bustled.

It is better to let the horse judge his own distance at the jumps than to try to judge it for him. The majority of good performers leave their horses alone for the few strides preceding the jump, leaving the whole thing to the horse. I do not mean that they give the horse an absolutely loose rein, but that they endeavour to convey to the horse no instructions as to how he is to jump, simply that he has to get over. Horses ridden in this way soon learn to look out for themselves and jump very safely.

Another school of riders handle their horses right up to the jumps and those of them who have very good hands and nerve succeed very well. The drawback to this system is that there are two chances of a mistake instead one—the man may err as well as the horse. On the whole, I think that horses accustomed to be ridden in the manner first described are the freer jumpers. The second method is more suitable to becramped country.

Tom Assheton Smith, the greatest rider of a hard-riding generation, liked to put his horse at a big jump at a slight slant. It enabled the horse to judge his distance better, he thought.

When coming up to a fence that one can see through, it is always the best plan to put the horse at the thickest and

ugliest part of it. He is more likely to jump it clean. If your horse jumps through his fences, make up one with a stiff bamboo rail hidden near the top of it and drive him fast right into it with the long reins. The heavier the toss he takes, the less likely he is to jump through his fences again.

A horse should be encouraged to change his feet on banks. At first many horses are inclined to fly them, but they will soon learn to change their feet on the top if they are taken slowly up to them in the long reins. Care should be taken that the banks over which a young horse is schooled are perfectly sound. If he has a fall through putting his feet on a rotten bank it will delay his education. A horse should have plenty of pace on at a big ditch, but he should not be sent at it so fast as to risk his galloping into it before he sees it. Dick Christian, in one of his inimitable lectures, laid it down that "A horse don't go to jump his furthest by bein' sent too fast at his fences," and again, "Take a good hold of your horse's head going up to your fences; the longer you hold him the farther he'll go," while Assheton Smith used to say: "If you see a man going a hundred miles an hour at his fences you may depend upon it that man funks." (I quote from memory.)

High timber and banks should be jumped slowly as a rule. The higher the horse raises his forehand before springing off at them the less is the effort required from him and his rider. If the horse is going very fast he can only get over a really high fence by standing well away from it and jumping very big. Efforts of this kind are all very well as long as the horse is fresh, but he cannot be expected to continue to jump in this style for forty minutes with hounds. A horse should not be asked to jump bigger than is necessary, so that he may have something in reserve if a really big fence and ditch is met with. Some horses jump timber best from a trot.

Ordinarily a horse should stand well away from his jumps and land well past them. Timber is an exception, except where there is a ditch with it. Such a combination is fortunately rare as it stops a good many people.

The beginner will probably be surprised at his horse's performance the first time he rides him to hounds or pig-sticking. He will find that the horse, excited and keen, is a bigger and better jumper than he judged him to be during the time of schooling. With the pace on, and the excitement of meeting other horses and the hounds to spur him on, it is extraordinary the ease with which a good and well-schooled horse covers a country which one would feel inclined to look at twice in cold blood.

A good deal of the rider's part in jumping may be expressed in negatives. Don't interfere with your horse at his fences. Don't keep a strain on the reins while the horse is in the air or is landing. Don't lean forward as the horse is coming down. Don't take hold of the horse's mouth with a jerk of the reins after landing. Don't interfere with your horse if he stumbles on landing, but sit back and leave his mouth alone. Don't forget your balance.

A beginner is apt to think only of his grip and to squeeze the horse so hard as to lose his position in the saddle when going at his first few jumps. He should remember that no amount of grip will do without balance. He should keep his shoulders behind a line drawn through his seat perpendicular to the ground (not to the horse's back), and his feet a little forward rather than back. I do not believe much in rule-of-thumb methods, but one tip which may be useful to some is this:—While going up to your jump, sitting as described in the chapter on "Seat," look up at the sky *immediately* above your head. This will take your shoulders about the right distance backwards, and when you look to the front again, keeping your shoulders

where the upward look put them, you will not be badly placed on your horse for the jump. Once you find the position you will wonder wherein your initial difficulties lay. They lie in balance as is the case in bicycling, skating, swimming, and, if we only remembered it, walking and running. Above all things, keep the arms and loins flexible.

The beginner must remember that Indian going is very hard as a rule and very trying to a horse's legs. He should therefore indulge himself in the joys of jumping with moderation when the ground is hard and should take advantage of the improved conditions consequent on a shower to give his horse a schooling gallop. He should not forget to put bandages or boots on his horse's forelegs when schooling for fear of overreaches, nor that it is the tired horse, as a rule, that breaks down.

Where the schooling fences are under the breaker's control, the landing should be softened by a good dressing of tan or stable manure to save the horse's legs from jar. Coarse sawdust, shavings, elephant's dung, old thatch, etc., are all useful for this purpose.

CHAPTER XI.

LONG MARCHES.

THE care of the horse on a long "dawk" is one of the points on which a beginner most needs advice. There is no reason why a horse in good, hard case, should not travel 40 miles in a day occasionally and there is no reason why he should lose condition over it, even in the hot weather.

All saddlery should be looked over beforehand. The saddle should be evenly stuffed, the numdah should be soft and free from holes and knots, and the girth soft and clean. The bridle should fit accurately and there should be no tags of leather hanging about to chafe the horse. It is a mistake to have a saddle restuffed immediately before a long journey. If the saddle requires attention, it should receive it a few days earlier so that the flock can settle down to the shape of the horse's back during rides of ordinary length. The same is true of shoeing. A horse should be shod at least two days before starting so that we may be quite sure that no injury has been caused to the feet.

The horse should be fed at such a time that he will have finished his food about an hour and-a-half before starting. After finishing his food he should be racked up or muzzled to prevent his eating his bedding or hay. If he is racked up on a hard floor he will not stale, so a little straw should be put under him before he is led out to induce him to do so.

The rider should look over the horse carefully before mounting to satisfy himself that all is in order, the curb

chain of the right length, the saddle in the right place, the numdah well up in the arch of the saddle and secured to it by the straps, the skin smoothed under the girths, and the girths neither too tight nor too loose.

On a very cold morning it is as well to trot the horse for the first mile to increase his circulation and to prevent him from taking a chill from being suddenly robbed of his blanket. In warm weather it is well to walk the horse at first until he "finds his feet."

The best pace to travel at on *cutcha* roads is the canter. It is most comfortable both for man and horse. On metalled roads the trot is less jarring to the legs, and excitable horses take less out of themselves at a trot. Every horse has his own "dawk pace" and should be allowed to settle down into it. The hotter the weather and the longer the journey the shorter should be the canters. When going really long journeys with one horse I get off and walk beside him for a short distance after each canter or trot. The relief to the horse is immense. The first time I dismount I look to the girths. Some horses distend themselves when being girthed up, with the result that the girths are really too loose though they appeared to be properly adjusted at the time. When dismounted it is well to look over everything once more lest something should have escaped you before starting.

When owing to the hardness of the road you have to trot, it is well to change your rise from one leg to the other occasionally. Say you start your trot by sitting down as the off fore comes to the ground. After a couple of miles you should change so as to sit down as the near fore comes down. This equalises the wear and tear of the legs. The change is effected by remaining up on the rise for an extra beat before sitting down. You cannot do it by bumping in the saddle. It is quite easy to remain in the air for two

beats and to sit down on the third, and this brings you on to the other leg.

If there is no chance of baiting upon the road the horse's food must go with you. The simplest way to carry it is to put it in the nosebag and to tie up the mouth of the bag which should then be very firmly secured to the Ds. of the off side of the saddle. The nosebag should not be tied close up to the Ds. or it will chafe the horse. It should dangle at the end of about a foot of cord and will then not rub the horse at all. A forage net full of hay may be hung on the other side, but this is rarely needed in India where grass or bamboo leaves are generally to be had on the road-side. The bamboos, however, shed their leaves in the hot weather, about April, and are not to be depended on at that time, at which grass also is scarce.

Give your horse a drink whenever you get an opportunity after the first few miles, especially in hot weather, and remember to water him before feeding and not for some time afterwards. Food should be given in small quantities at intervals of from two-and-a-half to three hours. A horse has a small stomach and large intestines, so his stomach has to be at work a good many hours a day to fill his belly. Fast work on the top of a large feed might cause colic, so it is better to give about 1 to 1½lbs. of oats at a time rather than a full feed. By small feeds given at judicious intervals a horse will keep his condition in spite of long marches, especially when his rider eases him by dismounting and walking by his side for half a mile or so after each long canter. In addition to the oats, I often pluck bamboo leaves and feed them to the horse as I walk along, and also do so from his back when he is walking. This gives him refreshment and saves time. After feeding thus with the bit in the mouth one should see before cantering on that the horse's mouth is empty. Leaves will

sometimes get caught up in the bit and will choke the horse when he tries to swallow them on starting to canter. Out pigsticking I have known horses to choke badly when suddenly jumped into a gallop with their mouths full of thatching grass.

A horse should always be taught to lead freely. A man behind him with a whip will soon teach him to step out, or you can touch him lightly behind the girth with a whip held behind you in your left hand as you lead the horse with your right.

Seven miles an hour is very fast travelling over a long distance with one horse. If you have a horse at every ten miles you can travel ten miles an hour and more, and I have ridden one horse twenty-two miles in two hours, but if you are going forty miles with one horse and there is no urgent reason for great speed, it is well to allow yourself about seven hours for it. In the hot weather it is well to start an hour before sunrise so as to get your horse under cover before the sun is at its hottest, unless there is some place where you can rest during the heat of the day. With a good moon one can travel very comfortably at night, but I do not believe in travelling long distances on dark nights. One has to go slowly and that means being a very long time on the horse's back, and I do not think that the absence of sun compensates for the extra hours spent on the road. Some horses feed badly in the open at night and stare about looking for jackals and wild pigs instead of eating their food and so waste valuable time.

If one has to go a long journey without having had time to lay dawks it is a very good plan to take a spare horse or two with one. I always train my horses to trot freely in hand and sometimes lead one on each side of me and change from horse to horse every five miles. In this way one can travel long distances at a great pace, for a horse

with no weight on his back is not easily tired. If two people are travelling and have only one spare horse, it is better to take it with them than to send it on dawk. In this way each horse can get a rest in turn.

Sometimes led horses will try to bite or play up. In this case the led horse's head should be brought close to the hand. The longer the rein the more the horse can play up. If a fresh led horse tries to break away circle your own horse to the side on which the led horse is. He can then do very little and will soon behave himself. With practice led horses give no trouble, though mares are apt to snap at each other. Horses travel better in company than alone as they do not get bored by the length of the road.

Unless a stallion is thoroughly well behaved and trustworthy it is better not to attempt to lead him when riding a mare, or to lead a mare when riding him.

When starting early in the hot weather the best of use should be made of the cool hours so as to be able to save the horse when it gets hot. A steady pace should be set and kept. It is a great mistake to set a fast pace if one has far to go, tempting as the early morning may be.

In very hot weather it is a good plan to make short halts under shade as a respite from the direct rays of the sun has a most refreshing effect on the horse. The rider should always dismount when halted and, in hot weather, should turn the horse's head to the breeze. When halted in cold, stormy, and rainy weather the horse's tail should be turned to the wind. Horses at grass always turn their tails to a storm.

When travelling on a hot weather evening one should keep one's eye open for Nor'westers. These storms come on suddenly and are sometimes extremely violent, and are

accompanied in many cases by hailstones which drive horses mad, so one should seek shelter when heavy clouds approach from the north-west. The lee side of a house is as good shelter as any. Light sheds are apt to be blown down and trees also are dangerous owing to their liability to be uprooted in these storms as well as on account of falling branches and lightning. In the Nor'wester season travelling in the afternoon should be avoided if possible. Woolly, white clouds drifting up from the south-east in the morning are very apt to come back in the form of a Nor'wester in the evening. A sharp fall of the barometer usually precedes a Nor'wester.

Before starting on a long ride, especially if the weather be hot and one's breeches thin, it is a good plan to rub the inside and back of the thighs and knees with veterinary vaseline or Cuticura. This will prevent chafing. If one does chafe vaseline should *not* be applied. The wound should be washed with a two-and-a-half per cent. solution of carbolic acid in water and should then be dressed with boracic acid powder and covered with sterilized wool or lint. Carbolic acid should be dissolved in warm water as it does not dissolve readily in cold. If a man finds that he is chafing while riding he can sometimes obtain relief by altering the length of his stirrup leathers and thus bringing another part of his leg into contact with the saddle. Thin merino drawers prevent chafing to a great extent. I have found that the best treatment when one has to ride on a raw chafe is to smother it thick in Cuticura and to put a smear of the ointment on the breeches where they cover the gall. I have ridden thirty miles thus and found the gall rather the better than the worse for the journey.

Great care should be taken that no part of one's cloak or anything else attached to the saddle touches the horse's

back. Once the horse is sweating freely the least touch of anything will make a sore. Unless it is certain that a rug or sheet for the horse will be available at one's destination, one should be carried on the saddle.

In winter horses can travel great distances, but they suffer severely if taken really very long journeys in hot, damp weather. The longest journey I know of in Bengal was undertaken in June, 1897, after the earthquake had destroyed the Northern Bengal State Railway. A well-known planter rode on one horse from Siliguri to Mutrapore in Malda in about 30 hours. I believe that the distance is over 90 miles. The rider weighed over seventeen stone with his saddle. It was a great feat, but the horse had to be pensioned off after the journey.

Horses sustain dry heat much better than they do moist. A journey which will not unduly distress them while the dry, hot winds blow will be almost beyond their powers after the first of the summer thunder showers has fallen, and in the rains long marches should be avoided if possible.

CHAPTER XII.

BITTING.

IT is generally agreed that horses not intended for racing should be ridden in a double bridle of some kind. Personally for hacking and hunting I prefer the Mullen-mouthed or half-moon Pelham to all other bits for any but hard pullers. There seems to be no reason for putting two pieces of iron in a horse's mouth when one will do, and it is only in fancy high school riding that the two mouthpieces are really necessary. The Mullen-mouthed Pelham can be had with cheeks of various lengths to suit different horses. The harder the horse's mouth the longer should be the cheeks of the bit, and a very big horse sometimes requires a fairly stiff bit to make him collect himself. I do not consider the jointed Pelham at all a sound bit to use and strongly advise the beginner to have nothing to do with it. I had a pony that ran away with a number of practised riders in one of these bits, but was held without difficulty in an ordinary double bridle. For most horses I like a sliding mouthpiece. This should have a leather or rubber guard at each side to prevent the horse's lip from being pinched between the mouthpiece and the cheek of the bit. A form of Mullen-mouthed Pelham without the sliding mouthpiece is known as the Rugby Club Polo Bit. The mouthpiece of all these bits should have a fair arch and should be pretty thick. The less the arch the milder the bit, as with a straight mouthpiece the pull is received on the tongue instead of on the sensitive bars of the mouth. A thin mouthpiece hurts and worries the horse and may

cut the bars of his mouth, therefore the broader the bearing surface, in reason, the better. Thin mouthpieces are very severe and horses seem to pull hard on them for the Irish reason that it hurts them to do so.

A common fault is to have the bit too high in the mouth. An inch above the tush of the gelding and two inches above the corner tooth in the mare is laid down in the books. I should place it from half to three-quarters of an inch lower in both. It should be comfortably clear of the tush in the gelding, but not more. What is required is that when the reins are tightened the curb chain nestles neatly into the chin groove. The chain should not be too loose. When you can just get two fingers between it and the horse's jaw it is right. A loose curb chain is of no use whatever and only slaps against the horse's chin and may rub the skin sore. With an unbroken horse it is well to put the breaking snaffle pretty high in his mouth at first lest he acquire the habit of putting his tongue over it. If he does this he will never have a good mouth. Mr. James Fillis has a cure for this. He says in his book (translated as "Breaking and Riding" by Captain Hayes) "... the only remedy is to put a small movable plate of the shape of a figure of eight, with its centre on the top of the port of the bit, upon which it can revolve." I have not tried this method yet but propose to do so the next time I come across a horse with this fault. It sounds as though it would prove effective. The "Field" had two letters on this subject recently. The writers recommend that the middle of a string or bootlace be tied to the joint of the snaffle and the ends brought up in front of the face and tied to a rather high noseband. This raises the snaffle in the horse's mouth and prevents him from putting his tongue over it. For this purpose a jointed snaffle used with a bit would replace the half-moon Pelham. As soon as the horse has formed the habit of keeping its

tongue beneath it the breaking snaffle can be placed lower in the mouth.

I remember once being given a dawk on a horse that was supposed to be bad to mount and a party assembled to see how I should manage to get on to it. When the horse was brought up I saw that both the bit and bridoon were far too high in its mouth and that it was girthed far too tightly. I loosened the girths myself and let out the bridle until the horse was comfortable, when it stood like a rock, to the disappointment of the onlookers, and walked quietly off as soon as I was comfortably in the saddle.

A curb chain should be of thick, big, single links. Thin, small links hurt the horse and irritate him into resistance, and I think it is true that the double-linked chains deaden a horse's mouth. Above all, avoid cheap curb chains. Everything about a horse's bridle should be of the best quality obtainable. The difference in cost between first quality bits and chains and the bazar stuff is not such as to influence materially one's yearly balance sheet, but a badly made or cast-steel bit may easily cost a man his life, and a broken curb chain can be nearly as dangerous.

Where both bridoon and bit are used, the bridoon should be half-way between the bit and the corner of the horse's mouth. It should not wrinkle the skin at the corner. Both bit and bridoon should fit the horse's mouth. If the bit is too broad it is apt to work to one side and so to get an uneven bearing, the straight part pressing on one side of the mouth and the port on the other, with the effect that the horse carries his head to one side. It is also apt to bruise the lips by shaking from side to side. If too narrow it will chafe them. If a jointed bridoon or snaffle is too broad half of it will come out of the horse's mouth to one side, with the result that the lip is pinched and cut in the joint. Bridoons and snaffles are to be had

on the half-moon principle and are, I think, to be preferred to jointed ones for ordinary work. A very good cross-country rider tells me that there are some horses which could not be held unless the snaffle were jointed. Granting the truth of this in steeplechasing, we may still hold that the point is unimportant when the bridoon is supplemented by the bit.

Some hard pullers with very callous mouths require very severe bits such as the Chifney or the "Three in One" bit, but horses that require such engines to hold them need not be mentioned in connection with beginners who should carefully avoid such brutes. A man who would sell such a horse to a beginner is fortunately a rarer animal than a bad puller, but I have met such an one, and the beginner should not disregard even remote possibilities.

On the march a noseband should be used with the half-moon Pelham, otherwise there will be nothing to hold the horse by when the bit is removed to enable him to feed. This bit is not suitable to such horses as object to the bit being put into their mouths again after feeding. With them a double bridle should be used and the bridoon should be left in the mouth. The best way to make such a horse open his mouth to take the bit is to close his nose by gripping it above the nostrils. It is not safe to take him by the tongue unless you have something else to hold him by, as there is a risk of pulling his tongue out if he suddenly tries to break away. To take hold of the tongue by inserting the fingers at the side of the mouth above the tushes is the recognised way of opening a horse's mouth. The tongue can be held between the second and third fingers and the lower lip between the thumb and index finger of the same hand. This removes all risk of undue strain on the tongue. Injuries to the tongue soon heal even if very severe.

In bridling a horse always remember to pass the reins over his head before trying to put the bridle on. You have then something to hold him by if he plays up. Horses that are difficult to bridle should have their forelocks left on to hold them by, in fact, I think that no horse should have his mane hogged until he is well broken. It is useful for all kinds of purposes.

A horse can be held by the ear by a man of ordinary strength and activity. I have often been lifted off my legs by a horse when holding him in this way. When a horse lifts me I find it helps me to retain my hold if I jump as the horse lifts his head. This reduces the strain on the hand. It is not easy, however, for a short man to take a tall horse by the ear if the horse suspects and resents his object. The best way is to work the hand gradually up the neck, but it is by no means infallible. When the ear is grasped it should be twisted half round, so that if the horse pulls at it he hurts himself. The head should be held as low as possible. It is easy for an assistant to bridle a horse held in this way.

If you are holding a horse on foot and he tries to break away try to get in front of him so that he has to back, and as he backs, walk after him so that he cannot get a pull on the halter. He will soon stop. If he tries to turn sideways tap him on the rump with a whip to straighten him, and if he strikes out at you hit him on the leg he strikes with while it is still in the air. It is useless to hit him afterwards. Watch very carefully if he rears that he does not hit you with a foreleg. You should hold the leading rein near the bridle with the right hand and the extreme end of it in the left, so that you can let go with the right hand and step out of reach of a blow without letting the horse go.

CHAPTER XIII.

SADDLING AND SADDLERY.

THE fit of the saddle is of such importance that too much attention cannot be given to it. Every horse should have his own carefully fitted saddle. A sore back is the result of bad fitting and a sore back means, at the least, a horse in the stable eating his head off and losing condition as fast as he can. To avoid the sore one sets the saddle farther forward or farther back, or one tries some hanky-panky with a folded blanket, with the result too often that the sore gets touched up again or another one is caused owing to the abnormal position of the saddle.

The first thing to see to in fitting a saddle is that the arch is wide enough not to pinch the withers and high enough not to press on them. The first point does not receive enough attention. Some saddlers in India seem to imagine that a narrow-grip saddle is a saddle with a narrow arch and they send out the most dangerous stuff under that misapprehension. The arch has no more to do with the grip than the arm of a chair has to do with its seat. I do not for a moment mean to say that all Indian saddlers make this mistake, but some do. Sufficient width in the arch should be insisted on.

The saddle should rest on the broad muscle on each side of the backbone and there should be a channel down between the pannels so as to ensure freedom from pressure on the top or sides of the bony processes of the spine itself. The saddle should nowhere come in contact with any part of the bone. Hence the importance of a muscular back. A

back poor in muscle is hard to fit because the dorsal ridge projects far above the part on which the saddle rests and so is liable to be touched by it. Very slight pressure is sufficient to do serious mischief.

