

**BOURGELAT CLAUDE, BERENGER  
RICHARD**

**A NEW SYSTEM  
OF  
HORSEMANSHIP**

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**A New System of Horsemanship**

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*A New System of Horsemanship:*

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# Claude Bourgelat

## A New System of Horsemanship

*Content, if hence th' Unlearn'd their Wants may view,  
The Learn'd reflect on what before they knew.  
Pope's Essay on Crit.*

# THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

*It is not my Design, in the Task I undertake of giving some Account of this Work, as well as of the Art which is the Subject of it, to trace its Origin back into past Times, or to wander in search of it in the Darkness and Confusion of remote Antiquity. Let it suffice to say, that though its Beginning, as well as that of other Arts, was imperfect, yet its Use, and the Entertainment it affords, have been known and tasted in all Ages. But however distinguish'd it may be by the Notice of the Great, who have at all Times deign'd to profess and practise it; it is yet less entitled to our Regard for these Distinctions, than for the real Advantages we derive from it. Riding consists of two Parts, the useful and the ornamental. That the latter of these may be dispensed with, is most readily granted; but that it behoves every one who puts himself upon a Horse to have some Knowledge of the first, is most evident. – For who would trust to the Mercy of an Animal that may prove wild and ungovernable, who knows himself to be incapable of controuling him, and of acting for his own Safety? Who would venture alone into a Vessel, that can neither row, nor manage a Sail, but must trust entirely to the Winds and Tide? Yet is this the Case with the Generality of Mankind, who are carried upon the Back of a Horse, and think they ride. The Utility of this Art consists then in knowing how to guide and direct your Horse as you please, and in reducing him to Obedience, so as*

to make him execute readily what you require of him. Thus far it is to be wish'd every Person who is conversant with Horses, would endeavour to attain. The ornamental Part, I have already said, is not so requisite to be known: It can only be called an Accomplishment, and placed among the superfluous but refin'd Pleasures of Life. In what Esteem and Honour however it has constantly been held, abundantly appears from the Schools and Academies every where erected for teaching its Elements, as well as from the Number of Books, ancient and modern, given to the World by eminent and accomplished Persons who have studied and practis'd it. Among these our illustrious Countryman, William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, has the highest Claim to our Praise and Acknowledgments. It would be needless to describe his Excellencies; his Character, as a Horseman, is universally known, and universally admir'd. The Truth and Soundness of his Principles, and the Extensiveness of his Knowledge, have opened to us an easier, a shorter, and more certain Way to Perfection in the Art, than was known before. His Precepts have accordingly been adopted by all succeeding Professors, and his Writings consider'd as the Oracle of Horsemanship, notwithstanding a Want of Method and Exactness, which has been objected to them. To remedy these Imperfections, is the Design of the present Undertaking, and the Labours of a judicious and experienced Foreigner, must consummate in the Knowledge of the Art he professes. He has presented us with a new System of Horsemanship, extracted from the Rules of that great Master. The

*Method and Conciseness with which he has digested the Whole, have made the Copy much less than the Original, but it is a small well-polished Gem. To speak truth, he has made the Subject so much his own by the Refinement of his Remarks, the Justness of his Reasoning, and the Light he has diffused through it, that it must have the Merit of an Original; at least the Reader will be divided to whom he shall render most Thanks, whether to him who has given the Food, or to him who has prepar'd and set it before us with so much Elegance and Order. This at least is our Author's Praise. – The Translator has endeavoured to do him as much Justice, in the following Sheets, as he has done his great Original; sensible of the Danger of so difficult an Enterprize, but prompted to it in hopes of making his Merit more known. He translated the Work, that the Treasures it contains may be gathered by those who are so unfortunate as to want this Assistance to obtain them. He has been as faithful to his Author, as the Languages will allow, judging that to be the surest way of doing him Justice. In some Places however he has used (as all Translators must) a discretionary Power. Every Art has technical terms, or Words of its own; these he has preserved in the Translation, the English affording none adequate to them. He has given no Notes or Comments, imagining the Original can, and hoping the Translation will, want none. Of this however his Readers will be the best Judges; he will say no more of himself, but that he has endeavoured to make the Work as perfect as he could; and for this Reason will be very ready to own any Faults that may be pointed out; for, though desirous of*

*Approbation, he is not vain enough to think, there may not be room  
for Censure.*

# CHAP. I.

## *Of the Horseman's Seat*

The Principles and Rules which have hitherto been given for the Horseman's Seat, are various, and even opposite, according as they have been adopted by different Masters, and taught in different Countries; almost each Master, in particular, and every Nation, having certain Rules and Notions of their own. Let us see, however, if Art can discover nothing to us that is certain and invariably true.

The *Italians*, the *Spaniards*, the *French*, and, in a word, every Country, where Riding is in repute, adopt each a Posture which is peculiar to themselves; the Foundation of their general Notions, is, if I may so say, the same, but yet each Country has prescribed Rules for the Placing of the Man in the Saddle.

This Contrariety of Opinions, which have their Origin more in Prejudice, than in Truth and Reality, has given rise to many vain Reasonings and Speculations, each System having its Followers; and, as if Truth was not always the same and unchangeable, but at liberty to assume various, and even opposite Appearances; sometimes one Opinion prevailed, sometimes another dazzled; insomuch, that those who understand nothing of the Subject, but yet are desirous of informing themselves, by searching it to the Bottom, have hitherto been lost in Doubt and Perplexity.

