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Pierce's to Pierce of St. Petersburg June 1856

To the Hon. Josiah Pierce  
Gorham, Maine, United States of America.

St. Petersburg, 28 May/9<sup>th</sup> June, 1856.

My dear father,

I write to you today, rather for the purpose of obeying your request that I should do so often, than because I have anything of importance to communicate - My occupations and my health remain the same - My time is much taken up with trifling interruptions, and with entertaining Americans who come to the office -

Since the opening of navigation, sixteen large American vessels have entered the Port of Cronstadt - Fourteen of them were built in the State of Maine, and I assure you I felt proud of the old pine-tree state when I saw these ships, these children of hers, by far the most symmetrical and large of all the merchant vessels in the harbor - Only one Portland ship (the Corinthian, Capt. Slater) and one Brunswick ship (the John L. Dimock, Capt. Skolfield) are among them - but you may easily believe, that I have felt at home among the Captains & fraternized with them as far as lay in my power, distributing for their pleasure & for the spread of good principles, among

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Date: 28 May/9 June 1856  
Description: Josiah Pierce letter on U.S. visitors to Russia

them, all the copies of the Eastern Argus I had on hand -  
Capt. Skolfield has his wife with him - a young lady whom  
I had often seen formerly in Brunswick - daughter of  
Mr. Forsyth and grand-daughter of old Capt. Curtis -  
Capt. Blair, of the fine large ship, <sup>the "John Sydney"</sup> from Richmond,  
is also an old acquaintance, who boarded at Mr. Davis's  
and attended the Academy, at Gorham, eight years ago;  
and, in fact, all these Ship-Masters seem like old friends,  
for they are acquainted with many of my acquaintances,  
and we have the same political & moral notions of  
matters about home - I have been about the city to  
show them the sights - and, day before yesterday,  
Col. Seymour & myself went to Cronstadt & visited the  
ships, where we were received with hospitality and  
flying colors - I think the Captains were pleased by  
our visit, & glad to run up the Star-spangled banner  
on the occasion - we were certainly rejoiced at the  
sight of the familiar "flag of the free", and happy  
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of time, patriotic, liberalized Yankees, as were these good representatives of our Merchant-Ship masters abroad — and for my part, I felt almost bursting with satisfaction at the show made for the State of Maine —

This morning I accompanied a very estimable country-woman of ours, Miss Dix, of New York, to the Moscow railway station — You know her reputation as a philanthropist — she has come here recently, after visiting the hospitals & prisons of almost all the rest of Europe, including Turkey, to inspect the admirable ones of this country, and goes to Moscow today in pursuance of that purpose —

The Emperor is still absent — the Empress is at the country-palace of Tsarskoe Selo — The Court, of course, & the fashionables, are, or are supposed to be also, out of town, in the beautiful villas of the environs of Petersburg, on their estates in the country, or travelling somewhere in foreign lands — The emigration has been enormous since the warm weather first appeared —

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In three or four days, Mr. Seymour will change his lodgings  
to the other side of the river -

I am going on a long voyage, in a yacht, called the  
"Georgian", belonging to Mr. Baird, the wealthy iron-founder  
here - Mr. Baird & two others besides myself will be the  
passengers - The yacht belongs to the Imperial Yacht Club,  
is entitled to the privileges of a vessel of the Russian Navy,  
and is manned by a crew of about twenty men - She is  
a beautiful schooner of between 200 & 300 tons burden -  
I anticipate much pleasure & instruction from the voyage, which  
remains uncertain as to its direction - but we shall probably  
visit Revel, Sweaborg, the Aland Islands, and go as far  
as Tornea at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, where  
we hope to see the "midnight sun" - So I shall probably  
not write home till my return from the cruise -

The box Lewis sent has arrived here, but owing to the  
delays at the Custom-house, I have not yet received it,  
and know nothing of its condition - With much love to  
all relatives & regards for friends, I remain, as ever  
Your affectionate Son  
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