



[William Crosfield Letters](#)

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L E T T E R S

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Res.

Dearest or you may
miss all the other who
come down to meals
do it as if it was a
business that is to be
done and with it
share of pleasure too
Still you will not let
work as if it was not
a chance that we get
once every 12 months
and thus I be made
the most of
Saloon 15th A
P.M. S.P. Persia
Thursday July 20/59
8.15 evening

You are now I
suppose thinking about going
to bed whereas I am just about
to digest my tea by writing
some chit chat to you all at
home. Our voyage has been
a very poor one we have on
board a P.C. Bishop with 2
Captains and 2 sisters of
mercy; one of the officers thinks
or says that he is the Jonah
who ought to be thrown overboard
for the prosperity of our voyage.
Throw him overboard we
might, but drown him we
could not, for as their custom

is he is somewhat stout. The pilot left us about an hour after the mail tender so that I could tell you nothing in the letter which I sent on shore by him. For 36 hours till midnight the water could not have been smoother on Hudson and as we passed up by the Cal of Man it was very pleasant. I was not up early enough on Sunday morning to see the Gameway wh we passed about 5 o'clock but enjoyed the rugged Irish coast up by Inster Mull wh we passed during the morning. About half past ten I went + carried mults allis into the saloon to hear prayers read by Capt Audkin and whilst waiting, for a moment forgot myself, dreaming I suppose, as I heard "the sound of the church going bell" in the bows I thought for a moment what church that could be, what village were we near, and then I comprehended that it was simply the ship's bell ringing for service; the effect was striking as the ship's crew came trooping into the saloon in their "go to meeting" white smocks with blue facings and glazed hats. The captain was very well. Sunday passed on Monday the water was rough from evening and shuffling and passed the time till dinner (4 o'clock) I could not take much but it was quite enough; and I gave it away. I could not help it. I took tea and what is more I did not get up. I was not sick but - but - in fact I did not "feel plucky" and ate crackers and about a mouthful of beef during the day slept just a few) and read Perdurianis and thus that day passed (the attendance at table was very scanty I am told). Wednesday I got up to breakfast

breakfast and sat on deck with
pleasant company till dinner
when I ate something starting
with the finest salmon that I
ever saw, it was great, our motion
was very slow head wind at
the way and strong ones too -
very unusual for July. Today has
been grand quite smooth and
we have been going 12½ knots
not more than 11 before. Today I
feel as if I could not get through
to eat. Breakfast at 8.30 two
chops bread coffee ad lib. Lunch
at 12 lots of smoked tongue and
roasted potatoes, followed by stewed
prunes, (with broth in front according
to choice) Then at 4 dinner -
Mock turtle - Turbot - Goose - Plum
sauce - Jelly and and Seed water
can't drink water without a
tumbler full of Ice to start with.
Then at tea (7 o'clock) only buttered
toast and ginger bread. Supper at
ten if I will. These items mind
you were only my choice and things
go so quick that you must take

3 Friday night
Again I will try to write something
that will give you some little
insight into my life on board this
good ship "Purpita", but we have today
had so much rolling and ~~then~~ still
so much that writing is much
more difficult than it was yesterday
but "we shall try". Of the ship she
is a love - a duck ~~etc~~ through rough
weather and through smooth on
she ploughs with a determination
evidently, to conquer or to die - now
she braces herself to overcome a wave
and like an ox yoked to its labour
she lowers her head - again exalted
she raises her indicator heavenwards,
her motto seems to be "on, still on"
At times I have drawn my breath
when standing by the wheelhouse
and looking towards the bow, her
head hanging down and I have
seemed to see into the depths of the
sea. Oh it's grand. Today I have felt
more jolly than since I have been on
shipboard. I have my sea legs at last,
and even feel sorry that tomorrow
we shall have been out a week and
must look for the end of our voyage

ere long. We have our excitement
too on board - for instance last
night we went to bed in a dense
fog and were kept awake by the
howling of the fog which from
time to time just so that one could
doze off and be awoken again. Now
of these intervals there was a great
now by three rowdies gloriously
drunk rushing about the ship and
calling the steward and other antics
known to blackguards, which have
brought them under the notice of
the captain - on dit that they are
locked up today. I hope to goodness
they are. We have a prospect of the moon
out again tonight - it is something
like the combined yell of a hundred
mammoths giving forth their last
breath. This evening we have had
the first fire burst since starting
Sebas just in time to see the ~~g~~^g ~~Tory~~^{Tory}
~~her~~ sink below the sea, all were taken
by surprise to see that it was an
eclipse - a genuine eclipse which of
course added much to the grandeur
of the scene. By the bye we have our
ghost on board too - the other night
a young lady took it into her head
that there was something wrong
with the engine and as supposed the

she thought that there was no one else
likely to know about it - but herself
she scrambled up on deck in her night-
dress (oh isn't it cold?) to tell the officer
of the watch of it - he a witty Scotchman
has made a good story of it. I should
like to say something of the company
but my yarn is getting spun out and
the post-office will refuse to carry so
much - but I will try to condense.
There are of course various sorts to
particularise. (The watch is just crying
"all's well" so that's right.) First
first if you please - my neighbour
at dinner Mr Bailey is now making
his 28 (twenty eighth) passage. Most
of the gentlemen (single gentlemen)
seen by their account to have left
New York six weeks ago - my roommate
an instance - except one who came
over in this ship last voyage was in
England just a week. Mr Jones to whom
the farmer introduced me - and his party
are five months out. I asked "had he
been from home long?" "No not long we
say 'long' after one two or perhaps
three years." Oh yes! Now for our table
the ladies opposite against the wall.
Mrs Reid a what shall I call her - a
Scotch - Canadian Baptist widow
who told us some long stories of Scott
Burns and others. Miss Bailey a