The saddle must not be so long as to press on the loins, and if it is of the military or semi-military pattern the fans should be well curved upwards or they will dig into the loins and cause a sore. They should also be long enough to ensure that the cloak or rear pack cannot touch the horse's back, no matter how lightly.

The saddle should be stuffed with well cleaned flock, not cotton wool, and there should be enough stuffing to ensure freedom from pressure but not enough to allow the saddle to rock about. New saddles often require the addition of a little flock at the withers after having been ridden in for a few days as the stuffing compacts under the rider's weight. After mounting, the rider should insert two fingers between the pommel and cantle of his saddle and the horse's back. If the movement of the horse causes the saddle to pinch his fingers between it and the back more flock is required. Major Hughes-Onslow says that he never goes out hunting without a pair of thick, knitted, woollen gloves under his girth straps. If he notices that his saddle is down on his horse's withers he puts the gloves under the arch of his saddle and his horse is saved a sore back. The spongy Newmarket Pad is first-rate for the same purpose.

Walers are lighter bodied than English horses as a rule, and I think that Australian saddles fit them better on the whole than English ones. This is, after all, only to be expected when it is considered that the majority of English saddlers have probably never seen, let alone measured, a Waler.

I believe in pretty thick felt numdahs cut from one piece with no seam down the middle. Thin numdahs are an

abomination, smart as they look. I once bought three and in three days had three sore backs in the stable. A thick blanket folded does well, provided that it is put on properly, but a thin blanket will ruck up and cut the back. Leather numdahs are inferior in that they are not absorbent, but they are not dangerous for light work so long as they are in regular use and kept soft by means of the horse's sweat. If they get hard they are worse than useless. Castor oil is a good thing for keeping them soft when laid by. All numdahs should be attached by straps to the saddle.

The threefold leather girth with a piece of cloth inside to hold oil is so far the best that no others need be considered. They can be obtained cheaply from Cawnpore.

A surcingle should always be used if possible, especially with a horse that fidgets, or when anything is carried on the saddle.

The position for the saddle on the horse's back is generally pretty clearly defined in the case of horses that are really fit for saddle work, and, as a rule, if the saddle fits the horse it will find its place of itself. The shoulders should have room to work freely, but the cantle of the saddle should not be back on the loins. The Army regulation is that the saddle should be put on "a hand's breadth behind the play of the shoulder." For racing the saddle should be as far forward as you can get it. The farther forward a horse's centre of gravity can be brought the longer will be his stride as shown in Hayes's "Points of the Horse."

If the saddle is inclined to work backwards a breastplate should be used, if forwards a crupper. The hand should be capable of being easily turned between these straps and the horse's body or they are too tight. A well shaped saddle horse does not need a crupper as a rule, though I

have known one or two very fast horses whose saddles were apt to work forward.

A horse in soft condition is always liable to get a sore back just as a man who has not ridden for some time is apt to chafe on the saddle, and such horses should not be asked to carry a rider for very long at a stretch until they harden. They should be brought into long work gradually. In the same way a horse that has been accustomed to a short hunting saddle is apt to chafe under the fans of a military saddle as that part of his back is unaccustomed to friction. Volunteer chargers should therefore be gradually accustomed to the long saddle before camp or they will be likely to go into hospital with sore backs after the first long field day. In the same way horses should be gradually hardened to the carbine bucket and scabbard.

Cheap saddles are a mistake. A second-hand saddle by a first-class maker is much better value than a cheap new one and can be sold again for about what it cost. It has the further advantage that it is much easier to sit in than a new one which, unless it is made of "reversed hide," is always hard and slippery. The reversed hide saddles are made of buffed leather and are easy to cling to. Kangaroo hide makes charming saddles, but these are expensive and not always obtainable. Plain flaps look smarter than knee rolls and as the latter are of no use that I can see I do not recommend them. When buying a second-hand saddle a trial should be had if possible to see whether it is comfortable to man and horse. A new saddle should be tried on the horse before the bargain is completed.

Saddlery should be dressed regularly with Saddle Soap which can be obtained very good and cheap under the name of "harness soap" from Indian soap factories. To soften a new saddle use milk and *debble roti* (leavened bread). Vaseline makes a nice soft saddle, but soils the

clothes and attracts dust. Buffed leather should be dressed on the reversed side only and for this purpose vaseline is excellent. If you want a highly polished saddle use bees-wax, but you will find a polished saddle slippery and hard to sit in, and a saddle well cleaned with soap looks smart enough for any purpose.

Level seated saddles are the fashion now and no fault is to be found with them provided the grip is narrow, but I think that the Australian pattern of saddle gives the firmer seat across country. It certainly gets you nearer to your horse.

Stirrup leathers should not be too thick. Thick leathers are apt to cut the knees and are unsightly. I like to have holes made through the leathers for the tongue of the buckle between the original holes so as to admit of a nicer adjustment. New leathers should be softened with milk and hung up to stretch with a maund weight at the end.

Surcingles should be of leather and care must be taken that they are not drawn tighter than the girths. This is important if you would avoid galls. The girths should admit two fingers between them and the horse's body and the skin beneath them should be carefully smoothed and freed from wrinkles.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOEING.

IN most Mofussil stations shoeing gives a great deal of trouble. The smiths as a rule know nothing whatever about their work and on all sides one sees horses going about "on stilts", with heels contracted and toes dumped to a degree that is disgraceful to their owners as well as to the rascally operators, while there are frequent complaints of dropped shoes.

The principal cause of dropped shoes is that the men are not strong enough, or are too lazy, to rasp the sole of the foot in one stroke from heel to toe. Consequently, they rasp first the toe and then the sides with the result that they obtain a rounded surface on which the shoe rocks until, with the weight and action of the horse, it rocks itself off. This is bound to happen if the under surface of the hoof is not level, and it is not easy to get the surface level if the smith is not strong enough to actuate the rasp when it is in contact with the horn from heel to toe.

Every horse requires individual attention in shoeing. Those with open, low heels may never need their heels rasped, while others whose heels have a tendency to contract may need them taken down half an inch a month. The best guide as to the treatment of the heels is that when the foot is shod the frog should be in contact with the ground. If the frog is off the ground all sorts of mischief may arise. If the foot has been much neglected and the heels are contracted and the frog high above the

ground it may not be possible to obtain contact in one shoeing, but by attending to the feet with this object every fifteen or twenty days success will be attained in time. If the feet are strong the horse may, in bad cases, be allowed to run unshod until the feet become normal. It should be remembered that unshod horses are very apt to slip on hard ground with dew on it or on any smooth surface that has not much give in it.

The toes should not be rasped down more than is sufficient to give the foot its normal angle. If the toes are rasped short and the heels are left long with a view to preventing stumbling the horse will become tender from being too much on his toes and will be more likely to stumble and fall than ever. Bevel off the front of the shoe of a stumbler by all means, but do not alter the natural angle of his feet.

Do not allow the smith to cut the frog, the bars, or the sole save where the shoe is seated. Any worn out flakes of the sole will fall off of their own accord in time and in the meantime all the padding which Nature provides between the sensitive foot and the hard ground should be retained.

The shoes should be most carefully fitted to the horse's feet and no rasping should be allowed once the shoe is nailed on. The rasp should never touch the outer horn of the hoof save from below. It is a favourite trick with the smiths to nail on a shoe smaller than the foot and then to run the rasp round the outside until the hoof fits the shoe. This is what is known as "dumping" and it ruins the feet. A horse's hoof may be likened to a bamboo, in that its chief strength lies in its outer covering. The horn is to protect the sensitive foot inside it and to remove it is as wise as to remove the lids from the eyes.

Horses' shoes should be removed once every three weeks in most cases. If not much worn they can be put on again.

On soft ground they will do two periods of three weeks easily. A few horses do not require shoeing quite so often, but the customary month is too long in most cases. If shoes are left on for a very long time they are apt to get in under the heel with the growth of the foot and so to cause corns. These cause much lameness. The only cure is to remove the pressure that caused them and with this end in view the shoe should be so shortened on the side next the corn that contact is impossible.

For horses with contracted heels shoes shortened on both quarters and known as "tips" are very good. They protect the front part of the hoof, which is usually the only part that breaks, and leave the heels in contact with the ground.

Bar shoes have the two arms joined by a bar at the back and are useful in sand crack to prevent the opening and shutting of the crack which causes the lameness in this disease. They should also be used after an operation for seedy toe when the outer horn has to be removed so far as the mischief has gone in order to get at the microbes that cause it. I have played a pony at polo with such a shoe when the outer horn had been removed over a surface an inch and a quarter wide and more than two inches high and its place taken by beeswax over a dressing of creosote. The pony played three days a week until the horn grew down and was never lame for a minute. Bar shoes should not be used longer than is actually necessary. They are often used for corns as they cannot get in under the heel and press on the "seat of corn."

For horses that overreach on the coronet the inner edge of the lower side of the front of the shoe should be bevelled off. It is the inner or hindmost edge that cuts, not the front edge. For horses that forge shoes may be made shorter than the fore-foot, so that the toe projects beyond the shoe. In this case side clips should be used instead of

a toe clip. For speedy cutting shoes are made so as to allow the side of the hoof that strikes the leg to project in the same way beyond the iron. It is then rounded off and strikes a less severe blow than the iron would do. Horses that speedy cut are dangerous and only fit for harness.

If the sole becomes bruised the shoe should be removed, a wad of tow dipped in wood tar placed in the foot, a piece of pump leather laid over the tow, and the shoe nailed on over all. The horse will probably work sound at once. The sole rarely becomes bruised if the smith does not tinker with it. If treated as above mentioned it will soon recover and after a few days the wad may be removed. It is good practice to leave the leather for a while longer.

Captain Hayes considers that an average slope for the front of the fore hoof is about fifty degrees, while the hind hoofs should have not less than fifty-five degrees. He notes that "a considerable amount of propulsion is lost by the angle of inclination of the hind feet being too small. This is a practical point which is very important to owners, and especially to those who keep race-horses."

CHAPTER XV.

THE HALTER TWITCH.

THE halter twitch is an instrument of the greatest value to the horsebreaker. It is of American invention and was brought into India by Captain Hayes. It is extremely simple, all that is required being a halter, a couple of yards of soft cord about as thick as an ordinary office pencil, and a metal ring about an inch and a half in diameter to which one end of the cord should be spliced. To prepare the twitch for use, put the halter on the horse, attach the ring end of the cord to the buckle or D, on the near side by a half hitch, pass the cord over the horse's head, down the other side, in between his upper lip and his gums, up the left side, through the ring, and let the end hang down. It will be obvious that if the end hanging down be jerked, the part passing between the horse's upper lip and his gums will tighten and cause him pain and that the pain will cease on the strain on the cord being relaxed. This is the great point of difference between the old twitch and the halter twitch. The old twitch hurt the horse during the whole time it was employed, whether he played up or not.

The use of the halter twitch is as simple as its manufacture. There is only one secret in it and that is always to use the same word of command every time the twitch is put into operation.

Let us suppose that the horse refuses to be saddled. Put the halter twitch on him, take the cord in your hand, and

tell the syce to put the saddle on. The horse will repeat whatever defence he has hitherto used, probably a plunge away from the saddle. As he does so, say "steady" and give him a severe jab with the twitch at the same moment and hold on. This will bring him up all standing. He may try to break away the first time or two, but all that is necessary is to hang on to the cord of the twitch. It is well to wear a glove or the cord may cut one's hand, and to take a turn or two of the cord to prevent its slipping from the grasp. The instant the horse is quiet relax the strain on the cord. Once more the syce approaches with the saddle, again the horse objects, again the word "steady" and the discipline. In five minutes he will be saddled and girthed. The next day the word "steady" will probably suffice if it has been invariably used with the twitch. A horse can be made steady to shoe, to mount, to harness, to put in the shafts, or for any other purpose in a few minutes by this means, and so long as he lives the word "steady" will have a sobering effect on him.

Before I knew of this invaluable aid to horse-breaking I sold one or two horses as being incurably vicious which would have given me no trouble had I only known the cure. One was a first class pony, a winner on the flat and over hurdles when he could be got to the post, but such a brute to mount that I sold him at auction in disgust. My work in those days necessitated my crossing two ferries daily. I used to spend an hour at each ferry in mounting whenever I had this brute out, for the boats were not such as one could ride a horse into. If I had that pony now I should have him quiet to mount in ten minutes.

No apprehension need be felt that the horse will attack the man with the cord. Such a thing has, I believe, never been known to happen even in Captain Hayes's battles with real savages.

I am always rather loth to use this apparatus with good tempered horses that are only above themselves, if other means will suffice, as it undoubtedly causes the horse great pain. But the amount of pain is exactly regulated by the amount of resistance, and if no other means will effect my purpose I use the halter twitch without hesitation. It is quick and permanent in its effects and the horse gives in so soon that the amount of pain suffered is usually small, though it is severe in degree.

I prefer to use soft cotton cord for the twitch as hemp sometimes causes abrasion of the mucous membrane. However wounds of that kind on the gums heal very readily and are not painful.

CHAPTER XVI.

VICES.

Jibbing and Rearing.

THE worst vice of which horses can be guilty is a rooted determination to do no work and to go nowhere but to the stable. This leads to bucking, rearing, jibbing, and a host of minor vices such as lying down with the rider, etc. A horse with a character of this kind is a thorough cad and I know of no means of curing him, though I have seen reforms effected in one or two cases by a prolonged and brutal, though thoroughly deserved, assault on the horse until he gave in. This requires pluck, a strong seat, and an absolute disregard for the animal's feelings, and is not everybody's game. I have known two country-bred geldings cured for a time of rearing and jibbing by the rider dismounting and giving them a severe thrashing. In both cases the discipline had to be repeated about once a fortnight. I have known this to fail in other cases, but it is worth trying if the severity of the punishment is not objected to. Personally I have no sympathy with horses of this kind and I consider any effective means of treatment justifiable. I have known a thoroughbred gelding and a half-bred mare to be permanently cured of jibbing in harness by the hearty application of a heavy hunting-crop thong across their loins, and I have seen a gelding cured of refusing to go near a polo ball and another of refusing to jump by merciless thrashings. The real objection to this treatment is that it is not always effective. Hayes recommends making a horse lie down and keeping him

down until he gives in. If the case is taken in time this sometimes effects a cure. To make a horse lie down strap up one foreleg by means of a stirrup leather to the surcingle. Kneecaps should be put on. A strong cord should be tied to a ring on the top of the surcingle, passed through a D of the headstall and back through the ring. If the near forefoot is tied up the cord should be through a D on the off-side, and *vice versâ*. By pulling on the cord the horse's head is pulled round to his side and after a time he will go down. He must not be thrown violently. This is Captain Hayes's method. The horse's head is tied to the surcingle round his body when he is on the ground, and so long as his head is thus drawn round to his side he cannot rise. A crupper must be used or the horse will pull the surcingle forward. Straw should be placed under him and he should be allowed to kick and struggle as long as he pleases. When he begins to groan and give signs of surrender he is allowed to get up and is tried at his work again. If he again gives trouble, he is put down again and kept down for a good long time. He will generally give in for the time being, sooner or later. The worst of this treatment is that if too prolonged it is apt to break a horse's spirit, but, as Captain Hayes justly remarks, the only object in dealing with such a brute is to make him serviceable and one need not bother about his spirit.

Personally I am of the opinion that really bad jibbers are not worth the time and trouble spent in trying to cure them. Moreover, they are always liable to relapse after an apparent cure, especially if they fall into the hands of a weak or timid rider.

A horse cannot rear if his hind legs are moving. If you have to mount a rearer it is a good plan to have a man handy with a whip ready to lace into the horse directly he

attempts to rear. If it is decided to keep such a brute great pains should be taken with his mouthing. If he is not a very bad case you may cure him by getting him extra well balanced and collected. Horses that rear but do not jib are generally curable. They rear as a defence against the restraint of the bit and breaking is all that is needed.

When a horse rears with you catch hold of his mane half way up his neck with your left hand, keep the reins slack, and lean as far forward as you can with your head on one side of his neck. As he comes down, push yourself back with your left arm so that he may not get the chance of sending you over his head with a kick or buck. I like to have my feet out of the stirrups so as to be ready to get clear of the horse if he falls, in which case one should push out from the neck with one's hands and be very alert on landing. If a horse's forelegs drop down to his sides look out. He has lost his balance and the sooner you quit the better. As long as he paws the air he is safe.

The best thing to do with a determined rearer is to get rid of him, by shooting, if you can afford to.

Bucking.

Very few people can sit a real buck, so it is fortunate that buckjumpers are very much scarcer than they used to be and are seldom seen. I remember when there were always two or three, if not more, within the circle of my acquaintance, but at the time of writing I only know one. I cannot say much about sitting buckjumpers as I am unable to do it, but what I have heard on the subject is given in the chapter on "Seat." The chief point seems to be to keep one's weight so far back as to retain one's balance under all circumstances. Unfortunately one generally tumbles off before the point of balance is ascertained. Although I cannot say much about sitting a buck, I can

say, with every confidence, that if a horse is carefully broken in as recommended in the previous chapters there is practically no chance of his becoming a buckjumper.

Remember to let the saddle warm up on the back before mounting young ones. They should be saddled and led round for half an hour or more before they are wanted and should then be mounted very quietly and made to stand for a minute before moving off (unless they are inclined to jib). Their heads can be kept up by running reins, and their backs can be got down by driving them in the long reins before mounting them until they become friendly and obedient. They should be accustomed while in the long reins to things touching them in the ribs for a lot of naughtiness is caused by ticklishness. Horses treated in this way and kept in regular work soon forget all about bucking, even if they have once practised it, except in the case of those old horses with whom jibbing takes this form.

If anybody is standing handy when a horse begins to buck he should at once lace into him with a whip and shout at him. The horse cannot possibly behave worse than he is doing and will have to stop bucking to get away from the whip.

There is no doubt that the knees should be well bent when on a rough horse. The last time I was bucked off I was trying a horse in a strange saddle of which the stirrup leathers were much too long for me even when in the last hole. I was in tennis flannels and pumps and did not expect a "plant." To reach the irons I had to straighten my knee and at the first buck I went as far as the reins would let me. The horse was cantering quite quietly when it suddenly stopped dead and I was in the air before I realized that the horse had a buck in it. I am convinced that I should have made at least an attempt to stay had not the straightened knee allowed the jar of the stirrup

to act directly on my body. A bent knee would have acted like a spring and would have absorbed much of the violence of the jar. The jar of a bucking horse is not easily forgotten. Of course, a stirrup so short that the thigh is not in real contact with the saddle is as bad as one too long. One must preserve a happy mean.

A horse that seems likely to buck may be prevented from doing so by being turned round and round to the side to which he turns most readily.

One way of keeping a horse's head up is to pass a strap or rein from the right ring of the snaffle over the horse's withers to a D on the left side of the saddle and one from the left ring to a D on the right side. The running reins mentioned at the end of Chapter VIII are also useful.

A tightly rolled blanket strapped well down on the front of the saddle will often save a fall.

With young ones a long sand-bag strapped securely across the saddle is sometimes used. The horse is held by a cavesson and allowed to try to buck the bag off until he gets sick of bucking.

An officer in an Indian Lancer regiment told me that he cured buckjumpers by lungeing them with a heavy sand-bag tied to each side of the saddle, so that when the horse bucked the bags flew up and returned with a bang on his ribs. He said that a little of this was enough for any horse.

The same officer also told me, and I have heard it elsewhere, that a horse cannot get rid of his rider easily if the stirrup irons are joined together by a strap passing under the horse's belly.

If a man is " stuck " with a buckjumper he may try any of the above, but I strongly recommend that when buying a waler without a fair, personal trial, a clause be inserted in the receipt to the effect that the horse is not a

buckjumper and that it is returnable if it prove to be one. A refusal to insert such a clause is significant.

I know of one bad case where a planter bought a horse at a high price by correspondence. He complained that the horse was an unrideable buckjumper, that no one in his neighbourhood could sit it, and that he considered that the dealer should take it back as he sold it as quiet to ride. In reply he was told that they never took horses back and that they would now advise him to buy a good horse at a reduced price. I do not know what further reply he got to his query as to whether this advice was to be regarded as wit or sarcasm. I cannot, however, think that such treatment of customers can do much good to a dealer's business.

Hogging and Pig Jumping.

All young horses in high condition are fond of jumping about when excited. If they try to hump their riders off they should be shaken up and shouted at, and a good whack with an ashplant or similar stick makes a very good accompaniment to the shaking up. Cantering in small circles and figures of eight soon gets their backs down. If a horse starts hogging when going across country shake him up, increase the pace for a time, and keep him up to his bit.

Shying.

The best cure for shying is to make the horse thoroughly obedient in the long reins and to accustom him quietly to the things he is afraid of. If the fault is due to deficient eyesight there is no actual cure, but from whatever cause it may arise, a tendency to shy can be mitigated by keeping the horse's attention occupied by collecting him and playing with his mouth. If the object he fears is on your right, draw his head gently to the left and increase

the pressure of the left leg, and *vice versâ*. If the horse runs backwards a close application of both heels just behind the girth will generally bring him up to the hand again.

Many horses shy for fun when they are fresh. They look about for an excuse for a lark. This is due rather to high spirits than to vice, and if it is objected to it can be cured by increasing the work. Well broken horses rarely shy.

Kicking.

Mere kicking up without trying to strike anything is not a very serious vice as a rule, but I have had a few thoroughbred ones that used to kick themselves nearly perpendicular and were consequently rather hard to sit. Two of them used to do it even at a fast gallop, and one of them, I am sure, kicked more than five hundred times on the morning on which he was first ridden on parade.

Horses that kick at others or at people or hounds must be corrected. If you hit a horse for kicking you must hit him while his legs are still in the air. If you wait till he is down he will almost certainly kick again. The place to hit a horse is just behind the girth. Further back he is much more ticklish and therefore more likely to kick if struck there.

