

MRS. CROSBY ADAMS

Crusader for Children's Music

ELIZABETH STONE HOYT

"ART has no fatherland and all that is beautiful should be prized by us, no matter what clime or nationality has produced it." So, the South is proud to acclaim a woman who, at eighty-three years of age, is its most remarkable musician—Mrs. Crosby Adams, best known to us as the composer of "Spring" and "Away in a Manger." The South has every reason to call Mrs. Adams its own as she chose to come to Montreat, North Carolina, twenty-eight years ago to make her permanent home, and this region has absorbed the harmonic artistry of her life and works.

Juliette Aurelia Graves was born in Niagara Falls, New York, March 25, 1858. Before she was seven years old, she had begun studying piano, and by the time she was fourteen she was teaching piano and playing the organ in her home town. Two years later, in Rochester, New York, she began advanced work in piano under Mrs. C. S. P. Cary and ensemble lessons under Henri Appy. At twenty-one she began teaching at Ingham University in LeRoy, New York, working under the musical guidance of Claude Crittenden, who had been a pupil of Liszt. She left the University in 1883 when she married Crosby Adams, a choral conductor and musical educator, and they moved to Buffalo where Mrs. Adams became a successful teacher of piano, a capable organist, and a concert pianist.

The middle period of her life was spent in the West; four years in Kansas City, Missouri, followed by twenty-one years in Chicago. The short sojourn in Kansas City was rich in accomplishments. Her successful piano teaching, her ability as an organist, and her talent as a composer won her a place of honor. Her impressive organ playing gave inspiration to the congregation of one of the city's then largest churches, the Calvary Baptist Church. It was in that city that her creative ability began to express itself in her first musical composition *Opus 1, No. 1. The Dance of the Marionettes*.

In 1892, Mr. and Mrs. Crosby originated and directed the "Crosby Adams School" in Chicago in which classes were conducted in instrumental and vocal music, musical theory and public school music—the latter having the distinction of being the first, two-year course in public school music ever taught in America.

The publication of Mrs. Adams' first musical compositions, the *Opus 1, Five Tone-Sketches*, in 1896 was followed by many others. She was now sought as a lecturer on musical and literary topics in Chicago and environs and her articles on musical criticism appeared in Chicago newspapers. It was in this period that her illustrated musical concerts became popular. Another original idea was the Doll Festivals in which music about dolls and for dolls was presented.

To the Adams' home in Oak Park, Mrs. Edward MacDowell came to speak of the movement that she has since launched in memory of her distinguished husband, the MacDowell Colony at Peterboro, New Hampshire.

In 1913 Mr. and Mrs. Adams decided to move to the Blue Ridge Mountains. They selected Montreat, North Carolina, as their home and they have helped make of it one of the musical centers of the South. Many celebrities have beaten a well-worn path to their cottage, "The House in the Woods." Here they have continued their musical careers. They teach music in their studios in both Montreat and Asheville; they direct their teachers' courses; and they are associated with Montreat College (formerly Montreat Normal School). Mrs. Adams continues her musical composition, writes numerous articles, goes on extensive lecture and concert tours. Here she and Mr. Adams in their eighty-third years are living active, productive, inspiring lives.

Although Mrs. Adams' special field is creating music for children, her compositions cover a wide range. A number of instruction books and studies for the piano for the first through the fifth grades have

the White House, April 17, 1936. Another *Away in The Manger*, was translated into Arabic and sung in Palestine and Nazareth. Her *Worship Songs for Beginners*, *Worship Songs for Primaries* and *Worship Songs for Youths* have been used widely in Sunday schools, private schools, and camps. She has also edited a number of piano compositions.

Closely connected with her musical composing is her writing of books about music and the teaching of music. An outstanding work is her *Studies in Hymnology*.* Mrs. Adams has devoted her life to a crusade for a better type of music in the churches of America and has been particularly zealous in her efforts to have children and young people taught the great classics of sacred music. William MacPhail, president of the MacPhail School of Music of Minneapolis, said that he wished every Christian in America could read her book on Hymnology.

