To Mm. Evelina L. Prine . Gram . Maine , U.S. of N. America 3 A. Feterburg . Russia , 4/ April , 1158, My dear Mother. your long Knist letter of Mank 9th gave me much pleasure - It seemed to carry me back to those quiet Sunday afternoon talk one have had together do often a and I was not a little rejoined to learn by it of fathers convales conce and your own chenfulness and health. I know you will not fail to write a few word, now and Then to me , when you can - Today came also father letter, with me from John Alon; and a short note from Lewis, telling me of Uncle Daniel & death - This must have saddened your hearts at home - and I am sure the regret and sympathy of all our Knided will be swatened and expressed for his loss and the borenosment of his family, and many reministences will suggest them selves of his general, honorable nature, and Knidly acti - I will write to aunt Fanny , if I can , by this mail -Not Knowing well how to execute, at present, your little commission about the spries of mystle, & , - I soul instead some flower - deals which annette (one house Kesper) has kindly given to me for the purpose - The got Them at the Betanical Gardens , - a description of my visit to which was in a recent letter to armt anne. Even the very poor people here Keep flowers in their warm, tight rooms, all writer - Little pots are rold at the great hours of the wrally noblemen at a very cheap rate -I also cent you some little pictures, on most of which explanations are written - These sketches will tell a stony more easily undrestood, no doubt, than any descriptions I would write of their now familian subjects.

Contributed to Maine Memory Network by an individual through Maine Historical Society

MMN #31866

Date: April 4-16, 1856

Description: Josiah Pierce on Russian Peace observances

To Mrs. Evelina L. Pierce.} Gorham, Maine, U. S. of N. America.} St. Petersburg. Russia, 4/16 April, 1856.

My dear Mother,

Your long, kind letter of March 9th gave me much pleasure – It seemed to carry me back to those quiet Sunday afternoon talks we had together so often = and I was not a little rejoiced to learn by it of fathers convalescence and your own cheerfulness and health. I know you will not fail to write a few words now and then to me, when you can – Today came also father's letter, with one from John & Eva; and a short note from Lewis, telling me of Uncle Daniel's death – This must have saddened your hearts at home – and I am sure the regret and sympathy of all our kindred will be awakened and expressed for his loss and the bereavement of his family, and many reminiscences will suggest themselves of his generous, honorable nature, and kindly acts – I will write to Aunt Fanny, if I can, by this mail –

Not knowing well how to execute, at present, your little commission about the sprigs of myrtle, &c, -I send instead some flower-seeds which Annette (our housekeeper) has kindly given to me for the purpose - She got them at the Botanical Gardens, - a description of my visit to which was in a recent letter to Aunt Anne. Even the very poor people here keep flowers in their warm, tight rooms, all winter - Little pots are sold at the green-houses of the wealthy noblemen at a very cheap rate -

I also send you some little pictures, on most of which explanations are written – these sketches will tell a story more easily understood, no doubt, than any descriptions I could write of their now familiar subjects.

I certainly do feel myself to be " poor " as you suggest, in the society of The many ofulent people here - "poor, but not ashamed" - and is with some difficulty that I Kup my expanditure within my salary, which is too small for my official position in this very expension city. I think the cost of The necessary things for such a place are is twee as great here as in Paris . There have been few great court ceremonies of late, and during Lent no thentrical representations have occurred - but concerts, tableany vivants, jugglisi performances, and such extintitions have taken the place, mean while, of the " legitionate drawn " - Upon the new of the conclusion of Peace, a grand To Demo was Jung in the magnificent little chapet of the Water Palace, before the Imperial fainty, which all the diplomatic corps attended -The music was almost sublime, viving into high, dear notes of joy, and falling to very deep, base, solemns tones, in the grand greek charte chant, performed (as always) by a choir of male sugers, which in this case was one of the best in the world. The Emperor was much affected it was said, he even shed team - Up to this epoch, he had worm the aigustettes of an aide de lamp of the and a few general's uniform, to signify that he was only , as it were, the aide . do . camp of his Musturing fatter, and carrying out his plans - The scenes in the chapel was a billiont one. The room is loft, with richly gilled, painted and State oct, arched ceiling, a magnificent seem or constant, and handrome windows + floor. The clarge were in their most sapers when - all green + gold , wearing laye caps like crown - most of them venerable men, with long white beauts - The metropolitan was experiely received with age and dignity, and was affectionally Kissed by the EmperorI certainly do feel myself to be "poor" as you suggest, in the society of the many opulent people here — "poor, but not ashamed" — and is with some difficulty that I keep my expenditure within my salary, which is too small for my official position in this very expensive city. I think the cost of the necessary things for such a place are is twice as great here as in Paris.