There is nevertheless a sure and infallible Method, by the Assistance of which it would be very easy to overturn all these Systems: But not to enter into a needless Detail, of the extravagant Notions which the Seat alone has given rise to, let us trace it from Principles by so much the more solid, as their Authority will be supported by the most convincing and self-evident Reasons.

In order to succeed in an Art where the Mechanism of the Body is absolutely necessary, and where each Part of the Body has proper Functions, which are peculiar to it, it is most certain, that all and every Part of the Body should be in a natural Posture; were they in an imperfect Situation, they would want that Ease and Freedom which is inseparable from Grace; and as every Motion which is constrained, being false in itself, is incapable of Justness; it is clear that the Part so constrained and forced would throw the whole into Disorder, because each Part belonging to, and depending upon the whole Body, and the Body partaking of the Constraint of its Parts, can never feel that fix'd Point, that just Counterpoise and Equilibre in which alone a fine and just Execution consists.

It is not therefore sufficient in giving Directions for the Seat, to keep altogether to trivial and common Rules which may be followed or left at pleasure; we ought to weigh and examine them with Skill and Judgment, in order to know how to apply them properly and suitably as the Shape and Figure of the Person to whom we undertake to give a Seat will allow; for

many Motions and Attitudes that appear easy and natural in one Man, in another are awkward and ungraceful; whence all those Faults and Difficulties which in many Persons have been thought insuperable; whereas a little more Knowledge, a closer Attention, and a more serious Examination into the Principles of the Art, would convert in the same Subject an awkward and displeasing Appearance, into an easy, natural, and graceful Figure, capable of drawing the Eyes even of Judges themselves.

Indeed the Objects, to which a Master, anxious for the Advancement of his Pupil, should attend, are infinite. To little Purpose will it be to keep the strictest Eye upon all the Parts and Limbs of his Pupil's Body; in vain will he endeavour to remedy all the Defects and Faults which are found in the Posture of almost every Scholar in the Beginning; unless he is intimately acquainted with, and apprized of, the close Dependance and Connection that there is between the Motions of each Part of the Body, and all the Rest; a Correspondence caused by the reciprocal Action of the Muscles which govern and direct them; unless therefore he is Master of this Secret, and has this Clue to the Labyrinth, he will never attain the End he proposes, particularly in his first Lessons, upon which the Success of the rest always depends.

These Principles being established, let us reason in consequence of them; we shall display them with great Force and Clearness.

The Body of a Man is divided into three Parts, two of which are moveable, the other immoveable.

The First of the two moveable Parts is the Trunk or Body, down to the Waist; the Second is from the Knees to the Feet; so that the remaining immoveable Part is that between the Waist and the Knees.

The Parts then which ought to be without Motion, are the Fork or Twist of the Horseman, and his Thighs: Now, that these Parts may be kept without Motion, they ought to have a certain Hold and Center, if I may so say, to rest upon, which no Motion that the Horse can make, can disturb or loosen; this Point or Center is the Basis of the Hold which the Horseman has upon his Horse, and is what is called the *Seat*. Now, if the Seat is nothing else but this Point or Center, it must follow, that not only the Grace, but the Symmetry and true Proportion of the whole Attitude depends upon those Parts of the Body that are immoveable.

Let the Horseman then place himself at once upon his Twist, sitting exactly in the Middle of the Saddle, let him support this Posture, in which the Twist alone seems to sustain the Weight of the whole Body, by moderately leaning upon the Buttocks; let his Thighs be turned inward, and rest flat upon the Sides of the Saddle, and in order to this, let the Turn of the Thighs proceed directly from the Hips, and let him employ no Force or Strength to keep himself in the Saddle, but trust to the Weight of his Body and Thighs; this is the exact Equilibre; in this consists the Firmness of the whole Building; a Firmness which young Beginners are never sensible of at first, but which is to be acquired, and will always be attained by Exercise and Practice.

I demand but a moderate Stress upon the Buttocks, because a Man that sits full upon them, can never turn his Thighs flat upon the Saddle; and the Thighs should always lay flat, because the fleshy Part of the Thigh being insensible, the Horseman would not otherwise be able to feel the Motions of his Horse. I insist that the Turn of the Thigh should be from the Hip, because this Turn can never be natural, but as it proceeds from the Hollow of the Hip-bone. I insist further, that the Horseman never avail himself of the Strength or Help of his Thighs; because, besides that he would then be not only less steady, but the closer he prest them to the Saddle, the more would he be lifted above it; and with respect to his Buttocks and Thighs, he ought always to be in the Middle of the Saddle, and sit down full and close upon it.

Having thus firmly placed the immoveable Parts, let us pass on to the first of the Moveable; which is, as I have already observed, the Body or Trunk, as far as to the Waist: I comprehend in the Body or Trunk, the Head, the Shoulders, the Breast, the Arms, the Hands, the Loins, and the Waist, of the Horseman.

The Head should be free, firm, and easy, in order to be ready for all the natural Motions that the Horseman may make, in turning it to one Side or the other: It should be firm, that is to say strait, without leaning to the Right or Left, neither advanced, nor thrown back; it should be easy, because if otherwise, it would occasion a Stiffness, and that Stiffness affecting the different Parts of the Body, especially the Back-bone, they would be without Ease, and constrained.

The Shoulders alone influence by their Motion the Breast, the Reins, and the Waist.

