

The Free Press' Short Story

MOUNTAINS TO CLIMB

By RUSSELL GORDON CARTER

MR. RAYBURN, the state superintendent of education, glanced up from the papers on his desk and carefully removed his glasses. His eyes were troubled as he turned toward the tall blond young man seated beside him.

"I am sorry you are not older and more experienced," he said. "Do you realize that if I send you to Pine River, you will be teaching boys who are only a few years younger than yourself?"

Martin blushed. "And you note, that those boys proved altogether too big a problem for their previous teacher, whose place I now have to fill?"

"Yes, sir, I know that."

Mr. Rayburn hesitated. Not merely the applicant's youth and inexperience troubled, but something in his manner the superintendent found far from reassuring, an apparent casualness that he was not quite able to understand.

"I should like to know," the superintendent said abruptly, "why, in your application for a teaching job, you expressed a preference for a place in the Pine River country?"

Martin smiled rather self-consciously. "To be quite frank, it was because of the mountains," he replied.

"I'm afraid I don't understand you," Mr. Rayburn lifted his eyebrows.

"Well, I've always been fond of mountains," Martin added, "and of course if I were located in the Pine River country, I'd be able to do some climbing."

"Oh," said the superintendent. Leaning back in his chair, he fixed his gaze on the ceiling. He suddenly wanted to laugh, mirthlessly cynically. Never in his life had he met so unpromising an applicant!

"Of course," said Martin. "I think I can teach the boys something. If I didn't, I'd tell you so, frankly."

Mr. Rayburn rose and began to pace the room. He asked himself what he should do. The school at Pine River was without a teacher, it was scheduled to begin at once, and the young man seated beside the desk was the only available candidate for the place. Would it be worth while to give him a chance? Or would it be better to postpone the opening of the school until a better teacher could be found?

At last the superintendent came to a decision. Pacing beside the desk, he said abruptly, "Very well, we'll see what you can do. I want to open the school on time or it would have a bad effect on the boys. The boys would be puffed up to think they had driven their teacher out, and no one to replace him. So good luck to you, and I hope you may succeed!"

"I intend to succeed," Martin replied. For the first time Mr. Rayburn observed determination as well as good humor in the set of the young man's mouth.

Late that afternoon Martin was on the train speeding northward.

The school at Pine River was a small square building of gray shingles on the northern outskirts of the village. Seated at his desk on the slightly raised platform, Martin was again aware of mountains. The lowered cold and blue through the windows above the heads of the fourteen boys who had assembled, reluctantly after a long vacation. He said to himself, "This afternoon I'll do some climbing," glancing again toward his pupils, he said:

"Now, fellows, we're all going to be together here in the classroom, so let's get acquainted. My name is Mr. Bligh, and—"

"At that point one of the boys at the back of the room uttered a kind of snort that was clearly intended to provoke disorder.

"We seem to have a pig in the room," observed Martin, then he added, "Now, I'm going to ask each fellow to tell me his name. When I come to the pig, he can snort if he wants to. Let's begin on the right—"

"Joseph Howard," said a thick-set, red-haired boy in the front seat. "We call him Red!" a boy in the other side added.

Again, laughter came and Martin smilingly asked, "Who's the boy behind Red Howard?" he asked.

"William Gibson."

"And the fellows call you Bill, is that right?"

"Yes."

"Next," said Martin. "First give me your real name, then your nickname. That'll save time."

"Duncan Hall," Duncan said for short.

"Next," said Martin.

During the quarter of an hour that followed numerous attempts were made at horseplay, but Martin's good humor was unshaken. He had a good memory, and when all fourteen of the boys had given their names he was able to repeat them without a mistake. That impressed the class, and he felt that he had made a good beginning.

His hopes received a jolt, however, when he began the serious work of the day. The boys were not interested in it.

At the end of the day Martin felt worn out. He climbed no mountains that afternoon; instead he went to his

room and sat for a long time pondering; wondering how he might do better.