There have been few great court ceremonies of late, and during Lent no theatrical representations have occurred – but concerts, tableaux vivants, juggler's performances, and such exhibitions have taken the place , meanwhile, of the "legitimate drama" – Upon the news of the conclusion of Peace, a grand Te Deum ws sung in the magnificent little chapel of the Winter Palace, before the Imperial family, which all the diplomatic corps attended – The music was almost sublime, rising into high, clear notes of joy, and falling to very deep, bass, solemn tones, in the grand Greek-church chant,

entirely (some of whom were very small boys) performed (as always) by a choir ^ of male singers ^ , which in this case was one of the best in the world. The Emperor was very much affected – it was said, he even shed tears — Up to this epoch, he had worn the upon his

aiguelettes of an aide-de-camp only and not ^ a full general's uniform, to signify that he was only, as it were, the aide.de.camp of his illustrious father, and carrying out his plans — The scene in the chapel was a brilliant one. The room is lofty, with richly gilded, painted and stuccoed, arched ceiling, a magnificent screen or "iconostast", and handsome windows & floor. The clergy were in their most superb robes — all green & gold, wearing large caps like crowns — most of them venerable men, with long white beards — The Metropolitan was especially reverend with age and dignity, and was affectionately kissed by the Emperor —

The Superial family occapied the foot places. The downger Supers , pale and ill, attentes much attention, and had evident Kendarf shown bornets her by her some - The present Support is a most extellent, prins, Sensible, light respected woman, above represent or calumny - The Emplow has four boys . The Grand Duke Constantine (where Duchers is very handrome) less ties or there children, and there are many other members of the Imperial family , all of ophon seem to live on excellent precidly terms with other, and to have plain social manney like there of any family in common life -Bellind them, on the right was the ladies of henor, in full deer : m the left the diplomatic cops and highest dignitaries of the Empire, also in brilliant full costume - The diplomat always have the first place, next to the sovereign family, on these great occasions, while certainly is very agreeable in afferding them the best view of the whole -I have been at Leveral Similar religious commines in the Imperial Chapel where the same personages were similarly placed - as funeral Dervies (most delemen of tempressive) on the anniversary of the death of The late Emperor Nicolar - at the bottotal coremony - and at the marriage rites of the young Grand Date Nicholas - During there occarrances all the audionic remain standing / as is ever the case in the Guck churches, where are no pews or seate / except during the short prayers, when everybody must kneel - a process quite perploying to individuals in tightly strapped diplomatic postaloons. The burden of the chants are sung in heavy bass by the priests, and a sort of theiling closure is being at intervals by the choin; no components are made by the conquestion but individual, often accompany the choirs.

The Imperial family occupied the front places. The dowager Empress, pale and ill, attracted much attention, and had evident kindness shown towards her by her sons – the present Empress is a most excellent, pious, sensible, highly respected woman, above reproach or calumny – The Emperor has four boys, The Grand Duke Constantine (whose Duchess is very handsome) has two or three children, and there are many other members of the Imperial family, all of whom seem to live on excellent friendly terms with other, and to have plain social manners like those of any family in common life —

Behind them, on the right were the ladies of honor, in full dress: on the left the diplomatic corps and highest dignitaries of the Empire, also in brilliant full costume – The diplomats always have the first place, next to the sovereign family, on these great occasions, which certainly is very agreeable in affording them the best view of the whole –

I have been at several similar religious ceremonies in the Imperial Chapel where the same personages were similarly placed – At funeral services (most solemn & impressive) on the anniversary of the death of the late Emperor Nicolas – at the betrothal ceremony – and at the marriage rites of the young Grand Duke Nicolas = During these occurrences all the audience remain standing (as is ever the case in the Greek churches, where are no pews or seats) except during the short prayers, when everybody must kneel – a process quite perplexing to individuals in tightly-strapped diplomatic pantaloons.

