



The Seven Storey Mountain

THOMAS MERTON

'It is a rare pleasure to read an autobiography with a pattern and meaning valid for all of us. *The Seven Storey Mountain* is a book one reads with a pencil so as to make it one's own.'

GRAHAM GREENE

The Seven Storey Mountain which has never before been published outside the United States is the complete and unexpurgated version of Thomas Merton's great autobiography, long recognized as a modern classic. It is now published for the first time illustrated with photographs from Merton's early life.

Thomas Merton grew up in the United States, in France and in England, travelling with his artist father, and prided himself on his worldly accomplishments. His year at Clare College, Cambridge, was indulgent, and although Columbia University, to which he went next, suited his temperament better it did nothing to assuage his restlessness. The disgust that he was beginning to feel with the modern world and his place in it, was steadily growing and his curiosity about things spiritual, which had begun on a visit to Italy, was nurtured by Gilson's *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* and the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Blake.

Gradually he became convinced of his need for faith and became a Catholic. With his baptism came the first serious thoughts of monasticism but his desire to enter the priesthood in a Franciscan monastery came to nothing and he remained a lay teaching member of the order although he still hankered for the peace of the cloister. When he was twenty-seven he made a retreat to a Trappist monastery in Kentucky. It was a momentous experience and convinced him that the silence of the Cistercian Order was what he craved. *The Seven Storey Mountain* is Thomas Merton's search for faith and peace in a world which first fascinated and then appalled him. It is written with the profound insight of a man who has seen himself clearly.

The
Seven
Storey
Mountain

©

THOMAS
MERTON



The Seven Storey Mountain

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By the same author

The Wisdom of the Desert

The Silent Life

The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton

THOMAS MERTON

The Seven Storey Mountain



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Reviews of the abridged edition

'I regard this as a book which may well prove to be of permanent interest in the history of religious experience. No one can afford to neglect this clear account of a complex religious process.'

Evelyn Waugh

'Without question one of the most interesting books of personal revelation published in the past few years.'

Peter Quennell

'One of the only books about the life of the spirit which is at once in modern slang and flattering to contemporary intelligence ... a direct and moving personal story ... modern and very good.'

John Betjeman

'Uncommonly good ... commands sympathy and respect.'

Raymond Mortimer

'Mr Merton's spiritual progress from disbelief to faith is impressively and sincerely conveyed ... He has notably and usefully succeeded in presenting in contemporary idiom his reaction against a prevailing spirit of materialism and futility.'

Malcolm Muggeridge

'This is essentially a practical book ; the book of a man who has an idea what is wrong with the world and sets out to do what he can about it. It is not a retreat from the world but an advance against it.'

Norman Nicholson

'A remarkable book, perhaps a classic of its kind, written in a vivid, rich and alert style which ranges from crisp vernacular to passionate eloquence, full of picturesque incident and passing at times into religious ecstasy.'

The Times Literary Supplement

