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SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS IN MILITARY RIDING AND BREAKING.

By Captain M. HORACE HAYES, F.R.C.V.S. (late Captain, The Buffs).

Thursday, 15th May, 1902.

Major-General JOHN CECIL RUSSELL, Colonel, 12th Lancers,
Equerry to the King, in the Chair.

I HAVE to thank you very sincerely for the great honour you have done me by attending this lecture. Its subject, "Suggested Improvements in Military Riding and Breaking," is of the utmost importance to our country, especially because the practical acquaintance which stay-at-home Englishmen possess about horses is becoming less every year. Our young rustics are seized with a longing for town life, and consequently the vast majority of the recruits for the mounted branches of the Service know nothing about our friend the horse. The majority of our subalterns are in the same plight. Even in the case of those whose fathers are hunting-men, the groom as a rule occupies the same authoritative position in the stable as the cook does in the kitchen. Those who have the good fortune to be sent to India quickly make up the deficiencies of their equine education, because there they have to be their own stud grooms. Even our veterinary surgeons can obtain their diplomas without ever having been on the back of a horse, or ever having handled the "ribbons" in a trap. Their case is a hard one, owing to the fact that their colleges (or rather teaching schools) are not State-aided, except in Ireland. Every member of the Army Veterinary Department should be a horse doctor, and not merely an animal doctor, to adopt the German distinction between *Rossarzt* and *Thierarzt*. Although the number of good horsemen in England is diminishing, we have the one great consoling fact that immense progress has been made in the science of horse knowledge within the last 50 years; but unfortunately our military authorities have introduced few, if any, of these improvements into the Service. We do not appear to have grasped the fact that riding and breaking are sciences as well as arts, and demand for their acquisition careful study as well as assiduous practice. A horse is a

much more complicated machine than a rifle or a cannon, and yet musketry and gunnery are taught in the Army only by men who have undergone long courses of scientific training, but our riding-masters have no such qualification: in fact, many of them know nothing about riding or breaking outside of the manège and parade ground, and are ignorant even of the paces of the horse. The Cavalry Drill Book gives us a convincing proof of this fact, for it tell us, on page 104, that "as far as relates to the general action of the horse, the canter is the same as the gallop, whether it be the short collected step of the manège, or the extended pace of the charge; there is this difference, however, which distinguishes them, namely, that in the canter the horse's forehand is raised, his whole figure is collected and shortened, his neck bowed and his head drawn in, and he moves by the spring of his haunches." Such a view of equine mechanism may have been pardonable 30 years ago, but since then instantaneous photography has shown us that the canter is a pace of three-time, and the gallop one of four-time. Thus, if a horse canters with the off fore leading, the order of his steps will be: *First*, off fore; *second*, near fore and off hind; and *third*, near hind. At the gallop it would be: *First*, off fore; *second*, near fore; *third*, off hind; and *fourth*, near hind. In fact, the canter has nothing to say to "collection," and is a natural pace which any colt or filly at grass can execute.

Reference to the literature of the subject shows us that our English system of military riding was founded on the old French *haute école* methods, and that none of the French improvements made within the last 70 years have been utilised. Our adapters made a singular mistake with reference to *épaule en dedans*, which they rightly translated "shoulder in," but misconstrued it as meaning that the shoulder was turned in, with reference to the body of the horse, and not as regards the school. In fact, the French shoulder in (*épaule en dedans*) is the passage with the head turned towards the inside of the school, and is synonymous with the French *croupe au mur* (tail to the wall). In order for a horse to pass, for instance, to the left in a well-balanced manner, it is necessary for his head to be turned to the left, so that the neck muscle (*levator humeri*) which draws the right fore leg forward, may work to the best advantage, which it cannot do unless its attachment at the top of the head is widely separated from its attachment to the *humerus* (the bone that lies between the elbow and the shoulder-joint). If the head, as in our English shoulder in, is turned away from the direction in which the animal is proceeding, the horse's action will be more or less cramped. Besides, teaching a horse to move to one side with his head turned in the opposite direction, is simply giving him instruction in a *défense* which refusers and jibbers often employ, in order to defeat the wishes of their rider.

