CESARESCO'S PSYCHOLOGY AND TRAINING OF THE HORSE¹

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This work represents the product of life-long study and practice of the art of horsemanship. The first volume deals with the mental and physical nature of the horse; the remaining three volumes are devoted to the methods of training.

We are told that "the horse's intelligence is limited, but the animal is intelligent enough to understand that it must have regard for what happens in its environment, and for its rider,—to feel the justice or injustice of the punishments inflicted,—to try to oppose, anticipate, and neutralize the efforts of its rider,—and to choose that moment for injuring its master when the latter is not looking." "The horse," furthermore, "has a highly developed imagination," and this combined with its great susceptibility to fear, makes the animal readily amenable to our attempts to train it, for the one "enables it to grasp readily the idea of our superiority" and the other "gives value to the slightest stimulus or chastisement."

In whatever way we may react to these psychological interpretations, the account of the methods of training will possess a positive value for the student of animal behavior, *viz.*: as a stimulus toward the formulation of specific problems in connection with the behavior of the horse. Such a student will miss with regret, at times, the minute analyses of stimulus and the significant classifications and tabulations of responses which, *c. g.*, make the work of Pfungst so valuable. Thus the changes in the voice of the rider are emphasized as one of the most effective helps, or means of control, and it would have been highly desirable to have had an analysis of the kinds of qualitative or other changes in the form of stimulation that constitute the really effective factor. At other points in the treatise

¹ Cesaresco, Count Eugenio Mantinengo: *L'Arte Di Cavalcare, Con Aggiunto: Il Cavallo Attaccato Alla Carrozza*. Devoti, Salò, 1914.

such a criticism will not, of course, hold: for instance in the description of gestures and caresses as inducing stimuli. In the main, however, the reader is left with a feeling that the description is couched too often in subjective terms such as: "approval," "disapproval," "menacing." . . . But the student will find suggested, on the other hand, a wealth of problems peculiarly significant. And their significance lies in this: that the horse presents, probably more favorably than any other form, opportunities for studying a mechanism of stimulus and response approximating very closely the typical social situation.

If Pfungst's work establishes the fact of a fine perception of minimal movements of all kinds, as involved in the functionally effective stimulus for responses in the horse, the treatise of Cesaresco indicates what appears to be the salient characteristic of the responsive phase, *viz.*: a finely balanced inhibition-mechanism. It is this fact, plus the sensitiveness of the horse to minimal changes in stimulation while the response is in progress, that makes its behavior so closely analogous to the reaction of the human individual in the social situation.