



[William Crosfield Letters](#)

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I 25
Clifton House, Niagara Falls
Sunday August 28/59

My dearest Mamma,
You cannot think
how I looked forward to your letters
awaiting me here and how delighted
I was to find 2 instead of 1 as I had
been led to expect from Maggie's
previous letter. Please thank them
for Charlie for their enclosure, and
tell them that I will talk to them
soon but I can not afford just at
this moment. My last was written
this day week indeed you will find
almost if not quite all of mine are
written on Sunday and then they
are ready to catch the steamer on
Wednesday for you must remember
I am a long way from the port of
embarkation. On Monday I spent
a very pleasant day at the Daltons,
they are living in a very humble way
in a cottage some distance from the
falls on the S^t Lawrence where Mr Dalton
transacts his business of which he has
a little. On Tuesday we (Blackaller
& I) went to the falls of Montmorency

eight miles, in the opposite direction, that evil was soon cured. We had now
from Dubec the falls are very fine got to historic ground and they made
and the scenery along the road is also the most of it every spot was marked
worthy of remark this 'not so good as in letters a foot long. Why if points
in the other direction. When we came of equal interest in England were all
back we went up to the flagstaff marked it would employ all the
Citadel from which the view on all painters in this "terrestrial orb" and give
sides is very extensive and pretty. Our employment to a good many men
left at 4 o'clock to return to Montreal. But the word "defeat" occurred
Paul, I would have gone by boat, too often and perhaps I was not in a
I wanted to start at 6.30 next day in state of mind to judge things. At
and if I had missed which was freight 8 o'clock the steamer Grine hahaha
it would have cost me 24 hours and added her passengers and then it
I could not afford that. Left morning not raining. You talk of cats and
started at the appointed time by dogs why it was pouring canals and
cars to Rouss Point on Lake Champlain with an intermixture of
lain the prospect for the day was a large pitchfork and paving stones, it
fine and I was looking forward to quite put the word "rain" to the blush;
day of very enjoyable mountain this continued till half past eleven hours
scenery, but we had not been on so much longer I cannot say when I
late 2 hours when a Scotch mist broke found one of those lovely lake
wrapped round us and put an evening awaiting me. The water
to views. At 8 o'clock we left Lake Champlain as smooth as glass just ruffled
stage 4 miles to Lake George and for a time by the steamer on her
it rained. The point of landing was a trip; the lake was bounded
Siconderoga, simplified by the by hills hidden however by thick
natives into "Si," I was outside, not woolly clouds giving promise of a
by choice, and got wet through, but bright day. By the time I had had

breakfast the view was complete, the clouds were gone a blue sky and burning sun were overhead and the blue hills in the background. But those Yankees won't let one enjoy a fine prospect I was thoroughly satisfied and happy when I heard they talk of Switzerland - why I did not see anything near as good as that all the time I was there; did you dear" addressing his wife. Perhaps evesdropping was no business of mine but I at once began to think of Lucerne and my appetite was spoiled for that view. Then at 2 o'clock we several of us took stages for an eighteen mile journey to Montpelier. The greater part of the road was for sale planks and with 2 agreeable fellows outside a negro boy (a slave I fancy) and a talkative driver, we did very well; one pup the last that we had of the lake was especially beautiful, lying there in the midst of the mountains with its smooth surface studded with islands. Again the same historical story of the revolutionary war. Here

William was slain, into yonder pond now overgrown with weeds and water lilies with leaves of an unusually dark green were thrown the bodies of the Britishers. But we have passed the place, taking a mournful pleasure in the remark of a fellow traveller that never had general greater disadvantage to overcome than in this instance. The valley is still very wild and unlike some of the battlefields of Europe is not luxuriant with corn to remind one of the slain. We soon arrive at Glen Falls a small town supported by saw mills which the Hudson here a small stream, keeps in motion as it leaps over a rocky bed with a descent of 75 feet. For the remainder of the road we have the Adirondack range of mountains on our left while on the opposite side of a broad valley range after range of the Green Hills of Vermont stand in inviting beauty. We soon come to the "Railroad crossing back out for the cars" and arrive at the

