



[William Crosfield Letters](#)

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Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York
September 14. 1859

My dear Charlie,

I dare say you think that I am very ungrateful, after you took the trouble to write to me that I won't write back but I have been thinking that as you will see all my letters home and know that I got yours you can wait for the express to yourself. I was very much obliged for the pains you were at it must have taken a long time to write all the news that you sent me. I hope you got the stamps that sent you from Quebec. I tried to tell you something about the steam engines in my text and now you will like to hear about the steamers. If you look in "Our Brothers Cousins" a little yellow book in my room you will see a picture to give you an idea of the outside. The engine is in the centre and they turn the beam out of doors making what they call a "walking beam engine".

it has just that effect when you see them moving at a distance. The boilers are most commonly out side on an open deck and the wheels forward sometimes. Up a flight of stairs and we find stow away goods and baggage on the deck just above the water and in the after part of this deck is the "ladies saloon" a room very richly got up with everything in first rate style. A broad flight of stairs leads down to the lower storey below the water level. This is a high saloon running from end to end (almost) about 12 feet high with four tiers of berths reaching from the floor to the ceiling & they are sloping like the side of the ship so that it is easy to get in to the top one, for it is like walking up high steps, indeed there is a great deal of room and comfortable clean mattresses &c. In the middle there is a part of the engine bored off but at the side you see from one end to the other. At the bows there is a wash room and barber's shop fitted with marble basins and all that man can want except toothbrushes.

Starting again on what we may call "The deck" we will go this time up a flight of stairs and we find ourselves on the saloon deck. All along on each side are state rooms which I cannot speak of as I have never been in them but I am told they are very sumptuous in their fittings. In the saloon itself the chairs, lounges and conversation chairs all have the most delicious springs, tables with marble slabs are all along the room and the light here as below is from chandeliers hung from the roof and burning each four lamps. On walking forward we look back to have a general view of the whole and we see an immense plate of glass 12 feet square forming a window and behind is the engine all of bright steel polished like the glass itself, and a little brass scattered among it. I never saw any machinery so splendidly kept in my life. I do not believe that

There was a spot of paint anywhere
even on the beam which now
and then made a bow to us from
above. There is other furniture
however, in sundry places on
the floor little round china
bowls with lids on having holes
in the center, white china beams
gilded the ship's name "Melrose"
in large letters on each. Glass
doors in front of the saloon lead
you out to an open deck and
as it is a splendid night we
will go and take a walk, the
moon is shining in a deep
blue sky and the stars seem
uneasy that they can't give
as much light as their Queen
if they could they would make
a revolution I am sure; but
her light is unapproachable
as she sheds a broad stream
of whiteness on the smooth
sea. But it is cold and I for
one would not go on to the high
deck if I could for there is still
another deck above the saloon
behind us. See what is that!

54
Great volumes of phosphorus
seem to be pouring out of the
two funnels instead of smoke, or
it is smoke which obtains light
from below and reflects it back.
It is exceedingly grand but that
is all the satisfaction we get except
it always so at night and no one
knows what sort of coal they burn.
Sometime I hope that you will see one
or indeed many of these for yourself
and notice many things which I
from habit pass over; for I am
astonished how soon I get used
to those things which I thought at
first very remarkable. I very nearly
saw an old schoolfellow Stephen
Watson of Rock Ferry at Incebeck.
He left the day I got there and also
Braithwaite Poole. I expect to
see Richard Groot when the Persian
comes in she is very late. Will
you please tell Mr Job if you see
him any time that I saw Mr
Archibald today; he was out of
the city till lately and is now
only at a hotel without any of
his family so that he could not

have you seen Mum's book? It's a "very nicely written Bostonian" I took me to his house but he gave me a good deal of information and a letter to our Consul general at Havana, which will be very useful I expect; and also one to Mr. Miner (tell mama, purely official) where I must get a passport. With Mr. Job's kind letter I might not have got into trouble for want of any identification at New Orleans. How many boys have you at school? Will you remember ^{me} to Mr. Turner if you have an opportunity. I believe that I told Maggie that I saw very few ferns, the very day after I wrote to her I saw great quantities but nothing new as far as I could tell. I have met one of my friends every day since I came to New York and sometimes more than one I don't mean those that I called on but chance passengers. There are many other things that I could tell you about but I must send at least one sheet to dear Bertha for fear she should forget me. Your very affect brother

W. Westfield