

THE GREATEST GENERAL.

The greatest commander was—who? Alexander, who whimpered, they say. Because there were not to his view More worlds he might conquer and away? Or Caesar? Napoleon? Nay! Though much in their lives we commend, Their achievements were carried away By the forces of General Trend.

Politicians are careful to woo The sentiments people display; Big Business and bankers review The pregnant events of the day; All sorts of conditions they weigh, All movements and whither they end, And their lines of procedure they lay In accord with the General Trend.

Where is he who tried to subdue The world to his will and his way? The old is submerged by the new, The past by the surge of today. The lords of the earth become clay— That one unavoidable end, And even the gods cannot stay If opposed to the General Trend.

ENVOY.

Friend, waggle the world as it may And however reformers contend, They will finally have to obey The orders of General Trend. —Plinthourgos.

THE SONG OF THE BEE.

In all his sixteen years Midge Macklin had known nothing but horses. His father had been a veterinarian and a good one—so good, in fact, that John T. Banfield had taken him under contract to care for the Questa Rey Stables exclusively. Midge's mother had died when he was five and as a result he had been thrown into a contact with his father much closer than most boys achieve. And his father taught him much about horses.

They lived at the breeding-farm and it was here that Midge learned to ride at the age of four, when his father gave him a Welsh pony. Although at twelve he was making his spending-money, both before and after school, as an exercise boy, it never occurred to John T. Banfield, watching the little gnome galloping his thoroughbreds around his private race-track, that Midge might some day make a jockey.

Then Midge's father died very suddenly, leaving nothing to Midge. There was nobody to look after the boy, so John T. Banfield took over the job—not because he was particularly charitable or fond of Midge, but because he saw in him a good, cheap exercise boy.

At sixteen Midge was as large as a normal boy of twelve. At full manhood he would be a flyweight. John T. Banfield saw that. And nobody could have seen it. But what he did not see was that Midge Macklin was extraordinarily intelligent, with a cold, calculating, logical intelligence not commensurate with his years and worldly experience. He was always asking why! Always studying cause and effect.

He was one of those strange human beings who, having an instinctive love for horses, is, in turn, beloved by horses. Midge knew that a horse has no brains to speak of; that he can be habituated to a course of action but never taught it as one teaches a dog. He knew that horses, particularly thoroughbreds, are nervous and flighty and that to do their best work they must have the utmost confidence in and familiarity with their masters. So, in addition to exercising the Questa Rey horses and helping break the yearlings, he was forever fussing around the stables doing work he was not expected to do. He petted the horses, spoke to them as to warm personal friends; he had a habit of carrying a carrot or an apple into the stall with him; instinctively he found out the itchy spots on a horse and scratched them.

Nor could the most irritable and nervous of horses get a flight out of Midge. When they started cutting up he let them cut up, getting them in hand gradually and gently soothing them, talking to them, slapping them on the quarters, humoring them. He knew how easy it is to spoil a high-strung horse and he avoided that. The result was that when Midge rode a horse that had the reputation of being a bad one at the barrier, that horse reduced his monkey-shines at least fifty per cent for Midge.

was not, however, quite out of debt. Now, Marion always had kept old Dan Henning's breeding-records. With him she had made an exhaustive study of the thoroughbred horse, possibly because she had inherited all of her father's love for a horse, possibly because old Dan had not reared her to work for a living. At any rate, at twenty-two, she was unmarried and the mistress of Sycamore Rancho, and when her father's attorney suggested that she sell the farm and the horses, she surprised them by announcing that she was going to carry on as her father had done.

Like Midge Macklin, Marion Henning had brains, although in racing story it might be better to say that she had horse-sense. And she had a horse she thought very well of, a three-year-old stallion named Pilgrim's Pride. As a two-year-old he had won several good races and showed extreme promise; as a three-year-old, Marion felt certain he was going to redeem that promise. She had entered him for the Governor's Handicap and as the season advanced the girl, deciding to cast about her for a good jockey, went to Tia Juana to look the field over.

She had two horses running there on shares and one day when she went to the barn to see how they were getting on, she found one of her horses with his head out of the box stall, accepting a carrot from a small wistful little boy, who rubbed the animal between the ears and crooned to him.

