

***M. HORACE  
HAYES***



***ILLUSTRATED  
HORSE BREAKING***

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# **Illustrated Horse Breaking**

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# PREFACE.

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I OFFER this work to the favourable consideration of the public, as an attempt to describe a reasoned-out system of horse-breaking, which I have found, by practical experience, to be easy of execution, rapid in its effects, and requiring the possession of no exceptional strength, activity, pluck, or horsemanship by the operator, who, to become expert in it, will, as a rule, need only practice. It is in accordance with our English and Irish ideas on the subject; for it aims at teaching the horse “manners,” and giving him a snaffle-bridle mouth; so that he will “go up to the bridle,” and “bend” himself in thorough obedience to rein and leg.

As a personal explanation, I may mention that after having spent many years racing and training in India, during which time I practised the ordinary methods of breaking, I returned to England, where I learned the use of the standing martingale and long driving reins, as applied specially to jumpers, from Mr. John Hubert Moore, who was the cleverest “maker” of steeplechasers Ireland ever knew. He, I may remark, obtained these methods, in his youth, from an old Irish breaker, named Fallon, who was born more than a century ago. I had also valuable instruction in “horse taming” from Professor Sample. Having read an account of MM. Raabe and Lunel’s “hippo-lasso,” as a means of control for veterinary operations, I conceived, with happy results, the idea of utilising this ingenious contrivance in breaking. I

also learned, about the same time, how to halter a loose horse without running any danger of being kicked, or bitten.

Having thus acquired a fair amount of information, on what has always been to me a favourite subject, I naturally wished to put it into practice.

As I knew, judging from my former ignorance, how much men in India stood in need of instruction in horse-breaking, I determined to return to that country with the object of teaching this art; so as to acquire the experience I needed, and to “pay my expenses” at the same time. I am glad to say that I was successful in both respects. During a two years’ tour, I held classes at all the principal stations of the Empire—from Tricinopoly to Peshawur, and from Quetta to Mandalay—and, having met a very large number of vicious animals and fine horsemen, I obtained experience, and greatly added to my stock of knowledge, which I shall now try to utilise for the benefit of my readers. As I proceeded through India, I felt the necessity of rejecting some methods I had formerly prized, altering others, and adopting new ones; so that the course of instruction which I was able to give to my more recent classes, was far more extensive, and of better proved utility, than what I had to offer at the beginning of my travels. The great want which I had, at first, felt was a method by which a person could secure and handle, with perfect safety, any horse, no matter how vicious he might be. However, after many kicks, a few bites, and several lucky escapes, I was able to perfect the required method, which is so simple, that the only wonder is that I did not think of it before. I may explain that the Australian horses met with in India, where they form a considerable

proportion of the animals used for riding and driving, are far more dangerous and difficult to handle and control, than British stock. Had I remained in England all my life, I should not have acquired a quarter of the experience of vicious horses I was afforded, during the time I lately spent in India. It goes almost without saying, that the harder the pupil is to teach, the greater chance has the instructor of becoming expert in his business. I need hardly say, that I shall, always, be very grateful to any of my readers who may favour me with special information on this, or kindred subjects.

I may mention, that, after returning from India, I held classes in England, Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, Ceylon, Singapore, and China.

I have much pleasure in giving, in the body of this work, the sources from which I have taken various hints.

The chief claim I, here, make to originality, is, that in bringing together the results of experience in different countries, I have endeavoured to reduce the art of breaking horses to a more or less complete system, many of the principles of which, I venture to think, I have been the first to expound, and that I have made several improvements in existing methods. The new things which I have introduced need no special mention here.

My best thanks are due to Mr. J. H. Oswald Brown, for the faithful and painstaking manner in which he has illustrated the letter-press of this book. The drawings speak for themselves.

Although I am aware that the proceeding on my part may be deemed unusual; still, in order to strengthen my words, I have ventured to submit to my readers, in an appendix, the

recorded opinions of various members of my classes on the practical working of the theories and methods described in this book.

I shall, at all times, be ready to give practical instruction to persons wishing to learn this art of making the horse a safe, and pleasant conveyance.

JUNIOR ARMY AND NAVY CLUB,  
ST. JAMES'S STREET, LONDON. S.W.  
*January 1, 1889.*



# ILLUSTRATED HORSE-BREAKING.

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# CHAPTER I.

