

So long upon the brink  
 Without the power to sink  
 Into that nothingness, and neither feel nor think!

How many times, when day brought back the light  
 After the merciful oblivion  
 Of such unbroken slumber,  
 And once again began to cumber  
 My soul with her forgotten cares and sorrows,  
 And show in long perspective the gray morrows,  
 Stretching monotonously on,  
 Forever narrowing but never done,  
 Have I not loathed to live again and said,  
 It would have been far better to be dead,  
 And yet somehow, I know not why,  
 Remained afraid to die!

## SOME AMERICAN RIDERS.

BY COLONEL THEODORE AYRAULT DODGE, U. S. A.

## First Paper.

WE Americans are a many-sided people in equestrianism as in other matters. The greatest variety of riders has existed on the continent of North America. Going back to include the days, still in the memory of old men living, when the Indians farthest from civilization were armed with bow and arrow, tomahawk and lance, and rode without a saddle, we can count almost every type, from the era which produced the frieze of the Parthenon to the present year of grace. As a matter of pure skill, as well as artistically speaking, the bareback rider in every age stands at the head of all equestrians; but as for practical work the saddle gives a distinct superiority, we can scarcely compare him to the modern rider.

No intelligent horseman now claims for his own method the  $\alpha$  and  $\omega$  of equitation. It is an axiom among all men who are not hide-bound by narrow prejudice that the method of riding, and the bit and saddle which are best adapted to the animal to be ridden, to the needs of the work to be done, and to the climate, will be the ones to grow into use among every class. This fact is well illustrated by the two almost extreme seats of the cow-boy and the fox-hunter. The cow-boy has to be astride his ponies from a dozen hours upward every day, ropes steers or drags out mired cows, has to stick to his saddle under the most abnor-

mal conditions, and must if need be have both his hands at liberty. He rides with a short tree, horn pommel, and high cantle. The fox-hunter has no occupation for his hands except by the play of the bits to get the very best performance out of his horse, and needs a saddle on which he can not only sit safely and comfortably over difficult obstacles, but which is convenient to fall out of if a horse comes down, and will prove the least dangerous should his horse come atop of him. He rides the flattest thing known except a pad. Those who have done duty as cow-boys and have ridden to hounds as well—the very best authority obtainable—unite in pronouncing each saddle to be as closely adapted to the needs of each rider as it can be made.

Leaving out the soldier, who is the lineal descendant of the knight in armor, with seat and saddle modified by his weapons and equipment, and who is everywhere substantially the same, the home of the long seat and the short stirrup is the Orient; the home of the short seat and long stirrup is the West. Midway comes the Englishman, with his numerous imitators, whose seat is a compromise betwixt the two. All other styles approach more or less to these, and each has its uncompromising advocates. But whatever seat may be believed by its partisans to be the best, there are so many unsurpassed



riders who break every commandment in the civilized decalogue of equitation that we cannot even ask, "Who is the best rider?" but only, "What is the best form for the peculiar wants of each of us, or of our climate, roads, and horses?"

Xenophon, whose work on horsemanship is the earliest which has been preserved to us, gives to some of our equestrians a commendable example by praising Simo, who had preceded him, and perhaps cut him out, in writing a horse book. "We shall expect," says he, "to acquire additional credit, since he who was skilled in horses has the same notions with us." It is everywhere a good deal the fashion, and in some places a matter of faith, to claim that some particular brand of horsemen, as of cigars or whiskey, is the best; or rather that there can be no other really good brand. Whoso has seen men and cities knows that there are everywhere equally good liquor, tobacco, and riders.

The East was the original home of horsemen, and war the early training of the horse. Though he appears first as a beast of burden, and though riding preceded driving, there is evidence to show that chariots in great numbers were used in war before cavalry became common. The use of the horse was all but limited to war. Bullocks were the usual means of transportation, and were no doubt then, as now, in the Orient, steady and rapid travellers. The higher the warrior above the common soldiery, the more terrible his aspect, and the deadlier his aim with lance and arrow. Hence the steed's early appearance in battle. To debase him to the purposes of pleasure was never dreamed of.

