

CAMPING OUTFITS AND EQUIPMENT.*

BY ALFRED BALCH.



OW my ambition yearned when I was a boy to have a buckskin hunting shirt and leggings, a long rifle, a coon or fox skin cap, a bowie knife and an Indian pipe! Thus armed and equipped I thought I could distinguish myself among the hunters of the Far West, even as my favorite heroes, drawn by Captain Mayne Reid, were in the habit of doing. In after life I learned to look upon buckskin in any shape, save that of mocassins when in the snow, with unfeigned disgust.

An outfit for camping on the plains—that is, camping where the transportation is done with horses or mules—differs somewhat from that which is wanted for canoe work. Generally speaking, I mean to talk in this article of the West and Southwest, and as the climate is somewhat milder than that which we find in the Northern woods, the dress is modified accordingly. To begin at the bottom, I personally like heavy, laced shoes for any sort of work in the open. They are, as a rule, more comfortable, and you are less likely to get sore feet. Still, if one likes boots, there is no earthly reason why he should not wear them. The modification of the boot which is slit over the instep and at the outside of the calf, lacing up at both points, would be, I should imagine, very good. This was first invented in England, and was extensively used in the English army during the Egyptian campaign against Arabi Bey. I have never tried them myself, but I like their looks, for they seem sensible and workmanlike. In default of boots, leggings or riding trousers must be used. The best leggings I ever had were made of a pair of common top boots. I cut the tops off at the ankle, would pull them up over my trousers, and then lace my shoes. Then, of course, the leggings were worked down until they rested on the shoes. Of the many styles of leggings that are made,

the best are those that lace up on the leg. Next in order I rank those that buckle, next those that button, and last the various styles of springs. A very good sort of legging is made of a strip of blanket or heavy cotton, wide enough to extend from above the knee to the foot and long enough to wrap two and a half or three times around the leg. These are fastened by two straps, each attached in the centre to a small ring, or simply sewn together at the right angle. One strap goes around the leg above the knee and the other below it. Each buckles on the outside of the leg. In putting the straps on, the ring or point where they are sewn together is placed back of the knee joint. These leggings are an absolute protection against snakes, for, as they hang more or less loosely, these most disagreeable reptiles cannot strike their fangs through the folds. In the place of the straps two pieces of whipcord, long enough to tie around the leg easily, may be used. These should be knotted together where they rest back of the knee.

If you wear either boots or leggings see that they do not come up higher than one inch and a half below the knee. In the first place they can be of no practical use higher than that, and in the second the less there is between the knee and the saddle the firmer the grip. When the knee is resting against an edge of the boot, or when there is between it and the saddle the creased leather of the boot leg, you are very apt to chafe the knee, particularly if you have a restive horse. In any event you should not have less than two pairs of boots or shoes. Six pairs of heavy socks which fit well are enough for the plains. Four pairs of drawers are needed. In winter they should be of canton flannel and in summer of strong cotton. In each case they must be reinforced in the crotch. Four undershirts, with long sleeves, heavy in winter and medium in summer, are enough. Over these you may wear flannel shirts with deep sailor collars. In winter you will find that turning these collars up will add greatly to your comfort. The winter shirts must also have an extra thickness of flannel on the back,

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coming down as low as the waist. Few people think of the fact that with the overlapping coats and the double-breasted shirts there is far more clothing over the chest than there is at the back. Yet the small of the back needs protection quite as much as the chest. I have seen men give out from exposure a number of times, and I have noticed that when they had been on horseback they broke down from pains in the back.

Nothing is better for the clothes than well-shrunken tweed in winter and heavy brown jean in summer. The trousers should be made to fit neatly. They do not need to be skin tight, but at the same time they should fit. Of course, you will have them double seated. Do not commit the folly of having this done with wash leather, for, of all uncomfortable things, that is the worst. The extra piece of cloth should come down well on the legs, terminating a little below the knee. What you want is to have the whole "grip" and seat of the legs, reinforced. If you wear boots you can have the legs of the trousers split up on the outside as high as the knee, so that they can be wrapped around the leg when the boot is put on. The arrangements, for the belt I have already described in the May number of *OUTING*. The coat should be of a sack shape, rather short, and with the pockets mentioned in a former article.

