

TRAILS' END

By AGNES LOUISE PROWSE

FOURTH INSTALLMENT

The water in her picher was fresh from the creek and cold. Anne splashed in it vigorously, one foot still tapping at odd moments in time to an intermittently hummed tune, but a disapproving pucker had come between her delicately marked brows. Now why did she have to do that silly trick? Why do anything which start anybody, even Martha, wondering where she had come from and what she had been before she had stepped off the two-thirty-eight at Marston? She must be more careful.

Dressing was a swift matter in these days. Insinuating odor of bacon and coffee were creeping in, but she went out of doors first.

Over by the horse corral she heard a sudden series of thumps, like dancing hoofs on hard ground.

Rounding the corner of the house she caught sight of Barry Duane. The dancing sounds came from the prettiest pinto Anne had ever seen, penned in the corral and making playful rushes at the gate. On the ground beside Duane was a saddle.

"Barry Duane, what are you doing?"

"Oh, hello!" He turned with a guilty grin. "Do you mind having visitors at this hour? I thought I'd bring a pinto down and ask you to exercise him occasionally. His name's Comet. It's a great riding country around here. I know some pretty good trails."

Her eyes shone. She tried to frown, and made a bad job of it.

"But you mustn't do such things. It's awfully good of you to want to, but I really can't—"

"Can't ride? I'll teach you in a morning."

"Don't be so innocent. You know what I mean. You've taken hours of your time and Petry's, and hammered and dug and sawed, and made special trips to Marston on errands that ought to have looked after myself, and even brought things down from your own ranch, but when it comes to taking your saddle horses—"

"Don't you like him?"

"Of course I like him. He's a darling."

"Then he's yours. And don't think that you are getting anything very great, because I have a hundred more running loose. Comet, come and make friends with your new boss."

The pinto arched his neck and looked warily at the strange hand. Anne reached over and ran her hand down a satiny neck.

"Oh, you beautiful thing!" she said softly. "How could anybody part with you?"

Barry Duane looked down at her with his nice smile.

"It doesn't have to be a complete separation. I've been hinting that I expect to come along when you ride him, but I haven't had even a nibble yet."

"You've got one now. I'm wild to try him."

"This morning?"

"Love to. Right after breakfast. Have you had yours or will you have some with us?"

"Both, thank you. I like Martha's coffee and I've been up since before five. Comet, we stay."

Half an hour later he was out again saddling the pinto for her and Anne was making a quick change into riding clothes.

Barry was waiting with the horses.

"All outfitted for the trail, aren't we? I suppose that means that you have ridden before?"

"Some. Not much," she added honestly, "but I'm crazy about it."

The pinto danced delicately, impatient to be off, but she held him in while Barry swung himself into his saddle. He nodded approvingly.

"That's just right. Keep a steady hand on him and he will soon know which one of you is boss. You'll find that he has plenty of ginger, but he's well behaved."

For the first half mile they scarcely spoke. Annet let Comet out a little. Pounding hoofs sounded back of her and the long-striding Captain soon came abreast. She gave Barry a radiant look, and his heart suddenly skipped a beat or two and went rocketing up into his ears.

After a time they came to a high flat that was like a parkland.

"Like to stop?" he suggested.

"This is one of the places I wanted to show you."

They found an inviting place to sit. Anne sighed happily.

"And to think," she added lazily, "that I'd planned to spend this heavenly morning struggling with a hoe."

"It's not a woman's work," he insisted doggedly. The mere suggestion seemed to make him angry. "If you need more help, let your neighbors take a hand. Or if you won't do that, Tranquillo has a nephew who will come by the day, and I'll see that he doesn't over-

charge you. I hate the idea of your grubbing in the fields. It doesn't fit you at all."

"I'm a hard-working woman, you know, not a princess in an ivory tower."

"You'd make a better princess than anyone I know."

She caught a dark flicker in his eyes. A warning little bell chimed somewhere in her head. Barry Duane was not the kind who made careless love.

The days ran by as swiftly as water slipping over a dam. There was still plenty of work to be done, but the first furious onslaught was over. Things were shaping up, indoors and out.

Every morning Anne ran out to look at the new green of her alfalfa fields. There were hours in the kitchen garden or out on the porch. Evenings she often sat with pencil and paper and thoughtfully poked her brow, trying to figure profits and losses, the cost of stock and what she ought to do next year.

Barry was looking after some neglected work on his own ranch, but every few days he found an excuse to stop at Trail's End. The obliging Boone Petry detoured to Trail's End every time he drove in to Marston and occasionally when he didn't.

Martha developed an uncanny presence in guessing when Petry was due and piling up errands and odd jobs for him.