We find the very best of cavalry in ancient times. The Greeks ran against a serious problem in the Persian light horse when they first trod the soil of Asia Minor. They were nothing like so good horsemen as the Asiatics until Alexander's Companion Cavalry showed them what drill could do; and the Roman was still less apt. Philip of Macedon first utilized the excellent material of the Thesalian plains, and organized a cavalry which, from its manœuvres and fighting, must have consisted of admirable horsemen. The ancients rode without saddles or stirrups, on a blanket or pad or bare back; and in spite of this fact, or perhaps by reason of it, rode extremely well. It is wonderful what feats of military horse-

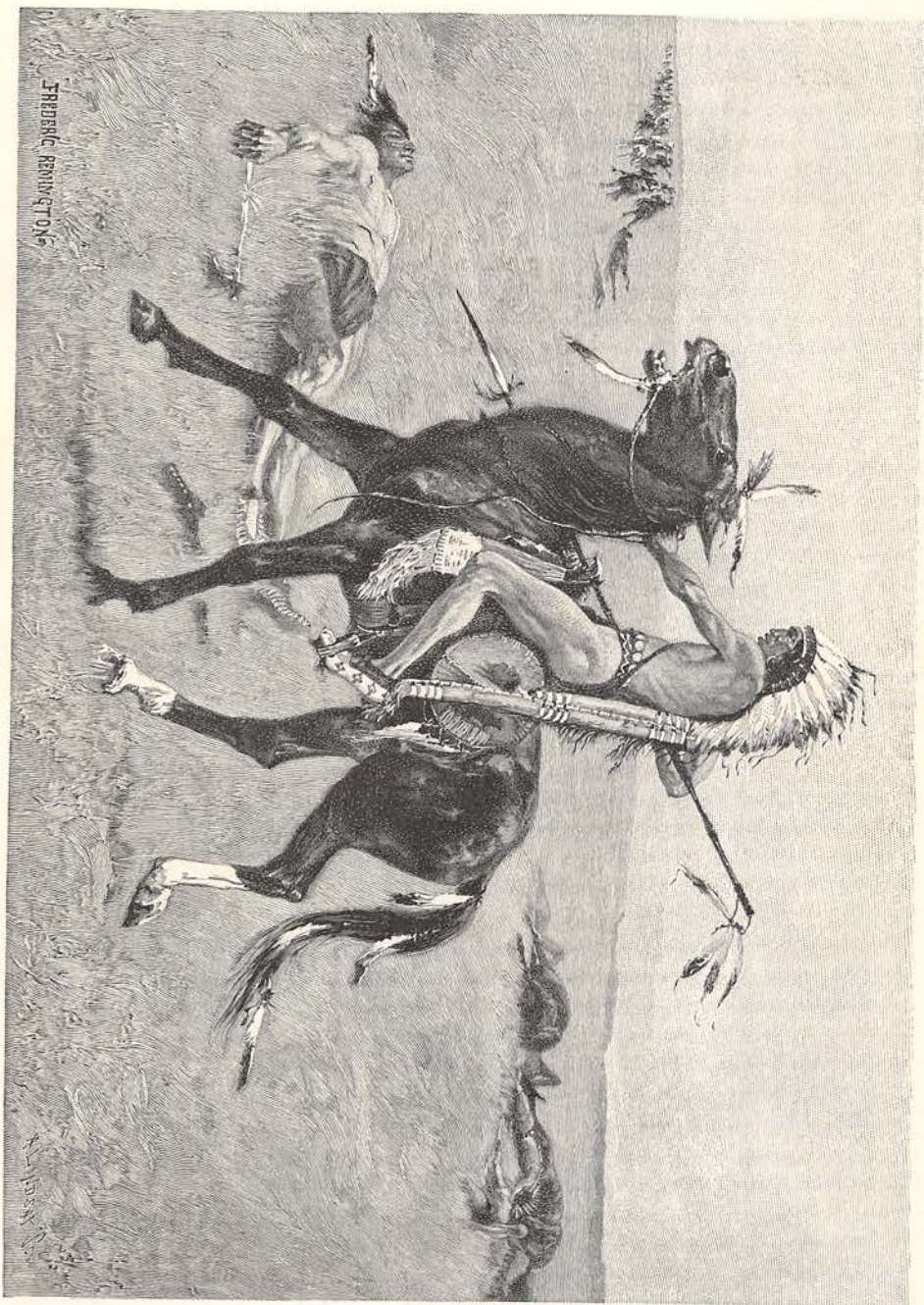
manship the bareback rider could perform in the age of what we might call gymnastic equestrianism. Nothing but the knowledge of our old-time Indian enables us to credit the historical accounts of his agility and skill.

When, centuries later, saddles came into use, there grew up two schools of riding—that of the mailed warrior, whose iron armor well chimed in with his "tongs on a wall" seat in his peaked saddle; and that of the Oriental, whose nose and knees all but touched. Why the Eastern rider clings to his extremely short leathers it is hard to say, unless it be to place him the higher above his horse, and therefore make him the more imposing when he stands up in his stirrups to brandish scimitar or matchlock. Yet he is a wonderful rider, this same Oriental; as, indeed, is every man who from youth up is the companion of the horse. This peculiar type does not exist in North America, though some of our Indians ride with very short stirrups. But every other style of equitation is found among our aborigines, or in the populated sections of the continent.