The overcoat for horseback work does not differ materially from that used in canoes or when snow shoeing, except that it is somewhat longer, coming well down to the centre of the calf, and the skirts are somewhat larger. They are, of course, split up behind as high as the seat. The object of the wide skirts is to have the legs covered when you are in the saddle, and if the coat be made properly you will find this is done. The coat should have an extra cape, long enough to come down to the waist. The collar should be high enough, when turned up, to protect the ears and the back of the head. No matter how many buttons you have, nor how large they may be, wear a sash around the waist. The drag on the lower button when you are in the saddle will break any fastening. In summer time you do not need a heavy coat, although a light one is very handy. The best for this season and the early fall are the blanket-lined brown jeans. In the far Southwest and in Mexico you should have a *poncho* or *ruana*. This is simply a square

of cloth with a slit in the centre through which you put your head. The best are made double, a light but closely woven cloth outside, lined with some finer kind. The best cloth for the lining is that closely woven red cloth used to line officers' cloaks. If you get it, however, take the precaution of having it dyed some other color than red, or you may find yourself unpleasantly conspicuous in a cattle country. A *poncho* may be of any size you like, but the best for general work is five feet on an edge! or five feet square. The slit through which the head goes must be faced with smooth cloth, closely sewn, so that there are no edges to cut or chafe the skin.

A most important part of the outfit for horseback work is the rubber *poncho*. This is six feet on the edge, and is made in this country as perfectly as anywhere in the world. Get the very best one you can buy; it is money well spent. For hats the felt sombrero is the best. It is well to carry some sort of a scarf or large handkerchief with which to tie the flaps of the hat down. A fez or some other skull cap is a comfort in camp. Gloves are chosen with reference to the season. In summer good buckskin gauntlets will serve your turn, while in winter the best fur that you can afford will not be out of place. For handkerchiefs, toilet articles and other small things I must refer you to the article in the May number of this magazine. There is a change, however, in the case in which your wardrobe is carried. We give up the canvas bag with the canoe or toboggan and use the canvas *baoul*.

The Spanish-American *baoul* or trunk is the evolution, by a people who have carried everything on pack animals for centuries, of the very best packing case for rough work. It is almost exactly like what is called a "bullock trunk" in India. It consists of two thin pieces of tough wood about nineteen inches wide and fifty-seven inches long. These are about half an inch thick. They are bent at right angles one-third of the distance from each end. One is set at right angles in the other, the result being a loosely outlined box without a top. A strip of rawhide is then taken, twenty inches wide and long enough to turn over about two inches at each end of one of the strip. This is turned and laced down, holes being made in the wood for the rawhide laces. Two other pieces of hide, twenty

inches square, are placed on the sides turned over the ends and laced down as before. The result is a box 20x20 inches, open at the top and covered with rawhide. A case of rawhide without the wood is then made, large enough to go over the box already finished, and the *baoul* is complete. It is lashed together with a long rope. As you will see at once, the "telescope valises," which are so popular, were copied from these Spanish-American trunks. The *baoul* is the most perfect thing for rough work that has ever been invented. It is absolutely indestructible except by fire, it is easily opened and it packs on the animals perfectly. While we cannot easily get rawhide in a city like New York, we can have trunks made of canvas which will serve very well. The inner half can be lined with wood, or a tin bottom with sides coming up ten inches may be made. This is a good thing when the trunk is allowed, as it sometimes must be, to stand in wet grass or puddles of water. The shallow tin box must be made first, and the edges strengthened with a stout iron wire run around them. Then the whole thing must be given two coats of paint. The canvas lower case should be made of heavy stuff, painted inside and out at least twice. The upper case is also painted. It is well to have your name upon each. The cases are roped up.

