

JOURNAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S CONVICT SHIP
'ROYAL ADMIRAL'

Surgeon: Mr. J.R. Roberts

Between the 23rd day of February, 1842 and
14th day of October, 1842.

The number of convicts embarked at Woolwich amounted to two hundred and four, with seventeen of their children, and were received from various prisons throughout England, Wales and Scotland, of these numbers, two women and one child were disembarked before leaving the anchorage, by order of Mr. Copper (?) to the *Justitia* Hulk, and the Penitentiary.

In addition to these, two free women and their families, consisting of nine were also embarked. The majority of these women were brought from distances by railroad, the rapid movements of which, not allowing time for the necessary ___ (?) of natures offices?, many arrived on board in a distressed and filthy state, and generally from the late arrival of the trains, did not reach the ship until after ten p.m., requiring much time and inconvenience at that hour to put them to rights. In several instances, they came with only the clothing they had on their persons, being informed at the prisons, that if they took more, those who had them, they would be either taken from them or destroyed, depriving them thereby of many essentials during their voyage.

The weather from the 25th of March to the 5th of May, the time of the ships stay at Woolwich, was at the commencement cold and variable, with sudden deviations of temperature as the season advanced, the thermometer ranging from 42^o upwards and on two days in April it rose to 70^o and 71^o.

The thinly clad state of many of these women in travelling, the change produced by the removal from prisons to the ship, together with a change of diet, and the rapid alterations in the state of the atmosphere, induced subacute mucous inflammatory action and rheumatism to prevail in them, and before quitting the anchorage, a variety of them had been under medical treatment, the cases slight.

The voyage from leaving England to about 6^o North latitude was fine and pleasant, thin, sultry and oppressive calms, with heavy rains prevailed, the thermometer on deck at 85^o. Those cases where much previous stability had been induced, rather by diarrhoea or protracted seasickness, which some throughout the voyage scarcely got the better of, assumed a more active character and acute ___ ___ ? inflammation manifested itself, extending in various shades to thirteen cases, these occurred between that latitude and 33^o South, when the last case appeared, the thermometer after crossing the equator to that parallel decreasing gradually to 60^o. The south east trades were strong and squally, which with the occasional sea that existed, distressed and aggravated their symptoms much at times, two of these women, Susannah Harvey and Mary Jackson, old chronic cases of disease, died. (Cases 110 and 115).

Every precaution to prevent the extension of this epidemic was resorted to by strict attention to cleanliness and ventilation, continued use of airing stores (?), keeping

the decks as dry as possible, and moving a patient instantly there was a tendency to an attack into this Hospital.

Our arrival at the Cape of Good Hope on the 29th of July, and when we were obliged to put into to obtain a supply of water, owing to the defective and leaky state of the ships casks, and our stay then until daylight of the 6th of August, was productive of much benefit to the whole of the women, by the supply of fresh meat and vegetables, taking on board at our leaving, another water consumption (?), and although the voyage from thence to Hobart Town extended to seven weeks, the weather for the most part of the period cold and stormy, the thermometer at one time down to 44° ___? No new case of importance occurred. The ship arrived at Hobart Town on the 24th of September, and on the 8th of October, all but eighty of the women ordered by the Governor to proceed to Launceston under my charge, in the Government Barque "Lady Franklin", were sent on there, clean and in excellent health, with the exception of four chronic and convalescent cases, these eighty women were also landed in same good condition at Launceston on the 14th of October following. No appearance of scurvy manifested itself during the voyage.

Seven births occurred during the period, two of the mothers of these infants, shortly after their delivery, were attacked with dysentery and one with hemoptysis, being deprived therefore of the power of lactation, the digestive powers of these children became disordered, although every means the ship afforded to remedy the deficit was adopted, and they died in convulsions from ages of seventeen days to eleven weeks. One child died in convulsions on the sixth day from its birth, the mother quite healthy, and another died also in convulsions from dentition, aged eighteen months, ___? lymph (decent) was det___? to Dr. Clarke on our arrival, ___ ___ ___? the voyage from the children.

The granted number of those cases entered in the sick list were of a most trivial character and only that the symptoms did occur, some by attention were speedily detected, are scarcely otherwise worthy of notice.

The convicts became very generally soon after their ___tion?, in excellent spirits, and with few exceptions, well behaved, cleanly, industrious and willingly disposed to improve themselves, and some of the most refractory and turbulent characters Newgate produced, and several with that character, after some little trouble became very orderly, well disposed, and industrious girls and preserved that character to the end of the voyage.

