

(No 11.)



1858.

T A S M A N I A.

A D D E N D A

TO IMMIGRATION AGENT'S REPORT FOR HALF YEAR ENDING
30 JUNE, 1858.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
21 September, 1858.



Immigration Office, Hobart Town, September 21, 1858.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward for the consideration of the Government some remarks and suggestions regarding the better management of Immigrant Ships,—the great importance of which has been forced upon my attention by the circumstances attending the *Persian* and *Trade Wind*, as well as by observations in the case of other vessels.

I beg leave respectfully to submit the propriety of these observations being printed, in connection with my half-yearly Report to the 30th June last.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. D. LOCH, *Immigration Agent.*

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

MEMORANDUM.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following observations upon points which it is important particularly to consider in regard to the fitting out and management of Emigrant ships, and which have been more especially brought under observation in the ships *Persian* and *Trade Wind*, which arrived at this port with Typhus Fever on board, and were placed in Quarantine.

2. I beg first to observe upon the want of information and the very inadequate ideas generally existing as to the amount of mismanagement, and of privation and distress, which are to be found on board Emigrant ships.

The results are not actually witnessed by the public generally, or by those in authority, even in the Colonies—far less in the United Kingdom,—and are only to be ascertained by patient investigation and observation, in which a few individuals only are engaged.

It is difficult to convey by description adequate ideas on these subjects, with which I believe nothing short of actually witnessing the effect of protracted short allowance of food on board ship, the condition of a fever-ship, or the scenes of a Quarantine station, can adequately impress the mind.

In the case of the *Persian* there is not, perhaps, a single individual, excepting the members of the Government, the Health Officer, and myself, who is aware of the extent of the disease,—and that out of 230 individuals who sailed by that vessel there were fully 160 cases of Typhus fever, of which 18 were fatal (with seven deaths from other complaints), and in many of which cases the patients lingered long between life and death—or that, had the ship continued at sea but some few days longer, a mortality fearful to contemplate would, on every reasonable ground of expectation, have occurred. It is not generally known that the expenses occasioned by the necessity for placing this ship in Quarantine approach nearly to £3000; neither do people, in general, see the helpless widows and children compelled to become a burden upon the public.

The deficiencies and mismanagement to which I allude, I have witnessed to a greater or less extent in various ships.

I have endeavoured, in my Reports upon the *Persian* and *Trade Wind*, to show the actual condition of those vessels in these respects. Great, indeed, must be the aggregate amount of disease and death and misery, and great the loss of money, arising from mismanagement in Emigrant ships.

3. Begging leave, therefore, to bespeak attention to the great importance of the subject, and of the careful consideration of means to remedy such evils, I submit that enforcement of proper rules upon the following points would be attended with very beneficial results :—

1. The general use of an improved cooking apparatus.
2. Sufficient provisions for cookery for the sick.
3. That Cooks should be qualified.
4. That a 'Sea Cookery Book' should be published, comprising various information for Cooks—and ships required to be provided with it.
5. A water filter for ships.
6. That greater care should be exercised as to the qualifications and suitability of the Surgeons of Passenger Ships.
7. That a book of instructions and useful information for Surgeons, Masters, Officers, and Matrons should be drawn out, and ships required to be provided with it.
8. That the ventilation of ships should be brought under the consideration of scientific and practical men; and that the practice should be guarded against of constructing large store-rooms on the after part of the passenger-deck, thus obstructing ventilation, and limiting the passengers to the very smallest space allowed by the present law.
9. That Ships' Hospitals should not be allowed to be below when it can possibly be avoided.
10. That Hospitals should be more roomy, and better fitted up.
11. That a proper Dispensing place should be provided separate from the Hospitals.
12. That measures be taken for securing the good quality and the full weight of the Preserved Provisions with which Passenger Ships are supplied.

4. On these points I beg to offer some observations :—

Nothing, I submit, is more important for the preservation of health than a sufficiency of plain, wholesome, and properly cooked food.

