

HORSE AND MAN

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Horse and Man by C. S. March Phillipps

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C. S. MARCH PHILLIPPS

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AND

M A N.

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AND PARLIAMENT STREET

HORSE AND MAN.

BY

Charles S. March
C. S. MARCH PHILLIPPS,

AUTHOR OF 'JURISPRUDENCE' ETC.

'Si je n'avais rien à dire de nouveau, je ne prendrais
pas la peine d'écrire.'

BAUCHER.

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1869.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT of this little work is to make the English sportsman acquainted with the rudiments of M. Baucher's admirable system of Suppling the Horse.

It is now about thirty-five years since M. Baucher first laid his theory of equitation before the French public. Its merits have been long and keenly discussed upon the Continent, but I cannot find that it has ever attracted any serious notice in England. An English pamphlet, containing an outline of its principles as adapted to the training of cavalry horses, was indeed published by the late lamented Captain Nolan in 1853; but it was not calculated to attract, and certainly did not receive, much attention from civilian horsemen.

I have not thought it advisable to translate

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any part of M. Baucher's works. Like many men of original genius, he was far more successful in discovering truth than in explaining it. His style of disquisition is very prolix, and sometimes not a little obscure; indeed there are certain portions of his teaching whose precise object and connection I frankly acknowledge myself unable to comprehend. Nor is this all. He perpetually employs that peculiar tone of philosophical grandiloquence which is so dear to French writers, and so utterly intolerable to English readers. I question whether there are many of my hunting acquaintance who would patiently hear themselves admonished that the cavesson must be 'sustained with an energetic wrist,' or that the horse must be prevented from 'taking an initiative which might have its dangers.'

But it has occurred to me that I may be able to do good service by introducing to the civilian horseman those elementary principles of M. Baucher's system which Captain Nolan has judged likely to be useful in the military riding-school. My own observation has con-

vinced me that they may be made exceedingly serviceable in the education of ordinary horses, and that they are entirely unknown to, or neglected by, ordinary horsemen. I have therefore endeavoured to explain them in a simple and straightforward manner, as I find them laid down by M. Baucher himself; and I have also stated the opinion which experience has led me to form of their practical utility or necessity, in the hope that better judges may possibly be induced to give them an equally fair trial.

All Englishmen naturally hate theory; and perhaps no Englishman hates it so thoroughly as an English sportsman. The fact is, in my opinion, highly creditable to the English intellect. Practical men are quite justified in hating a thing of which, potentially beautiful and admirable as it may be, they have never met with any specimen that was not actually useless or pernicious. And just as English statesmen despise a theory of government which practically leads to slavery or to anarchy, even so do English horsemen despise a

theory of equitation which practically disables its professors from riding across country. Your conclusions, we say, may be true in theory, but they are false in practice; and this familiar platitude is by no means so absurd as it sounds. Its real meaning is: We do not think it worth while to prove by argument that your theory is false, because experiment has convinced us that it cannot possibly be true.

But I do not observe that, when Englishmen have once perceived the practical value of a theory, they are either incapable or impatient of the abstract reasoning necessary to explain its principles. The kind of theory which we despise is that which is founded upon ingenious assumption unverified by experiment. Experiment is therefore our first demand. Show us your results, we say, and if we like them we will try to understand your demonstration. And how faithfully we in this respect keep our word, nobody who has ever been intimate with an enthusiastic rifleman or yachtsman requires to be reminded.