The next day was a repetition of the first. If the teacher entered into the spirit of the boys' follies, they were satisfied; that they found him likeable was apparent. As soon as he took up the serious work of the class, they returned to their old attitude of indifference.

A week passed with no signs of improvement. During that week Martin viewed the mountains only from a distance, his hiking shoes were under the bed, where he had placed them the first day. He recalled his confident remark to the superintendent: "I intend to succeed!" He had not succeeded and his pride was touched. He resolved to do no climbing until he had gained the mastery over his class, until he was a teacher in fact as well as in name!

Thus far he had managed to maintain his good humor and to conceal his discouragement, but one day an event occurred that proved to be a little too much for him. For the past two or three mornings a few of the boys had been arriving five or ten minutes late on this particular morning six of them were absent when class began. He inquired if anyone knew where they were, although he guessed from their attitude of suppressed mystery that those present knew something concerning the absent ones.

"Well, let's begin," he said and proceeded with the assignment in arithmetic.

Three quarters of an hour later, while he was in the midst of an explanation, the six boys entered the classroom and, with an appearance of indifference, took their seats. The rest of the class began to titter, but this ceased abruptly as Martin strode from the blackboard to the desk.

"Fellows," he said sharply, "you're playing a dirty game! If this were football and I were your coach, you six fellows who just came in would be off the team for the rest of the season!" He pointed his finger at Douglas Crandall, one of the late arrivals. "Crandall," he said, "stand up!"

The boy hesitated, but something in Martin's eyes made him obey; he slouched reluctantly to his feet.

"Now, Crandall, what have you got to say? Why did the six of you decide to come in three-quarters of an hour late?"

Douglas Crandall shrugged his shoulders and made no reply. Again there was tittering and Crandall looked pleased and important.

Martin's hands were cold and trembling. He knew it was a mistake to allow the class to see that he was angry, but he could not help it. "Sit down!" he ordered. "And then, in a quivering voice he added, 'If a thing like this happens again, there's going to be trouble!'"

Despite the force of his utterance, he knew that he had made a poor impression. The boys had "got a rise" out of him and were delighted.

While the class were writing, he sat with gaze fixed beyond the windows. There, far off, were the mountains that he longed to climb. He remembered his resolve to do no climbing until he had gained the mastery over his class. Disheartened by the recent encounter, he wondered if he had not been rather foolish to make such a resolution. Why not let the class go their own way?

A cloud passed across the sun, and the mountains were almost black. Martin Bligh had not seen them before in that somber mood, and he was impressed by their beauty and strength. They seemed somehow to stir him to unknown depths, something was heartening and inspiring in their massive strength and steadfastness. "No," he decided, "if I can't handle these boys, I don't deserve the fun of climbing!"

The morning passed without incident, and Martin felt that possibly his sharp words and display of anger might have had a good effect after all, but at the afternoon session, to his surprise and dismay, only one boy, Duncan Hall, was in his seat at the appointed hour! Martin waited ten minutes, and still none of the others appeared.

As the minutes passed, he felt a growing conviction, he had told the class that in the event of further tardiness, trouble would result, and now they had deliberately accepted his challenge!

"What's become of the others?" he inquired abruptly.

Duncan Hall lowered his gaze. Martin walked down the aisle and seated himself on the desk next to Duncan's. "Look here, Duncan," he said, smiling. "I don't want you to squeal of course not! But I think I know as well as you do what's happened; the rest of the class intend to find out if I meant what I said this morning."

The boy lifted his head. "How did you know that?" he asked in surprise.

Martin shrugged his shoulders. "Why didn't you join them?" he inquired.

The boy moistened his lips. "Because—well, because I didn't think it was the square thing to do!"

"I'm grateful to you, Duncan!"

"Something in Martin's voice touched the boy. Lifting his eyes abruptly, he said, 'Mr. Bligh, I don't care whether they call me a squealer or not! It's

true, what you said, and the whole bunch of them are in Red Howard's cabin down the path. They intend to stay there until school's almost out and then come in, just to see what you'll do!"