Apparently from ignorance of the paces of the horse, the directions for the passage are vague and incomplete. On page 65 of *Cavalry Drill* we are told that the pressure of the outward leg makes the horse cross his legs, but nothing is said as to the manner in which this pressure should be applied. To be effective, it should be intermittent, as we may see on pages 244, 245, and 451 of my book "*Riding and Hunting*." Thus, in the passage to the right, the rider should give the pressure with his drawn-back left foot at the moment the animal places his near fore on the ground; because at that instant the off hind is on the point of coming down, and the near hind can then be picked up and brought to the front without any pause. The rider can take the time of giving this indication better from a fore leg, than from a hind one, which is hidden from his view.

A knowledge of the paces of the horse teaches us that there are two forms of the rein back, namely, that in which a cart-horse tries to push a heavy load to the rear, and that of the saddle-horse. The former naturally throws his weight into the breeching and consequently raises his head, so as to make himself light in front and heavy behind. If the breeching were to suddenly break, he would, of course, tumble with his rump against the cart. The cart-horse style of rein back is the one adopted by our military authorities, for they tell us that in the rein back "each man will feel both reins lightly, by turning the little fingers towards the breast, and will press both legs to the horse's sides to raise his forehead and keep his haunches under him; the rider must not have a dead pull on the horse's mouth, and must ease the reins after every step, and feel them again." By these directions, the horse is made light in front, and consequently he is rendered heavy behind, when he is reining back! We are all agreed that when going forward, a horse should be light in front, and, to be consistent, we should admit that the reversed distribution of weight should take place in a retrograde movement. If a horse is heavy behind when he is reining back with a rider in the saddle, he will be unable to pick up his hind legs properly, and will be more or less inclined to rear. The well-collected rein back, as we may see in Barroil's *L'Art Équestre*, and Fillis's *Principes de Dressage et d'Équitation*, is a diagonal movement of two-time, and is effected by an alternate feeling of the two reins and by the alternate closing of the opposite legs. Also, the rider's weight should be brought somewhat forward, so as to enable the animal to pick up his hind legs freely. Here, the touch of the rider's leg makes the horse raise the hind limb of that side, which has been previously lightened by the head being turned to the opposite side. In this way, the rein back can be performed with such beautiful precision, that the rider can make his mount lead off with whichever diagonal he likes, and in perfect cadence. If, before the rein back, one fore leg is more advanced than the other

fore leg, when at the halt, the advanced fore leg and its opposite hind leg should, of course, be the diagonal to begin the movement to the rear.

With regard to bridling a horse, we read in *Cavalry Drill*, that "the bit should be placed in the mouth so that the mouth-piece is one inch above the lower tusk of a horse, and two inches above the corner tooth of a mare," but unfortunately the "why?" of the reader is not anticipated. Colonel Greenwood of the Guards, who is an excellent cavalry officer and a fine horseman, was, I believe, the first to combat this erroneous direction, about 40 years ago, by stating in his valuable book "*Hints on Horsemanship*" that the mouth-piece of the bit should be just clear of the tusches of the horse, and about one inch above the corner nippers of the mare, because the curb-chain would then have little or no tendency to work up on the sharp edges of the branches of the lower jaw. This position has the further advantage of placing the mouth-piece on that part of the jaw-bone which affords the broadest bearing surface, as I have pointed out in "*Riding and Hunting*" (page 104).

We are told in *Cavalry Drill* (page 105) that "a formed horse should be trained to be ridden on the bit entirely; but on first biting, the bridoon is to be used in aid, and to bring him to the bit by degrees. Very light-mouthed horses may require to be ridden on all four reins on all occasions." I believe that the experience of the present South African war has taught our cavalry officers who have served in that campaign, that in the large majority of cases the bridoon is more useful than the bit. I was brought up in Ireland, with a deep reverence for the snaffle, and after a long absence from the Emerald Isle I was delighted to see, when hunting last winter with the East Galway hounds, that almost everyone out with my friend Mr. Pollok's pack used my favourite bit for both guidance and control. I am aware that English hunting etiquette demands the use of a double bridle, but I have learned from experience in Leicestershire that many accidents in the hunting field might have been averted had the victims trusted to a snaffle instead of a curb. In school work I have always found that it is easier to teach the average horse all the ordinary *airs de manège* with a snaffle than with a curb. I have seen a good deal of Continental and English school riding, but regret to say that I cannot speak from the experience of active service. This is not my fault, because when I went to South Africa last year in veterinary charge of remounts, on the first of two occasions I volunteered for active service as a veterinary surgeon, but the veterinary authorities out there refused my application, probably because they thought I knew too little or too much about horses for their requirements. I therefore leave the question of superiority between snaffle and curb to be decided by my military friends. No one is better qualified than our distinguished Chairman to settle that point from its military aspect.

