



[William Crosfield Letters](#)

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Profile House, Franconia Notch
White Mountains New Hampshire
Sunday September 4. 1859

My dearest Mama,

After all that zigzagging
ole at the top you of course know just
where I am; so without any explanation
I must go on and try for this time to com-
press into a single postage the events of
this week. I wrote to Maggie (with one
to Nicholas) from Portland but in the
hurry of leaving forgot to post it, and
had to intrust it to the conductor of the
car who posted it at Paris or some
such insignificant village; I hope she
got it tho' I more than fear. I have to
thank you for one letter which I received
just after posting my last to you at Boston.
I assure you I read your letters on the
spot and then chewed the cud. I remember
I closed my last with a regret that I should
never see Niagara again - however, on
Monday morning I was up at 3.30 an
hour and a half before sunrise. I was
surprised to find myself dressing without
a candle for on a moonless morning
I found that it was always darkest
before the dawn. When I got to the front of
the house it was all explained - the sky
was lighted by the grandest aurora that
I ever beheld (and I remember that one whom
Dillworth took with us) In the west where
the sun had set, there was the same light
that I spoke of as so fine at sunset - all
around the heavens there were rays of platinum
light caught up above our heads like a
canopy till they formed a perfect circle, just

like a magnified photograph of the
mountains in the moon. There were
several of us looking at it and then
our constellations that we were not
superstitious when a very light settle
dove from SE to SW whilst there was
the usual shooting appearance in the
NW but; not as I have commonly seen
it was across towards the north, instead
of to the meridian. It was as light as
broadest moon light, and the falls were
sure to perfection as we left. Never again
can see so many glories together. The
aurora was seen in all parts of the
new states and Canada - indeed at
Montreal the telegraph was stopped by
great quantity of electricity in the air
had been equally fine till night,
9 o'clock on Sunday evening when
should have seen it if I had not been
so pleasantly occupied writing. I tell
same was again seen last Thursday
in many places; it is said with equal
brilliance as on Monday but the
telegraphs were worked without the
off any battery it seems to have taken
electricians by surprise for there never
was known so fine a display seen
the year 1835 in this country.

To continue: at 5 o'clock in the morning
the rain left suspension Bridge and
again I performed the old journey
Niagara and Albany with nothing
of interest besides being occasionally
turned out of my seat by females
to sit themselves elsewhere - of all
dreary ways to spend a day the
cars are the duller, unless you happen
have a lovescene enacted within ear
of you when you may find amusement
in hearing the gentleman propose
to take the lady to Europe for a wedding
journey; she has heard of Conway and

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thinks she should spend a month at
Conway - Well he knows Conway and
she shall go there - and then says he "there
is dear old Chester why I know every foot
of Chester" Oh yes her sister Maria was
at Chester and gave such a delightful
account of its antiquity and then she
can form no conception of the exquisite
loveliness, the extreme beauty, the darling
mountains, the pleasant streams, &c
of North Wales he really thinks that she
would go out of her mind with going
the things that he could show her. I could
have discomforted him sadly if I had
put a correction here and there by way
of a spoke in his wheel but for once I
was amused in a railroad car, particularly
when he promised never to see all these
things "without you" and each had to
the other his or her idea of perfection
"I shall expect you to do it" and "I shall
not be content without do it" But at
last we did get to Albany and the river
had to be crossed by ferry again landed
I was en route for Boston at the first
stopping place I fell in with 2 ladies, that
became acquainted with at that time
and had the pleasure of their society to
Boston where we arrived at midnight
as far as I was concerned considerably
tired. Unfortunately the darkness came
soon and I was not able to see any-
thing of the much praised New England
villages. One set of your letters kept me
up till one o'clock and then when I came
to breakfast I posted mine and
sat in the parlor to read another
it just arrived when I found myself
with ex president Pierce (or Mr Pierce)
in the forenoon I went to call on Mr
Dana to deliver my com-
mission. I was very kindly received by
both the latter is not in the least changed
I should have stopped him anywhere but

the street, he devoted some hours to me taking me through several stores; a large wholesale grocery store, another immense paint store in a new block in State Street built of granite very handsome and looking as if they would stand for ever. This is the most complete block of stores in Boston, the are only just built, indeed 2 1/2 years ago there was water where they now stand. Then to the Custom House a nice compact building also built of granite with porticoes supported by large columns cut out of single pieces of Granite. From there we went to Faneuil Hall interesting from revolutionary associations, then the State Hall near the Common, we then crossed the common, or park of Boston very nicely landscaped and well shaded with trees in their own natural situation, to the Public Library a very good building, and of course to the Dickmans, but as tastefully decorated and arranged as any building can be. It is in three parts reading room for periodicals circulating library, and reference library. Then up Washington Street a large dry goods store (Compton) over which the proprietor politely showed us and then home where in two hours Mrs. Milledge called for me to show the neighbour hood of the city. Almost all round the city there is water which they are fast reclaiming to make standing ground for fine blocks. At almost all the best buildings newest they tell you "a few years ago all this was water." Go ahead Boston