young lady with very Poterian curls
who makes first rate salad dressing
and makes herself very agreeable to
through her nose the while but what
matters - grand salad - Her mother who
reminds me very much of Mrs Wright
and calls out "oh meeky" when the ship
gives a lurch. Then Mr Allen a raw-
boned Yankee - very pleasant with all
her bright little daughter - age 12 -
her niece a fine girl of nine years
with large black eyes gentlemen to
match most of these. Mr Batten a Mr
Dodger of Worcestershire not him.
we met 10 years ago perhaps a relation
and self. One of the nicest looking men
on board, after Judkins, is Mr Porters
late US Consul at Porto with a fine
open face and light blue eyes. When
of course our laughing took a fool
who has a variety of smoking caps
which he changes periodically - he stands
about the deck now with his hands
in his trousers pockets and anon
twisting 2 or 3 hairs on his lip and
making an ass of his evidently nearest
dearest and only friend pro bono publico
In fact he thinks no small pockets of
himself. His is incoherent I know
but remember that there are 12 games
of cards going on in the room, coffee
and chatter all round - good night

5 Tuesday morning
All are looking forward to our departure
at New York sometime during the night.
I must confess that I shall be sorry to
leave my ten days home and the many
pleasant friends that I have made
since being on board. On Saturday
night everyone seemed to be in good
humour with himself and neighbours.
About a dozen of us joined in several
games of proverbs and then we played
consequences with good effect the
sentiment of "wives and sweet hearts"
was then given as it was Saturday
night and duly honoured by others.
On Sunday morning we again had
service on board and after that we were
at a loose end and I walked on
deck till dinner with several ladies
whose acquaintance I have made. Just
before dinner Mrs Porters sang some
hymns very sweetly - Like the woman
more and more I see her - her husband
too is a delightful fellow - he is a south
Carolinian cotton planter. As I looked
her sweet face and listened to her talk
I could not help wondering how so truly
Christian a man and woman as they
evidently are, could hold slaves, but the
problem is insoluble. In the evening
some few of us went down into the
ladies cabin and tried again to sing

The effort was mild and but for our
situation would have been very foolish,
but circumstances alter cases, before
going to bed I watched the phosphorescent
light for some time it was very beautiful
dancing and sparkling in the water
like so many enormous glow worms.

Monday morning was the brightest
and finest day that we have had since
leaving; towards noon all were sitting
quietly on deck reading under an
awning which the hot sun had rendered
necessary today for the first time, when
suddenly the watch was called up and
a great excitement took place I could
not tell what was the matter was it a
French frigate a whaleboat a water
or what? just a simple black cloud
drawing over the sky in front just
in our course. Soon the rain fell in
heavy drops but it did not drive us
below for at a short distance to our
starboard was a shoal "School" America
of porpoises, playing in all their
glory swimming at the same speed
as our ship and leaping from the
tip of every wave, the effect was curious
as we saw their bodies passing in mid
After dinner we were walking as is our
habit - I was with Messrs Jones when we
saw an unusually large number of
the crew on the fore-castle, we asked the

captain what was in the wind and one
of his usual curt replies sent us away
complaining of his incivility - he does
not give much satisfaction to his
passengers, especially the Americans whose
opinions he rather crosses by too many
English notions. However the present
instance of rudeness was soon explained
by about half a dozen of the men
appearing dressed up as one a man
on horse back - another made a very good
ass - a clown - old woman - and other
characters - they were preceded by a
fiddle - The animals were really well
done - for the others the sailors were
very much amused. One of the men
dressed as a nautic - no not quite so
but in usual sailor clothes - danced a
very good horn pipe and sang a sea
song. With the company this man
carried the palm and they retired.
Some songs "Willow Weep" and others
by ladies and gentlemen on the upper
deck and afterwards courtesies and
shyness finished the evening.

Think that we are sufficiently far
advanced now to say something of
our general run. We have done badly
almost all the way; our usual speed
has been 305 or 310 miles per 24 hours

From noon Saturday to noon Sunday
we made 336 miles and were all much
pleased. Since Thursday night we have
never been free from fog. That is today
we were liable to them at any moment
sometimes they would come on all
in a moment and it is very seldom
that we have not been able to see a fog
cloud in the distance. This morning
there was a bank of fog on our
starboard side and about half a mile
off we saw the tops of the 3 masts of
a ship afterwards we saw all her
rigging and sails but we never
saw her hull throughout. As we were
looking at her the lookout at the
main head called "a sail sight ahead"
and for once we altered our course.
It was very interesting to see how
quickly the head came round and
answered to her and did in a moment
tell her board. ^{They} say that of course when
we are in the neighbourhood of B.P.'s the
must be fog and dampness. And
so this is the reception that one meets
with in Newfoundland - I have seen
enough of it and would give it a wide
berth. Love to you all - remember me
to all who ask for me. I think of all my
friends and I write this. Your very
affectionate son William G.
I would suggest that you pay postages
when you send letters to B.P. New York. If
you have more than a shilling's worth here