The Horseman should present or advance his Breast; by this his whole Figure opens and displays itself: He should have a small Hollow in his Loins, and should push his Waist forward to the Pommel of the Saddle, because this Position corresponds and unites him to all the Motions of the Horse. Now, only throwing the Shoulders back produces all these Effects, and gives them exactly in the Degree that is requisite; whereas, if we were to look for the particular Position of each Part separately, and by itself, without examining the Connection that there is between the Motions of one Part with those of another, there would be such a Bending in the Loins, that the Horseman would be, if I may so say, *hollow-back'd*; and as from that he would force his Breast forward, and his Waist towards the Pommel of the Saddle, he would be flung back, and must sit upon the Rump of the Horse.

The Arms should be bent at the Elbows, and the Elbows should rest equally upon the Hips; if the Arms were strait, the Consequence would be, that the Hands would be infinitely too low, or at much too great a Distance from the Body; and if the Elbows were not kept steady, they would of consequence give an Uncertainty and Fickleness to the Hand, sufficient to ruin it for ever.

It is true, that the Bridle-hand is that which absolutely ought to be steady and immoveable, and one might conclude from hence,

that the Left-elbow only ought to rest upon the Hip, but Grace consists in the exact Proportion and Symmetry of all the Parts of the Body, and to have the Arm on one Side raised and advanced, and that of the other kept down and close to the Body, would present but an awkward and disagreeable Appearance.

It is this which determines the Situation of the Hand, which holds the Switch. The Left-hand being of an equal Height with the Elbow, so that the Knuckle of the Little-finger, and the Tip of the Elbow, be both in a Line; this Hand then being rounded neither too much nor too little, but just so that the Wrist may direct all its Motions; place your Right-hand, or the Switch-hand, lower and more forward than the Bridle-hand; it should be lower than the other Hand, because if it was upon a Level with it, it would restrain or obstruct its Motions; and were it to be higher, as it cannot take so great a Compass as the Bridle-hand, which must always be kept over against the Horseman's Body, it is absolutely necessary to keep the Proportion of the Elbows, that it should be lower than the other.

The Legs and Feet make up the second Division, of what I call the moveable Parts of the Body.

The Legs serve for two Purposes; they may be used as Aids, or Corrections, to the Animal. They should then be kept near the Sides of the Horse, and in a Line with the Man's Body; for being near the Part of the Horse's Body where his Feeling is most delicate, they are ready to do their Office in the Instant they are wanted. Moreover, as they are an Appendix of the Thighs, if the

Thigh is upon its Flat in the Saddle, they will, by a necessary Consequence, be turned just as they ought, and will infallibly give the same Turn to the Feet; because the Feet depend upon them, as they depend upon the Thighs.

The Toe should be held a little higher than the Heel, for the lower the Toe is, the nearer the Heel will be to the Sides of the Horse, and must be in danger of touching his Flank. Many Persons, notwithstanding, when they raise their Toe, bend and twist their Ankle, as if they were lame in that Part. The Reason of this is very plain; it is because they make use of the Muscles in their Legs and Thighs; whereas, they should employ only the Joint of the Foot for this Purpose; a Joint, given by Nature to facilitate all the Motions of the Foot, and to enable it to turn to the Right or Left, upwards or downwards.

Such is, in short, the mechanical Disposition of all the Parts of the Horseman's Body. I will enlarge no further upon a Subject treated on already so amply by every Writer; as it is needless to write what has been already handled. I have had no other Design in this Chapter, than to give an Idea of the Correspondence that there is between all the Parts of the Body, because it is only by a just Knowledge of this mutual Relation of all the different Parts, that we can be enabled to prescribe Rules for giving that true and natural Seat, which is not only the Principle of Justness, but likewise the Foundation of all Grace in the Horseman.

## CHAP. II.

### *Of the Hand, and its Effects*

The Knowledge of the different Characters, and the different Nature of Horses, together with the Vices, and Imperfections, as well as the exact and just Proportions of the Parts of a Horse's Body, is the Foundation upon which is built the Theory of our Art; but this Theory will be unnecessary and even useless, if we are not able likewise to carry it into Execution.

This depends chiefly upon the Goodness and Quickness of Feeling in the Hand, a Delicacy which Nature alone can give, and which she does not always bestow. The first Sensation of the Hand consists in a greater or less Degree of Fineness in the Touch or Feeling; all of us are equally furnished with Nerves, from which we have the Sense of Feeling, but as this Sense is much more subtle and quick in some Persons than in others, it is impossible to give a precise Definition of the exact Degree of Feeling in the Hand, which ought to communicate and answer to the same Degree of Feeling in the Horse's Mouth; because there is as much difference in the Degrees of Feeling in Men, as there is in the Mouths of Horses.

I suppose then a Man, who is not only capable to judge of the Qualities of a Horse's Mouth from a Knowledge of the Theory, but who has likewise by Nature that Fineness of Touch, which

helps to form a good Hand; let us see then what the Rules are that we must follow, in order to make it perfect, and by which we must direct all its Operations.

A horse can move four different Ways, he can advance, go back, turn to the Right, and to the Left; but he can never make these different Motions, unless the Hand of the Rider permits him by making four other Motions which answer to them: So that there are five different Positions for the Hand.

The first is that general Position, from which proceed, and indeed ought to proceed, the other four.

