

Recreation in the saddle fills a want that is not met by other recreations. The wheel encounters many obstacles in a rough, stony, mountainous country; a canoe loses the finest or wildest places, unless in the Adirondacks; carriage-riding is devoid of the desired exercise; walking would hit the mark, if it were not too slow and exhausting; but to the horseman almost every pathway is accessible, the unbridged stream is a pleasure. The exercise is full, though not exhausting, and, taking all the most attractive portions of the country into account, there is open to him the greatest possible variety of pleasant experiences.

Confiding in an easy saddle-horse, callous to the pains of long riding, with imagination on the alert to make the most of the surroundings, yet not to distort them, and with a genuine abandonment to the journey that forbade the intrusion of a care, I set out from the southern part of Berkshire with a companion on a tour to Howe's Cave in Schoharie County, N.Y., and through the whole Catskill country, — a distance of two hundred and thirty miles in the saddle, and about forty miles in mountain-climbing on foot. He who travels for pleasure, and has his mind occupied with the cares of his every-day employment, or is fretted by the little annoyances that come upon him now and then, had better stay at home.

The full enjoyment of continuous horse-back-riding for long distances depends upon so many things that it demands more experience than any other kind of travelling. The horse must be suitable for the saddle, or his rider will have a miserable time. Put the cart-horse before the cart, drive the carriage-horse where he belongs, confine the trotting-horse to the light carriage or sulky, but do not ride any of them, for they are unfit for the saddle. A practiced eye tells a good saddle-horse on sight, whether he has ever been ridden or not. Do not get a horse that strikes the earth with his feet as if he meant to bury them in it, nor one that throws himself several inches off the ground at every step; a horse that comes the nearest to gliding over the ground is the one we want.

The high vaulting, so unsuitable to a saddle-horse, may be partly, if not wholly, overcome by making him travel barefoot. This involves a heresy, I am aware. The Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture looks with small favor on the unshod horse; the veterinarian scares you with his account of barefoot-travelling; the blacksmith will assure you that your horse will be ruined; and horse-owners, generally, "never heard of such a thing,"

There is, however, good ground for the assertion that, in moderate use, a horse with sound feet travels better without shoes than with them. Hoofs have been the product of adaptation, if not of natural selection, while the horse was yet wild and used them in moderation. They may become tender under long-distance travelling where the way is rocky and rough, it is true, for that is a use to which they have never become adapted. But a large part of a horse's use is within the range of the adaptation of his hoof to barefoot-travelling.

The mare I rode on this journey had no shoes. She has travelled fifteen hundred miles in the last fifteen months without them, much of the distance being over the roughest roads and

pathways in a mountainous country. Before setting out on this trip I rode her one hundred and fifty miles in fifteen days, and the Catskill journey added two hundred and thirty miles in eight days, making three hundred and eighty miles in twenty-three days. Though no roads can be harder than those in the Catskill Mountains, yet the horse's hoofs were in excellent condition all the way to the end. I was stopped a dozen times a day to reply to the question, "Why don't you have shoes on your horse?" — "The horse doesn't need them and travels better without them." — Well, you won't go another day in this country without them." The remark has, repeatedly been made elsewhere.

The evidence on which this belief rests is that horses have lost their shoes on rough ground and had their hoofs broken up. This is inevitable, for the shoe causes the hoof to be brittle; the shoe should be taken off in the early mud of the spring, then the hoof will be tough instead of brittle when the ground hardens. A great mass of evidence, all drawn from men's experience, could be cited in favor of letting saddle and driving horses go without shoes, and perhaps some working horses. It has been found that every man who has rationally used unshod horses is opposed to shoeing them.

This is a matter of some concern also to the rider, for the travelling of the unshod horse is much easier for him than that of the same horse wearing shoes, because the animal moves nearer the ground, and does not spring so much into the air. In long-distance riding, which may be considered an average of thirty miles a day or more, the horse is not ridden much, if any, in a gallop or lope, but more in a ramble, or "single foot" pace. Common saddle-horses in the East are not broken to this? but they may be, in no more than ten miles' riding under proper handling.

For this purpose spurs are requisite to keep the horse from falling back into a walk when the bit restrains him from a trot or gallop. The rowels should not be sharp ones cut out of sheet-iron, but cast-iron ones with blunt points. No good horseman goads his horse with spurs, but uses them rather in cases of emergency when near a railway train, or crossing a stream, or in some situation where it is desirable to have the animal move with celerity.