Martin walked with slow steps to the window. Again, for a brief moment, he felt the temptation to let the class go in its own way; but in front of him were the mountains, strong, steadfast, somehow inspiring! He turned and strode to the desk. Picking up his geography book, he said to Duncan Hall, "Come along!"

A few moments later he said Duncan were outside, following the path that led downhill through the woods. At the end of perhaps ten minutes they came to a small rough shack beside a stream, and there were the rest of the class, some of them inside the shack some lounging about on the grass outside. They greeted the teacher, with looks of startled surprise.

Martin glanced at his watch. "All right, fellows," he said as if everything were natural and orderly, "everybody inside the cabin. We're almost twenty minutes late, but we'll make up for it."

The boys obeyed him wonderingly, crowding into the shack.

"Now, fellows," he added, "now you seem to like this place better than the schoolhouse, we'll hold class right here. He paused impressively. "Ever since I came to Pine River you fellows have been trying to get my goat. Well, you got it this morning, but I'll promise you you'll never get it again! If I sent up here to teach you something, and believe me, I'm going to do it!"

"Of course," Martin continued, "if I wanted to, I could go to your parents and tell them you went off in the woods when you ought to have been at school. In that case some of you would get a licking. But I don't want that to happen, and I don't believe you do! Now for the geography lesson! Red Howard, since you own this cabin you'll have the honor of answering the first question: What is an isthmus? First, give the definition and then take that stick and draw one for me on the blackboard!"

The boy looked bewildered. "On the blackboard?" he repeated.

"Yes," said Martin and pointed to the dirt floor.

The others grinned as Red Howard stepped forward.

That was the beginning of Martin's triumph. Despite the cramped quarters, he kept the class in the cabin for the full period. At the end of it he asked the boys where they would prefer to meet thereafter, in the crowded cabin again or in the schoolroom where all might be comfortable. They voted in rather a shame-faced manner for the school-room.

The next morning they were all in time. During the days that followed it was apparent that their attitude had changed for the better. Less horseplay was seen and some of the boys began to show an interest in the work.

Meanwhile, thrilled by his triumph, Martin devoted much of his spare time to devising new means of holding their interest. He climbed no mountains; but then the term finally ended, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had really taught the boys something.

The day that followed the end of the term he was obliged to return to the city, without having climbed a single one of the peaks that surrounded Pine River Village. The day after that he again confronted the state superintendent in his office.

"I have had some exceedingly good reports of your work," Mr. Rayburn exclaimed as he clasped Martin's hand. "I needn't tell you, I am delighted, for I admit I had grave misgivings."

"Yes, I know that, Mr. Rayburn," the superintendent interrupted him. "What do you care to take the school again?"

"Yes, I would, because this semester I feel that I've done nothing more than just make a start."

"Good," said Mr. Rayburn. He added, casually, "You were interested, I believe, in the mountains up there. Did you climb any?"

Martin suddenly laughed. "Why, yes," he replied whimsically. "I climbed fourteen of them, but the curious thing about it, Mr. Rayburn, is that there's not a speck of mud or dirt on my hiking shoes!"

For an instant the superintendent looked puzzled, then his eyes crinkled in an understanding smile.

Weekly Garden-Graph Written by DEAN HALLIDAY for Central Press Canadian



What to do about tomato rot

There are certain precautions which should be taken if tomatoes in the home garden are to be kept healthy. In the average vegetable garden, where only a small amount of space is available, tomatoes should be tied to stakes or trained on trellises. Aside from saving space by staking, the tomato patch will look neater and the tomatoes will be cleaner than they would be if the vines were allowed to sprawl on the ground. When staked or trellised, tomatoes ripen more quickly because the sun can reach them easier. Most important of all, however, is the fact that if the tomatoes are kept off the ground there will be less danger of their being attacked by rot.

