

*D. W. Oodham.*

# Aids in Military Equitation

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# AIDS IN HORSEMANSHIP

## DEFINITIONS, &c.

**Aids in horsemanship** are the indications by means of which the horse is made to understand by the rider what he is required to do. They consist of the correct motions of the hands, application of the legs, and disposal of weight, to direct and determine the horse's movements and paces.

The **Bearing of the Reins** is a light feeling on the bars of the horse's mouth, which is increased or relaxed as required. A double feeling of a rein means the double bearing of the bit on one bar (or side) of the horse's mouth, retaining a light bearing on the other. The leading-rein is the one which bears the double feeling, indicating the direction. The supporting-rein balances and assists the power of the leading-rein. In doing so it retains its normal bearing, but is pressed against the side of the horse's neck by being carried over towards the opposite hand.

The **Pressure of the Leg** is an elastic application of the lower leg (inside the calf), according to the horse's temperament. Support from a leg is the amount of pressure required either to keep the horse up to hand or that which holds him against an increased pressure from the opposite leg (directing), and prevents him running away from it.

**Disposition of Weight** is the correct disposal of the rider's weight in conforming to the horse's movements. In the direct paces it should be so placed as to give the maximum of ease to the horse and rider. In turning, circling, lateral movements, etc., it must be inclined so that the weight of both is in the same plane (i.e., as in riding a bicycle).

**Displacement of Weight** is the shifting of the normal balance of the horse and rider in a given direction. By this displacement the greater weight is placed over a particular support or supports for the purpose of lightening the remainder of the mass.

The **Spur** is to enforce what the leg pressure failed to do. It is only to be used for this purpose.

The use of the **Voice** is invaluable in training the young horse, the tone being sharp and coercive, or modulated to a soft and coaxing one where necessary.

The **Whip** should only be used in conjunction with the voice, and then only by a trained horseman.

(The voice and whip, for obvious reasons, are not permitted in ordinary riding, but only in training the young horse, or re-breaking a refractory one.)

The command "**Attention**" to the cavalryman means attention on the part of the rider to the work on hand, and attention on the part of the horse to the rider, so as to be able to move off instantly in any required direction at a given signal. The characteristics of cavalry are combined in the man and the horse—the superior intelligence of the one and the mobility and power of the other. The rider, in direct sympathy with his horse, instantly communicates his wishes by means of the Aids.

The **Normal Position of the Rider** is upright in the Centre of Balance. The weight, being centrally disposed, can be brought forward or backward, and to the right and left, in conforming to the horse's movements, or in displacing it for the purpose of lightening the forehand or haunches.

(To lighten the forehand is to put greater weight on to the haunches, and vice versa.)

The horse is said to be **Collected and Balanced** when his powers are concentrated and entirely controlled between the hand and leg of the rider; and, being neither in front of nor behind his bit, he may be said to move within himself. He must stand square on his feet, with the weight equally distributed