The bareback rider was common among the Plains Indians of forty years ago. Beyond trappings for mere show, his pony was as naked as he. The bareback seat ought, in theory, to be alike in all ages, varied slightly only by the conformation of man and beast—the slimmer the horse's barrel or the longer the man's legs, the straighter the seat. We ascribe variations from it to the use of saddles. This seat is supposed to train a man to grip his horse from breech to knee, and, unless when making unusual exertions, to allow his leg from the knee down to hang more or less perpendicularly. It is distinctly the model from which to start. The less the variation from it, the better the results. And although many horsemen who wander farthest from this seat achieve singular success in equitation, the model nevertheless remains the best. This is a maxim in every school. Variations from the bareback seat are the result of peculiar habits or requirements.

This is theorizing, you may say; but the best practice comes from good theory, however often practice alone may produce individual success. A man or a horse, or both combined, may accomplish astounding things in the wrong way. "Practice makes perfect," runs the old





FREDERIC REMINGTON

AN OLD-TIME NORTHERN PLAINS INDIAN—THE COUP.



saw, but the word perfect has a limited meaning.

The average bareback rider of civilization is far from perfect. He pulls on his horse's mouth for dear life. If he lets go the bridle or halter rope he is gone. Look at Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair." Her riders are the country bumpkins of every clime. Good bareback riding, on the other hand, is a fine performance. Did you ever try it? It is all very well as long as you have a bridle and a good tough mouth to hold on by; but drop your bridle, fold your arms, and see what happens. Now the old-time Indian did just this. He needed both hands for other things. When hunting he must use his bow and arrows; on the war-path still less could he spare a hand. And yet he was a consummate rider, who, despite what we call defects in style, could outdo in his way any rider of to-day. There are many things which only a man in a saddle can undertake; but that does not make him the better rider. What applies to the old-time Indian applied with equal force to the cavalryman of antiquity. Livy aptly divides cavalry into "those with and those without the bridle," meaning regular and irregular horse. The latter guided their horses with voice or legs, or a slender rod.

We have from all sources accurate and consistent accounts of the extraordinary riding of the old savage. Catlin and Parkman and Dodge describe him fully. A piece of buffalo-robe girthed over the pony's back stood in lieu of saddle, if even so much was used; a cord of twisted hair lashed round its lower jaw served for bit and bridle. When hunting, in fact as a rule, the Indian wore naught but a breech-cloth and moccasins—not to lay stress on paint and feathers—and carried a buffalo-skin, which he threw about his shoulders, or let fall from about his waist. He was often a splendid specimen of manly strength and activity. "By —, a Mohawk!" exclaimed Benjamin West, when he first beheld the Apollo Belvedere. A heavy whip, with elk-horn handle and knotted bull's hide lash, hung by a loop to the Indian's wrist. His bow and arrows gave full occupation to his hands; he must guide his pony with legs and word alone, and rely on its intelligence and the training he had given it to do the right thing at the right time. Thus slenderly equipped, this superb rider dash-

ed into the midst of a herd of buffalo, and so quick was the pony and so strong the seat of his master that, despite the stampede of the terror-stricken herd and the charges of the enraged and wounded bulls, few accidents ever occurred. The Indian on horseback has ninety lives, not nine. His riding is not an art, it is nature.

The Indian has never developed a system of training his ponies. Each man teaches his own to suit himself, and except imitation, or a certain trick shown by father to son, and thus perpetuated, there was none but individual knack in his horsemanship. The Plains pony was quickly taught after a rough and ready fashion, more by cruelty than kindness; in a manner, in fact, as different from the system of the Arabs as the fine shape of the Barb differs from the rugged outline of the bronco. All horses are more intelligent than man supposes; those most with men, or on which man most depends, most readily respond to training, and the Indian and his pony were every day and all day comrades. Before the Indian could trade for or steal a bit, he always used the jaw rope—or nothing. With the rope in the left hand, he bore against the neck to turn to one side, and gave a pull to turn to the other; or else he shifted his pony's croup by a more or less vigorous kick with either heel. When both his hands were busy he relied entirely upon his legs and the pony's knowledge of the business in hand; but as every Indian digs his heels into his horse's flanks and lashes him with the quirt at every stride, it is hard to see how the pony caught on to his meaning. The more credit to the quadruped.

The feats of the Indian of to-day, such as picking objects off the ground at a gallop, or hanging to one side of his horse, concealed, all but an arm and leg, while he shoots at his enemy from behind the running rampart, were equally performed by his bareback ancestor. The latter was wont to braid his horse's mane into a long loop through which he could thrust his arm to preserve his balance, but he had not the advantage of the cantle to hold to by his leg. The old bareback rider has now disappeared; it needed but a short contact with civilization to show him the manifest advantages of bit and saddle.

