

Cartwright (Saturday Evening Post)

That might be entitled, "Idle Remarks on an Important Subject."

One of the members of the family who was always kind of a hero to me was my oldest brother, Russell. Russ was a very independent fellow with a rather violent, rather sharp temper. Even when he was very small he demonstrated rather exceptional skill with his hands. My mother often told how when he was only five - four or five - he built kites that were so large he could hardly get them out of the house. He used to dream about these kites at night, and wake up swearing loudly about somebody who couldn't hold his kite. He would make little sleds, wagons and other things of bits of wood and paper and have them be about the house. He has never lost this interest in building things. As he grew older he was the center of attraction for all of the mechanically-minded boys in the neighborhood. He fixed the bicycles, and later the motorcycles and cars. Even today he is known as one of the really.....well, there just isn't anything he can't fix. He has the innate love of machines that seems to be a part of every good mechanic. He was so independent, however, that he didn't bother to finish high school. He couldn't see it. It seemed to him rather a waste of time when there were lots more interesting things to do. As he got a job and became more free, he was away from home -- he considered it an absolute right to go out every evening, so that whenever he did for some reason or other stay at home it was as though we had a rather special guest and we all sat around and talked with him. He was opposed to all authority and used to have very loud arguments with my father and mother about how people should live--his idea being that young people had a right to live their lives the

way they wanted to. He was a man with a very generous heart and often gave a lot of money (a lot of money in those days—a lot of money in proportion to what he had) to friends. On Saturday nights he never came home but what he didn't have a huge bag of fresh fruit and candy for the family. But his independence often got him into arguments and squabbles. I worked with him intimately, closely for two or three years, until I moved into the Weather Bureau. He had a small — he had a truck with which we did general hauling, but mostly coal, and I have never seen a man who could wield a shovel with such intensity and speed as he could. Not big, but he was very strong. Strength was rather a thing admired in the family. He used to pull out his competes and all sorts of objects. I remember one time he made a set of bar bells out of old flywheels from a car. Oh, I forgot to say that my father had a ... one of the best friends in the family was a carpenter whose family, with his father and brothers, had quite a successful business which steadily grew. He was a constant visitor to the house and continually talked about the failures of the Administration or the lack of ambition of the part of orators. Even today when I go back home he always calls and these seem still to be the trend of his arguments. He has been a reasonably successful man, but he agreed to finance my brother in a hauling business - long distance hauling business - and the thing started off rather auspiciously. Unfortunately, not very long after it got going the truck caught fire due to faulty wiring, and for several years after sat rusting and dead as a sorry monument to what was a bright promise of early manhood. Yes, these were days—years of great pleasure and a variety of experience. We moved finally from rented homes which, incidentally, my father kept so well that the landlord usually increased the

rent after he had set everything in order. We moved finally to a new home in another part of the town--a rather better part. My father was persuaded by his German carpenter friend that he could and should finally buy a house. It was a change I didn't welcome^{and} for many months felt quite desolate at leaving my old familiar haunts and friends. I remember the first days at school, how lonely I felt, but I was always keen about school--in fact, at nine years I had never been absent or even tardy. I did well in school. It was known by most of the family as sort of a greasy grind. But it didn't, I don't think, keep me from enjoying most of the normal pleasures of boys. I was small. My mother said I had practically every children's disease that came along, but somehow they seemed to give me an immunity today which has brought me almost continuous good health. Even when I graduated from high school, I weighed less than 100 lbs. But hard work with my brother was to change this, and I was soon up to weight, approximately the weight which I now hold. Well, the move to the new part of town - the North Hills, it was called - was slowly developed into a pattern of life, new friends, and rather a more cultivated period. There I finished high school, somewhat before the depression began but I seemed to have difficulty in getting started in the proper job. Fortunately, I took up my work with the Weather Bureau in 1929, before the depression was really in full-sway. I never wanted for work from then on. The job was in Pittsburgh, and for a few months I lived there, but this was a very unhappy period because my thoughts continued to turn almost entirely to the family back home. I later learned that this was an impossible way to live. Finally, I moved back home and commuted the 100 miles a day between New Castle and Pittsburgh. This was a strain but it had many pleasant sidelights. At this time I began my school work at

Pitt and took on a substantial load of Scout training, and found myself oft times getting in at 2 A.M. and rising in time to catch the train at 6 A.M. I can remember many nights walking the two miles up the hill from the station, as there were no street cars, and pausing long enough occasionally to lean against the telephone pole, but this didn't seem to bether my health at all and I enjoyed it immensely. It was a busy, growing period. I fell in love with a rather attractive young ~~woman~~ girl, but ~~we~~ never got very far except to cause my mother a great deal of unhappiness.