In the two ships particularly under consideration, there were general, serious, and just complaints that, although the provisions were in general good, they were so spoiled and lost in cooking, that the people were, in point of fact, half starved, their health, in consequence, suffering greatly; and I have found similar cause of complaint in other ships.

It is not at all uncommon to treat complaints of this kind in a very light manner; but the subject is of the utmost consequence, for thus is induced permanent debility, and the foundation laid for disease and death. I am thoroughly convinced that much of the disease existing on board these two ships was thus occasioned. Other causes no doubt conduced,—but here, in my opinion, was the predisposing and extending cause; and I have made the same observation as regards other vessels.

The common and very evident causes of this evil are the use of an ill-constructed and insufficient cooking apparatus—an unskilful cook—and want of knowledge of the subject on the part of the officers. It is quite common to find in Emigrant Ships a cooking apparatus of the old-fashioned and barbarous construction so well known, and so unworthy of an age of science like the present; the defects of which must be evident to every one at all acquainted with the subject, or who will take the trouble to consider it, and the only recommendation of which is that it costs less than those of an improved construction, which can now be obtained by those who will pay for them. This cooking apparatus is almost always complained of as too small—the coppers are difficult to clean and to empty completely—the provisions are frequently burnt in them, and the bottom of the coppers burnt into holes—and the general character of the cooking is uncertain, and very unsatisfactory.

The comfort and health of Emigrants are greatly promoted by the bread or cakes they make with flour and oatmeal, lime-juice, and soda, &c., when able to do so; but it is simply an impossibility that the miserable apparatus I allude to can either afford sufficient means of baking at all the quantity required, or properly perform its work. Too often we find the oven formed of a single plate of iron, the fire acting directly upon one part of it, and one or more sides in contact with the open air. The oven of the *Trade Wind*, carrying 279 individuals, for whom it was supposed to suffice, was 2 feet 5 inches long, 12 inches high, and 13 inches wide. It would be a waste of words to endeavour to show that an oven of these dimensions could not do the amount of work required. The consequence of such defects is, that sufficient food cannot be baked, and that what is baked is sometimes burnt, and sometimes underdone.

The Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners have given proper attention to this essential point, and of late years their ships have been provided with a baker, and an oven for this especial purpose; and beyond all question there ought, in every passenger ship, to be adequate provision of this nature.

That this can be accomplished is perfectly evident. Any man of common sense and observation, possessing the will, and seeing the importance of the subject, may, in a very short space of time, make himself acquainted with the nature of a great variety of inventions of this description, and with the opinions and procedure of practical men regarding them.

The Emigration Officers may, if they are so authorised, just as easily require a ship to be fitted with an improved and proper apparatus of the kind decided on by authority, as allow her to go to sea

with one which cannot perform the work required, and is a disgrace to all concerned in permitting the use of it merely to save money to the owners at the sacrifice of the comfort, and probably the lives, of the passengers.

The Cooking Apparatus ought, I submit, to afford good and sufficient means, available at all times, for cooking for the sick, or, if it does not, there should be a small extra apparatus for the special purpose.

The representations constantly made of the difficulties experienced in getting little comforts prepared for the sick,—which, in their state of health, are indeed necessities,—and the manner in which they suffer for want of them, show very strongly the necessity for better arrangements on this head. The cooks, already embarrassed with their ordinary duties, are irritated by applications for extra cooking, and quarrels and disappointment are too frequently the result.

I further beg to submit that some care should be taken that a passengers' cook is capable of the duty he undertakes. Not unfrequently they know little or nothing of cookery, and what they do know is of the roughest kind.

Great advantage might, I conceive, be anticipated from the preparation and general use of a "Sea Cookery Book," explaining the management of the cooking apparatus, and the preparation of food for both the healthy and the sick, with advice and information for cooks. The cookery commonly in use is of the very rudest description; but with the good materials provided, and some trifling additions, improvements in this respect might be effected of most important results, both as to the comfort and health of passengers.