## THEORY OF HORSE-BREAKING.

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Object of horse-breaking—Causes of faults which can be remedied by breaking—Vice in the horse—Distinction between nervousness and deliberate vice—Mental qualities of the horse—Association of ideas in breaking—Value and scope of breaking—On the possibility of overcoming any form of vice—Necessity for obtaining control over the horse—On the nature of the coercion to be applied to unruly horses—Punishment—Fatigue as a means of subjugation—Effect of the voice—Personal influence in breaking—Advisability of possessing various methods of breaking—A good mouth, the chief requirement—Permanency in the effects of breaking—Expedition in breaking—The ordinary method of breaking—Breaking by kindness alone—The rough and ready style of breaking—Summary of the principles of the art of rendering horses docile.

*The object of horse-breaking* is to teach the animal to obey the orders of his master in the best possible manner. Hence, this art includes instruction in the advantageous application of his powers, as well as methods for rendering him docile.

*Causes of faults which can be remedied by breaking are:*  
—1. Nervousness; or the unnecessary fear of the presence or handling of man, or of the effect of any of the horse's other surroundings, which, however startling they might be

to him in a wild state, he can find by experience will not hurt him.

2. Impatience of control, which frequently co-exists with nervousness, in the same animal.

3. Ignorance of the meaning of the indications used by man to convey his wishes to the horse.

4. Deliberate disobedience. There is no doubt that sulkiness of temper is, often, inherited.

5. Active hostility, which, as far as my experience goes, is, always, the result of bad treatment, whether brought on by cruelty, or by allowing a naturally fractious animal to get the upper hand.

It is evident that vices caused by disease, or infirmity, do not come within the province of the breaker.

6. The fact of having been taught some trick—for instance, kicking when touched behind the saddle—the practice of which constitutes a vice.

*Vice in the Horse*, from a breaking point of view, may be held to signify the practice, on the part of the animal towards man, of disobedience—wilful or otherwise—of any legitimate command; or want of docility.

*The distinction between nervousness and deliberate vice* may be easily made, if we observe how a horse acts after we have proved to him that he need have no fear of us. For instance, if we fix up a horse, say, in a “strait-jacket,” (see [page 118](#)) so that he cannot kick, and continue to “gentle” him over with our hand, until he is thoroughly assured of the good faith of our intentions; we might justly term him a vicious brute if he kicked at us, without our touching him, the moment the restraint was removed. I may mention, in

this connection, that fear of the near approach of man will often induce a purely nervous animal to kick out, if a person, and especially a stranger, ventures to come within reach. Although we may frequently find a horse kick from nervousness, he will rarely bite from that cause alone. As a verbal distinction between faults due to deliberate vice, and those caused by fear of man, or of the animal's strange surroundings, would not, generally, be understood at first glance, I need not attempt to make it in these pages.

The more experience I acquire in the breaking of horses, the more convinced I become, that the so-called "nervousness" of animals that have been handled some time, is largely made up of impatience of control, and, in many cases, of active hostility. Without, for a moment, imputing intentional deceit to a "nervous" "old stager," I make bold to assert that many crafty, dangerous brutes pose before their owners as ill-used victims of a too highly strung nervous system. Take, for instance, an aged horse, like many I have met, that snorts with apparent terror at anyone that approaches him, and is ready, on the slightest chance of reaching his mark, to strike out in front, or lash out from behind, if saddling or mounting him be attempted. His nervous emotion, the first time he was taken in hand, or the first time he began his unpleasant tricks, may have been thoroughly genuine; but its exhibition was evidently attended with the result of his more or less successfully resisting control. This act of insubordination having revealed to the horse the extent of his own power, which, to every animal, is a pleasurable sensation, was naturally repeated again and again, until the vicious habit was confirmed;

although its necessity might have been, scores and scores of times, disproved by the saddling or mounting having been accomplished without the infliction of any pain to the horse, however great the trouble may have been to the groom or rider. In the case I have mentioned, the fault lay with the person who had charge of the animal, and who ought to have, then and there, mastered him the very first time he shewed resistance to a legitimate order. Whether the continued failure to resist discipline was caused by the infliction of cruelty, or by the exhibition of incompetence on the part of the man, matters little as regards their detrimental result on the animal, except, that unsuccessful punishment always aggravates a vice to a deplorable extent. I am inclined to think that really nervous horses are not as naturally "game" as their more placid fellows; while I am thoroughly convinced, that the majority of the *pseudo* nervous sort are sulky, treacherous brutes. I am, however, ready to admit that there are many exceptions to the rule I have ventured to lay down. At the same time, it would be most unwise to ignore the fact that the repetition of any trick, however it may be caused, the practice of which renders the animal difficult of control, has an increasingly bad effect on him the longer it be continued.

