

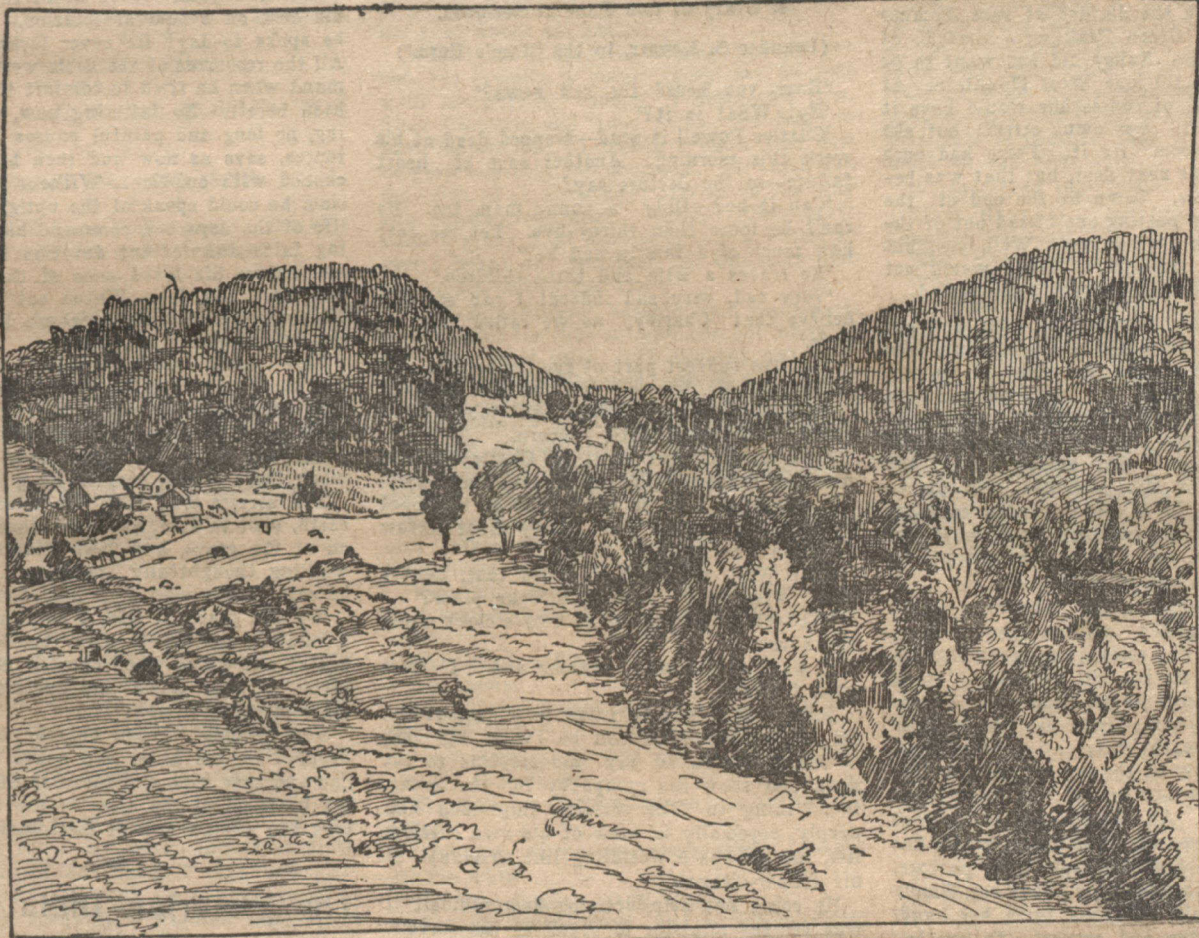
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'IF YE HAVE FAITH AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.'

Nancy's Renunciation.

(Zephine Humphrey, in the 'Congregationalist and Christian World'.)

Nancy stood in a corner of the family pew, singing softly under her breath. She felt very sad and lonely. That is the reason why she sang softly. To have kept silence altogether and let the waves of desolation break over her would have been unbearable; while, on the other hand, to have given voice to a joyous outburst would have been of course impossible. So she sang softly, letting the clear tones of Mr. Brainerd's tenor ring out behind her, and Miss Amanda's contralto, measured and rich and grave, support her own small soprano and sooth and comfort her.

To-morrow Nancy was going away, even to-morrow. What did it matter that seven years ago she had unaccountably happened to get herself born in an alien city, afar from her valley? It was all a mistake. She ought to have been born in the valley. And the valley was her home. How miserable every year, in the full tide of high companionship with West Mountain and Green Peak, to be hauled away to the city again, the dreary, alien city, in search of education! Nancy lifted her chin and looked wistfully towards the south-west window of the little church, behind which she knew West Mountain was standing, big and solemn and gray in its autumn bareness. She could almost fancy she heard it joining in, too, in the hymn, in a voice that was grander even than Miss Amanda's contralto.

Besides her mother and—Nancy meant it reverently—besides her mother and God, Nancy had hardly two better friends in all the world than West Mountain and Green Peak.

What their companionship meant to her was a thing not to be talked about, partly because the dictionary has not yet provided words for

and Green Peak, understanding the matter, preserved an inscrutable silence. Nancy followed their example.

A few nights ago she had had a thrilling experience. Sitting on a footstool in the library after tea, undressing Susan the doll, she had dreamily listened to her mother reading aloud to Ethel from 'Paradise Lost.' The great march and rhythm of the lines was all that claimed her attention. She was thinking most about the worn condition of Susan's shoes. Suddenly, however, these words smote her consciousness and called it imperatively into life:

From their foundations, loosening to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills with all their load,

Rocks, waters, woods, and, by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands.

O, why! She let her hands fall in her lap, and gazed fixedly across the room. Then a shiver went through her, a wave of sheer exultation. She caught Susan to her breast to break the force of the emotion. That was West Mountain and Green Peak; she knew it, she knew it. Glorious! A little later she stole out to look at them, calm and great beneath the stars. It seemed to her she had never known such reverence for them before.

And now she was going to leave them. She settled back into the pew after the hymn was over, and crossed her feet. The minister was about to read the Bible. Would he choose a comforting chapter? No, not very. The lunatic boy, falling into fire and water, was depressing if anything. What a pity. When her need was so great! Ministers ought to know. Suddenly again, however, as in the reading of

every experience, partly because who would want to use them if it had? West Mountain