During this period I gave virtually all my salary at home because there was a considerable strain on family finances.....to pay off the mortgage on the house....to keep the rest of the children in school in clothes. Soon after I left home -- or after I had left home, my grandmother who was living with us became more and more an invalid, and the strain - not the physical but the mental strain of having to be always present and worrying about her ups and downs, plus other problems, seemed to grow too much for my mother, and she suffered a nervous breakdown, plus a heart attack. She spent a few weeks in a sanatorium - a rest sanatorium - but when she came home she seemed to have learned a lesson that worry and fussing accomplish little, for even though she took things quite gently for a year or so thereafter, her health seemed to slowly improve, and today at 70-some she does practically all the work that needs to be done around a good-sized house. When I returned home to live I took an active interest with mother in our neighborhood church, and became one of the leaders. This was of tremendous benefit to me and helped more than anything else to bring me out of my shell of extreme shyness. I learned to talk on my feet, and even got to the point of taking part in amateur dramatics, which

I came to enjoy immensely. But then the big move finally came. I left Pittsburgh for Cleveland--^{not} much farther away but ~~still~~ certainly beyond commuting distance. Thus came the beginning of the real separation from my family. The Cleveland period was happy but there^{was} ~~was~~ a lot of tragedy, and finally I went south to Louisiana to take over ~~another~~ an upper air station on a military base. This was sort of a period of time and suspension. I married there against the wishes of ^{her} ~~my~~ mother, of her parents. Our marriage seemed happy enough. She was very young. We moved to Dallas, promotions came to Ft. Worth, a town which promised the happiest period in my married life. A wonderful community where they said "Out where the West Begins." Those were rich days. I took up my education in earnest, going to school full-time, working full-time, and did in one year - as well as working - what it takes most average students to do in a year and a half. It wasn't easy, but one soon gets in the habit and the frivolities of life seem unimportant. The children - the first girl came - a new phase of life that was great fun -- it brought new problems and new joys as well as sorrows. Then we moved to New York; the struggle of finding an apartment in this city after the glorious freedom of Texas was most depressing. The work was exciting and challenging, but after work not very fresh--not very new. School was more difficult because of constantly changing shifts, but I started in a modest way and then came the big break--the scholarship for full-time study. It seemed like a breeze after going to school full-time and working full-time. Well, I sailed through the course with considerable ease and success, then the War came. I went to Washington on detail for several months, leaving the family behind. Slowly the differences perhaps between myself,

my work and my family began to show. We finally moved together in Washington and bought a home and we started a fresh. This period was ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ one of steady development at work, but my family life was not as solid as it might have been. It lasted down there through the War, but then in 1945 I took a special assignment to Canada. It was intended to be only for a few weeks, but after the principal meetings were over they asked me to stay on until a permanent head could be found. I went back to Washington for two or three months, and was soon called to Montreal for a permanent assignment. These months of separation from my family seemed to improve the relationship. There was nothing open, just the deep subconscious, thus a weakening in ties. The six years in Montreal started off in a great way. It was a job with tremendous challenge, intense work at times, exciting contacts and travel, and in some respects I could have stayed on indefinitely with great pleasure. There is a whole tribe of fascinating people assembled from all over the world in a unique group. But my old job, my old boss, called me back. He called me and said they'd like to have me back. The assignment was Hawaii. By this time relations had become strained at home, and I went away to Hawaii alone. It was a year and a half of paradise in the Pacific, a period of almost perfect joy and intense loneliness, but the memory of that marvelous place never left me; that is, it is almost heart-breaking to visit for a few days and to know that you are not to be there indefinitely. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Nothing seemed to last and I always had the feeling that I was forever saying good bye to those who meant to me the most in life. Back to Washington and a better job—more responsibility—but no family. Then came a real change. The Antarctic with the Russians. It was the beginning for me of a new phase in my life that had been so changeable as to seem almost periodic, without

continuity and the enrichening growth that comes from stability. It ties with the past by which one can judge improvements in the future. What did it mean?