As I have not lately had an opportunity of examining military bits, I refrain from criticising their construction. I wish only to repeat what I said in "Riding and Hunting," that the best curb for an average horse is one with a mouth-piece 5 inches wide; low (Melton) port; lower end of cheeks 3 inches long; length of upper end of cheeks from mouth-piece to top eye, $1\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches; and upper end of cheeks inclined a little outwards, so that the distance between them at the top may be about 6 inches. The Ward Union curb is made on somewhat similar lines, and is certainly the most generally useful curb on the market. In all cases the mouth-piece should be thick, so that it may not hurt the bars of the mouth.

In an admirable letter which appeared in last January's number of the JOURNAL of the United Service Institution, Major Dashwood has ably discussed the question of Pelhams. Although this form of bit should not be used with two reins, because the snaffle reins will tend to draw the mouth-piece too high up in the mouth for the proper action of the curb; it is useful with one rein, in which case the Pelham may be employed either as a snaffle or curb, as may be required.

Our military system of holding the reins in one hand is faulty, because the grip on them is obtained by the lateral pressure of the fingers and thumb, which lateral pressure is far weaker and much more tiring than the ordinary closure of the hand with the reins "crossed" in it.

On page 43 of Cavalry Drill, we read that when men are riding with a bridoon rein in each hand, "the turn is made by a double feeling of the inward rein, the outward retaining a steady feeling." This "double feeling" would have the effect of pulling the bridoon more or less through the horse's mouth, and would give him but a slight indication to turn. Both theory and practice teach us that the difference should be made in the direction of the respective reins, and not in their tension, during the turn. Thus, in turning to the right, we should carry the right hand to the right, so as to give our mount the clearest possible indication to turn to the right; and we should carry the left hand also to the right, so as to press the near rein against his neck, but without altering its tension in any way. The reverse indications would of course be used in turning to the left.

I approach the subject of spurs with great diffidence, because I do not know the amount of influence which "eye-wash" has on it in the Army. At a social function like a meet in the Shires, spurs are as much an article of propriety as a pair of gloves; but I question their use, except, perhaps, for doing the *piaffer*, making a horse canter on three legs, or some other high-school movement in a circus. I cannot recall a single instance in which they were any advantage to me between the flags, out hunting, or in a school, because their severity makes them

useless as an ordinary indication. The late George Fordham, whom I had the pleasure of knowing when I lived in Newmarket nearly twenty years ago, thought little of them, and told me that they made a horse shorten his stride and "shut up," instead of bravely struggling home. We have the fact that sharp spurs are forbidden at polo, except by special permission. I believe that Lord Harrington, who is a fine horseman, has advocated their abolition in the Yeomanry.

If there is no social degradation even in Leicestershire to hunting men on account of putting their feet home in the stirrups, why should this safe and comfortable procedure be tabooed among cavalrymen?

Throughout the Cavalry Book the expression "a stronger feeling of the outward leg" frequently occurs; but when we are sitting straight on a horse, it is impossible for us to press one leg stronger than the other leg. What we should really do is to exert pressure by drawing back the outward leg a little.

Our military "aids" are limited to the action of the hands and legs. It would be a great advantage if the weight of the body and the voice were added to their number. In turning, especially when the change of direction is made sharply at the gallop or fast canter, the weight of the rider's body ought to be inclined inwards, which is a practical as well as a mathematical fact, that no good horseman ought to ignore. The necessity of doing this I would be glad to illustrate by means of instantaneous photography, but the limits of time and the generous patience of my hearers will not admit of such elaboration at present. Having accustomed a horse to the change in the distribution of weight at the turn, we can easily teach him to obey it as an indication ("aid"), both at the turn and for the change of the leading fore leg in the canter and gallop. Although the advantage of being able to make a horse readily do this change is passed over in silence by the writers of Cavalry Drill, it is well recognised by polo players and Continental school riders. If, for instance, our horse is leading with the off fore and we wish to turn him to the left, it is essential for him to change his leg, in order to make the turn with the near fore leading, because if he does not do so, he will be liable to cross his legs and come down, to say nothing of the disadvantage of the turn being made in an uncollected and clumsy manner. The change in the distribution of weight can also be made with benefit for the halt by bringing the weight back.