The selection of a saddle for a journey like this is a matter of no small importance to horse as well as to rider. No one who has ridden in a Texas or California saddle will ever ride in one of another kind if he can help it. The saddle should be narrow, and, in this part of the country, should be light. Its horn and high cantle make the position of rider secure and easy; the bent wood stirrups, covered in front and on sides with leather, are a comfort to the feet as well as being safe. The iron stirrup of the English saddle is a death trap and a nuisance. The Texas saddle being made upon a tree, it never rests upon a horse's backbone or withers, if it is laced upon the back properly. The girth should be made of hair. It is broad, is cool to the horse, and will not scald him.

It is not necessary to have a large saddle-blanket nor a heavy one, so long as it softens the pressure of the saddle and prevents chafing. In case the horse has very high withers, as

many of the best thoroughbred saddle-horses have, the forward part of the tree may rest upon them unless the blanket, is padded enough to raise up the saddle a little. Burlap cloth is excellent for putting next to the horse on the under side of the felt composing the upper part of the blanket.

Let me caution the horseman against using a crupper attached to the rear of the saddle for the purpose of keeping it from sliding upon the withers. The crupper will surely make a horse's tail sore under long riding, and is, after all, not needed. Texas saddles are sometimes provided with two girths, the rear one keeping the saddle from moving forward; it is not much in favor, however. The best saddle-horses usually do not have bodies swelling much, if any, larger than the measurement just back of the fore legs, so that a saddle on them is more likely to slip back than forward. The skilled horseman always watches his saddle and keeps it in place.

A horse need not be provided with two bits, which Eastern horsemen often have, -a common bit and a curb. This practice arises from the want of knowing how to use the curb-bit. If the animal is too headstrong put a curb-bit only in his mouth, and use it gently, making the very slightest pressure on the mouth in reining to the right or left. Western horsemen use the curb-bit upon the most irritable and vicious horses without irritating them.

So much for the horse and his appurtenances. The rider, while exercising the tenderest consideration for the beast, is by the same act providing for his own ease and welfare.

While the dress of the tourist on horseback will agree with his own taste, he will certainly not neglect to wear a flannel shirt; and, if he cares to preserve his pantaloons from dust and sand soiling, and from the rapid wearing of holes in them, he will surely have neat riding overalls of thin sheepskin.

Light saddle-bags may be convenient, but without them, all necessary "baggage" can be tied in leather strings attached to the rear of the saddle. Besides the clothing worn upon the body a water-proof coat is needed. It should be long enough to reach to the heels, and should be split up the back far enough to allow each half to be wrapped around a log. The traveler will encounter showers now and then; but, thus provided, he need not be wet by them.

This coat is tied at the rear of the saddle in company with a little cloth bag holding about six quarts, the use of the latter being to carry four quarts of oats for the horse, and a lunch for his rider on occasions when the mid-day rest may be foretold to occur at some distance from food,

The tourist may carry a field-glass, if convenient, or a sketch-book, if useful, and he should put in his pocket such small articles as he may know that he will need, but he should not encumber himself any further, if he is a green hand he will load himself and his horse to the last limit; but if he has the wisdom that is bought with experience he will rule out all articles except those mentioned. Should he be determined to take a big outfit, notwithstanding, his subsequent punishment will be a guaranty that he will not repeat the experiment on the second trip. Such clothing and other articles as may need to be exchanged on the journey may be bought on the way, and cast off articles had better be thrown away than carried.

So equipped and prepared a horseman may cheerfully set out to travel through any part of the country where he can find a human habitation at night and good food for his horse. In every part of the State of New York-a State rich in natural scenery and in treasures for the tourist's enjoyment — good accommodations may always be found at night, particularly in the Catskills, where almost every house is a hotel or a boarding-house.

The route of this excursion lay through Catskill, up the creek of the same name, through Cairo, Durham, up the gorge through which the creek runs, across a corner of Albany count through Livingstonville and a pass in the mountains, to Middleburgh in Schoharie county ; from thence to Howe's Cave in the Cobleskill valley, thirty-nine miles west of Albany. Returning from the cave to the Schoharie valley at Middleburgh, the journey followed up the valley to Gilboa and across a corner of Delaware County to Greene County again, passing several fine waterfalls on the way and much picturesque scenery. At Lexington, the town above Prattsville, we left the Schoharie valley, followed up the Westkill valley to the village of Westkill, rode through the Bushnellville Clove and down Deep Hollow, where some of the wildest scenery in the Catskills may be seen. From Shandaken, in Ulster County, the route extended up the valley to the Grand Hotel on Summit Mountain, then back again to the Big Indian valley, up which the way led to Slide Mountain, the highest in the Catskills. Returning down the Esopus valley, we turned to the left: at Phoenicia, and went up through the Stony Clove to Hunter, in the Schoharia valley again, nine miles from the place where we left it. We proceeded then to Tanners ville, to South and North mountains, the Kaaterskill Clove, and all the wild and romantic region thereabouts, coming back to Berkshire by the way of Catskill.