Hold your Hand three Fingers breadth from your Body, as high as your Elbow, in such a Manner that the Joint of your Little-finger be upon a right Line with the Tip of the Elbow; let your Wrist be sufficiently rounded, so that your Knuckles may be kept directly above the Neck of your Horse; let your Nails be exactly opposite your Body, the Little-finger nearer to it than the others, your Thumb quite flat upon the Reins, which you must separate, by putting your Little-finger between them, the right Rein lying upon it; this is the first and general Position.

Does your Horse go forward, or rather would you have him go forward? Yield to him your Hand, and for that Purpose turn your Nails downwards, in such a Manner as to bring your Thumb near your Body, remove your Little-finger from it, and bring it into the Place where your Knuckles were in the first Position, keeping your Nails directly above your Horse's Neck; this is the second.

Would you make your Horse go backwards? quit the first

Position, let your Wrist be quite round, let your Thumb be in the Place of the Little-finger in the second Position, and the Little-finger in that of the Thumb, turn your Nails quite upwards, and towards your Face, and your Knuckles will be towards your Horse's Neck; this is the third.

Would you turn your Horse to the Right, leave the first Position, carry your Nails to the Right, turning your Hand upside down, in such a manner, that your Thumb be carried out to the Left, and the Little-finger brought in to the Right; this is the fourth Position.

Lastly, Would you turn to the Left, quit again the first Position, carry the Back of your Hand a little to the Left, so that the Knuckles come under a little, but that your Thumb incline to the Right, and the Little-finger to the Left; this makes the fifth.

These different Positions however alone are not sufficient; we must be able to pass from one to another with Readiness and Order. – Three Qualities are especially necessary to the Hand. It ought to be *firm*, *gentle*, and *light*; I call that a *firm* or *steady Hand*, whose Feeling corresponds exactly with the Feeling in the Horse's Mouth, and which consists in a certain Degree of Steadiness, which constitutes the just Correspondence between the Hand and the Horse's Mouth, which every Horseman wishes to find.

An *easy* and *gentle Hand* is that which by relaxing a little of its Strength and Firmness, eases and mitigates the Degree of Feeling between the Hand and Horse's Mouth, which I have

already described.

Lastly, a *light* Hand is that which lessens still more the Feeling between the Rider's Hand and the Horse's Mouth, which was before moderated by the *gentle* Hand.

The Hand therefore, with respect to these Properties, must operate in part, and within certain Degrees; and depends upon being more or less felt, or yielded to the Horse, or with-held.

It should be a Rule with every Horseman, not to pass at once from one Extreme to another, from a firm Hand to a slack one; so that in the Motions of the Hand, you must upon no account jump over that Degree of Sensation which constitutes the *easy* or *gentle* Hand. Were you at once to go from a firm Hand or a slack one, you would then entirely abandon your Horse; you would surprize him, deprive him of the Support he trusted to, and precipitate him on his Shoulders, supposing you do this at an improper time; on the contrary, were you to pass from a slack to a tight Rein all at once, you must jerk your Hand, and give a violent Shock to the Horse's Mouth, which rough and irregular Motion would be sufficient to falsify the finest Apuy, and ruin a good Mouth.

It is indispensibly necessary therefore, that all its Operations should be gentle and light; and in order to this, it is necessary that the Wrist alone should direct and govern all its Motions, by turning and steering it, if I may so say, through every Motion that it is to make.

In consequence then of these Principles, I insist that the Wrist be kept so round, that your Knuckles may be always directly

above the Horse's Neck, and that your Thumb be always kept flat upon the Reins. In reality, were your Wrist to be more or less rounded, than in the Degree I have fixed, you could never work with your Hand, but by the means of your Arm; and besides, it would appear as if it were lame: Again, were your Thumb not to be upon the Flat of the Reins, they would continually slip through the Hand, and, by being lengthen'd, would spoil the Apuy; and in order to recover them, you would be obliged every Moment to raise your Hand and Arm, which would throw you into Confusion, and make you lose that Justness and Order, without which no Horse will be obedient, and work with Readiness and Pleasure.

It is nevertheless true, that with Horses that are well drest, one may take Liberties; these are nothing else but those Motions which are called *Descents* of the Hand, and they are to be made three different ways; either by dropping the Knuckles directly and at once upon the Horse's Neck, or by taking the Reins in the Right-hand, about four Fingers breadth above the Left, and letting them slide through the Left, dropping your Right-hand at the same time upon the Horse's Neck; or else by putting the Horse under the *Button*, as it is call'd; that is, by taking the End of the Reins in your Right-hand, quitting them entirely with your Left, and letting the End of them fall upon your Horse's Neck: these Motions however, which give a prodigious Grace to the Horseman, never should be made but with great Caution, and exactly in the time when the Horse is quite *together*, and in the

Hand; and you must take care to counter-balance, by throwing back your Body, the Weight of the Horse upon his Haunches.

The Apuy being always in the same Degree, would heat the Mouth, would dull the Sense of Feeling, would deaden the Horse's Bars, and render them insensible and callous; this shews the Necessity of continually yielding and drawing back the Hand to keep the Horse's Mouth fresh and awake.

