



Dressage

The collection

By Emmad Zagloul



The aim of the collection of the horses is to:

- Further develop and improve the balance and equilibrium of the horse, which has been more or less displaced by the additional weight of the rider.
- Develop and increase the horse's ability to lower and engage his quarters for the benefit of the lightness and mobility of his forehead.
- Add to the 'ease and carriage' of the horse and to make him more pleasurable to ride.

The best means to obtain these aims are the lateral movements, travers, renvers and, last but not least, shoulder-in as well as half-halts. Collection is, in other words, improved and effected by engaging the hind legs, with the joints bent and supple forward, under the horse's body by a temporary but often repeated action of the seat and legs of the rider, resulting in driving the horse forward towards a more or less stationary or restraining hand, hence allowing just enough impulsion to pass through. Collection is consequently not achieved by shortening of the pace through a resisting action of the hand, but instead by using the seat and legs to engage the hind legs further under the horse's body.

However, the hind legs should not be engaged too far forward under the horse, as they would shorten the base of support too much, and thereby impede the movement. In such a case, the lines of the back would be lengthened and raised in relation to the supporting base of the legs, the impairing of the stability, and then the horse would have difficulty in finding a harmonious and correct balance. On the other hand, a horse with a too long base of support, unable or unwilling to engage his hind legs forward under his body, will never achieve an acceptable collection, characterized by 'ease and carriage' as well as lively impulsion, originated in the activities of quarters.

The position of the head and neck of a horse at the collection places is naturally dependant on the stage of training and in some degree, on his conformation. It should, however, be distinguished by the neck being raised unrestrained, forming a harmonious curve from the withers to the poll, being the highest point, with the head slightly in front vertically. During, the rider applies his aids in order to obtain a momentary and passing collecting effect. As such, the head may become more or less vertical. ■