"So you're the Great Big Devil at the post, are you, Don Marco? Just won't behave, eh? I wish I had you in charge. I'd make you do your stuff. Yes, and you'd be glad to do it, too. If I ever get the leg on you, big horse, we'll certainly spoil the Egyptians. Yes, yes, old-timer. That carrot's good, isn't it? Have another. Nobody understands you, do they, Don Marco?"

Midge Macklin was a sensitive boy. He felt an alien presence and, turning, saw Marion Henning smiling at him. He doffed his shabby cap. "That's my horse," said Marion, by way of introduction.

The boy smiled. "You Dan Henning's girl, miss?"

"Dan was a friend of mine," he explained. "He got me the leg up on Don Marco here last fall. I'm Macklin."

"How do you do, Midge. I'm glad to see you. I didn't see that race, but Father told me that the way you booted Don Marco home was the best bit of riding he had ever seen."

Midge smiled his gratitude at the compliment. "That was easy. The old boy can step some, Miss Henning."

"He's never done it since," she reminded him. "He's a misunderstood horse. He's been spoiled. He's permitted to act up at the post and he hasn't been off to a really good start since that day I rose him. Of course we had the starter crazy that day, but you see, I'd watched him a lot and I knew his habits."

"He'd swerve away from the webbing and carry me back about forty feet before I could get him faced around again. Then the assistant starter would lead him up and the instant he'd let go Don Marco would swerve again. Between ourselves, Miss Henning, I let him swerve. I wanted to get the starter mad and out of patience; I knew that the instant Don Marco was in any half decent position for a half decent start, the gate would go up."

"Well, I know the starters. I've spent days sitting on the fence studying them. So I kept my eye on the starter and I asked the assistant starter to keep his hands off Don Marco. Well, the horse carried me back maybe twenty yards, then I turned him and trotted him back slowly. For other horses were nicely lined up for a perfect start and I was delaying. I kept my eye on Henderson—that's the starter—and he waved me to the gate as I got Don Marco's head up to the tail of the horse on my right I saw Henderson's mouth. I knew he was going to say come on—that the gate was going up, and I beat the gate a split second. Just gave the horse his head a little and clucked to him—and we were off—first."

"I rated him. I knew he had reserve speed. The jocks that weren't hopelessly out of it at the half had let me make the pace. I knew I was two seconds slow at the quarter; I was sure I was a second slow at the half. But I had the rail and I made my run before the others—not very much—just enough to get three open lengths to the good—and then I talked to this baby. He lasted. Lord, that was a race—and I've never had the leg up on this horse since."

He gave Don Marco another carrot. "Whom do you ride for, Midge?"

"Exercise boy for the Questa Rey Stables—Mr. Banfield. But I'm an apprentice jock now and sometimes I get a mount in a cheap race from outside owners. Mr. Banfield won't trust me on a good horse."

"Would you like to ride Don Marco tomorrow, Midge? Perhaps I can arrange it."

"I'd like to, miss—and I'll make every post a winning-post."

Moderator entered in the Governor's Handicap, I believe, Mr. Banfield?" He nodded.

"Is your boy Midge Macklin going to ride Moderator that day, Mr. Banfield?"

"Good Lord, no, my dear young lady. Midge is just a glorified exercise boy, although as an apprentice I let him have a little experience riding for other owners occasionally. Some day he may make a jockey, but you may rest assured that when Moderator goes to the post I'll have a real jockey up on him."

"Midge gave Don Marco a good ride just now," she defended.

"Nothing to write home about, Miss Henning. He was in the company of his equals and inferiors. And Don Marco isn't a stake-horse, although unquestionably he was the best horse in the race."

"You remember Pilgrim's Pride?"

"Good two-year-old."

"He's mine and he's entered in the Governor's Handicap. I want to engage the services of Midge to ride him."

"Well, that should be an added reason why Moderator should win the race," he smiled back at her. "You've been warned."

"I play my hunches," she replied. "Is Midge under contract to you, Mr. Banfield?"

"Yes, he is," Banfield lied. "Want to sell his contract?"

"I might consider it. How much am I offered?"