If a horse cowkicks at you when you go to mount him hit him on the offending leg as it is striking. A whip should be used as a stick might lame him. In mounting such a horse get well up to his shoulder with your right hand on the pommel of the saddle instead of on the cantle. He will then be unable to reach you. If he cowkicks at your foot when you are mounted spur him hard and instantly on the side to which he kicked.

A horse should always be punished for striking out at a man if it can be done at the time. It is no use to hit him after his leg is down.

It is well to remember that a horse cannot kick you if you are close up against his buttocks, he can only give you a very rude push, but beware of his heels if you are three or four feet behind him.

Biting.

Captain Hayes's method of dealing with biters consists in the use of an octangular wooden bit with the faces grooved and the angles sharpened. This is made so thick that when it is on the horse cannot close his mouth. When he snaps he hurts his mouth badly and soon gives up the practice.

When mounting a horse that bites turn the elbow of your left arm (supposing you are mounting from the near side) out towards the horse's eye, take the right rein shorter than the left, and place your left hand well up the horse's neck, feeling the right side of his mouth all the time. As long as your elbow is sticking into his face he cannot bite you, but look out for the seat of your breeches if your off rein is too slack as you mount. A horse that both bites and cowkicks requires careful mounting. You must stand well up to the shoulder to avoid his heels with the elbow pointed at his eye, and the off rein shortened to prevent his biting you.

Many horses are inclined to nip one out of pure good fellowship. They should be checked for this, for a horse's nip is pretty severe.

Bolting.

A horse that bolts is temporarily mad, does not look where he is going, cannot be stopped or guided, and ought to be shot. If you have to ride such a brute have running reins on him and, if he gets away with you, haul his head round to his side with one of them. He is likely to fall,

but if you know that and lean right back with your feet out of the stirrups you will fall clear. If such a horse gets away amongst traffic it is extremely likely that he will kill somebody. As I said, such brutes should be shot. Fortunately they are rarely met with.

Hard Pulling.

This differs from bolting in that the horse is not mad and can be guided and managed by a good rider. A puller can generally be much improved by being thoroughly mouthed in the long reins and in the riding school. Once you succeed in getting the stiffness out of his neck and get him to canter slowly on his hocks, arching his neck to the curb, you can always get a hold of him when you want to. In the riding school all sorts of bits can be tried until you find one to which he will bend his neck. Sometimes when a severe bit is not successful a much milder one solves the puzzle, for horses undoubtedly sometimes pull from pain. I do not believe in high ports to curb bits except in the case of horses that get their tongues over the bit or draw their tongues right to the back of their mouths, and then only if the effect of the port is to keep the tongue in the proper place. Longer cheeks and a tighter curb chain make the bit more severe and cheeks can be had long enough to break a horse's jaw. Some horses that pull very hard can be held in such bits as the Chifney, the Baron Thornton, the Three-in-One, and the Mohawk, but careful breaking should make almost any horse that is not insane go in an ordinary double bridle or a Half Moon Pelham. Rubber mouthpiece covers are useful in some cases, especially after injury to the jaw, but many horses dislike the taste of them and try to spit them out.

For light-mouthed, excitable horses the curb chain should be covered with wash leather. The leather should be

removable or the chain will rust inside it and may break when most required.

Unsteadiness.

Fidgeting, refusing to walk or trot without breaking, refusing to stand still, etc., are all matters of breaking. Once obedience is secured the rest follows. If a made horse from freshness will not walk or trot quietly, and it is necessary that he should, the best plan is to take him then and there off the road and canter him in a small figure of eight with the correct changes of leg until he sobers down. If one is alone the simplest plan is to let him go along until he becomes quiet. Some horses will halt when required to, but after a short time begin to fidget, turn round, etc., etc. This is a great nuisance from a parade point of view. The halter twitch is the only cure in bad cases, though the man who is taking a school ride regularly may improve the horse by sitting on its back at the halt while the work is going on. The trouble is that though the horse will soon learn to stand still in the school he becomes excited on a big parade and will be almost as bad, perhaps, as ever. For such the halter twitch and the word "steady" may be tried, but one cannot use the word above a whisper on parade.

Horses required for parades should be accustomed to military bands whenever possible. Music excites some horses greatly at first and sets them a-dancing which is no advantage when walking or trotting past the saluting point under orders to maintain the greatest steadiness. Opportunities should also be taken of accustoming chargers to crowds, shouting, clapping of hands, waving of flags, etc. Boldness is first of all the result of confidence in and obedience to the rider, and until these are secured horses will always be liable to shy and play up at unusual

sights and sounds. Their education should therefore be well advanced before they are introduced to processions and rows. A thoroughly schooled and collected horse is under control and that is half the battle. He will soon get used to things that do not hurt him if he cannot get away from them or play up, while if he succeeds in creating a riot he will be worse on the next occasion.

I make a point of shooting crows, etc., round about the stable at times, generally when the horses are feeding. After a short time they take no notice whatever of the discharge of the gun.

Nervousness of Weapons.

When the horse is obedient in the long reins, the sword, hogspear, lance, or whatever it is he dislikes, should be shown to him and he should be accustomed to its sight, touch, and smell. He may then be mounted by a good rider who should quietly move the weapon about while the breaker still constrains the horse to stand still by means of the long reins. In exceptional cases the halter twitch may be required, but I have not come across such. I have a mare that was quite quiet with the sword except when I picked up anything on the point of it, when she became frightened and extremely violent. I cured her by putting small bunches of lucerne grass about, picking them up on the sword point as I rode about, and feeding them to her direct from it. She is now quite pleased to see a tent-peg or anything else on the point.

The weapons should not be used for any purpose until the horse is quite used to their being carried in the hand and moved about, and when the sword is first brought into use cuts should be made very gently so as not to frighten the horse by the noise of the contact with the object. The more quietly one proceeds, the sooner will one attain one's object.

CHAPTER XVII.

PICKETING HORSES.

To people who have much inspection work in the mofussil it is of great importance to be independent of stables, and with this end in view horses should be accustomed to being picketed in the open and under trees. During the rains in Bengal, and always in wet districts like Sylhet, each horse should be furnished with a waterproof sheet in addition to his body clothing. With this he is practically independent of the weather save that on wet, sloppy nights he will not lie down unless a dry bed can be found for him.

The simplest, and I think the best, way of picketing horses is to use two shackles, one attached to a fore pastern and the other to the opposite hind pastern. The rope from the shackle on the foreleg is carried forward in a straight line and almost tight to two pegs planted one behind the other, some seven feet from the horse's foot. The rope from the shackle on the hind leg is carried straight backwards and fastened to two pegs at the same distance and in the same way. A clove hitch is put on the first peg and drawn tight, then a similar clove hitch is made on the second peg, taking care that the rope between the pegs is taut and that the hitches are on the ground level, and then a couple of half hitches round the last peg will make all safe and shipshape. I have never known a horse to draw pegs thus arranged. The shackles should be changed to the other pair of legs occasionally, preserving the opposition.

When picketing a horse it is essential that the body of the horse should be in a straight line between the pegs. If the horse is to one side of the straight line when the ropes are tied to the pegs directly he moves into the straight line the ropes are seen to be too loose, and when that is the case he can get his free leg over the rope and may hurt himself, besides getting into other mischief. The exact length for the rope is hard to describe, but it may be taken that if the horse is standing with all his legs well under him the ropes should be about taut. If they are taut when his legs are spread out he cannot lie down.

At first horses will pull at the ropes as they resent the restraint and the syces should remain with them until they become quiet. As soon as they find that they cannot get free they will become quite quiet. I have never known of an accident from this form of picketing, while I have known of many from horses getting a leg over the head-rope when picketed by a rope from the halter. A horse can pull up a peg with his head, but not with his foot, as he is then pulling in the line of greatest resistance. The pegs are driven with their heads sloping away from the horse. The shackles should be of threefold soft leather, well oiled, and the ropes of well laid cotton. Hemp is not reliable.

In hot dry climates it pays well to picket horses out at night. The best permanent picket that I know consists of a post or stout bamboo well planted, some five and a half feet out of the ground, in the middle of a circular brick platform two feet high and two and a half feet in diameter. An iron ring, large enough to rise, fall, and turn easily on the post, is slipped over it and to this the horse's head-collar is tied by a rope just long enough to enable him to eat off the ground. When the rope is thus arranged the horse cannot get a leg over it, but he can eat.

walk round and round the post, lie down, and get up without difficulty. The edge of the brickwork should be rounded to prevent its chafing the rope. Some make the platform broader with a view to placing the horse's fodder on it. This is unsatisfactory as the ring and rope knock all the fodder off as the horse moves about. It is better to put the fodder on the ground close up to the brickwork. The horse will not then tread on it and spoil it. The object of the brickwork is to prevent the horse from getting a leg over the rope. Should this happen a rope cut will most likely be caused and these take a long time to heal. If one occurs, a half-and-half mixture of boracic acid powder and iodoform should be applied immediately the wound has been cleaned. Dirt should be excluded and complete rest given.

When in camp and choosing a place for a picket, attention should be given to the weather and the prevailing winds. In dry, sultry weather the horse should face the direction of the prevailing wind. In stormy weather their tails should be turned to the gale. A site down wind of a clump of teak, banyan, or pipal trees should be avoided in March and April as the strong and gusty winds of that season raise quantities of dead leaves which unsteady some horses seriously. No horse likes dry leaves flying about and against him. Mango and tamarind trees are practically free from this objection and also afford the best shelter in stormy weather. In still, fine weather horses are better away from trees at night as they are then cooler, less troubled by mosquitoes, and not liable to be disturbed by flying foxes. In the cold weather the horses do very well away from trees in the daytime if their loins are well protected from the sun by blankets.

March and April are the worst months for picketing horses. Hail then constitutes a great danger. The hail-

stones drive horses nearly mad, and in the hail season, the season of the first Nor'westers, stabling should be provided when possible.

Should the camp be surprised by a Nor'wester blankets and waterproof sheets should be spread over the horses from ear to tail. If hail is feared, or comes, the shackles should be removed, the horses, if necessary, blindfolded, and two men should hold each horse under the shelter of the most leeward of the thickest trees available. The bigger the wood the less danger there is of branches on the lee side of it falling.

Hail generally precedes rain in Bengal, and there, if the rain falls freely after the burst of wind, there is little cause for anxiety save from falling branches. This is not true of Sylhet where hail sometimes comes in the middle of a rain shower. A good aneroid barometer will foretell a Nor'wester with fair certainty and no one who camps out much should be without one. If a storm is apprehended shelter should be sought forthwith for man and beast.

I may perhaps mention that all tent ropes should be slackened at the approach of rain as they contract with wet and are apt to pull the pegs out of the sodden ground. Nor'westers are likely to blow tents down unless they are well sheltered, so for the men's sake as well as the horses', it is wise to seek house-room.

Drains should be cut round all tents to carry off the water falling from the roofs in wet weather, as otherwise the water will find its way into the tents.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TENT-PEGGING.

TENT-PEGGING is a great resource in places where there are not enough people for polo. It is a most fascinating amusement and its only drawback for the owner of a small stable is set forth in the wise Army order which lays down that no horse is to have more than three runs at a tent-peg in one day. The best plan is to send down all available horses and give them three runs each. The Army rule is a perfectly sound one. To give a horse more than three runs in one day is found to put him off the game altogether as well as to try his legs severely.

The *modus operandi* is as follows:—Having mounted with the lance, take your horse rather short on the bridoon rein and halt him. Letting the point of the lance rest on the ground, the pole perpendicular, grasp the lance, thumb downwards, with the point of the thumb level with the hip joint. This is the proper point at which to grasp the lance. Having found your length raise the point of your lance until the pole is perpendicular. As you approach the starting point let the point of the lance fall backwards, pass under the hand, and raise again to the front. This is quite easily done if the wrist be allowed to bend easily and if the last three fingers relax their hold of the lance. The back of the hand will now be undermost, the thumb pointing to the left front, fingers pointing to the right rear, the lance over the wrist and the point of the lance well up and pointing to the left front. This is preliminary to the flourish of the lance given as you start galloping. As your horse

springs off reverse these motions, taking care that the lance does not touch him anywhere. As the lance comes to the perpendicular once more, point up, hold it so at arm's length, looking " through " it at the peg until you get to the fifteen yard limit (measured from the peg). Here come down evenly, without jerking, as far as you can to the right, pressing the calf of the right leg against the horse to prevent your weight from bringing him over the peg. The lance, which should have been brought down in a straight line between you and the peg, should now be grasped in the full of the hand, the arm hanging directly below the shoulder. As the horse approaches the peg, the point of the lance is unconsciously directed upon it by the eye. Any voluntary muscular effort means, as a rule, a miss. The rider's eye being fixed on the peg, at the moment of contact the lance comes into the field of vision, it is essential that the eye should remain fixed on the peg and refrain from looking for the lance which will arrive in good time. As soon as the lance comes into the field of vision it should be kept there. As the lance, with, we hope, the peg on it, passes behind us, the eye should follow its point, the left shoulder being brought round to admit of this. This is most important. The butt end of the pole of the lance, after the peg has been taken, should come in contact with the back of the rider, the arm should point to the right rear, the wrist should be straight, the back of the hand up. If care be not taken at first the lance will come up straight to the rear, the butt passing over the rider's wrist and bringing his wrist and elbow into a very constrained position, while the point of the lance is brought dangerously near the horse's hind legs. This bad habit once acquired, is very hard to get rid of and care should be taken from the start to avoid it by keeping a straight arm and wrist and watching the point right round. As soon as the lance is in a straight line with the arm to the right

rear it should be brought smartly to the front by a widish sweep, the two flourishes repeated as at the beginning of the run, and the lance brought to the "order," resting on the right shoulder. The horse should be gradually pulled up in a straight line with the track. He should not be allowed to circle while pulling up as it might make him inclined to turn off before he was wanted to, and, besides, horses are harder to stop when on a curve, especially if they are working their heads round towards home. As soon as the horse stops, walk him quietly back to the others. When several men are going in turns it is a good plan for all to dismount and each to mount as his name is called. Horses should never be kept standing about at the starting point. Having to check them when they expect to jump into a gallop sets them backing and shifting and unsettles them a great deal. They should not be taken to the start until the peg is set and the course clear. Tent-pegging excites all horses and their peculiarities require careful study. No horse should be practised at tent-pegging when he is over fresh. Then all his little idiosyncrasies are at their keenest and he may hit on some new trick that in work he would never have thought of. Some very good tent-peggers, that is, horses that go very straight when extended, are sticky at starting. In the case of such a horse it is a good plan to send a man on a steady one to the starting point with him. As soon as the sticky one starts galloping the other pulls up.

It is a mistake to have the starting point too far from the peg. Nothing is gained by too long a gallop and it knocks horses about unnecessarily. When one does start, however, the sooner one is galloping the better. Some horses will plunge and throw themselves about until they are fairly extended and to check them makes them worse. The horse should therefore be pressed into his gallop at

once if he "plays up." If you check him when he plunges you may find yourself at the peg before he settles down.

Directly your horse has settled down in his gallop, and you have completed the flourish and got your lance perpendicular, look, as I said before, "through" the lance at the peg. In other words, with your eyes fixed on the peg bring the lance into the line of vision, the hand a little lower than the shoulder and to the front, so that the lance just clears the horse. The pole of the lance should now be between your eyes and the peg, though you are looking at the peg and not at the lance. Direct your horse so that as he gallops the lance remains between your eyes and the peg. As you bend over your lance will come down straight in that line. As you come down stare at the peg, focussing it most carefully. It must always be in focus of both eyes and you must see nothing else. Then patience. If you consciously do anything except focus that peg with both eyes, you will almost certainly miss it. If you remain entirely and solely actuated by your eye you will, bar accidents, score. The best point to focus is an imaginary point on the peg on its middle line and about an inch above the ground. This will allow for any small error in elevation. Avoid coming down too soon as the longer you have to wait when down the more likely you are to miss. On a fast horse the fifteen yard limit just gives time enough.

Although it is wise to commence with young horses at slow paces, it is not recommended that beginners should practise much at a canter. It is all right to canter until one has grasped what is required of one, but the canter is not the pace for competitions and it is not easy to hold a fretting or plunging horse at a canter and take a peg at the same time. It is essential that the horse should require no attention. He should be going as fast as he can lay

legs to the ground, and when he is doing that he cannot very well do anything else, although, of course, he may run out.

The horse chosen for tent-pegging should be a free and level mover, of a sedate and kindly nature, and above all he should have a good back for a saddle. It is neither pleasant nor easy to lean well over from a tall, roach-backed brute with straight shoulders and low withers. However, it is not often that one has a very large choice and a lot of fun can be had even with the most "three-cornered" of them. It is only very nervous and excitable ones that are unsuited to the game, and, of course, it is foolish to use an untrained one. He will probably be permanently spoiled. The use of horses under six years old is forbidden in the Army.

Horses for tent-pegging cannot be too well trained, and, especially when they are first put to the game, the more riding school work they get the better. Preferably, they should go straight from the school to the tent-pegging track while the sense of discipline is still on them. Horses to be used for competitions should be practised almost daily, and the rider should practise at pegs only two inches wide.

The course should be carefully prepared. The surface should be broken up evenly so as to save the horse's legs from jar, and, when available, tan, stable refuse, or straw from old thatches, should be spread over the whole. The longer the prepared track the better so as to give the horses plenty of room to stop in.

It is a great mistake to pull up a horse suddenly. It hurts his mouth and jars his legs and may make him take an intense dislike to tent-pegging. He should be taught to stop by degrees and he should never be jabbed in the mouth. Horses should not be overbitted, and sticky

starters should generally be started on the bridoon rein. Very few horses require to be ridden on the bit rein while tent-pegging, but I know some that do. With most it is wiser to start on the bridoon rein. The bit rein can be used after taking the peg if necessary. The less a horse's mouth is hurt the less likely he is to give trouble. At the moment of taking the peg the horse's head should be perfectly free.

The spur is hardly ever required while tent-pegging, though a sharp spur on the left heel may be of service in correcting one that runs out to that side. Spurs must be worn when tent-pegging in uniform. Great care must be taken not to drive the right spur into the horse, an act which would probably sicken him of tent-pegging for good, and blunt spurs should be worn as a rule.

Some horses shy off at first from the pressure of the right leg against them. Others run over the peg from the weight of the rider, as he bends down, drawing them over that way. These faults are easily cured by teaching the horse, in the riding school, not to mind such things, and by careful riding. What are not easily cured are faults such as running over the peg or running out because the horse is thoroughly sick of the whole thing and tries to make it not worth your while to ride him. Riding school, and plenty of it, is the only cure for this sort of thing, but, even combined with first class riding, it is not a certain one, and the horse is always liable to revert to his bad manners if he is at all above himself. He is never to be trusted for a competition. A horse is always more likely to play up and shew unnecessary spirits at a competition, where he sees a lot of strange horses, than when he is practising with two or three old friends at home.

Some riders always take up the left stirrup a hole before tent-pegging, and one I know usually fails to score if he

neglects this precaution. Personally I do not see what effect it can have, but *chacun à son goût.*

It is worth while to see that your lance suits your horse, that is to say, that it handles pleasantly when held at the length required. Some badly-made lances are very point-heavy when used from a tall horse.

Horses and ponies should, if possible, be run in separate classes at competitions. Most people consider that a man on a pony has an advantage over a man on a horse, and in some places ponies are handicapped a few points against horses. Points are given for style and pace and these should be rigorously withheld for any declension from the ideal, especially in pace. The pace required is the utmost pace of the horse, and nothing less will do.

The pegs must be $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 14 inches long. Seven inches of the peg should be above the ground and seven inches below. The best material for pegs is the inner wood of very young and small date palms. Care should be taken that the pegs are cut with the run of the grain or they will break. They should be wired round at the top, and again, seven inches lower, at the ground level, to prevent them from splitting. They should be soaked in water before being set in the ground. The side next to the rider is rubbed with dry lime, which adheres to the wet wood, and the peg is then set in a hole carefully made to receive it by means of an iron wedge shaped like a peg. It is a good plan in dry places to make a hole where the pegs are to be placed and to fill it with damp clay just before practice begins. It is very easy to set the pegs in this. Some horses shy at the wet clay, so it is well to cover it with dust or cut grass, or whatever the natural covering of the ground consists of. It is important that the pegs be soft. It is disheartening to a beginner to fail to carry his peg after making a good hit. Some pegs I have

ridden at have rung like iron when hit and absolutely refused to be pierced. The kind recommended above are of a leathery consistence when wet and, if properly made, *i.e.*, with the run of the grain, will be carried every time they are fairly hit. Good practice pegs can be made from the butts of the green leaves of Palmyra palms where they join the trunk. These are easily penetrable. They can be wrapped round with white paper fastened behind with tacks. They of course vary in size. Ordinary wood is quite unsuitable for pegs. Straw bottle cases do well at a pinch.

The faults of which beginners are most frequently guilty and by the commission of which they most frequently miss their pegs are these :—First and foremost "pointing" at the peg. It is sometimes done almost unconsciously and must be sternly avoided. More often it is a conscious act. One is close to the peg and the Evil One whispers in one's ear :—"Dig at it and you've got it." Well, you haven't. The next serious mistake lies in looking at the lance-point and trying to direct it on to the peg. The peg is then out of focus and is almost certainly missed. The peg has to meet the lance which *must* be carried on to the peg by the advance of the horse only. The eye influences the hand in keeping the point in the true direction. Impatience is the cause of both these faults and the overcoming of them makes tent-pegging a very good discipline for a hasty man.

Want of pace is the easiest of all faults to overcome and is justly punished by the withholding of marks. Want of style is due to want of practice and to ignorance of the proper methods. It is laid down that the rider shall not "come down," that is bend over and lower his lance-point, until within fifteen yards of the peg. At practice this fifteen yard limit should be clearly marked and the lance should begin to come down as the mark is reached. On a

fast horse one must be very careful not to come down too late, for this leads to a bad appearance which will lose points for style even if the peg be taken. Another fault which looks very ill is not leaning over sufficiently. There are several acknowledged styles of flourishing the lance. The one laid down here is accepted and looks well. Checking the horse at the start, and pulling him up too soon, or on a circle, are faults, and so is the failure to recover the lance properly. The lance should come across the rider's back and be brought smartly to the front as soon as possible with a strong movement. The rider should show that he has thorough control over it and should not trail it along like a crossing sweeper with a broom. A well-soaked peg is unexpectedly heavy when at the end of a lance and a firm movement is required to handle the combination neatly and with apparent ease—and to handle your weapon neatly and with apparent ease is style.

