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Date: Jan. 10, 1856

Description: Josiah Pierce description of Russia

The Imperial Palace —

[Image of palace] St. Petersburg. Russia

Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> (N.S.) 1856.

Palais d'Hiver ("Winter Palace.")

My Dear Parents,

My last letter to you was a very long one, giving a detailed account of my journey to this place, and was mailed on the 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> of December ult. —

of Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>

Your welcome letter ^, enclosing George's, John's & Eva's, arrived here day before yesterday. The steamship which leaves Boston on Wednesday usually arrives in Liverpool on the next Sunday but one, and in about eight or nine days from then we receive here our mails by her — and send our letters for America from here on Thursdays so that they are carried in the steamer which sails from Liverpool on a week from the following Saturday — The mails, and all business transactions in fact, between England & Russia, are as regular as if peace existed — Since I last wrote to you I have, without seeking, witnessed scenes and had adventures of

importance sufficient for a longer description thea I can now give you; but I will write a brief they of way occupations, and enlarge upon July points as present themselves most vividly at present in recollection -The weather has been very variable - During the last week of December, a very disagreeable thew sported the sledging, and made the air damp and dangerord -Then it began to peere a little, and is now quete constatable, being about fifteen degrees ( Takenlist / below Zero - The houses are so thoroughly wound that one has no occasion while in them, to think how Cold the weather may be - a those in writer is worse for the poor people them the coldect weather: for the latter their buildings and clothing are well proposed: but against a thew they cannot protest the frozen meals, Which transported from distant provides, are stored in vast quantities in the markets, and down sport when the theiremeter - mercury files above the peering point, depriving the city at once of food - The martats of porew meats + fish are very extensive + curious .

importance sufficient for a longer description than I can story

now give you: but I will write a brief ^diary of my occupations, and enlarge upon such points as present themselves most vividly at present in recollection — The weather has been very variable – During the last week of December, a very disagreeable thaw spoiled the sledging, and made the air damp and dangerous – Then it began to freeze a little, and is now quite comfortable, being about fifteen degrees (Fahrenheit) below zero – The houses are so thoroughly warmed that one has no occasion while in them, to think how cold the weather may be – A thaw in winter is worse for the poor people than the coldest weather: for the latter their buildings and clothing are well prepared:

& fish

but against a thaw they cannot protect the frozen meats ^, which transported from distant provinces, are stored in vast quantities in the markets, and soon spoil when the thermometer – mercury rises above the freezing point, depriving the city at once of food – The markets of frozen meats & fish are very extensive & curious

and I shall attempt some future account of them -My last letter to you stated, I believe, that I had been duly presented to and received by 12 Porent defelode, the veteran Minister of Foreign affair -2. Three days after to the Esav. a few days subsequently, I was presented to the Empref, who was bown a Prince of Hesser Darmstatt, and who is a most channing, excellent woman, not gossified about, but universally reputed to be a good wife and mother, as well as a lighty - educated lady - Stee is very amiste in appearance, unassuming, gentle, and good humored - Speaking French, German, Suglist perfectly well ( as do also all the Superior family ) the receives foreigners, and converses with them, carely and so that they feel no embaral ment -These presentations took place in the Palace, which you have represented at the beginning of this note a building of vast size is their famous "Winter Palace"-It is a town of itself - Six thous and or more persons live in it - no one person is familiar with all its apartment, - Some colonias of interlopers ("squatters") are

and I shall attempt some future account of them —

My last letter to you stated, I believe, that I had been duly presented to and received by 1º Count Nesselrode, the veteran Minister of Foreign Affairs – 2d. Three days after to the Czar.