"Tell me how much you want?"

He considered. "Five thousand dollars for a contract that has five years to run," he decided. "I have better boys coming up."

"I'll give you the Midget," she replied. "Give you my check the moment you hand me the contract duly assigned."

"I'll have to send away for it. See you in four or five days, Miss Henning."

The young mistress of Sycamore Rancho was at the barn when Midge came into his tack room. "I've bought you from Mr. Banfield, Midge," she announced, him enthusiastically. "I couldn't sell it. After that race you won with Don Marco I simply had to have you and I bet twenty dollars for you on Don Marco, Midge. Five to one. Here's your share of the loot," and she handed him a hundred dollars.

That was the first real money Midge Macklin had ever seen and his eyes popped and his throat worked as he gazed upon it. "Thanks, Miss Henning," he mumbled.

"You belong to the Sycamore Rancho, Midge," she went on. "You're going to ride Pilgrim's Pride in the Governor's Handicap."

"What?" The world was slipping out from under Midge.

"You're going to trust me on Pilgrim's Pride in the Governor's Handicap?"

"Why not? But, of course, Midge, if you aren't interested—"

"Oh, miss, if I win that race—"

He paused, unable to visualize such a glorious future as that would entail. "Well, I'll give him a good ride, anyhow," he ended. "If he's a winner I'll win with him as handy as any jock on the Big Time could. He'll have an apprentice allowance of five pounds in the weights and that will help. You're awful kind to me, Miss Henning. Thanks ever so much. Did you say you'd bought me from Mr. Banfield?"

"I've bought your contract, Midge. It has five years to run, and if you and I have any luck with my horses in those five years the deal may turn out to be a very profitable one for both of us."

"How much did you pay him?"

"I'm going to pay him five thousand dollars."

"He's sold me, eh?" Midge's voice was husky with emotion. "I liked Mr. Banfield. I thought he liked me. I didn't think he'd do that. I—I guess he thinks I don't amount to much."

There were tears in the boy's eyes. Then suddenly his Celtic rage flared, triumphant above his emotion.

"That's the worst deal Mr. Banfield ever put over," he declared, his voice taking a high shrill note. "I'll show him whether I'm a jock or an exercise boy. Sell me, would he, like I was a broken-down selling platter? I'll turn him."

He commenced to weep, darted out of the office, hired a car and went back to Tia Juana. Half an hour later he had transferred his few miserable possessions to an empty stall in the Sycamore Rancho's barn; when Marion came to the barn again he told her what had occurred between John T. Banfield and himself.

"I go on your pay-roll, Miss Marion," he pleaded, "and you may me what you think is right and fair. We don't need no contract. If we had a contract you might—sell me; and I don't like to be sold away from folks I—like."

"We'll shake hands on it instead, Midge," she suggested, and thus the deal was closed.

Marion employed a trainer, Jim Merton, and a good man he was, yet curiously enough, in the matter of Pilgrim's Pride she listened most to the advice of Midge; for although young, she knew he was old with wisdom of his craft. He had worked with Pilgrim a week before she sent for him.

"What do you think of our entry Midge?"

"I hate to tell you this, Miss Marion," Midge replied, "but that dog's cost of shipping him. He has everything a champion should have except heart. I'm disappointed in him."

Marion was horrified. "A morning-glory? Why, we've never had one on Sycamore Rancho."

"Well, you've got one now and he's a daisy. Morning after morning I've set him down over a half-mile in company. He's a lamb at the post, he breaks like a flash, he's faster than greased lightning and I think he can stand going long. Every morning he's the grandest prospect in the country. But when I skip the morning workout and work him in the late afternoon he's just two seconds behind his time. He just won't extend himself. I've tried everything, but the stop-watch tells the tale. I never knew a morning-glory that brought home the bacon in the afternoon. And that's when races are run, Miss Marion."

It was a week before Marion admitted that Midge's verdict was unimpeachable.

Nobody has ever been able to discover the answer to the question: Why is a morning-glory? Racing men only know that they happen. To such curiously constituted horses the morning workout is sufficient evil for the day. Apparently, they prefer to dawn and to withhold it in the afternoon. Or perhaps they are horses just a bit faint-hearted, and when running in company they lack the spur of ambition and accept defeat too readily.