One final hint may be found of value. On certain tent-pegging tracks it is only possible to run one way owing to buildings or other obstacles giving no room to pull up in if the course is taken reversed. In India such tracks are generally arranged so that the afternoon sun shines on the face of the peg. In the morning such courses are naturally unsatisfactory as the sun is behind the peg which is thus unlighted and hard to see. If the track is required for morning use this difficulty is completely overcome by arranging a good shaving glass on three bricks in such a way that it reflects the rays of the sun on to the peg. A concave glass is the best. It should be placed well clear of the track some 20 or 25 yards from the peg.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MAN AND SOME HORSES.

THE Man, alas! is no longer in this Land of Regrets. But he has left with us many pleasant recollections, some of which I would put on record before I go hence and be no more seen. He was a most lovable Man in many respects, but it is of him in his relation to horses that I intend writing to-day.

He was a born horseman. Over six feet high, and always weighing under twelve stone, he was tall enough and strong enough to control most things. He had a singularly graceful as well as strong seat and the best of hands and nerve. Of his nerve I may tell you an anecdote. He was standing before a cane chair, a full peg in one hand and his pipe in the other. A friend gave him a push which sent him back into the chair and turned the chair over so that the back of his head was on the ground. He balanced that peg in falling so that not a drop was spilt. There may be better horsemen, I cannot say, but I have met very few as good. He did not go in much for race riding, but thoroughly enjoyed getting hold of a real sour-tempered one and trying to make a Bishop's hack of it. He had no Hayesian dodges. He got on their backs and stayed there until they gave in or put him down. In the latter rare event he quietly got up again and began anew.

One he never got quiet was a little thoroughbred mare called "Failure." Two of his friends went down to Calcutta to buy something to win local races with. Several good-looking ones they saw, but nothing filled their eye like this little mare.

"No good, Bob, too much money," said one of them while they were studying the mare for the tenth time.

"Well, there's nothing else I can fancy alongside her. Let us see what they want for her; we may be able to run to it."

The importer came along and saw they were struck.

"Cheap mare, gentlemen," said he.

"Out of our reach I am afraid," said one of them. "What are you asking for her?"

"Six hundred."

"Why, what's wrong with her?"

"She's quite sound," said the man, and left them to think the matter out.

"I'll be hanged if I have anything to do with her," said one.

"So will I," said the other, and off they went.

One of them returned to the mofussil that night. The other could not help going back next day to have another look at the mare. He was a well-known good rider and thought that he could not be far wrong with the mare if she passed the vet. He knew, of course, that it was very unlikely that the dealer would make a mistake and sell a two-thousand-rupee mare for six hundred, but the price turned the scale and he bought her.

"She's a bit green," said the seller as he gave the receipt, "perhaps you had better put a rough-rider up for a bit until she settles down."

A rider was engaged, and the mare and he went up to the mofussil together. The first day at exercise that rider was put down eleven times. He left the same evening for Calcutta, thanking his stars that he was able to move sufficiently to travel. The owner then exercised the mare himself, with a bolster over his thighs strapped under the mare's belly. Fortunately she never threw herself down. She had perfected the art of bucking and stuck to that.

The Man of whom I write heard of all this in the course of a few days, and, following his custom in such cases, wrote and begged the favour of a ride on the mare. Her owner brought her over. It took two syces to hold her, and even then a weak rider could never have got on her back. The Man mounted, said "*Chor do,*" and came flat on his back. He mounted again, and this time managed to sit her quite a furlong before the bump came. His third attempt was at first more successful. The mare's owner rode with him to see if she would go better in company. She went fairly kindly, after the first few bucks, until the owner, after checking his horse to let the mare go first over a wooden bridge, trotted up alongside. Then one furious buck sent her rider over the edge of the approach to the bridge, a fall of some ten feet. He landed on his head and came to himself after some time to find his head supported by the owner who was saying: "I fear I've done for him this time." He rode the mare home after this, "to prevent her thinking she's had the best of it" and went to bed for some days with concussion of the brain.

The mare was trained by her owner with the aid of the bolster, and she then went a-racing in a district to the north of ours. She there distinguished herself by bucking her jockey off in the three races she was entered for and came home in disgrace. Then the owner asked the Man to keep her for him for a time. He kept her for a year and had only three more falls from her, but she never became quiet. It always took two men to hold her at mounting, and if you raised your hand to your head you were a lost man. You could not keep her head up with one hand, and if you took one off the reins she took advantage of you instantly. If she got her head down you went down too. One day the Man was hacking her back to a friend's place from pigsticking. As he rode up the avenue his

hostess came out to greet him. He had ridden the mare a fast twelve-mile dâk and thought he might take a small liberty with her. He raised his hand towards his hat and a moment later emerged from a cloud of soorky dust with hot words on his tongue. But he trained the brute and won three races on her. The description given of her performances in the papers tempted a man in the Tea Districts. He wired "Will you sell 'Failure'"? "Yes, at a price." "Will give Rs. 800." "The mare leaves on receipt of cheque." We never saw her again, but we heard not long after that her new owner was dead and the mare sold for Rs. 100.

Another mare the Man had about this time was "Molly." She was a 16-hand chestnut Waler with a silver mane and tail. She, also, got him down more than once. He used to ride her as trumpeter's charger with the Light Horse. It was an education to watch him with his head low over the mare's shoulder, her head swinging high over his as he blew the calls which she hated. Had he sat up straight she would have knocked the trumpet down his throat. One day she put him down on parade and he was up again so quickly that no one knew he had been down until they saw the mud on his uniform. Once when he went Home on leave "Molly" and sixteen others were sent down to a dealer in Calcutta for sale. The dealer lent "Molly" and two others to customers for a morning's ride and on their report sent the whole string of seventeen over to Cook's to be sold by auction.

The Man liked thoroughbreds, but his absolute limit of price for any horse was Rs. 400. Some of them, needless to say, were hardly beginners' horses. He got a good many for nothing. If they were wild he got on with them somehow. If they were unsound he drove them leader in tandem. He held that any horse could be patched up

sufficiently for that work. He drove as well as he rode. In spite of having a withered thumb, due to a bite from a leopard, his left hand never moved on the reins when he was driving tandem. Once he was driving a friend across some fields in a high dog-cart, tandem, "taking a short cut," when the cart lurched into a grip and shot him out. He landed on one knee, got up, pulled up the horses, and got back into the trap, his hold of the reins absolutely unchanged and requiring no adjustment. He had a mare called "Devotion" whose first appearance in any harness was as leader in tandem. He said they were sure to be all right in the lead as long as they pulled. "Devotion" certainly fulfilled this condition. I was in the trap with him the first time she was in. She was pulling so hard that the pressure of the leader's reins on the territs of the wheeler's headstall prevented him from raising his head. "She catches hold a bit, doesn't she?" said I. "Take them and see," quoth he, and verily we should have done just as well without traces.

He was not keen on keeping "Devotion," she was one of those brutes that have never done pulling, and once there were some rather amusing negotiations for her sale. There was a youngster, no kind of a horseman, who was extremely taken with the mare's appearance and with her charming manners in the stable. "What a beautiful creature! How I should like to have a horse like that!" was the constant burden of his song. At last he heard that the Man would take Rs. 400 for her and asked him if it was really true that his lovely mare was to be sold so cheap.

"I should so like to buy her," said he when he heard it was a true bill.

"Well," said the Man, "she pulls a bit and I don't know whether you could ride her. I certainly should not like you to buy the mare without trying her."

This rather put the boy off. However, he could not help thinking of himself, mounted on that lovely mare, "witching the world with noble horsemanship," so he took his courage in both hands and went to the Man.

"When can I have a ride on 'Devotion'?" he asked.

"What's that? A ride on 'Devotion'?"

"Yes, you said you would not sell her to me unless I had a trial."

"Well, I am afraid you will have to do without her. She would probably kill you and screw herself. You would not stop her till she got to the sea."

One evening as "Devotion" was being led out to exercise, wearing only a watering bridle and rug, a fox came into the compound. The Man took the ends of the *bagdor*, leapt on her back, and with two fox-terriers picked up his fox. In his hands the mare turned the fox to the terriers again and again until "Jack" took him "*en passant*."

"Spread Eagle" was another horse I remember, not on account of his good qualities. He was bought from the importer in Calcutta, by a man who thought he looked like a 'chaser, for Rs. 350. He was a fine figure of a horse, standing 16-3, and up to any amount of weight, but he had a very bad pain in his temper. Like others of his type he came to the Man for education. He smashed a dog-cart to smithereens one day because an elephant came near him while his syce was putting him to, but he never got the Man down. He tried. I saw him one day shy violently, take a bank and ditch sideways into a field, stumble on to his wicked head, and get up and buck three times all within about ten seconds. This did not disconcert his rider in the least. The Man won a race on him, but his subsequent fate I forget.

"Timothy" was a great sloppy brute that required as much room to turn in as an omnibus. He was prin-

cipally distinguished by an intense objection to ticca-garis and stacked-up cars. One day the Man was driving the Inspector-General of Jails round the station with "Timothy" in the lead and "Shamrock" in the shafts. By ill luck they met the missionary omnibus taking the little girls home from school. "Timothy" promptly swung off the road and went the wrong side of a tree. The man as promptly turned the wheeler after him and all would have been well if "Timothy" had not caught his toe in a root and gone head over heels. He managed to wrap himself up in the traces to such an extent that it was a matter of minutes before he could be freed. In the meantime "Shamrock" was deliberately and savagely kicking the cart to pieces. When he was got out of the shafts his hocks were found to be terribly cut. Said the Man "That's the second time you've done that. If you ever do it again I'll have you shot, as sure as your name's "Shamrock." He never did it again, but whether it was the threat or his battered hocks that induced him to mend his manners this deponent saith not. This "Shamrock" did a weird thing once before the Man got him. He was always fond of cutting his corners. One day a man was taking a girl for a drive behind the old brute and became too interested in his companion to mind his road. Old "Shamrock" took the sloping roots of the first tree in the avenue with the off wheel and tilted the cart to such an angle that, the girl clinging to the man, they both tumbled out. "Shamrock" galloped off, turned into the garden drive, went round it, and, finding the other end closed, jumped the gate, taking the trap with him. When the trap landed on its wheels after this it looked as though there would be something left of it, but "Shamrock" managed to upset it and smashed it to splinters at the corner turning to the stables. An old race-horse called "Moustache" was leader to "Shamrock" for

years. He was promoted to be break horse, but he got himself disliked by seizing the youngsters by the scruff of the neck and shaking them if they hung back when he started. A separate rein on the outside prevented this, however.

"Glengarry" was a very handsome little chestnut thoroughbred who took a lot of breaking in to harness. Nothing would make him start until one day the Man stood up in the trap and gave him one across the loins with the thong of his hunting crop. After that the only difficulty was to get into the trap before he started. I have known another cured of jibbing in the same way.

"Glengarry" once planted over a pig. He stood perfectly still with his ears back although the pig was rootling at his hocks and his rider's spurs were hard at work on his flanks. What induced this extraordinary conduct we did not understand at the time, and I am not sure now that I am right when I put it down to the Man's having kept the spur home instead of pricking the horse and withdrawing it. "The Little Grey Barn" planted in precisely the same way with poor "Barty" when he was attacked by a lot of ruffians armed with *lathies*.

A splendid little pigsticker called "Shikari" which the Man was keeping for a friend came to a strange end. He was asleep in his stall one night when he apparently got nightmare. He sprang up in a frenzy and threw himself about in his stall to such an extent that he injured himself very seriously. When he was quiet enough to be handled we found that he was simply covered with wounds, some of them very severe. He was unable to leave his stall for a month. The season was the rains, and when we took him out of his stall for the first time we found he was hopelessly gone in the loins.

The last of the horses that I remember clearly was a cobby, dark chestnut Waler who would follow one all over the place. He was so lazy that if one stopped riding him for a moment he would stand still and try to graze. He could, however, buck like a fiend when he wanted to. One day the Man, who at the time was under orders for Home after a heart attack, was riding this brute out to join a party who were to pigstick next day. The weather was fearfully hot and the Man was feeling very slack and ill. I tried to persuade him to stay at home but he would not listen. He had the chestnut for the second dâk and, finding him sluggish, gave him the spur in a fit of impatience. This was an indignity the brute never would put up with. He bucked forwards and sideways and backwards all over three fields and only stopped when he was so done that he remained with his nose on the ground after the last buck. The Man was utterly exhausted and one more buck must have "put" him. It was a queer sight —the horse with his nose upon the ground and the Man leaning with both hands on the pommel of his saddle, both of them too distressed to move.

Soon after this the Man went Home and the chestnut was returned to his owner. He was sold to a plucky youngster from Calcutta who, on the strength of a short trial during which the horse did not buck, gave good silver money for him. Arrived in Calcutta the horse promptly put him down and broke his collar-bone. A friend who was induced to ride the new horse during the owner's illness met with precisely the same treatment with the same result. The brute stood in the stable until his master was able to ride and then broke the same collar-bone for him over again. His subsequent history is not recorded.

CHAPTER XX.

MY FIRST PIG.

MORE years ago than I care to count, when I was new to the country, I was sent to an isolated factory to learn my work and the vernacular. There was no work going on so I applied for leave to join a big shooting camp in the Central Provinces to which I was invited. I was told that I should get no leave until I could speak the local dialect. As I knew hardly a word of it, and not a soul in the neighbourhood could speak a word of English, I was more than a little bored. There was nothing to shoot so I was dependent for amusement chiefly on a grey Cabuli gelding which I had been lucky enough to pick up from a man who was leaving the district. This horse stood about 15 hands 1 inch and had won a race in his own class. He was past mark of mouth, but was as sound as a bell, clever across country, and would follow a pig by himself. His reputation as a pigsticker made me anxious to try to flesh my maiden spear, but unfortunately pigs were scarce in my place of exile. I had acquired an old spear somehow or other. I forget whether I bought it second-hand or found it in the factory discarded by my predecessor. It was not a good one, but in my eyes a spear was a spear and a valuable asset.

I was in a state of blissful ignorance of all matters Indian, and all I knew about hog hunting was what I had gathered from a book which I had borrowed and read when in the station. But I was keen to enter at the game, so you may imagine my excitement when some men

with difficulty explained to me that, when going to cut thatching grass, they had been charged by a big boar who had driven them off the ground. I ordered my horse, seized my cherished spear, and, with my informants to show me the way, started for the spot. When I arrived I found that I was expected to perform immediate miracles. I felt rather nonplussed. The grass was fairly extensive and I had not the wildest notion of the proper method of setting about matters. Beaters were mentioned in the book so I made signs to the men to enter the grass. This they were very reluctant to do in spite of my objurgations which, being in English, caused more relief to my feelings than violence to theirs. At last one or two of them gingerly advanced towards the grass. This sufficed, for out came the pig and away went the beaters for their lives. As soon as my old horse saw the pig he was into his bridle with a bound, but the pig seeing him broke back into the grass. Then I realized the value of that old grey. Bounding over the high grass, his eyes fixed on the pig, he kept at his tail, at times hardly out if a canter but never thrown out. We came to a patch of thorns and heavy grass in which I thought the pig would lie up. But no, on and on we went until I began to think that something was wrong, perhaps that the old nag did not care to go closer. I did the poor beast a great injustice. He was far wiser than I. At last after many turns and twists we got into lighter grass and then into the open, where the pig, making a village about two miles off his point, began to gallop in earnest.

I happened to check the grey, whose mouth was much better than my hands were then. Realizing the situation he responded by a vigorous blow on my nose with his head, and was in a moment sailing away in complete command of the expedition. When the sparks had died out of my eyes and I found sense enough to leave him alone,

I realized that the time had come for me to do my share of the work. I was rather surprised that the pig had not made some hostile demonstration, especially after his inhospitable reception of the coolies, but far from showing fight he seemed to be uncommonly short in the wind and began to jink in an unexpected and disconcerting manner. At last he showed marked signs of distress and the old horse, suddenly increasing his speed, gave me a grand chance of a passing spear. I struck that broad, bristly side truly enough but, to my dismay, made practically no impression on it. Although I had not realized it the spear was as blunt as a poker. The poor beast was soon completely blown and again and again I did my best to kill him, he responding with some half-hearted charges, until at last for some reason or other he sank down beneath a babul tree and gave up the ghost. Whether this pig died of exhaustion or of disgust at my ineffectual efforts to kill it I never clearly understood. However that may be, it was now apparently dead and my nose, wrist, and shoulder were undoubtedly sore, so I dismounted and, spear in hand, advanced cautiously to inspect my quarry. As I approached my triumph was dashed by mighty fears.

Where are the tushes, my hard-earned trophy? whence that lightning recollection of the styes behind the orchard at home? The fears become certainty and certainty is followed by remorse. Who will now feed and tend the family, obviously young, of the portly sow whose limbs are stiffening in death beneath my gaze? who will protect them from the prowling jackal?

Shivering with disappointment and disgust at my crass rawness I withdrew from the harrowing scene to my horse, who was indulging in a vigorous shake after his exertion. Sorrowfully I mounted and returned to the grass fields whence I had started so full of pride. These were now a

scene of wild excitement. Two men I saw retreating with newly-slaughtered sucking pigs. The rest armed with *lathies* were falling over one another in the high grass in pursuit of the survivors of the bereaved litter which, driven from their home in that clump of thorns so nobly avoided by the old sow, were scampering in all directions. I drove the rascals from the spot with reproaches and the butt end of my spear, and then rode slowly home with thoughts on which I dare not dwell. I relieved my feelings somewhat at the expense of sundry *Domes* who wasted a lot of my time explaining that, in return for fabulous *bakshish*, they would bring in the carcase of the dear defunct, but that night I did not sleep.

PART II

HINTS ON THE USE OF

THE SHOT GUN.

CHAPTER I.

GUNS FOR INDIA.

THE guns usually sold in India have the right barrel a nominal cylinder and the left barrel more or less choked. These guns are all very well in their way and are probably the best for the man who wishes to indulge in all forms of shooting and who can only afford one gun. They have, however, the disadvantage, inherent in such compromises, of being quite perfect for nothing.

For snipe both barrels are best when of cylinder boring. Of this there is no doubt whatever. For ducks on *be ls* both barrels should be fully choked. A modified choke is useful when beating in line for jungle fowl and partridges as the shots are sometimes long, and also when shooting these birds over dogs. When these birds are driven they are within range of a cylinder barrel and so are duck at the morning flight. A perfect battery would, therefore, consist of three guns of the same weight, shape and balance. This is out of the question for most of us. Some people, instead of having two guns, have one gun with two pairs of barrels, one pair choked and one pair cylinder. This plan has disadvantages. It is extremely difficult to make two pairs of barrels to fit one body accurately, and harder

still to tighten up the gun when it becomes shaky if the two pairs of barrels are not exactly equally worn.

There is something to be said for the "improved cylinder" gun. This has in reality a very slight choke and is less apt to show cartwheel patterns than a true cylinder. Its killing range is also slightly greater.

Guns for India should be free from fancy engraving. This only harbours dirt which encourages rust, and it adds nothing to the practical value of the gun while making it more costly.

Modern 16 bores give so good a pattern that it is doubtful whether a 12 bore has any advantage over them for snipe and quails, while the 16 bore has two distinct advantages, namely, its light weight which does not fatigue the user and its light charge which is not likely to cause gun headache. Even the modern 20 bore, chambered for the magnum cartridge, is a most efficient weapon. Guns of still smaller bore require such accuracy of aim that they unnecessarily handicap a beginner. They are chiefly bought for boys and ladies, and by old gentlemen whose desire to shoot is as great as ever but whose natural strength is abated. Some of these old sportsmen make marvellous shooting, even with 28 bores. To be of any use these small guns must be made by a gunmaker who makes a speciality of them and they must be of substantial weight. Some of those offered by dealers make a very poor pattern and are too light for accurate shooting.

Sixteen bores, though very good for snipe and quail, do not take so large a charge of shot as 12 bores and are, therefore, less suitable for duck shooting unless chambered for the $2\frac{3}{4}$ inch cartridge.

I have shot lots of ducks with an ordinary 16 bore and with a cylinder twelve. They are, however, not the proper weapons for the sport. Except when they are

driven or when flighting at dawn ducks rarely give a shot much within 45 yards and that is beyond the effective range of a cylinder barrel even with No. 3 shot. The patterns made by a cylinder barrel at such a range with big shot are so thin that a duck may easily fly through untouched, and the odds are great against its being struck by the four or five pellets which secure retrieval. A single pellet in a lucky place is often the cause of death. More often the pellet is in some part not vital and the use of cylinder barrels results in an undue proportion of pricked birds, a thing every sportsman wishes to avoid. With a full choked barrel a duck is killed with certainty at forty-five yards if the aim is correct and the confidence given by this knowledge is a great asset. A full choked gun chambered for the three-inch cases will bring down ducks at extraordinary ranges, some makers guaranteeing them to kill at 80 yards, but they are heavy, and they blow the birds to bits at short ranges. Personally I think that the better shooting made by using a duck gun of the same weight and balance as one's snipe gun about makes up for the slightly reduced range of the lighter gun.

It is false economy to buy very cheap guns if one can by any means afford better ones. Especially should cheap hammerless guns be avoided. If one must have a cheap gun, a very serviceable hammer gun can be purchased in Calcutta for Rs. 225 and I do not recommend any lower grade. If possible, one should buy a gun by a good maker. Even if it is of plain quality it will be safe to use and fairly durable. Foreign guns with only the dealer's name on them should be avoided like the plague. They are unreliable and are practically unsaleable at second-hand.