When these cases are packed they should not weigh more than one hundred and twenty-five pounds apiece if you are using pack animals, and care must be taken to balance them by placing the same weight in each. And here I may point out that when you are camping with a wagon or pack animals there is no necessity of limiting yourself in the number of things carried, as you must necessarily when in a canoe. The pajamas of Turkish toweling, for example, should be taken, and you can indulge in a liking for plenty of clothes more innocently and without such a weariness to the flesh. A great convenience when you are on the plains is a hair mattress to sleep upon. This should be four inches longer than your height, eighteen inches wide and two and a half or three inches thick. It must be sewn through every three inches, so that when it is finished it looks something like a succession of small rolls of hair fastened together. The case is made of stout ticking. On the under side a rubber blanket should be loosely tacked on,

the mattress being laid on it with one edge touching the edge of the blanket. This will leave a flap on the other side wide enough to more than cover the mattress when it is pulled over. At the upper end of the mattress and extending down about eighteen inches from the top, there must be a bag of some sort sewn to the mattress. Into this during the day you put your toilet case, your pajamas and towels. To pack the mattress, stow the things in the bag, fold up your blankets and place them on top of the mattress, extending nearly to the foot. Turn the rubber flap over and begin to roll the thing up from the top or bag end. When rolled, rope it securely. It forms a bundle which can be easily stowed in a wagon, which will keep dry and which will be the source of a great deal of comfort. The object of sewing or quilting it across is to make it roll easily. This mattress roll, if you are using pack animals, is carried between the packs. In winter it is well to increase your bed clothes by the addition of a good buffalo robe.

Almost any kind of wagon will do for work on the plains, providing always that it be strong. It is well, however, to look at the water barrels and see that they are in good order, and to be sure that the wagon box is well stocked. If anything is lost on the plains you cannot go to a shop to replace it. Take the trouble to stow your wagon carefully, or to see that this is done. No better rule can be followed in this regard than "a place for everything and everything in its place." Those things which you want first must go into the wagon last, in order that you get at them easily.

The equipage for your horse should be the subject of a good deal of care. I do not propose to discuss the merits of saddles here, because the average man looks on a saddle in somewhat the same way he does on a woman; he admires one more than another for no earthly reason except that he does admire it. You may talk for a week without affecting his views. Personally speaking, I like a Whitman or a McClellan better than I do, a Mexican, simply because I have no use for the horn. While I can throw a lasso I cannot catch anything with it more than once in five times, and as a horn is of no use to anyone unless he swings a rope, I do not care for it. But I grant at once the beauty of the deep, straight

Mexican seat, and the Whitman gives it to me. I have seen one case of rupture caused by the Mexican horn. Get, then, any kind of saddle tree you please, but have it covered and rigged properly. There is no girth on earth equal to the Mexican hair sinch.

It is broad enough to hold the saddle firmly; it has enough elasticity to give when the horse needs it, and with the sinch strap, which is far better than any buckle, it will hold as long as anything will. It should be not less than three and a half inches wide—four is better—and the rings should be well covered with leather. For mountain work it is well to put the South American breeching on. This is a wide band hung by a cross strap which goes over the horse's hips about eight inches from the tail, and passes through the crupper. The ends buckle into the rings on the saddle, to which the sinch straps are fastened. These buckled ends should be long, bringing the buckles well back of the legs. You can, if you like, have a breast band hung by a strap over the withers and passing around the breast. This is also secured to the sinch strap ring. This harness is of the greatest possible value in a mountainous country, for it relieves your horse more than any arrangement you can have. For convenience, have the strap over the withers hook into the breast band on the left or saddling side. The crupper should be strong and should fasten to a bar bent over and securely screwed to each side of the tree, behind the cantle. When you unsaddle at night examine the crupper, and if it has caked with dirt wash it thoroughly until it is smooth once more. Then grease it. Otherwise your horse will have a sore tail.

The question of saddle bags must be left to the individual taste of the owner, and it must be decided by the sort of expedition you are on. There is a temptation always existing to load your horse up with more things than you absolutely need with you, which must be guarded against, and saddle bags are handy things to put small articles in. This applies with equal force to the *cantinas*, although as a matter of convenience these are more useful than the saddle bags, as you can get at them easier. If you have them or the bags, get them made of good, honest leather and let the duck abominations, with their patent leather covers, severely alone. You will need a *poncho* case.

