

SF309

.C43



9  
1

7

# Jumping and Cross-Country

## Riding

First Lieut. Adna R. Chaffee, Jr.  
*Comanza*

Thirteenth Cavalry

Copyrighted by



Reprinted from

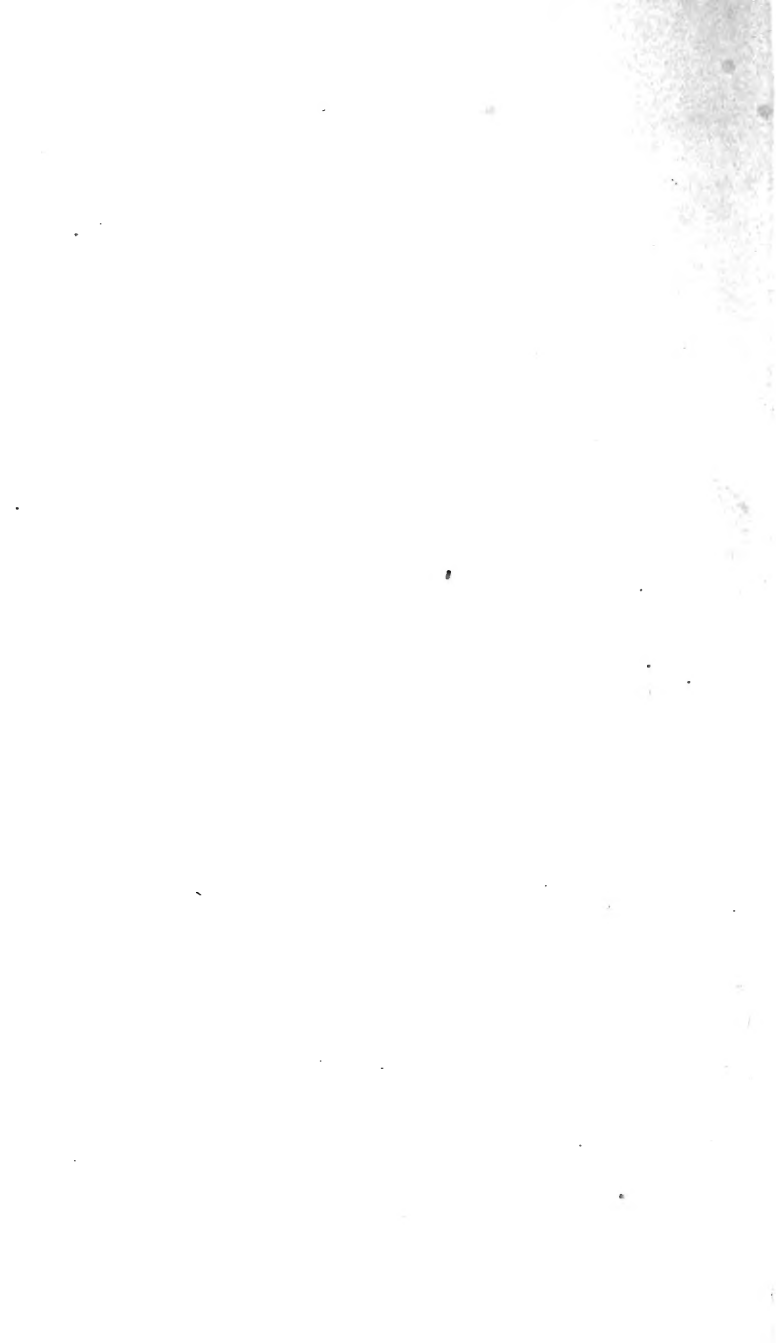
**THE RASP 1913**

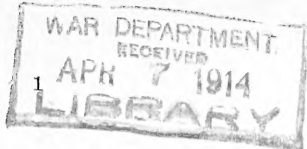
Mounted Service School Press



SF 30  
CA3

WAR DEPARTMENT  
RECEIVED  
APR 7 1914  
LIBRARY





## JUMPING AND CROSS COUNTRY RIDING

BY 1ST LIEUTENANT ADNA R. CHAFFEE, JR.,  
THIRTEENTH CAVALRY.

“WHAT practical value is there in having a horse which can jump? Do you expect the average soldier, mounted on the remount furnished in time of war to get over big fences?” “Why is so much time spent at the Mounted Service School in exercises over obstacles?” These are questions which have been asked in the service and will be asked again. They come from practical men and must have practical answers.

The primary value of this work is as a physical exercise for man and horse.

The cavalry soldier must be as good a horseman as we can make him in order that we may have a maximum of mobility, marching power, and fighting power in the saddle. Any exercise which will lead to a firm seat in the saddle under all circumstances, endurance, quick thinking, resolution, and daring will increase our efficiency in the three qualities mentioned. Jumping does this.

The horses which we ride in time of peace may all have to be replaced during the course of a war. The trooper who has a good tight seat in his saddle will train his remount much quicker and make him a serviceable horse sooner than one who has not had the benefit of such exercise. As a suppling exercise, to establish and keep a firm seat in the saddle during violent movements of the horse, jumping is the best means at our disposal.

For the officer it does more. If he schools his own horse to carry him over obstacles, his pleasure and interest in his daily riding are greatly increased. As his pleasure increases he begins to note the differences which come from variations of feeding and work, to understand conditioning; before mounting he takes more note of his horse's

172 14 May 41

care and appearance, and the care of his leather and bits. Just as soon as the officers' horses and equipment are kept in fine shape and closely looked after, the troop mount and equipment will greatly improve.

The more that officers and men ride for pleasure outside of drill hours, the better will be our physical condition, the greater our endurance.

Jumping and cross country riding are continually teaching the rider that the horse is capable, when properly managed, of surmounting difficulties which before would not have been attempted. He will get his horse, even the war remount, if not across the biggest fences, still across the lowest panel nearby, or over the small natural ditches usually encountered in open country. If we can cross the small natural obstacles quickly and surely, our ability to stay on our horses and keep going forward, to ride around the hostile parties and find out what is behind them or to maneuver and push them aside will be greatly increased, and our information will be fresher and more quickly transmitted.

So much for the rider, what are the benefits for the horse.

Jumping is a splendid exercise for developing the muscles of the hindquarters, the loin, the back and shoulders, and for hardening and strengthening the tendons, especially those of the fore legs. It makes the horse extremely quick and agile in the handling of his feet and teaches him to balance himself by the use of his head and neck. This physical development adds to his marching and weight-carrying power, the agility aids in quick maneuvering over rough country. It makes horses bold, self reliant and cool in tight places. It may be argued that troop horses should not be exposed to such a chance of accident. The chance of permanent injury is infinitesimal. This is more than offset by the increased physical development of the troop mount as a whole.