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Note to the Stenographer:

~~RE~~ The beginning of this text actually lies more to the end of this particular roll of tape, however, it is probably not important to have it typed in specific order.

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(Continued on Page 8)

(SEE NOTE TO STENOGRAPHER ON PAGE 6)

The comparatively small town of New Castle, Pennsylvania. New Castle was a steel town. Steel was in the air literally and in the lives of everyone who lived there. The United States Steel dominated the community for 40 or 50 years, and when the mill was no longer economical to run they built another at Gary left the town to its own devices. Old Judge Gary was either a god or a demagog depending on the conditions of the mills and the stratta of society with whom he talked.

My family started out, actually my father came from England when he was about six to join his father Charles who was already here trying to set up a home. My grandfather, Charles, was a man of the old school and there was no love between my father and him. He had lost one eye in an accident in the watermill and as long as I knew him he raised squab, tame pigeons for Hart's Hotel, the restaurant owner. I don't remember ever seeing a squab on our table and as far as I know none of his children ever had one. He believed that a man ruled his castle. I remember my father saying that his mother always served the old gentleman his dinner alone, the children and the mother eating at the second table. She stood behind the chair, saying, "Yes, father? What is it father?" Even had to butter his bread. This system may have been alright in England but it didn't work in America and none of the children, so far as I knew really had a regard or affection for the old man. He lived with us from time to time. He was always tidy, neat, quiet and lived to the ripe age of 92 with a shot of whiskey and two soft boiled eggs for breakfast as long as I knew him.

My father was a very quiet industrious, hard-working, un-ambitious, un-

imaginative man. He was a good father who was steady and denied us nothing he could possibly afford and did many things he should not have done.

My mother on the other hand, although she only went to school through the fourth grade, was a very competent person. She was born of Welsh parentage and lived in the town of Fullerton, Pennsylvania, where a whole clan of Welshmen lived, dug the hard coal and died as they did in the green hills of Wales. They had a very large family but most of them seemed to have died young. My grandmother lived with us nearly all the time I can remember. She was a warm-hearted, worrysome woman who thought my mother didn't love her children because she didn't worry about them every bit of the day. But as in many of the older families, the wealth of them is they all seem to have an older person, quarrelsome and jealous, but still exercising an enriching influence on the family life, doting on the grandchildren and telling them stories of the past which to me was so wonderful to hear.

I suppose of all the seven children in our family, I was more ^{Welsh} ~~welshy~~ than any. I loved music from an early age and was the only one who tried to learn to speak Welsh--I never succeeded but it was fun and I love to be with the Welsh people, so colorful, so temperamental, so strong in their family ties. Yes, there were seven in our family: one girl, the oldest, five boys, and then Ruth, the youngest. My mother often said after five boys she found it difficult to raise another girl. She liked boys, understood them. I have always thought of her as a remarkable woman. She had a first-class mind, an amazing memory and a tremendous interest in people and events, but events because they ~~at~~ illuminated the people who took part.

From a sickly girl she became a robust woman who could carry a full washtub of water up out of the basement into the back yard. She always did her own work.

I remember when all the boys were grown, the job of ironing 30 white shirts every Tuesday didn't seem to bother her in the least; canning, baking, all the work that ten members of the family required because seven children, two parents and one grandparent made a full house. But this was her joy, it seemed; she loved people and our place was always crowded with out-of-town guests or just neighbors in for a visit. On week-ends it seemed as though we were running an automobile agency there were so many cars about.

Strikes and paper problems were a ^{very} real part of our existence. The real life of the family depended on the success or failure of the mill. I was born in 1909, the year of the big Homestead Strike which put my father out of work as well. He struggled on odd jobs for more than a year trying to keep a going family alive. My mother often recalled the good time she had in the little cottage on the west side of town. My grandmother often told about standing on streets trying to keep the strike-breakers from - or scabs as they called them - from taking -- doing the work of the strikers. It was these events that left their mark on the community, and even for years after I can remember my grandmother saying, "Ah, yes, but he was a scab." My father took a very active interest in the work of the Socialist party. I remember one of the early pictures of him sitting at the table with his hand under his chin, rather in the role of the thinker. He wasn't really, but he felt a natural kinship for these people who were concerned with the unfair and arrogant practices which the great industrial groups seemed to pursue in those days. I often thought how little ~~the~~ ^{the} really/common workmen wanted, and the attitudes of the big industrialists seemed so short-sighted. In fact, arrogant beyond words. There seems no question of U. S. Steel ruled this little town

