

On Her Majesty's Service
To
Sir William Burnett
Inspector General of the Navy
Admiralty
Somerset House

East London Convict Ship
Nosological Returns

Sir,

I beg to transmit to you a few remarks extracted from the journal and diary of the Convict Ship East London between the 2nd day of May 1843 in which the first division embarked at Kingstown and the 28th day of September 1843 the morning in which they were all disembarked at Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land. May 10th Weighed anchor at 6 a.m. Wind S.E.½E May 11th A heavy Sea. The morning sufficiently fine to allow all bedding to be brought upon deck. P.M. Winds W. by S. heavy rain. 12th Dark Gloomy weather heavy rain great difficulty in working our way down the Irish Channel. May 13th enduring to weather St David's head and the winds upon the Welsh Coast. Sea running very high. May 14th I have gratified the Convicts this morning with a supply of boiled oatmeal instead of Tea or Cocoa which they all have manifested a dislike to. May 15th Wind still directly contrary heavy Seas.- May 16th Wind W.N.W. Latitude 4919. Mary Harrowhile No 95 was delivered of a female infant both well notwithstanding the severity of the weather. The case No 1 Mary Healy is in the Hospital and has suffered much since the Ship came out to sea. I am compelled to pass nearly the whole of the day to preserve cleanliness and order amongst the convicts in order to preserve health by keeping the decks dry. May 29th Wind continues contrary at S.byW. in Latitude 3417 N. Sunday June 4th Wind N.E. Ship under studding sail within sight of the Island of Madeira at 10 p.m. Anchored in Funchal Roads. June 5th Having experienced severe weather on the passage from Dublin and a great number of water casks empty, I thought it advisable to fill them with fresh water at this place. The water being excellent, the supply speedy, instead of filling them with salt water. Up to this period the Prisoners were supplied daily with fresh beef. The weather being cold was favourable to preserving it. June 6th Received the last boat load of water and proceeded to sea at 3 p.m. having not been detained more than 40 hours at this time. I had two cases in the Hospital one of fever and the other Diarrhoea with Incipient Phthisis. July 3rd Now near the Equator. Thermometer 70 to 75 degrees. Kept the women on deck as much as possible and gave them employment by distributing work for sewing and knitting and in employing their minds in distributing religious books. July 13th Latitude 1858 S. Eliza Higgins age 22 a Native of Carlow was delivered of a female infant both well. July 15th Catherine Brady Age 1 year died of Marasmus Catherine Higgins age 2 days D.D. of Convulsions and Eliza Dunlop age 1 year of Hydrocephalus Marasmus Anasarca July 18th Barometer 3025 Therm 72. Mary Healy case No 1 Phthisis and Diarrhoea. She had been an invalid from the time of embarkation. July 21st Thermometer 45 Latitude 2758 S high winds have been prevalent, with heavy rains. Joanna Wilmott age 25 has suffered since her embarkation from Sea Sickness constipation, Diarrhoea and laterally from Gastro Enterite died this day. July 31st In the Latitude and Longitude of the Cape of Good Hope. Wind high and contrary; as the Prisoners were tolerably healthy having an