Besides these Rules and Principles, there are others not less just and certain, but whose Niceness and Refinement it is not the Lot of every Man to be able to taste and understand. My Hand being in the first Position, I open the two Middle-fingers, I consequently ease and slacken my Right Rein; I shut my Hand, the Right Rein operates again, and resumes the Apuy. I open my Little-finger, and putting the End of it upon the Right Rein, I thereby slacken the Left, and shorten the Right. I shut my Hand entirely, and open it immediately again; I thereby lessen the Degree of Tension and Force of the two Reins at the same time; again I close my Hand not quite so much, but still I close it. It is by these Methods, and by the Vibration of the Reins, that I unite the Feeling in my Hand with that in the Horse's Mouth; and it is thus that I play with a fine and *made* Mouth, and freshen and relieve the Bars in which the Feeling or Apuy resides.

It is the same with respect to the second *Descent* of the Hand: My Right-hand holding the Reins, I pass and slide my Left-hand upon the Reins up and down, and in the Degree of Apuy of the *easy* and *slack* Hand; by the means of which the

Horse endeavours of himself to preserve the Correspondence and Harmony of that mutual Sensation, between his Mouth and the Rider's Hand, which alone can make him submit with Pleasure to the Constraint of the Bit.

I have thus explained the different Positions and Motions of the Hand; let me shew now in a few Words the Effects which they produce.

The Horseman's Hand directs the Reins; the Reins operate upon the Branches of the Bit; the Branches upon the Mouth-piece and the Curb; the Mouth-piece operates upon the Bars, and the Curb upon the Beard of the Horse.

The Right Rein guides the Horse to the Left; the Left Rein to the Right. Would you go to the Right, you pass to the fourth Position of the Hand, that is, you carry and turn your Nails to the Right; now in carrying thus your Nails to the Right, and reversing your Hand in such a manner, that your Thumb point to the Left, and your Little-finger being raised turns to the Right, you by this means shorten your Left Rein; it is this Left therefore that turns and guides the Horse to the Right: Would you go to the Left, pass to the fifth Position, you will carry the Back of your Hand to the Left, so that your Nails will be turned down a little, your Thumb will be to the Right, and the Little-finger to the Left; this will shorten the right Rein, and the right Rein determines your Horse to the Left.

I have already said, that the Effect which the Mouth-piece has upon the Bars, and the Curb upon the Beard, depends upon

the Branches of the Bitt; when the Branches rise or are turned upwards, the Mouth-piece sinks, and when the Branches sink, the Mouth-piece rises; so that when your Horse is going strait forward, if you keep your Hand low and close to your Body, the Mouth-piece then presses strong upon the Bars, and the Chain or Curb having, in consequence more Liberty, acts less upon the Beard; on the contrary, if you keep your Hand high, a little forward, and consequently a little out of the Line of the End of the Branches, the Mouth-piece then sinks, and the Branches of necessity operate upon the Curb, which presses then very strongly upon the Beard; now, in order to place, and to bring in your Horse's Head, you must hold your Hand low, and in order to raise and lighten a Horse that weighs upon the Hand, and carries his Head too low, you must advance your Hand a little, and keep it high.

Would you have your Horse go backward? Come to the third Position, but take care to round your Wrist exactly, in order to work equally with both Reins, and by this means to aid your Horse more effectually to go backward strait and ballanced between your Legs, which he could never do, if one Rein was to operate stronger than the other.

There are particular Cases, where the Reins are separated, and one held in each Hand; it is usual to separate them when you trot a young Horse, or when you are to work one who is disobedient, and resists his Rider; upon these occasions, keep both your Hands upon a Level, low and near your Body: To turn to the right, use

your right Rein; to go to the left, use your left Rein; but in order to make them have their Effect, move your Arm gently, turning it a little from your Body, keeping your Hand always low and even near your Boot.

Such are the Principles upon which the Perfection and Justness of the Aids of the Hand depend, all others are false, and not to be regarded; Experience has so much the more evinced the Truth of this, as the new Discoveries which some People imagine they have lately made, have produced nothing but Hands, cold and unactive, without Firmness, whose irregular and capricious Motions serve only to render a Horse's Mouth uncertain and fickle, and who, by their manner of holding them high, have ruined absolutely the Hocks of all the Horses, that they have worked according to these absurd Notions.

## CHAP. III.

### *Of Disobedience in Horses, and the Means to correct it*

Disobedience in Horses is more frequently owing to the want of Skill in the Horseman, than proceeding from any natural Imperfections in the Horse; in effect, three things may give rise to it, Ignorance, a bad Temper, and an Incapacity in the Animal to do what is required of him.

If a Horse is ignorant of what you expect him to do, and you press him, he will rebel, nothing is more common; teach him then, and he will know; a frequent Repetition of the Lessons will convert this Knowledge into a Habit, and you will reduce him to the most exact Obedience.

He refuses perhaps to obey, this Fault may arise either from Ill-humour, Dullness, or from too much Mettle; it often is the Effect of the two first Vices, sometimes the Result of all the three. In either, or all these Instances, recourse must be had to Rigour, but it must be used with Caution; for we must not forget, that the Hopes of Recompence have as great an Influence over the Understanding of the Animal, as the Fear of Punishment. Perhaps he is not able to execute what you ask of him; examine him, something may be amiss in some Part of his Body, or perhaps in the whole Body; he may be deficient, he may want

Strength, or not be light enough; perhaps he is deficient in both, in that he resists and rebels. Consider whether he knows what he should do or not; if he is ignorant, teach him; if he knows, but can't execute through Inability, endeavour to assist Nature as far as you can, by the Help of Art. But does he already know, and is he able too, and yet does he refuse to obey? After having first tried every Method that Patience and Lenity can suggest, compel him by Force and Severity. It behoves then every Horseman, who would be perfect in his Art, to distinguish from whence the different Sorts of Defences and Rebellion in Horses proceed: And this Knowledge is by so much the more difficult to attain, as he must have Penetration enough to distinguish if the Cause of their Rebellion is in their Character and Nature, or owing to any Fault in their Make and Structure.

