

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE

"Let no man despise thy youth"—I. Timothy 4:12

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### FAITH MOVES A MOUNTAIN

A Happy Thanksgiving Day as told to  
Mary Noble

All my life I hated the great towering mountain at the edge of a meadow across the road opposite our home in northern New Hampshire. It was too near the house, hedging us in. Its beauty was marred by a path where no trees grew, nearly a hundred feet wide, from the thimble-shaped summit straight down to the meadow. It looked like an artist's canvas picture slashed through the middle by a vandal's knife. We called it the "slash."

Doug, McNeil, a neighbor, two years older than I, continuously taunted me. "Why don't you have that mountain removed? It's easy. The Bible says all you got to do is to have as much faith as a grain of mustard seed, the littlest of all seeds, and say to the mountain 'get going' and it will be gone."

Years later, when Doug and I had finished college, we sat on the steps and watched the moon go down behind the hated mountain. We were young, drenched in moonbeams and romantic dreams. Always we had loved each other and expected to marry. He said, "That mountain is there for keeps, Mary, to the end of time, but you can get out from behind it."

But I could not get out. Being an only child, my parents lavished everything on me but the choice to govern my life. Mother was ailing and needed me. We went to Europe for her health and to complete my cultural education. The McNeils began to go to Florida for the winter. Doug went with them, in business with his father. I stayed at home to make my mother's last days happier.

Her "last days" covered a period of nine years. After her death, father's health was failing; he could not bear that I should leave him.

Each summer Doug pleaded for our happiness, but I could not go away. Perhaps the chief deterrent had a lot to do with the little Presbyterian church whose steeple pointed so feebly toward heaven. I believed, as all devout Calvinists, that God has a definite pattern for each human life in His Kingdom; a pattern molded by the inexorable laws of duty.

The fatal day came when I had to make choice between the love of my heart and the dictates of conscience. Doug concluded his plea with, "It's that mountain! It has gotten into your blood. Your soul is shut in, walled about. You've let a complex ruin our lives."

Doug went back to Florida, to sunshine and warmth and gaiety. I stayed with a paralytic father, reading to him hours on end, gazing out the windows at the snow-whitened mountain.

Some months later I read in a New York paper a brief notice of the marriage of Douglas McNeil and Peggy Shore in Florida.

Doug and his wife came to New Hampshire the first summer. Peggy was a pampered eighteen-year-old child. College-bred, highly cultured, world-traveled, Doug made the best of what was obviously a mistake. They returned to Florida and I knew would never come back.

As the slow days dragged, news seeped to my far-northern prison-home that Peggy had

borne two weak, sickly babies, a year apart; that Doug spent most of the time abroad, alone, on business.

After eight years my father died. At last the time had come for me to get out. But when the first shock of grief was lifting I found myself financially stranded, walled in forever. All I possessed on earth was the old brick mansion and useless acreage, for the soil was worn out. Ironically, I was sole owner of the mountain. A small insurance might tide me over for one year.

I was forty years old. The evening before Thanksgiving Day, one week after my father's funeral, I sat on the sheltered end of the porch watching the waving curtains of snow sheets that obscured the mountain to a dim, barricading outline. In a suppressed frenzy of fear and despair I took cognizance with myself and God.

I tried, humbly, to cling to the faith that God ruled the world. I spoke aloud, "Yes, you can do all things, but what have you done for me? I have given my youth in service to my parents. Every day of my life I have said my prayers, including 'Thy Kingdom Come.' Every Sunday I've gone to church and listened to the exposition of the Scriptures called sermons. It has gotten me nowhere.

"Here I sit, alone, and it is Thanksgiving Day tomorrow. I am defeated, thwarted, frustrated in everything that gives glory to womanhood or that makes life worth while.

"And now, God, what are you going to do about it? I'm through! Done. Finished. I can't sleep at night; tormented because there is nothing ahead, not even food and shelter. How can I live in this big, empty house? I can't even pay the taxes after this year? It will be taken away, like everything else.

"I ask you, God, what are you going to do about it? I dump the whole mess of my life into your lap. You claim to have the pattern of it, so here it is. Take it!"

Shivering with cold, I went inside and crept into bed, and, strangely, dropped to sleep at once.

That Thanksgiving morning, the rays of a rising sun streaming into my face awakened me.

Standing by the window I watched the sun rise, like an altar flame. A strange sense of peace permeated me. The stark tragedy of inner deadness and rebellion of the evening before was gone. A quiet surge of life welled into my heart. Involuntarily, I walked to another window and looked toward the mountain. Strangely, the mountain mattered no longer; I dismissed it. Nothing mattered but what was going on inside my being; God was proving Himself by His presence and reality. New hope was breaking through.

Suddenly I remembered that it was Thanksgiving Day, and my heart breathed its first Thanksgiving prayer in many years—an outpouring of spirit, with praise, worship and thanksgiving.

I took practical stock of the situation. Everything seemed simple. There was one year. The mountain would go! Much can happen in a year. And much did happen.

As snow began to whirl again, old fears presented themselves, but I turned from them. Thanksgiving Eve again I sat on the porch and

took council with God. For one year only He and I knew what had been happening in my world; that everything was new and fresh and strangely expectant, because faith was singing in my heart. I had spent the time in expectancy, preparation, as it were—a quality I could not put into word form.

And now, where was I?

As if in answer to the question, a car dashed around the drive. It was a messenger with a telegram which read: "Will be with you for Thanksgiving dinner. Doug."

Doug arrived at noon the next day, holding the hands of a frail, listless little boy and girl; they walked straight into my heart. I listened as he told of the death of his wife the year before.

And then he told of a skiing company in Switzerland whom he had interested in my mountain, to make a great American winter skiing center; how the mountain, through centuries, had been forming for the purpose, with the great "slash" already made needing only surface smoothing. He presented contracts which would give me financial independence for life.

And then he asked me to marry him. In an awed ecstasy of joyful illumination I cried, "Doug, it is true! The mountain is gone! The mustard seed did it. I have removed that mountain."

He laughed. "You !Silly! I did it myself. I've worked on this skiing proposition for a solid year."

But I knew better!—Your Faith.

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### TODAY IS REAL

Today is real.

Then wait not till the morrow

Thy task to do,

For time thou canst not borrow.

Did'st thou offend

Thy neighbor or thy brother?

Forgiveness ask.

Thou mayest not have another

Chance. Today is thine;

Then wait not till tomorrow—

Forgive, forget,

Lest waiting bring thee sorrow.

—Publisher Unknown.

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."—Jesus.

The devil has many methods of disrupting church life, but carnality is the glove that fits them all.