A few days subsequently, I was presented to the Empress, who was born a Princess of Hesse Darmstadt, and who is a most charming, excellent woman, not gossiped about, but universally reputed to be a good wife and mother, as well as a highly-educated lady — she is very amiable in appearance, unassuming, gentle, and good-humored – Speaking French, German, English perfectly well (as do all the Imperial family) she receives foreigners, and converses with them, easily and so that they feel no embarassment –

These presentations took place in the Palace, which you have represented at the beginning of this note — a building of vast size is this famous "Winter palace"— It is a town of itself — Six thousand or more persons live in it — No one person is familiar with all its apartments — Some colonies of interlopers ("squatters") are

Said to whatet its precede - Families of watchen with wives , children , poultry , goals & even cows are said to have lived on its woof - the goals + cows being fed by the grass which grew there -The front which you see in the picture is the Southern , lovery Toroach an acorners square or "Place" - The Northern port is along the gray of the river Neva, and meanues about you feet-The building is nearly square. It is said to be, and I believe it, the most splendid and largest royal edifice in the world = It was burned to the ground in 1837, and by ourredible real, expense, and labor, rebuilt and finis hed again in two years. Lofty apartments, and splended conidors, stately starrings, grand vantes halls - magnificently painted or gilded ceiling, beautiful polished floor, with furnitue, admirable paintings (mostly of battle scores) costly rate flowers of hor house growth vaces, statuary, works of ornamental art of every description distract the attention during one's fust visits to this great edifice, but seem well placed Russia's - who lives plainty, however, in one corner of the building.

said to inhabit its precincts – Families of watchmen with wives, children, poultry, goats & even cows are said to have lived on its roof – the goats & cows being fed by the grass which grew there –

The front which you see in the picture is the Southern, looking toward an enormous square or "Place" – The Northern front is along the quay of the river Neva, and measurers about 700 feet – The building is nearly square. It is said to be, and I believe it, the most splendid and largest royal edifice in the world= It was burned to the ground in 1837, and by incredible zeal, expense, and labor, rebuilt and furnished again in two years. Lofty apartments, and splendid corridors, stately stairways, grand vaulted halls – magnificently painted or gilded ceilings, beautiful polished floors, rich furniture, admirable paintings (mostly of battle scenes) costly

rare flowers & plants of hot-house growth vases, statuary, ^ works of ornamental art of every & fatigue

description distract ^ the attention during one's first visits to this great edifice, but seem well-placed decorations of the residence of the Czar of all the Russia's – who lives plainly, however, in one corner of the building.



Nort enclose westerly of the Winter Palace, Dependent from it by, a boad wad . Then a broad road , then a broad road , then a broad road , or fronting on the same great square with its rear on the same

quay of the Neva, the Admirally buildings, surrounded by a Boulevoid, shelch along for nearly a half-mile ( the guide book of munay says ) having a depth or Eastern & Western fronts of about 650 feet, being built of yellow stone, in Some architecture; with a truly Russian spice, tall tapering & covered with gold plating over the central archway of its southerly pout - Beyond the admirally you some and divided from it by a large square in The centre of which is the equestrian states of Peter the great, you see in the Western distance the Salace of the Holy Lynd and the Senate, about which I will say more hereafter -To return to my visits at bourt te -Soon after my presentation to the Supress. I was introduced to the Grand Duke Constantine, eldest brother of the Egar, and most active and Thoroughly

## 2.) [Image]

Amiraute No 2 –

Next <del>easterl</del> westerly of the Winter Palace, seperated from 1st

it by ^ a broad road, then a broad mall, then another broad road, & fronting on the same great square with its rear on the same

quay of the Neva, the Admiralty buildings, surrounded by a Boulevard, stretch along for nearly a half-mile (the guidebook of Murray says) having a depth on Eastern & Western fronts of abut 650 feet, being built of yellow stone, in Ionic architecture; with a truly Russian spire, tall tapering and covered with gold plating over the central archway of its southerly front – Beyond the Admiralty you see in and divided from it by a large square in the centre of which is the equestrian statue of Peter the great, you see in the Western distance the Palace of the Holy Synod and the Senate, about which I will say more hereafter –

To return to my visits at Court. &c — Soon after my presentation to the Empress, I was introduced to the Grand Duke Constantine, eldest brother of the Czar, and most active and thoroughly

