

**IN THE RIDING
SCHOOL: CHATS
WITH ESMERALDA**

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In the riding school: chats with Esmeralda by Theo. Stepherson Browne

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THEO. STEPHERSON BROWNE

**IN THE RIDING
SCHOOL: CHATS
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IN THE RIDING-SCHOOL

CHATS WITH ESMERALDA

BY

THEO. STEPHENSON BROWNE

— We two will ride,
Lady mine,
At your pleasure, side by side,
Laugh and chat.

ALDRICH.

BOSTON

D LOTHROP COMPANY

WASHINGTON STREET OPPOSITE BRONFIELD

TO THE
MODERN MEN OF UZ;
MY
FRENCH, ENGLISH AND AMERICAN MASTERS.

CONTENTS.

- I. A PRELIMINARY CHAT WITH ESMERALDA . . . 7
The proper frame of mind — Dress —
Preparatory exercises.
- II. SHALL YOU TAKE YOUR MOTHER, ESMERALDA ? 19
The first lesson — Various ways of
mounting — Slippery reins — Clucking —
After a ride.
- III. CHAT DURING THE SECOND LESSON . . . 34
Equestrian language — Trotting with-
out a horse — Exercises in and out of
the saddle.
- IV. ESMERALDA'S TRIALS AT THE THIRD LESSON 50
Pounding the saddle — A critical spec-
tator — A few rein-holds.
- V. ESMERALDA ON THE ROAD 64
Good and bad and indifferent riders —
A very little runaway.
- VI. THE ORDEAL OF A PRIVATE LESSON . . . 83
Voltes and half voltes — "On the right
hand of the school" — Imagination as a
teacher.
- VII. ESMERALDA AT A MUSIC RIDE 97
Sitting like a poker — The ways of the
bad rider.

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- VIII. **ESMERALDA IN CLASS** 111
Keeping distances — Corners — Proper place in the saddle — Exercises to correct nervous stiffness.
- IX. **ELEMENTARY MILITARY EVOLUTIONS** . . . 126
“Forward, forward, and again forward!” — How to guide a horse easily.
- X. **CHAT DURING AN EXERCISE RIDE** 141
The deeds of the three-legged trotter — The omniscient rider — Backing a step or two — Fun in the dressing-room.
- XI. **ESMERALDA IS MANAGED** 158
Intervals — The secret of learning to ride.
- XII. **CHAT ABOUT THE HABIT** 174
Riding-dress in history and fiction — Cloth, linings and sewing — Boots, gloves and hats.
- XIII. **CHAT ABOUT TEACHERS** 196
Foreign and native instructors — Why American women learn slowly — “Keep riding!”

IN THE RIDING-SCHOOL.

I.

Impatient to mount and ride.

Longfellow.



AND you want to learn how to ride, Esmeralda ?

Why? Because? Reason good and sufficient, Esmeralda ; to require anything more definite would be brutal, although an explanation of your motives would render the task of directing you much easier.

As you are an American, it is reasonable to presume that you desire to learn quickly ; as you are youthful, it is certain that you earnestly wish to look pretty in the saddle, and as you are a youthful American, there is not a shadow of a doubt that your objections to authoritative teaching will be almost unconquerable, and that you will insist upon being treated, from the very beginning, as if your small head contained the

knowledge of a Hiram Woodruff or of an Archer. Perhaps you may find a teacher who will comply with your wishes ; who will be exceedingly deferential to your little whims ; will unhesitatingly accept your report of your own sensations and your hypotheses as to their cause ; and, Esmeralda, when once your eyes behold that model man, be content, and go and take lessons of another, for either he is a pretentious humbug, careless of everything except his fees, or he is an ignoramus.

It may not be necessary that you should be insulted or ridiculed in order to become a rider, although there are girls who seem utterly impervious to teaching by gentle methods. Is it not a matter of tradition that Queen Victoria owes her regal carriage to the rough drill-sergeant, who, after making endless respectful suggestions, with no effect upon his pupil, horrified her governess, and astonished her, by sharply saying : " A pretty Queen you'll make with that dot-and-go-one gait ! " Up went the little chin, back went the shoulders, down went the elbows, and, in her wrath, the little princess did precisely what the old soldier had been

striving to make her do ; but his delighted cry of "Just right !" was a surprise to her, inasmuch as she had been conscious of no muscular effort whatever. From that time forth, *incessit regina*.

You may not need such rough treatment, but it is necessary that you should be corrected every moment and almost every second until you learn to correct yourself, until every muscle in your body becomes self-conscious, and until an improper position is almost instantly felt as uncomfortable, and the teacher who does not drill you steadily and continuously, permits you to fall into bad habits.

If you were a German princess, Esmeralda, you would be compelled to sit in the saddle for many an hour without touching the reins, while your patient horse walked around a tan bark ring, and you balanced yourself and straightened yourself, and adjusted arms, shoulders, waist, knees and feet, under the orders of a drill-sergeant, who might, indeed, sugar-coat his phrases with "Your Highness," but whose intonations would say "You must," as plainly as if he were drilling an awkward squad of peasant recruits.