

Tied up with the manuscript in which these edifying words are recorded was the original letter from Alexis Orloff, in which, with the most cold-blooded distinctness of phrase, he announced to the Empress the murder of her husband!

In the early years of our own century, a young Bostonian — who later became one of the noted wits of his generation, — in the course of a visit to Europe spent some weeks at St. Petersburg. He became intimate with an elderly diplomat, to whom he had letters of introduction, and who had long resided in Russia. One day, when dining *tête-à-tête* with his friend, he ventured to hint a question upon a delicate subject which had for years occupied the curious in such matters, namely, the truth as to the death of the Emperor Peter III.

His host silenced him with a gesture. "The subject is too dangerous for discussion," he said, in a low tone. "I dare not enter upon it even with you and alone. Your curiosity must be answered without words, if at all. We are going to the ball at the palace to-night. Keep your hand in my arm, and whenever we pass one of the persons suspected — mind, I

only say *suspected* — of complicity in the matter, I will give it a slight pressure. But you must guard your face. It would never do to have it imagined that any communication on such a subject was passing between us."

So that night, as the young American, leaning on his friend's arm, passed through the brilliant throng at the Winter Palace, he was conscious ever and anon of a slight significant pressure. Always it came as they encountered some court official high in office, and especially resplendent in dress or decorations. At last they met the gigantic Prince Orloff, literally blazing with orders and jewels, and towering head and shoulders above the crowd. The pressure here was particularly distinct.

"He held the handkerchief," murmured the diplomat in his young friend's ear.

This "handkerchief," the enormous Orloff, and the puny and enfeebled young Emperor furnished, it may be presumed, one of the most striking of the "felicitous combinations" which Catherine had in mind, and for which she thanked Heaven with such exemplary fervor.

*Susan Coolidge.*

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## MOOSILAUKE.

MOOSILAUKE! mountain sagamore! thy brow  
 The wide hill-splendor circles. Not a peer  
 Among New Hampshire's lordly heights that fear  
 Nor summer's bolt nor winter's blast hast thou  
 For grand horizons. Lo, to westward now  
 Towers Whiteface over Killington; and clear,  
 To north, Mount Royal cleaves the blue; while near,  
 Franconia's, Conway's peaks the east endow  
 With glory, round great Washington, whose cone  
 Of sunset shade, athwart his valleys thrown,  
 Darkens and stills a hundred miles of Maine!  
 To south the bright Lake smiles, and rivers flow  
 Through elm-fringed meadows to the ocean plain, —  
 Lone peak! what realms are thine, above, below!

*Edna Dean Proctor.*

## LETTERS OF SIDNEY LANIER.

## II.

LANIER'S connection with the Centennial Exhibition brought him, during the summer of 1876, into many pleasant relations; but, unfortunately, his health declined. He passed several months at West Chester, Pa., where he wrote *Clover* and *The Waving of the Corn*; and then, when autumn came, he returned to Philadelphia in what seemed a dying condition. For many weeks he was tenderly nursed at the Peacocks', until, having regained a little strength, it was evident that he must go South if he would survive the winter. Accordingly, leaving the children behind, he and his wife journeyed to Florida as fast as his feebleness permitted. His first note, written on a postal card, is dated "Cedar Keys, Fla., December 20th, 1876." He says: "Through many perils and adventures we are so far safely on our way, in much better condition than could have been expected. We leave for Tampa presently. It is about 125 miles southward; but we stop at Manatee, and do not reach Tampa until to-morrow night, — spending thirty-six hours in the steamer. We have been wishing all the morning that you might pace these white sands with us, in the heavenly weather. Will write you immediately from Tampa."

TAMPA, FLA., *December 27th, 1876.*

On arriving here we find that your friendship has as usual anticipated us. May and I, strolling down to the Post office to rent a box, and not daring to think of letters, are told by the clerk that he thinks there is something for us, — and the something turns out to be

<sup>1</sup> Miss Stebbins subsequently published a life of Miss Cushman (Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1878). Lanier had hoped, and many of

your pleasant budget, which we incontinently open and devour, sitting down on the steps of the Post office for that purpose, to the wonderment of the natives. Your news of our dear manikins is the first we have had, and is a fair gift for our Christmas. . . .

The letters you sent were all pleasant in one way or another. One is from H. M. Alden, Editor *Harper's Magazine*, enclosing check for fifteen dollars, and accepting the poem (*The Waving of the Corn*) sent him by me through Bayard Taylor. Another is a very cordial letter from "Geo. C. Eggleston, Literary Editor *Evening Post*," making tender of brotherhood to me in a really affectionate way, and declaring that "the keen delight with which he recently read my volume of poems sharpens the pang he feels in knowing that one in whose work he sees so rich a promise lies on a bed of illness."

The postal card is from Gilder, whom I had requested to make a slight addition to my article on *The Orchestra* in *Scribner's*.

The fourth letter is, as you guessed, from Emma Stebbins, and I enclose it for you to read. It seems from the last portion of it that she has quite abandoned the idea of writing the life of Charlotte Cushman, substituting for that the project of merely printing a *Memorial Volume*.<sup>1</sup>

The *Bulletin* with the notice you mention has not yet arrived. I am very much pleased that the *Psalm* of the West has given Mrs. Champney a text to preach from. One begins to add to the intrinsic delight of prophet-hood the less lonesome joy of human helpfulness — when one finds the younger poets

his friends and Miss Cushman's had hoped, that this work would be assigned to him.