Russian in feeling - He is Lord High admired" and promotes with quat aider the naval and commercial progress of his country - He is three mouth younger Then suyself - looks a little like Alex. Longfellow but as if he might be frerie when angened - He was very Knid and affable to me, talked quite a long true with me about our fast refuls de, total me I ought to be half a Sailor suyself, coming from the State of Mane, and secured much pleased with my expression of are inclination to leave the Ruman language - He lives in another splendid palace formally Known as the Marble Palace, from the fact that it is within and without built and ornamented with beautiful and various marbles - but now called the Constantine Polace - It marble morain floor, and with fluted Columns reminded me of the finist palaces of Staty to which country it seemed more outed than to this frogen North -I was next introduced to the other brothers of The Emperor - the Grand Daker Michael + Nicolas,

(Nicolus, ago 24 - Michael aged 23) two very

Russian in feeling – He is "Lord High Admiral" and promotes with great ardor the naval and commercial progress of his country – He is three months younger than myself – looks a little like Alex. Longfellow – but as if might be fierce when angered – He was very kind and affable to me, talked a long time with me about our fast vessels &c, told me I ought to be half a sailor myself, coming from the State of Maine, and seemed much pleased with my expression of an inclination to learn the Russian language – He lives in another splendid palace formerly known as the Marble palace, from the fact that it is within and without built and ornamented with beautiful and various marbles – but now called the Constantine Palace – Its marble mosaic floors, and rich fluted columns reminded me of the finest palaces of Italy to which country it seemed more suited than to this frozen North -

I was next introduced to the other brothers of the Emperor – the Grand Duke Michael & Nicolas, (Nicolas, aged 24 – Michael aged 23) two very pleasant, nitelligent, modert princes - They received me in another wing of the Wanter Palace where they live, in a laye room which had been their gymnasium containing besides the usual gymnastic apparatus, all don't of weapons , artilley de , from the smallest sores for babies to handle, to the fully proportioned arms of grown men, with by the discipline of which They had been trained to all the manual exercises of a doldier from baylood -After these presentations, I rode about the city and left my card, according to usage, on the member of the diplomatic corps now here from other countries = of whom I have already met leveral, and have found them Kind, gentlemonly, brighty - accomplished, moster tations, and very willing to oblige or informs each other, and without any exception that I know, much esteemed here, and on very good terms with lack other. About this true, I went no day with led. Seymon to pay our respects to the newly arrived

pleasant, intelligent, modest princes – they received me in another wing of the Winter Palace where they live, in a large room which had been their gymnasium containing besides the usual gymnastic apparatus, all sorts of weapons, artillery &c, from the smallest sizes for babies to handle, to the fully proportioned arms of grown men, with by the discipline of which they had been trained to all the manual exercises of a soldier from boyhood –

After these presentations, I rode about the city and left my cards, according to usage, on the members of the diplomatic corps now here from other countries = of whom I have already met several, and have found them kind, gentlemanly, highly-accomplished, unostentatious, and very willing to oblige or inform each other, and without any exception that I know, much esteemed here, and on very good terms with each other.

About this time, I went one day with Col. Seymour to pay our respects to the newly arrived

Persian Ambassador, Seif-el moulk, Mir - Pendy, Abbas Kouli Khaw - whose long name is to be thus interpreted - Seif-el-Month ( Sword of State ) Mir-Pendy ( chief of five thoward new) Whan ( the nobleman) abbas Kouli - (Kouli of the abbas family -He is an ambassador of the highest rank - has a laye retinue - is gorgeously apparelled - wears a fine scinctar - tacks in flowery language - and is the Subject of much telk - He would speak only Persian - He has interpreter however - de, te -Pati four breakfasts of does a thousand odd things -The Supress asked live if the clinate was not very cold to him - He replied that he could not be cold here, where there are three suns - one pointing up I in the heavens above - the two others, the two eyes of the Supress / pointing at them Is bey which the poor Empress, who is a very sincere person, was quite overcome - I was at a mas querade the other livening - the women in tominis puriled the Persian Secretaries most brothly - by their unembourned address and activity a intriguing -