It is to be regretted that we can make no satisfactory comparison between the





A WHITE TRAPPER.

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THE ENGRAVER'S



bareback rider of ancient times and our own Indian of the past generation. There are many men yet living to testify to the skill and strength of the Indian horseman; and Catlin has left us numerous pictures of the savage. But of the ancient rider we have in monumental and ceramic art few except very crude pictorial delineations, and in books yet fewer written ones, and it is not easy to reproduce him. One of the most precious relics of the past is a bronze statuette dug up at Herculaneum in 1751, and thought to be a copy of the equestrian statue known to have been made of Alexander the Great by Lysippus, after the battle of the Granicus, when statues of all the brave who fell in this initial victory were made by the famous sculptor. If it is truly a copy of Lysippus's work, we can judge from it how the Macedonians managed their horses in a hand to hand conflict. The king is shown sitting on a blanket firmly held in place by a breast strap and girth; without dropping the reins from his bridle hand he grasps this substitute for a saddle at the withers, and turning fully half-way to the right and looking backward, gives a swinging cut with his sword to the rear, covering as big an arc of the circle as the best swordsman who ever sat in a saddle. The statue is full of life and natural to a degree. If not Lysippus's work, it is that of a consummate artist. The position shows great freedom of movement on the horse, and a seat strong and elastic. That the Macedonians kept their heels well away from the horses' flanks, or rather that they did not rely on their heels to cling to him, is shown by their commonly wearing spurs, a thing the Indian usually avoids; and the same habit shows clearly in this piece of art.

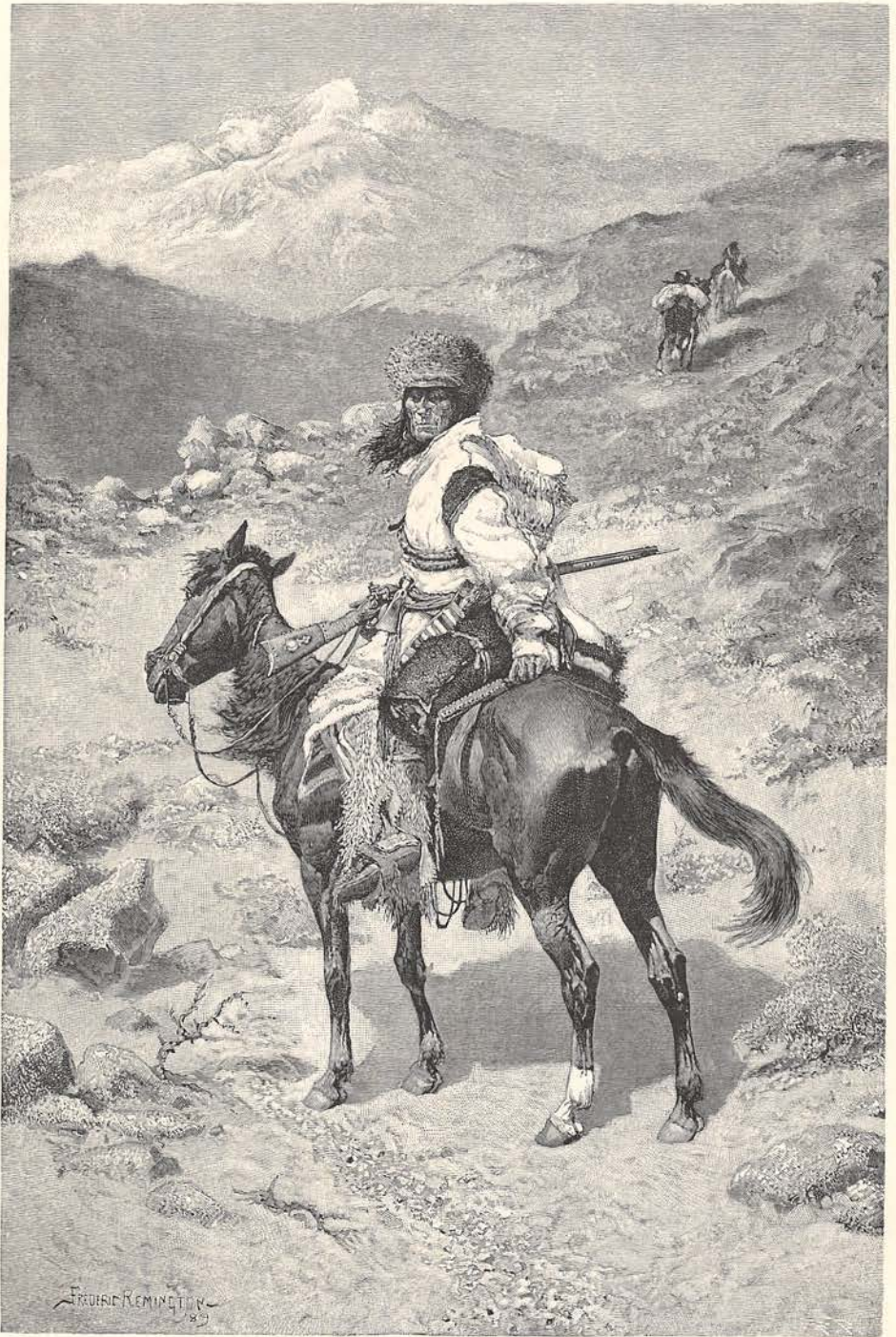
When riding merely and not fighting, the Greek sat on his breech in a natural position, took a firm hold with his thighs, but let his legs from the knee down hang free. His attitude, as shown in the Panathenaic procession on the frieze of the Parthenon, was singularly graceful in style; and that it was the common one is to be seen from Xenophon's rules for keeping the seat. He managed the reins with light and easy hands. The Indian, on the contrary, was as singularly awkward and ungainly. He sat on his crotch, leaned forward, with the thigh not far from perpendicular, and the leg thrust

