



[William Crosfield Letters](#)

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Washington City D. C.
Thursday November 11/59

My very dear Mother,

Once again in weary Washington! was my ejaculation as I landed from the river steamer in a cloud of mist which prevented me from seeing anything even indistinctly as I ought to have done at six o'clock. I knew that I was in Wash'ton "because I ought to be". My intention on starting from Charleston was to lie over at Richmond but subsequent events caused me to change as you shall hear in due course. The result is that I brought up at this city having overshot my mark by six hours. My hurried drive through this ~~place~~ ^{city} on that bright afternoon six weeks ago made me think that it is "not so bad as it seemed" on my previous visit (for I am now here for the third time;) so here I am to work out my second idea. I chose the best hotel this time and having a very comfortable room hope to find satisfaction. I am in the post office of Kingston, I have no very distinct notion of the external but am conscious of barred windows and long

rows of pigeon holes in one of
these marked C. I see a bulky
letter that seems to follow "your"
calling for it I saw it and find
myself holding - New Orleans letter
It is a slim satisfaction instead
of "seven days later news" to find
not a "twice told tale" but a twelve
times-read letter.

Before I go any further, let me
ask you if you can, to keep some
of the "Times" articles on Osawatimie
Brown's so called trial for the Hay
Ferry affair. I do hope the Thunder
will lay it on strong for the sake of
the South generally. Bertha will
find a note enclosed, which I wrote
on Monday though I have not
yet sent it off.

Our voyage in the "Isabel" was
one of unalloyed pleasure and
satisfaction. Captain Pollins
Mr Purser Malloney are perfect
gentlemen, who seem to strive to
make their passengers comfortable
and all under them anticipate
every wish. Five weeks being passed
on the shore we bore away to sea
again on Friday evening and
continued out of sight of land
till Saturday night at nine o'clock
when we made the two light houses
of Savannah we stood off the
harbour for about an hour firing
signals but as no notice was
taken of our presence we did

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not deign to wait on the landmen
and so started off again with
men and two passengers who
wanted to land but very sensibly
gave up the idea when they
found it was impossible. At seven
o'clock ^{Sunday} we were in Charleston
harbour and as it was pouring
with rain we put off crossing
in our "go to meetings" till we
should get on shore and when
we looked forward to doing it
in style and comfort. Our gun
is fixed and half past eight
finds us at our berth, two stages
with their horses & drivers are the
only inhabitants of the wharf.
The custom's officers don't seem
to think it worth notice but that
does not help matters and by
ten o'clock we get tired the ship
gave us no breakfast and we
saw the hotel breakfast hour pass
with mingled feelings of hunger
and regret. In half an hour the
sweet chimers of St Michael's
sound sweeter because they are
out of our reach. Lebois and I
had looked forward to church
with immense pleasure and
there we were fast through the
stupidity of a few noodlers. The
purser went on shore and at
noon brought an old man who

(adding insult to injury) charged
20 c. for examining our luggage
and after it was all over this day
prevented us from saying anything
to him and we could only speak
at him. When we got on shore
we had a fire made in a joint room
and by dinner time were comfort-
able. I was haunted by the face of
a Liverpool man that I knew
quite well, but could not tell
who he was; as he had breakfasted
he had vanished before I was
ready to investigate. After dinner
I got to church and found myself
close to the "rigger gallery" in an
old, old fashioned English church
high straight-backed and square
plus made myself fancy myself
in an English village church
old irregular masonry on the
doors, and altogether I thought
of Grassmere with galleries. The
Church of St. Michael was built
by the English and English who
delighted the colonists till they
were stolen (or taken back) to the
Old Country; they were then bought
by a Quaker. Wound by him taken
"to the place from whence they
came" and then (not "to the place
of execution") simply hung. At
supper we went as did to try for
some church but unsuccessful.

settled down ¹³¹ to sleep early, and
on Monday did Charleston the
whole air of the place is English
of the olden time, with evidences
of aristocracy everywhere. The
Main business street "King" is
narrow and crooked but has
some good stores among the rest
Adams' dry goods' would look
well in New York. Livingston who
had been with us since Orleans
left us after we had witnessed a
fare out of the "Military" Art
of the city, when each man mistook
himself for a soldier, and when
which was often he could not do as
he was told, he did as he liked and
all bungled. In the middle (muddle)
the Cadets came onto the ground, a
party of Boboys, from the Academy
and they went through their evolution
like a brick wall. I have been up for
two nights and tomorrow go to
Mount Vernon; as it is late must
conclude this after my Nov. 10.

It seems too bad that when a
stranger is willing to pay his small
tribute to one who was the conqueror
of his country that even facility
should be allowed him. I was not
in the least surprised when last
night I enquired at the office to
verify a notice of a steamer to Mt.
Vernon (which I saw on the wall) &

was told that she made her last
trip last Tuesday. Travellers always
are just too late for conveyance
so this is not a new experience
and as it is evident that I am
not to go to Mount Vernon I gave
it up. So continue my journal.

