Jo Mu. E. L. Preise Gortion . Maine Met of america Ir Peterburg, November 28, 1858 Dear Mother. you will remember that I arrived in this city just one year ago today. Therefore it is an auniversary of some importance to me -A year's recritime have has not quite made the place like home, however familiar it may have become - But certainly I do not regest the stop I took in leaving my perhaps more secure property and more climby attached friends in Portland, to exchange them for what I have found here -You know I never wished to become "fixed for life", with the read to the and of it planie, marked out and visible before me, too door - and it would have been too soon for me, I am satisfied, if I had availed myselfof any occasion historite presented for becoming " settled down " Lo you see -I can dispose saily of most personal considerations in passing a self-Ex assination at the end of a year so to whether I did eight in consing here - by getting ried in this way of the principal objection as to it having turned we away from a part I had advanced some way in , towards as now and doubtful one - Sections the year of has been of more bleasure them profit - more of aumsement that instruction - but cretainly I would not give up its experience and even confinitful occupations for what I might have had instead, at Portland: and Some of its events have affected me for oternity, and

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Date: November 28 - December 10, 1856

Description: Josiah Pierce reflecting on his life in Russia

To Mrs. E.L. Pierce

Gorham, Maine. U.S. of America.

St. Petersburg, November 28,/ December 10 1856.

Dear Mother.

You will remember that I arrived in this city just one year ago today. Therefore it is an anniversary of some importance to me – A year's residence here has not quite made the place like home, however familiar it may have become – But certainly I do not regret the step I took in leaving my perhaps more secure prospects and more closely-attached friends in Portland, to exchange them for what I have found here – You know I never wished to become "fixed for life", with the road to the end of it plainly marked out and visible before me, too soon – and it would have been too soon for me, I am satisfied, if I had availed myself of any occasion hitherto presented for becoming "settled down" - So you see I can dispose easily of most personal considerations in passing a selfexamination at the end of a year as to whether I did right in coming here – by getting rid in this way of the principal objection as to its having turned me away from a path I had advanced some way in, towards a new and doubtful one – Perhaps the year of has been of more pleasure than profit – more of amusement than instruction – but certainly I would not give up its experience and even unfruitful occupations for what I might have had instead, at Portland: and some of its events have affected me for eternity, and

in a way, I hope, to be turned to good account - You see I write to you ofenty my poor thought of myself, without few that they will be as vidiculous or uninteresting to you, as they would be if proclaimed them to others, and as confidently as when I pier came home to you been school -

It is by no mount as sold now, as when I first passed through the then stronge streets of this far northern town, twelve mousts age - Indeed, something like a farmary than is now taking place and the streets are running with water - to the comfort I done day of many from people have, who are said to be much troubled this sounds on account of a slight rise in price of their great new - friends of feet the cold however more densitively than last year. Inch is the usual experience of foreigness are live here - just as a man's noce having been once force, afterwards with freeze more quickly and at a higher temperature -

One day of last week, I made a trip to bountast, when the theonometer store at about 8" above zero, but I scally Suffered much from the cold them, as I should not have done at home, for one of the previous winty winds of Russia blew over the gulf of browstadt which we had to cross upon the rice - The distance from here was about 40 miles, as we went along the wash to Oranien baness, and wered from them to the island of browstadt - I want with elle, Prince force of the wandering "Salam boys" I who is the manager of the branch in this city

in a way, I hope, to be turned to good account – You see I write to you openly my poor thoughts of myself, without fear that they will be as ridiculous or uninteresting to you, as they would be if proclaimed thus to others, and as confidently as when I first came home to you from school –

It is by no means as cold now, as when I first passed though the then strange streets of this far northern town, twelve months ago – Indeed, something like a January thaw is now taking place and the streets are running with water—to the comfort I dare say of many poor people here, who are said to be much troubled this winter on account of a slight rise in price of their great need – firewood – I feel the cold however more sensitively than last year – Such is the usual experience of foreigners who live here – just as a man's nose having been once frozen, afterwards will freeze more quickly and at a higher temperature –

One day of last week, I made a trip to Cronstadt (where the thermometer stood at about 8° above zero, but I really suffered much from the cold there, as I should not have done at home, for one of the piercing wintry winds of Russia blew over the gulf of Cronstadt which we had to cross upon the ice – The distance from here was about 40 miles, as we went along the coast or Oranienbaum, and crossed from there to the island of Cronstadt – I went with Mr. Prince (one of the wandering "Salem boys") who is the manager of the branch in this city