Mrs. Adams' musical philosophy is clear-cut and ideal. She believes that the student, in order to become an artist must be inspired with the desire to express the *beautiful* in music. To be able to reveal the beautiful, he must make a serious study of the *best* musical literature. She says, "There must indeed be a discriminating taste shown by every teacher who would build into the life of each pupil an enduring taste for good music. The greatest thing any teacher can do for his pupils is to give them a cultivated musical taste."

To put into practice these ideals she has emphasized several teaching principles which have made her a pioneer as a musical educator. One postulate which she has advocated is to present the music to the pupils in an orderly fashion assigning first grade material first and so on through the several grades. Another principle is to teach the beginners only good music, that is, it should be "child-like but not childish." (The lack of enough such musical literature led her to compose music for beginners in particular.) Still another of her theories is to have beginners develop skill by presenting a wide range of material, introducing the use of

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under the several grades in sequence. Mrs. Adams' connections with organizations both national and local illustrate her close touch with the musical world. In 1880 she joined the Music Teachers' National Association, and in 1936 at its meeting in Chicago an honorary life membership was presented to her and for a number of years she has served on its Executive Board. She has been associated for many years with the National Federation of Music Clubs and served on its National Board at one time. She was honored by having a life membership conferred upon her in that organization in 1923. Also, she belongs to the National Association of American Composers and Conductors, the Hymn Society of New York City, and Friends of Music of Washington, D. C. An honorary membership has been bestowed upon her in a number of other clubs: Saturday Music Club, Wednesday Morning Musicale and Delta Kappa Gamma, all of Asheville. Also in Mu Phi Epsilon, Delta Chapter in Detroit, Michigan.

Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, granted to this pioneer musical leader and eminent composer an honorary degree of Doctor of Music in recognition of her outstanding contributions and influence in the musical world. The president of the college, Dr. R. P. Pell, well expressed the sentiment of all who know Mrs. Adams' work, when he said: "In conferring the honorary degree of Doctor of Music, Mrs. Adams, Converse College desires not merely to show formal recognition of your many outstanding contributions and achievements in the field of musical endeavor, but more especially to express to you through this Degree our deep appreciation of your great work and greater influence as an educator and musical missionary in the Southland. Converse College is honored."

North Carolina, her adopted State, has paid respect to her in many ways. The North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs voted Mrs. Adams the outstanding woman musician of the State in 1926, which meant that her name would be presented at the Sesqui-Centennial Expo-

Book as one of the four outstanding women in North Carolina. Many other tokens of esteem have been lavished upon her.

Mrs. Adams cherishes the very best in music for herself and for others and has made her life a pattern of symphonic understanding, "And never yet was anything seen so beautiful or so artistic as a beautiful life." She sees "beautiful meanings in beautiful things." Her mother and father desired the best to be uppermost in the life of their daughter, and they made every effort to give her opportunities to develop her God-given talents. To them,

have lived together in perfect accordance; therefore, their married life of fifty-seven years has been an ideal of loveliness; as Mrs. Adams says, "I owe to Mr. Adams much of the inspiration of both teaching and composing. It is exceedingly helpful to persons to have someone believe in them and encourage them in their endeavors. Together we have walked down life's highway with a harmony of purpose and a complete understanding and appreciation of each other."

The world pays tribute, the Nation pays tribute, the South pays tribute to this beloved composer.

GROWING THINGS

FRANCES DICKENSON PINDER

*A music drifts upon the orchard dusk
That gathers of its own, apart—
Young music, with the joy of wings,
The flight-song of the heart.*

*Upon its crest all beauty of desire,
The tears, the rainbow strife of spring—
Largesse of love that sows, improvident
Of tilth, of harvesting.*

*But we, though debtor to the starry bough,
Our lips grown unaccustomed, mute,
Dare not lay finger on a single flower,
Nor pluck its casual fruit.*

POTTED PLANT

STANTON A. COBLENTZ

*We freed the plant whose bunched, tormented roots
Squeezed vainly at the pot's constricting hold.
And, in the ground, it sprouted queenlier shoots,
And blossoms of more gracious rose and gold.*

*Thus, too, we thought, with many a human flower
Whose roots are pressed and cramped as in a vise!
Yet how to burst the shell, and loose the power
The seed was born with, but the soil denies?*