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Title: Letter from William Wilkins to “Pet” Wilkins

Date: December 29, 1834

Location: I-Friends-1982-13

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St Petersburg, Dec. 29th 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 of business 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. It

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 Césarevich 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 & 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 pret amoy shall
my dear children? Tell her she may take her
choice of all but you - that I cannot part

St. Petersburg, Dec. 29th, 1834.

My dear Pet _

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I rec^d. 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 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!

I should like to know how you & Mr. Ross get along together now-a-days _ Do you still court, kiss, box & fight? How do Mr. Watts 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 handsome & good tempered, & he likes him, he shall be broke 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_

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 Héretier"_ 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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