This is a roll of leather about thirty inches long and wide enough to hold the cloth and rubber *ponchos*, or the rubber alone. It straps up and is tied in front of the pommel resting upon the wings of the saddle tree. Some people carry a field glass with them. This should go into a leather case on the left side of the saddle, front of the leg. It is necessary to have a canteen, which should be large and well corked. The only canteen which has been supplied so far is made of tin and is about as poor a thing as one can well imagine. It should be covered with blanket, closely sewn on, and should be slung by two strong straps to rings fastened to the saddle. The cork must be secured by a cord. If you wear the Mexican riding trousers you will not need sweat leathers on the stirrup straps. If not, they are useful. The stirrup straps should be laced together and not buckled. The wooden stirrups must be covered with stirrup leathers long enough to prevent any hooked branch catching in the stirrup. It is astonishing what a protection against cold feet these stirrup leathers are.

There is possibly no problem so hard to solve in the saddle as that of the best way to carry the gun or rifle. Every known method has its disadvantages. The most common style is placing the weapon in a gun "well" or "boot," which is secured to the saddle on the right side. With this arrangement the gun passes under the right leg, where it is a constant source of annoyance and discomfort. The method adopted in the army with the short carbines, that of slinging the arm to a hook on the right side of the saddle behind the leg, is in some respects good, but the length of a rifle makes it impossible to adopt it. A style which is very good where there is no timber is to have a pad fixed behind the pommel upon which the rifle can lie, held in place with the hand, but this becomes a nuisance in time. Probably the well is the best plan, and at any rate it is the one most generally adopted. If you carry a carbine—and unless you are on a hunting expedition pure and simple one will probably serve your turn—you can put it in a canvas or leather case hung behind the right leg. Let it swing free. A method which I have seen, but never tried; consists of a band of leather about an inch and a half wide and fifteen inches long. At one end a slit is cut which goes

over the horn. Take the rifle, pass the strip of leather around it below the trigger guard and bring the leather back. Then cut another slit so that this end can be passed over the horn. There should be a projecting end to catch hold of about four inches long. With this rifle sling the weapon lies down along the front of the leg. I have seen men who were loud in their admiration of this system and certainly it appeared to work well. It seems to me, however, that with repeating rifles the weight of a dozen cartridges in the tube constantly jogging down against the spiral spring would injure that detestable but necessary part of the mechanism. Be this as it may, the gun sling is one method of carrying the rifle, and as such must be described.

In choosing the bit, regard must be had to one's style of riding. If a man is accustomed to pulling at the reins as though he were hauling in the main sheet, he must leave the Mexican bit alone. If he has a light hand, the Mexican is the best bit in the world. I have heard it claimed that the copper rollers upon the steel tongue bar keep the mouth from getting sore by generating a current of electricity. Whether this be so I do not know, but I do know that sore mouth is very rarely found among horses on the plains. It is important when using this bit to keep the curb chain tight. No better headstall can be found than a light cord which passes over the head behind the ears. For reins I prefer cord—a small signal halliard line will make a capital bridle—because it is pleasanter to handle when wet. The ends of the reins should be spliced together and continued in a single piece of cord about three feet long, which ends in the quirt, a piece of rawhide or heavy leather about ten inches in length. This forms the whip. No spurs in the world are better than the Mexican, as they will not, unless most savagely used, cut into the skin.

If men are going upon long expeditions which will occupy months of time, the selection of a horse is a matter of the utmost importance. In fact, no matter how short the trip may be, care in this is never thrown away. The two worst faults a horse can have are rearing and bucking. The former is dangerous, because the animal may fall over backward, in which case the rider runs a chance of being crushed. As for the latter, no man in his senses will ride a bucking horse if

he can help it. It is not that he will be bucked off, for, while it is by no means easy, if he is a good rider he can stay on—sometimes. It is because being bucked hurts so frightfully. It gives one a headache alongside of which all former attacks of the kind are as naught; it hurts the back, and there is a chance of very serious injury being done. Find out, therefore, if possible, whether the horse allotted to you by the dealer is cursed with this trick, and if he is refuse him.