depot just in time to shelter from a thunder storm the counterpart, on an infinitely smaller scale as to duration, of the night before. In a short half hour the cars bring us to Saratoga. The beauties of nature had seen no thunder storm; behind us, here we find beauties indeed but oh how artful! I made my way to the El Hotel a very large house, quadrangular inside the door - I had just made form open at one side, which contains upwards of 500 beds all full, we are told "the single gentlemen must sleep out of the house" so much the better I guess. I got a large double bedded room of foamy whiteness - The American myself; instead of a small confall - just opposite me, then in the attic my room is on the first floor. As lucky all places are not Saratogas and Niagaras for oh the shops! I could just make out the outline of something about them too but when "crack!!" the clouds spare you. One night there is opened and a vivid flash enough and I made my way of summer lightning hung here on Friday morning with a sort of impression that it falls and ~~for an instant illumined~~ ^{lined}

the scene. If there had been any ^{III} some time and the sky was almost
rain I could have gone right cloudless, only a few in the west,
off and left it contented - but the whole of the eastern part was
tho' it is worth 320 miles by rail of an indescribable yellow auburn
to see that I may as well look very bright and cold but such as
on, for one flash follows another one could look at for ever and a
far on into the night and a day. And now feel utterly power-
a few drops of rain, I retire to bed. Niagara is a fit subject for
look at it less romantically a Milton and a Churchill to combine
but perhaps rather more than their energies upon - (Dickens has
comfortably from the piazza, tried it and what has he done, a
now regret first - I leave at 4 a few words which one can read
tomorrow morning and tho' whilst looking at the falls, and
still remains and will remain there think what a noodle he was
as long as I live. A house at to attempt it; and admire nature
Niagara with - or no; Cap the more for the fruitless efforts
Rouge on the Niagara instead of one who can describe many
of the St Lawrence and it was things. It is now use - to know
be a little heaven. But what Niagara a man must spend a
year I'm spinning and nothing week at Niagara he must see it
yet about the one subject - see you under every phase. He must
an in for a florin but tea and stand on the bridge to Bath Island
then the task. and without ^{not} troubling his head

I have been taking a last look about 150,000 square miles of water
at the falls, for suppose the dauntless themselves by this single
will not have dawned when the stream, or 90 millions of tons
tomorrow - The sun had been passing over this precipice every

hour since the world began: at this may be true but it is quite a
- boots clap-trap and will only confuse him, when he has need
enough in all conscience, of all the eyes and all the wits
he has got. But let him stand on the bridge and watch the
looking up the stream he sees the water at a distance smooth as a
millpond, it approaches nearer and seems to take the form of
living creatures there a shoal of snow white porpoises playing
and rolling about as only they know how, again a wave surges
refuge in a hollow, going with a joyous leap as if it would say
"now I am safe" driven thence it seems to cling to a large rock
lying in the stream only to be repelled and then with an air
half of heroic despair, half of perfect bow, it is even doubled at
spite it seems to rush on to meet its doom below. This is not a man - Or he must watch
on Goat-Island he may sit at listening to the howl of the Woodpecker
the American fall at sunset when the rosy light falls upon the white

drapery and changes it into a thousand
hues let him give his imagination
carte blanche. And he must descend
to the foot of Biddle's stairs to where
the rocks have fallen, he must not
notice that even here John Smith has
left his autograph but he must look
up as that eternal stream rolls on
with its overwhelming rush. And he
get a correct idea of the whole he must
cross to the Canadian side and from
the Pavilion on Clifton House view
the entire scene if possible at 3 in the
afternoon, the eddying water will seem
to take endless different forms, like
looking into the fire he may amuse
himself here to his heart's content. He
must sit by Table Rock and have the
mighty stream rushing on unceasingly
within a few feet of him. But
I could go on ad infinitum;
will think that I am really doing
so, luckily my paper comes to an end
and as all things will a visit
to Niagara amongst the rest.
Here if anywhere a man must
be alone. Feel as if I was leaving
one of my oldest friends - shall
I never see Niagara again? No
one such time should last a long
time. Excuse my fifth sheet
and please forward it to
Sickle Field. Believe me my
dear mama with best love to
all my friends your very affec-
tionate son W. Grosfield

Boston Many thanks for yours & Maggie's
per "Asia" Aug. 5. Is paper looking out for let
to Cuba and Jamaica? as many as possible
will be acceptable. I wish I had more room
I have much to say; but we must wait
until