

May 1st 1935-

Miss Julia Howell T aylor  
La Grange  
Georgia

My dear Julia: - Your letter came while

I was away, and, having been gone so long, a great many things had to be done when I got back.

I hope you are still interested in hearing about Vienna for it is a truly splendid city and one where anybody with the money to spend can have a very good time. The coffee is better, so much better, than the bread is unbelievably good, and the butter - you wouldn't believe how nice butter is in Wien. The people there and all over Germany call it Wien (the long e sound).

Like some other very old cities, it was once surrounded by a very wide <sup>moat</sup> ~~moat~~ and a thick heavy wall. Now the moat is filled up and the wall taken away which made a place for what they call The Ring street. This Ring is really more like a horseshoe closed at the end & very wide

There are very many very handsome buildings, palaces, theatres, house of Parliament, all sorts of the grandest sort of places facing the Ring. I wish I could show it to you.

When I lived there, 1902-4, and again in 1908, it was said to be the richest of all cities. But there was much terrible

poverty there, too. Think of it - as many people as live in Atlanta or New Orleans did not even have a bed to sleep on. They would be so poor they would give a very few Heller (a Heller is the fifth of a cent) for the part of a bed to sleep in!

There were very many princely families living there in grand old palaces, and the emperor was, of course, very rich. The ~~Crown~~ <sup>Crown</sup> jewels are there, always on exhibition, many millions of dollars worth. pearls, emeralds, diamonds, of course, and quite the largest rubies in the world. There is one emerald as large that it was hollowed out underneath set inside.

In the old part of the city some of the streets, especially Jew Street, are as narrow a baby carriage crowds it.

The houses, of course, here are very old and dark. Any life so different is hard to describe. The merchants in Jew Street bring their goods and lay them out on the street. Shoes and clothing hang on the outside front walls. One ~~the~~ street is so narrow <sup>you walk single file</sup> ~~you walk single file~~.

<sup>in a street</sup> The place where Beethoven used to like to go to eat is a whole story below the level of streets that cross it and is terribly noisy because it is so shut in. Luckily Beethoven was too deaf to hear. So different from our streets.

The greatest of the greatest musicians lived here <sup>in Vienna</sup> and here the great pianists, especially, were trained.

The Poles, Italians, Czechs, Byzants and so many other kind musical people lived here in great numbers that one heard

So many kinds of lovely music.

I came to take lessons from Lischitzky. He was quite the most famous of teachers.

It was always an all day business getting a lesson from him. Two or three others were always there to take a lesson and one never knew who would be first, or how long a lesson would last. They were always very interesting. These lessons, and often very disagreeable for the old man was very rude often, and loved to say mean things. The lessons, though, in spite of all that, were wonderful, and one learned here as no where else. Whenever the great pianists came to study with Lischitzky we could soon hear a change for the better in their playing. This was always a new and better style which everyone could appreciate.

Wien was a wonderful place for great parades. On Corpus Christi day, which came once each year, occurred the most unusual one. Austria is a Catholic country, as you know. All the altar boys, priests, monks, bishops, cardinals and the emperor everybody in full regalia, <sup>except the deacons</sup> in a long procession over flower strewn streets and bearing the miraculous Eucharist in splendid golden vessels with jewels and great decoration. The body and blood was supposed to be the emperor, but the emperor was not. Finally all went into the great Cathedral and celebrated mass. After that the great people drove away in such

Remarkable old, old carriages with splendid horses and footmen and out riders, all wearing ancient livery, with crests and found splendid decorations and such strange harness.

The emperor's horses were four pure white horses which do not come out except this one time. I visited his stables. There were 500 horses there. Some coal black ones were only used at royal funerals. Franz Joseph walked to church but rode away on did all the grand pageants.

The noble Hungarian generals, riding Arabian steeds, stripped to the waist and carrying leopard skins over one shoulder were stationed all along the line. Each man had on a sort of turban and in <sup>the</sup> front part of this turban was a paul or sort of feather which was so rare each feather cost hundreds or thousands of dollars. The bird which bears this feather has only one like it and is very rare. Perhaps only once a year is caught. A guard must have a feather.

Once when the Emperor had reigned 60 years all the European Kings came to see him. I saw, perhaps twenty, kings at this time and many others on other occasions.

The country made a great event of this jubilee year. A great historical pageant was gotten up which was two hours passing any one place - miles long.

Out of every ancient reign (since about 1100 A.D.) some scene was reproduced exactly as it happened, the same armor, carriages, or whatever it was, and the guards when possible, wore the things their ancestors had worn and so acted out whatever scene was to be depicted.

A little girl, a Hungarian princess, coming in an ox cart to wed a 9 year old emperor was one such episode.

Of course it is no longer the gay rich city it once was but the houses and the people are there. I doubt if it is more to visit.

Vienna at that time had about 1,750,000 people. The old part of the city was the interesting part of it to me and that was all inside the Ring but the finest new buildings were, as a rule, on the outside and fronting on the Ring.

There is one very famous cathedral there known as St. Stephens Cathedral. Such buildings seem impossibly big and St. Stephens was so long to go around that every body passed through it instead. Such a structure is more like a community of small churches than one big one. There are many smaller half closed in rooms called Chapels each having its own services its own furniture while the great main room is usually bare of seats of all sorts and with only a high pulpit with a sounding board overhead to show that great services like the crowning or burial of an emperor are occasionally to be held where thousands can take part. Nobody tries to warm a cathedral too big.

If you go there in the winter wrap up for it about as far north as Hudsons Bay. Not like Florida exactly.

I am glad to get news of you again. Tell your mother you ought to live here and take lessons. Love to you all. Sorry you must return the plates.  
Cousin Ben.