I do not believe that a horse's schooling in jumping should be taken up until he is at least four years old and has had nearly a year of riding. In that time his physical growth is well advanced.

An officer's horse should then be safe and pleasant to ride at all gaits and quite handy. The average troop horse

Transfer

Army War College



should then be fairly well under control at the three gaits and should turn and halt quite easily.

To begin his schooling I would place a bar on the ground in a riding hall or other enclosed space, perpendicular to the wall and across the track. The horse should be bridled with a snaffle only. Standing on his near side, take the bight of the reins in the left hand, the right grasping both reins about eight inches from the bit. In this manner lead him over the bar. As soon as he has crossed, stop and pat him—or better give him a handful of oats. Then start again, away from the bar, make a wide change of direction and return over the bar in the opposite direction to the first crossing. Be sure that you stop and caress him after each crossing so that he may quickly learn why the rewards are given. This should be continued until he no longer pays attention to the bar, crossing it at a steady walk, without hesitancy and without hurry. During the daily rides out of doors one may now commence to lead him over the smallest natural obstacles to be found; bars or six inch tree trunks on the ground, small shallow ditches which he can step down into, up and down small banks and over rough ground. Passing obstacles when led by the reins must be regarded not only as a means to the end, but also as an important part of the education itself. It is a method which must frequently come into the service of troops and even of the individual, when faced by a difficult crossing.

Having made him quiet, calm and confident in leading we may now take up the work on the longe.

Again the horse must be led back and forth over the bar on the ground, this time with the cavesson and longe. During his year of training he has been carefully trained to work on the longe at the three gaits, to halt and take up each gait at the command of the voice. As in all work with the longe, the latter is held in the hand nearest the head, folded in eights, and the driving whip is held in the hand nearest the croup, butt to the front and lash trailing behind. After the horse has been quietly led over the bar several times, the trainer allows his longe to slip out a few feet and, standing a little in rear of the end of the bar allows the horse to pass over it quietly. As the horse approaches the bar the trainer should accompany him, keeping level with

the haunches. As the horse passes over the bar, the trainer allows the longe to slip through his fingers so that the horse may become accustomed to leaving the obstacle on a straight line. The horse thus works on an ellipse instead of a circle, and the trainer moves back and forth on a straight line following the longest axis of that ellipse. As soon as the horse goes over the bar quietly at a walk he is made to take the trot and perform the same work at that gait, the ellipse being slightly enlarged. The same work is performed at a gallop. The bar should not be raised until he is perfectly calm at the three gaits in passing the bar on the ground.

The bar should then be carefully raised a few inches at a time. The trainer's attention should now be concentrated on the manner in which the bar is approached and cleared, rather than on the actual height passed over. Now, also the horse must be taught to respect the obstacle, so that while the latter is kept low, it should be as fixed as possible.

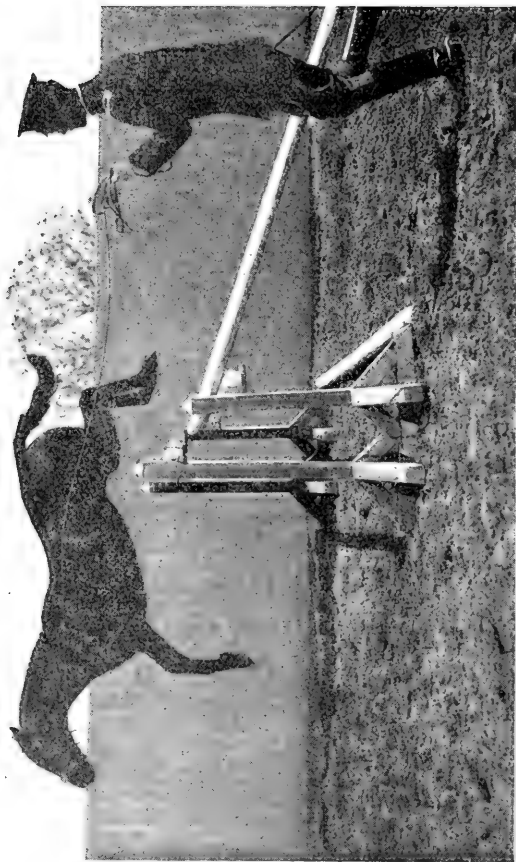
Work on the longe should be continued until the horse jumps quietly any moderately high obstacle of any nature which is placed before him.

During a horse's whole career as a jumper one should frequently return him to the lessons on the longe. Jumping is largely a matter of muscular development and skill. To develop these the horse should jump a great many times over low obstacles. With a rider up this is not possible on account of excessive fatigue, but with the longe one may make him jump from thirty to fifty times in one lesson without danger.

The following rules should be observed during the lessons on the longe:

1. Handle the longe as you would a rein—always with a light feeling on it and never a dead pull.
2. Be sure that the horse does not receive a blow on the nose because of the longe being too tightly held.
3. Only touch him with the whip in case of emergency; the voice and the sight of the whip will usually suffice.
4. The trainer should approach the obstacle with the horse, arriving near the end of the hurdle as the horse takes off; the latter is thus prevented from refusing by cutting his circle.





THE LONGE SHOULD RUN OUT OF THE HAND SMOOTHLY; IF FOLDED ACROSS THE  
HAND IN EIGHTS, IT CAN DO THIS

5. As the horse passes over the obstacle the longe should be allowed to run out of the hand smoothly. If it is folded across the hand in eights it can do this; there will also be no danger of the trainer's being dragged with his hand caught in a loop.

6. Change direction frequently, working equally to the right and left hands.

7. Be very liberal with rewards, especially in the beginning.

With troop horses, where a sufficient number of good cavessons is not available or when there are too many horses to be trained at once, or again when men skillful with the longe are not available, one may give the first lessons in a chute.

One of the best forms of chute which I have seen is that designed by Mr. Thomas Hitchcock of Long Island, of which a photograph is shown herewith. Due to its small dimensions and short turns a horse is prevented from rushing his jumps. The chute shown in the photograph could be bettered by having a ditch on one side which could either be used alone or in conjunction with the fence on that side. The fences, which work on counterweights, can be raised or lowered with one hand. The disadvantage of this chute is its cost, and the requirement of a skilled carpenter. Chutes have been built on Mr. Hitchcock's plan at Fort Meyer and Fort Leavenworth.

