



Edith Wharton at Home: Life at the Mount

Richard Guy Wilson

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The Mount, Edith Wharton's country place in the Berkshires, is truly an autobiographical house. There Wharton wrote some of her best-known and successful novels, including *Ethan Frome* and *House of Mirth*. The house itself, completed in 1902, embodies principles set forth in Wharton's famous book *The Decoration of Houses*, and the surrounding landscape displays her deep knowledge of Italian gardens. Wandering the grounds of this historic home, one can see the influence of Wharton's inimitable spirit in its architecture and design, just as one can sense the Mount's impact on the extraordinary life of Edith Wharton herself.

The Mount sits in the rolling landscape of the Berkshire Hills, with views overlooking Laurel Lake and all the way out to the mountains. At the turn of the century, Lenox and Stockbridge were thriving summer resort communities, home to Vanderbilts, Sloanes, and other prominent families of the Gilded Age. At once a leader and a recorder of this glamorous society, Edith Wharton stands at the pinnacle of turn of the twentieth-century American literature and social history. The Mount was crucial to her success, and the story of her life there is filled with gatherings of literary figures and artists. *Edith Wharton at Home* presents Wharton's life at The Mount in vivid detail with authoritative text by Richard Guy Wilson and archival images, as well as new color photography of the restoration of The Mount and its spectacular gardens.

"The Mount was to give me country cares and joys, long happy rides and drives through the wooded lanes of that loveliest region, the companionship of dear friends, and the freedom from trivial obligations, which was necessary if I was to go on with my writing. The Mount was my first real home . . . its blessed influence still lives in me." —Edith Wharton, 1934

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