For instance,—instead of peas and water, often half boiled, excellent peas soup or peas pudding might be made; rice or biscuit puddings for children or others; and with salt and preserved meat, flour, suet, oatmeal, preserved potatoes, biscuit, sugar, treacle, lime-juice, and seasoning at command, and abundance of persons from whom to select assistants to the cook, or substitutes for one found incapable, a variety of excellent messes might be prepared. There is no real difficulty but to create *the will* to give attention to the subject, accompanied by the knowledge how to do so.

Wholesome water is also essential to health, and the use of impure and unwholesome water is a well-known and extensive cause of disease. Yet, in many cases, this important particular is much neglected. In the case of the *Trade Wind* very serious complaints were made on this subject, although the water was said to have been filtered before put on board. I submit that ships should be provided with the means of filtering water, and exposing it to the action of the atmosphere, and that it ought to be constituted part of the duty of the surgeon to attend to the diet of the emigrants as a means of preserving health.

5. The appointment of the surgeon, and his acquaintance with the duties required on board ship, are subjects of extreme importance. It is most painful to reflect how often the surgeon, upon whom the comfort, health, and lives of many so much depend, is, from various causes, unfit for the position he occupies.

It certainly may not be possible to induce men of superior qualifications to undertake such duties, and especially for the small remuneration given; and it may sometimes be from necessity that young and inexperienced men are placed in charge of emigrant ships; but *it is* possible to publish and provide each surgeon with detailed instructions and information to assist him in the performance of the important duties entrusted to him,—and to continue to neglect to do so, is, I submit, to incur a very heavy responsibility.

The Emigration Commissioners provide their surgeons with instructions, which are of great service, but are intended, in some respects, especially for ships chartered by themselves.

In addition to many valuable directions contained in these instructions, much more might be introduced; and there would not then be found, as in the case of the *Persian* and *Trade Wind*, young men, on their first voyage, declaring that they sailed almost at a moment's notice, and in a great measure unaware of the duties the surgeon ought to perform, or even what medicines or other articles there ought to be on board for the treatment of the sick.

It may, perhaps, be objected to me that it is easy to point out defects, and that it would be more to the purpose at least to sketch out a book of this kind myself; and I would certainly endeavour to do so were I not sensible that persons residing in less remote situations than this have better opportunities for obtaining useful information, by communicating with practical men and otherwise. Some few suggestions I will, however, venture to append to this letter.

6. The Ventilation of Ships is a subject which, I submit, requires much more careful consideration than it receives, and is well deserving the attention of scientific and practical men, as closely connected with health and the preservation of life. At present there is sometimes an insufficiency of fresh air, and sometimes a current of air too strong, and which cannot properly be regulated, causing danger of disease from chill; persons being even berthed immediately under the funnel by which the air

enters ; or if that is stopped, then the means are suspended on which reliance was placed for ventilation. There are also, as in the case of the *Trade Wind*, partial currents, and a want of proper provision for the circulation of air among the side berths of the ship, as well as a very general absence of means for the equable escape or the removal of foul air. In fact, attention appears to be entirely, or at least chiefly, given to the introduction of a current of air, often partial and misdirected, and little or no care taken for the free escape, and still less the direct drawing away, of foul air. To this last point I submit that measures should be directed, so as to remove the foul air from the places occupied by it, and allow fresh air to take its place, rather than depending upon the principle of driving out the impure air by means of a forcible current from some few particular points.

In a steam-vessel, no doubt, an apparatus for the purpose of drawing away, or pumping out, foul air, the place of which would be taken by fresh air, might be readily and effectively worked. In a sailing vessel the difficulty would be much greater ; but were this principle taken into consideration, it appears to me highly probable that very beneficial improvements might be effected.

