THE AMBLE.

The amble is a development of the walk into a mode of progress from which a higher rate of speed may be obtained. Practically, it is an accelerated walk; it has the same sequence of foot-impacts, but from their more rapid succession, a hind-foot and a fore-foot are alternately lifted from the ground in advance of its following foot being placed thereon.

This procedure results in throwing the duty of support alternately on one foot and on two feet. A hind-foot and a fore-foot successively furnish the single support; diagonals and laterals alternate in supplying the duplex support.

Series 24 demonstrates how this movement is consummated.

In 1 the support devolves on • △, with—as in the walk—〇 △ suspended between them. In 3 • is lifted in advance of 〇 being landed, which is, however, on the ground in 4, where 〇 △ jointly sustain the weight of the body; the bent knee of △ indicates that 〇 will soon have to perform its labours alone, as it is doing in 5; △ soon comes to its assistance, and in 6 the left laterals assume the responsibility which in 1 devolved on the right laterals. One-half of the stride is now completed, and so far all has gone as it should; had the remaining moiety been executed with similar precision, there would have been no fault to find. In Pennsylvania, ambling horses are not so abundant as they are in Kentucky, California, and some other countries; the only horse capable of ambling, and obtainable, was the one here represented, who neglected to use his legs in the orthodox manner during the second half of the stride.

The six consecutive phases used as an illustration of this gait may, however, be accepted as perfectly characteristic of the complete movement, which may be recorded in the diagram as—

![Diagram of the amble](image-url)
This motion is perhaps better scientifically demonstrated in series 26, which represents a complete stride by a first-class ambling horse, photographed at Palo Alto during the summer of 1879. The horse not having been of a suitable colour for the background, the outlines were carefully filled in to give the figure more distinctness, and a dot added to distinguish the right feet from the left. The stride is somewhat more than completed in phase 11. No record of the speed was taken, but it probably was about seven miles an hour.

Series 27 illustrates twenty-four phases of one nearly completed stride of an elephant while progressing at as fast a speed as vigorous persuasion could induce—equivalent to a mile in somewhat less than seven minutes.

The gait resorted to was the amble. In phase 10 the weight of the body devolves on △; 12 demonstrates the assistance rendered by ○; the bend of the knee in 14, which is more pronounced in 15, determines ○ to be practically furnishing exclusive support for a brief period, which function is shared by △ during several following phases. In 21 △ assumes the entire responsibility until 23, when the animal is again fairly on the diagonals.

The diagram of the stride of a horse is equally applicable to one by the elephant.

The walk and the amble are probably the only two gaits used by the elephant in his natural state. Oriental paintings and carvings may not be very trustworthy sources of information, but so far as they have been examined by the author, they corroborate this supposition.

It is very remarkable that, although the amble is the most comfortable to the rider, of all the gaits which are natural to the horse, or to which he has been trained, it is now, in Great Britain, either entirely unknown, or has lapsed into disfavour. It is perhaps more remarkable that many writers on the horse and horsemanship should have confused this delightful, easy motion, with that disagreeable jolting gait, appropriately termed the rack, or, as it is ambiguously called by some horsemen, "the pace."

It would seem plausible that the very earliest riders of the horse would very soon discover the steady and comparatively rapid motion of the amble, just as the North American Indians have, whose acquaintance with the animal does not date back much more than two centuries.

The gait was evidently well known to the ancients. On the walls of Karnak, the great Rameses is represented on his return from the wars with prisoners; he is standing in a chariot drawn by two ambling horses. The phase corresponds with one occurring between 4 and 5, series 23.

Horace, in his "Epistles," as translated by Francis, alluding to a retired citizen who enjoyed comfort, says—

"On horse-back now he ambles at his ease."

Vegetius, in the fourth century, writes of the "ambulatura" being the favourite gait of the wealthy and indolent Romans, and of the care they bestowed on their horses to make them perfect in it.

Illuminated manuscripts of the tenth and later centuries—if they may be considered as reliable evidences—prove
that ambling was constantly practised by the Anglo-Saxons and Normans, especially in the diversions of hunting and hawking. In the Bayeux Tapestry “one” arrives before Duke William on an ambling horse.

We have the testimony of Chaucer that the Canterbury Pilgrims made their journey on amblers. The illuminated manuscript of the “Canterbury Tales,” in the Ellesmere Collection, confirms the poet’s assertions. The “good wyf” is seated, masculine fashion, on an “amblere” in a phase exactly corresponding with 2, series 24; the horses of many others of the company are also represented as practising the same motion, the favourite position more or less resembling that of 3, with △ or △ alone on the ground. The prologue has—

“A good Wyf was ther bisele Bathe... Vpon an amblere eesly sche sat;”

and “The Tale of Sir Thopas,” Fyt I.—

“His steed was al dappul gray
Hit gooth an ambel in the way,
Ful softely and rounde.”

Gower, in “Confessio Amantis,” has—

“On fayre ambulende hors thet set,”

and—

“Thel set him on an ambuling palfray.”

In the “Morte d’Arthur,” translated from the French in the fifteenth century by Sir Thomas Malory, the “softe ambuler” is often alluded to.