Another form, of simpler construction, is of elliptical shape, the axes being 60 and 30 yards. A three barred fence six feet high forms the outer perimeter. There are two concentric tracks, each eight feet wide. The two inner fences are of two bars and are four feet high. The inner track is arranged to receive movable obstacles, two on each side, whose height and breadth can be varied at will. This is the track used for training young horses to the mechanism of jumping and for developing their muscles. The outer track contains four fixed obstacles of the types usually met with in the neighboring country: post and rail, brush, earth banks, with or without ditches. This track aids in completing a horse's education as a cross country horse.

In the riding hall a very serviceable chute can be made by placing a line of wings eight feet from the wall and parallel to one of the long sides. Several obstacles are placed

across the path thus enclosed. The end may be blocked by one of the short sides of the riding hall and a narrow space, through which the horse can be led out, left between two of the wings; or the end may be left quite open and the horse allowed to run out into the riding hall, where he can be easily caught.

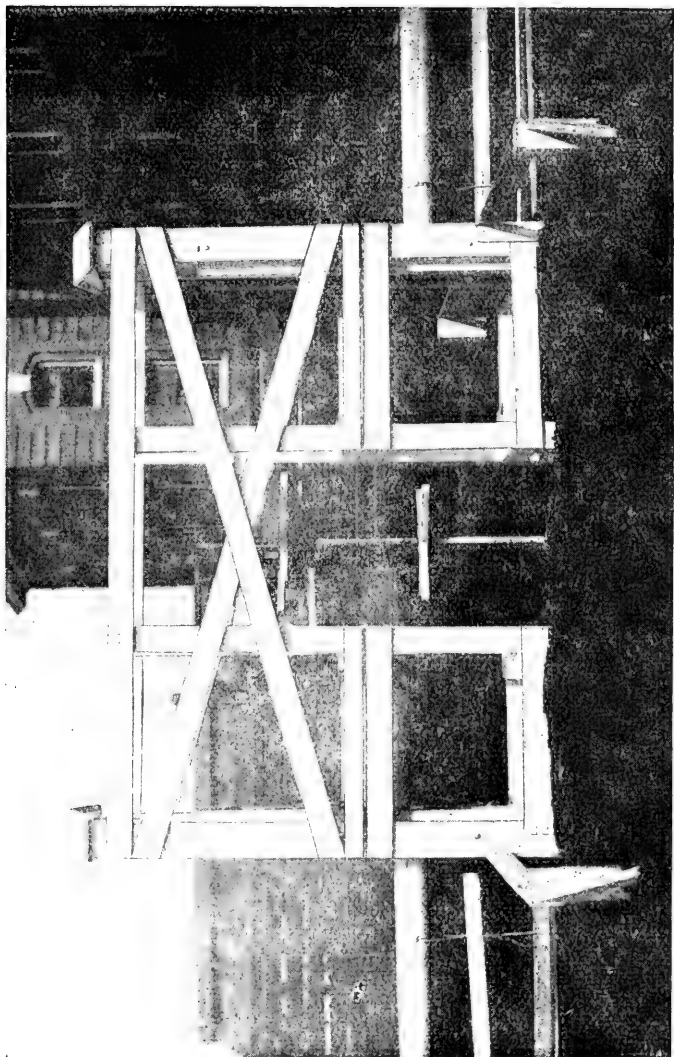
A long straight chute out of doors is perhaps useful for teaching steeplechase horses to jump without hesitation when well extended, or for a few timid horses which habitually hang back. The ordinary horse in such a chute is liable to learn to rush his jumps in an undesirable manner.

As on the longe, the work in a chute must be graduated according to the horse's progress as to height, duration and speed. Everything possible must be done to keep him calm. With troop horses an officer should always supervise this work. With the circular chute abuse is particularly easy. It is such a pleasure to watch a horse at liberty which is jumping willingly that we are liable to forget how much energy he can expend in a very short time. Then also in our desire to see what he really can do we are prone to raise the bar too quickly and perhaps get a fall which undoes all our former work by taking the heart out of the horse. It is certainly very easy to disgust a young horse for this work in the above manner.

When the horse is sufficiently advanced in his work without a rider and shows sufficient muscular power, we must take up his mounted training.

For the first lesson we return to the bar on the ground across the track. A large snaffle bit is the proper mouth-piece. An old horse as leader is here useful during the first lessons.

In approaching the bar at first, the rider should have his horse well between his hands and legs in a collected walk to avoid his hesitating or turning out. As he passes over be sure that the fingers are opened so that he may take any amount of rein that he desires. On the next turn of the hall the reins may be held longer, as he will probably pass over without trouble. Should he make a sudden jump take hold of the pommel or mane, let the reins slide out and take them up very gradually afterwards; do anything to avoid punishing his mouth. When he passes easily over one bar, then place two together on the ground. Continue



HITCHCOCK CIRCULAR JUMPING CHUTE, FORT MYER, VA.





with the bars on the ground until he crosses them in his stride on the track or in the middle of the hall at a walk and trot, without swerving or changing his pace. One may then raise one of the bars a few inches at a time, leaving the other on the ground, until a height of about two feet six inches is attained.

Gradually obstacles of about the same height but of different character will be substituted for the two bars. Work with the obstacle in the center of the hall should advance more slowly as to height than on the track; the bars and other obstacles used there should be rather long; except with indifferent riders, wings will not be necessary.

This work should continue until jumping obstacles of this size and character becomes second nature to the horse and the thought of attempting to escape by stopping or going around never enters his head. It is important that the gaits during this period be restricted to the walk and trot. At these gaits he is more easily held straight, and he learns to raise his shoulders and to make the greatest use of his head and neck.

The same progression is observed out of doors, the height and character of the obstacles being gradually changed until the horse passes all kinds of low natural obstacles. Since these obstacles are usually fixed he learns to respect his jumps and, if kept to the slow gaits he will learn never to refuse.

For ditches and broad jumps the same progression is followed.

Both indoors and out the height may then be gradually increased. When it reaches three feet a few strides at the gallop should not be denied if the horse demands them, as he probably will. Care must be taken not to give him a sharp pull just as he takes the gallop. The effect of this would be to make him nervous, irritable, and to make him pull to get his head. If the hands are kept still and he is taken up gently on the far side of the obstacle, he is more likely to remain calm and jump without excitement in the future. From the few strides at the gallop it is necessary to progress and allow him to jump many obstacles in the full gallop stride. When he clears from four to four and a half feet regularly and in his stride, does not hesitate at ditches of eight feet or so, and remains calm with other

horses galloping about him, his education as a cross country horse is complete.

Having sketched a form of progress for the education of the horse in jumping, let us now see what is necessary to bring the rider to a stage wherein he will make the most of his mount's abilities and thereby take him safely and easily across obstacles.