*Mental qualities of the Horse.*—The possibility of our being able to obtain an easy mastery over the horse, who is greatly our superior in strength and activity, and quite our equal in pluck, rests on the fact that instinct, rather than reason, guides his actions. To investigate this, we may try the experiment, when standing to the side and a little to the rear of a kicker, of touching him about the hocks or quarters

with a conveniently long stick, when, if he “lets out” straight behind him, we may conclude that this is a purely reflex or instinctive action on his part. If the animal kicks at the stick, as the cause of annoyance, he certainly conducts himself in a manner that is not altogether irrational. But if he tries to kick the man who holds the stick, we cannot deny him the possession of reasoning power. In order that my meaning be not misunderstood, I here suppose that this experimental horse is one which would viciously kick a person who, when standing behind him, would be rash enough to touch the animal, however gently, with his hand; and not one whose kick would be more of a push—to remove an offending object—than a blow. Luckily, horses that can reason, even to such a small extent as this, are rare.

I usually teach horses to lie down (see [page 153](#)) by tying up, in the first instance, one fore-leg, arranging the necessary gear, and then making the animal forcibly “go down.” Although many horses will “fight” desperately, time after time, when they are thus compelled to submit, and at a moment when they are utterly helpless, I have never found one that would resent, as a result of this hard-earned experience, the preliminary tying up of the fore-leg. But after having even once been twitched in the usual way, a horse will, as a rule, “fight” the moment his muzzle is touched. In the first case, owing to the more distant connection, the animal is unable to associate the idea of the irksome compulsion employed to make him lie down, with that of tying up his leg; apparently to us an extremely simple mental effort. In the second instance, the action of

the muscles, on the hand touching the muzzle, would seem almost entirely instinctive.

The useful intelligence of the horse undoubtedly depends on the retentiveness of his memory, upon which we should work in educating him to become our faithful servant. If, however, we neglect the cultivation of this his chief mental gift, and try to gain our end by stimulating other and weaker qualities of his mind, we shall run a serious risk of spoiling his disposition. It has been often remarked to me by good judges—and it is my own experience—that teaching horses a lot of tricks, the acquisition of which demands some strain on their reasoning powers, and petting them, are very apt to cause them to become crafty and difficult to manage. In acting as I have advised, we follow the practice of judicious parents who educate their sons according to the lads' respective talents. Thus, for instance, a boy with an extremely retentive memory, but small capacity for reasoning out problems, would have a fair chance of shining as a linguist; although he would, certainly, prove a failure as a mathematician.

The feeling of self-preservation is so strongly implanted in the mind of every animal, and the retentiveness of the horse's memory is so great, that, if once the idea of his being our physical superior gets into his head, he will, naturally, be inclined to resist our commands. Hence, it is a maxim among all good breakers, that, if possible, a horse should never be allowed to know his own power. As a corollary to this, I may state that if we have a dispute as to discipline with a horse, we should not part company before making him yield; lest he may carry away the mischievous

impression that he has got the best of the battle. The breaker need not attempt too much in any one lesson; but what he undertakes he should succeed in performing before quitting his pupil. For instance, with a horse that will not allow his hind legs to be touched, the breaker may reasonably content himself with making him quiet to handle about these parts, without insisting on his standing submissively to be shod behind—an operation that may be attempted on the following day. We should also make use of our knowledge of the limited scope of a horse's reasoning powers, to change the subject of contention, if we fear that there is any chance of our being worsted in a pitched battle with the animal; so that the victory—even if it does not affect the original cause of dispute—shall always remain on our side. As an illustration, I may mention the advisability of forcibly making a determined and headstrong runaway lie down, until he thoroughly “gives in”; in order to make him yield the more readily to the indications of the rein.

