

SINTALUTA TRAILS.

(1) The Upward Road

" I always love this time of year and this view of the Quapelle valley."

The woman speaking was seated on a hill overlooking the Quapelle valley north of Sintaluta. She was of medium height and although her hair was almost white the face and eyes beneath it were serene and calm.

The man seated at her side took his pipe from his mouth and pointing with the stem of it said, "This part ~~has~~ has'nt changed much over the years, this hill not at all. It is forty years ~~last~~ <sup>spring</sup> since I first saw this valley. The road yonder", waving to the north east with his pipe, "has been built higher and wider , that is all. All else is unchanged and if we wait a few minutes longer we ~~will~~ <sup>shall</sup> hear the Whip-door- will start his evening song .Yes, spring in the Quapelle valley " he stopped there and said no more. He was a tall man and his hair was iron grey. his eyes had crinkles round their corners as if they had squinted a long time against sun or snow. He sat still, pipe in mouth gazing north across the valley.

The woman sat musing too, glancing from time to time at her companion, then in a low voice she broke their friendly silence. "You loved her very much, did'nt you ?" There was a pathetic undertone of entreaty

*Finished for*

2.  
in the woman's words as if she already knew the answer.  
*It was as if he had read his thought*  
more a statement of fact than a question. There was no  
answer from her companion for a few moments but he had  
grown very still. Then, "How did you know?" and without  
waiting for an answer and still looking across the valley,  
"Yes, she was my first love, we were both the same age ~~xx~~  
and young together. Oh," with a short laugh, "there were  
others, girls at school, puppy love I suppose you'd  
call it, but this was something different altogether.  
Oh well 32

Again the unfinished sentence and the woman felt  
that the man at her side had said those same words many  
times and that the incomplete sentence was like the  
romance of long ago, unfinished.

"How did you know?" This time the man turned and  
looked squarely at his companion.

"I have never told anyone else and this district  
must have forgotten long ago if it ever took any interest  
at the time. Even my own family knew nothing much. It  
was just one of those things that it <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ better to  
forget."

"Except that you never have forgotten have you?"  
Again the pathetic quality of tone. "How did I know?  
Well you see, girls sometimes have girl friends, and  
Francie was mine, besides she was my cousin. You never  
met me, I was away at Indian Head when you were here  
that spring. But I saw you once. You were with her  
at a Chatauqua night in Indian Head, remember?"

3-  
The man sat staring out across the shadowing valley ~~and did~~ <sup>ing</sup> not answer and the woman continued.

"I think I knew Francie better than most. Knew her wildness and despair, perhaps could see more clearly than Francie herself the road she was taking. There were times when you could'nt reason with her, she was like her father in those moods." ~~The woman~~ hesitated and then went on.

"Then you came along. She never had time for ~~any of us then~~ any of us then. I have never seen such a change in anyone. She seemed to mature and quieten, become more of a woman and less of a hoyden, ~~and~~ She told me all about you <sup>33</sup>"

"Hmph," the man interrupted her, "There was'nt much to tell. Something in his tone gave his companion ~~the~~ the idea that he did not want to reopen old sores and ~~she~~ she sat ~~quietly~~ <sup>quiet</sup> watching the evening shadows <sup>darken</sup> (densen) and creep across the coulees ~~on~~ the valley.

Just as the man had predicted the ~~Whip-door-~~Will started his evening song and in no time the valley was echoing with the notes of reply, melodious and clear. The man rose to his feet, pocketing his pipe ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ He reached out a hand to the still seated woman and pulled her up beside him. Together they stood for a moment each lost in thought. Presently the woman spoke.

"You had a snap shot taken on this hill didn't you? You and your friend Larry Graham, and Francie stood between you. She showed me a print you had given her

4.  
"You hav'nt changed much Jim, the years have been kind to you. I think I recognized you very soon after you came even though you did use your middle name."

"So that was how you knew. " The man's voice was ~~and~~ matter of fact.

"Yes and when you kept coming out here the odd evening, I was sure."

He turned and looked at her and then turned away.

"We'd best be heading back to the farm the lads will wonder where the dickens we've gone. Its time I was on the road again. I never intended to stay this long." A sudden restraint seemed to fall between them as they turned south to lights showing dimly through the trees some half mile away

As they walked side by side through grass already damp with evening dew the woman spoke.