In some ships a space on the passenger deck, equal in extent to the poop, is partitioned off by a solid bulkhead, and used as a store-room, proper ventilation being thus greatly obstructed, and the passengers limited to the very smallest space allowed by law. This was the case in the *Persian* and *Trade Wind* fever ships, and I submit that the practice is most improper if the lives of the people are to be considered as of any value.

7. It is, I conceive, the intention of the Passenger Act, that, when practicable, hospitals shall not be below, but in the poop or some deck-house. Common sense and experience both point to this as the proper course, yet the hospitals are constantly found below in the midst of the passengers.

I may say that the practice is condemned by every medical man who has sailed in an Emigrant ship, but it nevertheless prevails. In the *Trade Wind* the hospitals were thus situated, and were described by the surgeon as most offensive and dangerous. The Crown Solicitor of this Colony, on considering Section 24 of the Passenger Act in conjunction with the definition of " Upper Passenger Deck, &c., in Section 3, was unable to decide what the meaning of the Act really is.

I submit that the terms in this case should be plain and precise ; and that most certainly the Hospitals should not be below, while it is possible to have them to be in the poop or other suitable place elsewhere.

The Hospitals also should, I submit, be more roomy, and better fitted up than usual at present. Where there is much sickness the accommodation is quite inadequate ; and in the construction of Hospitals there is not the slightest trace of consideration for the comfort of those who may occupy them.

The want of a proper dispensing place is a general subject of complaint with Surgeons. It is evident that in every Passenger Ship there ought to be such a place separate from the Hospitals, and with abundance of light and air.

I conceive that all Surgeons of Passenger Ships should regularly keep a detailed Journal, and be furnished with a Book for the purpose, particularising not only cases of sickness and their treatment, but all complaints and proceedings upon them, defects observed, measures adopted, and generally everything worthy of attention, which Journal he should be bound to produce to the proper Officer at any Port. Such a Journal is a great check upon all parties ; it is valuable for reference, and is a protection to the Surgeon who performs his duty. I am aware that in this there are difficulties, and though I mention the subject as very desirable, I fear it may not be possible to enforce it as a general rule.

8. Regarding the quality of the preserved meat, and other preserved provisions supplied to Emigrants, I have usually found the most serious and strongly expressed complaints. It is very common to say that Emigrants are fastidious, and that they cannot discriminate between the ordinary odour of preserved provisions and the smell of putrid meat, and other nonsense ; but Emigrants are, like other people, very well able to distinguish good meat from bad ; they very soon ascertain the general quality of that supplied to them, and when satisfied that it is bad, they very generally either leave the tins untouched, or, as in the case of the *Trade Wind*, throw them at once overboard unopened as received, and this when suffering for want of food.

The principle on which meat is preserved is well known,—and if properly prepared and proved there should never be a bad tin ; and the tins should be filled with good solid meat, from an establishment which can be relied on.

The *Constance* recently arrived here was supplied with preserved meat prepared by Messrs. H. Powell and Sons, London and Sligo, which the Emigrants pronounced to be of excellent quality, and which they gladly received ; and I have found Emigrants quite as ready to express satisfaction with good supplies as to complain of bad. There can be no doubt that by proper measures good meat might always be obtained, as also preserved soup and milk, which are often found to ferment and fly.

I have frequently submitted this subject to notice, and am satisfied that there is great and just cause of complaint, both as to the quality, and as to deficiency of weight.

If in the case of the *Trade Wind* a serious outbreak of the passengers had taken place, it would have been matter of little astonishment. Such a case may yet occur; and I submit that it is, on every ground, proper to adopt means for removing the just causes of complaint which most certainly exist.

9. I beg leave respectfully to press these points on attention. It might appear superfluous to do so, but as evils so much felt have long been permitted to exist, it cannot be unnecessary to endeavour to bring them particularly under consideration; and the more especially, as these are points on which the class of persons chiefly interested require the protection of some superintending authority,—for, being usually unacquainted with such subjects, they discover deficiencies when at sea, and too late to protect themselves.