But if you are forced into taking him, or if you find out the habit after you have started, fix him so that he cannot jar your spine into your skull. No horse can buck unless he can get his head down between his fore legs. Take a stout string, a piece of whipcord or bass fishing line, and push the bight up under the upper lip until it rests upon the gums. Bring the ends down and knot them well up under the jaw, and then carry them up and tie them rather tightly over the neck near the head. The working of this device, as the patents have it, is simple in the extreme. When a horse puts his head down between his legs he widens the angle between it and the neck, at which it is usually carried, and consequently lengthens the base or line subtending that angle. The string which you have put on roughly represents this base. As the string will not stretch, it presses in upon the gums in a manner which is very painful to the horse and which causes him to lift his head again. Result: he does not buck. This plan will work with nineteen horses out of twenty, but the twentieth either has copper-cased gums or he is willing to endure the pain himself for the pleasure of trying to shorten your backbone. Take it all round, it is better to let someone else ride a bucking horse. If you are going on a long trip, teach your horse to come to you when you call. It is easily done by starving him a little and calling him to his food. After he has learned give him a bit of salt, a handful of grain or some little thing whenever you call him to you and you will have no trouble.

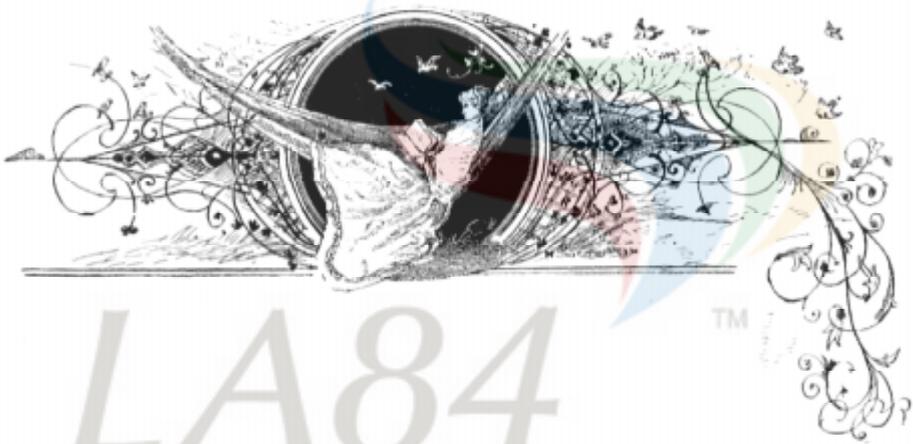
On the plains it is often necessary to stake your horse out at night or to hobble him. The stake pin should be of iron or iron tipped, with a rope thirty feet long. Hobbles are made in an elaborate manner, but they are no better than a piece of small rope about seven feet long. You tie the fore legs together, or one fore and one hind leg. In many parts of the

Southwest the horses are unshod or shod only on the fore feet. It pays to see that they have full sets of shoes before you start. The most serious evil to which the animals are subject is sore back. This can be largely guarded against by washing the backs carefully after the saddles you or pack saddles have been taken off. If, however, you find a lump on the back the only thing to do is to cut the saddle blanket in such a way as to relieve this swelling from the pressure of the saddle. One of the very best things I ever found was to have under the saddle blanket a piece of good carpet, with the pile down. This seems to keep the back in better

order than anything I know of. I suppose the reason is that the pile allows one part of the skin to work independently of the rest. If, in spite of everything, the skin breaks into an open sore, then if possible give up riding the animal. If you must ride keep the place as clean as you can, and rub it morning and evening with grease in which some carbolic acid has been worked. This does not need to be very strong, and the best grease for the purpose is vaseline.

It is useless to give any directions for pack mules, because if you use them you will have your *arrieros*, who know far more about them than any man could write down.

To be continued.



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The fair moonlight was rifling
Across the placid bay,
A boat was slowly drifting
Adown its silvery way.

His arm her form supported—
They drifted with the tide—
And so they sat and courted,
Forgetting all beside.

And as I stood, a-dreaming,
In shadow 'neath the trees,
Watching the boat white gleaming,
Borne on before the breeze,

I thought how often drifting
Along in life we glide,
Forgetful of the hard row back
Against the wind and tide.

ELLA J. JONES.