back at almost a right angle. This he could do with the Plains pony, whose barrel was far from as well rounded as that of the Thessalian chunk; and he got a goodly part of his grip from his calf and heel. The contrast between the statue of Alexander, or one of the Parthenon riders, and any one of Catlin's pictures is striking. But though the old-time Indian was the equal—probably the superior—as a mere rider, of the Greek, it is the latter whom we must select as model if we wish to preserve any semblance of beauty in equestrianism.

It is no wonder that the Indian rode well. Before he could walk or talk or remember, the lad had been tied to a horse, and no Indian can recollect the time when he could not ride anything and everything which came along. The boys from twelve years up do most of the herding, and in this occupation they become familiar with every pony in the tribe. It is probable that the lads have roped and mounted in succession every one intrusted to their care, and have learned its individual qualities, while gaining in general horsemanship.

Even to-day the Indian always races bareback. His saddle weighs too much, and he himself does not train down like our jockeys, so that he strips off all he can. He is keenly fond of horse-racing, and is up to all the tricks of gambling or jockeying. He can give long odds to the best race-track shark. His pony will, of course, beat a thorough-bred at short distances; any pony can. At a mile or two miles the tables are turned. While wonderfully agile and with great endurance, the Indian lacks the strength of our athletes; and in boxing or wrestling, even after a course of instruction, would be no match for an average American. But he can perform equestrian feats which strike us as wonderful enough. It is a point of honor with him, as it was with the ancients, not to leave his dead or wounded in the hands of the enemy, liable to butchery or deprived of the rites of burial; and he will pick up a warrior from the ground without dismounting, almost without slacking speed, throw him across his pony, and gallop off. This requires much practice. Sometimes two men act together in picking up the man, but one is quite able to accomplish it. A buck represents the dead or wounded man. He lies perfectly still and limp if the former, or aids





AN INDIAN TRAPPER.



as far as is consistent with his hurt if the latter. Perhaps this is the best of the numerous feats the Indian can exhibit.

The Indians would be capable of making a superb irregular cavalry were it not for the divided authority from which all tribes suffer. There is no central power, no influence to hold the individuals to anything like what we call duty. Yet they have a certain organization, and in battle are able to execute a number of manœuvres, all, however, weakened by the lack of the one controlling hand. Nor can the Indian be kept in the ranks. In order to claim a scalp, the warrior must give the dead man the *coup*. This was in olden times a stab with a weapon, but Indians now have *coup* sticks. Whoever first strikes the victim the *coup* can rightfully claim the scalp; and no authority can keep an Indian in the ranks when there is a scalp at stake.

The Indians of to-day show a certain similarity in their style of riding to those of the last generation, so far as the constant use of the whip and heels is concerned, but the saddle has completely changed their seat. The different tribes differ as greatly among themselves. All Indians ride well. Living in the saddle, breaking wild ponies and using half-trained ones at all times, they cannot help being expert horsemen; but most Indians ride in so ungainly a manner as to be hard to describe to one who has not seen them.

The first point of difference between them and the civilized rider which is apt to be brought home to a tenderfoot turns on the fact that the Indian always mounts from the off side. This was the habit also of remote antiquity, perhaps arising from the same cause, that the lance or other weapon was naturally held in the right hand, and could not readily be thrown over the animal without fright or injury. The Greeks had a small loop on the shank of the lance, into which they thrust their right foot, and this aided them greatly in mounting. But the dangling sword of the mediæval cavalry soldier obliged him to mount on the near side, and as he is the pattern from which we moderns have been cast, the habit has survived. The white man who attempts to mount an Indian pony in our fashion is very apt to get a nasty spill before he has reached his back, for at the unusual attempt the half-trained beast will be apt

to fly the track with a quickness which the ordinary "American" horse could in no wise rival.