Persian Ambassador, Seif-el Moulk, Mir-Pendi, Abbas Kouli Khan – whose long name is to be thus interpreted – Seif-el-Moulk (Sword of State) Mir-Pendj (chief of five thousand men) Khan (the nobleman) Abbas Kouli – Kouli of the Abbas family) – He is an ambassador of the highest rank – has a large retinue – is gorgeously apparalled – wears a fine scimetar – talks in flowery language – and is the subject of much talk – He could speak only Persian – He has no interpreter however – &c. &c – eats four breakfasts & does a thousand odd things – The Empress asked him if the climate was not very cold to him – He replied that he could not be cold here, where there are three suns – one (pointing up) in the heavens above – the two others, the two eyes of the Empress (pointing at them) = by which the poor Empress who is a very sincere person, was quite overcome — I was at a Masquerade the other evening -- the women in domino's & teased

puzzled ^ the Persian Secretaries most doubly – by their unembarassed address and activity

The monument to Peter the great is very spirited - The horse Lecus in actual motion. The figure of the 62au is life like. Horse and ride are of home. The statue is placed on a huge pedestal of grante; but you will remember or can easily find and read a better and fuller description than I can give of it - one of the fust otone's a travelle hears about it, however, is of that Youker Sailor who climbed on the horse, and astonished the police , one day , by exhibiting himself mounted believed the fine of the Can; Capt. Daniel Hood of Portland will tell you all about it -The large building near the statue is that of the Senate and Holy Synod - that in the distance is acrosp the News, being the Russian Academy ", pictures in the note I send herewith to folia and Even -To return to my official uffair - On monday last, a great bout ceremony took place, the bestothat according to the forms of the Greek church of the Grand Duke Nicolas to his consin the Princess Alexandra . O' Olden bong , in the chapel of the Palace -

3. —— No 3. ———— [image]

M<sup>t</sup>. de Pierre le Grand

The monument to Peter the Great is very spirited – The horse seems in actual motion. The figure of the Czar is life like. Horse and rider are of bronze. The statue is placed on a huge pedestal of granite;

but you will remember or can easily find and read a better and fuller description than I can give of it – One of the first stories a traveller hears about it, however, is of that Yankee sailor who climbed on the horse, and astonished the police, one day, by exhibiting himself wounded behind the figure of the Czar; Capt. Daniel Hood of Portland will tell you about it –

The large building near the statue is that of the Senate and Holy Synod – that in the distance is across the Neva, being the Russian "Academy", pictured in the note I send herewith to John and Eva —

To return to my official affairs – On Monday last, a great Court Ceremony took place, the betrothal according to the forms of the Greek Church of the Grand Duke Nicolas to his cousin the Princess Alexandria d'Oldenbourg, in the chapel of the Palace –

The bout were all present in grand continue - the Diplomatic corps in their doest clother '- look Seymono + supelf wearing our military uniforms - all the highest nobility, and civil, military shave offices of Russia in their most brillrant dresses, collected in the magnificently decorated little church, since aliqued as the Euperon came in leading his brother + the Prices, followed by the Empres and the cest of the Imperior family up to the steps before the gorgeous danstray - Then the Metropoletia and several others of the ligh days, came out, attered in superbly embroidered whee, and high jewelled crown like caps, and performed the religious rites of the occasion, prayers, blessings, charts ( glowing music), and the Empress placed but exchanged their behothal rugs, and the Imperial family affectionately embraced & used them - about fifty or more beautiful young ladies of honor attended the Empres - all the

