

GENERAL REMARKS.

The Female Convicts ordered for Transportation in the “Hydery” to Van Diemens (sic) Land embarked at Woolwich from the various Jails in England and Scotland between the 15th and 29th March 1832 and were of the following ages

Under 20 years of age 29 in number

From 20 to 30 Do. 69 in number

From 30 to 40 Do. 28 in number

From 40 to 50 Do. 21 in number

From 50 to 60 Do. 3 in number

Making the total number 150 embarked. One woman labouring under Ascitesⁱ, apparently from diseased liver was refused being unfit for the voyage and before we left Woolwich, sent, by order to the Hospⁱ Ship there.

Many from long incarceration, the dread of the voyage desponding thoughts about their unhappy condition-parting from all they held dear, and the fatigues over a long journey had a sickly and squalid appearance: but the greater part of them reckless of their fate and probably enjoying better diet than they had being accustomed to in their former irregular lives looked in robust health.

The Ship lay at Woolwich till the 3^d day of April during which time several inflammatory affections and bowel complaints occurred (sic) no doubt (sic) arising from the change of water the increased allowance of animal food and the circumstance of so many being brought together in so short a time- the later complains probably depending on the presence of some peculiar (????) matter in the atmosphere at the time as the Cholera Asphyxie prevailed then to some extent in that neighbourhood.

On the morning of the second of April a case of Cholera Asphyxie appeared without any premonitory symptoms that I could discover in a woman of fortyeight year of age who had come direct from Stafford and embarked on the 17th March and during our stay at Woolwich had no communication with any affected person- A predisposition to disease had no doubt been created by long incarceration and for several days before her illness by watching & attention to a sick child that had been labouring Aptha for some time before. To prevent the spread of the disease in a field so peculiarly suited to its malignant growth every precaution (sic) was used- in separating the patient from the rest of the prisoners- ventilating the prison- sprinkling it with a solution of the chloride of lime and keeping those in health in the fresh air on the upper deck the whole of the day (for the particulars of this womans (sic) case see Page 8 N^o 5 of this journal-). On the Navy Board's being made acquainted with the appearance of this disease on board the "Hydery", which was immediately done a Steam Vessel was ordered early the following morning to tow us to Standgate Creek. At that place we remained till the eleventh of the month during which time four more cases of the same disease happened but of a less malignant nature than the first case which proved fatal in the consecutive stage on the fourth day they terminated favourably (See cases N^o. 6- 7- 8 -& 9 Page 13 to 23 of this Journal)

and were in a state of convalescence by the time we went to sea. The clothing, bedding, and such other articles as were in use about the patients were destroyed by the concurrence of Cap^t Marshall, Superintendent of Quarantine, and the most particular attention was paid to the cleanliness, visitation, and keeping the convicts in the fresh air on the upper deck so far as was consistent with due warmth, and the weather proved remarkably fine the whole time, from morning to night, not even allowing them to eat their meals below. The alarm created by the appearance of the most horrid disease on board was very great, not a woman but fancied she was ill, and many actually had slight diarrhoea, but by the time we went to sea fresh scenes occupied the attention and the excitement wore off. But in getting rid of one evil was made for a succeeding of a very disgusting although not of a very dangerous nature – seasickness. On getting under weigh the weather proved rather wet and very squally with a foul wind and a headsea which continued with interruptions till the 23rd April (????) we fairly got out of the channel and to add to our disagreeable situation the lower deck ports which had been knocked out fore & aft so soon as the Cholera appeared on board could not be sufficiently caulked in, in bad weather at sea leaked very much: this as might be expected with such a (????) made the prison notwithstanding all our efforts, for the time, in a most horrid state of wet & filth – almost every woman was confined to bed &

constantly vomiting but on leaving the land a fair wind & fair weather allowed almost all to come back on deck the bedding was thoroughly dried the lower deck completely cleaned and we got rid of such a scene as I never hope to witness again – besides seasickness several inflammatory affections & bowel complaints at this time had taken place and continued occasionally to happen till we got to the northern trade winds on the 11th of May when all recovered and for a short time we had a clear sick berth –As the weather became hot several cases as Diarrhea succeeded and one fatal case of Apoplexy happened in a short stout thick necked woman aged 46 a native of Scotland who previous to her conviction had been a habitual whisky drinker. On crossing the line a few cases of simple cholera merely vomiting & purging took place and from the heat, constipation & interrupted menstruation which were general complaints during the whole voyage, convulsions among the younger part of the females were very prevalent. After leaving the line till we got into the cold weather the complaints were very slight and of a general nature. On approaching our destined land Diarrhea recurred and in several instances was accompanied by scorbutic symptoms which in one case proved fatal and during heavy weather when the upper deck was constantly wet and when it was with difficulty that the lower deck could be kept dry and at a proper temperature most

of the affections that took place were attended with cold rigors as a prominent feature.

Three of the children each about a year old died on the passage one from Diarrhea – one from Convulsions in teething and a third from Apathy.

As every case of any interest is given in detail in the foregoing journal with the treatment pursued I deem it unnecessary to extend these remarks to a greater length. As to the means adopted for the preservation of health during the voyage I may state that the meals were properly cooked and regularly served, abundance of excellent fresh water, was allowed for the victuals – drink and washing both of their bodies and clothes. The allowance of Lemonade was regularly issued throughout the voyage with an adequate portion of wine mixed as sherbert daily after we got into south latitudes when the hot weather had ceased. That very morning after the upper deck was dried every woman brought up her own bed where it was stowed in the nettings or on the poop or in fine weather hung up on a line in the rigging to air – when possible all the meals were taken on deck and no women were permitted to go below except those whose turn it was to clean till mustered down at sunset with their beds. The prison & sick berth were every morning thoroughly cleaned by dry holystoning and very frequently the roof, walls and beds & every part washed with a solution of the chloride of lime – and with that solution the decks were sprinkled daily and once a week or as

often as the weather would permit they were made wash their clothes and not allowed to take them down till thoroughly dry

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&
Superintendent

ⁱ Ascitis a type of abdominal tuberculosis