Tomato rot is a common disease which develops as a result of conditions unfavorable to the plants. Often rot is the result of a long period of dry weather, or again it can develop as a result of a long period of moist, warm weather. Tomato rot turns the diseased part of the fruit black as shown in the accompanying illustration. Spraying tomato plants with Bordeaux mixture or dusting with copper lime mixture for a few weeks after the plants are set out is the best means of preventing the disease. Burn any fruits which are found to be infected.

NOTHING LIKE LEATHER FOR OUR ARMY BOOTS

The output of Canadian shoe factories has been stepped up to such an extent that now, every week, 30,000 pairs of solid leather boots for the Army, the Navy and the Air Force are delivered to the Department of National Defence. The exigencies of modern warfare have not eliminated marching. The Canadian soldier, in order to stand up under rigid drilling, while in training, and more strenuous footwork in the lines of battle, must be well shod. Each pair of these 30,000 manufactured every week for the armed forces has passed rigid tests. Whether he was a miner, a surveyor or a farmer, the recruit is issued with a pair of boots as strong as he ever wore. A plant visited in Montreal is typical of shoe factories in the Dominion which are working feverishly to look after the needs of the army. There, as in other plants, the faint tap, tap, tap of the ancient cobbler has become a roaring hum of numerous machines, each doing its job at lightning speed. The maximum output of this factory is 600 pairs of boots a day. It employs 350 workers, 40 per cent of whom are women. To date, it has delivered 55,000 pairs to the Department of Defence.

In huge work rooms the infantryman's heavy boots are born of sheets of solid cowhide leather. The casing is solidly nailed and bound to a sole half an inch thick, reinforced with steel blades. Brass tacks are sunk into the sole and the heel. The latter is finished off with a solid steel plate. The Canadian tar's boot varies little from the army's. Hooks supplement lace-holes. A waterproof, rubber and waterproof canvas inlay adapts it to navy conditions. The airman's shoe is lighter, being made of calf leather instead of cowhide. The sole has no steel reinforcement and the heel is of rubber.

These shoes are of thoroughbred stock, bearing the Government stamp of approval. They will prove superior to any Ersatz product the Germans can paste together.

French army engineers are shown inspecting the wreckage of a German bombing plane that was brought down on French soil with only the undercarriage damaged. Apparently, since the opening of the German blitzkrieg on the Low Countries and France, more than 1,000 warplanes have been brought down.

Save Your Quarters for a Certificate, and Serve by Saving

DOMINION OF CANADA WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATE 25 FIVE DOLLARS or TEN DOLLARS

Start saving for one of these and help Canada fight at the same time. War Savings Certificates are issued at \$5, for which you pay \$4, being redeemable at full price in 7 1/2 years; and are issued in \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100 denominations, which can be purchased at propor-

Canada's War Plans Realized and Expanded

Enlarged and Accelerated Effort Told Briefly by Plain Figures

From the statements of the Prime Minister—Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, and other Ministers to the House of Commons this week, the following summary has been prepared. It shows in brief form Canada's war achievements to date and the extended plan for the future.

What Canada has done: Over 100,000 men on active service on May 10th.

This comprises: Canadian Active Service Force, 61,819; Royal Canadian Navy, 6,614; Air Force, 12,316.

Total war contracts let to May 15th: \$275,000,000. Of this amount \$200,000,000 placed on behalf of Canadian Government; \$75,000,000 on behalf of Allied Governments. All except \$50,000,000 placed in Canada.

Twenty shipyards engaged in the production of 90 vessels of war. Under construction: 82 aircraft carriers, 175 construction projects, including coastal fortifications, submarine defenses and hangars.

On order: 9,000 motor vehicles, at a cost of \$14,000,000. Of these, 3,000 already delivered overseas.

War munitions being manufactured at a cost of \$80,000,000.

Industry working full speed to meet future requirements of clothing, boots and personal equipment.

In commission: Seven destroyers, 15 minesweepers, 15 fisherman's reserve vessels, six anti-submarine vessels, 51 other auxiliary craft. Conversion of three high-speed merchant ships to light cruisers to be completed shortly.

Canada's war program calls for: Formation of Third Division. Early dispatch of Second Division overseas. Appointment of Minister for Air Recruiting to be pushed forward. Formation of Canadian corps in the field.