The Court were all present in grand costume – the Diplomatic corps in their "best clothes" – Col. Seymour & myself wearing our military uniforms – all the highest nobility, and civil, military & naval officers of Russia in their most brilliant dresses, collected in the magnificently decorated little church, were aligned as the Emperor came in leading his brother & the Princess, followed by the Empress and the rest of the Imperial family up to the steps before the gorgeous sanctuary – Then the Metropolitan and several others of the high clergy, came out, attired in superbly embroidered robes, and high jewelled crown-like caps, and performed the religious rites of the occasion, prayers, blessings, chants (glorious music), and the Empress <del>placed</del> bet exchanged their betrothal rings, and the Imperial family affectionately embraced & kissed them — About fifty or more beautiful young ladies of honor attended the Empress – All the

ladies were the elegant court costume of Rusting an antique gart, dequi fied and becoming - which admits of great ornament with the appearance of Implicity and little exposure of the person a Sarafaw (or saraband?) or sort of peline is wow ova the ordinary garments, it has short sleeves - The head deef is red over a high coob, from which a law veil fall, down the back -- Cannon were fined, bells were rang, the city was illuminated in the evening on that occasion, the particular of which I reget I count give you are idea of - but I give up all hope of describing intelligibly the dresses and decorations of the looks & ladies who helped to make the deiplay - I enclose the programme of the Ceremony which somebody at home can translate. I went last evening to a gippy Concert -The Russian Gipoies ( Zinganyi) are carefully present Specunius of their Ishmaelitish, anistocratic race of theever of Wajabouts - but are attracted for

ladies wore the elegant court costume of Russia – an antique garb, dignified and becoming - which admits of great ornament with the appearance of simplicity and little exposure of the person – A Sarafan (or saraband?) or sort of pelisse is worn over the ordinary garments. it has short sleeves – the head dress is red over a high comb, from which a lace veil falls down the back – - Cannon were fired, bells were rung, the city was illuminated in the evening on this occasion, the particulars of which I regret I cannot give you an idea of – but I give up all hope of describing intelligently the dresses and decorations of the lords & ladies who helped to make the display – I enclose the programme of the ceremony which somebody at home can translate –

I went last evening to a Gipsy Concert – The Russian Gipsies (Zingaryc) are carefully preserved specimens of their Ishmaelitish, autocratic race of thieves & vagabonds – but are celebrated for

fruie Origing - Safteen Jepry women & Eight men In very picture que + bright garments ( " nary one alike) Jang wild melodier, in the Russian language, Which were very pleasant in sound but seemed to breath the true spirit of a strange, untameable rooms life - Some of the women danced also in a most extra ordinary manner, not impracefully, but Jerking & Shekoreg every lind of their body at once. These Gipry expibitions are as popular here as the "Ettio pias melodies" with us = the nobles often line them to perform at their doiners -My twie, though not my inclination or supply of lopies, for writing gives out - I am much obliged to Junge for his letter and hope he , and many others , Lewis , Nawy. Ella, Mother ) will write again soon-Tell George, a sensible person will find "society" and Useful associates " locay where -The question I intended to enclose for Lewis in my preeding letter I have sent in another way: they were as to the use of authorite coal for smelting iron with much love to all, believe me your offectionate don Jusiah.

fine singing — Sixteen Gipsy women & eight men in very picturesque & bright garments ("nary one alike) sang wild melodies, in the Russian language, which were very pleasant in sound but seemed to breath the true spirit of a strange, untameable roving life — Some of the women danced also in a most extraordinary manner, not ungracefully, but jerking & shaking every limb of their body at once. These Gipsy exhibitions are as popular here as the "Ethiopian melodies" with us = the nobles often lure them to perform at their soireés —

My time though not my inclination or supply of topics, for writing gives out – I am much obliged to George for his letter and hope he, (and many others, Lewis, Nancy, Ella, Mother) will write again soon – Tell George, a sensible person will find "society" and useful "associates" everywhere —

The questions I intended to enclose for Lewis in my preceding letter I have sent in another way: they were as to the use of anthracite coal for smelting iron – with much love to all, believe me

Your affectionate son

Josiah.