



William Crosfield Letters

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7
Hatskill Mountain
House. August 7/59
Sund off

My dear Mama,

I think that my last
letter was finished on Tuesday so I
will take up my story from that point.
We had a very exciting time on Tuesday
owing to fog; the whistle was going
more or less all day except about noon
when it was clear; at half past two we
took the pilot on board, 140 miles from
Sandy Hook, and then there was a
rush - oh such a state of excitement for
the ladies as a thorough going Yankee
stepped on board from his pilot boat
representing America - the gentlemen
settling aside all the softer feelings of
patriotism scrambled for newspapers
and having got them you heard "dry
goods and down" "another murder in
Broadway" "Bank returns show -
millions deficient" whilst one or two
were found quietly consulting the
advertisements to see how the trains
were, to get home. That afternoon
Duckins was on the lookout himself
constantly: late on we very nearly ran
over a schooner which we could not see

till we were within a few yards of her, a difference of six yards in our position would have seen us right through her and very likely our doctor very busy. We were all up very late and just before the lights were put out we had a few songs in the smoking room, and went to bed at midnight a late as the rules of the ship allow light next morning I was up at 4 o'clock (we had been laying too for some hours) and saw the sun rise just at the entrance of New York harbour which harbour aforesaid I was very anxious to see both to gratify my own visual organs and my friends who talk very depreciatively of the Bay of Naples in connection with this view it is very fine certainly more particularly in the neighbourhood of Fort Mammillon where many very fine country houses are situated. We arrived off our berth before six but as the Africa was at the dock we were obliged to remain in the river and did not have our baggage passed and leave before 9^{1/2}. Then again at Jersey City long delays took place so that it was another hour before we were en route for the St Nicholas to which I had to go even before I found that the Iron House (3rd Avenue) was not yet open. I looked out for Mr & Mrs.

Bulley but saw nothing of them I fancy that they must have crossed to Jersey City as we crossed to New York so that we passed on the ferry. Thus about Broadway that afternoon and called on William James. Next day I made more calls and deposited my parcel with Mr Maury. I was very much amused to find myself in a shop asking (quite naturally) for a pair of "pants" I was shown a pair which the man designated "D number 1." Cloth was much too hot. Found my light coat was unfit for anything but winter to judge from "the sample of July" what it must be in "December." I failed to leave right away and so taking a tour of up-town to see the desert part of New York and not judge what it is like (of this hereafter) returned to my chamber to cool myself as best I might and be off at 11.30 on the morrow. Accordingly I went at the above hour to deposit myself at West Point. We passed up the Hudson past the Palisades which extend for 20 miles up on the right (river's) bank - after this the banks are not very interesting till we come to Stony Point where the river seems to exit but finds its way through rocky wooded hills a few miles further up to West Point considered by some

August 8
the gem of the river. There is a military
academy on a considerable elevation
here, it contains 3000 pupils I believe.
The situation is exceedingly fine being
a perfect square with the library, schools
lecture rooms and church on one side
and officers and professors villas on
a second, with beautiful and to me
uncommon trees in front the third
side is occupied during the summer
months as an encampment. I have
now disposed of 3 quarters of my subject
the fourth I should like to leave to your
imagination but as that is only a
so so way of describing scenery I must
say as much as I can. The plateau is
about 300 feet higher than the river and
from this side commands a much
finer view than there any that we
had seen coming up the river. The hills
are by no means high but the variety
green of the leaves intermingled with
the rugged rocks add much beauty
as they stand on either bank coming
close down to the water, in the center of
the stream are several islands of much the
same character as the shores. The latter
part of the day was very wet and when
sitting consulting myself as I best might
a gentleman came and introduced
himself to me as a business friend
of Swigg. Crossfield. Mr. Sutton of Charleston
and with him I passed the day at

Crozzens excellent hotel, going for a few
minutes before ^{tea} to see the cadets parade
on the ground. The next morning we
came together to this place. The river is
as beautiful above the Westpoint district
as it was below, till we get to Hyde Park.
^{where it is narrower} We passed en route many beautiful spots
where new York's princes camp out after
their business days are ended, a New York
paradise is defined as a house on the Hudson
that is to say the gentlemen, as for the
ladies, there is a popular opinion prevails
amongst their husbands that after death
their spirits go to Paris sometimes also
before death. That is what the husbands
say as represented by Mr. Putch a fellow
Persian. But I am forgetting Hyde Park
only for a moment though the impression
made by the first view of the Catskills
will be long in leaving my mind. The
afternoon was very bright and we could
see them towering 2500 feet above us
you may think how fine it was when
at a distance of 20 miles we could distinguish
see this house 22,000 ft from the river
brink, and that with the naked eye. At last
we landed and made a party of about 70
for the mountain house 12 miles from
the village of Catskill. When we were
about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way we heard from a party
coming down that all the accommodations

was the floor, so not knowing whether
to believe the story or no, we staid on
with the happy disposition to choose
the softest side of the plank. The steepest
part of the ascent is the last 3 miles,
which takes shows in the coaches, and
is entirely through the woods. Indeed
the whole mountain is one wood
abounding with wild berries of many
kinds, the blue berry like our Allberry seems
the most common and is very delicious.
Up the last 3 miles I walked as I could
that I might as well have every advantage
of arriving early if there was any. On
this part of the road lies "Rip Van Winkle's
Sleepy hollow" but it is not the real
Simon Pure so I did not go out of my way
to see it. By the bye Americans pay for
their seats in the coach and ride up hill
or down all the same, a dollar worth
a dollar. Two gentlemen joined me
part of the way up one of them found
very pleasant indeed, and full of information
on most every subject. Mr. Church the
painter. We arrived and inscribed our
names the first act at an American
hotel the universal rule is "the first clerk
on the register the first served." We found
already about 50 people unprovided for
so we had a poor prospect for 2 nights as it
was Saturday. With love to you all I remain
your very affectionate son W. W. W. W.
You must not be annoyed if you do not hear
from me every Monday for the mails are very irregular
and I cannot perhaps always get the steamer till the