The question of using the voice as an "aid" is so fully dealt with in the new edition of Captain Miller's book "Modern Polo," which has just been published and which I had the pleasure of editing, that I need not dwell upon it here. We all know that horses quickly learn to obey words of command, which, in the case I refer to, can be uttered in a very low tone of voice, because a horse's power of hearing is singularly acute.

For practical purposes, they might be restricted to a click of the tongue for starting, "whoa!" for the halt, and "steady." We should here bear in mind that horses have little power of discrimination between mere words, but are particularly observant of the tone of the human voice. Even if such verbal orders were unsuitable for school and parade work, they would be of immense use on active service.

I mark with surprise that Cavalry Drill contains no directions for either making or teaching a horse to turn on his forehand, which is a very necessary movement for mounted men who are acting singly, as, for instance, when opening a gate, or for placing their animal alongside some object.

On going through the Cavalry Drill-book, I was also greatly surprised to find that our cavalrymen are not taught how to do the figure of 8 at a canter, so as to teach them and their horses how to change the leading leg at the canter, and do the turns to the left and to the right collectedly.

After reading the directions for "training the young horse," Cavalry Drill (pages 96 to 101), we need not wonder that in South Africa complaints were made that many of the imported remounts were unbroken. The system laid down in the red volume does moderately well for the civilised horses that are purchased as remounts in this country, but it is of little use with animals which are brought up in a semi-wild state, especially if the breaker is in a hurry. I became greatly impressed with this fact when I was a subaltern in India in F 19 and D 20, Royal Artillery; for our difficult Australian remounts were used only as "off" horses in the teams, and were never ridden. As I concluded that breaking was an art about which we knew very little, I determined to study it, and having acquired a certain acquaintance with it I resolved to teach breaking in various countries, so that I might acquire all the knowledge I could from my pupils. The French proverb truly says that one may know more than anyone else, but it is impossible for one to know more than all the rest. The result of my experience in breaking is that horses, before they are ridden, should be made quiet to carry a weight on their backs, and should be taught to obey the indications of the reins. In short, we ought to make a horse rideable before getting on his back. Memory is a horse's strongest mental faculty, and consequently the more he is prevented from "playing up" during the process of breaking, the quieter will he subsequently be. The preparatory mouthing lessons had best be given according to the long-rein system which I have devised. By it, perfect control is obtained, and any unbroken animal can be taught to circle, turn, halt, rein back, and jump in a well-collected manner in three days, during which time he can be gradually accustomed to carry weight on his back, by attaching, for instance, bags of earth or shot to the driving pad. This work could be

varied with advantage by teaching him to turn on his forehand and also on his hindquarters by means of a cutting whip or cane, according to the French method (see Fillis's and Barroil's books). In this way and with two or three auxiliary methods, which time does not allow me to describe, I never had any difficulty in breaking, within four or five days, wild horses of the steppes of the Don and Volga, when I was employed at the Russian remount depôts by the Russian Minister of War. These animals are far more difficult to handle than unbroken South African horses, of which I had a year's experience during a breaking tour among the Boers in the early nineties. The great interest which the Boers took in the breaking and handling of horses showed me that they were far more formidable enemies than the English public gave them credit for being. It makes me very sad to contrast their horse knowledge with that of the cavalymen with whom I went out to South Africa in a Government transport.

I think we all will admit that every cavalry horse should be taught to lie down, which can be quickly done by the American method of tying up one fore leg and drawing the head by a cord to the opposite side. This plan has the immense advantage of "taking the nonsense" out of unruly horses; and had it been practised on unbroken remounts in South Africa, the tears of many widows and mothers might have been spared.