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Our drive lead us by way of Jamaica Plain where many country houses are situated and which reminded me more of England (suggested by W.M.) than anything that I have seen. We seem to be more alive to the errors and excesses of this country ^{and worse} than anyone that I have met. We just stopped at the large reservoir which supplies the city with water and then drove to Mount Auburn where deceased Bostonians lie in a cemetery ~~for~~ which nature has done her best to beautify and there been succeeded by men of taste who have gone on with the work. The day was very pleasantly concluded by an evening spent with Mrs. M. who does not look as well as Miss J. used to do. (This between our selves) Next day I went by car to Portland of the nice sunny harbour, it rained nearly all the way so that I must still not speak of "New England villages." At Portland everyone I found there. At Portland everyone that you see (precious few in all conscience) talks of "the Great Ship" I have lately met with Mr. Russell Scott and the Misses Scott of London.

they are much loved by people asking weary up hill miles ³⁹ "we sped" to see if they are any connections of the the view, true the top could not be Great Eastern. The only thing that seen but within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile we saw Rups Portland alive just now is the oh such a scene! Immediately in sugar house and I have been told the front of us stood Mounts Clay Jeffers even that, is "claring out." (A wet night Adams & Maddison each one differing at a small slow trot (all it in) from the other in character whilst between suffered for Portland and seven o'clock there the views of further ranges were next morning (Thursday) found me a most beautiful in one we could see as my way to Gorham to take a stage far as the Canadian Hills, and each to the White Mountains N.H. I was formed as it were a separate picture, deposited at the Glen House foot of Mount the light in each being of a different Washington at one o'clock when I arrived here; on one we had the full sun light, and joining two other fellows set out another bore a golden tint, whilst at 2 to ascend his highness for 4 miles a rosy setting sun seemed to shine there is a carriage road (?) so called on the rest of the landscape we felt well Heaven protect the carriages which repaid for all our fatigue and going traverse they rock on brittle path! 6223 feet to find mist and mists the 4 miles more of as rough a path as view on the other side. We were down at 7.45 to the astonishment of folk, any Swiss mountaineers need no instance how I make my friends brought in to the clouds, and the I was endeavouring to survey the stars Tip Top House, and bread and cheese thro' a stand telescope on the first floor balcony - focusing it, the We were told that we could not get down again that night so having small end came out and over engaged to be at the Glen before 8 in a fright for up there such a thing 20 minutes were enough to rest was of any value that they would and at half past five we again turned name. I was caused by a most ed our faces homewards. "Eight hearty peal of laughter from a dark

corner of the balcony. I went below far off of course were ⁴⁰ hills shining
picked up the pieces and finding them in the sun, and at our feet was
thing was used to turn things and a valley just like the hold of a
- hunt. Returned to investigate further. A huge ship, ravines on either side
and found a very jolly girl with her looking like her ribs. A Yankee hand
brother enjoying the evening air by exclaimed "Oh what a place to
after supper returned again the stone cotton". That evening I spent in
girl got very talkative she was on a chair and when I tried to get up
of the best American girls that I found my legs were powerless I
have seen and after that I need a might have had sticks with just as
say that she was a Bostonian. As much advantage to myself. I was as
looked 19 but said she was much stiffer as any poker with sticking on
younger than I would suppose to the stage which I had had all to
she was going by stage to Crawford myself for 20 miles and being light
House next morning so I had my oh didn't it jolt? However after a
mind made up and took my passage time I got to bed and slept. Saturday
But oh "woman frailty's thy name" 20 miles more of staging after 35 of
she did not turn up! Peace to me yesterday was something to look to.
next day's ride was through the mountains. An American mountain
thru' Pinkham Notch. Those two adjectives mean something which
cannot understand without mitigation; and for scenery was most
a spring cart and driving for enjoyable. Was landed here at 2 o'clock
8 hours over a fresh ploughed field and after dinner drove on to "The
Just try it! At four o'clock we went at the house", we stop at a certain point on
Crawford's and as a party was starting I went with them up the road and there 1500 feet above our
starting I went with them up heads is a man's face of course it
Willard, it was cold but the view looks small but is 40 or 50 feet long,
was grand the Mt is 4000 feet tall. It stands out from the face of the rock
tide water and 2000 above Crawford and is one of the most perfect profiles

that I ever saw. Three and half miles
further we have again a grand view
down the Maucorin Notch bounded
again by mountains. The Klum
proper is a narrow gorge in the
rock in which a large boulder is firmly
wedged and will remain there so
far as one can see for ages. We next
visited "the pool" a curious basin in
the bed of the stream (called Pernigewasset)
the surrounding rocks rise to a height
of 150 feet and the pool is ¹⁵⁰ ~~100~~ across and
40 deep but of all the wonders which
the Pernigewasset visits in its wander-
-ing, the profile at whose feet it rises
is the grandest. Here silly girls are
wont to amuse themselves by finding
new profiles around; I don't know
how many they have not tried to
prove to me this morning. Here for
the first time I have seen Sunday
travelling; most stage bills and
advertisements end "except on
Sundays." As usual I have no room
for any messages of love and such
remembrances as fill my head when
I finish my letter but am driven
away by other topics when room
exists but I do feel all those tender
things for my friends, that I seem to
forget them. Your Affectionate Son
W. Grosfield