The rider we must keep in mind is the military rider. His conditions are different from those faced by the race rider whose prime object is galloping and whose obstacles are of secondary importance; different from those of the ordinary hunting man who is riding a sure going horse usually in the best of condition; different again from the horse-show rider who has eight to ten artificial jumps between wings to negotiate. The military rider must often take a comparatively green horse, perhaps suffering from lack of forage and tired from long marches and get him across a rough country picking the least formidable obstacles the time and circumstances will permit.

His seat will be that which combines the rider's maximum of security and driving power with the least possible fatigue to the horse.

Before taking up jumping the rider should have a fairly firm seat at the three gaits. It is not within the scope of this article to go into the details of this instruction, the difficulties encountered and their remedies. It may however be remarked that the riding of many different horses, use of suppling exercises, and much work without stirrups is conducive to the best results.

The stirrup leather should generally be adjusted so that, when the leg hangs naturally, the tread of the stirrup will strike the boot half way between the top of the heel and the ankle. This rule is not without exceptions: some cases will be found where, due to the conformation of the rider's thigh or lower leg, it is desirable to lengthen or shorten the stirrups a little more than stated.

The heel should be lower than the toe and the foot shoved home to prevent the loss of the stirrup. The inner, upper part of the calf should lie close to the horse near the rear edge of the girths. There should be no daylight under the knees, and the thighs should be well descended. The weight should be borne equally on both buttocks, which



THE FINGERS MUST BE READY TO RELAX AND PERMIT THE REINS TO SLIP AT ANY DESIRED INSTANT. HERE THE HORSE HAS MISJUDGED THE TAKE-OFF AND BY A VIOLENT EXTENSION OF THE HEAD AND NECK SEEKS TO RETRIEVE HIS ERROR



must be drawn well under the body and should remain in the saddle. The upper part of the body must be extremely supple; carried ordinarily in an upright position, it must be free to sway with the movements of the horse. The hands are carried low and well separated, the fingers ready to relax and allow the reins to slip at any desired instant.

In order to understand the appropriate actions of the rider's hands, legs, and weight in jumping, it is necessary to consider the successive phases of the horse's leap.

If the horse approaches the obstacle at a walk or slow trot these several phases will be more apparent than at the faster gaits.

We will consider them as follows: The take-off; the leap proper; the landing.

**The take-off.** In approaching the obstacle at a walk the horse hurries his last few steps in order to give himself a little spring and to diminish the muscular effort which is necessary to clear not only the height of the fence but also a certain amount of breadth. At the same time he gathers himself, drawing the hind legs under the mass; he then draws back the head and neck on the body so as to carry their weight on to the hind quarters and lighten the forehand in order that the latter may be easily raised. The more marked the carrying back of the head and neck, the more the forehand may be raised with facility. The movement to the rear is preceded by a movement of extension which gives a sort of swing to the head and neck and regulates the amount which they are drawn in on the body. It corresponds to the movement of extensions in the arm of a ball player making a long throw: there is a preliminary motion forward before the arm is brought to its rearmost point, from which it whips forward again and releases the ball. Greater extensions in the first movement will give greater power in the second and third. This extension is also a safeguard, in that it permits the horse to have a good look at the obstacle he must cross.

**The leap proper.** The hindquarters being well drawn under and weighted, the forelegs now act as springs to lift the forehand. They immediately bend to clear the obstacle. At this moment the hind legs are extended with a powerful thrust. This thrust, with the impetus due to the hurrying of the last few steps, allows the forelegs, bent under

the body, to attain sufficient height to pass over the obstacle. The extension of the hindquarters is no more than finished when the horse again extends his forelegs and stretches out his head and neck as much as possible to aid in drawing the whole mass forward. At the same time he bends his hind legs under him to prevent their touching the obstacle. The movement is like that of a balance scale when the weights are transferred from one pan to the other.

The landing. The forehand having led the hindquarters in the scale motion, the hind feet follow the front feet to the ground and are placed more or less closely to the latter. The head and neck then raise slightly, taking weight off the fore legs, and the horse resumes his stride.

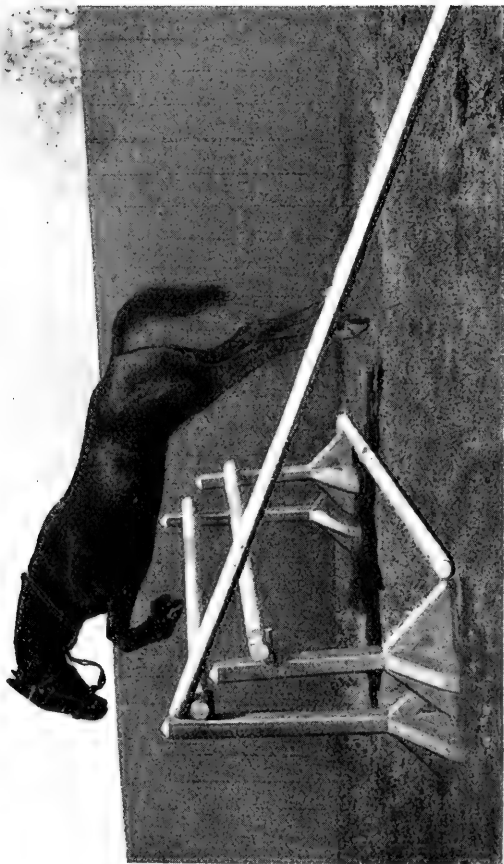
When the rider approaches the obstacle, he should close his legs to keep his horse in the forward movement, lower and steady his hands and settle down in his saddle with his body well relaxed. The arms should be supple enough to permit the preliminary movement of the horse's head and the hands should accompany it forward and back moving just enough so that the light touch on the mouth will not be lost at any moment. As the head extends, while the mass is being thrust over the obstacle, the rider should yield as much as possible in his shoulders and arms; if still more rein is demanded by the extension, the fingers must now permit it to pass easily and without the least jerk; on the other hand, they must not turn the rein loose or give more than is actually asked for.

If the rider has "gone with his horse," during the upward movement his body will have flexed forward at the waist, the buttocks remaining well down in the saddle; directly above the hurdle, it should be about vertical, but with the back well curved to the rear and supple; as the horse lands, the body will naturally be a little in rear of the vertical. The legs should remain on the girths throughout the movement.

At the moment of landing, the fingers should close on the reins to prevent their slipping further and to give a slight support as the mass comes to the ground.

The body then comes up to its original position, the reins are gradually adjusted, and the horse leaves the obstacle in the same gait which he approached.