*Association of ideas in breaking.*—As association of ideas is the most valuable aid we possess to memory, we should largely utilise the practical working out of this principle in breaking. The intelligent obedience to the voice of their driver, in turning, stopping, going on, and in varying their paces, displayed by many cart-horses, is a common instance; as is, also, that of the 'bus horse, who starts onward the moment he hears the door of the conveyance slammed-to by the conductor. A friend of mine had a horse that became so increasingly difficult to mount, that at last he found it impossible to get on to him by ordinary means, on account of the animal “breaking away” the moment he



attempted to put his toe into the stirrup. Living near a river, he hit on the expedient of placing the horse with his off side "broad-side on," and close to, a steep part of the bank, and then attempting to mount on the near side. As usual, when the man's foot touched the iron, the horse swung round, and, on this occasion only, fell down twenty feet into the river. The effect of this lesson, which was entirely harmless, was to make the animal perfectly steady to mount, so long as he stood on the bank of the river, in a position similar to that from which he had had his tumble; but he was just as difficult to mount as ever, anywhere else. Such a method, to be perfect, should be of universal, and not of local, application. I may add, with reference to my remarks on [page 4](#), that my friend's unruly brute of a horse would, by many, be deemed a nervous creature, and a worthy recipient of any amount of kindness and petting. The most effective means of applying the principle of association of ideas to the breaking of vicious horses, is one by which the animal arrives at the right conclusion from wrong premisses; as with Pratt's rope-twitch (see [page 113](#)), when making a horse steady to mount. Evidently mistaking the cause of the pain inflicted on him by its employment, he connects the idea of punishment with the word "steady," and not with the application of the cord. Were he able to argue rightly on this subject, he would remain quiet only when the twitch was on, and would entirely disregard the verbal admonition, for which he entertains such marked respect.

*Value and scope of breaking.*—The scope of breaking is wider than persons might generally imagine; for not alone does it include the education of the untutored animal, but it

also embraces the correction of faults, which, while seriously detracting from the horse's value, are usually looked upon as unavoidable dispensations that have to be borne with becoming philosophy; as, for instance, prancing and refusal to walk quietly, when "fresh"; chucking up the head; stargazing; boring to one side; shewing excitement in harness when the whip is cracked; shying off the ball at polo; refusal to stand perfectly steady when being mounted; etc. I need hardly say that the knowledge, which I shall endeavour to impart to my readers, of the art of giving a horse a snaffle-bridle mouth and to render him steady and reliable, is of infinitely more value to everyone, except, perhaps, to the showman who requires an advertisement, than instruction, which I shall also supply, in methods for taming man-eaters, and other exceptionally dangerous animals. This art of "horse taming" is of very little practical use; for the need of its application is of but rare occurrence. Even the celebrated Rarey, after subduing three or four "savages," when in England, had to content himself with exhibiting them about the country, as reformed characters, for lack of new subjects on which to shew his skill. When wishing to form a class for practical instruction in breaking, during my tours, I have frequently met with the objection that there were no vicious horses in that particular place. As I always replied that I needed animals with only common faults of mouth and temper, I was never at a loss for subjects to demonstrate the fact, that there are but few horses that are entirely free from some riding or driving fault, which, more or less, impairs their value, and which, as a rule, can be readily overcome. The more frequent vices I

have encountered among army horses are: unsteadiness at mounting; “rushing” at fences; refusing to quit the ranks; refusing to jump; buckjumping (among Australian horses); and “difficult to shoe behind.”

*On the possibility of overcoming any form of vice.*—The influences which man, being the weaker animal, can apply to making the horse obedient to his wishes, are: affection; the natural submission yielded by an inferior to a superior intellect; fear; and the impression—which is, generally, erroneous—that the order given cannot be resisted. The first three are the usual means for rendering docile a high-couraged horse. Although we may, to a certain extent, use the last-mentioned influence with quiet horses, and, especially in mouthing, we should remember that it is our last resource, when all others fail, in reducing a rebellious animal to submission. If, however, the horse which we have taken in hand, happen to reason sufficiently well to enable him to “see through” our artifices, our labour will, of course, be in vain. Herein lies the whole question of success, or failure, in making vicious horses docile. Man-eaters, like the historic Cruiser, the taming of whom made Rarey famous, being actuated, almost entirely, by instinctive hostility, yield far more readily to authority, than the sulky animal that, having found out a method by which he can thwart the wishes of his would-be master, craftily adheres to it, with a fair show of reason on his side. I may mention that the assertion made by many “horse-tamers,” that they can cure any horse of any kind of vice, is manifestly absurd.

Of all forms of vice, those caused by stubbornness are the most difficult to eradicate; for the animal which sets its