
HORSE TAILS

By AYELIEN

Dear Mother,

You would be rather surprised at the temporary new addition in the barn. She is a purebred Arabian filly and it looks like I am going to get some more education!

Nelt called me up recently saying they had called him from Syracuse that Arabian entries were light and would he please fill the classes (as usual in those cases they promised him the moon). He couldn't get away so asked me if I would accompany his niece and help out with the showing. Since I had just about a how-do-you-do acquaintance with any of his horses they decided to bring the one I was to be most busy with here where I could get used to her, and vice versa. Since one of our mares has been fooling us all summer we simply traded horses temporarily hoping his two stallions would be able to say something to our mare that would enlighten us as to when (if ever) would we ever get her bred again.

The filly arrived shortly after the phone call and I will say the next ten days were an experience I never dreamed of. Shally is a very beautiful very gentle, but stubborn and irritable kind of filly. The first few days I half decided I didn't like her at all and under those circumstances decided maybe I could do nothing with her. Then she began to worry me (after all she is quite a valuable animal.) I couldn't turn her out with any of our "butchers" and turning her alone created a problem. She is a fence pacer. She instantly fell in love with our gelding in the next field so picked out about ten feet of fence as close to him as she could get and up and down and up and down she jigged. As I looked out the kitchen window I could see her . . . and her maneuvers are

entirely foreign to any of the Morgans I have. For instance . . . she would trot up and down, then wind her head up in the most peculiar fashion and straightaway she would go at a hard fast trot with her nose elevated very high, in fact higher than her ears! How she could see I can never figure out, and judging from the scratches she got on her shoulder I would assume she hit the fence on occasions. Also, she would occasionally go straight across the middle of the ring at a very fast trot and her terrific hock action and stride always puzzled me . . . as the front end action was so low, so utterly different from the Morgans. When you see all that natural hock action in a horse you of course expect the front action to be equally full of possibilities . . . and she just had none. However her action was beautiful to watch as she seemed to float and point her feet forward with a slight thrust, then a hesitation in midair before completing the stride. I decided that since I could not understand the difference in ways of going I had best just appreciate it . . . so I watched her.

Soon Shally and I became friends of a fashion and she began to respond very well. I had spent a sleepless night or two hearing her "tlot tlot tlot tlot" the fence so decided to keep her in the barn. After schooling her a bit I would brush her, and then take her out in the yard on the lunge for some grass.

One evening just as it got dusk she did a peculiar thing . . . the lunge got wet in the grass and light was not too good. She was peacefully grazing and I was talking to her when all of a sudden she spied that line (I was continually snaking it a bit so she would not get on it). Her warlike inbred history then asserted herself as Shally jumped

on that line and stomped it to death. She never hesitated one bit . . . the minute she spied it she was a'gonna fight it! After she assured herself it was harmless, she continued grazing. If I ever meet a rattlesnake on her she will surely fight it . . . as she is absolutely fearless and bold. Ginger says that is a common trait in Arab mares . . . they were on the desert the chosen warhorse . . . and if that little attempt to savage the lunge line is any indication I wonder . . . perhaps she is right.

Our acquaintance continued and she did well enough at the show . . . I even got to ride the little Arab stud. He is a sweet tempered little horse with none of the self sufficiency of the mare . . . I don't get to ride him often but he is surely a pleasure to handle and be around.

However, I doubt very much if you will find me trading off my Morgans for Arabs. I like both breeds . . . but while the Morgans we have are dead-heads and docile in the barn they appear fiery when I ride; the Arabs appeared quite docile when you ride them but I did not trust them around the barn . . . I like a little more style in a horse than the Arab offers . . . now that they are so well trained for the ring their classes are not as colorful at the shows. Morgans, when well trained still have a glowing controlled but fiery way of moving that catches the eye . . . perhaps it would be nice to be able to have both breeds but as yet, I think you will be happier while we keep Morgan horses . . . I did not allow either Bill or Salle to get near the Arabian . . . I just wasn't sure of her.

You remember how we just tossed Salle up on sassy Nancy, last summer at the show, and she won a blue ribbon on her? Then I took Nancy in that evening as a Parade horse and she appeared to be so spirited that you wouldn't think she could have been handled by a ten year old would you? Well, that is why we have Morgans, we can all get some fun out of them . . . without getting ourselves killed.

Your loving daughter