"A real race-horse," Midge explained, "is selfish and plucky. He just naturally can't bear to be beaten and he'll do everything to prevent it. But a morning-glory—well, he ain't got no pride, that's all. He does what he's told to do in the morning, but he won't do what he's asked to do in the afternoon. The Pilgrim's too easy-going—not enough nerves. Now, if I could only give him a good scare at the right time in a race, he'd be liable to run over his field. I can't lift him with whip or spur. And I can't talk him into it."

"Well, we'll not hop him up, Midge, if that's what you're leading up to, and we'll not have a cunning little electric battery up your sleeve so you can sting him mentally."

"Just what do you mean?"

"Please don't ask me now. I'll make some experiments and if they work out all right we'll both know it without talking about it."

For three weeks Marion heard nothing more about Pilgrim's Pride, then one day after luncheon Midge came over to the house.

"Don Marco's back, and so is Ballyhoo," he announced. "I'm going to put the Pilgrim over this afternoon in competition with them this afternoon, and I'd like, Miss Marion, if you'll clock me. The race is called for three-thirty."

"And has Pilgrim's Pride had his usual morning exercise, Midge?"

"Yes, miss. And if he does today what I think he's liable to do, he'll still be fit for the race of his life."

At three-thirty, therefore, Marion sat up in the lit pagoda at the finish line on her own mile race-course, split-second stop-watch in hand. A hundred yards down the road Jim Merton drew down the starting-gate; Don Marco and Ballyhoo, with exercise boys up, and Pilgrim's Pride, piloted by Midge, pranced up to the gate fretted, whirled, fidgeted, whined again and were off to a perfect start. As the webbing was released the trump came down on the head of the stop-watch. Her glance never strayed from the three thoroughbreds racing down the tracks, Don Marco four open lengths out front, Ballyhoo second, Pilgrim's Pride a bad third. At the quarter the Pilgrim began closing in.

At the half-mile Ballyhoo had been passed and slowly, inexorably, Pilgrim's Pride was creeping up on Don Marco. They turned into the stretch with Don Marco coming strong along the rail, two lengths in advance of the Pilgrim, who carried wide at the turn. And then something happened. The Pilgrim commenced to make his run! With apparent ease he flashed by Don Marco, took the rail and came on in a thunder of flying hoofs, his head outstretched, his nostrils flung wide. He was giving all that was in him and giving it gladly.

Of course, at the mile, Don Marco was done and the boy sensibly pulled up. Ballyhoo had long since pulled up and there was no longer any competition for the Pilgrim. Nevertheless he did not falter; indeed, as he passed in front of the pagoda he increased his stride with a sudden spurt, seeming to call upon new reserves of speed and stamina. As he flashed past the finish of the course Marion looked at her stop-watch and gasped.

Midge pulled the horse up and came jogging back to her. "I'll guess it," he called. "He stepped that mile and an eighth in forty-nine."

"Forty-eight and a fifth," she called back to him. "Oh, Midge, that's a race horse."

"That's a dog," Midge contradicted; but he can run when he wants to. The thing is to make him want to.

"How did you get it out of him, Midge?"

"That's a secret, Miss Marion. I think I've made him ashamed of himself. I've been talking to him and telling him what a low-down disappointment he's been and I reckon he sort of took a notion to reform. He wouldn't do it for nobody but me."

"If the Tia Juana track is as fast as this one and he has half decent luck he's worth a big bet, Midge."

"I think so, Miss Marion. I'm going to bet my little roll on him. If we win, I want you to sell him."

"Why? If he wins we should be able to annex a few more big stakes."

"And if I get spilled and hurt and somebody else has to ride him he won't be worth more than his hide. You sell him, Miss Marion, and let somebody else try to psychoanalyze him. My stuff is good, but I can't go on doing it forever. He'll get on to me and be morning-glory again."

"Is this the first time he has really extended himself for you?"

"Yes, Miss Marion."

"But he showed very well as a two-year-old and in his workouts since then he has showed so much promise. Workouts are in the morning," Midge reminded her and jogged back to the barn.

