



[William Crosfield Letters](#)

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Havana Nov 8/59
Tuesday morning

Of all the curious spots
on this earth this San Cristobal de
la Habana is the most curious -
but it looked lovely as we stood off
the port at halfpast five this morn-
ing waiting for sunrise and leave
to enter. Before us lay the town white
yellow and green, in the center the
moor and on the left green hills.
Oh! so jolly after three mortal days
of life in the dirty disgusting
Granada a disgrace to the port of
New York.

But you must hear something
about last week's doings. On
Monday we had such a sail as
made some think that Louisiana
minus one or two of her institutions
must be synonymous with heaven.
But I have delayed too long and the
Plaza de Armas has destroyed all
connection between the Mississippi
and the Tropics. For a hundred miles
above New Orleans the banks are a
decided improvement on the
up river scenery - true both are flat
but there is something decidedly
refreshing to the eye in the flowering
green of the sugar farms - and
more showy than the dull stiffness
of the cotton plantation, did I

Dear someone say nothing like in many cases, not a word passed
leather! I hope not for this is a casual observer could
opinion. The dark green groves, but even a casual observer could
standing like islands in the water see that there was a great deal of
sugar cane surrounded in most hidden feeling in the public show
instances the two storied, whitewashed of sorrow. The graveyards of New
magnificent mansion of his highness Orleans are peculiar to that city I
the planter. Pandanus Magnolia believe the nature of the land prevents
and flowering plants of various burial and hence the custom of
kinds seemed to complete the "overs" form the resting places of the
picture. Monday at dusk we found dead except in the "Potter's field"
ourselves in the Crescent City at where they bury strangers who die
the St. Charles Hotel which is the far from home and friends. In
building in the city except the the afternoon many of the P. & C.
Hall, a few blocks further up the Spanish, and Portuguese brotherhoods
Tuesday was All Saints day and joined coming their monuments
as we were told it is observed with while a band performed a dirge
great ceremony by the Roman and then they walked off. There
Catholic community at their is not much to see in New Orleans
Cemeteries we visited some of the except the levee which certainly is
up early in the forenoon and a wonder to anyone coming down
finding that the ladies were decorating the river but if any one is starting
the tombs with flowers natural from Liverpool direct let him
artificial, leaves, beads and imitate not look out for anything startling.
The idea seemed very nice though the levee is the scene of a great deal
I could not feel as if I was in a graveyard, in cotton it is built entirely
yard so many of the devices were of wood and stands at the level
a gay kind. Widows sat by the grave of the street as I have seen no
of their husbands and their relatives has no on the western water.
The visits of friends who deposited the steep sloping shore forms
a wreath to the memory of the dead especially the only landing for
and often imprinted a kiss of farewell passengers and freight further
dolence on the cheek of the living

regard then let New Orleans
be praised for ^{our} reception here
not a broken toe or necessarily a
dirty boot. One afternoon we
took a trotting horse and buggy
and drove out over the Common
to the Canal and then went
about three miles along the
Shell Road this is made of sand
and is equal in every respect
an English turnpike, except
that the tolls are doubled in
first instance and one has to
pay both ways. The road is
on either side by swamp dense
dirt and damp a man who
wants to get inside must
make his way by laying
At one point there was a cultivated
garden surrounded by orange
trees and on the trees to delight
our northern eyes was green
figs were very common. The
is a very large and massive
ing in course or I should say
in course of erection now to
from estimates going to decay
this will it is hoped some time
be the Customhouse. An Opera
is to be opened in a few weeks
like every other from New York
Havana is the finest in America

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Whilst in HQ I called on Mr Wigg a
Nephew of Mr Barrow but as he left
Liverpool only three weeks ago I should
have been sent to find him at
his office in Customhouse Street. By
the bye this is just singular as far as
my observation goes in the United States
for bad numbering on the houses
you will find this is a vis and a
little further on perhaps a hint
leaving you undecided which is the
one you want; all the streets seem
to be alike in this respect. Mr Moore
found is still in Europe he is staying
longer than his usual time because
he has been ill whilst away. I wish
they would send the best instead of
the worst of our citizens to represent
us in foreign cities - if we have any
who can withstand the temptations
of absence from home and life in
such sinks of iniquity as HQ why
not send them. I have heard too
often of the British Consul there. He
is a perfect gentleman - a very
good fellow - but debts at home
sent him out here or "he couldn't
stay in England so he got the appointment
of Consul there". But after all
we stand a better chance than our
neighbours the Americans from
a few instances that I have met
with. Do not think that my words
are intended to reflect on our
good Sirs' officer here, I have
not met him yet but am

hoping soon to call upon him
I am unable to hear any thing
against Melancthon of his
who I believe with an eye worthy
of a "British Scot" has married
rich Cuban wife is doing well
Hamilton was unfortunately
unable to come along with
and myself so we left him to
find his way home via New York

And on Saturday morning at
eight o'clock left New Orleans without
a regret for of all the cities that
ever heard of for shooting, killing
stabbing or simply butchering
a man to death this stands
Yesterday they were to have an election
which is simply and solely a fight
power. 100 pairs of brass knuckles
had been ordered by one club for evening
went. A band of "flung axes" from
Baltimore was expected to assist
and other societies with differences
names but equally unpleasant
significations were to be on the
field. If I see an American dead
let it be one of the quietest sort
and not a dangerous specimen
or I may not be able to make
my report. Four or five fires at
were constant whilst I was there
but it seems that so many
uncommon for it was
that they must be the worst
of the vagabond boys of the
city. Seven houses in our district

were found ready for the match.
But it is time to give up all these
details of death and destruction.
We dropped down the river on Saturday
morning the banks seemed still
improving orange orchards took
the place of solitary trees, masses
of golden fruit made the mouth
water, for a fresh orange is a great
luxury - the banana still looked
pleasant tho' the first trial of
its fruit does not invite a second.
We pass several masses of merchandise
moving up stream which reminded
me of "those secret room" - ships
that I should pick out anywhere as
Liverpool traders even if I did not
see names that I knew - towards
evening we came to the Delta and
the Buccaneers - and just
as we sit at table to feed if tea is
any improvement on dinner
up goes her bow - up goes her stern
all the men cry "we have crossed the bar"
the women think it time to kill
rush to their staterooms - we
up and down; up and
down "oh isn't this grand" "what a
fine time we shall have" says one
man who thinks he is a sailor. And
it is first rate for a time
must come to
the end as well as bad and soon all

by common or consent seem
look over the side for consolation
I was soon down on a settle and
lay there till midnight the
Moonbeams were dancing on
the water, the waves were surging
into white masses of bubble
and then the light would strike
the top of one before it broke and
then when the eye was tired of watching
the foam there was the deep deep
water beyond the colour was of an
lighted up by the moonlight - the
variety was endless and the
above the bright moon and
the glittering stars looked large
and more brilliant than they
ever did to me before. Sunday
my close stateroom was a dull
and stormy day. Monday was
smooth and pleasant an occasional
visit from a land bird, a man
of seaweed from the Gulf Stream
enlivened the day and this morning
I woke to see the tops of the tentacles
where they have bananas and a
Palms but what have they not
got - Crocodiles, Goolies, slaves, soldiers,
Chains and shackles - My idea
must settle, I must see some
volunteers & Cubans before I speak
of Havana - Adieu my love
to all my friends is ever the
wish of your affectionate son

W. H. Field