The instructor must be able to see at a glance the faults



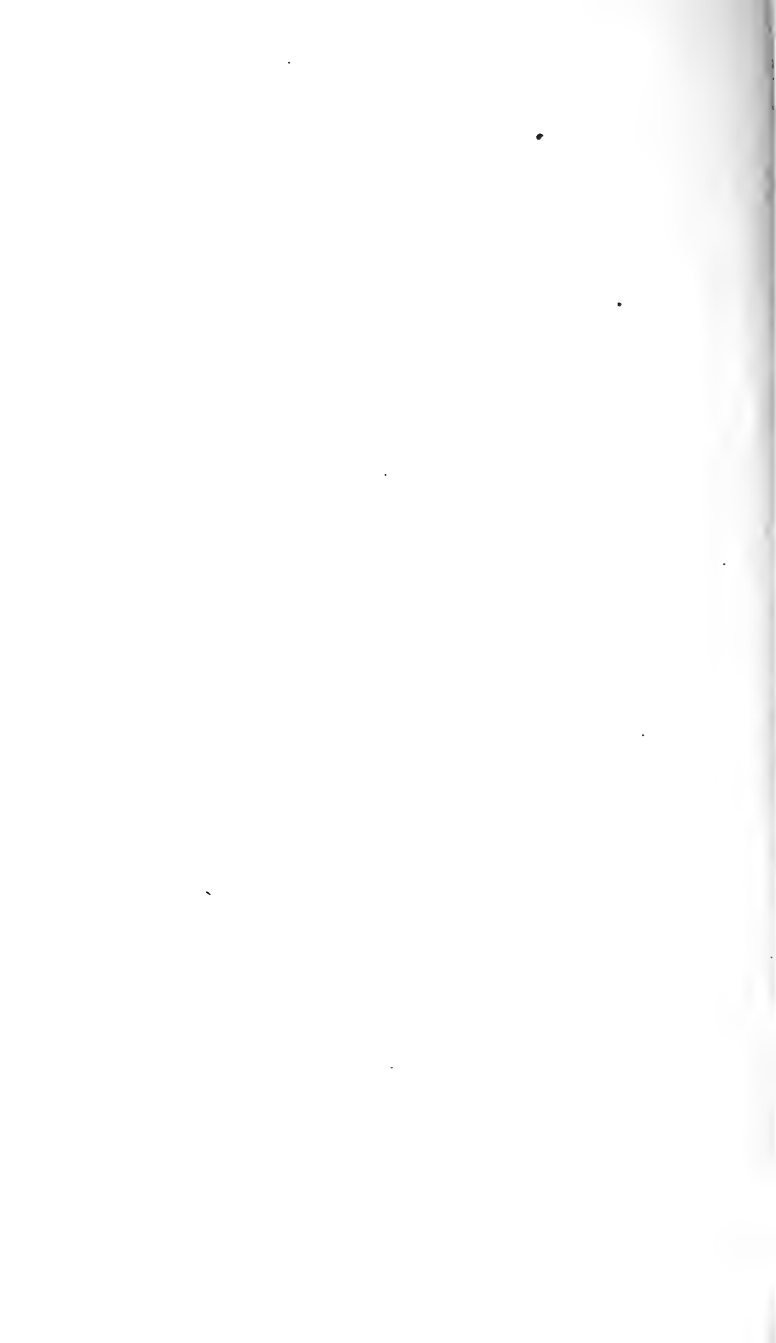
NECK AT FULL EXTENSION. FORE LEGS HAVE BENT AND ARE COMMENCING TO EXTEND. EXTENSION OF HIND LEGS IS JUST COMPLETED







NECK AIDING IN DRAWING THE MASS FORWARD. HIND LEGS FLEXING TO CLEAR OBSTACLE. FORE LEGS EXTENDING TO RECEIVE WEIGHT



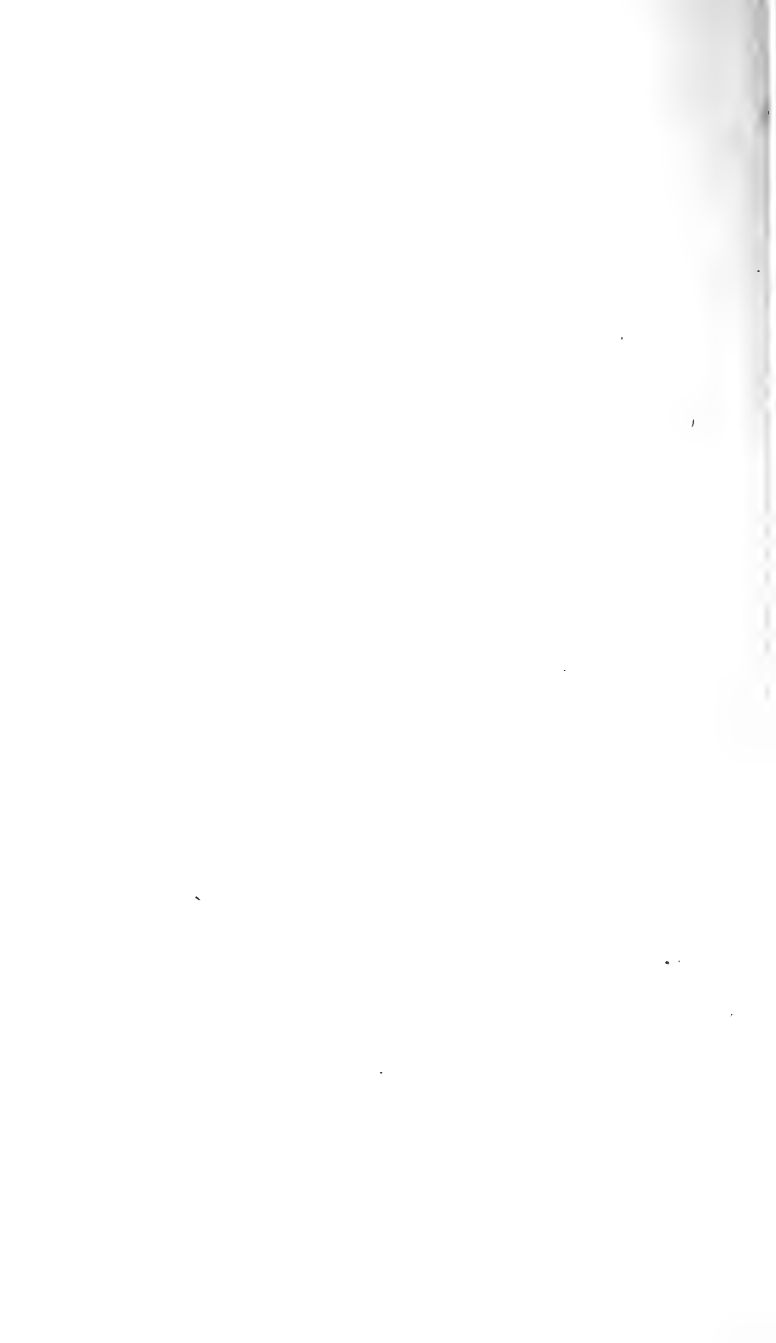


NECK STILL EXTENDED TO DRAW THE MASS OVER. FORE LEGS EXTENDING. HIND LEGS FLEXED TO CLEAR THE OBSTACLE





FORE LEGS RECEIVING THE WEIGHT. HEAD RAISING TO RELIEVE STRAIN ON  
FORE LEGS. HIND LEGS COMING FORWARD TO TAKE UP THE STRIDE OF GALLOP  
RIGHT