A very objectionable form of hammer gun is one in which the right hammer must be lowered before the gun can be opened. I once had a narrow escape from one of these, the hammer of which slipped when the owner was

trying to lower it, preparatory to unloading, with the result that the shot entered the ground within a few inches of my foot. An accident with one of these guns happened to a friend of mine. The hammer slipped from his thumb and the lever was driven into his hand by the recoil and made a ragged and deep wound which gave a great deal of trouble. Have nothing to do with such weapons. At the same time run no risk of hammers slipping from the thumb and from the first acquire the habit of cocking and uncocking your gun with the second joint of the thumb instead of the top joint. It is just as easy and slipping is impossible.

Half the pleasure of handling a gun, and more, lies in its being well balanced. When the gun is taken apart the barrels without the fore end should weigh 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ oz. less than the stock, and the bulk of the metal in the barrels should be at the breech end. I will defy any one to shoot well for any length of time with a gun that is too heavy forward. There is no reason why the barrels of a twelve bore should weigh more than 3 lbs. The gun should balance from $2\frac{3}{4}$ to 3 inches, and the barrels alone 9 inches, forward of the breech. The metal in the barrels should have a minimum thickness of ·03 inch and will of course be considerably more at the breech. If the minimum thickness is much less it points to the fact that the barrels have been re-bored or "regulated" *after* proof. After being tinkered with barrels should be re-proved. In purchasing second-hand guns expert advice should be taken unless the gun is of a good grade and by a good maker and its history is thoroughly satisfactory.

In any case when buying a second-hand gun a beginner will be wise to take it to a gunmaker's trial ground to find out whether it fits him, and if not what it would cost to alter it to suit him. Alterations in length can easily be made,

but changes of bend and cast-off are not likely to be permanent. A good new stock will cost about Rs. 40. If the gun is a very good one and cheap, this expenditure may be advisable, otherwise it is better to look for another gun. A good gun is an economical investment as it will last for years. My favourite snipe gun was bought at second-hand more than 24 years ago and is still perfectly serviceable. The right barrel does not make quite such a good pattern as it did years ago, but there is not much the matter with it for it killed nine snipe with ten cartridges the last time it was out.

To sum up, the gun should be suited to the work for which it is required. If no duck shooting is likely to be obtained I advise the beginner to purchase a double cylinder. The vast majority of snipe and quail are shot within 35 yards of the gun. A quick shot in fine weather kills most of his birds within 30 yards. It is interesting to step out the distance to where a wild snipe is lying. The beginner will be surprised to find that the distance is less than he estimated, sometimes by a good many yards. If one cannot buy two guns at one time the cylinder should be bought first and the duck gun can be made to the same measurements afterwards. To those going out to India I say be fitted for your gun before leaving Home. You will have to pay 10% duty on it on landing.

Provide yourself with a handguard for each gun. Under the hot sun of India barrels heat quickly and cool slowly.

CHAPTER II.

AIMING.

THE one thing necessary to good shooting is concentration of all the faculties on the object aimed at. You will become conscious of the position of the gun barrels without looking for them or at them. You *must* look at the bird with both eyes and focus it clearly. This is of the utmost importance. A good shot appears to foresee an erratic movement on the part of the bird so intensely is his attention fixed on it.

The object of the beginner should be to make this strain of aiming last as short a time as possible. He should, before going out to shoot at game, practice aiming until his gun comes upon the object he looks at. He should pick out a mark on the wall, focus it well, and suddenly bring his gun up on to it. He may then close his left eye and see whether his aim is correct. He should do this at various marks, high and low and to left and right of him, several times before he leaves his room every morning until his gun comes up true. Then when he goes out to shoot game, let him say to himself, "Forward and high, forward and high," until his subconsciousness is imbued with that idea. Up gets a snipe and dashes off to the left. The muzzle of the gun overtakes the bird, continues to travel and is in front of the bird and still travelling as the shot leave it, and over goes the bird. It is all done by one smooth movement of the gun, the secrets being that the eyes focus the bird and that the movement of the gun is not checked. The whole operation takes about

one second from the time the bird is seen and the hand begins to move.

For a bird going straight away a fraction more time is required to steady the gun if it is brought in from either side on to him. Care must be taken not to swing past him then. If the gun comes up straight in his line the shot should be fired as the gun comes on and the muzzle still rising a little will ensure that the shot is not too low. We must remember that the longer we dwell on our aim the further the bird gets from us, and that the shot pattern becomes thinner and thinner the further it gets from the gun.

If a bird is coming at you take him at about 40 yards away. He is apt to be blown to bits if allowed to come too near and he will be quite close enough by the time your shot reaches him if you raise your gun when he is a fairly long shot off.

If a bird is coming high over make quite sure that you realize in what line he is travelling, then swing forward in that line and fire. The further the bird is from you the further ahead you must fire, and consequently the greater the importance of being in the right line. Be careful with overhead shots that the left hand does not pull your gun over to the left. For high overhead shots the left hand should not be advanced so far along the barrels as usual owing to this tendency to pull the gun over. For all other shots the straighter the left arm is the better, I think. His Majesty The King, in common with other first-class shots, shoots with a practically straight arm.

For birds coming from a distance and crossing you the best plan, I think, is to bring the gun up slightly behind the bird, swing past it, and pull. The gun should not be brought up until the mind is made up to fire. Any delay once the gun is up tends to failure.

If two birds are crossing in the same direction take the rearmost bird first, even if it be the nearer. It is very difficult to kill a crossing bird if the gun is swung to meet it and it is seldom necessary to try this shot. The impetus given by the swing with the bird will tend towards the avoidance of the common and fatal fault of stopping the gun before pulling the trigger. This swing with the bird should cover a small angle only and is quite different from the terribly dangerous habit some men have of following a bird's flight all over the country with the muzzles of their guns "trying to get on to it." Such men should be prosecuted under section 336 of the Indian Penal Code.

Make a rule as to which you will take if several birds rise together, and stick to it. It will pay you immensely in the long run and you will not stand undecided at the sight of a big wisp or covey, nor will you be tempted to brown it. As young shots are generally, for obvious reasons, placed on the left of the line, practise taking the left hand birds of each wisp. In any case when shooting with another man you must take the outside birds, *i.e.*, those furthest from your companion. Remember that a bird flushed by him is his to fire at until he has missed it or, by taking another or not raising his gun, declined it. Should you in your haste fire at such a bird at the same time that he does and the bird falls, the bird is his, no matter though you are quite certain that you hit it and that he missed it. Strict attention to this rule makes jealousy out shooting almost impossible. I am of course supposing that my reader has sufficient self-control to walk straight to his front in the line given without edging in so as to encroach on his neighbour's beat. No man will ask to shoot with him those who break such elementary rules of courtesy, and the beginner will have to depend on others for the bulk of his sport in most instances.

CHAPTER III.

SNIPE.

IF one is ploughing through mud after snipe and not hitting them one is apt to get angry or disgusted. That does not help matters. Sit down for a few minutes if there is anything to sit on. I like to have a *mohra* (wicker stool) with me. Turned upside down it makes an excellent basket for the cooly who carries your change of clothes and refreshments; and the right way up it is a comfortable seat for you, even if you are in water. When you go on again, if birds are plentiful (it pays even if they are not) aim carefully at one or two birds with an empty gun until you feel "on them." It helps, too, to overcome the feeling of hurry which a snipe is so apt to cause in a beginner. Then repeat to yourself "*Forward and high, Forward and high,*" until you find you are getting on to your birds. I have found this method of "suggestion" most useful, and others to whom I have recommended it tell me the same.

Nearly all snipe when flushed rise in their flight, though the rise may be small. The charge of shot that misses a snipe usually passes behind him, or under him, or both. It is impossible to describe to a beginner just how far he should shoot in front of a crossing bird. It all depends on the pace, distance, and angle at which the bird is moving. If you can get hold of a clay pigeon trap it will teach you this; and it has the advantage that you can set it again and again at the angle that puzzles you until you master it. If you cannot get the use of a clay pigeon trap, the

best plan is to take your gun whenever you go for a stroll out of the station and shoot at every edible bird that comes within range. You can of course work out the problem mathematically. Your shot travel roughly 300 yards a second, and your bird may be taken as travelling at 40 miles an hour (unless it is a frightened duck). Having worked out your problem as to how far you should shoot in front of your bird you will still have the difficulty of recognising that exact distance 40 yards away.

As a man tires towards evening he is very apt to undershoot his game. He will recover his aim to a certain extent if he realizes what is wrong, suggests "*forward and high*" to himself, and, if very tired, takes a rest and a drink of soda water and a biscuit. Eating a little often steadies the nerves.

On a dark day one finds it very difficult to focus the birds clearly. Hence the bad averages made under such conditions. Another cause of poor bags on dark, windy days is the wildness of the birds, which on these days sleep lightly, if at all. In a cyclone I have known them to lie like stones, unwilling to face the storm; but as a rule in cloudy and windy weather few birds will rise within 30 yards of the gun and great numbers will rise out of shot. At such times they usually fly low, and in *beels* it is practically impossible to define them clearly against the brown water weeds. In green rice they are easier; and easier still if they have to cross open water. Therefore in bad weather such grounds should be chosen if available. Against a background of trees snipe are hard to hit. Some otherwise good grounds are unpopular simply for the reason that the absence of a skyline at a reasonable angle makes good shots seem mediocre. This is not sound, for a bad shot cannot shoot snipe there at

all, but a shot just under the 1st class is apt to be very jealous of his reputation.

The effect of wind on the flight of snipe is a matter of controversy. Some maintain that snipe invariably rise, and fly, against the wind, and that therefore it is advisable to advance directly down wind upon them. Others declare, Mr. E. B. Baker amongst them, that the up wind flight is a myth. My experience is that it is the natural habit of snipe to rise against a strong wind as they thereby obtain a mechanical advantage, but that when they have been a good deal fired at their object is to get away from the gun let the wind blow whence it list. A great disadvantage attached to walking down wind in *beels* is that the sound of the splashing of one's feet in the water is carried directly by the wind to the birds who thus rise at a greater range than they would otherwise do. Another disadvantage of walking down wind early in the season is the great heat felt when walking through heavy going with the wind behind one. I think the best plan when shooting alone is to walk down and across the wind with one coolie up wind and two or three coolies down wind of you. With two men out the guns should be at each end of the line, save for one coolie down wind of the down-wind gun who should be the better shot. The up-wind gun will get more crossing shots than the other, and a crossing bird is easier to hit than one going away. It presents a larger target, is more readily defined, and its jinking from side to side does not materially affect the position. I walk down wind to snipe to get a low sun behind me or because I cannot help it, otherwise not. In *beels* one usually has to get to snipe as one can. Deep water, stretches of dry ground, etc., regulate the direction of the advance more than do the wind or even the sun.

To have the sun in one's face during the short days, when he does not rise high in the sky, is tantamount to having a bad average. The brown water-weeds glisten in the sun. Away go a cloud of snippets, and "scape, scape" goes a snipe amongst them. The whole lot are represented by a mere glitter of swiftly moving wings. The odds on the snipe as against a good shot are at least two to one; as against a bad shot, all Lombard Street to a China orange.

This brings us to the question of what degree of skill one may arrive at. It is hard to put a limit to the skill of the few great shots. They miss very little. In the ricefields early in the season, when the majority of the birds are pintails, an ordinary good shot should miss very few, certainly not more than one in four, and, in form, he will often kill his dozen or fifteen without a miss. Later in the season, in the *beels*, the matter is different. Three kills for five shots is then good shooting provided all fair chances are taken and all shots counted in a long day. Of course one may sometimes do better and a good deal better, but as an average it is good enough. On big *beels*, on dull, stormy days in December and January two birds for five cartridges may be a good average with which a man has reason to feel himself not disgraced. I remember one afternoon of gales and clouds when my companion, talking over a bag of 29 couple we had made, said that he regarded every bird we had killed as a fluke! They certainly were difficult.

In February and March the light in the *beels* improves, the rising temperature makes the birds more sluggish, and they become more concentrated as the water dries up. The shooting should then improve too, and the averages be the same as in September and October. In these averages count all cartridges not brought home as fired, and only count birds actually on the stick.

Remember one most important rule. Do not speak yourself or let any of your men say a word while amongst snipe. My custom is to whistle a snippet's call to attract attention and then to signal a change of direction or for the reserve ammunition, as the case may be. Snipe may lie within 10 yards of you when you are firing, but a word will put up every bird within hearing, and their ears are good.

When a bird is shot the coolie in whose front it falls should mark the spot and when the line comes up to it, should quietly pick up the bird. No one should step a yard in front of the line for any purpose whatever.

To keep your line of coolies straight it is a good plan to instruct them that whenever you halt on an *ail* (ridge between fields) they are to do the same. You can thus correct the dressing without a word. A curse yelled at a coolie will do your sport more harm than any fault, except yelling, that he can commit.

If you come across people working in the rice or *beel* it is well to hand your gun to a coolie, *having first drawn the cartridges*, until you are past them. They will only put you off your shooting, and may get hurt, if you try to shoot past them.

A man is safe from No. 9 shot at about 175 yards, but it is well to give him a full 200 yards. Blood has been drawn through a glove with No. 6 shot at 256 yards, so it is well to be on the safe side and to allow 300 yards when using shot bigger than No. 9.

CHAPTER IV.

WHERE TO FIND SNIPE.

EARLY in the season in fine weather snipe will be found in those rice-fields in which the water is not too deep for them and in which the mud is of that soft consistence so dear to the snipe-shooter's heart. If the crop is backward and the cover light they will shelter under the west and north sides of the ridges between the fields. They avoid very heavy rice as they cannot rise out of it with ease. *Aus dhan* stubbles are excellent finds, especially after the stubbles have sprouted again.

After heavy rain look for the birds on higher land amongst light thatching grass, sugarcane, *airi*, autumn *kalai*, etc., as the rise of water in the rice-fields drives them out. I remember being out once in a shower of over two inches of rain one September. There were numbers of flooded out snipe flying about in search of drier quarters. They eventually collected into wisps and made off for some thatching grass. In a cyclone the birds get into quite heavy cover.

Early and late in the season, when the sun is very hot at midday, the snipe often seek the shelter of bushes and tufts of high grass. At such times grass bordering their feeding grounds is always worth beating. In Sylhet, where two crops of rice are grown, they will sometimes leave the young second-crop rice at midday for one-crop fields where the rice is bigger and affords better shelter.

There are certain places where snipe are often found on dry ground. These are usually close to *beels* in which there is no cover, but good feeding. The birds retire to grass or crops in the neighbourhood, or to large clods, during the day. On the first of March, 1903, I was out with a friend on a small *beel* on laterite soil. There was hardly a bird in the *beel* and I had almost given up in disgust when I saw a snipe pitch right out in "the dry" on my left. I walked him up and flushed him out of the dry bed of a water-course, under the shade of whose banks he had taken refuge. I took the hint, kept to the banks of the little *nullah*, and picked six and a half couple out of it. My friend who stuck to the *beel* got only one bird after I left him. These birds were about a quarter of a mile from the nearest water or mud.

In the *beels* it is not of much use looking for snipe where the water is deep unless it carries islands of floating weed with grass or flags growing through it. In this case birds are sometimes very plentiful and are best shot from boats. The birds that fall on the floating islands are, however, very difficult to retrieve, and, if no boats or canoes can be had, the walking will be found very heavy. There are many *beels* on which very good snipe shooting can be had from boats, or from two *doongas* or dug-out canoes fastened together. As one does not get tired one shoots very well from boats once one becomes accustomed to firing from a moving platform. Care should be taken to prevent the cartridges from becoming wet in the water at the bottom of the boat, and also to protect them from the full rays of the sun. Some cartridges after exposure to sunshine for some hours kick like mules.

The round, smooth rushes, like marlin-spikes, which grow in those parts of the *beels* which are not cultivated rarely afford good shooting except very late in the season

when other parts of the *beel* are dry. Avoid them, therefore, unless you are driven to them, like the snipe, because there is nowhere else to go. The snipe always prefer cultivated ground and fallows. Ground that has not been ploughed at some time or other is rarely soft enough for them; probably never save where there are perennial springs which make the real bog or morass. An exception to this rule occurs in the Sylhet *haors* where the snipe are often found on ground which is quite hard under the deposit of silt left by the receding floods. Sola, the pith of which is used for hat-making, often gives cover to lots of snipe in the middle of the day; and in moist, but not wet, places on the edges of *beels* I have shot quails in it. Sandy soil is useless for snipe shooting except after heavy rain when, as it dries quickly, the flooded-out snipe may have to take to it until their regular quarters become habitable. On such occasions I have had good sport in places where as a rule snipe are never seen. In *beels* where the water is too deep in the rains for rice you will sometimes see, in the cold weather, fields full of mud and water prepared for *bora dhan*. These fields are free from vegetation, but are divided by ridges on which long grass or even *bena* grass grows. The ridges usually hold lots of snipe which are easy to kill as you know whereabouts they will rise, and they are easy to define as they fly across the bare fields. When the *bora dhan* is planted and growing, in January, February and March, fields of it should never be passed over.

An excellent cover for snipe is formed by the straw of the long, trailing *beel* rice which is said to grow as fast as the water rises in the *beels*. After harvesting, the straw, which is quite useless, is gathered into heaps, and lies thus until it is dry enough to be burnt. In one *beel* I had delightful sport amongst these straw heaps, week after week. This was in Rajshahi, a very good district for small game shooting.

I believe that snipe are to be found on the links near the sea coast of Bengal, but I have had no experience there. I have shot them on the beach and amongst rocks in Scotland at low tide, and lots of them in pastures near the sea, and no doubt similar localities in Bengal suit them equally well. They may also usually be found under the banks of small streams, especially if the banks be hollow or clothed with flags.

CHAPTER V.

EQUIPMENT AND FINAL HINTS ABOUT SNIPE.

THE best gun for a beginner to use at snipe is a cylinder 12 gauge, bored to give a pattern of about 120 pellets in the 30-inch circle at 40 yards with the standard charge of 3 drs. black powder (or its equivalent in the smokeless powder used) and 1⅛ oz. of No. 6 shot of 270 pellets to the oz. Such a gun with No. 9 shot will make a pattern at 35 yards that nothing can get through. Some guns do not perform well with certain sizes of shot, so the snipe gun should be tested at the target with Nos. 8 and 9. Both barrels should be bored to shoot alike. Many guns have the left barrel choked, but this only leads to smashing up, or missing, near birds. A cylinder barrel will kill snipe at any reasonable distance and is all that is required.

The stock of the gun should be short rather than long. It must be remembered that one's feet are often hard and fast in mud when a bird rises, and that sometimes, in such cases, one has to take a shot to the left rear with the butt against the biceps instead of into the shoulder. You should therefore be able to pull the trigger of the right barrel with the first joint of your forefinger when the butt is in the bend of the elbow.

The gun should be well balanced and *must* fit you if you aspire to shoot well. Any good gunmaker can fit you with a gun as well as a tailor can fit you with a coat: but, with guns as with coats, "reach-me-downs" are apt to prove failure.

I rather like guns with 28-inch barrels. A gun can be built lighter with them without being in any way weakened, and they are quite long enough to aim with. Guns of very light make are apt to give "gun-headache" owing to the vibration set up by the recoil.

At one time I used a choke bored 16 gauge gun, for all small game, loaded with No. 7 shot and Ballistite powder. This combination is good enough for anything, and I have killed many grouse, partridges, and hares with it as well as snipe, but it is not so easy to shoot with as a cylinder 12. I gave it up when I was transferred to a district where there were good shots using scatter guns and a good deal of competition. When I went back to the twelve-bore, I changed to Schultze powder as I felt that the standard charge of Ballistite in twelve-bore cartridges was too heavy for comfort. The drawback to ordinary Schultze powder is the "blow back." Shooting against the wind this stuff blows back into one's eyes and smarts. Imperial Schultze and Cube Schultze are free from this defect. Schultze is very regular in its performance, and so is E. C. No. 3, but this last powder is not easily obtained in Calcutta. No doubt there is some reason for this, but the powder behaves very well at home. No. 9 shot is the best all-round size for snipe, but No. 8 is useful in windy weather. Modern shot charges for the twelve-bore chambered for $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch cases do not exceed as a rule $1\frac{1}{16}$ oz. Many prefer 1 oz. for snipe, and find it ample. In this each can please himself. Your cartridge bag should be waterproof and strong.

As far as clothing goes, everybody will no doubt please himself. The main point is to have the coat and shirt thick enough to protect one from the sun. Very light upper garments are a mistake. For nether tackle I like khaki regulation pantaloons; long stockings over them,

tied above the swell of the calf; and leather boots. This get-up is equally adapted to walking and riding. To ride home in Jodhpore breeches are the most convenient as they enable one to dispense with gaiters or putties. Putties are a nuisance in a *beel* and nearly always come down. Leather boots will not become hard, no matter what your bearer may say, if they are properly dressed with vaseline before use and *just before they become dry.* They will then keep supple enough. They should have two or three eyelets let into them at each side of the instep just above the sole. The holes thus made will let in water, it is true, but they will also let it out. Water is bound to get into your boots, so it is well to make arrangements for it to come out again. Squelching about on dry land in boots full of water is far from pleasant. Boots should not have projecting welts, as these lift mud, but the soles should be strong or you will get your feet sadly bruised in walking over hard ground with sodden boots.

Veterinary vaseline can be had at the Army and Navy Stores in 5-lb. tins at Rs. 2-10 a tin. It is the best thing going for guns, boots, belts, and any leather work that is required for use and not show. It darkens leather, so should not be used for parade equipment. Mixed with beeswax it makes a good lubricant for rifle cartridges. Melt the mixture, dip the bullets into it, and set them to dry. Mixed with mercurial ointment it makes a first-class grease for rifle barrels, removing leading from the grooves. A 5-lb. tin lasts for months.