abundance of water on board, I was desirous of completing the voyage as soon as possible the Barometer 3038 Thermometer 62 Latitude 3512 S Bridget Carey embarked with Scrofular had an attack of Diarrhoea, Anasacra and died this day. August 1st Spoke to the Royal Saxon a ship heading towards the Cape, I fear that in attempting to touch at the Cape will cause a great detention to us – the winds being so contrary. August 3rd Weather dark and cloudy. I beg leave to observe that I was employed the whole day keeping the decks dry and well ventilated having the Windsails constantly employed and four clean swing stoves sent below every day. I can imagine it to be possible to keep the deck of the Male Convict Ship as the lower deck of a ship of the Line but the females will wet the deck at night requiring my attention at the earliest hour possible in the morning to dry scrape the deck and to get all bedding on deck as soon as possible. My presence amongst them was understandably required for that purpose. August 3 Catherine Murray age 40 died of Gastro Enterite and Diarrhoea. These cases would not bear the lancet, a large Supply of Leeches to be indispensable if possible to be kept alive during so long a passage. August 4th Mary Spillane age 70 died of old age, debility Anasacra and Ascetis had been under treatment from the time of embarkation. August 22nd Latitude 3858 S Longitude 60 E Margaret Cowan age 40 died of Gastro Enterite, Diarrhoea, Anasacra and effusion on the surface of the Pleura. Thermometer 56 Barometer 3030 constant attention required to keep up the heat at the same time ventilation my Hospital comforts as Rice Sago & began to get wine supplied my patients liberally from the cabin. August 23rd Alice Brady, a tedious case of continual fever in the early part of the voyage, was in Hospital from the 28th day of May to July 2nd. Latitude 354 S Vide Journal case 4 subsequently seized with Gastro Enterite Aug 20th died Aug 23rd in a state of great exhaustion. Ann Rae age 33 a native of Autrim long in the Belfast Hospital. Syphilis, Erysipelis Ophthalmia suffered in this ship from retention of urine subsequently of paralysis died August 25th. Lat 390 S Longitude 6728 E A heavy gale at this time. Thermometer 61 Aug 28 Lat 3847 S Longitude 77.47 E high wind with seas, Island of St Paul in sight, Ann Gannon age 23 Gastro Enterite, Diarrhoea and symptoms of Scurvy began to ????? died today. August 29th Cath Manly age 39 an old chronic hepatic affection Ascetis with Anasacra having yielded to mercurial treatment in the early pass? now with Gastro Enterite and Diarrhoea. August 30th Ellenor Curren age 40 Gastro Enterite, Diarrhoea Sept 6th Ellenor Cooney age 36 Gastro Enterite, Diarrhoea and Scurvy. The sweeping of the deck where the Prisoners were located was now the great object of my care and attention by mustering there daily allowing them a moderate supply of wine, lemonade, checking salt provisions and substituting preserved meat with rice and fresh soup. Rose Quinn, Syphilis suppuration of Pleura Gastro Enterite was under my care nearly the whole of the voyage died in a state of great exhaustion. September 9th Latitude 4144 Long 119.50 E. Mary Farrell age 20 years having suffered nearly the whole of the voyage from Sea Sickness, Gastro Enterite Diarrhoea & Incipient Phthisis died today. Sept 10th Rose Carroll age 22 years Latitude 4200 Longitude 123.36 E Thermometer 51, died today, Gastro Enterite Diarrhoea, Scurvy. Sept 13th Latitude 4330 Longitude 131.4 E Thermometer 55 Died Ann Read age 33 Ophthalmia, Cynanche Gastro Enterite, Diarrhoea laterally Scurvy. Had been under treatment during the whole of the voyage, died today in a state of exhaustion. Mary Gilbride, Susan Whittle, 1st age 25, 2nd 21 the same diseases, on arrival of the East London at Hobart Town.

I have requested of His Excellency, The Governor of the Colony that an inquiry should be minutely entered into and that my journal and diary should be strictly scrutinized for your satisfaction touching the great mortality on board, the causes that led to it and the modes used by me to prevent it. I fear that the members of that board did not enter

minutely enough into the journal but I trust justice will be done to me by members of that board ordered by Dr Clarke, the Deputy Inspector of Hospitals in Hobart Town.

12 children died on the voyage chiefly from Marasmus owing to the carelessness of the mothers and their bad constitutions. Having obtained His Excellency's permission to return to England by way of Sydney I have this day embarked on board of the Lord Petre about to leave this for Sydney having waited one month here, and no opportunity offering for England. The opportunity of obtaining a passage to England from Sydney being greater and being desirous of obtaining an audience from you in order that I may submit the journal and diary to your inspection.

I have the honor to be Sir

Your obedient servant

Edward Caldwell, Surgeon R.N.

Hobart Town

1843