of his pupils in order that his correction may follow instantly after commission. Let us then list the principle errors for which we must watch.

In approaching, at a distance of about ten yards from the hurdle, just as the horse takes a little "run in" for his take-off, we frequently see a strong pull on the reins which throws him out of his stride, hurts his mouth, and next time, at the same point, he will throw up his head and bolt.

Nearer, we see the legs to the front—there is no driving power and the horse may easily stop; or they are not close into the horse—he will be liable to jump out from under the rider and would leave him on the croup if it were not for a good tight hold which he has on the reins. If his back is stiff now he will certainly be thrown up out of his saddle when the horse is above the obstacle.

As the forehand raises there are two principal faults: standing in the stirrups, and stiffness in the shoulders, arms and fingers. The first tends to diminish the driving power of the legs, and to place the rider too far forward as the horse comes down; he is also in no position to render any aid in case of a mistake. The second prevents the play of the head and neck and the horse receives a strong blow in the mouth which is liable to throw him and is almost certain to disgust him with jumping in the future; this blow is frequently strong enough to wrench the rider from his saddle. From this cause, the hands will usually be seen to fly upward.

As the horse descends we often see the legs fly out to the front. If he stumbles or strikes the obstacle hard, the best thing for the rider to do will be to close his legs hard and endeavor to keep him going forward until he can get his feet under him, at the same time supporting him with the rein. If the legs are too far to the front they will be too late in acting. The seat will also be loose and the horse will receive a heavy blow in the back from the rider's weight.

Again at the moment of landing, the fingers having gripped the reins too tightly, will cause the hands to fly upward and give the horse a painful blow in the mouth. At this point also, if the rider is rigid in the arms and body, he is liable to be drawn forward out of his saddle.

The best instructions for beginners will be, "Sit well down in your saddle, close your legs, lower your hands, relax your body from the waist to the fingers, and go with your horse. Do not jump before the horse nor after the horse, but jump with the horse."

"When a horse refuses to jump, his rider, or the instructor who is supervising, must determine the cause in order to apply the appropriate remedy. If the horse has shown sufficient strength in his work in the chute or on the longe and if his education in jumping has been well conducted, the only explanation of his refusal to jump lies in his rebellion against the aids or in a lack of tact on the rider's part.

In the first case the wisest thing to do is to perfect his training before recommencing to jump.

If he refuses on account of the awkwardness of the rider, the instructor's indication to the latter of the fault committed will usually suffice to obtain obedience on the part of the horse.

Refusals on the part of the horse may generally be grouped under three classes as follows:

*Stopping Short.* This comes through lack of impulsion or fear of the rider's hand. If from the former, it is necessary to take the horse away from the hurdle and give him a thorough lesson in moving forward immediately at the indication of the legs, or if need be the spur; this done, he should be brought back slowly, well gathered, calm, and very straight, and he should be pushed out only during the last strides. As soon as he jumps dismount and pet him.

If he refuses through fear of the rider's hand, one must first modify the biting. Then the bar must be lowered, or out of doors, the smallest obstacle chosen, and the rider should allow the horse to pass over these at a walk and slow trot with the reins long until the latter regains confidence and stretches his head and neck in jumping. If necessary the rider should take hold of the pommel to avoid any jerk on the horse's mouth.

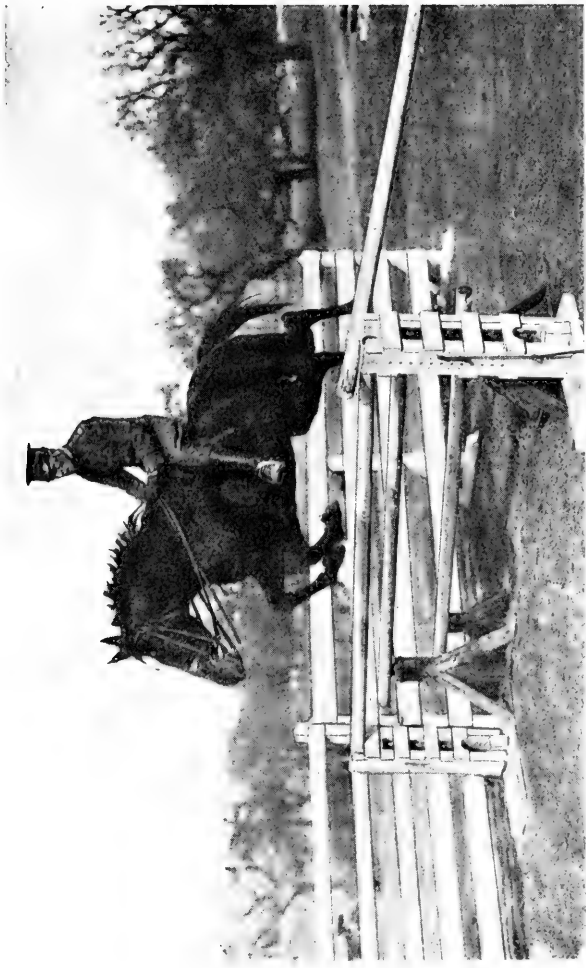
*The horse runs out at a distance from the obstacle.* To do this he first forces the rider's hand, placing the head and neck in any position which enables him to escape the au-





DURING THE UPWARD MOVEMENT THE BODY WILL HAVE FLEXED FORWARD AT THE WAIST. IN THIS PICTURE THE SEAT IS RAISED TOO MUCH FROM THE SADDLE





ABOVE THE HURDLE THE BACK SHOULD BE VERTICAL, BUT THE BACK WELL CURVED TO THE REAR AND SUPPLE





AS THE HORSE LANDS THE BODY WILL NATURALLY BE A LITTLE IN THE REAR OF THE VERTICAL



thority of the bridle, and he escapes in whatever direction he can.