They shipped Pilgrim's Pride to Tia Juana and Midge accompanied the train in the express-car. They got the train in the express-car. They got the train in the express-car. They got the train in the express-car.

That night Midge called upon his employer at the latter's hotel. "Well, he's fit," he announced, "and Jim Merton has placed all the bets for your ranch help with the bookies in San Francisco. Betting anything on him?"

"I was waiting for your final report, Midge. Do you still advise it?"

"Barring racing luck, which is never very good, he has as fair a chance as the favorite. I'd spread that five thousand you were going to pay John T. Banfield for that contract on me he never had; but I wouldn't bet it at the track, Miss Marion. He'll open ten to one for sure and five thousand would cut him to even money. Have Jim Merton place it for you in San Francisco and then, and your bets will be safe enough. I've got a good position. Third from the rail. He's a sensible horse at the post and starts like a flash and I don't figure on getting pocketed. Have you seen the weights?"

"No, Midge."

"A hundred and ten—and that day at the Sycamore Rancho he carried a hundred and twenty. That's a little surprise I've been saving up for you, Miss Marion. I gave him top weight that day. I wouldn't kid myself and I wouldn't kid you. He'll run tomorrow, never fear."

Marion's heart was beating wildly as the bugle called the eighteen horses to the post the following afternoon. Pilgrim's Pride stalked sedately past the grand stand in No. 3 place and Midge waved at her as he rode past. Then they paraded back.

They were at the post a minute and a half; then there burst from the crowd a sound that was half roar, half sigh, and the horses were off to a beautiful start.

True to Midge's prediction, Pilgrim's Pride was off first, making the pace. He caught the rail presently and held it; when he was challenged he did not respond. At the half he was fourth, at the three-quarters fifth. Then he started moving up until as the field came into the stretch he was challenging the leader.

Down the stretch they came, Moderator, the favorite, running easily and holding the head of Pilgrim's Pride at his tail. But Moderator could not shake him off, and through her glasses Marion saw that the favorite's jockey was using his hat while Midge was hand-riding the Pilgrim.

Closer and closer they came; then suddenly the Pilgrim commenced moving up. His blazed face was at the saddle-girth of Moderator now, at his quarter, on even terms. . . . The paddock the field swept, the Pilgrim an open length in front and gaining at every jump. . . .

She closed her eyes. When she opened them again the results of the race were just going up on the board across the track. Pilgrim's Pride first, Moderator second, Oregonian third. John T. Banfield's entry had been nosed out by a whisker. He had run a great race, having come up from tenth place to challenge the leader in a magnificent burst of speed that would have carried him to victory had he made his run ten seconds earlier.

The girl looked at the timer's board. 1:48—flat! She wondered if it was a world's record. She was too excited to remember. Certainly close to it—close enough to make of Pilgrim's Pride a horse of very great value.

She saw Midge ride him into the circle reserved for winners, dismount, remove his tack and step into the weighing-room. When he came out again, almost immediately, she knew he had weighed out as he had weighed in—that the victory was secure. Then the governor of Boja California came into the circle, and lifted Midge back on to the Pilgrim's wet glistening back, while the Governor's wife hung around the sleek neck the long way from the camera-men in action. Marion saw a dozen camera-men in action. Then Midge slid off Pilgrim's Pride, was blanketed, and horse and rider jogged off to the paddock. Simultaneously Marion made her way to the paddock also.

After changing into his street clothes in the jockey room over the paddock, Midge came down to meet his mistress. He found John T. Banfield talking to her.

"Come here, Midge," the girl commanded. "You're a dear. I know you'd do it. I knew I just had to beat Moderator if only to prove to Mr. Banfield what a poor judge of apprentice jockeys he is. I bet the five thousand, too. We'll know in a minute what the closing odds were."

"At least ten to one," said John T. Banfield. "The bookies were laying eight to one; boosted him from four to one to incite the fancy. Midge you ran a great race."

"If you'd had me up on Moderator I'd have won a fifty-thousand-dollar purse," Midge reminded his late patron. "It must be fifty thousand, with all the added money."

"Midge," said Marion Henning, "Mr. Banfield wants to buy Pilgrim's Pride!"