If one desires to include Cooperstown in a ride through the Catskills, at Gilboatum toward Stamford to the west, and the journey may be prolonged four or five days, or longer if desired, in a beautiful region.

The comfort of a horseman on a long journey depends largely on the way he rides his horse, and upon this also depends on the animal's ability to travel easily and without exhaustion.

Amid the diversity of the styles of riding that one sees in various parts of the country what method shall the tourist adopt? Shall he imitate the Englishman, the Central Park horseman, or the Western ranchman?

The only appeal that can be made is to experience. Every one who rides much on horseback finds that necessity is the test of correctness of riding. Experience is a solemn fowl, to be sure, but in this instance she does not cackle oftener than she lays a real, live egg. The men of the Far West, who all but live in the saddle, ride as they find they must, and hence they ride correctly.

The significance of this must no one can realize until he undertakes to ride, say fifty miles a day, for several days. If he is a beginner, at the very best his life will hardly be worth living during the period; but he will learn how to ride a horse, and, what is equally important, how not to ride.

A schooling of this nature forbids a man to rise at all from his saddle ; he sits in it as if he were tied to it ; whatever the mo-

tion of the horse, he is a part of the saddle, yes, of the horse himself. If a man in the remote West should ride a horse and rise and fall in the saddle, as nearly all riders do in the East, the very boys would look upon him as a pitiable creature, and the ridicule would either drive him out of that part of the country, or force him to ride as he ought before necessity had compelled him to do so.

Riding-schools are responsible for the curiosities of some Eastern riding. A man goes to one of these schools to learn to ride, and he is likely to come out prepared to make a ludicrous exhibition of himself. He rides the worst saddle, made after the English pattern; he thrusts his feet forward towards the horse's nose, as if he were warming them before a fire ; he often sticks them outward from the horse at an angle of thirty degrees. These peculiarities, and short stirrups, indicate the novice.

The Western ranchman sits close to his horse; his stirrups are long enough to straighten out his legs; he rides with his feet directly under him close to the horse, and nearly behind the animal's shoulders. When the horse gallops, or lopes, or shambles, or steps in a heavy trot, which, however, should be prevented if possible, he does not allow himself to be thrown up from the saddle and to come down like a trip-hammer, as our Eastern horsemen do ; he never rises from his saddle unless he is "bucked" out of it.

The most thorough school for teaching a man to ride well is long-distance riding. The man who, after a little preliminary riding to become accustomed to "How do I ride?" but "How do I look?" and hence riding-schools have never discovered the secret of good riding, on 'account of their devices to cover up the awkwardness of the beginners motions.

The new rider may be certain that if he learns to ride well, his appearance will take care of itself. Let him learn to sit in his saddle, and to stay there, whatever the motion of the horse, and he cannot be anything but graceful. Our idea of gracefulness comes from our perception of ease, and no rider seems so easy as he who appears to be a part of his horse.

The care and management of a saddle-horse on a journey should be the best. At noon and at night, and oftener on a hot day, it is well to bathe his back with cold water to keep it clean and to take out all inflammation, waiting for the back to dry before again putting on the saddle. The hoofs should be examined to discover stones wedged around the frog. Let the horse drink often, though not enough to bloat himself; his freshness depends upon frequent drinking. Lounging in the saddle, so as to pull it to one side, must not be indulged in, for it will make a sore back.

When fording a stream the rider should take his feet out of the stirrups, so that he may not be caught under the horse if he falls, and, in this event, it may be necessary to slip out of the saddle into the water, to relieve the animal of incumbrance, if it should be preventing him from readily struggling to his feet.

Alexander Bain denies that Adam and Eve could have had the deep sleep in the Garden of Eden that Milton gives them, because they had done nothing to earn it.

The best sleep and the keenest appetite must be earned, and they are both due to the horseback rider. While he is rarely weary, if he is in frequent practice, he keeps a prompt digestion, his hunger needs no stimulant to give it sharpness, and there comes upon him a profound, refreshing sleep that neither title can win nor riches buy.