

HORSE TAILS

By AYELEEN

Dear Mother,

Sometimes I get surprised to find out that our Morgan horses really must be tougher than the ordinary run of pleasure horses, which are predominately Quarter and walking bred with a lot of palominos in this section.

As you know often when I ride alone I take the trip right straight to Elmira and Sam is tireless and if I didn't ask him to walk he never would as he likes to get there and fast. Were he back about 50 years, I'm sure some farmer could drive him to town smartly and it is this, behind the Morgan horse, that makes history about them interesting to me. They used to indicate that every farmer in New England thought his trappy little Morgan was a second Ethan Allen who set a world's record at the trot. Well we know not all of them went that fast but the Morgan's cheery alert willing nervous speed on the road surely is selling him as a top pleasure horse. There are still some of us who like to ride a horse that can take a real trip over all kinds of terrain and still feel that if there is a Parade or a show someplace the next day our little Morgans will have all the fire and animation in the world as they are healthy and rugged.

Many a Sunday I have ridden someplace and called home about five o'clock to get Bill to come get us with the trailer as in winter we run out of daylight so soon that a long ride back all alone is not as cheerful. Sammy knows it is a lot easier to ride back and usually hops on the trailer very fast now. Riding is better than walking, he must think, anyway.

A few weeks ago the local riding club decided to drill and then ride. I trailered to the meeting place and there were quite a few people out . . . it was Sunday and a beautiful warm day. Of course I can never quite understand going to all the trouble of getting ready to ride and then take the horses around a city block but obviously that is what the greater majority of the local riders keep their horses for, or the horse just can't take it like our Morgans.

A half hour after we left the meeting place, three of them returned . . . we were hitting into the rough mountainous Mt. Joar area and the roads are numerous and riding is good. Within

another mile there were but four horses out in front and the remainder of the gang was falling back gradually. I want you to realize that we were not pushing our horses either, we were just jiggling along and having a good time . . . in fact the one hill is so steep that you wouldn't run a horse up it anyway.

When we reached the fork at the crest of the hill we went on to make a good loop so we would ride at least ten miles. The balance of the riders lagging far behind us then turned back towards Elmira so they went down the highway (a total ride of about 3 miles). There were four of us left . . . Lorrie on her half-Morgan Traveller, Bob on his registered Morgan known as Dinah, and Jackie on her registered Morgan Bonfire. I had my old grade mare, Polly. We made a few bad jokes about all the horses and riders dropping out and went on to have a good ride. In some spots we can have a good gallop and I have never seen a Morgan in my life that can stretch out and run like Bonfire does. He gets so low it looks like he will bang his knees and hocks on the ground and he goes by us in a rush of air just like an express train. After a few good gallops our horses are still fresh and ready to go but we begin the long descent back to town and cooling them out gradually.

I really think it may not be the fault of the other breeds of horses, surely they can all be tough when conditioned. But maybe the Morgan is not only tough but easy enough gaited to ride so that the riders enjoy them. Or maybe just the people who fall for the spirit of the Morgan are those that like me want a horse they can ride, and use and not feel that a pleasure ride is to be of 15 minutes duration or so. Course we take short rides too . . . but when we get a group together we take a big ride as we have so much beautiful country to ride in anyway. At any rate the palominos, walkers, Arabs, and Quarter horses that want to stay with our tough little Morgans on a long trail ride should realize they are up against a horse that hasn't got a quitting hair on him! That's one of the reasons I like Morgans . . . they are tough.

Your loving daughter,