

*A Sunday Afternoon At Montreat With  
The CROSBY ADAMS'*

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**I**N Montreat, North Carolina, at the "House in the Woods" on Sunday afternoons, there awaits a treat for those who love beauty and cultivate its graces. Mr. and Mrs. Crosby Adams open their interesting music room to old friends and new who gather at Montreat, and at that time a variety of musical offerings interspersed with readings is enjoyed.

On one such occasion recently Mrs. Adams, with a group seated about her in a semi-circle, gave a few introductory remarks. She began with reference to their childhood at Niagara Falls, where they lived for twenty-five years. After their marriage they were in Buffalo, N. Y., for four years and a later stay of four years in Kansas City, Mo., gave them the viewpoint of the West as well as the East. It was here that Mrs. Adams began her creative writing. They then moved to Chicago where they made their home for twenty-one years, becoming, as in the former places, a part of the musical life of that marvelous city. While there they started the first course of one year and subsequently two years devoted to the teaching of public school music in the Crosby Adams School, and at the same time carrying on private work in piano and theory. Mr. Adams also conducted choirs, thus establishing a tradition for reverent interpretation of beautiful literature.

Thirty-six years ago they moved to Montreat to spend the evening of life in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Seven paths lead to their house, the "House in the Woods," where people have journeyed for lessons and interviews. Thirty-nine annual teachers' classes, begun in Chicago, have brought teachers from thirty-seven of the forty-eight states to attend these sessions at different points.

Coming back to their informal meetings, we see on Sunday afternoons, in their music room, people gathered from many states and sometimes foreign countries. But despite their varied backgrounds, a common bond of interest ties them together, love of music and literature. Often the unexpected happens. Mr. Adams tells of the time when a lady, looking across the room, was amazed to find herself gazing into the face of a cousin whom she had not seen for years.

All present are encouraged to have a part in the program, to tell an interesting story, to recite a poem, or to speak of something beautiful they have experienced. Varied are these contributions and highly enjoyable. However, a highlight of the afternoon is Mr. Adams' reading from memory inspiring poems and prose writings of rare beauty. One of his best known selections is a quotation called "Youth," and the listener, noting the vigor and enthusiasm with which he speaks the words in a voice of a young man but with the wisdom of his ninety-one years, is inspired to put the years behind and to feel with him that, "Youth is not a time of life but a state of mind." He encourages those of us with poor memories by the amazing statement that he began to memorize at the age of eighty.

Mrs. Adams, a composer of note, has taught piano for more than three-quarters of a century. She has composed numbers of compositions which are widely known and used. As a teacher, her motto is "Music without tears" and her method of teaching imbues each student with earnest devotion to the art.

We thrilled to her interpretation of selections from Bach, Beethoven, Schumann and MacDowell, as well as her own compositions, which she played by request. There is gentle grace in her bearing as her fingers, still flexible at her age of ninety-one, lovingly touch the keys as only an artist can.

Her advice to one who was beginning to taste success was, "Do not rest on your laurels, but keep pressing on." Mrs. Adams, a living exponent of her own advice, continues to teach and to compose.

Deep in the heart of Montreat woods, away from noise and strife, a lamp of faith in God and fellowmen burns brightly. Those who journey there light their candle of faith and carry it with them out into the world, thereby increasing the inspiration to go forward.

William Cullen Bryant, when he first read Wordsworth, said: "A thousand springs seemed to gush up at once into my heart, and the face of nature changed of a sudden into a strange freshness of life." His reaction on finding a mind greater than his own, but sympathetic to it, parallels our experience when we find these two remarkable people, of the "House in the Woods," who help us to see beauty in all its phases.

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