

St. Petersburg, January 9/21. 1858.

My dear Father,

Yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter of December 25, together with one from George and another from Lewis. I was very glad to be informed by them of the continued health and comfort of yourself and mother - and that the "hard times" have pressed so lightly upon you and your family - May many new years to come find you in peace and ease and good health in your happy home -

What do you say to a weeks visit from me? It is quite possible - There are despatches now on hand in our office for the State Department which I may take to Washington, and be excused on their account for leaving my post, even if, as is very doubtful, no pay should be allowed me for bringing them - I have resolved to profit by Messrs Winans & Co's proposal, unless something very remarkable occurs to oppose it before the time for carrying it into execution. \$5000. per year is not to be thrown away by a man otherwise destitute. But I do wish to see you and my home once more before entering upon this new absence of five years longer, and

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Maine Historical Society

MMN #31901

Date: Jan. 9/21, 1858

Description: Josiah Pierce on visit to Maine

this opportunity seems likely to be the only one - If I leave here about the last of January - I must be back by the last of April - so allowing a month for the journey each way, and a week for business in Washington, and another week for the road, I should have a week to pass with you - The length and expense of the journey I do not value in comparison with such a visit to home, short as it will be. If you do not hear from me within four weeks from the receipt of this, you may conclude that I am on my way to Gorham Corner.

So the girls have taken to skating! Good! better than dancing, at midnight, in high-pressure corsets and tight shoes - And you have good sleighing! Until this week we have had none except for a few days in November, and the dust of the streets and rattling of wheels has seemed doubly disagreeable and unnatural during so long a period of winter - And Tom Patrick is dead! Peace to his funeral pile! I always had a respect for him since I heard of that ancient fight of his with Staples - The village patriarchs of my boyhood's day, seem to have nearly all departed, and the village itself to be rendered common-place by the railroad -

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Thanks for the slip of paper containing a decision in the case of a
Suit on Herrick coupons - I was in the two suits formerly defaulted,
I believe, and opposed the default to the last but my senior counsel
thought otherwise - Geo. Shepley first pointed out to me that both
bonds and coupons bore interest and the latter could not be good, if
the bonds were - Perhaps I shall come back finally from Russia
and earn nominal fees again some ten years hence, in suits concerning
The Y. & C. R.R. growing out of that brief sway of "Acting Treas^r.
Herrick", the litigation on which seems interminable - If I was
at home and the Attorney of the Co. still, I firmly believe I would
urge what I did urge several times while I remained in that
distinguished but harassing place - viz: to throw the whole business
into Chancery, and make everybody parties to the equity suit, and
then it would last forever, and nobody would have to pay
out anything except to the lawyers, and nobody but the lawyers
would get anything from it. But our learned brother "Jabe"
Woodman may be trusted for not leaving it while there remains
of its carcass one bone to pick -

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St. Petersburg is very gay just now - with the fresh sledging - the New Year's festivities and the merry-making preceding Lent; which dismal period of abstinence will come in on February 3^d/15th -

Three times lately have I been to the Palace, in full regimentals - firstly on New Year's day, to a "circle", where the Diplomatic Corps presented to the Imperial family felicitations of the season - 2^d, on January 6/18,

to see the ceremony of "blessing the water", or the Epiphany, before described by me - and 3^d, in attendance at a magnificent ball given by their Majesties - All the Court, numbering some 2000 people, in their usual

splendid dresses and uniforms, attended these ceremonies - I have also dined out much lately, and been at two balls, and also at a "rout", (as a party is called where there is no dancing) given by Prince Gortchacoff -

and I come home from these occasions, and get into my old clothes and slippers, and smoke a clay pipe, looking at a hard-featured bust of Gen. Jackson on my bookcase, and meditate about ^{going back to Maine} coming home to be

a Justice of the Peace and live on the Baldwin farm. So mote it be!

I am well and hearty, but evidently am growing old -

Please give the enclosed envelope to mother, with my love: and with love to all the family, and best regards to all friends,

Believe me, ever, your affectionate son, Josiah Pierce Junr.

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