

St. Petersburg. Jan <sup>16</sup>/<sub>28</sub>. 1856.

My Dear Father,

Three weeks have passed since I wrote to you, I believe, and during that time a great event has occurred in the history of Russia, as you will have learned by the journals. The propositions for peace have been accepted by the Czar, more for humanity and in accordance with his wishes for peace and the moral and material improvement of his country, than from any necessity or compulsion - Many of his oldest and wisest counsellors are said to have advocated Peace: among them the famous Marshal Paskiewitch, Viceroy of Warsaw, now on his death-bed, and the hardly less celebrated Count Orloff who is at the head of the Police administration of this mighty empire = and the Empress herself, and the active and intelligent Grand-Duke Constantine are said to have also given their voice for an end of the War.

Historical Society  
Jan 16-1856  
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Date: Jan. 16-28, 1856

Description: Josiah Pierce on Crimean War

You cannot so long have studied contemporary history without learning to distrust the prejudiced and violent statements of the English journals regarding foreign affairs: you know it would be an error for a German to form his opinion of the civilization, the government, the manners or even the geography of our own country from an English newspaper: and I assure you that respecting Russia and the prospects of Peace, the English now make as many perverse misrepresentations as they ever did about us.

Foreigners as well as natives here declare that Russia has ~~at~~ this moment both vast means for action and incalculable powers of endurance in war; and think she has not been weakened but strengthened in those respects by the present conflict -

The army, and the nobles of Russian origin do not willingly receive the prospect of peace, but the merchants and manufacturers and most of the higher statesmen are said to welcome it. Little doubt seems entertained here or on

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the continent ^ of the successful result of the negotiations for  
that purpose: if the result depended on England, the war  
might continue - but her Allies manifest a much more  
humane and pacific feeling -

The neutralization of the Black Sea - the free admission  
to its waters of the commerce of all nations - the advantages  
to <sup>trade from opening the mouth</sup> commerce ^ of the Danube - the protection of Christians  
under the bigoted Moslem rule, are conditions which may  
not be without advantage to the whole world, bringing some  
indirect benefit to the people of the United States - but they  
will be more likely to benefit Russia and the people con-  
cerned in her grain trade and <sup>that of</sup> the Danubian principalities  
than any others -

The rapid and great rise in government funds all over  
Europe, and the active purchase <sup>here</sup> of commodities for exportation  
show the ~~strong~~ <sup>great</sup> confidence of the mercantile community in  
the establishment of Peace: but as yet Russia does not  
neglect or diminish her great preparations for war, with which  
all her workshops and engineers are now most busy -

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I reserve till a future letter a narrative which, if I had time,  
I would like to send you now of "sights" & "shows" I have  
seen: and will only mention that, <sup>since my last letter</sup> I have been presented to  
the Queen of Holland (sister of the late Emperor) - to the Prince of  
Oldenbourg (one of the royal family, by marriage) - have also  
attended a great ceremony at the Palace, the blessing of the  
waters of the Neva, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, when there was  
a great state procession, and church rites, and review of  
40,000 household troops near the palace; and <sup>on this occasion</sup> took breakfast  
at the Palace, from the imperial plate, at a table with  
Count Esterhazy and many other diplomats, and had a delightful  
conversation with some charming maids of honor, and also was  
accounted in and received many compliments for, the uniform of  
Major of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regt. 2<sup>d</sup> Brig. 5<sup>th</sup> Div. of Maine Volunteer Militia:  
and that I have very little leisure, having much copying  
to do, and many Americans & others to entertain: and that  
every day I wish myself back in the United States, dealing  
in Minnesota lands. With much regard for all my friends  
whom you see, and hopes that they will not become oblivious  
of me, I remain ever your affectionate son Josiah.

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