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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letter from William Wilkins to “Pet” Wilkins

**Date:** December 29, 1834

**Location:** I-Friends-1982-13

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St Petersburg, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> 1834.

My dear Pet -

This morning I sent by the Courier of the French Ambassador to the care of Mr. Livingston in Paris a packet for your mother, containing a letter to herself, one to your uncle Dallas, Charles, Sophy & little Hett. And now I answer your dear letter to me by the opportunity, of which I have just heard, of a Courier to London dispatched by the British Minister -

I read your letter, my beloved Pet, so well and prettily written, on Christmas day, with those from mother, Uncle Dallas, Charles & dear little Hett. I am much obliged to you, and you must write to me very often - Your letters come safely & nobody looks into them -

Tell Mr. Biddle it was unwise in him to take advantage of my absence & ~~Commence~~ to build at the Knoll - I think he has done it on purpose to get clear of being pestered with my plans & notions - You tell me he is going to take you all out with him there next summer - A

doubt he thinks of every thing that would make  
you happy - and cannot contemplate having a  
house of his own without having my poor children  
under its roof. I hope you are all attentive to  
him and love him - He is the best - the only  
prince father has on earth! Mother writes to  
me how constantly good he is to you all, &  
how deep & everlasting her gratitude to him  
is - May God bless him! God will bless him  
for his benevolence & attention to the unfortunate!

I should like to know how you & Mr. Ross  
get along together now-a-days, - Do you still  
count, kiss, box & fight? How do Mr. Watty  
and Mr. Bradford behave themselves when they  
come up to see you?

Give my love to Charles & tell him of the letter I  
have written to him - and that I have said  
to him, that if Sundusky turns out to be hand-  
-some & good tempered, & he likes him, he shall  
be taken for him, & he shall have him for a  
riding horse upon my return, provided, his  
mother gives him no bad marks in her letters

to me - He must answer my letter immediately & tell  
me what he thinks of the bargain - My next  
letter shall be directed to my dear & excellent  
Maria - Edward calls me to my dinner

at 5 o'clock - I go to it alone - I have dined -  
My dinner was - soup - beef steak - partridge -  
turkey - eggs & spinach - carrots - potatoes -  
baked custard - and - sweet cakes - & water -

To day the weather has not been so cold - it  
was a beautiful, clear day - & I saw the sun!  
I walked for an hour & a half - walked over  
the Arwa on the ice, covered with snow and  
as solid as the earth - The cold weather is  
now beginning - and the very coldest will last  
for about three weeks - After returning from  
my walk I dressed myself in my court dress,  
and went to court at the Winter Palace to  
be presented to the young Grand Duke - the  
eldest son of the Emperor & heir apparent to  
the Throne - "Son Altesse Impériale Monseigneur  
le Césarewicz et Grand Duc Héritier" - He is  
about 17 - remarkably handsome - tall - intel-  
-ligent & speaks English very well - I have

also saw his sisters, the two elder daughters of  
their Majesties - they are very pretty, very genteel  
genteel & modest in their appearance - the elder,  
the palpable image of her father - and, when she  
was dancing in a cotillion, her mother, the  
Empress, told me she was past 15 - of course  
she is about the age of Maria, and about  
her size - The Empress also told me she was  
quite uneasy about her size - she was afraid  
she would not be tall enough - The presump-  
-tion is she will be - for the mother is tall & the  
father remarkable & distinguished in his ap-  
-pearance - finely formed - fully as tall as  
Mr. Gravel of certainly one of the handsomest  
men I ever saw - But, I must not tell you  
of what I have seen at Court, or you will  
only return me for answer - "How glad I am  
that you so happy!" "I am pleased that  
you are in such fine & delightful spirits!" &c. &c.!

Has grand mother any pet amongst all  
my dear children? Tell her she may take her  
choice of all but you - that I cannot part

St. Petersburg, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1834.

My dear Pet \_

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Tell Mr. Biddle it was unfair in him to take advantage of my absence & commence to build at the Knoll \_ I think he has done it on purpose to get clear of being pestered with my plans & notions \_ You tell me he is going to take you all out with him there next summer \_ No doubt he thinks of every thing that would make you happy \_ and cannot contemplate having a home of his own without having my poor children under its roof. I hope you are all attentive to him and love him\_ He is the best \_ the only friend father has on earth! Mother writes to ~~hi~~ me how constantly good he is to you all, & how deep & everlasting her gratitude to him is \_ May God bless him! God will bless him for his benevolence & attending to the unfortunate!

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Today the weather has not been so cold \_ it was a beautiful, clear day \_ & I saw the sun! I walked for an hour & a half \_ walked over the Neva on the ice, covered with snow as solid as the earth \_ The cold weather is now beginning \_ and the very coldest will last for about three weeks\_ After returning from my walk I dressed myself in my court dress, and went to court at the Winter Palace to be presented to the young grand Duke \_ the oldest son of the Emperor & heir apparent to the throne \_ "son Altesse Impériale Monseigneur le Césarevicz et Grand Duc Hérétier"\_ He is about 17 \_ remarkably handsome \_ tall \_ intelligent & speaks english very well \_ I have also seen his sisters, the two elder daughters of their Majesties \_ they are very pretty, very gentele

genteel & modest in their appearance \_ the elder, the palpable image of her father \_ and, when she was dancing in a cotillion, her mother, the Empress, told me she was past 15 \_ of course she is about the age of Maria, and about her size \_ The Empress also told me she was quite uneasy about her size \_ she was afraid she would not be tall enough \_ The presumption is she will be \_ for the mother is tall & the father remarkable & distinguished in his appearance \_ finely formed \_ fully as tall as Mr. [Israel] & certainly one of the handsomest men I ever saw. But, I must not tell you of what I have seen at Court, or you will only return me for answer \_ "How glad I am that your [sic] so happy!" "I am pleased that you are in such fine & delightful spirits" &c &c!

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