The rider, in this case, should stop his horse, quiet him, place the head and neck in the normal position, and in bringing him back to the obstacle hold him enclosed to the last moment between the reins, separated and well stretched, and the legs, driving as hard as possible.

*The horse turns out close to the obstacle.* Two cases may arise here: Where the horse escapes with a shoulder leading; where he escapes with a haunch leading.

In the first instance the leading shoulder must be restrained either by use of the opening rein, if he shows merely an attempt to swerve, or by a strong use of the indirect rein if he roughly throws his shoulders out of the straight path. He must be energetically pushed with both legs.

In the second case, where he escapes with a haunch leading, to the left for example, one may replace the haunches in the proper direction by using the lateral aids of left shoulder-in (left rein of opposition and left leg). It is true that the horse's head is drawn in the direction in which he wishes to escape, but under the action of the left rein and leg the whole mass, and it is that which counts, is pushed over to the right. The right opening rein acts as a regulator in guiding the forehead. The horse should be straightened at the last moment and the impulsion of the shoulder-in rein together with the energetic action of the legs should send him easily over the obstacle. All the defenses which have just been analyzed are always preceded, at some point or other, by the horse's quick abandoning of the rider's hand. He profits of this moment of liberty to take the position which he prefers for resisting.

The rider, in bringing his horse up to the jump, should therefore guard the haunches carefully with his seat and legs and keep his reins stretched so that he does not lose contact with the mouth."

*(Extract Manuel d'Equitation et de Dressage, 1912.)*

Horse Show jumping and steeplechasing are in some ways different from the usual cross country jumping, and some modifications are required of the methods outlined above.

In the show rings of this country it is usual to find two obstacles on each long side of the "ring," of heights from four to four and a half feet. As to type they are usually the obstacles found in the surrounding country; brush, post and split rail, stone wall, plank fence, and gates predominate. The size of the ring seldom permits more than one hundred feet between jumps on the same side.

In hunter classes, horses are required to take these obstacles in their stride at a fair hunting gallop. The same pace ought to be demanded in military jumping classes. In the open jumping classes the form and pace in which the horses jump have little influence with the judges, it is then merely a question of getting over without touching. In schooling for the first named classes one must endeavor to obtain a clean jumping horse, but at the same time he must not show a great waste of energy by going a foot higher than every obstacle. He must jump regularly and uniformly, and not stand off ten feet from the first fence and on the next one get up so close that he has to wriggle over it. He must not "prop" or jump stickily.

In order that the rider may not overload the horse's loin and that his body may be quite in line with the thrust of the hindquarters, it is well to shorten the stirrups a little and lean forward slightly from the waist in taking off. The seat should remain close to the saddle. In this manner the horse has the greatest chance of avoiding a touch in front. In clearing the obstacle, likewise, the body is kept slightly forward so that the hind quarters may not be overloaded and cause a hind foot to descend quicker than it ought, giving a tip on the fence. The forward position enables the rider to get along with less manipulation of the reins than he would use in open country—the arms and shoulders take up nearly all the play of the head and neck—so that the horse is in hand for the second jump as soon as he lands from the first. This is especially advantageous where a close in-and-out is set.

A horse which is fit for the show ring practically never refuses. For this reason the driving power of the seat described above has been lessened to permit greater facility in bringing the horse under control in the very short distance between jumps. Nevertheless the rider still has sufficient leg pressure to materially aid his horse in the col-







USE OF THE LONG REINS DEMANDS TACT AND SKILL ON THE PART OF THE TRAINER

lection before the jump, and a skillful man may even save a touch by a hind foot, which he feels to be dragging, by a quick pressure of the legs or a touch of the spur while quite in mid-air.

Jumping without touching the obstacle is largely a matter of habit with horses. It is well to do a great deal of their early training over solid fences, so as to instill in them a proper respect and caution. With older horses which have become careless, a rapping bar, used either by hand or on pulleys attached to the obstacle, may cause them to take more pains; or the fence may be slightly raised and tied in place. Care must be taken in both instances not to sour the horse in his work.

Work on the long reins is excellent for quieting horses which are hot-headed and inclined to rush their jumps. The long reins may also be substituted for the longe in the earlier stages of the horse's education in jumping, but their use demands a great deal more tact and skill on the part of the trainer.

In steeplechasing the horse's ability to take and sustain a fast gallop is the first consideration. The obstacles are not usually formidable, but the horse, even when tired, must be able to take them in his stride without hesitating or checking before or after. A horse whose education in jumping has been carefully conducted as indicated above, needs but a few lessons at jumping at speed to make a serviceable steeplechaser, provided he has speed, staying power, and courage for the final struggle in the stretch.