I do not recommend smoking while shooting. I used to think that I shot better with a pipe in my mouth, and there is no harm in it in a short day, but I think now that it makes one thirsty, and affects one's wind on a long and heavy day.

You must of course drink something if you are out all day, but I strongly recommend that nothing alcoholic be

taken until you have changed into your dry clothes and are ready to go home. Then a peg will do you no harm. Always take a change of clothing and a towel with you. You will find the *mohra* I mentioned earlier very useful while changing. Personally I like to have two changes on a long day so as to sit down dry to tiffin. If you decide not to change for tiffin, you will find a rug or horse-blanket wrapped round your wet legs a great comfort in cold weather.

Formerly, my instructor in snipe shooting and I always used to take our shooting ponies into the *beels*, and ride them, in all kinds of places, until we saw lots of birds. If the sport became slow we mounted again until matters improved. In the district where I now live snipe are too scarce for this method, and I dismount whenever I see a likely place. Likely places may be summed up as :—

(1) Any stretch of rice, not too heavy, where the water is not excessive and the mud is of the right consistency.

(2) *Especially* any field where the rice looks *both* darker and more straggly than usual.

(3) Any fallow or stubble field in the right sort of soil if the cover is sufficient.

(4) Any good cover in an open *beel* except the round rushes.

(5) Any light cover near good feeding grounds on which there is no shelter for the birds.

(6) Any well covered ridges between open fields of mud and water.

(7) Any cover in the vicinity of newly ploughed land in places which snipe frequent.

Avoid ground that feels hard under foot when looking for snipe unless you have particular grounds for thinking that the birds are there. Slimy clay is seldom productive of sport. Do not leave good feeding ground with no cover

on it without taking a cast through the adjacent crops and grass.

Do not walk down wind to snipe in a *beel*. If it is very windy weather, and the birds are very wild, it often pays a good shot to walk straight up wind to them. They are then very hard to hit, but you can sometimes get within range of them in this way when you cannot do so in any other. Ordinarily down and across the wind is the best line to take.

When you fire at a snipe and see both his legs drop he will be found dead wherever he pitches, unless he has merely had his legs broken. I have only once seen such a case as the last, but I have seen many a snipe with one leg down. By degrees you will acquire an instinctive knowledge of when a bird is hit. If you have any reason to suppose this to be the case, mark the bird carefully down and, in mercy, add him to the stick as soon as possible. The best way to kill a wounded bird is to hold it breast upwards in your hand and bring *the back of its head* into sharp contact with the butt of your gun. A smart stroke will kill it instantly, a half-hearted tap is cruel, and a hard smash will send blood and brains all over you. If your coolies are Mahomedans they will appreciate it if you let them *halal* some of the winged birds for their own use. On good ground there are usually plenty of birds for everybody.

Pintail snipe are the first to come and the last to go. They are easily distinguished by their richly barred underwing and by the pin feathers in their tails. They have a more compact shape, shorter beaks, and are more easy to shoot than common snipe. They are frequently found alone and often rise silently. The pintail snipe comes in while the weather is still hot and seeks the shade of bushes, etc., before midday. There is a big variety of pintail

found at Labpur in Birbhum which has only 22 tail feathers as against the normal 26 of this species. This variety requires investigation, *vide* the Bombay Natural History Society's Journal, Vol. XX, No. 3.

The Jack snipe is a handsome little fellow, very good to eat, but very apt to make you score a miss. He jumps up as a rule from thick cover, flickers about for a short distance and pitches again. If you do not realize that he is a Jack, you will be very likely to shoot in front of him.

Beware of painted snipe. Until you become acquainted with them you will probably fire at them. They are easy to shoot if you realise what they are: but like the Jack snipe, are often missed when mistaken for snipe. They are unfit to eat, I think, but some people do not dislike their flavour. Their plumage is very handsome, especially that of the hen bird.

Once more let me impress on the young sportsman the necessity of recovering wounded game wherever possible, and of instantly killing winged birds. It is unsportsman-like, to say the least of it, to leave wounded game about to be torn by kites and hawks and your coolies will never see the necessity of killing the wounded birds they pick up unless you insist upon their doing so. My practice is to have all live birds brought to me at once and I kill them in the manner above described. It may cause a little disturbance and loss of sport, but we owe the snipe much and should avoid needless cruelty in dealing with them.

Woodcock.

Woodcock are obtained sometimes in Sylhet, fairly often in Shillong, rarely in Bengal. I shot three this year in Sylhet, but I only saw two in my 23 years in Bengal. They like small, boggy streams in the jungle and have favourite spots where they are found year after year. You require spaniels to flush them.

CHAPTER VI.

KALIJ PHEASANTS AND JUNGLE FOWL.

AS the methods of bringing these two game birds to the gun are very similar, I may well treat them together. In the lower hills and teelahs they frequent the same covers and I have known one of each killed with a right and left. In the higher hills of the Darjeeling and other Himalayan districts only pheasants occur, while in Midnapur and Malda the jungle fowl will be found alone.

There are three recognized ways of obtaining these birds. One is to drive the jungle towards a line of guns. Another is to pass along the edge of the jungle in the morning or evening while dogs or boys draw the crops or tea bushes into which the birds have wandered to feed. The third is to shoot the birds from elephants while beating spurs of jungly hills towards the open. It is useless to beat towards the main hill as the birds will then simply run into deeper cover.

In Darjeeling the beaters with their dogs are sent to the top of a hill and beat it downwards to the guns who are posted in the beds of torrents locally called *jhora*. The pheasants drop down the face of the hill at a great pace and are very hard to shoot. There are none too many of them and if it were not for an occasional barking deer and, in winter, an occasional woodcock, the game would hardly be worth the candle so far as sport is concerned, but the scenery is so beautiful that one cannot but enjoy oneself even if sport is poor. There is, however, a serious

drawback to this sport from my point of view. The cover is so thick that one cannot see the beaters or the guns to one's right and left, and one never knows when one can shoot with safety.

In Sylhet and Chittagong jungle fowl are generally driven from the teelahs by coolies and sometimes good bags are made. The jungle is sometimes very heavy and in that case very careful beating is necessary to dislodge the birds. The guns should be well concealed or the birds will not go near them, and the beating line should be straight or the birds will go back. Jungle fowl can only be successfully driven in the line they want to take and to make a good bag it is necessary to know in which direction they will go when disturbed and to post one's guns accordingly.

I do not believe in very large shot for these birds. It is more important to get a lot of shot into them than to reach them at long range with one pellet. When the birds are driven No. 7, or even No. 8, will kill them, and the close pattern of the small sized shot will often break their legs and so prevent wounded birds from running back into thick cover from which it takes a very good dog to retrieve them. With a choke bored gun larger shot, say No. 5, give as good a pattern and are perhaps preferable, but with the snipe gun I recommend No. 7 when driving. When shooting with dogs the shots are often longer and larger shot may be necessary, but more birds will be lost unless the dogs are really clever. Without dogs it is essential that these birds should be shot dead as otherwise they escape for the time being to die of their wounds in the jungle. Long shots should, therefore, not be taken at them. With a cylinder barrel 30 to 35 yards is a fair range. At over 35 yards the chance of killing such a big bird clean is small. With a choke barrel the range is extended by from five

to 15 yards according to the amount of the choke, but a full choked gun smashes game at short ranges and on the whole, I think, a cylinder is to be preferred.

Remember that it is unsportsmanlike to fire at game at such a range that you are not likely to kill it, even if you hit it. It is far better to let the "murghie" go than to wing it and lose it in heavy cover. Young shooters should practise stepping out distances and looking back over them, and then judging distances and stepping them out, until they can recognize 35 yards when they see it. It is the sporting limit of range for a cylinder gun when used on big birds like those treated of in this chapter.

Polyplectron Pheasants.

The polyplectron pheasant is found in Cachar and Sylhet. It may be heard in the early morning crying "querk, querk, querk, querk, querk, quark" in the thickest part of the forest, and may be stalked and shot. As it must be shot sitting and at close range a 22-bore rifle is recommended. The bird is very wary and in the thick cover is exceedingly hard to stalk. It is one of the most beautiful creatures in the world. It is also good to eat. Its name in Sylhet is *Forfodham*.

CHAPTER VII.

PARTRIDGES AND QUAILS.

The Grey Partridge.

GREY partridges are so wily that it is almost impossible to get them on the wing without a gang of coolies. In the early morning and evening they run and run till they break the hearts of any dogs you may use to them. In the middle of the day they lie very close in heavy and thorny cover and leave little or no scent. The dogs get knocked up by the heat ; and if some coolie is not lucky enough to push a bird out of a bush on the end of his *lathi*, you see nothing of them. The coolies should then thrust their *lathis* into the middle of the bushes and stir them well up. The partridges do not much mind a blow on the top of the bush they are in during the heat of the day.

In extensive and continuous cover these birds can hardly be shot at all. Still sport of a sort can be got with them in the following classes of cover :—

(1) Narrow but long strips of cover out of which the birds cannot run without being seen.

(2) Detached clumps of thorny bushes near crops, or similarly situated fields of high sugarcane.

(3) High crops early and late in the day.

In cover of the first kind, if not so full of thorns as to be unbeatable by the practically naked coolies, you can get these birds on the wing by cutting rides and putting out coolies to act as stops. Two rides should be cut across a

narrow part of the cover, near to the end, and towards them the birds should be driven. The first of these transverse rides should be cut some twelve feet wide. Some yards further on should be the second, a regular clearance of 40 feet at least. Twenty yards between the rides is about the correct distance for thatching grass covers. If the jungle is of thick thorns they should be much nearer together. At the far side of the second clearance two or three stops should be posted to head the running birds back. They should show themselves, and may talk, but not make a great noise. The birds, running on ahead of the beaters, will halt in the space between the two rides on seeing the stops. When the beaters arrive the guns should take up positions commanding the patch in which the birds are and the beaters, in close and even line should be sent in. One or two men should remain in the narrower ride to see that the birds do not run back. The beaters may make as much noise as they like early in the beat to get the birds on the run. As they approach the end they should move more quietly and should not shout lest they flush the birds prematurely.

The second class of cover affords pleasanter and less wearisome sport, specially in a quail year. Every bush should be beaten and stirred up as the line comes to it, and all thatching grass should be beaten in line. It is of the greatest importance that the line be straight and the gaps between the beaters as equal as possible. If there are wide gaps, or if men straggle behind, the partridges will dodge behind the line and squat until they have a clear chance, when they will run back at about eight miles an hour. In cover of this class I have had pretty mixed bags of partridge and quails, with perhaps a hare or two, and a few snipe from "soft" bits. I have always enjoyed this form of shooting immensely, but it is not worth much in a year when the quails do not come down.

The third class of cover is of course the feeding ground of the birds. If the crops are in detached fields the birds rise out of them when disturbed. This form of shooting is very uncertain and you will seldom find enough birds to make it worth your while.

The best bag of grey partridges I ever helped to make was eleven brace, but such bags are rare. It was in cover of the second class and was made before 9 A.M.

The grey partridge is faster on the wing than a snipe, and carries a lot of shot, so you must aim well forward to kill. It is mud-coloured and generally skims away over the clods—indefinable—after having carefully ascertained which direction gives it the best chance of escape.

I shall leave them at this point. They can be shot, but a man must be hungry to eat them, except in very cold weather when they are well fed on ripe rice and can be hung for two or three days. Even then they are inferior to the domestic *murghi* to my mind.

No. 6 or 7 shot is the best for these birds, but I have killed plenty with No. 9. A runner is rarely recovered without a dog, unless it falls in the open, and even in that case it will give the coolies a good run before they catch it. Grey partridges should only be shot from September to 15th February.

The Marsh Partridge.

With this bird I have little acquaintance. I have seen it only in the Malda District and in Sylhet where it frequents heavy cover near water and is hard to bring to the gun unless elephants are used as beaters. It is a fine big bird, but does not afford much sport. It was common once in Sylhet, but it is no longer so I find, though it exists in places in fair numbers. It is a very handsome bird.

The Black Partridge.

This is a bird of the more Northern and Eastern districts of Bengal. I have only found it in three places west of the Bhagirathi river. On the left bank of the Ganges it is common in suitable places and affords good sport. I have known eighty-eight shot in five hours in Malda.

Compared with greys, black partridges are easy to find. I have found them in the shooting season, *i.e.*, from October to 1st March, usually near water, in *jhao* jungle, grass, and crops. We easily got on terms with them, and I have had great sport with mixed bags of "blacks," quail, snipe, and hares. The worst of the black partridge is that he is far too easy to shoot. The cock is easier to shoot than the hen on account of his colour, which makes him very easy to see against any background. I have flushed and shot them in *beels*, in a couple of inches of water, when snipe shooting, and numbers of them are sometimes flushed when beating grass for larger game. No. 6 or 7 shot are the best, but I have killed them with No. 9. The plumage of the cock bird is very beautiful. Some people consider them good eating.

Quails.

I am afraid that every rains a lot of nesting birds come to grief under the name of rain quails. For this reason I never go after them now, though I shot a lot before I found out that they were nesting. The rain quail is nearly as big a bird as the grey quail, which is the bird I mean by my heading, and is found amongst them in the cold weather in its duller winter plumage.

The grey quail has one fault. It does not come to Lower Bengal every cold weather. If crops are bad in Behar it deigns to visit us. If it gets enough to eat in the

North-West it stays there. As regards shooting quails, there is little to be said except "Don't be in a hurry." The whir with which they rise, sometimes at one's very feet, is often disconcerting to beginners. In a "quail year" they are everywhere. All the *dhal* crops hold them, as do stubbles, sugar-cane, cereals, light thatching grass, tufts of *bena* or *binda* grass, and the cultivated parts of *beels* which are too dry for snipe. They love sandy churs. They are easy to flush once, but after one flight they lie very close, and afford good sport with well broken dogs. They are delicious to eat and easy to shoot when one is accustomed to the sport, though men who are accustomed only to snipe sometimes find them difficult at first. When in practice at them you should not miss many. The snipe gun and No. 9 shot are the most suitable, and February perhaps the best month. There are a good many varieties of big quail shot in the cold weather in Bengal which are not fully described in any book I know.

Button quails are not worth powder and shot. As an instance of a charge of shot "balling," I may mention that I once cut a button quail in half with a charge of No. 8 at over 30 yards—34 paces.

The Bamboo Partridge.

This little Partridge is common in Sylhet but rarely gives a shot. It inhabits the thickest jungle and I have seen it dodging a spaniel round a clump of bamboos rather than take wing. When it does fly, it merely twists away amongst the bamboos and does not rise over the m.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILDFOWL.

Flight Shooting.

THE finest flight shooting I have seen is to be obtained on the left bank of the Ganges. The ducks pass their days floating about on the backwaters of the river. In the evenings they pass in huge flights to their feeding grounds in the big inland *beels*, as a rule flying very high and often out of shot. In the early mornings they come back to their quarters on the river and that is the time to shoot them. They begin to arrive before dawn. No one is about and they fly low and fearlessly. By this time you should be posted behind cover on their line of advance. As the night pales into pearly grey and the eastern sky flushes into what Private Dormer calls "a bloomin' gallanty-show," flight after flight of pintail ducks will, if your stand is well chosen, pass within thirty yards of you. The shooting lasts until sunrise when you can return to your breakfast with a full day before you for your work and the satisfaction of a great hour's sport behind you. On two consecutive mornings, the 18th and 19th February, 1898, I killed a total of 44 pintails and I do not think that the sport on the two mornings together lasted for two hours.

I sent word of this sport to some friends and gave the place a rest until the 23rd, when they came, but the birds had changed their route. We saw millions, as I had done before, but they were to right and left of our line and we only got six birds to five guns. On our way home we got

a mixed bag of quail, pigeons and a hare, and a destructive member of the party who had been lugging my four-bore about all the morning weighed in with a fox and a parioodle (*Canis semi-domesticus Indiensis*) as his sole contribution to the bag. It was a disappointing day, showing that it is necessary to change your stand almost daily as the birds change their route on being fired at.

The best way to find out where the birds cross over is to reward natives for the information *after* it has been proved to be correct. A police officer can get valuable information through the village chowkidars, and private individuals can get *khubber* through the same source if they care to ingratiate themselves with the *Daroga* in charge of the *thana*.

The flighting season in Lower Bengal lasts from the time the birds assemble in January, which depends on the season, until about the 11th of March, and when I was living on the banks of the Ganges this was to me a time of unmixed delight. I rarely missed a morning whilst the flights lasted, for even if I got but few birds, I was generally rewarded by a glorious sunrise. Very rarely I returned empty-handed. Usually I got from three to six birds and on the great occasions mentioned above eighteen and twenty-six. On this last day I also got a Brahmini duck as I was taking my spoils home in a dinghy, and I brought down four other pintail ducks which were lost in the high crops, or thirty-one birds in all, a big score for less than one hour's shooting.

It was glorious sport and I much wish that I could spend another February where the large flights pass. Where I used to shoot the flights no longer cross owing to changes in the river, and no one has taken the trouble to locate them, the present residents not caring about rising at half-past three on cold mornings. If you are like them

and prefer to confine yourself to the evening flight, I should recommend a heavy twelve-bore chambered for Kynoch's long "Perfect" cases and heavy charges.

I used No. 3 shot in my snipe gun for the morning flight. You should use whichever size of large shot you find that your gun shoots best.

Pintail ducks are very fast and carry on a great way even when killed clean. The crops in February are often high, and if you do not post your retrieving coolies at least seventy yards behind your stand you will lose many birds. Another man about a hundred yards further back still is very useful to pick up pinioned birds which will sometimes fall behind even him. All the men should keep under cover as much as possible. Winged birds will hide themselves very cleverly and lie until almost trodden on before moving. A good and thoroughly steady retriever would be a most useful companion and I often wished that I had such a dog with me. Your stand should be about a quarter of a mile from the river. Even then some cripples may be recovered by means of a dinghy.

The birds come in long, drawn out lines and it is a rare thing to get two birds with one shot. It does happen, of course, at times, and I once got five at a shot which, with one other bird, made up my bag for the day. I stepped out of my cover as the birds came within range. On seeing me they "bunched up" and I, aiming *for* (not *at*) the leading drake, happened to rake the bunch.

The second shot at flighting duck is a very difficult one. At the flash of the first barrel the birds shoot up into the sky and in a second are out of range of the earth. While it is still nearly dark this has a very weird effect, for the birds rise so perpendicularly and so rapidly that they disappear into the upper darkness like ghosts. Even in a good light they are very hard to hit when thus rising and I never acquired facility in this shot.

I believe that the big flights of ducks send out scouts. Before the flights came on moonlight mornings I several times saw single drakes flying at great speed barely clearing the trees. If I fired at and missed one of these birds I had to change my stand, for not another shot would I get at that stand that morning. I used to keep under cover and let them pass. I may remark that on moonlight mornings the light is very bad for shooting until it is broad daylight.

Duck Shooting on Beels.

This is a sport which requires marksmanship of a very high order. Nearly all the shots obtained are long ones and the pace that birds passing overhead attain is amazing. The ducks chiefly shot on *beels* are gadwals, shovellers, red-headed and pearl-eyed pochards, garganeys and common teal. Occasionally a few pintails may be got, but this is rare. They generally leave for pastures new directly the firing begins. I have twice obtained widgeons, once two pink-headed ducks, and a sprinkling of spotted-billed ducks, golden eyes, and red-crested pochards. I have never seen a mallard in Lower Bengal. I have heard of them as being obtained in Malda, but I have shot the Malda *beels* without seeing one and I am not certain that my informants knew what mallards are. I have known shoveller drakes called mallards.

In *beels* where there is cover the best plan is to conceal yourself and have the birds driven over you by the boats. A line of four or five guns is best.

The finest target I know is a garganey teal passing high overhead at its best speed—anything over a hundred miles an hour. I cannot lay down in feet and inches the distance one must aim ahead of one of these birds to allow for the pace, but it is many times the bird's own length. And

what a pleasure it is to cut down two of them right and left! When they fall they send the water splashing feet into the air. If clean shot they lie floating on their backs, their feet perhaps faintly padding. If they are not shot clean they disappear under water as they fall, and are usually not seen again, for they swim in under the lotus leaves and hide themselves, their beaks only above the surface of the water. If the eagles do not get them they may sometimes be found floating dead by the returning boats. Pochards dive like fish, and the wounded are best brought to bag by throwing one of those many-headed bamboo fish-spears at them if they can be seen in clear water, or at any motion amongst the weeds if they fall in cover.

On *beels* where boats are not to be had there are usually dug-out canoes. Two of these fastened together make a pleasant conveyance. A single one is dangerous. When two are fastened together a chair can be placed with two legs in each and one gets the easiest of shooting.

In storms of wind I have known ducks to lie very close amongst the lotus leaves. Whether it was because they did not hear the boat approaching, or because they disliked the wind, I cannot say. I once made a bag of 26 in little over an hour under such conditions. Pochards sometimes lie very close in heavy weeds towards evening when there has been heavy shooting on the *beel* all day. I have then sometimes shot them with No. 9 shot while looking for snipe amongst the lily pads on the way home.

A long, narrow, isolated *beel* is the most convenient to shoot. Long, in order to have the necessary expanse of water; narrow, that a line of boats can command it; and isolated, that the birds may not be tempted to leave it for safer quarters close at hand. As the boats proceed up such a *beel*, the birds usually rise almost, if not quite,

out of shot, and fly forward. As the end of the *beel* is approached the boats should keep a perfect line and advance slowly. The ducks will rise and fly back over the boats, singly, in pairs, in dozens, in hundreds, affording most difficult shots and much satisfaction to those who hit them. I have in my mind's eye a *beel* of this description, where I was a frequent guest, on which our bag was never under 50 ducks, not to mention great quantities of snipe, and that with some bad shots out.

Cotton teal are hardly game birds; but they are fairly hard to shoot, and some men shoot them regularly. They are very common on most *beels*. They are eatable.