In “The regulations and Establishment of the House- hold of Algernon Percy the Fifth Earl of Northumberland. Begun anno 1512” there occurs—

“Item, paltryes for my ladys, to wit, one for my lady, and two for her gentil-women.

“An amblynge horse for his lordship to journey on dayly.

“A proper amblynge little nagg for his lordship when he gaeth on hunting or hawking.”

Polydore Virgil, in the fifteenth-sixteenth century, says English horses “are not given to the trot, but excel in the softer paces of the amble.”

Holinshead, sixteenth century, says, “The Irish hobbie is easie in ambling, and verie swift in running.”

Shakespeare was evidently perfectly familiar with this pleasant mode of progress; he uses it as a metaphor in “As You Like It,” iii. 2, and in “Much Ado about Nothing,” v. 1.

Ben Jonson, also, in “Every Man in his Humor,” metaphorically says, “Out of the old hackney pace, to a fine easy amble.”

Cervantes, in “Don Quixote,” ii. 40, as translated by Skelton, gives an admirable description of this motion: “This horse... ambles in the ayre, without wings, and he that rides upon him may carry a cup full of water in his hand, without spilling a jot; he goes so soft and so easie.”

Gervase Markham, a celebrated authority on horses, writing in 1615, says, “The ambler... is the horse of the old man, the rich man, and the weak man.”

Gibbon, “Roman Empire,” Iviii., speaks of the war-
horse of the knight, until approaching danger, being usually led by an attendant; the knight himself “quietly rode a pad or palfrey of a more easy pace.”

Cowper, in “Retirement,” says—

“To cross his ambling pony day by day,
   Seems at the best but dreaming life away.”

Sir Walter Scott—a most accomplished rider, and thoroughly versed in all the gaits of the horse—scarcely wrote a poem or a romance without alluding to this motion. In “Red Gauntlet,” Letter I., we find: “The black ... ambled as easily with Sam and the portmanteau as with you and your load of law-learning.” And in the same work, Letter XII.: “Better the nag that ambles a’ the day, than him that makes a brat Bale for a mile, and then’s dune wi’ the road.”

The characteristics of the gait are well described in the “Fortunes of Nigel,” v.: “He again turned his mule’s head westwards, and crossed Temple-Bar at that slow and decent amble which at once became his rank, and civic importance.”

Washington Irving in “Bracebridge Hall,” says, “Lady Lillicraft ... rode her sleek ambling pony, whose motion was as easy as a rocking chair.”

Cooper, in “The Last of the Mohicans,” ii., specifically describes the motion as “a pace between a trot and a walk, and at a rate which kept the sure-footed and peculiar animals they [the ladies] rode, at a fast yet easy amble.”

Tennyson, in “The Lady of Shalott,” recognizes the suitability of the gait to—

“An abbot on an ambling pad.”

Macaulay, “History of England,” iv. 25, records the third William as “ambling on a favorite horse named Sorrel” when he met with the accident that cost him his life.

Charles Dickens, in “Barnaby Rudge,” xiv., mentions “the grey mare, who breaking from her sober amble into a gentle trot emulated the pace of Edward Chester’s horse.”

We find in Lord Lytton’s “My Novel,” iv. 11: “The pad ... giving a petulant whisk of her tail, quickened her amble into a short trot.”

Captain Burnaby, in “Horse-back through Asia Minor,” xv., testifies that “the pace of a Rahvan, or ambling horse, is an easy one for the rider.”

The writer has selected these quotations, from a large number which he has accumulated, for the purpose of clearly illustrating the distinguishing features of a most enjoyable method of riding, which is regrettably so little practised at the present time, except in those parts of the world—Spain, Spanish America, California, and Kentucky, for example—where the gait is better known and its advantages more generally appreciated; and he can emphatically endorse the opinions of the authors quoted, especially those of Cervantes and Irving: Travelling in Central America he has slept for hours at a time while riding—like Prior Aymer—“upon a well-fed ambling mule.”
THE AMBLE.

A HALF-STRIDE IN SIX PHASES.
Horse "Clinton."

Length of complete stride: 82 inches (2.05 metres).
Time-intervals: 0.85 second.
Approximate time of complete stride: 3.5 seconds.
THE AMBLE.

CONTINUATION OF PHASES. SERIES 24.

Horse "Clinton."

AN IRREGULAR STRIDE IN ELEVEN PHASES.

Horse "Clinton."

Time-intervals: 0.52 second.

95
ONE STRIDE IN ELEVEN PHASES.

Enlarged from a Photograph on Paper. Outlines filled in.

Horse "Sharon."

Length of stride: 123 inches.

Photographed at Palo Alto, 1879.
THE AMBLE.

ONE STRIDE NEARLY COMPLETED.
The Elephant.

Height of animal: 100 inches (2.50 metres).
458 strides to a mile.

Length of stride: 140 inches (3.50 metres).
Approximate time of stride: 49 second, or a mile in less than 7 minutes.

Time-intervals: 0.96 second.
THE AMBLE.

SOME PHASES SELECTED FROM SERIES 27.

The Elephant.