I cannot too strongly urge the necessity of abolishing the present faulty method of lunging young horses which is recommended in Cavalry Drill. By it the horse is made to move in a thoroughly uncollected manner, for no means are taken to prevent his hindquarters from swinging outwards. In fact, instead of his hind feet going on the same track as his fore feet, they describe a concentric circle outside of it. Also, the single lunging rein affords no means of controlling the paces of the animal, which can walk, trot, or canter just as he likes, unless he is forcibly stopped. By the long-rein method he is under absolute control in all his paces, and he is mouthed as well as exercised. If he is high-spirited, the fact of his being able to career around the lunging circle at his own sweet will is the worst possible lesson he can get. In circling a horse with the long reins, the outward rein, which goes round the animal's quarters, acts like the outward leg of a capable rider. In speaking of the long reins, I am, of course, aware that they have been in use for the last hundred years for breaking horses, but in a different way from the method I have devised, which certainly owes a great part of its efficiency to the presence of the standing martingale buckled on to the rings of the snaffle, the use of which was taught me by Mr. John Hubert Moore, who is the father of my friend Mr. Willie Moore, of steeplechasing fame. Its help reduces the difficulty of breaking in young horses by at least one half.

It is a fact which cannot be denied, that many lives, especially those of inexperienced youths, have been lost in South Africa on account of these poor victims to ignorance having been put on badly broken horses, which certainly formed the majority of the remounts. Such occurrences should be avoided in future by the institution of special courses of study in horse-breaking, and if I were permitted to lend a helping hand I would only be too glad to work in that direction for the welfare of our country. As no change in our methods of military horse-breaking has taken place since the battle of Waterloo, I do not think that even the sad experiences of the South African campaign will have any effect on our Conservative authorities. Practical horsemen, like those whom I have now the honour to address, will recognise the all-important fact that in olden times our military horse supply consisted of home-bred animals which were easy to break in; but in future it will be more or less made up of wild horses, and consequently the difficulty in breaking will be greatly increased. Luckily Colonials are now members of our Empire; and as they are not so self-satisfied as stay-at-home Englishmen, I hope, before the year is out, to be among my Australian horse-loving friends, who no doubt will teach me much more than I can show them.

Major E. C. HAWKSHAW (late R.A.):—We have listened with much pleasure to Captain Hayes's lecture, a gentleman well known to all of us, though I never had the pleasure of meeting him before personally. Having been in India, I know him well by name. Regarding the training of Army horses, one thing must always be taught non-commissioned officers and men, and that is sympathy with a horse; another that a horse must be brought to regard man as his friend. So many young fellows harbour the idea that a horse to be broken in must be broken in spirit, to which too often follow knees and hocks. A cut with a whip is the introduction of the tutor to his pupil, and the latter is dubbed a brute because he naturally resents it with a kick. You can no more treat two horses alike than you can two men or two women. With a sensitive well-bred horse the voice will do all frequently, whereas one cut will permanently spoil everything. It is a well-known fact that, with the exception of an elephant, no animal has a more retentive memory than our noble friend the horse. I was delighted to hear Captain Hayes dilate on turning a horse and pulling his mouth about. This is a *most* important point. What is the use of a man thinking that he can pit his strength against that of a large animal like the one in question? The horse must be taught by touch what is required of him. A polo pony kindly treated will, after a few games, follow the ball like a cat does a mouse. Look at gun horses. I have served for a long time in the Horse Artillery and other branches of the Royal Artillery and personally took great interest in driving in teams, and found that a halt from a fast gallop was mostly to be effected with the voice. Getting a riding horse to throw off with right or left foot in cantering is all done by handling gently and pressure of legs. No hard-spurring or knocking about need ever be resorted to. In Arabia the horse is a cherished member of the family. Everything is done by a sign. Topmost speed is mostly produced by the rider bending forward and pinching the horse's ear. Young horses must be treated like children, and not over-worked