of the Boston Commercial home of W. Ropes the . Four of the Seven american ships, all freighted and presen in for the winter at Connetated are oronal ex chartest by that home - a deteful winter is before the Captains and come of the 388 foreign vessels suddenly entrapped there in icy fetters. They have no remement, or occupations wast what they can device for them selves - but after ale - excepting for the loss of work - they are more confortable them if at sea . Two of the accentum Captomis have their wices with them, and four of them, at least, are from Maine - I toke with me for their consolation, and much to their gentification, all my Late Eastern argus's - and shall continue to do wheat I can for them during the winter The Slips look Strangely enough, Standing fact, with all their rigging still up, in the cold white plain of snowy ice - man walk out to them, and carriage dive around them. More of them are clustered inside the great therehouts mote" forming an enclosive, with powning batteries, around them; but many are outside in the channel, in all dots of positions, just no they were careful while making saidely efforts to get out through a channel which 500 men & some steamers variety endeavoued to clear theory, the ice soon after its first congealment = The Brice & I west in one of the "trickis" - I horse sledge - out getting up at it in the morning, easily made the journey of 80 miles to browsladt and back, in severe for ter at 8 o case in the evening - Our dayligher is brief at present - lastly only from 9 orchook the half - post & - and the social life of the city begins at dinner . I have dined out almost every other day

of the Boston commercial house of W. Ropes & Co. Four of the seven American ships, all freighted and frozen in for the winter at Cronstadt are owned or chartered by that house – A doleful winter is before the Captains and crews of the 388 foreign vessels suddenly entrapped there in icy fetters. They have no amusements or occupations except what they can devise for themselves – but after all – excepting for the loss of work – they are more comfortable tan if at sea - Two of the American Captains have their wives with them, and four of them, at least, are from Maine – I took with me for their consolation, and much to their gratification, all my late Eastern Argus's – and shall continue to do what I can for them during the winter – The ships look strangely enough, standing fast, with all their rigging still up, in the cold white plain of snowy ice – Men walk out to them, and carriages drive around them. Most of them are clustered inside the great "Merchants mole", forming an enclosure, with frowning batteries, around them; but many are outside in the channel, in all sorts of positions, just as they were caught while making useless efforts to get out through a channel which 500 men & some steamers vainly endeavored to clear through the ice soon after its first congealment – Mr. Prince & I went in one of the "troika's" – 3 horse sledges – and getting up at 5 in the morning, easily made the journey of 80 miles to Cronstadt and back, in season for tea at 8 o'clock in the evening – Our daylight is brief at present lastly only from 9 o'clock till half-past 3 – and the social life of the city begins at dinner – I have dined out almost every other day

for a fortuight - new very good for the health , you may say -Last Sunday, the first Court coremonial requiring the attendance of the differentia coops took place. June our return from allescow - In some on the Oceasin of the Saptism of the newly . Som som of the Grand - Dake Nicholas , brotten to the Entered - which was performed in the splendid chapel of the Winter Palace, with the Sweetest muries and most coneful eccenomial of the Guek chund . The Emperor was god father - the bake's grand worthe the Duchan of Oldenbugh) was good mother - In Musica you know the god parents are believed to have , were them any when alle, the most solenn responsibilities regarding their god child's spiritual welface - The Metropolitan of this district baptered the chiel - which was naked - + was duly immered three times in a quar fort, after its ops, mouth, hands i feet had seen avoid will the ledy chein, in shop figure of a cross. The father a mother, facialing to rule were about - The priests were their most gregions when - The muse was held the cloth was in the position Russian muster costume, with board blue head - bour adented by decimals - The great dignitions of state - eferinge minister, te, were all there , in full tosture -

I have received type tenday of a very brief rate from Ella, dated eller.

In which the says your hard been it with the mention, and white keeping your worm armost yourself a little with my letter, the first went with them - at an glace if they can while away any weary or painful moments you may have - and so inclose some more - which you may towarder as "Sight from my towards" or thinks street scenes in It. Petersburg, though I tout you will not again have the like occasion to be assessed by such thereft, and with love to all at home, I celesion, Joseph affectionate down, Joseph

for a fortnight – Not very good for the health, you may say – Last Sunday the first Court ceremonial requiring the attendance of the diplomatic corps took place since our return from Moscow – It was on the occasion of the baptism of the newly-born son of the Grand-Duke Nicholas, brother to the Emperor – which was performed in the splendid chapel of the Winter Palace, with the sweetest music and most careful ceremonial of the Greek church. The Emperor was god-father – the babe's grand-mother (the Duchess of Oldenburgh) was god-mother – In Russia you know the god-parents are believed to have, more than any where else, the most solemn responsibilities regarding their god-child's spiritual welfare – The Metropolitan of this district baptized the child – which was naked – & was duly immersed three times in a great font, after its eyes, mouth, hands & feet had been anointed with the holy chrism, in shape figure of a cross. The father & mother, (according to rule) were absent – The priests were their most gorgeous robes – The nurse who held the child was in the peculiar Russian nurse's costume, with broad blue head-band adorned by diamonds – The great dignitaries of state – & foreign ministers, &c, were all there, in full costume —

I have received (yesterday) a very brief note from Ella, dated Nov. in which she says you had been ill with rheumatism, and while keeping your room amused yourself a little with my letters & the pictures which went with them – I am glad if they can while away any weary or painful moments you may have – and so inclose some more – which you may consider as "Sights from my window" or Winter street scenes in St. Petersburg, though I trust you will not again have the like occasion to be amused by such things, and with love to all at home, I remain, your affectionate son, Josiah —