The old-time Sioux was one of the earliest of the saddle-riding Indians. He was to be met with on the Northern Plains some forty years ago. He managed his pony with a stick or the hereditary jaw rope, and this, when not in use, he was wont to let trail. Curiously, a pony used to a rope thus trailing will never blunder on it. His home-made saddle was a wooden, or sometimes elk-horn, framework, with side pieces well apart, and held to the arches by shrinking rawhide upon them. The pommel and cantle were very much alike, and both rose perpendicularly from the arch of the tree to a height of sometimes eighteen inches. The bent wood stirrups were lashed in straps cut from rawhide, slung loosely on the side pieces, and working back and forth into all conceivable positions. Such trifles the Sioux never heeded. His seat was not so easily disturbed as a city swell's by one hole difference in his leathers. His seat was peculiar. His leg from crotch to knee gripped in an almost perpendicular position; from the knee down it was thrown sharply back, so that his weight was sustained solely on the crotch and the muscles of the thighs. As a consequence of this seat, he pounded in his saddle like a fresh recruit, leaned over his horse like a modern track jockey at a hand-gallop, sticking his heels meanwhile into his flanks for a hold. How he could thus ride and escape injury from the pommel is a mystery. But though smashing to atoms all the maxims of equitation ancient or modern, the old-time Sioux was a good rider, and his seat was strong and effective. He tricked up his pony's mane and tail and forelock with feathers, beads, or scraps of gaudy cloth, and often painted him all over with colored clay. In his fashion he was as much of a dude as if he had worn a three-inch collar and a big-headed cane, and was a singularly picturesque if ungainly horseman.

Some of the largest cities on the American continent—St. Louis, as an instance—may be said to have been built from the profits of the fur trade. The first man who discovered the immense extent to which the peltry traffic could be carried was a rover, who most likely hailed from Kentucky or Missouri, was of





THE TRAVAUX PONY.



French or Scotch-Irish descent, and perchance came from the blood which crossed the Alleghanies in the footsteps of Daniel Boone, intent on adventure or flying from civilization. The white trapper was as averse to association with his fellow-man as the hardiest of the old pioneers. In fact he often fled the settlements for good and sufficient cause. He has now all but died out, with the buffalo, though a generation ago he was a common enough character in the territories north of Colorado. His sons have turned cow-punchers.

This famous hunter was a character more practical than poetic, though he has been made the subject of many fine phrases and the hero of many exaggerated situations. His hair and beard floated long and loose from under his coyote cap, and he had lived so continuously with the Indians that he had largely adopted their dress and their manners, could if need be live on the same chuck, and always had one or more squaws. He was apt to carry a trade gun; perhaps a good one, perhaps an old Brown Bess cut down. At his side was slung an enormous powder-horn, for in the old days he could not so readily replenish his supply, far from civilization as he was wont to be. He rode a Mexican saddle, for which he had traded skins—or maybe stolen—and from which he had cut every strip of superfluous leather, as the Indian does to-day. He rode the same pony as his Indian competitor in the trade, but with a seat adapted to a saddle rather than a pad, and still retaining a flavor of the settlements despite his divorce from their ways. In fact a white man on the Plains can to-day be told from an Indian as far as he can be seen by his style of riding, and it was no doubt always so. Nor had this trapper lost his pale-face instincts so entirely as to indulge in the Indian's usual atrocious cruelty to his horse.

The Indians were not long in finding out that peltries were a ready means of getting the guns and calico and fire-water of the white man, and the white trapper was not long alone in the business. The Indian trapper whom our artist has depicted may be a Cree, or perhaps a Black-foot, whom one was apt to run across in the Selkirk Mountains or elsewhere on the plains of the British Territory, or well up north in the Rockies, toward the outbreak of the civil war. He was tributary

to the Hudson Bay Company, whose badge he wore in his blanket coat of English manufacture, which he had got in trade. Wherever you met this coat, you might place its wearer. He had bear-skin leggings, with surface cleverly seared into ornamental patterns, and for the rest the usual Indian outfit. He rode a pony which had nothing to distinguish him from the Plains pony, except that in winter his coat grew to so remarkable a length as almost to conceal the identity of the animal. Unless you saw it in motion, you might take it for a huge species of bear with a tail.