or over-strained with carrying too much weight until their bones are hardened and thoroughly formed. If this is neglected the result is curbs, spavins, and all the other ills which horse-flesh is heir to. This and the non-rasping of hoofs is the secret of keeping a horse's legs right. The Almighty put the enamel on the hoof to keep the oil from escaping. Too often man thinks he knows better, rasps it off, the result being bad feet, navicular, splints, etc. Shipping and training requires especial attention. Never fight a horse until you are obliged to do so. Try and gain your object by the exercise of man's superior intelligence. How often have we seen blind-folding resorted to at once! When taking horses on board a ship select a steady one to lead, make the man turn his face away from him, and go unhesitatingly on as if nothing unusual is occurring. If any horse in following begins to fight, don't bother with him, but lead him on one side and let him see all his friends disappearing on board. In nine cases out of ten at last he will follow too. I once got a horse on board at Portsmouth that baffled his battery for an hour, not to mention the bluejackets too. They had fought him from the outset and tried the fatal blind-folding, until the animal was mad with terror. The plan is my own, and I recommend its use in bad cases. Wrap a thick cloth completely round the girth and back to prevent his being galled; then put a rope round on top of the cloth with a long end on each side (a canvas band is better, as there is less chance of cutting). Put four or more men on each rope, and let one man steer his head without pulling at him unnecessarily. All being ready, walk away with him. He is then bound to go, and can see where he is putting his feet. The old plan of a rope round the quarters is much to be deprecated, as it too frequently happens that a horse's hind legs are pulled under him, he sits suddenly down, and is liable to injury by breaking his back. Never pull with great force at a horse's head from the front; nothing is easier than to break his neck in this way. In old days barbarity was practised in cropping ears and tails, and using hot irons for the most trivial mishaps. Thank goodness we eschew these things now to a great extent. When commanding batteries in India I advocated not cutting horses' tails at all—considering it a great shame to deprive the animal of what had been given him for his own protection against flies in the great heat—but it was not considered smart, so common-sense went to the wall, and horse-sickness took its place, as has been our fatal error in South Africa. Turning their tails to the wind when standing in the camp is also a most important comfort to them, that is in high winds or storms. Before officers are allowed to be considered efficient in the mounted branches of the Army they should be compelled to systematically learn from the outset stable management, and the *common-sense* care of animals according to their natural state. It too frequently is assumed that, because a young fellow can sit on a horse with a military seat, he is fit to go and buy, train, or have charge of horses. Our failings in the recent war are nothing more than what one has wept over for years, and received on many occasions reprimands for bringing forward in reports. This, of course, is due to the senior officers never having studied the absolute nature of our charges.

Lieut.-Colonel F. N. MAUDE, *p.s.c.* (late R.E., O.C. 1st Hants R.E. (Vols.)) :—I should like to thank Captain Hayes for his very interesting lecture; I only regret that I came in so late that I had not time to criticise it as it deserves. The author in his last paragraph says :—"It is a fact which cannot be denied, that many lives, especially those of inexperienced youths, had been lost in South Africa," and so on. I would go further than that and say it is a fact that this war has been going on for two years longer than it need had done, because, as Captain Hayes very rightly says, we have absolutely neglected since the time of Waterloo the A B C of training men to take