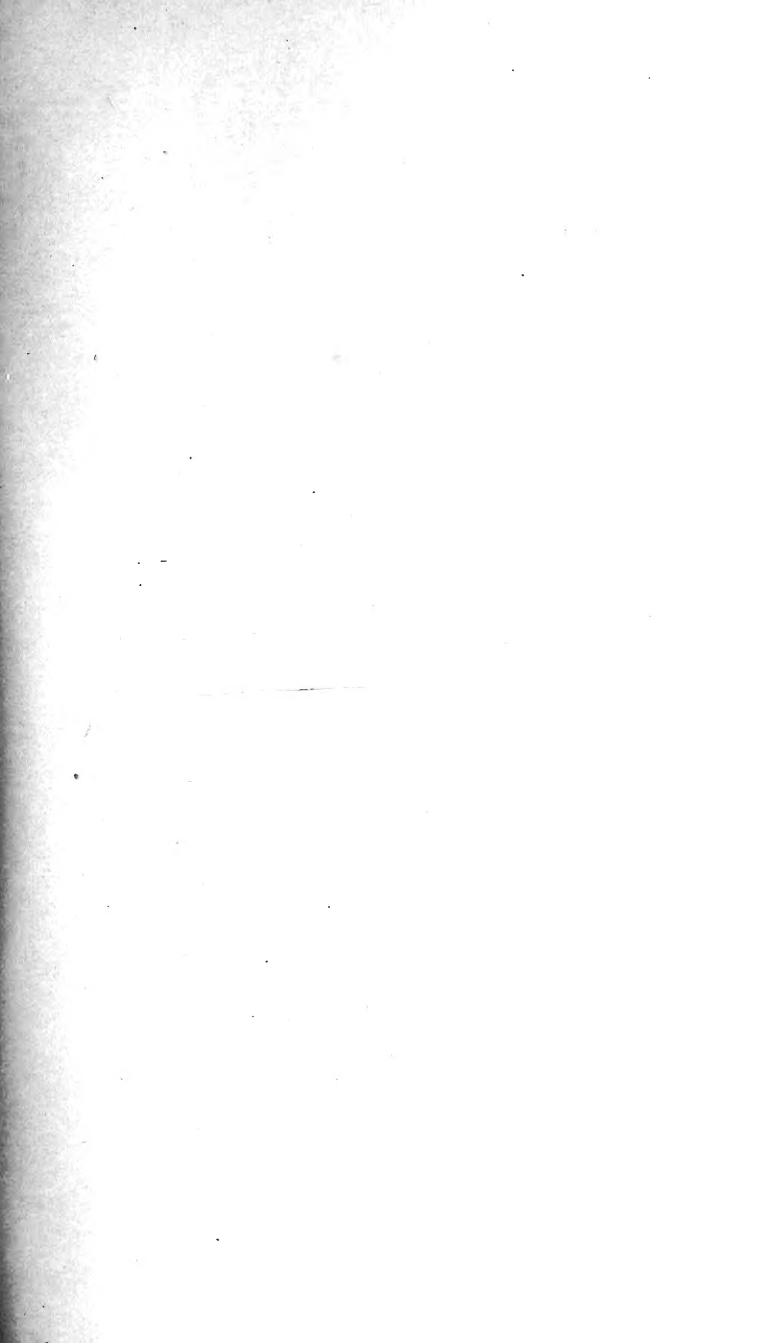
As speed and endurance are here the main objects, the rider's seat must be such as to favor both. The stirrups are considerably shortened. The thighs are close to the horse and the lower legs steady. The top of the body is inclined forward to free the loin, allowing the hindquarters to act with more power, placing the center of gravity forward, and so favoring speed. The buttocks, while they are thus raised slightly out of the saddle, can instantly drop into it again, provided the thighs, knees, and lower legs, preserve their adherence.

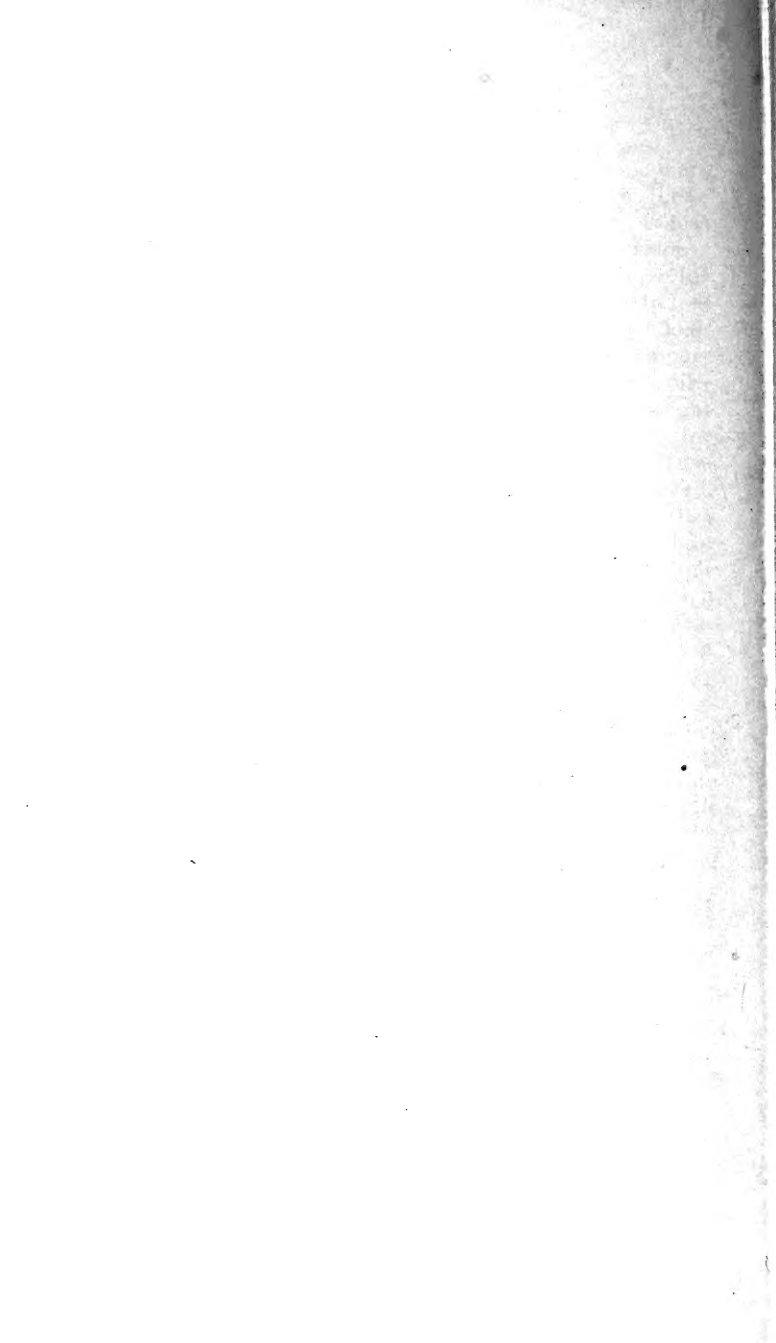
The rider should try, more than ever, to push his horse up to the hand. The more the horse has confidence in this support, the better will he place himself to assure speed.

The hands should be held low and supported against

the neck, so as to give the horse the most stable and constant support possible. Since the horse is already well extended in his gallop, the play of the head and neck is less marked than in jumping at ordinary speed. The rider is therefore usually able to take up what play there is, in his shoulders and arms. For this reason, and in order to lessen the pull on their arms, which is very fatiguing in a long race, most steeplechase riders cross their reins and support them against the base of the neck. In case of a horse taking off a stride sooner than expected, or of even a slight rap on a stiff fence, it takes a great deal of dexterity for them to allow the reins to slide out and save a fall. Because of their forward position in the saddle and the high speed, we have seen many of them wrenched from their saddles by the extension of the head and neck following slight mistakes not even sufficient to bring their horses to their knees. This is because their reins were held in such a manner that they could not slide easily in case of emergency. It is recommended therefore, that the reins be not knotted and be only crossed in case the horse is a very strong puller.

As in all racing, judgement of pace plays a capital rôle. Aside from the matter of sustaining the gait over a long distance, every horse has a maximum rapidity of stride with which he can jump with safety. Pushed beyond this he will be almost certain to fall. The rider must feel the horse in this stride and must not exceed it in approaching the obstacles.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 002 828 053 1