The different Natures of Horses are infinite, though there are certain general Principles, of which all, more or less, always partake.

A Horse may be imperfect from four Causes, Weakness, Heaviness in his Make, Want of Courage, and Sloth.

Four Qualities must conspire to make a perfect Horse, Strength, Activity, Courage, and Judgment.

The Mixture of these different Qualities occasions the different Natures and Dispositions of the Creature, according as he is form'd better or worse; for it is from his Temper, or rather from the Harmony or Unfitness of the Parts and Elements, of which he is composed, that we are enabled to fix his Character;

it is therefore the Part of every Horseman never to work but with Discretion and Caution, and to adapt his Rules and Lessons to the Nature and Ability of the Horse he undertakes, and which he ought to know.

A Horse may be difficult to be mounted, examine the Source of this Vice; it may be owing either to the Ignorance or the Brutality of those who have first had to do with him, or perhaps that the Saddle may have hurt him, or else to a Temper naturally bad. To whatever Cause it may be owing, remember never to beat him, for instead of curing him, you would certainly confirm him in his Vice; clap him gently when you approach him, stroke his Head and Mane, talk to him, and as you talk, clap the Seat of the Saddle; keep yourself still all the while, put your Foot only in the Stirrup to encourage your Horse, without doing any more, in order to make him familiar, and lose all Apprehension and Fear when he is going to be mounted; by degrees at last he will let you mount him, you will immediately get down and remount, and so successively for several Times together, without attempting to do any thing else, but send him back to the Stable. If it happens that then when you are upon him, he runs from the Place where you got upon him, bring him to it immediately, keep him there some Time, coax him, and send him away. – The first Lessons ought to be well weigh'd; when you undertake to bring a young Horse to Obedience, and to reclaim him from Liberty to the Subjection of the Bridle, Saddle, and the Weight of his Rider, so restrain'd, it is not surprizing if he should employ all his Strength against

you in his own Defence.

The Generality of Colts are difficult to be turn'd and guided as you would have them go; we ought not however to be surprized at this their first Disobedience, it must be imputed to the Habit they acquire from their Birth, of constantly following their Dams. Indulged in this Liberty, and subjected all at once by the Bit, it is but natural they should rebel; there is no way of eradicating these first Impressions, but by Gentleness and Patience: A Horseman, who should make use of Force and Correction, and employ it all at once upon a young Horse, would discourage and make him vicious ever after. If therefore your Horse refuses to go forward, you must lead another Horse before him, the Person who rides the Colt will try from Time to Time, and insensibly, to make the Colt go a-breast with him, and afterwards get before him; if being surprized at seeing the Horse no longer, he stops or runs back, the Rider must endeavour to drive him forward, either by his Voice, or some Kind of slight Punishment, or he that rides the other Horse may give him a Stroke with the Chambriere, in order to make him go forward; if these Methods should not succeed, he will go before him again with the other Horse, by degrees (for one Lesson wont be sufficient) the Colt will grow accustom'd to it, and at last will go on of himself.

Most Horses who start, have some Defect in their Sight, which makes them fear to approach the Object. The Horseman, upon those Occasions, instead of having Recourse to Punishment, which serves only to alarm the Horse, and extinguish his Courage

and Vigour, should first endeavour to lead him gently towards the Object that terrifies him, either by encouraging him with his Voice, or by closing his Legs upon him, to make him go up to it. If he wont go towards it, you may give him the Spurs, but with Discretion, and by Coaxing and Caresses push him towards it insensibly; severe Correction will never cure him of this fearful Temper, which is a Fault inherent in his Nature, nor of any Imperfections in his Sight, which is a Disorder belonging to him, but the Habit of viewing the Objects which alarm him, may in time remedy the Defects of Nature.

If notwithstanding you perceive that Sloth and Malice are added to these Faults, you must use as you find necessary both Mildness and severe Correction, and you will bestow them in proportion to the Effect they produce. For the rest, be careful never to surprize a young Horse who is shy, and apt to start, never terrify him with what he most fears, never beat him to make him come up to an Object which he dreads; accustom him by degrees to it, and have Patience; the Fear of Punishment does oftentimes more harm, and is more dreaded by him, than the very Object which first alarmed him.

There are some Horses, who are struck with such Terror at the Sight of a Stone or Wooden Bridge, and at the Sound and Echo of the hollow Part of it, that they will fling themselves headlong into the Water, without the Riders being able to restrain them: They are to be cur'd of this Apprehension by covering the Pavement of their Stall with Wooden Planks, between two or three Feet

high; and the Horse standing constantly upon them, his Feet will make the same Noise as they do when he goes over a Bridge, and he will of course grow familiar to the Sound, and lose all Apprehension of it.

To accustom them likewise to the Noise of the Water running under the Bridge, lead him to a Mill, fix two Pillars directly over against the Wheels, and tie your Horse constantly for two Hours together, several Times in the Day; having done this, bring him back to the Bridge, let an old Horse, that is not afraid, go before him upon the Bridge, by degrees you will find him go over the Bridge as readily and quietly as if he had never had the least Apprehension.