Whistling teal are an unmitigated nuisance. They fly round and round, disturbing the whole *beel*, generally just out of shot. When the legitimate shooting is over for the day I shoot them, as well as coots and waterhens, for the boatmen. A whistling teal, when shot, comes down in the most ungraceful way. He dies like the cad he is. He is not very good to eat except in the flapper stage and he ruins acres of rice and should be exterminated.

The purple coot is common on many *beels*, where it spends the hot hours of the day amongst sola or other cover. It lives principally, like the whistling teal, on grain, and is very destructive. It dislikes flying and is a very easy bird to shoot. Its native name is *Kaim*. Its colouring is most striking, and but for its lanky shape it would be a very beautiful bird. It makes excellent mulligatawny soup.

Geese.

Of the shooting of geese my experience is small though I have some experience of trying to get near them. I have crawled for miles with a 4-bore gun and with a small bore rifle, and only once was the bag worthy of the labour

involved, although the excitement incident to the stalk made amends for small results. I do not, however, think that the game is worth the candle after one is turned of thirty. To crawl through half a mile of crops two feet high, lugging a 4-bore gun weighing 17½lbs. with you, only to find at the end that the geese have moved out of range and that you must crawl all the way back again and select a new line of attack, is a disappointment. To have such a thing occur twice or thrice in a morning is destructive to morals, especially after having risen at 3 o'clock to make assurance doubly sure and being consequently wet through with dew. Still, one can get geese in this way at times, but you must not hope for uniform success. Better fun is to be had on the *churs** in the day time with a small dinghy and a small bore rifle. A Stevens' ·25—25—96 (or 86) is a capital rifle for this sport. Run your boat hard and fast on to the *chur* before firing. You will not hit much with a rifle from a moving boat as the shots are long and the targets smaller than one would expect. Be careful to use your binoculars to see that no one is in the line of fire if you use a powerful rifle.

You may sometimes get a goose or two while waiting for flighting ducks. With the shot you use for that sport you will hardly kill a goose that is flying high if you hit it in the body. Try, therefore, to forget its body and to shoot for it as if its head were your only target. You may also occasionally by a fluke get geese on *beels*. I have never managed to do so in Bengal, but I know of a party, consisting entirely of bad shots, who got three one day on an inland *beel*. In Sylhet geese are often obtained in the *Haors* as the big *beels* are called there.

To those who live near a big river stalking geese with rifle is good enough fun, but I do not consider it good

* Sandbanks.

enough to repay one for a special expedition. Brahmini ducks help to swell the bag, if considered game, and are found, usually in pairs, on all *churs* in big rivers. They can be shot with a 12 bore at times from a dinghy but are very shy.

I believe Manipur is a great place for geese and other wildfowl. I have heard of great bags being made there.

Shot for Duck Shooting.

I ADD these few lines to say that I am becoming more and more convinced that No. 7 shot is the best for duck shooting. For years we were told that Nos. 3 & 4 were the only sizes to use with the result that we had patterns at 40 & 50 yards so open that it was pure luck if a pellet struck a vital spot. With No. 7 the pattern is well filled and the penetration, owing to the smaller size of the pellets, seems to be equal to that of No. 4. It is not weight of lead that kills a duck but penetration of pellets to vital spots.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FLORICAN AND LIKH FLORICAN.

THE florican, or florikin, is practically extinct now in Bengal, south of the Ganges. An old friend of mine used to show me a few on his estate some years ago, but they were even then scarce and I have seen none thereabouts for some years. There are still some in Malda and plenty in Purneah and Assam.

We used to have great fun with them. They were generally first seen when we were beating the *Ula* grasses for pig. Having thus discovered their whereabouts we used to make regular expeditions to secure them. We rode through the grass in line with the beaters until a bird was flushed and then galloped after it to mark it down. We remained watching the place where the bird pitched until the men ran up bringing our guns. We then dismounted, walked the bird up, and shot it. I never saw one missed, though I have known a marked down bird disappear in a mysterious manner and refuse to rise the second time. The gallop and the shot together made these expeditions very pleasant. Florican are generally shot when beating big grasses for other game.

Ula grass is the favourite resort of the florican and I have never seen it far from this cover. Sometimes when riding through low grass a florican may be seen suddenly to shoot its head and neck above the grass to take stock of the stranger. They may also be seen sometimes in the early morning stalking about in the open.

The cock bird is very handsome in his breeding plumage but is not nearly so large a bird as the hen. We once found a florican's egg on my host's birthday, the 24th June The florican is very good to eat.

The likh florican is probably seldom found in Bengal south of the Ganges since the cultivation of indigo ceased, at least I have not seen it since. Indigo was its favourite cover, and was at its best in May and June, the months in which the likh used to visit us. So far as I know they do not breed in Lower Bengal and I never saw one in breeding plumage.

Once when I was staying with a friend in the Murshidabad District it was proposed that some fellow guests and I should ride over with him to visit a neighbour who lived some six miles off. We were to ride through the indigo on the way. I asked my host if it were worth while to take a gun on the chance of a likh. He scoffed and suggested a rifle in case we should see a stag, so the gun was left at home. Nevertheless we flushed three likhs during that ride, and that without looking for them, so no doubt they were pretty numerous, for they lie close.

The likh is faster on the wing than the true florican, but flies straight and is easy to shoot. It carries less shot than the bigger bird. No. 6 will kill either of them at 40 yards and over, and I have seen a hen florican killed at fully that distance with No. 8 shot. The likh is very good to eat.

CHAPTER X.

HARES.

UNFORTUNATELY hares are getting very scarce in the more cultivated parts of Bengal as they are killed off by Santhals and Dhangars during floods when they are confined to the higher lands. I have known Englishmen to shoot them at such times but I cannot think the practice sportsmanlike. In floods I have known hares to swim very well, and I once lifted one into my boat in the middle of the Bhagarutti River.

The Bengali hare is a poor beast on the table, but she adds a "home-like" appearance to the bag, and is, after all, eatable with claret sauce in a salmi, or as soup.

Hares are found in all country likely to hold grey partridges. They do not as a rule choose very large patches of jungle. Their object is to be snug and at the same time to be able to gain the open at speed whenever a move seems advisable. They are often found in crops, and a patch of thistles in a badly-weeded wheat field is very likely to contain one. I think that hares prefer outlying and unimportant looking cover because jackals are less likely to kennel there. A hare may laugh at a single jackal in the open but she does not like being stalked on her form and being turned out in a blazing sun. I have never seen a brace of foxes course a hare, but I believe that they would catch her. I saw a pair of eagles attempt it once in Rajshahi. It was pretty to watch. First one eagle stooped at the hare, then, as she doubled, the other eagle stooped to strike her before she could collect herself

for another turn. This occurred several times but the hare was too clever for them and got to cover in some high crops.

Hares are often found in winter cereals and in grass when you are quail shooting. You see nothing of them but the movement they cause in the cover. Remember to allow for its height or you will shoot too high. In cover a close, even line must be kept or hares will break back. Beaters should be restrained from running after hares and throwing sticks at them as they are prone to do.

In spring you will sometimes find hares in the drier parts of *beels*. On hot days they frequent mango gardens, and I have seen one lying with no other shelter than the shade of a mango tree. In the cold weather they often come into the vegetable garden and eat the hearts out of the cauliflowers. If this happens, or if you see the droppings about the garden, you will probably find the hare in the nearest covert, often in a rubbish heap.

But the best of all cover for hares is young sugarcane. They are sometimes quite plentiful in the cane fields. A friend of mine whom I took out shooting in the young cane on one occasion made what must be a record. He missed fifteen consecutive hares in about an hour and a half! I once put three out of one tiny field. For this form of shooting a thin line of beaters suffices. The men should advance slowly through the cane gently clapping their hands. They must not talk or shout. When driven quietly the hares will creep forward to the edge of the cover and look about them. If they do not see the guns they will make up their minds as the noise draws nearer and break for the next cover. I have often seen them looking round in this manner. If you are in the open keep your legs together and do not move until the hare is well away. Hares will always break back if they are too much bustled, so the more quietly they are driven the better.

It is not sportsmanlike to shoot with small shot at a hare going straight away at more than 30 yards. You are fairly certain to hit her at the longer ranges, and no doubt she may die, but as a rule she will carry the shot a long way and die a slow death in the jungle. A wounded hare sometimes screams dreadfully. A crossing hare is a fair shot up to 40 yards provided you shoot well ahead of her. The whole animal fills the eye, but you should try to shoot for the head and neck only as though the rest of the animal were armour plated. The old rule about a hare going straight away from you with her ears up is to aim for the tips of the ears. Such artificial aids to shooting are, however, of little use. If going specially to shoot hares use large shot, say No. 4, and choked barrels. You may then attempt them at slightly longer distances than those mentioned above, but long shots are to be avoided for hares are tough, hardy beasts and take a lot of killing.

The largest hare I have killed in Bengal weighed fully 7½ lbs. This was an exceptionally large one, for few weigh 6½ lbs. and the average is considerably less.

For all forms of hare shooting unobtrusive colours should be worn. I think the best are heather mixture and *khaki*. If a hare does not see you when she breaks she will often stop in the next cover she comes to and there listen to the sounds that disturbed her. This gives you a second chance of a shot at her. Again when a hare creeps to the edge of the cover to look out she will certainly break back if she sees a man standing with his feet apart or in startling raiment.

I may note that in Western Bengal sugarcane is planted out so late that the shooting season is over before it is big enough to hold hares. North of the Ganges the crop is planted out much earlier, and it is there that I have shot hares in the cane.

Let me repeat that hares should be carefully shot and spared at long ranges. The hard hitting gun is the gun that is held straight. Game falls dead if in the middle of the pattern, while it struggles away if only touched by outside pellets. The greatest compliment that can be paid to your shooting is a remark that yours is a hard-hitting gun. You may remember with pleasure any such compliments paid to a cylinder bore snipe gun when in use at ducks or hares.

CHAPTER XI.

VARIOUS.

Golden Plover.

GOLDEN plover are to be found inland in Lower Bengal chiefly at the beginning and end of the snipe season. In mid-winter they are not so common, and go, I believe, at that time to the sea coast. In the morning and evenings they visit ploughed lands, grazing grounds, and freshly-formed mud flats in rivers, to feed. In the middle of the day they retire to *beels* and rivers to rest and drink. In August and September rain-flooded grazing grounds seem to have a great attraction for them, probably because the insects are drowned out of their holes and shelters. At such time a dozen or two can generally be got for the table by a native shikari who knows how to shoot. They are seldom worth a special expedition ; but they are frequently met with when one is out after more sporting game, and everybody fires at them whenever the chance presents itself. I have heard of great bags being made by a right and left into the "brown." The most I ever got with one cartridge was 13.

I have occasionally known them show good sport. I once put up for the day at an outlying, disused bungalow, and, in the afternoon, saw from the verandah a number of golden plover scattered over a large expanse of newly-ploughed land feeding. Having a gun, and nothing to do, I went for them. They afforded very pretty shooting, rising singly, or in twos and threes, from amongst the

large clods like snipe. My bag of seventeen gave me great pleasure, and cost me more cartridges than the same number of snipe would have done. They are very strong on the wing, and after a pot shot into a flight of them it is well to watch them away carefully, as some birds will usually fall out, after a more or less extended flight, and be picked up dead. Of course this sort of thing is not sport, but the birds are so good to eat that it is justifiable.

These birds, as well as blue pigeons, when feeding in the open are best approached behind cover. If no cover be available proceed as though about to pass them at about 30 yards on your left. Keep the gun low, the muzzle pointed straight for the birds. When the gun is in this position they will not see the glint of the barrels nor recognize the gun so readily. No. 8 shot is the best.

Blue pigeons.

Blue pigeons give very good practice and are good to eat. If you want a lot of them you should get a dead pigeon, or a stuffed one, for a decoy. The decoy should be propped up in a stubble field, or on newly-sown ground, near a village where there are lots of pigeons, in as natural a manner as possible. Then take cover near the decoy and you will hardly fail to have sport when the birds come out to feed, that is to say during the second and third hours after sunrise and after half past two in the afternoon. When birds are shot they should be fixed up near the decoy before the others return, which they will often do again and again giving some pretty shots. Never shoot pigeons in a village or town as the inhabitants object, although the birds are wild ; and, of course, never shoot any pigeons which, from their colour, appear to be tame.

When you fire at pigeons and drop some reload as quickly as possible, as some birds generally come back to see what has happened to their comrades; and do not let your attendants run in to pick up the dead birds until it is clear that no more will return. When possible pick out slender, dark-coloured pigeons as they are young and tender.

You will sometimes get sporting, overhead shots, at pigeons by taking up a position between a village and its threshing floor while threshing is in progress. The time to shoot them is when they are coming back as they then often come in very small parties. I once got 14 at one such stand.

Pigeon seldom move between 10 A.M. and 2-30 P.M. except to drink. They may be shot over water about noon.

The best shot is No. 6 or 7. I have killed lots with No. 9. The size of shot does not matter much up to say 30 yards if the pigeon is in the middle of the pattern.

GREEN PIGEONS.

GREEN pigeons are difficult to shoot as they are terribly fast on the wing and take a lot of shot. Anybody can of course shoot them as they sit in the banyan and peepul trees eating the ripe berries; but it is rather a feat to kill neatly a right and left as they fly out of the tree after somebody has fired at them. Their departure is abrupt.

In some places, where they have well-defined roosting places, regular flight shooting at them may be enjoyed in the evenings.

They are good to eat, but require keeping to make them tender. Their plumage is singularly beautiful. There are several species.

They nest at the end of the hot weather and in June and July and should not be shot at that season.

Imperial pigeons.

A pigeon locally given the above name is found in Sylhet. I have not yet obtained it and do not know its scientific name.

Ortolans.

The bird known as the Ortolan in Bengal is a small lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*). It occurs in small parties during the cold weather, but collects into enormous, dense packs in March, and remains until about the 12th of April, when it moves to its breeding grounds in Thibet. I have seen it in Behar on April 18th and in the United Provinces on the 20th. In Sylhet small parties remain till the end of the month. Heavy storms break up the packs, and, if continued, cause an early migration. They are delicious to eat, but afford little or no sport. I think the best way of getting them when you want them is to send out a native shikari. His moral character will probably not be seriously injured by the disgusting sight of wounded birds being torn to pieces by the kites which follow the gun. After a shot into the middle of a pack of ortolan there will usually be more wounded birds than dead ones, and the killing of those picked up is a filthy business, the poor little things bleed so freely. The shikari leaves them to die in his bag. They occur chiefly on rice stubbles, newly ploughed lands, grazing grounds, and, especially, threshing floors. A hundred of them are sometimes obtained with a well-directed double shot, but the record is probably over 150. Dr. Jerdon once got 144 with two cartridges. The first shot should be fired at the birds on the ground, the

second, usually, the more deadly, as they rise *en masse*. No. 9 or 10 shot will be found satisfactory.

Edible Snippets.

The word "Snippet" is applied in India to all small migratory waders except snipe. The edible common species I know are four in number, *viz.*:—(1) the greenshanks, (2) the redshanks, (3) the stilt plover, (4) the little stint.

Greenshanks are usually solitary. They rise with a wild piping cry, and are readily distinguishable by their white backs. Pallas says of him "*Sapidissima avis in patina*," but I rather think he flatters the bird.

Redshanks collect in small parties in *beels* and can be recognised by the expanse of white on their wings. They fly in lines like ducks when travelling and may be shot flighting in the evenings.

Stilt plovers occur in parties of from 4 to 10 in *beels*. They fly badly, and are therefore of no use for sport. They are well-flavoured.

Little stints occur also in *beels* as well as along rivers. They are very good eating but very small. Occasionally they have a fishy taste but not often.

None of these are game birds, but they are eatable if nothing better can be got for a "Sikkin." Personally I never shoot any of them.

I have shot stone plovers in the Birbhum District in September, but they are very rare and are becoming rarer. They are good to eat.

I have shot godwits in Sylhet. They are good to eat but too rare to count on though more frequent than the stone plovers which are very local.

Vermin.

If a man live in a country in which there are partridges, jungle fowl, or hares, let him never spare wild cats or civet cats. I am inclined to think that mercy should also be withheld from the mongoose, but his reputation, not unearned, for killing snakes saves him. Wild cats are too predacious to be very numerous. The country could not support many of them to the square mile. If every one that offers a chance is shot an appreciable difference will be found in the size of coveys. I am not sure that foxes do much harm, though I mistrust them, but as for jackals I hold that they should be exterminated at the public cost. A jackal does nothing for the good of mankind that vultures, crows, and kites cannot do better; and he is accountable for many deaths from hydrophobia yearly and for the rapid spread of rabies. In the cold weather of 1898 and 1899 there were over 100 cases of bites inflicted on human beings by rabid animals within three months within the municipal limits of one small civil station in Bengal. One European amongst them is since dead of the results of the bite although he was treated as soon as possible at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. On another occasion, in the same district, a mad jackal bit 17 people, of whom 16 died of hydrophobia. I know of several instances nearly as bad, and I hold that a charge of shot placed just behind a jackal's shoulder is well expended in any country that is not regularly hunted.

CHAPTER XII.

SNIPE SHOOTING ON DRY LAND.

Written in January, 1911, *in the Malda District*.

THERE is a form of snipe shooting which is not commonly practised, yet which affords capital sport without necessitating the wetting of the feet or entailing the fatigue of ploughing through deep mud. It is thus especially suited to those who are liable to attacks of fever after wading or who are otherwise in weak health, and for their benefit I describe it.

After an interval of two years I am again in camp near an open *beel* along the edges of which *bora dhan* cultivation is in progress. While the land is still a few inches under water it is ploughed and the *dhan* is planted out from the seedling nurseries. The fields are surrounded by small mud embankments to retain the water as the level of the *beel* falls and are filled artificially daily, while new lands are brought into cultivation as the fall in the water level permits of their being ploughed and planted. The constant irrigation keeps the higher fields filled, and naturally the whole of the lands thus prepared forms a paradise for snipe which feed there at night in dozens. The arrival of the cultivators in the morning sends the birds to quieter quarters for the day, and it is in the wheat fields to which they then retire that I have had quite good sport with them.

When I first came here I was told by Europeans who had visited the *beel* that, owing to the absence of cover,

it never held snipe, but I ventured to disbelieve them on seeing what excellent feeding grounds it provided. Accordingly I rode through the crops on the higher lands all round the cultivated parts of the *beel* and found, as I expected, that there were snipe in plenty. I found them singularly partial to certain fields and even to certain parts of fields, and I also found that there are acres and acres of wheat into which it is quite useless to go. In the very places that were good two years ago I got my sport again this cold weather.

The birds like the slopes facing south, as they are there protected from the strong north-west winds prevalent during the cold weather and also get plenty of sun. The favourite places are in wheat where the clods are large and the crop consequently sparse, but of two places apparently alike one will be full of birds while the other never by any chance holds one. Once I had discovered the places I was certain of snipe for the table whenever I wanted them. If the birds were not in one of my marked fields they were in another, and I have never drawn an absolute blank. I have never been out for more than about half an hour looking for the snipe, as I have had a great deal of work to do, and so my biggest bag has been eleven birds, but I could easily have exceeded this had I had more time to devote to the sport.

Sometimes the birds were in large wisps and then I only got a few shots. On more favourable occasions smaller wisps and sometimes single birds were distributed over the fields and I got a dozen shots or so in almost as many minutes. I used to take only one man with me, and we prowled quietly about in line some twenty yards apart in the fields favoured by the birds. When they were in large wisps they were very wild and rose all together sometimes out of range, but single birds and pairs gener-

ally lay nicely and afforded very pretty targets as they shot up out of the wheat into the high wind which sweeps all day long over the wide expanses of the *beel*.

When I first came into camp this time there was one corner which was always good for a few pintail snipe. I shot thirteen of them in all and since then I have seen nothing but the common kind. The pintails were always separate from the others.

Another thing I noticed about these dry land snipe strikes me as curious. I sometimes marked birds down in the wheat and failed to flush them again after a careful search. Apparently they ran and hid like quails. I experienced this at all times of the day, even after sunset, when as a rule snipe are very quick to take wing, in fact latterly, after the birds had been worried a good deal for some days, they were generally hard to flush a second time when, as rarely happened, they pitched again within reach. When they rose in wisps they generally went further than I was able to follow them in the time at my disposal, and sometimes they defeated me by flying across the *beel*.

After a resting place had been shot over two or three times the birds would desert it for another, but would return if it was not disturbed for some days. Cultivation goes on in several distinct parts of the *beel* and I used to work each portion in turn, giving two or three outings to each. The birds were fewer on each occasion and it paid to watch which way the survivors went. Had I worked all the places in one day I might have made quite a good bag, but I was busy and besides I had no use for many birds.

One place was so close to camp that one day my shot fell quite close to my bearer as he sat cleaning my boots. I generally had a look at this place before going further

a-field and it was extraordinary how often it yielded the few birds I wanted. It was there I got the eleven birds. Though it was nearly sunset they lay fairly well and I got them with twelve cartridges. Fortunately they rose one at a time so that I was not bustled. Snipe shooting is largely a matter of nerves and I, in common with many others, find wisps rising all round me apt to upset my nervous equilibrium.

Driven snipe, a pleasant variant in the sport, were obtained from a small, grassy island in the *beel* whereon a few snipe elected to spend the day. Suspecting this I sent the coolie to beat it. The first day I did not get a shot but I was able to determine the line the birds took to their shelter in the wheat. Ensconced behind a babool tree I took toll of them on several subsequent occasions, until either the island became taboo to them or I had shot all its frequenters.

One hint I may give is that the coolie should wear shoes. The hard, dry clods are very trying to bare feet and an unshod coolie soon cries "Enough."

Doubtless there are other places in Bengal where this form of the sport can be followed. It entails no fatigue, no special clothing, and no *bundobust* beyond finding the birds' resting place for the day. Looking for the places gives one an object for one's ride and shooting the birds gives one an object for one's walk. It might be hard to make a very large bag owing to the habit the birds have of leaving the feeding grounds together and then pitching in large wisps, but the experiment might be tried of sending a man to the rice fields very early in the morning to move quietly about so as to flush only a few birds at a time, allowing one lot to get to the resting grounds before flushing more, and so on. In this way a good morning's shooting might be prepared. But even as things are a

great deal of amusement is to be had from the wheat-field snipe, and residents in the neighbourhood of *beels* where there are feeding grounds without cover might do worse than look for the day haunts of the birds which are certain to frequent such places at night.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY FIRST JUNGLE FOWL.