I trust I shall not be understood as reflecting injuriously upon any Officers in the United Kingdom. They must doubtless take the law as they find it, and allow others to do so likewise, and may have difficulties to encounter of which persons here are not aware; but I am not the less sensible of the necessity for remedying evils, the lamentable effects of which I have myself witnessed and investigated. Nothing can obliterate the impression thus produced on my mind, or, I trust, weaken the desire to contribute to the prevention of such evils for the future.

The plain point is, that Emigrant Ships should not be allowed, on any consideration whatever, to proceed to sea without proper precautions for the health of the passengers, as they often now are; and I submit, that whatever measures are necessary for that purpose should be regarded as indispensable, and be insisted on.

The suggestions I have submitted are derived from facts within my own knowledge; and I venture to believe them to be obviously of a plain practical nature, the general enforcement of which would be productive of very great and extensive benefits to the numerous class of persons concerned.

JOHN D. LOCH, *Immigration Agent*.

Immigration Office, Hobart Town, September 9th, 1858.

SOME few Suggestions for a Book of Instructions for Surgeons and Officers of Emigrant Ships, alluded to at Paragraph 5.

THE Surgeon should, if possible, be on board some days before sailing, to become acquainted with the Captain and Officers, and to make his preparations before going to sea.

He should satisfy himself that he has the proper supply of Medicines and Instruments, Medical comforts, &c., of which the instructions should comprise lists—instead of stating at the end of the voyage (as in the case of the *Trade Wind*) that he did not know what he ought to have had, that he found his medicine chest half empty, there not being medicine for the treatment of the sick, and that he believes it was never inspected; also that the berths in the Hospitals are such as can be conveniently used in case of disease, and are properly provided with bedding and requisites; that the Hospitals shall, if possible, not be below, and that he has a proper separate dispensing place; on these points, if necessary, the Emigration Officers should be communicated with.

He should see that the Medical comforts are at hand ready for immediate use; that there is oatmeal and other proper food ready for the use of children (or for others requiring it) with reference to previous habits, from the time they first come on board, without waiting till the people are put on sea allowance, so that a child shall not—as in a recent case—be half killed by change of diet for want of proper food at first, and then treated, till it dies, with wine and physic for diarrhoea.

He should consider himself as in charge of the people in all matters affecting their health; should not hastily regard complaints or applications as frivolous, or wait for a formal application for what may be necessary, but regard himself as at all times on duty; move about among the people, ascertain what is necessary and proper, and see that their reasonable wants are supplied,—directing himself the requisite arrangements, in concert with the Master, so that this may be done systematically and without difficulty. He must expect that so soon as he gets to sea perhaps half his people may be laid down with sea-sickness or other ailments, and that many of them will prove extremely helpless. For this he should prepare beforehand, so that gruel and little comforts may be readily obtained, especially proper diet for children, who suffer much on board ship; for neglect at this time—when, perhaps, the

Surgeon himself may be incapable of active exertion, and when there may be persons who cannot help themselves, and have none to help them to obtain what they require, and when also the temper of the cook is probably irritated, may,—as I have no doubt it has done, lay the foundation of serious disease. He should remember that every passenger is entitled to a sufficiency of plain, wholesome, and well-cooked food; and should consider the meals of the people as intimately connected with their health, and attention to this subject one of the best preventatives of disease. He should therefore inspect the provisions, the cooking, and the meals as served; and if there are defects, set himself earnestly to remedy them in concert with the Master, instead of letting them go on from one end of the voyage to the other without an effort for improvement. If he is unable to effect improvement or be unsupported, he should place his endeavours or his protest on record by letter addressed to the Master, and by entries in his journal, for the protection of his own character.