For Horses that are addicted to lay down in the Water, you must provide yourself with two little Leaden Balls, tie them to a Piece of Packthread, and in the Moment that he is lying down, you must drop these into his Ears, and if he rises instantly, or forbears to lay down, draw them back; but this Method is not less sure than that of breaking a Flask fill'd with Water upon his Head, and letting the Water run into his Ears.

Fire, Smoke, the Smell of Gunpowder, and the Noise of Guns, or other Arms, naturally surprize and frighten a Horse. – There are few that will come near Fire, or pass by it without Difficulty.

There are many Occasions however, wherein it is necessary; it is therefore proper to accustom your Horse to it. In the first place, begin with your Horse by letting him see it; and for that purpose tie him between two Pillars, and hold before him, at

about thirty Paces distant, a burning Wisp of Straw; this should be continued for some Days together, repeating it several times each Day. Let the Person who holds the Brand, advance towards the Horse step by step, and let him take care to advance or stop often, as he perceives the Horse is more or less frighten'd, who in a short time will be imbolden'd, and no longer afraid of the Fire: After this get up on him, carry him slowly, and, as it were, insensibly towards the Brand, the Person who holds it taking care not to stir: If your Horse comes up to it, without being frighten'd, let the Man on Foot walk on, and let the Horse follow the Fire. Lay upon the Ground some Straw about half burnt out, and he will pass over it.

With respect to the Noise of Arms and Drums, let your Horse hear them before you give him his Oats: Do this regularly every Day, for some time, and he will be so used to them as not to mind them.

A Horse is said to be *entier* to that Hand, to which he refuses to turn; a Hurt in his Foot, Leg, or Shoulder, may often be the Cause of his refusing to turn to that Side, where he feels any Pain; a Hurt in his Loins or Haunch, a Curb or Spavin, by hindering him to bend and rest upon his Hocks, may make him guilty of this Disobedience. Art can do little towards curing these Evils, consequently a Horse so affected will never dress well, because he never can be made supple and ready; besides, every Horse is naturally inclin'd to go to one Hand more than the other, and then he will go to that Hand on which he finds himself the weakest,

because with the strongest he can turn more easily.

They may likewise refuse to turn, from some Defect in their Sight, natural or accidental. I have tried a Method to remedy this Vice, which has answer'd very well; I have put a Lunette upon the ailing Eye, and as his Fault was owing to his Eye, the Horse began by degrees to go to that Hand to which before he had refused to turn: After this I made two little Holes in the Lunette; I enlarged them afterwards, and the Eye of the Horse being thus insensibly accustom'd to receive the Light, and he to turn to that Hand, he no longer disobeyed; I exercised him in this Manner from time to time, in order to confirm him in his Obedience. – I have said, that there is no Horse who is not by Nature inclin'd to go better to one Hand than the other; their inclination generally carries them to the Left rather than to the Right. Some People impute this Preference to the Manner in which the Foal lies in its Dam's Belly, and pretend that even then it is entirely bent and turn'd to the Left: Others insist that Horses lay down generally upon their Right-side, and from thence contract a Habit to turn their Heads and Necks to the Left: But not to regard these groundless Notions, it is easier and more natural to believe, that this Habit is owing to Use, and the Manner in which they are treated by those who first have had the Care of them.

The Halter, the Bridle, the Saddle, and the Girths are all put on and tied on the Left-side; when they are rubb'd or curried, the Man stands on the Left-side; the same when they are fed, and when they are led out, the Man holds them in his Right-hand,

consequently their Head is pull'd to the Left. Here are a Chain of Reasons, sufficient to induce us to believe that if they are readier to turn to one Hand than the other, it is owing to a Habit and Custom which we ourselves have given. We seldom meet with Horses that are readier to turn to the Right-hand than the Left, and when it so happens, it oftentimes denotes an ill Temper; it demands much Time and Pains to cure them of this Fault.

It is not proper to use severe Correction to make a Horse obey, who refuses to turn to one Hand; if he is cold and dull, he will lose all his Vigour and Courage; if he is of an angry Temper, hot and brisk, you would make him desperate and mad; work him then upon the Principles of Art, and pursue the Methods you think most likely to reform his ill Habit, and reduce him to Obedience; if he obstinately refuses to turn to one Hand, begin the next Lesson, by letting him go to his favourite Hand a turn or two; finish him on the same Hand, by degrees you'll gain him; whereas were you to do otherwise, you might make him ever afterwards rebellious. A Horse that strenuously resists his Rider, if he has Vigour and Courage, after he is reduced and conquer'd, will nevertheless succeed in what you want of him, provided he is under the Direction of an able and knowing Person, who understands the Aids of the Hand and Legs, and their mutual Harmony and Correspondence.

Such a Horse is even preferable to one who never rebels; because in this last, Nature may be deficient, if I may so express myself, from his Want of Strength and Resolution.

In order to teach your Horses to turn to both Hands, you must separate your Reins, as I have already mention'd; don't confine him too much, support him moderately so that you may easily draw his Head to one side or the other, as you would have him go, and to give him the greater Liberty to turn.

If he refuses to obey, examine him; if he is by Nature impatient, hot and vicious, by no means beat him, provided he will go forwards; because being held in Hand, and kept back a little, is Punishment enough; if he stops, and strives to resist by running back, drive him forward with the Chambriere.

