

Goodbye now Laura dearest - I often think of you with acute longing-
those were lovely hours with you and Bets in April. Bless you both.

Alma

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Dearest Laura - I've just had such a remarkable hour listening to an amazing elderly woman near here - actually she is a direct descendant and was a pupil in, the original Oneida Community near here - who was talking about Petri, that I feel impelled to try to write ~~down~~ down what she said, if only to review her words and try to fix them in my mind - and my thoughts of course turn to you. She is Mrs. Edith Kinsley, 82 and I go over about twice a year to have an invigorating hour or two with her - usually taking some guest over with me to whom I wish to give a supreme treat ! I began by asking her what she was playing on the piano these days - and we went over to her piano where a book lay open at the 21st prelude by Chopin. She said Petri had come there to visit her once after knowing her somewhere else - (many people - Julian Huxley, all sorts of very distinguished people have passed through her little parlor) - and had said he would play a program for her alone, if she would draw one up for him. When she'd done it, he laughed aloud and said "Nobody but you will enjoy this program," and proceeded to chop it to bits and draw up another more to his liking. When he wrote down Chopin Prelude No 21 - Edith looked at him and said - Do you know what I imagine that prelude to be the story of?" No, said Petri - tell me. Then she, following the melodic lines with her finger pointed out that the opening is the lament of a young maiden who has loved, and committed sin. Then the nuns lament for her, pray to God, and beg forgiveness for her. Then the maiden laments again, and prays for forgiveness for herself. Then Monks come by walking on a cliff, praying for her and bemoaning. I forget just how it ends and alas I seem not to have my Chopin preludes at hand.

ambling along. I hear Jean Redpath was wonderful at Agi's Market one evening - I wish someone in Utica would bring her - I fear she's not quite "Chamber Music Society" calibre! Make your Community Concerts bring the New York String Sextet, with Doktor in it - they'll play 6 staves or 5 staves - particularly the Schubert 2-cello - heaven-sent performance.

My friend has a piercing way of looking at you with her very black eyes in which one can dimly discern those golden discs in the depths, like a dog's - she said "Petri pierced me with his eyes and asked me if I'd ever read Chopin's letters to George Sand. No, I said - I cannot read French and they don't exist in translation unfortunately. Petri continued: You have just told me the complete story of this prelude as he ~~has~~ ~~and~~ wrote it out to George Sand in a letter."

Then she turned ~~back~~ back to the 12th, which I looked at and don't seem to know; it is in triplet eighth notes Presto chromatically working its way up the piano and then down again very very fast and con fuoco. She said - "Mr. Petri -- I won't tell you what I think the story of this is -- I cannot tell you." "No?" said Petri - well, I know what you feel it to be, and you are right." Edith looked piercingly at me again and remarked that to her it is the Sex Act minutely described.

I tried to make out from looking at this unknown music what it would sound like -- thunderous, all right - I don't know if it is my idea of the Sex Act or not - I fancy not - but it seemed to be Edith's and Petri's. !!

Well that was about all, but I thought it would interest you. I've just returned from three days in Marlboro -- Serkin was giving heavenly Mozart performances in Tanglefoot at the time, but Casals was on hand, and old Marcel Moyse, to me just as wonderful a teacher and conductor. Beautiful music and we stayed in a lovely camp in the deep woods - private lake, etc. "Grand Luxe." Then I went on ~~the~~ to Boston for several days visits, then to New York, picked up Aunt Matilda, now 91, and friends drove us back here on Monday so we are all installed for the summer. Matilda seems her same old self full of interest and liveliness. I hope you two are well and