THE Christmas sun rose as I was starting to pick up the beaters I had sent on to my rendezvous with C. who was to be my companion during the day. The weather was perfect and I was in the best of spirits for I was going to gain a new experience and to add a new bird to my game list. I had never until then seen or shot a jungle fowl and it was to shoot a *murghi* I started that Christmas Day. Although I got away so early, and galloped the first three miles to warm myself and my pony, we did not start beating until late. We sent our beaters on from C.'s place direct to the ground, a matter of miles, and went ourselves to a ferry to meet a friend who, however, did not turn up. The result of this separation from our men was that owing to a misunderstanding of C.'s instructions they went to the wrong place and we had to hunt for them amongst magnificent tree jungle for an hour. Even when we found them we had still some way to go and it was eleven o'clock before we came to our first stand in a clearing half-way down a long cover. The jungle consisted of wonderful old trees with heavy undergrowth and the beaters, who were mere village coolies, found difficulty in forcing their way through it in places, while the knowledge that there was a leopard about and the fear of pigs kept them from entering the heaviest cover in spite of their bodyguard of Mal Paharias armed with bows and poisoned arrows. Probably owing to the faulty beating the first drive proved unfruitful and the first fine

edge was taken off our enthusiasm. We hastened on and took up our positions at the end of the strip being heartened by the footprints of *murghies* in the dust. This time they came. First a cock and a hen broke just out of C.'s reach on the right of our position. Then three hens came to my companion who dropped one of them, and at last a fine cock glided like a shadow through the cover about forty yards on my left. I was well on him and, as he carried on behind the cover with his head down and his beak half open, I felt confident that I had at last added one more species to my list. As soon as the arrival of the line of beaters released me from my stand, I went gaily to retrieve my bird. Imagine my disappointment when the closest search amongst the thorny undergrowth revealed nothing but a bunch of breast feathers. Apparently a civet or other cat had removed the bird for something of this nature was moving and growling in a cane brake just behind where it fell. The Mal Paharias who were our guides tried to dislodge the brute, but the thorns were too thick for them and they had to desist. Our early delays were unfortunate, but this was indeed a big bead to add to the string of ill-luck which clung to me throughout the earlier part of the day save on one occasion when my chance was good but my performance villainous.

Our next beat was a long strip of cover into which the flushed birds had gone. I advanced with the beaters while C. went on ahead. One by one we flushed the three hens which all broke to my companion who bagged one of them. Then a hare dodged across the track and I missed her handsomely as did C. when he caught a glimpse of her a moment later. At the end of this strip came my crowning chance. A glorious old cock broke some eighty yards away and came straight down the edge of the cover at me in the open. He had evidently made up his mind to pass within five yards of me and, as I did not want to

blow him to bits, I covered him at about forty yards, stopped to look at him, and missed him clean. He came on as silently as an owl but at a terrific pace, the embodiment of energy, his rapid wings half hidden behind a blaze of gorgeous hackles glittering right royally in the sunshine. To give him room I turned round only to find my Paharia right before me. He leapt one way and I the other and confusion reigned as I let drive again only to score another miss and to see the streaming tail feathers disappear in the jungle. Such a chance and so badly muffed !

It was his courage that saved him. If he had tried to pass me thirty yards away, instead of coming right at me like an angry flying machine with red whiskers, I think I may say without vanity that he would have stood but little chance of his life. But still, alive he is and lucky may he be, and when he next doth fly abroad may I be there to see.

We followed him into the cover he had taken, but saw no more of him though two hens went back over the beaters and one gave an unaccepted chance to C. We took another strip back and this held another splendid cock and a hen. They both rose to C. but went on, the cock leaving two tail feathers behind as a souvenir. In this strip one of the Paharias reduced our little remaining pride to a minimum by shooting a hare dodging through the cover dead with a blunt arrow. He hit her on the brain pan, a wonderful shot.

It was now two o'clock and we began to feel the need of refreshment. The tiffin-basket rascal had added to the bad luck by going off to where we had ordered the horses to meet us in the evening, and it was a quarter to three before we finally got hold of him. We had another beat while we were waiting and a hen, after passing out of

sight behind trees, gave me what was perhaps a long chance, straight into the sun, which I failed to take advantage of. Immediately afterwards I heard a patter in the jungle and a noble cock, the one C. had fired at I think, shewed for a second as he ran into cover. We sent the coolies round to drive him out but they made a mess of things and flushed him in the wrong direction.

The basket then turned up and we made a hasty though much-needed meal and started to beat a fresh stretch of country towards the horses, for I was still without the *murghi* I coveted. The bad luck still pursued us, for the tired beaters were keeping a bad line and letting the birds break back and out to the sides, while C. missed a hare that broke out to the right—the only shot he got.

At last, standing forward at the end of the last beat of all, I got my chance and took it, securing a fine full-grown cockerel and a hen. My object was attained. I was no longer one of those unfortunate individuals who have never shot a jungle fowl. But still the leading feature of the day to me is the magnificence of the old cock I missed in the sunshine.

We spent a few minutes beating for a hare which the men said had gone forward, but as we had eight miles and a river between us and dinner and the sun was setting we could not stay long enough to find her.

It was a delightful day. The perfect weather, the extraordinary beauty of the surroundings, the novelty of the sport, the achievement ending up a day that promised, so far as I was concerned, to be a blank, combined to form one of the most perfect of my shooting recollections.

The difficulty of making a good average at jungle fowl in that country lay, *inter alia*, in their scarcity and consequent unexpected appearance, their great and deceptive

speed, their silence on the wing, and the fact that nearly all the shots fired were in heavy tree jungle. It reminded me of pheasant shooting near Darjeeling, but this is the better sport and the trophy is a finer one. A mature jungle cock in full plumage is as noble and handsome a bird as can be imagined, and that cockerel, I must say, furnished the very best meat I have tasted in India—very tender, and in all respects delectable.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR LOCAL PHARMACOPŒIA.

ONE day in March, long ago, I was returning with an acquaintance from the station to my factory. It was hard on noon and no work was going on, so I was surprised to see a crowd of people filling the compound. Most of them were congregated on the edge of the cliff on which the factory stands and were apparently very much taken up with something going on in the *beel* below. I rode up to the office and asked the *gomasta* what was the matter. He replied:—"A leopard has just walked through the compound close to the house, and has climbed down the cliff to the *beel*." The *beel* was absolutely without cover of any kind so I felt sceptical. I certainly did not believe that the animal, if animal there were, was a leopard, but I was soon convinced when I got to the edge of the cliff and looked over. The brute was sitting in the only boat the *beel* possessed, calmly licking his chaps, while the wind gently wafted him towards the opposite shore. Three of the late crew of the boat were swimming for three different points of the horizon, and a fourth, who could not swim, was holding on to the rudder beneath the projecting stern, no doubt hoping that the leopard did not know he was there. On the far side of the *beel* was an encampment of *Danghars*, tending a large herd of milch buffaloes, and this made it dangerous to fire from where we were. Having taken in these details I provided my guest with a rifle and, taking up my shot gun and some ball ammunition, ran down the *ghât* to the *beel*.

When we arrived at the water's edge the boat had drifted to some distance and the leopard was lying down and no longer visible. We hurried towards the place where the boat seemed likely to come ashore, promising ourselves a handsome skin. The *beel* was a long one and I much regretted not having ordered out fresh horses to carry us round. But my guest might have said with Salvation Yeo that horses (especially strange ones) were break-neck beasts he put no faith in. Having painfully worked his passage to the factory he declined to ride anything more that day. Like a famous Viceroy he was "busy" riding—but that is an old story. The boat touched ground when we were still at a considerable distance, and the cow buffaloes formed a semi-circle round it to keep the leopard from their calves. The *Danghars*, too, ran up with spears and joined their buffaloes. Said my guest:—"This is a soft thing. We are bound to get him." I thought so, too, but his death was not to come from us. Without the slightest warning the brute leapt from the bottom of the boat right into the middle of the *Danghars*, who, with great presence of mind, received him on their spears and killed him instantly. He had not a kick in him when we ran up a moment later. My guest said that it was great cheek of the *Danghars* to kill the beast when they saw us running up with our guns, and he refused to see the force of my argument to the contrary. The man who had been clinging to the rudder of the boat did not seem to care who had done the killing. He was trying to adjust his scalp to his skull, reminding me of an amateur actor whose wig is too small for him, and he was otherwise mauled. I asked him how he managed to get into such a scrape. He said that he and the other men saw the leopard slip into the *beel* and begin to swim across. One of them suggested that it would be an easy thing to attack him in deep water

from the boat, kill him with *lathies*, and earn the reward. They jumped into the boat and pushed after the leopard only to find when they overtook him that he could get into a boat from the water just as easily as they could. They gave him a severe blow over the head as he got into the boat which, as I found afterwards, had fractured the nasal bones, and this no doubt made him very savage. He bit one man through the biceps and scraped the scalp over another's eyes before that crew of madmen could tumble overboard, and then sat in state in the boat as we first saw him. I arranged with the *Danghars* for the skull and skin. The latter, though much injured by spear thrusts, was interesting from the circumstances under which it was obtained.

A small sum securing me these trophies we started for the house. On the way we saw a bunch of garganey teal and I let drive at them with a bullet from my smooth-bore. "Not a blank day at all events", I said as one of them turned over and came down on the opposite bank. But again we were to be disappointed. The words were hardly out of my mouth when one of the rascals who had assembled to see the *tamasha* snatched up the bird and bolted. We never saw him or the bird again.

The man who had been bitten through the arm presented a pitiable sight. He had several claw wounds as well. I put him in a cart with the man who had been scalped and sent them both off to hospital. The scalped man stayed there and was cured. I heard two days later that the other had come back, and I saw him soon after with his arm in a terrible state. It was hard and swollen, and the tooth marks were much enlarged and full of some horrible-looking pale green stuff. I asked him why he had not stayed in hospital and given himself a chance. He said that the Doctor Saheb had put some medicine on the

wounds, but as he felt no better in the morning he thought he would come back and try some very good medicine he knew of himself. I said :—" What on earth *have* you put on it ?" He replied :—" Crocodile's dung. It's the finest thing in the world for a leopard's bite, and if a crocodile bites you then the proper medicine is leopard's dung." Curiously enough he lived and I often saw him afterwards. His arm was shrunken and he could not work. I asked him one day :—" By-the-bye, where did you get that medicine of yours ? It must be hard to find." " Oh ! no," said he, " you find a crocodile's hole, and when the crocodile is out you dig down from above. If you are lucky you will find all you need, and perhaps some to sell to a *Kabiraj*."

CHAPTER XV.

ONE WAY OF DOING IT.

I WONDER if any of my readers have ever tried to kill a crocodile without the proper apparatus. It is not a very easy thing to do as I can certify from personal experience.

One night at about half past ten, just as I had finished my dawk and was thinking of bed, a man came in to say that a crocodile, by his account 14½ hands high at the shoulder, was in the middle of a mulberry field close to his house. "The crop has been cut," he said, "and the brute is right out in the open. Pray come and kill it." I assured him that I had nothing to kill it with, but he would not be satisfied. He knew that I had a gun, and the fact that I had only No. 8 shot in camp with me meant nothing to him. At last, to please him and get rid of him, I went, taking the gun and six cartridges loaded with Cube Schultze and No. 8 shot. I also slipped a ·32 Colt's New Police revolver into my pocket. Five chambers of it were loaded with cartridges each containing 13 grains of black powder.

Allowing for the exaggerations natural to a *chasa*, the man's statement proved to be fairly correct. There certainly was a crocodile in the middle of the raised field, but it was well under polo height. The scene was brightly lighted by torches held by excited Bengalis who were chattering like a girls' school, and I thought then, and think now, that it was a very extraordinary thing that the crocodile should remain there. However, there she

was and something had to be done with her. I stood in a sunken road with the field about level with my chest and from this advantageous position, at about 12 yards range, I gave her the right barrel just behind the right shoulder. She immediately squirmed up, arching her spine backwards, with her fore feet high off the ground and her mouth open. As she came down I gave her the left barrel in the same place. Up she went again to get another shot as she came down, and this performance was repeated until she had been struck five times. She then tried to make off but seemed unable to use her forelegs. I scrambled up into the field and went after her and gave her the sixth cartridge at about five yards. This stopped her and I took a lantern in my left hand and went for her with the revolver at about three paces. The first shot put the lamp out, so I got a torch, and then I put the revolver bullets into her all in the same place behind the shoulder. They passed clean through her, but she was by no means dead although she seemed incapable of locomotion. She would seize a *lathi* held out to her and allow herself to be dragged about by it until it splintered into fragments, and she would wipe round with a wicked looking tail if she thought that anybody was within striking distance. A rope was produced and we made a noose in the middle of it, worked it over her head and round her neck, and tried to strangle her. We might as well have tried to strangle a drain pipe, but the rope served to drag her into camp. It took three men to get her there, and when she arrived, though the noose was as tight as four men could draw it, she was still blinking her cruel little eyes and was still ready to chew up a *lathi* or anything else she could reach. For a time she lay still till I thought she was dead and bade the men turn her over on her back. They turned her over with *lathis*, but she immediately heaved herself back again and began to go off, propelling herself by means

of her hind legs and a snake-like wriggle, her forelegs being useless. This was too much of a good thing and I looked round for something to finish her off with. I found a woodcutter's axe and with this primitive weapon went for her again. I made a chop at her spine just in front of her hips but allowed too little for the length of the handle and buried the head in her body, beyond the bone. The next chop severed the spine cleanly and she replied by a snap at a man who had come too close to her snout. I rather wanted to save part of the skin but it was impossible to leave her to die slowly in this state, so I gave her three more chops behind the head, one of which cut her spine through again and, I hope, killed her. At all events she showed no more signs of life.

The axe revealed the fact that she was about to lay eggs which may account for her leaving the tank and setting off across country.

I had her buried immediately for fear that jackals should hold a *post-mortem* examination through the axe cuts and spread the results about the camp. I am sorry now that I did not remove the skin and investigate the effects of the shot charges. Owing to the dark, an inferior lantern, failing eyesight, and a disinclination to touch the stinking brute, I was unable to ascertain whether the shots had actually passed through the skin, or whether the mere impact of the charge had knocked the wind out of her and so enabled me to get to close quarters with the revolver.

The carcase measured only 7 feet 3 inches. Had the crocodile been a big one I believe that I should have failed to stop her with such small shot even by hitting her as I did on a line parallel with the ground line in the tender region behind the shoulder. I once killed one by stabbing it there repeatedly with a hogspear, but the retention of life

in crocodiles is most remarkable. It took six charges of shot, five revolver bullets, one strangling (during which she was dragged half a mile by the noose drawn tightly round her neck), and five smashing blows with a felling axe, two of them severing the spine, to kill this one, and I do not propose to attack another without adequate arms. It is a dirty business.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DAY IN THE PUJAH HOLIDAYS.

THE early part of October in Eastern Birbhum is usually, curiously enough, one of the worst times during the season for snipe. This appears to be due to the fact that the survivors of the pintail snipe which afforded sport in September have migrated further south while the fantail snipe do not find satisfactory feeding ground there until the *beels* dry up sufficiently to afford them ground for the soles of their feet. Most of the rice is too high and the water in the fields too deep, but still there are places where a bird or two may be had by trudging. One such place was, fortunately, just behind my house and one day, expecting a friend to dinner, I went over it in the evening and found seven birds of which I shot five. They were all pintails. On the next two days my friend and I explored two *beels* across the river, but found too much water and all we could do, although we were holding straight, was to put up a miserable bag of six snipe, five of them fantails, one teal, and one grey partridge. So on the Monday morning I did not know where to go for sport.

Rising at five I first went for a thirteen mile ride with the sowars to exercise the horses, and on my return I started to get some more exercise with the gun and two terriers. I really meant to get a partridge or two if possible, but as the dogs could flush none and only succeeded in unkennelling some jackals which they chased all over the *mulk* I gave up the idea of partridges, sent the dogs home, and went back to the old place to look for a snipe. Soon

a flock of snippets rose and excited my inexperienced gun boy. "*Oo noy*"* I said as they flew off, "*kintu oo botty*"† as a pintail snipe rose and returned with a splash into the field to the shot. A few paces further on another pintail rose wild to the boy on my right but dropped to a quick shot at about 60 yards. We marked him down in some rather tall rice bordering the seedling nursery from which he had risen, but find him we could not. At last we gave him up and went out to an outlying corner which always holds a bird. He was there, another pintail, but as he flew straight for a man who was walking along an *ail* I had to let him go off unfired at. Then back to the main ground where I had the luck to find my lost bird, his wing broken close to his body, running like a quail along an *ail*, quite 250 yards from where he was shot. This is the third time that this has happened to me in an experience of 24 seasons and I fancy that this running habit of snipe winged in such a way that they do not attempt to fly accounts for many a mysteriously lost bird. I have also known a wounded snipe to go down a hole. But to return. I soon came to some good looking ground where I was encouraged by seeing beak marks in the mud. A little party of nine fantail snipe had come in and six of them were in one field. Four of them rose singly and were all added to the bag, but unfortunately the fourth was only slightly winged and in securing him my boy flushed two others in such a way that I could not, with any regard for the boy's safety, fire at them. The other three rose about 250 yards away on the left being probably flushed by one of the *dhamin* snakes (*Zamenis mucosus*) which are very common in this neighbourhood and grow very large. I could find no more fantails, and those flushed had left the ground, so the only chance was to pick up

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* "That's not one." † "But that is."

another pintail or two on the way home. We flushed three. The first gave me a curious shot. He rose in front of me, went straight up, and turned to come over my head as a black partridge turns back over the beaters when they come to the end of the cover. This snipe very nearly fell on my head and I picked him up without moving. The next was a straight forward shot presenting no difficulties and the bird took his place on the stick. Here it struck me that I was shooting rather well, I had missed nothing so far, so Dame Fortune had a dig at me. My boy was walking too fast and had got a little in front. I whistled to him and signalled him to keep in line. He did not understand at first and just as I renewed my signalling most vigorously a snipe rose beyond the boy and went forwards. I did my best to collect myself and get on to him but he beat me handsomely, and my shot passed on his right as he shot out of range with a triumphant "skeap." As it was now ten o'clock and we were close to my horse I went home to tub and work until tiffin. After tiffin I was again in my *duftar* till, at three o'clock, a letter was brought in to say that a friend was at the Railway Station, 14½ miles away, that he could not get a conveyance, that he supposed that his telegram had miscarried, and that he would return to Calcutta by the 7-30 train.

The river was in high flood, the horses had already done 13 miles fast hacking in the morning, and the stable people were off to see the Poojah, but something must be done. By the time I was in boots and breeches the sowars had got the syces together and the saddlery into the boat. The horses had to swim. The first to cross, a sixteen-hand mare, entered the current too low down the river and missed the landing place. The sowar in charge of her got cramp and had to let her go and for a moment I feared that there would be a catastrophe. However one of the

boatmen reached the sowar in time and the mare swam against the current to the landing place, a feat which I thought very remarkable and which shewed sense, strength and courage. The other horses started higher up stream. The little fifteen-hand mare crossed all right, but the big gelding got his hind legs into a quicksand and my heart was in my mouth for a moment until he dragged himself out of it. By 4-15 I had them dried and saddled and started off for the station, leading a mare on each side of me and riding the gelding. I changed horses at the end of each five miles and arrived at the station in 75 minutes only to find that I had my pains for my trouble as my friend, despairing of getting a conveyance, had returned to Calcutta. I was in the happy position of being 15½ miles from home (by the road I should have to use in the dark) with three horses each of which had already done 27½ miles of fast work that day, no forage, and no more daylight. As against these disadvantages I had some Kulu apples in my pocket and a five days old moon to light me. I watered the horses and let them graze until 6-15 and then started for home. When I was riding one of the mares she and the other mare would snap at each other every few minutes, and the further they went the more fretful they grew. They wanted to fight, too, when I stopped to change horses and sometimes I was hard put to it to prevent a row. At last I started singing to them and they went very much more quietly, probably because my false notes set their teeth on edge and made biting unprofitable. No wonder they were hungry and fretful, but in spite of it they travelled magnificently. I walked them the greater part of the way back but they kept a tremendous stride and we finished the 15½ miles in 2¾ hours to the tick, every horse full of life as they finished their forty-third mile for the day. I did not care to swim them across the river in the dark so had ordered arrangements

to be made for picketing them under the trees near the ghat. They were soon made comfortable and cleaned out their grain boxes as though they had only been to exercise, but then they are all thoroughbred. Had I been on underbred ones I should have got back in a broken-hearted condition, in charge of a lot of cats' meat, at about 2 A.M. I eventually got to bed at midnight thanking God for good horses and a healthy day's exercise. I am thankful to say that none of us were any the worse for our exertions and I was able to put in another long trudge with my gun the next morning. The horses got three days' leave.

APPENDIX.

The Griffith Martingale.

I omitted to mention one method of overcoming a very hard puller who gets his head up. Get a long piece of muslin, double it, make a loop for a Crupper as in the case of the Crupper Leading Rein (p. 73), and make a knot in the two ends together about two feet above the loop of the Crupper. Put the Crupper over the horse's dock, leave the next knot on his loins, separate the two ends and let one hang down each side ; now pass the ends from behind through the girths and between the horse's forelegs, and attach one end to each ring of the snaffle or to the noseband as the case may require. The length should be such that the horse cannot get his head into an abnormally high position. The muslin, if broad enough, will not give way and will not chafe the horse. I have known a pony play an excellent game of polo under this restraint that could not be kept on the ground without it. If the horse pulls he only pulls at his own dock and soon gets tired of it.

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