care of their horses and to ride them. One can only deal with rough approximations in a discussion like this, but think what the difference in this war would have been if, instead of the extraordinary lot of broken-down horses we had up at the front at the time of the Modder River, General French had had horses in condition, ridden by men who knew how to ride them, and how it would have shortened the time we required to reach Pretoria. I think Captain Hayes will agree with me in this: that with any given horse a first-class horseman will take that horse at least three times as far as a bad rider. That is an extreme case. But supposing horsemanship had been mastered, as it should have been, in the Army when the war broke out, I maintain that although we should have lost many horses—of course the conditions were against us—we would, nevertheless, have managed to cover treble the distance in a day's march that we often did, and with no greater loss. What that would have meant at the time when we were at Pretoria we all know. The point is this: if, as Captain Hayes tells us—and it is within my own experience—there has been no change in the methods for many years, and very little improvement, is there no way in which we can get the authorities to devote more attention and time to the question of horse training? I am afraid that the authorities can only do what the spirit and will of the Army enable them to do. It is no good giving orders that we are to do this, that, and the other with regard to the training of men or horses when you cannot make a man use his brain unless he chooses—and if men will not use their brains, the more you drill them the worse they get. We shall never get any great result until we have made it worth every man's while in the cavalry to give his whole attention and mind to what he is doing, and to take a pride in the care of his horse. That is the whole secret of the marvellous efficiency of both the Austrian and Prussian cavalries. It is difficult to say which is the better. Those men have their horses absolutely under control. It is not a mere case of circus back-riding to which routine has accustomed the horses, but the horse is absolutely at the rider's control, and is taken, placed by the rider exactly where the rider wishes him to be. The material with which they have to work is certainly not equal to ours. The late Colonel Percy Barrow some years before he died used to ride down with me at Aldershot to see some experiments made on the ordinary German system with English horses and English recruits—with shockingly bad horses and recruits. They were the drivers of the Royal Engineer troops, and were, as a rule, the men who had been rejected by every other corps in the Army. Yet, within six weeks, following the simple rules which the Germans had arrived at, not by orders from headquarters, but by experiments and the survival of the fittest, we could get these men and horses to do what formerly we had taken six months to accomplish. General French thoroughly adopted the Prussian system which Colonel Barrow had introduced, and his regiment, the 19th Hussars, when I was attached to it in 1891, was about the best that could be seen anywhere. The horses were marvellously in hand, they would go anywhere at any pace, and were at all times thoroughly in hand. This success was due, I take it, to the very simple reason that every squadron commander, and every officer, was responsible for his own squadron or division. We are always hearing our cavalry officers abused because they go racing and take no interest in their work. But if a man is kept in barracks and there is nothing in which he may take a personal interest, he will endeavour to get out of barracks as soon as he can. If you give a man sufficient interest in his work and make him take a pride in doing that work, you will very soon see that he gives his mind and attention to it and takes a personal pride in turning out the smartest horses and the smartest cavalry in the place. Just look at the emulation that exists in the Navy. There can be no doubt of the extraordinary efficiency of the men; they take such a pride in their work that they devote their time solely to it.

Why cannot we do the same thing? It seems to me it is simply a matter of understanding what decentralisation means. We have got everything on paper which gives us decentralisation; all we want is the spirit to carry it out, but this must grow from the root upwards. You cannot create it from the top of the tree downwards. The most authorities can do is to create the conditions which will foster its growth—essentially a matter for sound common-sense and a knowledge of human nature.

Captain HAYES, in reply, said :—I have certainly obtained the wish of my heart to-day, and that was to learn something. I always want to learn things. I have learnt several very valuable hints from the gentlemen who have spoken to-day, and I thoroughly agree with them. If ever at any time I can be of any help to them in working out any scheme in regard to the breaking or school life of a horse, I shall only be too delighted to place my services at their disposal.

The CHAIRMAN (Major-General John Cecil Russell): — We have had a most interesting lecture from Captain Hayes. He has favoured us with a paper on very important subjects, and especially on the actual theory of the movements of horses when they are engaged in certain exercises. Every word he has said is most valuable, because he is an expert in the whole matter. He is a veterinary surgeon of the very highest attainments. He says truly that we must be not only theorists—and he advises us to be that if possible—but that we should know practically the formation of a horse as well as know how to ride it. With great deference to Captain Hayes, I must say that I think his criticism of the Cavalry Drill-book and our system of cavalry equitation is a little severe. Our system of breaking horses is no doubt faulty in a great many ways—it may be very faulty—but, at the same time, as I have had the honour of commanding a cavalry regiment myself, and have seen a great many cavalry regiments and batteries of artillery, both horse and field, I may be allowed to say that, although our theory may be extremely incorrect and our instruction very faulty in many ways, I cannot help thinking that the result has been very fairly satisfactory. Most of us, altogether irrespective of our personal attendance on many dusty field days in different parts of the world, have seen our military horses do exactly what was wanted in a satisfactory way on very many other occasions. Most of you have seen the beautiful exhibition of horsemanship and breaking in of horses at the Agricultural Hall at the Military Tournaments. These horses may have been trained in a very bad way, but I think you must all say the result is extremely good. I remember particularly the case two or three years ago of a horse artillery battery. I think it was commanded by Major Dunlop—which had only been formed within a very few months—one of the youngest horse artillery batteries—yet I saw that battery performing the most extraordinary double drive with the guns that I ever saw in my life. It was most beautifully done. Major Dunlop and his non-commissioned officers and drivers and everybody connected with the battery most certainly and thoroughly understood how to get the required result. Whether they went by the Drill-book or not I do not know, but certainly the result was there. If they went upon the theories which had been inculcated in all of us, I do not think the theories could have been very far wrong. No doubt they are faulty like everything else that is human, and undoubtedly they may be very greatly improved, and if we are to improve them I do not think we can do better than go upon the principles which have been so clearly enunciated by Captain Hayes. There are one or two points which he emphasised on which perhaps I may be permitted to say that I entirely agree with him, and I speak from experience gained when I had the honour of being at the head of the riding establishment at Canterbury, where we did a good deal of horse breaking. Captain Hayes mentions