Two additional destroyers for Royal Canadian Navy.

Output of pilots and air crews, preparation of aerodromes and hangars to be speeded up by every feasible method.

Full-time Minister to be in charge of Munitions and Supply. Special powers to enable Minister to speed up provision of equipment and materials.

Creation of a new Ministry for Air. Expenditure of \$2,000,000 per day on war effort alone.

GROWTH OF C.A.S.F.

On September 6th last, before Canada entered the war, 22,878 troops of all ranks had been recruited. On September 24th, the number of the Canadian Active Service Force had risen to 56,817. On May 20th, it stood at 83,394, exclusive of reinforcements. Added to the personnel of other branches of the service, Navy and Air Force, the number of Canadians on active service is well over the 100,000 mark. The decision to raise a Third Army Division will boost this total by many more thousands.

TIRED WAITING

Father—You are going to marry that insignificant little fellow Perry? Why you must see to say you would never marry a man less than six feet high.

Daughter—I know, dad. But I decided to take off 20 per cent, for cash.

TRAINED PERSONNEL INCREASED

A promising feature of the Canadian aircraft industry is the marked increase, this early date, in available trained personnel. Manufacturers are feeling the benefit of graduating classes from technical institutions. These advanced students are being added to the skilled workers trained and developed by the companies themselves.

EXTENSIVE TRAVELING

A youth who had great enthusiasm for his work was asked to travel. He was willing to do so and said: "If I do travel there are only a few places where I should want to go. They are Orpington, Plymouth, Ardabaha, Lagan, Ancora, Rhode Island, Minorca."

How did he make his listing? Answer—Raising poultry.

On Sale Now! WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATES

A direct obligation of the Dominion of Canada. "Since the momentous day of last September, hundreds of thousands of Canadians have been asking themselves, 'What can I do to help win the war?' "One answer is, 'By saving.' Every man, woman and child in the Dominion can now make a direct and continuing contribution to Canada's war effort by saving not only his dollars, but also his nickels, dimes and quarters to buy Canada's War Savings Certificates.

WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATES are repayable in seven and one-half years. If you hold them to maturity, you will receive 3% on your money — your investment will increase by 25%. They are sold as follows: For a \$5 certificate you pay \$4 For a \$10 certificate you pay \$8 For a \$25 certificate you pay \$20 For a \$50 certificate you pay \$40 For a \$100 certificate you pay \$80

TO FIT ANY BUDGET: You can take advantage of this patriotic and profitable savings plan, whether your savings are measured in dollars or in occasional nickels, dimes and quarters. Canada's War Savings Certificates are expressly designed to appeal to the man or woman of modest means who cannot afford to subscribe to war bonds of larger denominations, but who desires to do something tangible to assist the Country's war effort.

CHILDREN TOO: Even children can purchase War Savings Certificates, using their coppers, nickels and dimes to buy War Savings Stamps at 25c each. Sixteen of these stamps will buy one \$5 Certificate.