"What will you do when you go from here, Jim. What a have you done all these years ? You've been such a help to the boys and me, they'll miss you terribly, the place has been so different since you came and Edward needed someone like you to guide him, he was getting rather out of hand."

"Well you took me in for supper that day I came roaming round and", with a shaky laugh, "I guess I just stayed on. There seemed to be work for a man to do and ne needing to be done, but Ed can handle it all now and Chuck--there's no need to worry over him, he will always make out all right. Ed has steadied down since he took up with the Carlyle girl and Peggy will be good

9.  
for him, she's high spirited but no nonsense about her.  
That pair were made for each other."

"You've taken so much interest in Edward, Jim. I thought at first you two were not going to get along at all."

"I guess it's because I never had a son of my own. Then too I've seen so much of the rougher side of life that I try to make myself see a younger fellow's view point. The young people today are no different fundamentally than we were at their age with the exception that they take a franker view of life, ~~They~~ are a generation removed from us and two world wars have shown them how <sup>clerk</sup> frail our so-called civilization really is." He paused and then with a short laugh. "I'm really making a speech; when I get wound up it's hard to stop."

"Go ahead, I like to hear you talk. You make sense to me. But I always worried about Edward more than Chuck. Chuck is like his father and perhaps it is natural to worry more about an adopted child than one of your own. One at least knows that some parental trait on both sides is liable to come out in your own flesh and blood. Both Max and I worried about Edward and when we knew Max was going to leave us I think the thought of leaving Ed just when he needed a dad the most, worried <sup>my husband</sup> ~~him~~ more than he let on. Now who is speech making?"

<sup>chuckled</sup>  
Jim gave a short laugh but did not answer. As they strolled home in mutual silence his thoughts went back

6-  
to a day not so long ago when he faced an angry young man in the barn one night. He had said something to Edward about neglecting the stock to go out driving and the young fellow had flown into a rage.

"Who do you think you are round here anyway, giving orders all the time. This is Mother's farm, she's the one to give orders not you!"

"He had answered the boy quietly although his own temper was pretty quick. "Just a minute Ed, I was not giving orders, but you said you would feed the stock when you came home. It is six o'clock now and the last time you were out you did not get home until three in the morning. I just said I did not think it was fair to leave stock that was tied up that long without feed. It is not as if they were loose and could forage for themselves. I think your Mother would say the same, if she knew."

"Well, go ahead and tell her then, you're always after us to do things your way. We never asked you to come here in the first place."

"No, Ed, and you won't have to ask me to go, either, but before I do go I'm going to give you an opportunity to get your trouble off your chest another way." He had walked over to a small feed room in the barn and reaching up had taken down two pair of boxing gloves.

"I saw you and Chuck sparring with these the other night. Perhaps you will put them on with me; what I lack in youth I may make up in experience, unless you have too high an opinion of your own prowess to mix

1.  
with a man nearly three times your age."

"Well, if that's what you want, give me the gloves!"  
Dad taught me quite a bit before he died. You just take care of yourself, that's all. Perhaps this will settle who is boss round here ! "

It was not many seconds before Edward found out that despite his age Jim was formidable. Do as he liked <sup>he</sup> Ed could not hit his opponent with any telling effect. Long years of an active outdoor life had given the man muscles of steel and a liveness and quickness of eye that belied his usually calm and unobtrusive manner.

On Jim's part it had been ~~years~~ since he had donned boxing gloves and he found quickly too that the young man was quick and keen and had a deadly right hand if it should ever connect. But he kept pressing in hoping that the youngster would tire before he did. That that was going to happen soon was evinced by the boy's heavy breathing. It was one thing to put on the gloves with his father who was teaching him. Quite another to face this man who he could never ~~seem to~~ hit and who never backed away. Reason told him that he would never best the man in front of him if they kept at it all night but his ~~anger~~ <sup>pride</sup> kept pushing him on. All of a sudden something seemed to explode inside his head and he found himself seated on the straw of the stable floor. Jim breathing heavily, was kneeling beside him.

"Guess I hit you harder than I intended."