They were out on the steps one day when Petry drove up, the old car piled with supplies.

"There's your package from the mail order house, Miss Anne, and here's a letter for Martha. No letters for you or me. Shall I take the groceries around back, Martha?"

He usually walked straight through the front door to the kitchen, as did everybody else, but today he flickered an eyelid at Martha and tramped around to the back door. Martha followed him.

"Look here, Martha, some of those old hens in Marston are talkin'."

"What's the matter with them?"

"Miss Anne's the matter. Miss Bagley, she can't get over the shock of findin' that there wasn't any tag on her coat, and Miss Caswell at the post-office, she says it's awful queer that Miss Cushing never gets letters from home like other folks."

"Well," said Martha sharply, "what did you tell her?"

"What could I tell her?" Petry scratched a worried head. Her being a lady, I couldn't very well cram her remarks down her throat, could I?"

"No," said Martha dryly. "Bein' a man, you wouldn't know how. Now see here, Boone Petry, the next time you hear any such hinterest'n conversation goin' on, you just slide up and tell 'em you know for certain, only you wouldn't tell anybody but them, that Miss Anne hasn't any folks except cousins she's never seen and she run away because her guardian wanted her to marry a rich old rake that she shated."

Petry grinned. "All right, Martha, just as you say."

Martha's mouth quirked briefly and sobered again.

"Look here, do you suppose Barry's heard any of this?"

"Don't believe so. If anybody's ever said it to him, he'd have sailed in and took 'em apart."

Martha looked worried. "No," she said grimly, "he wouldn't take 'em apart. He'd just turn 'em mad and freeze 'em until they cracked. And he'd rage inside all the way home, because he's awful fond of Miss Anne."

Inside of the house a voice was singing, a lilting soprano. Petry listened for a moment, eased the box softly to the table and tipped out again.

Anne was restless. She was alone, for Martha had gone to Marston to spend the day, leaving shortly after breakfast with Petry. At first it had been rather fun. She had roamed from the house to the creek and back to the house again, but little by little things that she wanted to forget had crept in.

She must not think of them; she didn't want to. This was a new life and she was going to be happy in it. She was happy. Would she ever feel free to do the things that other girls did—well, to marry, for instance? Even if she told the man first? But she couldn't tell. Whatever happened, she didn't dare to show you. . . . She wondered what Barry Duane would say if he knew.

She jumped up suddenly and gave herself an impatient shake. She would go out and saddle Comet, and leave it miles behind.

For the first level half mile they swept along in an exhilarating burst of speed, but after that she pulled the pinto down to a steady pace, and once turned to a steeper trail he bent down to business and climbed diligently.

This was the first time that she had ridden for any great distance

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alone, and there was a thrill in it. She meant to make the same circle that she and Barry had traveled on their first ride together.

For over an hour she rode slowly. Then she reined in and dismounted. Momet watched her dith liquid unblinking eyes as she climbed out to a boulder of red sandstone. It made a natural seat.

For a long time she sat there. The sun's rays were slanting from the west. Little by little the warmth and light were fading from her face again. She jumped up abruptly. She suddenly realized how low that sun was. "Comet!" she called. "Come, boy, we're going home."

No answering whinny came to her call. There was no sign of the pinto.

Anne stood very still for a moment, telling herself that she wasn't scared. It was her own fault; she ought to have "tied him to the ground," as Petry called it. She gave an anxious glance at those slanting rays and turned quickly to her way.

A swaying of bushes on a lower slope caught her eye, and then in an open space there was a flash of glossy pibald flanks. She called with all the strength of healthy young lungs. The pinto caught the sound, looked back and hesitated. She was within a hundred feet of him when he frisked capriciously, broke into an easy canter and stopped at a safer distance.

She could have wept with vexation. More slowly this time, Anne followed him with coaxing voice and outstretched hand. This was a nice game and Comet was feeling coltish and gay. He let her come quite near and then wheeled and cantered off again.

When she came to the next open space there was no sign of the pinto. She stopped and called again. There was no sound. The graceless Comet had gone light-heartedly about his own business, and she must get back to the trail and make her long way home.

The trail? The thought startled her. She made a turn, blankly strange, and came suddenly on a wall of rock.

It rose sheer, two hundred feet or more, directly in her path. She turned and looked back uncertainly, wondering where the first wrong turning had been. Back of her was the blank wall of cliff, and ahead and on both sides stretched an endless reiteration of trees and undergrowth and rocks in bewildering confusion.

There was no trail. She was lost.

Barry lounged comfortably in a big chair and wondered why Petry was so late. He had been out in the blazing Junipero all day, but he knew that Petry had conveyed Martha Larrabee in to Marston to spend the day, and the efficient Martha would not have allowed any such late returning to her own duties. Probably the old rascal had invited himself to supper at Trail's End.

