

To Hon. Josiah Pierce.
Gorham, Maine, U. S. of America.

St. Petersburg, March 3/19 February, 1857.

My dear father,

Your letter of the 3^d Feb. was received by me this week with much pleasure - which I always feel at hearing from you, - and with thankfulness for its information of your tolerable health and of mother's comparative recovery -

It will not only give me no trouble but will afford me much pleasure to procure for our kind friends Mr. & Mrs. Baldwin, such Russian pictures &c, as they desire according to the note of Mr. Baldwin's which you enclosed to me and which I now return - Probably I may send them a package by the first ship which will leave Cronstadt for Boston, about the middle of May - but will inform you or Mr. Baldwin, of any such shipment when it is made, and the cost attending it - repayment of which he may make to you if he pleases.

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Date: February-March 1857

Description: Josiah Pierce on wanting to leave diplomatic post in Russia

I am very glad if the slippers and other little presents sent home by me have given you and the others to whom they were addressed any satisfaction - and often wish it was within my power to transmit to my friends at home many other more valuable things which are common here but would be curious to you - most of them being too expensive for my purse or too cumbrous for my means of transport -

You ask me how the word "Russia" is pronounced - It is an English word, and I believe is properly pronounced in the old-fashioned way, as it is spelt; - and not, according to a certain modern affectation, Rooshia - The Russian name of the country is spelt and pronounced "Rossiya" - the German name is "Russland" - and the French "La Russie" -

You also ~~ask~~ if I see American journals & magazines - I see as many of our newspapers as I have time or wish to read - and now & then a magazine, which I care little for. I prefer the London Times, now, to the Edinburgh Review, which I hope you will think not a perversion but a simple

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variation of taste.

The time of my return to America is uncertain - It depends upon the instructions I receive from the State Department. On the 5th of March I shall write to Mr. Buchanan, expressing briefly what I really feel - as far as I am personally concerned, that, though liking the Diplomatic service, and being ready to accept any order he may send me as to continuing in it or leaving it, I am not desirous of remaining at this post, so little remunerative, any longer than I can help.

The Russian Carnival, with its great fair in the Admiralty place, of which you will find a description in Kohl's Travels, came to an end three days since - and the season of Lent, which is very strictly observed by the rules of the Greek church, has commenced, and all ^{weddings,} balls, theatrical entertainments, parties, and meat dinners are postponed till its close by orthodox Russians. Not belonging to their church, I continue to eat meat; but cannot help being influenced by the sudden change of the town from gay to grave, from lively to severe -

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Permit me to say, even if I have said once or twice before, that Kohl's book on Russia is one of the most correct I know in its descriptions of manners here among the merchants & lower classes - but still it is in many respects superficial & inaccurate - Haxthausen's Studies of Russia, in three volumes, of which one English translation was published last year by Chapman & Hall in London, is the best work for giving a general knowledge of the rural districts - the proprietorship of land & its incidents - the church - & its sects - the army - the strange patriarchal communism of the villages, and the different races, in Great & Little Russia - and I should recommend the Directors of the Athenaeum Library to purchase it if they wish to possess the most entertaining & instructive and unprejudiced book on Russia -

It gratifies me much to be kindly remembered by my friends and old acquaintances at home, and to learn now & then that I have been favorably spoken of by persons whom I have had the pleasure of meeting here - I hope to preserve their good opinion, and especially your own - & with love to all our family, remain
Ever your affectionate son, Josiah

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