This trapper rode a pad, which was not unlike an air-cushion, cinched in place and provided with a pair of very short stirrups hung exactly from the middle. This dragged his heels to the rear, in the fashion of the old-time Sioux, and gave him a very awkward seat. By just what process, from a bareback seat, the fellow managed to drift into this one, which is quite peculiar to himself, it is hard to guess. The trapper would sit all over his horse, weaving from side to side, and shifting his pad at every movement. His pony's back was always sore. His pad lining soon got hard with sweat and galled the skin, and the last thing which would ever occur to him would be to take steps to relieve his patient comrade's suffering. He never attempted to change his pad lining or cinch it more carefully. On went the pad, up jumped the trapper; and why shouldn't the pony buck, as he invariably did? Sore backs are as much at the root of the bucking habit as the half-and-half breaking of the pony.

This matter of sore backs furnishes a curious study. In every Southern country outside the United States, and among all wild or semi-civilized nations which are not peculiar horse-lovers, no heed whatever is paid to saddle or pack galls. The condition of the donkeys in the East, in Africa, or in Spain and Italy, is as lamentable as it is short-sighted. It never enters the minds of the owners of these patient brutes that a sore back is a commercial loss; nor do they couple the idea of cruelty with dumb creatures at all. It is not until you reach Teutonic nations that both these ideas are extended so as to reduce the discomfort of animals to a minimum. An Indian is perhaps more unspeakably cruel to his pony than any other person. He never wears spurs, not even





MODERN COMANCHE.

as a matter of vanity, for spurs would prevent his pounding his pony with his heels at every stride, as is his wont; but he will stick his knife into him to make him gallop faster, and an Apache will give

his pony a dig with it from sheer malice when he dismounts.

There is no horse superior to the bronco for endurance; few are his equals. He came by it naturally from the Spanish



stock of Moorish descent, the individuals of which race, abandoned in the sixteenth century, were his immediate ancestors; and his hardy life has, by survival of the fittest, increased this endurance tenfold. He is not handsome. His middle piece is distended by grass food; it is loosely joined to his quarters, and his hip is very short. He has a hammer head and the pronounced ewe neck which all plains or steppes horses seem to acquire. His legs are naturally perfect; but they finally give way at the knees from sharp stopping with a gag bit, for an Indian will turn on a ten-cent piece. One form of racing is to place two long parallel strips of buffalo hide on the ground at an interval of but a few feet, and, starting from a distance, to ride up to these strips, cross the first, turn between the two, and gallop back to the starting-point. Another is to ride up to a log hung horizontally and just high enough to allow the pony to get under, but not the rider, touch it, and return. If the pony is stopped too soon, the Indian loses time in touching the log; if too late, he gets scraped off. The sudden jerking of the pony on its haunches is apt both to start curbs and break his knees.

The toughness and strength of the pony can scarcely be exaggerated. He will live through a winter that will kill the hardest cattle. He worries through the long months when the snow has covered up the bunch-grass on a diet of cotton-wood boughs, which the Indian cuts down for him; and in the spring it takes but a few weeks for him to scour out into splendid condition. He can go unheard-of distances. Colonel R. I. Dodge records an instance coming under his observation where a pony carried the mail three hundred miles in three consecutive nights, and back over the same road the next week, and kept this up for six months without loss of condition. He can carry any weight. Mr. Parkman speaks of a chief, known as Le Cochon, on account of his three hundred pounds' avoirdupois, who nevertheless rode his ponies as bravely as a man of half the bulk. He as often carries two people as one. There is simply no end to this wonderful product of the prairies. He works many years. So long as he will fat up in the spring, his age is immaterial.

The absence of crest in the pony suggests the curious query of what has become of the proud arching neck of his an-

cestor the Barb. There are two ways of accounting for this. The Indian's gag bit, invariably applied with a jerk, throws up the pony's head instead of bringing it down, as the slow and light application of the school curb will do, and this tends to develop the ewe-neck. Or a more sufficient reason may be found in the fact that the starvation which the pony annually undergoes in the winter months tends to deplete him of every superfluous ounce of flesh. The crest in the horse is mostly meat, and its annual depletion has finally brought down the pony's neck nearer to the outline of the skeleton. It was with much ado that the pony held on to life during the winter; he could not find enough food to flesh up a merely ornamental appendage like a crest. The Moors and Arabs prize the beauty of the high arched neck, and breed for it, and their steeds are well fed. The Indian cares for his pony only for what he can do for him, and once lost, the crest would not be apt to be regained, for few Indians have any conception of breeding. The bronco's mean crest is distressing, but it is in inverse ratio to his endurance and usefulness. Well fed and cared for, he will regain his crest to a marked extent.

