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Date: September 8-20, 1856

Description: Josiah Pierce on life in Russia

[image]

Dessiné d"après nature par Indiessoff.

Imp. Par Lemercier.

Vue du Kremlin

Moscow, September 8/20, 1856.

My dear Father,

I had the pleasure today of receiving your No 11, dated Aug.19th, and enclosing a note to Ella. All your letters have reached me safely, and I am much obliged to you for the regularity with which you write – it surpasses by far that of any other of my correspondants at home.

The above view of the Kremlin, supposed to be from the opposite bank of the Moskwa, shows the southern side tolerably well. The buildings numbered by me are No. 1, the "Great Palace", a stately edifice without, & magnificent within beyond any other palace I have seen, and in which the Court Balls & Receptions

take place – The flag is hoisted upon $^$ (the imperial banner bearing the black eagle with two heads in the center of a yellow field,) when the Emperor inhabits it. The domes of the Cathedral of the Assumption (No. 2) in which the Coronation took place, are seen behind – No.3 is the lofty belfry, (full of bells great & small) called the tower of Ivan Veliki – No. 4 is the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, in which are the tombs of the ancient Tsars – No. 5. is the tower above the "holy gateway" where all men must take off their hats. No 6. the Church of St. Basil

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List outside of the Krimitia wall, are the coutters extrainity of the Krasnaia Plasched, the cades of all the odd churches of Morrow, with some fifteen gandy domes, all unlike, and a fautastic and labyrithing medley of chapels. et 7. the Teremo Salaw, shows only its roof, from which Napolin took his fait satisfied view of the conquest town below after culturing its well; is the ancient resistant of the Stars, a very comons building of three votories, diministing like the arte structures from bottom to top, with comias gaily painted scande Not, the long modern building west of the Great Falace is the Museum of the Regalie, of ourself armor Alturnes of Carrenge ; or most interesting The bridge in the picture is called The "Stone brigge"; It aboutunts a pier are specially constitute, so you will precise, to const freshet floods + ice -I son X of enclose also some other pictures of public buildings in this city; & while however, I must own, give no bette idea of their carriers conglow-& cration + variety as they appear in mass, then a single archivery would I of the bolisium - Those are said to be about 1000 chevoles in Mostows and "all have gay, fautestic domes & spices, pechaps you low imagine how they developed the view over the great roofs and square white houses, that tast pertined public building, and treet tops noing from the many gardens of the undulating darfaces of the town. I have had but little time to go sight seeing - or to visit many of the churches carefully - Their interior , it is said , are not very werentable to a person who has seen two or three, being quite Similar, and very small - The Krewlin walls enclose the buildings which proof I the most historical interest - The Great Palace + Museum, I Senate + arener there, are modern, built since the fire of 1812. The other parties,

is outside of the Kremlin walls, at the southern extremity of the Krasnaia Ploschad, the

oddest of all the odd churches of Moscow, with some fifteen gaudy Domes, all unlike,

and a fantastic and labyrinthine medley of chapels.

No 7. the Terema Palace, shows only its roof, from which Napoleon took

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his first satisfied view of the conquered town below after entering its walls; ^ is the ancient residence of the Tsars, a very curious building of three stories, diminishing like the Aztec structures from bottom to top, with cornices gaily painted & carved. No. 8. the long modern building west of the Great Palace is the Museum of the Regalia, of the ancient armor & thrones & carriages; a most interesting collection. The bridge in the picture is called the "Stone bridge"; Its abutments & piers are specially constituted, as you will perceive, to resist freshet. floods & ice – [Note X]

I enclose also some other pictures of public buildings in this city; which however, I must own, give no better idea of their curious conglomeration & variety as they appear in mass, than a single archway would of the Coliseum – There are said to be about 1000 churches in Moscow:

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X I send also, some programmes., tickets, & a bill offaire, which have been issued in connection with the Coronation, and therefore will I hope prove interesting. Please keep them for me to look at after I return.

and ^ all have gay, fantastic domes & spires, perhaps you can imagine how they diversify the view over the green roofs and square white houses, and vast porticoed public buildings, and tree-tops rising from the many gardens of the undulating surface of the town.

I have had but little time to go sight-seeing – or to visit many of the churches carefully – Their interiors, it is said, are not very remarkable to a person who has seen two of three, being quite similar, and very small – The Kremlin wall enclose the buildings which possess the most historical interest – The Great Palace & Museum, & Senate & Arsenal, there, are modern, built since the fire of 1812. the other, ancient.