Barry was thinking of a shabby little ranch house in a small valley, where a girl was gallantly tackling a man's job. Was a queer occupation for a girl like Anne Cushing to choose. Usually girls as pretty and dainty as Anne wanted anything that kept them manicured and permanently waved.

For a moment the fading sunset lights played a curious trick on him. He saw a shadowy figure in the chair opposite him, with luminous eyes and a curved mouth that smiled at him. He was always thinking of Anne. And he had known her only a few short weeks.

Steps came from the rear, heavy

to be shipped to Georgia and other southern states. The government will pack and can all that are fit for good and distribute to the unemployed."

He states further that "many towns are shipping in water from near by rivers, since many hundred wells and water systems are exhausted. Nothing like this has ever been experienced before over such a large territory. Of course we are getting vegetables from communities where they have had plenty of rain, there being plenty of everything in the markets, but many people have nothing to pay for food."

Rev. Simmons also tells of how he and his wife celebrated their "Golden Wedding" anniversary recently, and he recalls the fact that he has spent fifty-six years in the ministry. He is a native of this section, but has been in the west for a long period of time—Mt. Alty Times.

who have no faith in him. It was the lack of confidence in God that first cut man off from fellowship with him. He is spoken of as going in the cool of the day and talking with Adam in the garden until Eve allowed the enemy to persuade her to believe that God was withholding from her something by which she would be benefited and therefore was not worthy to be trusted.

The condition which the Lord lays down for a return to fellowship with him is the renewal of the lost confidence. We read that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So it is those who believe on or trust him who receive the blessing.

Why should not every one respond to the urge of the Spirit and trust his life with God? If we can trust inanimate things, animals, and people, we should not hesitate to trust God. He is much more worthy to be trusted than they.

He sent a band of angels to take you home to rest. We all miss you dearly, but none can take your place, but we are always thinking darling of your sweet loving face. Oh, how we miss you darling, but we all feel safe about you, for we know God needed you to complete his holy band. The gates were open, darling here on earth where you God needed you around His mighty throne. Oh how we miss you darling here on earth where you stayed, but you are with Jesus where no tears are shed and no pains are suffered. We all hope some day to be with little Jr. He has gone to join his little brother who passed away several years ago. Little Junior leaves to mourn his death a mother, Mrs. Bertha Jones, a father, Robert Jones, three sisters, Lucy Jones, Vivian Jones and Audrey Jones, one brother, James Jones. He was laid to rest in the Jones cemetery near Christie.

By a friend, Maggie Saunders.

Short Sermons

By J. B. CURRIN

The Exercise Of Faith

There is much more exercise of confidence, trust, or faith, whichever we wish to call it, than one might at first thought suppose.

We trust inanimate things every day. Such trust is exercised in such little things as collar buttons, shoe laces, matches, chairs and a host of others. With out even thinking of the fact we just depend on them serving the purpose for which they are intended. In like manner we trust dogs, horses and other animals.

We exercise confidence in manufacturers and merchants in the purchase of their goods. We trust our lives with trainmen and busmen when we ride with them. We go to hospitals and allow ourselves to be put to sleep and operated on not knowing whether or not we will come from the table alive.

Such an attitude towards things and towards men is necessary and becomes increasingly so as civilization advances. The more we discover, the more we achieve, the more we must exercise faith.

Faith or confidence in God is also necessary if we are to receive enjoy, and use life as we have the privilege of doing. One who has tried in vain to help those who have no confidence in him realize to some extent how impossible it is for God to bless as he desires those

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Letter Tells Of Drought In West

The terrible conditions in the drought stricken western states is graphically described in a letter which G. L. Simmons, local clothing merchant, received last week from his brother, Rev. W. A. Simmons, who is pastor of a church in Des Moines, Iowa, a section that is on the border of the most parched drought area.

The letter tells of the suffering of both people and animals in Iowa and neighboring states and mentions a shortage of water as far west as Colorado, a state that draws much of its water from the snow covered Rocky Mountains. Another of Mr. Simmons' relatives, Rev. W. E. Simmons, is pastor of the First Baptist church in Lamar, Colorado, and has recently been a visitor in Des Moines.

In describing the drought, Rev. Simmons states, "We are having a blighting drought in twenty western states. It certainly is distressing. There are thirteen hundred counties which will have to be fed by the government for the next year. Iowa will have a pretty good crop in about half the state, but from Des Moines south the crops are burnt up. Cattle are starving for food and water, and thousands are being killed just to relieve them of their suffering. The government is buying about two hundred thousand every day for slaughter, or

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