Ed shook his head to stop it from spinning and looking

4.  
up at the older man said, "I think you had better carry on where Dad left off, perhaps I'll really learn to protect myself someday." It was perhaps the only thing the lad could have said to make Jim feel the test was worth while. He got to his feet and reaching out his hand to Edward said, "Will you shake on that?" The strong young hand that met his with a firm clasp had started a friendship between the two men that had endured and grown over the months. The matter had not been mentioned again and not at all in the house, so the mother was not aware what had altered her son's attitude to the man who now walked by her side.

Don't go fern!

again the pathetic quality of tone. "How did I know? Well you see Fannie was my cousin and we were gibbeted chums as well, perhaps I knew her better than most. Knew <sup>her</sup> ~~the~~ wickedness, and despair, perhaps could see more clearly than Fannie herself the road she was taking. There were times when you couldn't reason with her." The woman hesitated and then went on. "Then you came along. He never had time for any of us then. I never saw such a change in anyone in that one month. He seemed to mature and quieten." You see, I never met you. I was away at Indian Head and you were only here for a week, but Fannie told me all about you. "Humph" the man interrupted her "that wants much to tell." Something in his tone gave his companion the idea that he did not want to reopen old wounds and she sat quietly watching the evening shadows creep across the cañons of the valley.

Just as the man had predicted the whip-poor-will started his evening song and in no time the valley was echoing with the

songs of reply melodious and clear. The man rose to his feet pocketing his pipe as he did so. He reached out a hand to the still seated woman and pulled her up beside him. Together they stood for a ~~minute~~ moment each lost in their own thought.

Presently the woman spoke. "You had a snapshot taken on this hill didn't you. You and your friend Larry Graham & Fannie stood between you" she showed me a print you had sent her. "You haven't changed much Jim, the years have been kind to you. I think I recognized you very soon after you came even though you did use your middle name."

"So that was how you knew." The man's voice was matter of fact. "Yes and when you kept coming out here the odd evening I was sure." He turned and looked at her & then turned away. "We'd best be heading back to the farm, the lads will wonder where the chickens we're gone." And it's time I was on the road again, I never intended to stay this long." A sudden ~~restraint~~ restraint seemed to fall between them ~~and~~ as they turned ~~their~~ south towards lights some half mile away.

noises.

As they walked side by side through grass already clump with evening dew the woman spoke. "What will you do when you go from here, Jim?" What have you done all these years?" You've been such a help to the boys and me 'they'll miss you terribly, the place has been so different since you came and Edward needed someone like you to guide him he was getting rather out of hand."

"Well you took me in for supper when I came roaming round here in spring and," with a shaky laugh, "I guess I just stayed on. There seemed to be work for a man to do and mending to be done but Ed can handle it all now and Chuck - there's no need to worry over him, he will always make out all right. Ed has steadied down since he started going <sup>steadily</sup> with the Earlyle girl and Peggy will be good for him, she's high spirited but no nonsense about her. That pair were made for each other!"

"What'll I do?" The man stopped half turned and looked back over the way they had come. It was as if he

was making a decision that had been deferred for  
~~quite~~ some time. In the half dusk the woman watched  
him & sadness about her as if she were incapable  
of stopping something she wished would not happen.  
Then as her companion swung round and started walking  
he said: "I shall go back to the work I left to come here."  
They gave me a year's fulcrum you know and I feel that  
even at my age I'm still some use in agriculture and  
those people in India trust me and how they need help.  
They can do so much for themselves when they have some  
encouragement. It takes patience and forbearance  
and understanding and above all love of your  
fellow man no matter what his condition in life

Sentatuta Trails.  
Two people, a man and a woman.

"I always love this time of year and I always ~~love~~ this view of the Quappelle valley." The woman speaking was seated on a hill overlooking the Quappelle valley north of Sentatuta. She was of medium height and although her hair was almost white the face and eyes beneath it were serene & calm. The man seated at her side took his pipe from his mouth and pointing with the stem of it said "This part hasn't changed much over the years, this hill not at all. The road yonder; waving towards the north east with his pipe; has been built higher & wider that is all. All else is unchanged and if we wait a few minutes longer, <sup>we'll hear</sup> the whif-poor-will start his evening song." "Yes spring in the Quappelle valley." he halted there and said no more. He was a tall man and his hair was iron grey, his eyes had wrinkles round their corners as if he had squinted a long time against sun or snow. He sat still, pipe in mouth, gazing north across the valley.