Midge's heart leaped. What a true-blue sport she was. Now that he had led her to a triumphant victory she was not going to make another move without consulting him.

"Well, anything's for sale at a price, Miss Marion. How much does Mr. Banfield offer?"

"Fifty thousand," Banfield replied. "Chicken-feed," Midge murmured sorrowfully. "Guess we won't trade today. No need to be in a hurry. I got my eye on a couple more stakes I might just as well clean up for Miss Marion and then sell. Besides, Miss Marion," he added, turning to the girl, "there ain't no sense in grabbing at the first offer you get. . . . There's other sports in this world. Give the boys a chance. They know the Pilgrim has won over the best horses in the country."

Deliberately he led Marion away. But John T. Banfield followed the Pilgrim, he announced. "Take it or leave it."

"Sold!" said Midge quietly. "Got a check-book with you?"

"Write it. Here's your bill of sale for Pilgrim's Pride. I had it made out a week ago. It's the regular printed form, Mr. Banfield. I knew you'd want him if he won. Fill in the blank and Miss Marion will sign it."

"The young man's a quick trader," Banfield suggested blandly.

He filled in the check and the bill of sale and Marion signed it. As he lifted his hat and walked away, Midge glared after him. "And I wish him joy of the Pilgrim," he growled. "He can buy the Pilgrim but he can't buy me—and that goat would have finished in the ruck if I hadn't ridden him."

"Will you tell me now how you managed to induce him to perform, Midge?"

"His little hand stole into hers. 'A horse ain't got no brains, Miss Marion,' he explained. 'You can't really teach 'em very much, but you can give 'em a habit. I told you the Pilgrim had to be scared into running, didn't I? Well, it's the easiest thing in the world to scare a thoroughbred horse—and no matter how something is you can never tell when something will scare him and you'd have been willing to bet a new hat it wouldn't and couldn't. Me, I just educated the Pilgrim to a certain form of fright. . . . I got the batteries out of your car and put 'em in his manger. Then I tied him up to the manger and led two copper wires from each battery up to his neck, just where the mane quits growing. I tied one wire around his neck and I wet his neck with water. Then I sat up on the edge of the stall and with the other wire on the end of a long stick I touched the wire around the Pilgrim's neck. There was a buzz and a snapping of sparks and the old Pilgrim got a shock. Didn't he carry on? I want to tell you I did, Miss Marion. He tried to tear the barn down. And every time he'd get quiet I'd touch him up again. . . . Well, I educated the Pilgrim for three days. At the end of that time I could throw him into convulsions by looking into his stall and saying, 'Buz-z-z!'

"Then I took him out, put a hundred and twenty pounds on him and ran him with Don Marco and Ballyhoo. I discovered that day he didn't need competition to give him ambition. He didn't do his real running until he found himself out in front—and then I said, 'Buz-z-z!' and jabbed him on the neck with this. And you know what happened."

Midge held up his right hand, displaying on the middle finger a ring fashioned from a horse-shoe-nail which had been nicked. Marion was familiar with such trinkets. There is a superstition among jockeys, copied by trainers, that a ring made from a horse-shoe-nail will avert rheumatism, and most of them wear this simple charm.

"Are you rheumatic, Midge?"

"Not yet—but you never can tell. But this ring is lucky. Remember the first time I rode Don Marco? Well, that was the first winner I ever put over, so when they changed his plates I got one of the nails and made this ring. It's a soft nail. Look, and with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand he bent the end of the nail outward from the head. Horse-shoe-nails are pretty sharp—and I made this one a little sharper. I wore this ring in the race with the end pulled out. Nobody could see it when my hand was closed over the reins, and there ain't a judge in the world that would be suspicious of a horse-shoe-nail ring on a jock. When I wanted to make my run with the Pilgrim, I sang the song of the bell to him—and jabbed him in the neck with the point of my ring."

"Midge, you're a wicked boy."

"Well, I'm more than nine years old and I been around race-horses all my life. Did you have your glasses on the Pilgrim?"

"Of course."

"As we come into the stretch did you see him throw up his tail and swing it in a circle?"

"Yes."

"That was when I stung him first. But I know something else about the

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