It may be time proper to state as a general remark, that those women who had for any time been under prison discipline, and had received the attention and care of Ladies Societies, more definitely those of Newgate and Edinburgh, were decidedly the best behaved and orderly, and the impressions made there on their minds, with very few exceptions, appeared ___? and beneficial, and their grateful recollections of such kindness and care was deeply implanted and cherished by them.

The rules formed by the Ladies Society for the improvement of female convicts were with some slight alterations adhered to, and answered well. A daily inspection took place at eleven a.m. of all berths, utensils, water closets etc., together with strict attention to the care and regulation of bedding, and the removal through the day of the boards of the lower berths, and when order and cleanliness did not correspond with those berths that set a good example, their wine for the day was stopped and given to those who had done so, the ___? was good, and required but few examples.

Four matrons were appointed. two for each side of the ship and a Governess to superintend the whole, who regulated all general movements by a whistle one wore suspended from ones neck.

Morning and evening divisions took place whenever weather permitted, and at the morning one, all irregularities of conduct that had occurred, and were entered by the respective matrons on their slates, were then formally examined, and such punishments as the case merited awarded. The whole ___? resumed their needle work and knitting, and after dinner until five p.m. attend schools. In the first and middle watches at night, two "submatrons" or mistresses of berths in rotation kept watch below, to report any out of their beds after ten o'clock, or any other irregularity. Punishment consisted in being confined to the "Box" on bread and water, wearing handcuffs, with a distance chain, to being placed in the after hatchway with the ladder up on bread and water, and for fighting the two were handcuffed with a distance chain, together for a day or two when noisy or troublesome in their berth, immediately removing them stopping them some, and doubling ___? fined if repetition occurred, minor offences, by sweeping the decks every two hours above and below, throughout the day.

The prisoners were kept clean by scraping and dry combing? and when weather permitted washed with hot soap and water, and the airing ___? and all the convicts being kept on deck until ___ fully dry, as they ___? were daily, and in hot weather under awnings, taking their meals there. ___? stones? and ___? were ___? and used from the Cape of Good Hope.

The ship shortly after my joining was placed under peculiar circumstances, the first mate (Bell?) was drunk excessively for five days and the Master (Weakine?) not on board, and early on the second morning following his return, he jumped out from his cabin window and was drowned. The mate after this attempted to destroy himself in the stewards berth, and he was obliged to be confined with a guard over him, until the arrival of the owner, then he was discharged, a Master was put in temporary command when the crew refused duty, another Master (Fell) was permanently appointed and before leaving England he discharged the second mate, also a new first mate that had joined us and others were appointed, some of the crew returned to their duty and others pr___d?, all went on smoothly, until the arrival of the ship in 30^o 20' South latitude, when the crew in the middle and morning watches, were all drunk, with the exception of one man, by what means not then detected. In the middle watch of the following night a light was discovered in the lazarette and a seaman named Brown? and an apprentice named Leach were seized as they came up out of the coal hole hatch underneath their forecastle berth, with the spirits they had obtained, the manner of affecting this was then discovered some distance from the lazarette bulk head, and in the hold an empty water cask of the apprentice? had been lifted just sufficiently to admit Leach who was a very slight lad to pass down and crawl aft through the cuntlings of the lower and middle tier of water casks and then penetrate upwards through a small aperture in the stowage of the provisions to the rum cask in the provision rooms, the empty cask being replaced, no appearance of entrance could be seen and the slightest thing in the lazarette also concealed it there, every precaution was made to prevent a repetition and in a few days a detachment of the men came aft requesting forgiveness which was ___? to. At the Cape of Good Hope, the first mate (Barker?) was discharged for mutinous behaviour at sea (a few days previously) to the Master and suspended from duty, together with several of the crew who were supposed to be principals in the rum affair, and others ___? in their room. The

crew as we progressed became more insubordinate and troublesome and on the 8th of September, a seaman named Kelly, refused the mates orders. The Master went instantly forward with a loaded pistol in his pocket, and he again defying him, he rashly snapped it at him, which fortunately ___? fire, he was then put in handcuffs, in which the whole of the A ___? and one ordinary seaman after ___ ___? work, nor did they afterwards return to it. The ship did not reach Hobart Town until the 24th following, during which time the ship was worked by the officers and remainder of the crew. The Master and myself from this time kept watch (and watch) and with the officers all wearing arms concealed, and everything arranged aloft? to prevent a ___?, several trying circumstances took place during this period, but the women all behaved exceedingly praiseworthy and orderly during it. On our arrival, thirteen of the crew were taken by the Police in handcuffs to prison and were afterwards sentenced to three months at the Tread Mill.

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