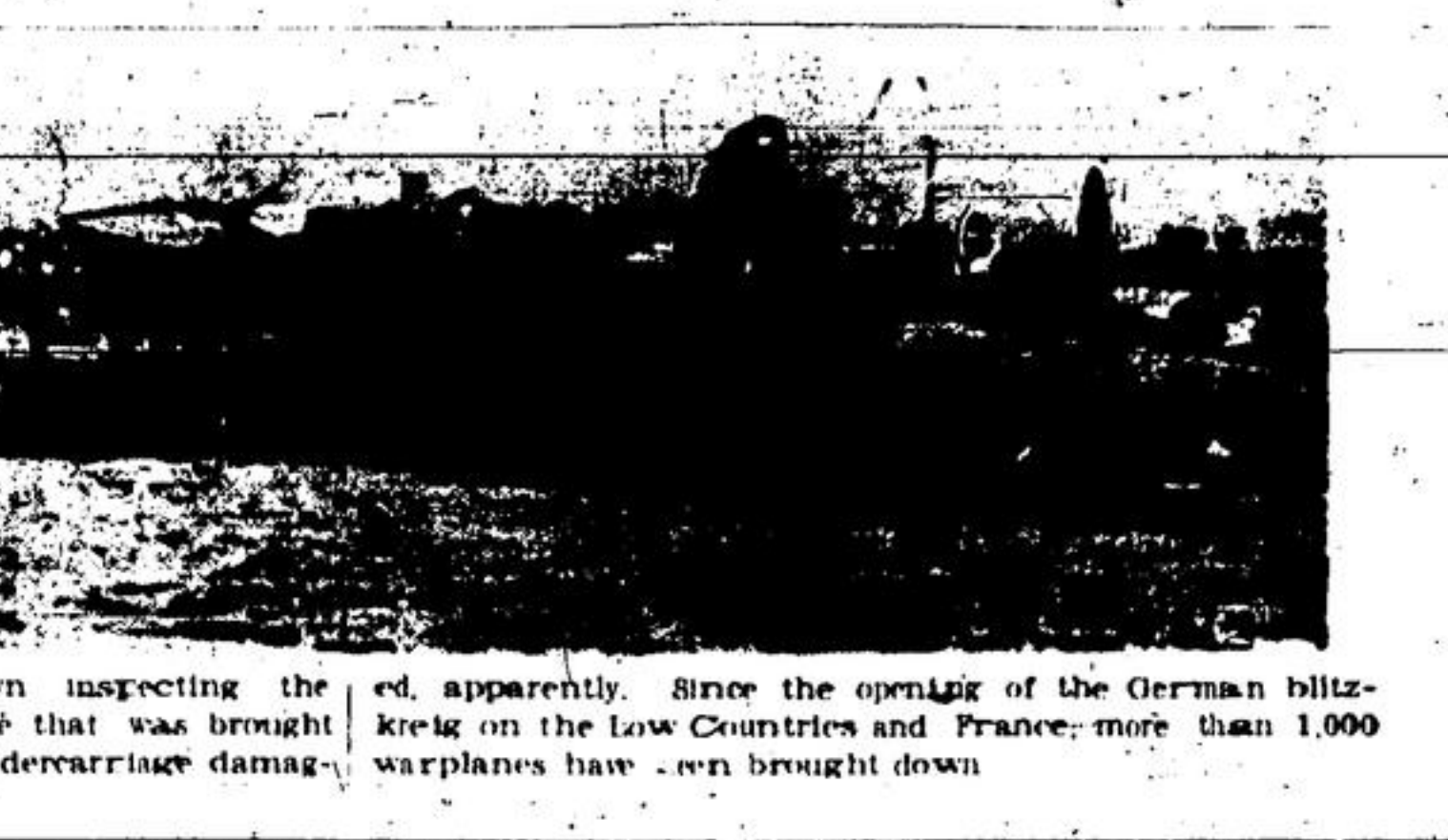
DEVELOP THE SAVING HABIT: You can purchase as many War Savings Certificates as you like, up to \$500 maturity value in any calendar year. Buy them when you wish — buy them often. Remember, systematic saving is successful saving — and your Country needs your money.

REGISTRATION: Each War Savings Certificate is registered in one name only, and is not transferable.

REDEMPTION: War Savings Certificates cannot be called for redemption by the Government prior to their date of maturity. The owner, however, has the option, after six months, of redeeming his certificate for cash at fixed redemption values. In urgent cases, advance notice will be waived.

You too can SERVE - by SAVING! Complete information and application forms at BANKS, POST OFFICES AND DEALERS

Post Mortem on a German Bomber



French army engineers are shown inspecting the wreckage of a German bombing plane that was brought down on French soil with only the undercarriage damaged.

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tional "cut rates." You can buy the \$5 denomination for \$4 cash or you may buy War Savings Stamps at 25 cents each, and turn them in on a certificate when you have the required amount. Stamps will be sold by banks, post offices and many stores.