On Tuesday I left Charleston for
one & felt very strange in a car
once more after an absence of just
three weeks, the Illinois Central
shaver at (11) being my last
acquaintance of this class. At
the other end of the car was a young
lady who struck me as very like
Mrs. Stally brass add to her beauty
a commanding carriage, elegant
of person and an aristocratic air.
On looking at her I could not
help endorsing popular opinion
that the Carolinians are the
proudest people of America - and
I did look at her till she changed
her seat and sat with her back to
me. The conductor was particularly
attentive and I almost wished
that I was Captain Grosfield of
the North Eastern R.R. The country
we were passing through is very
poor in soil, much marsh and
pine forests - indeed the only
support of that section is to all
appearance turpentine trees.
All the pines show marks of

the axe; and at intervals wooden
sheds cover the distilling apparatus,
while castles lie round bearing the
brand "Sugar House prime Syrup"
on their heads; investigation
however shows that they contain
rosin. About sunset the conductor
came and spoke to me "How far
was I going?" "well to Philadelphia
but to lie over at Richmond" "would
I have any objection?" etc etc "not the
least" "What's your name?" "wait a
minute if you please". The end of
all this was that in two minutes
I was sitting beside Madame
Bourgeois perfectly happy. A few
words of praise of England from
her, and of her children from me;
made us friendly. She was going
through to Baltimore and I was
fixed to help her at the many
changes during a night & day.
A conductor is a great institution.
She afterwards told me that this one
asked "if he might introduce one
of his countrymen; he would be
much better satisfied in giving
her in charge to an Englishman".
Just imagine for a moment
that universal favourite the
bearded guard of the 50c express
from London doing a thing
like that. Suppose if I go on you
won't read it. I found that she came
from Alabama where she had been
spending sixteen months. She is

on her way to Europe in the
"Orago" - (by the by I have long had
a desire to see Southampton)
Two of her three boys are he strange
mortals that I ever saw; the eldest
talks like a man of 50 either in
French or English, and the young
of 5 years made a long speech in
French several times and argued
up when I called him "petit homme"
showed very strongly what side
he was taught to take in this
great question. But after our
we dismissed that subject and
remained good friends. I had
my rivals and with us all she was
well cared for. I tell ye. On Thursday
morning I found myself in this
Hotel (Willards) having passed
Moccasin Vernon in the fog. After
two or three hours sleep I got up
to the consciousness that it was
a dull day. The fog still hung over
As the day wore on the sky cleared
and after dinner I went to the
Capitol where I saw a fine
sunset just the counterpart of
the rise I saw two months ago.
In my room I found that the
first side of the Capitol is that
which looks away from the city
and Whitehouse. Two groups stand
at the top of the flight of steps
and have a very imposing effect.

One is a statue of Columbus who
with outstretched arm holds a
globe (the world which he has found)
above a female figure who is
meant to represent the native
races; the other is Civilization
an Indian in the act of scalping
a woman with a child in her arms
whilst the father coming up from
behind pinches his arm and
has him completely "in a fix". In
the centre of the grounds below is
a sitting statue of Washington;
his right hand is raised high above
his head the four fingers pointing
upwards - as his eye is on the Capitol
he seems to say "up up!!" But it
is no use for the dome of the
structure is used for years will
be a shining of the future. On three
sides of the pedestal is the following
doubtless war

First in peace

And first in the hearts of his countrymen
which stars one in the face every-
where. The fourth side is blank
leaving room for

And in the pocket of the nation
as soon as his monument is
finished the sculptor for the best
inscription has not been engaged
yet. Yesterday I also visited the
Patent Office - thinking that I

mentioned the building when
I was here before, and said that
it was unfinished but I could
not then get inside. Now here
the reason why it is still in progress
for if the Yankers go on inventing
as they do now they will want
the entire District of Columbia
for their models. A part of the
centre of the building is used as
the National Institute, which is
an Embryo museum. The greatest
object in this part is the Coat of arms
and points in which the General
resigned his commission to Congress.
The Board of Patent Office contains
a little of everything from a patent
baby's feeding bottle to the numerous
schemes of the enterprising Bessemer
and in one gallery is a collection
of hoops & enough to feed all the
ladies in Washington to the Lunatic
Asylum. If you expect me to give
any thing like an account of the
stores contained in this building,
you must please excuse me. As
I could not do what I had first
intended today and as it has
rained almost without ceasing
since breakfast I am content to
do little. Renewed my acquaintance
with the internal grandeur of the
Capitol and found that the prospect
of the Assembly meeting in

two weeks they have "cleaned up"
considerably. The fixings are
certainly very grand but I know
rooms that please me quite as
well nearer home. The four
staircases look much more
presentable than they did when
I saw them before. There are two
leading to each gallery all the
staircase of white marble, with
the exception of certain spots the
impurity struck me though you
know I am not geological and
investigation proved that they
are not natural but indelible
placed there since they left the
quarry notwithstanding boxes
of sand placed in all the corners.
One of these staircases is solely of
white marble the balustrades &
all being of the same material;
the other three have the balustrades
and columns of red marble. The
flooring throughout is of tiles.
I passed on through the rotunda to the
Smithsonian which contains
a valuable library and museum,
a lecture hall, a very valuable
collection of Chemical apparatus
the gift of Dr. Hale and a large
gallery of likenesses of Indian
chiefs. These likenesses are said
to be striking and I think so too.

Billy Bowley, must have been
very imposing when alive; but
I do not think that my own awe
has been much enlarged by my
view of Mr Stanley's arduous
labours. I stood with considerable
interest before a case containing
the fur clothes which contained
I have in the Arctic regions. I
said that such relics should be the
only evidence of our lost coun-
men & what a story could they
have told if like him they had
returned home! I see to day another
letter from Dr Livingstone. What a
fearful loss is that of the Royal Char-
lotte among the saved two men
I know; on this side we have been
much relieved by news today of the
"North Star" she has for some days
been almost given up with 80
passengers. Please tell Maggie
that she may look out for the
postman some day soon, she
needs the impression that she
sees my journal I find it hard
to write to her as often as her long
long letters deserve, from this
and no feeling of ingratitude.
I delay longer than I could wish.
Once more my best love to all
my friends. Soon I hope I may
deliver this message myself
I remain my dear Mother
your son W. H. P. S. Field