

LETTER VII.

HAVANA, Feb. 6th, 1867.

It was five o'clock of Sunday morning (3rd inst.,) when we left the New Orleans levee, and the weather being fine (though a little fresh) we had a good view of the country extending below the city to the mouth of the Mississippi. The view is soon exhausted, but the great wealth of orange groves, laden with fruit, ripe and growing, is interesting when seen for the first time. As we descend the river, the long extending earth declines first into rice fields and then into marshy land, with vast fields of reeds waving in the breeze; until about 130 miles from New Orleans, about two p.m., we pass through a group of mud banks and snags, dragging heavily over the universal bar—forming everywhere by the soil of the Mississippi—into the gulf of Mexico, and leaving behind us a cluster of the vessels of all nations that were either not so fortunate as ourselves, in being debarred, or otherwise waiting for pilots to guide them through the winding, and constantly varying channel of the river. With accommodation for 70, we carried about 60 passengers, making the vessel not uncomfortably full. We dined (very fairly) upon leaving the bar, and felt a warmer atmosphere as soon as we were fairly at sea. Towards evening the breeze increased, and by dark we had a moderate sea running, and the majority of our sixty immoderately sea-sick. I succumbed to the common fate, but experienced a much milder attack than some of my more robust young friends, and rallied next morning without having felt the despair or *abandon* that is said so often to accompany the attack, but, on the contrary impressed strongly with a sense of the value of human life in general, and the very great value of my own life in