particularly the position of the bit in the horse's mouth. Undoubtedly in the instructions I think the bar of the bit is too high, and, as Captain Hayes has said, it should be placed a little lower down than it is usually fitted. Captain Hayes's views in regard to the holding of the reins are, I think, extremely sound, if I may venture humbly to give my opinion. I have certainly found a difficulty myself in riding with the reins in the manner in which we are taught, and if everybody had their reins folded over as he suggested it would be a great advantage in many ways. Captain Hayes has criticised very justly the conditions of the breaking in of the remounts which were provided for the war in South Africa, and he pointed out how they ought to have been very much better trained before they took the field. There is no doubt whatever that we have something still to learn about the breaking in of horses, but in South Africa unfortunately there was no time allowed even for the most elementary breaking. The horses were landed from the ships, they were put into trains, and sent up to the front; the men were chucked on to them, and they had to do what training they could actually in the field. There was really no time whatever for any training—good, bad, or indifferent. Finally, there is one point I should like to notice, namely, that Captain Hayes says that "In olden times our military horse supply consisted of home-bred animals which were easy to break in; but in future it will be more or less made up of wild horses, and consequently the difficulty in breaking will be greatly increased." There is no doubt that in the days of the Peninsula and in our campaigns in Europe in the early part of the last century we had a very admirable source of horse supply in this country. In those days people made their journeys on horseback, or in post-chaises, and for that purpose a very excellent breed of horses was reared in the country. The horses were bred for a particular purpose; they were bred to have strong constitutions, to have good staying powers, and to have sound, hard legs, and we succeeded in producing that type of horse which I am sorry to say does not, I believe, exist in any number in the country at the present moment. But in the days of the Peninsula there is no doubt that our cavalry and our artillery were extremely well mounted on that type of horse, and excellent results were obtained from it. It would be very much to the advantage of the country if we could by some means, by the efforts of horse-breeding societies, or by Government intervention, try to reproduce in some sense the class of horse which furnished so many horses for our wars in the early part of last century. Captain Hayes has said that our supply in future will be more or less made up of wild horses. That is all very well. We have had the command of the seas during the South African war, and we have been able to put horses into South Africa from every quarter of the world. If we had been at war with even a second or third rate sea Power, the whole of the supply of those horses would have been checked at once, and until our Navy had absolutely cleared the seas we should not have been able to move cargoes of horses as we hitherto have done; and if we were at war in Europe we should have to be entirely dependent on our own horses until we had actually got command of the seas. I think it is a very foolish thing indeed, if I may be permitted to say so, if we are going to consider that we shall always be able to import horses, even from our own Colonies, to any seat of war where we may be engaged in military operations. By all means let us be prepared to break wild horses from whatever part of the world they may be able to come, but we ought if possible to have a sufficient supply of horses at home to at any rate supply our wants until we can have command of the seas. I have taken up too much time already, and I shall not venture to say anything more, but I hope I may be allowed in the name of all of you to offer our most cordial and sincere thanks to Captain Hayes for his very admirable lecture, and for drawing our attention to so many points which are of the greatest importance if we

want to have effective mounted troops. We have always fancied that we were a very horsey nation, and I am afraid in this respect we have been disappointed by recent experience, I will not say in the Regular troops of the Empire, because they have done well, but we found there was a great want of knowledge in the general population of the country, both in regard to the riding of horses and looking after them, and everything connected with them. I can only hope that those people who are so very ignorant of the subject will take an opportunity of studying the admirable literature which is composed in the books written by Captain Hayes. In the meantime, I venture to offer to their author our very hearty thanks.