The burden of the chants are sung in heavy bass by the priests, and taken up

a sort of thrilling chorus is sung ^ at intervals by the choir; no responses are made by the congregation but individuals often accompany the chorus.

The clays now lengthm, out the cold does not stroughen and spring or summer lendenty approaches. By the clays I mean the claylegher the sum tree today at 42 minutes part 4 and see at 18 minutes part seven a gaining three minutes cray my in earlier wing + three in later selving. It was down this merming about one o'clock; and in about to days then will be thirtyful all night.

The weather is not untill tone at bome during the dame month, cather damp with extentions from needling dams; The street, are quite close of same; it was bottom up and could away from the principal throughfour as it became become into daily ice. The lie still comains from in the obeste - and is not expected to bean up for a fortinght - doing out; or ditches have been made in it however to be paid the sundering - Scentiful, great, glassy cake, travel been later out, one by one, during the write, to store for business breases been later out, one of later companies with that were lay the Jankers on them the part work of later companies with that were lay the Jankers on their ice points.

The whools of June fly heriff around - the third of a year I have points here seems over them of a son of course, very compostably looked to boment with

here seems very short. I am, of course, very comportably lodged + bounded with Jor. elegenous, and the only consumerance amonging to me in their terpest is that I have no recome to very own uses, where it can be doletary if I wish, except my small bed corns. The Governor's family is need gente large for a backets.

ille. Want + how daughter alle. In Gazebel (where carriers history I will by + lay) + me. Want, som Resert. with eller frame, of the measurable heave of Ropes + lo-with respect, all Americans, assemble at the board, and level in the shower. It is the house.

In the house - It is certainly better than a politicle, for a backets is hall.

Make my peace with my friends who don't receive expected better from me):

and with love to all believe me ever

your affectionate son Josiah.

The days now lengthen, |but the cold does not strengthen| and spring or summer evidently approaches – By the days I mean the daylight – the sun rose today at 42 minutes past 4 and set at 18 minutes past seven = gaining three minutes every day in earlier rising & three in later retiring – It was dawn this morning about one o'clock; and in about ten days there will be twilight all night –

The weather is not unlike ours at home during the same month, rather damp with exhalation from melting snow: The streets are quite clear of snow; it was broken up and carted away from the principal thoroughfares as it became hardened into dirty ice – The ice still remains firm in the Neva – and is not expected to break up for a fortnight – Long cuts or ditches have been made in it however (about 2 ½ or 3 feet thick)

to facilitate its sundering – Beautiful, great glassy cakes ^ have been taken out, one by one, during the winter, to store for summer luxuries – but at great waste of labor compared with that used by the Yankees on their ice-ponds –

The wheels of Time "fly swift around" – the third of a year I have passed here seems very short – I am, of course, very comfortably lodged & boarded with Gov. Seymour, and the only circumstance annoying to me in that respect is that apartment

I have no ^ rooms to my own uses, where I can be solitary if I wish, except my small bed-room – The Governor's family is now quite large for a bachelor – Mrs. Ward & her daughter Mrs. De Guerbel (whose curious history I will tell by & by) & Mrs. Ward's son Robert – with Mr. Prince, of the mercantile house of Ropes & Co - with myself, all Americans, assemble at the board, and live in the house – It is certainly better than a solitude, for a bachelor's hall.

Make my peace with my friends who don't receive expected letters from me: and with love to all, believe me ever

Your affectionate Son, Josiah.