with a firm hand. When the labor market became short, they saw that new workers, Italians and other Europeans were brought in. We had no Carnegie Library; apparently the company felt that a town of this size and of this character really didn't need a library, so ^I ~~we~~ struggled on all my school years with a very inadequate library that would hold dilapidated old books, until finally the U. S. Government built a new Post Office and donated the old one to the city for a library. Now there are many reasons why the ordinary working man can feel resentment against "big business". Unfortunately now it seems that labor has become arrogant--corrupt. The pendulum will no doubt swing again if we are around long enough to see it. I said that steel was in the air and in the minds and in the lives of every member of this community. I remember well the old slips which we used to have. Apparently the Rosena Furnace--blast furnace--was coming old and broken-down. Occasionally the complicated charging system would fail, or the furnace wouldn't operate properly and a minor explosion would occur which would throw a tremendous -- a huge, red cloud of ore high into the air. We, as children, had strict orders that if we ever saw one of these slips coming and my mother had windows open or clothing on the line we had to raise the alarm, because this red dust falling on a line full of wet clothing produced disastrous results. I remember ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ sweeping it from the porch and sidewalk on many occasions. I suppose this was one reason why U.S. Steel decided to leave New Castle, because it was easier to build somewhere else than to tear-down the old plant. New Castle is a drab, dirty city like most steel centers, but it was home. I loved to take a walk down into the small built-up area that we called the south side where the mills were. At night, in the early spring, when the air was thick with fog and everything soggy--it was such a thrill to see the light some of these

mysterious--this mysterious setting would give to the windows as we passed see the gathering of family--such a warmth and intimacy contrasted with the bleakness of the outside. The Welch families were strong and I think happy ones, although they tended toward ~~XXXXXXXX~~ tragedy there is a certain wildness in their blood, it seems, which made for difficulties. Strong emotions, great passions. They seemed to have the kinship of the Italians in this respect. But their love for music was always a powerful influence on me. I can remember lying in bed on a hot summer's night - the mill - men would be coming back from the amusement park which was somewhat beyond where we lived -- and I have never heard sweeter music than the harmony of these voices in the night air. It had a tremendous appeal with a sense of richness, glamour. There was no one in our family who really sang well, but we had a piano which my sister played. My other sister married an Irishman ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ - a big-hearted man who became rather successful in the hotel business--a success which brought nothing in the way of happiness. She was a very different -- my aunt was very different from mother -- rather pretty, fickle, light-headed who, when modest prosperity came to them, seemed to be completely off her balance, spending money as though the supply was _____.

I have heard my mother say many times, "What a pity--the day will surely come when she will wish she had it back again." We could have easily lived quite comfortably

I remember
with the money that was wasted. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ she used to bring -- she never darned a stocking -- if it had a hole in it she would put it in a big bag; so my mother asked her if she would bring them to us. From the outcast clothing my mother made quilts and clothing for the children growing up. She was a wonderful seamstress.

Every Sunday evening they would bring their family to our place -- this was a period of wild joy for all of us. They were a lively group. They had an aura, an affluence about them but the children never seemed affected by this-- we had wonderful times together, and as the evening would close ~~we~~ she would sit down at the piano, she played by ear, and we would have the most glorious time singing old songs and just being together. Yes, these were very rich days, and I can't think how they could have been improved. The lack of money was no real barrier to our happiness. We had our troubles, of course, but they were minor. My smaller brother -- youngest brother -- had a bad abscess in his throat from which he nearly died. Following that he had great difficulty in swallowing. One of my uncles invariably went to town on Saturday evening and he came home at a reasonable hour always with some candy in his pocket for the children. And he almost always gave some of these candies to us. His favorite was the little, black negro babies. I can remember on how many occasions my young brother, then only a year or so old, would get these caught in his throat. Mother would run screaming from the house; my sister would catch him by the feet and turn him over and give him a sharp whack on the back and the candy would come out. In all of the excitement my uncle would quietly leave.

(END OF TAPE 2A)