The Resistance of a Horse, whose Mouth is faulty, discovers itself more in going forward than backward, and in forcing the Hand; a Horse of this sort ought never to be beat; he ought to be kept back, as I have just now said. You must endeavour to give him a good and just Apuy, and put him upon his Haunches, in order to cure him of the Trick of leaning upon his Bit, and forcing the Hand. If your Horse is heavy, never press or put him together, till you have lighten'd his Fore-part, and put him upon his Haunches, for fear of throwing him so much upon his Shoulders, that it may be very difficult afterwards to raise him. Take particular care to lighten every Horse that is heavy before, and has Malice in his Temper at the same time; for if you were to press him, he would resist you through Vice; in which Case by his Want of Strength on one hand, and being heavy and unwieldy on the other, you would be exposed to evident Danger.

A *restive* Horse is one that refuses to go forward, who standing

still in the same Place, defends himself, and resists his Rider in several different Manners; it is much to be fear'd that one should lose all Temper with such a Horse, since it requires a great deal of Patience to cure so Capital a Fault, and which perhaps by Habit and Time is so rooted in him as to be almost natural to him, treat a Horse of this sort, who has been too much constrain'd and tyrannized over, with the same Lenity that you would shew to a young Colt.

The Spurs are as improper to be used to one as the other; make use of your Switch in order to drive him forward, you will alarm him the less; the Spurs surprize a Horse, abate his Courage, and are more likely to make him restive, than oblige him to go forward, if he refuses to do so. There is likewise another Method to punish a restive Horse; it is to make him go backwards the Moment he begins to resist; this Correction often succeeds; but the general Rule is to push and carry your Horse forward, whenever he refuses to advance, but continues in the same Place, and defends himself, either by turning or flinging his Croupe on one side or the other; and for this Purpose nothing is so efficacious as to push him forward vigorously.

The most dangerous of all Defences a Horse can make is to rise directly upon his Hind-legs, and stand almost quite strait, because he runs a risque of falling backwards; and in that Case the Rider would be in Danger of his Life. People have endeavour'd to correct this Vice, by a Method of Punishment, which might prove dangerous, unless given in *time* and with the

greatest Exactness.

When the Horse rises strait up, throw your Body forward, and give him all the Bridle; the Weight of your Body on his Fore-parts will oblige him to come down: In the Minute that his Fore-feet are coming to the Ground, give him both the Spurs firm, and as quick as you can; these Aids and Corrections however must be given with the greatest Caution and Exactness: For were you to give him the Spurs when he is in the Air, he would fall over; whereas if you watch the Time so as not to spur him but when he is coming down, and his Fore-feet near the Ground, it is then impossible he should fall backwards; for then his Balance is destroy'd, and he is upon all his Legs again, and can't rise without first touching the Ground, and taking his Spring thence; if therefore you give him the Spurs before he is in a Situation to rise again, you will punish him, and drive him forward at the same time.

This Defence is still more dangerous in Horses who are of a fiery Temper, and weak in their Haunches, at the same time; these are continually apt to rise, and whatever Precautions the Rider may take, he is in continual Danger of their coming over. The way to correct them is this: Tie your Horse between the Pillars very short, put on a good Cavason of Cord, and don't suffer him to be mounted; prick him upon the Buttocks with a Hand-spur in order to make him strike out; encourage him when he kicks, and continue to make him kick; encourage him from time to time when he obeys; do this for a Quarter of an Hour

every Day; when you perceive that he begins to kick the Moment you offer to prick him, without waiting till he feels it, get upon him, hold your Reins long, prick him, and let a Man stand by and prick him at the same time. Encourage him when he kicks, and continue to prick him to make him do it, till he will kick readily only at the Offer you make of pricking him; he ought to be brought to this Point in five or six Days: After this take him out of the Pillars, mount him, and trot him in the Longe, and make him kick by pricking him behind; after that let him walk two or three Steps, then make him kick again, and so work him by degrees. Put him to the Gallop; if he offers to rise, prick him behind, and make him kick: Nothing excels this Method to break a Horse of this terrible and dangerous Vice.

Those Horses who are apt to kick, either when they go forward or stand still, must be kept much together, or held in closely; make them go backward briskly, and you will cure them of this Vice.

To resume our Subject. All Horses are by Nature rather awkward than nervous and strong; fearful than bold; hot and fretful than mischievous or ill-temper'd; whenever they grow desperate and absolutely ungovernable, it is often rather to avoid the extreme Pain which they feel, or expect to feel from too great a Constraint, than merely to resist the Horseman. Arm yourself then with great Patience; keep such Horses as are of a fiery and fretful Disposition, rather in Awe than in absolute Subjection; they are naturally fearful, and apt to be alarm'd; and

violent Correction and Force would dishearten and make them quite desperate. Such as are of a hot and impetuous Temper, are generally timid and malicious. Endeavour therefore to prevent the Disorders they would commit; for Lenity and good Usage would never reduce them to Obedience, and Severity would make them lifeless and jadish. In fine, let your Lessons be short, easy, and often repeated to Horses of a cold and heavy Disposition, because they have no Memory, and want both Resolution and Strength.

In a word, never depart from this great Maxim, "Always observe a just Medium between too indulgent a Lenity and extreme Severity;" work your Horse according to his Strength and Capacity, give your Lessons in proportion to his Memory, and dispense your Punishment and Rewards suitable to his Courage and Disposition.

# CHAP. IV.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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