As the patient ass to the follower of the Prophet, so is the travaux (or traîneaux) pony to the Indian. It is hard to say which bears the most load according to his capacity, the donkey or the pony. Either earns what he gets with fourfold more right than his master. The burdens the ass bears in the Orient break him down to the extent of forgetting how to kick. Fancy driving even an overworked Kentucky mule by the tail, as they do the donkey in many parts of the East, and guiding him by a tweak of that appendage, close to his treacherous heels! The travaux pony furnishes the sole means of transportation of the Indian camp, except sometimes a dog hitched to a diminutive traîneau, and, weight for weight, drags on his tepee poles more than the best mule in Uncle Sam's service does on an army wagon. When camp is broken, the squaws strip the tent poles of their buffalo-skin coverings, and it is these poles which furnish the wheels of the Indian vehicle.

The Blackfoot makes the neatest trappings for the travaux ponies and pack-saddles. The pony is fitted with a huge leather bag, heavily fringed, and gaudy





AN APACHE INDIAN.



with red and blue flannel strips and beads of many colors. Over this goes the pack-saddle, which is not very dissimilar to the riding saddle, and has perpendicular pommel and cantle; and in the pommel is a notch to receive one end of the tepee poles, which are sometimes bound together two or three on each side, and trailing past either flank of the pony, are held in place by two pieces of wood lashed to the poles just behind his tail. In the socket so made rides the *parflèche*, a sort of rawhide trunk, and this receives the camp utensils, plunder, children, sometimes an old man or woman, puppies, and all the other camp *impedimenta*; while a squaw rides behind the pack-saddle on the pony, indifferently astride or sidewise with her feet on the poles, and perhaps a youngster bestrides its neck. Thus laden, the wonderful little beast, which is rarely up to fourteen hands, plods along all day, covering unheard-of distances, and living on bunch-grass, with a mouthful of water now and again.

There are apt to be several ponies to carry the plunder of the occupants of one tepee, and often one of them is loaded down with the rougher stuff, while a second may be decked with the finery, and carry only one squaw; particularly if she happens to be a new purchase and a favorite of the chief. A squaw is usually about as good a horseman as her buck, and rides his saddle or bareback with as much ease as a city woman rocks in her chair. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find women in the fighting ranks, and doing a man's full duty.

The Comanche of the Fort Sill region is a good type of the Indian of to-day. He is the most expert horse-stealer on the Plains if we can credit the Indians themselves, who yield to him the palm as a sneak-thief—with them a title of honor rather than of reproach. There is no boldness or dash in his method, but he is all the more dangerous. He eats dog and horse flesh—as all Indians do more or less—and is by no means above a diet of skunk. Indeed, anything is chuck to the Indian, and while he has his *bonne bouche*, it is, as a rule, quantity and not quality he seeks. The Comanche is fond of gay clothes, and has a trick of wrapping a sheet around his body, doubling in the ends, and letting the rest fall about his legs. This gives him the look of wearing the skirts or leg-gear of the Oriental. He

uses a Texas cow-boy's tree, a wooden stirrup, into which he thrusts his foot as far as a fox-hunter, and leathers even longer than the cow-boy's, perhaps the longest used by any rider. He is the only Indian who thus out-herods Herod. Between him and his saddle he packs all his extra blankets and most of his other plunder, so that he is sometimes perched high above his mount. For bridle and bit he uses whatever he can beg, borrow, or steal.

In one particular the Comanche is noteworthy. He knows more about a horse and horse-breeding than any other Indian. He is particularly wedded to and apt to ride a pinto ("painted" or piebald) horse, and never keeps any but a pinto stallion. He chooses his ponies well, and shows more good sense in breeding than one would give him credit for. The corollary to this is that the Comanche is far less cruel to his beasts, and though he begins to use them as yearlings, the ponies often last through many years. The Comanche is capable of making as fine cavalry as exists if subjected to discipline and carefully drilled.

The Apache of the present day is just the reverse. His habitat is the Sierra Madre in Arizona. He is not born and bred with horses, he knows little about them, and looks upon ponies as intended quite as much for food as for transportation or the war-path. He outdoes the Frenchman in hippophagy, for he will eat all his ponies during the winter, and rely upon stealing fresh ones in the spring; and he and the Cheyenne are the most dashing of the horse-thieves. He raids down in Chihuahua where the vaqueros raise stock for the Mexican army, and often drives off large numbers. When pursued, the Apache takes to the mountains, and is sometimes compelled to abandon his herd. He steals his saddles in Mexico; wears spurs when he can get them to drive on his pony, and if these do not suffice to make him go his gait, will goad him with a knife. The Apache is hideously cruel. In the mountains, where the sharp, flinty stones soon wear down the pony's unshod feet, this Indian will shrink rawhide over the hoofs in lieu of shoes, and this resists extremely well the attrition of the mountain paths. Arrian tells us that the Macedonians, under Alexander, did the same to their cavalry horses in the Caucasus, and no doubt the habit was much older than Alexander.