Stort life hire is much the Same as in Poleribory - though gayer now, from the vast concourse of people to correage - and perhaps always more likely to excite attention from the unexpected manner in which one comes upon strange things, chareter, we, in consequences of the great inegalarity of the steels - The istrost chiks were a conceal instead of a bell small hat - the mights deep the Same . The nel people have many confect, and luxuries - fine wines - French fastismed dresses - carrieges such as one west in London: Paris, or New York, - good cooks - the opens, The balkt - the Fruit theatre - could playing and dealing parties bonnets on the back of the need + balloon - skirted petticals -Opera from - canes - Kid gloves - Navannas cigars - late breakfasts lively chit chat - the last new novels - horse - races - elegant furniture prime forter - Preach Teachers - jewelley - Shawls - and good overshoes ate of which conveniences and appentenances of the every bay life of the wearthy in large cities are in particularly active use and operation near-The cornation ceremonies go on sacrefo fally - I am completely Confounded at the move idea of altempting to describe Horn - they militia uniform has appeared, day after day, at the levers of the Emperor and of autoseadors - at a gala night at the Opera - at the qualest Court ball + Sappar wer given , at the Palace - in the Superor's staff, on the field where he reviewed his 110,000 soldiers of the goar's succuped new by - at a said military during quinty the Merchants of theserow to His Imperial Majerty & the military men of distriction), in one vast room, whose roof is unsupported

Street-life here is much the same as in Petersburg – though gayer now, from the vast concourse of people & carriages – and perhaps always more likely to excite attention, from the unexpected manner in which one comes upon strange things, churches, &c, in consequence of the great irregularity of the streets – The istvostchiks wear a conical instead of a bell-crowned everywhere in Russia.

hat – the majiks dress the same ^ – The rich people have many comforts and luxuries – fine wines – French-fashioned dresses – carriages such as are used in London, Paris, or New York, – good cooks – the opera, the ballet – the French theatre – card playing and dancing parties – bonnets on the back of the neck & balloon-skirted petticoats – Opera glasses – canes – Kid gloves – Havanna cigars – late breakfasts—lively chit-chat – the last new novels – horse-races – elegant furniture—piano fortes – French Teachers – jewellry – shawls – and good overshoes – all of which conveniences and appurtenances of the everyday life of the wealthy in large cities are in particularly active use – and operation now –

The coronation ceremonies go on successfully – I am completely confounded at the mere idea of attempting to describe them – My militia uniform has appeared, day after day, at the levees of the Emperor and of Ambassadors – at a gala night at the Opera – at the greatest Court-ball & supper ever given, at the Palace – in the Emperor's staff, on the field where he reviewed his 110,000 soldiers of the guard encamped near by – at a vast military dinner, given by the Merchants of Moscow to His Imperial Majesty & the military men (of distinction), in one vast room, whose roof is unsupported

by a single pillar, and in which, on that occasion, 3000 men sardown to dunier confortably, with rown for more swith Love sheetators looking on . I feel cometines rather like the jackdow in bonowed plumes, among so many well soldiers , warriers market with stan from many fights , and not a few who fand the terrible sain of short & hell for eleven mostler on the bactions of Setastopel - but wally it is not as a soldier that I am present, and only wear my uniform as an incidental garment which I have a right to put on, which no american med be ashamed of, and which I prefer to the more conspicuous lable waiters suf of a swallow tailed black load & white wavat. Ofte I am tied of the sort of life - and with I was at home, a fighting in the battle of this years political stufe, for the preservation of our bonstitutional principles, and against that reckless sectional party where surees would be paught I sent bolieve with the greatest danger to the permanence of Out glorious confederation of republies the dismin and destruction of which & solving would be the questions calaning which could in this age kappen to civilization, to social progress sivil pertons Every american in Europe pears for Buch anan's election, so far as I have had the apportunity to know a too learn here to price what goods us one lebuty & national changth - the investables and delicate bonds which can as they have hellers done, some unite us in a brotherhood of States -You ask how long I intend to runain here - I cannot yet decide - Daing The winter probably - + doubtlef I shall not your advice upon the subject - With love to mother of all my relatives , or Kind regards to an my piends, I remain, ever your affectionate son, Josiah Pierce fo,

by a single pillar, and in which, on that occasion, 3000 men sat down to dinner comfortably, with room for more & with 2000 spectators looking on. I feel sometimes rather like the jackdaw in borrowed plumes, among so many <u>real soldiers</u>, warriors marked with scars from many fights, and not a few who found the terrible rain of shot & shell for eleven months on the bastions of Sebastopol – but really it is not as a soldier that I am present, and only wear my uniform as an incidental garment which I have a right to put on, which no American need be ashamed of, and which I prefer to the more conspicuous table-waiters dress of a swallow tailed black coat & white cravat.

Often I am tired of this sort of life – and wish I was at home, fighting in the battle of this year's political strife, for the preservation of our Constitutional principles, and against that reckless sectional party cannot but think

whose success would be fraught I must believe ^ with the greatest danger whose

to the permanence of Our glorious confederation of republics, the ^ disunion worst that

and destruction of which I believe—would be the greatest ^ calamity which^ could in this age happen to civilization, to social progress & civil freedom. Every American in Europe prays for Buchanan's election, so far as I have had the opportunity to know – we learn here to prize what gives us our sacred alone

liberty & national strength – the invialable and delicate bonds which ^ can, as they have hitherto done, alone unite us in a brotherhood of States – You ask how long I intend to remain here – I cannot yet decide – during the winter probably – & doubtless I shall ask your advice upon the subject – With love to mother & all my relatives, & Kind regards to all my friends, I remain, ever, Your affectionate son, Josiah Pierce Jr.