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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

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

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Maine Historical Society

MMN #31873

Date: September 8-20, 1856

Description: Josiah Pierce on life in Russia

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

It 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 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 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; 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 or three, being quite similar, and very small - The Kremlin walls enclose the buildings which possess the most historical interest - The Great Palace & Museum, & Senate & Arsenal, these are modern, built since the fire of 1812 - the other, ancient.

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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 hat — the majiks <sup>overcoats in Russia</sup> drop 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 — Havana cigars — late breakfasts — lively chit-chat — the last new novels — horse-races — elegant furniture — piano fortes — French Teachers — jewellery — 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 ~~great~~ 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

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