For the preservation of health, he should also take care that the ship is properly cleaned. In the Commissioners' ships the Surgeon has authority, and there are instructions, petty officers, and a regular system for this purpose. As regards other ships, where the Order in Council may not be very exactly observed, and where, although a filthy condition of the 'tween decks ought not to be allowed to exist, it not unfrequently does exist, it may be useful to refer to the following extract from the journal of Dr. Bone, Surgeon of the *Constance*, recently arrived in good order at Hobart Town with Emigrants, as showing the benefit of cleaning a ship when dirty, and also how it may be done:—

“The following Notice, signed by the Captain and myself, was to-day stuck up and rigidly enforced—every one on deck except the sick, captains of messes, and one or two volunteer cleaners. The taking up and airing of beds, &c., gave satisfaction to all except the * * *; these people always growl at everything that is found necessary to be enforced tending to the comfort of the others.

‘SPECIAL NOTICE.

‘Boxes to be had up from the hold to-day. Beds to be on the poop before half-past 10. All passengers to be on deck at the same time, except Captains of Messes. ‘Tween decks to be thoroughly scrubbed, including space ‘tween the berths.

E. P. ELLIS,
W. H. BONE, M.D.’

“Acting in accordance with this, by eleven the cleaning began;—the dirt, filth, and stench were abominable; the accumulation of dirt, rags, old boots and shoes, &c., was very great; the beds having been all, except those of the sick, brought on deck, and the boxes all removed on to the hatchways; the upper bunks were all swept and then washed; the spaces between the decks and the lower berths were cleansed, then the lower decks were swept, and the scrubbing commenced; the ladders were taken up, and the dirt, as soon as swept, was handed up, and then water was passed down, and supplying them with soap, set them to work; they one and all worked well, and by four the whole space was thoroughly scrubbed. Before allowing any one to go down the swing stoves were set on work, and the deck dried thoroughly; purified by burning pitch ‘tween decks and allowing the fumes to flood over the entire ‘tween decks; disinfecting powder thrown into the water-closets soon made them wholesome and sweet. When once the decks were dry, they went down to a clean and purer atmosphere than they had breathed lately. Two hospital beds were thrown overboard as they were saturated with filth.”

I may here observe, that though it would have been much better had this ship not been allowed to become so dirty as she thus appears to have been, yet that these measures were highly proper and beneficial; an occasional cleaning day of this kind on board the fever ships lately arrived here would have been of very great utility, and had the Surgeons been provided with a book of instructions that plan would probably have been adopted. Of course the book might specify much more than is here stated.

There should be particular instructions as to the management of Medical comforts.

The Surgeon should invariable keep a journal, comprising not only cases of sickness and treatment, but all particular occurrences for reference, and for his own protection as well as that of others.

Should a Surgeon be appointed to a ship with Bounty Emigrants, he should obtain from the Agent a copy of the Bounty Regulations, or a Bounty Ticket, or refer to such as may be in the possession of the Master, and make himself carefully acquainted with them, as far, at least, as concerns his own duties.

The Surgeon should attend particularly to ventilation, and consider the regulation of it as under his particular charge; on this head the book should give information and advice. A current of air may be conveyed to any particular spot by attaching a canvas hose to a common windsail. The hose may be kept open by wooden hoops. In urgent cases a hole may be made in the deck in a convenient situation, and a wooden or leather funnel fitted to it to carry off foul air, &c.

The book might advantageously contain information upon *construction* of various kinds in connection with ventilation, privies, bathing places, means of cooking, &c. One of the privies for

women on board the *Trade Wind* was shut up during a great part of the voyage, greatly to the prejudice of health and decency,—and yet it does not appear to have occurred to any officer that it was possible to construct another.

The Surgeon should encourage exercise and cheerfulness, promoting music and dancing under proper restrictions, also singing and reading aloud. He should take an interest in the promotion of religious observances, attendance at school, and useful occupation in general.

The single women should always have the use of the poop, and should never go further forward than the main-mast. After dusk they should either be below or on the poop, and nowhere else. If their compartment extends as far forward as the main-hatchway, passage by that hatchway should be closed at dusk, and the after hatchway only used.

In warm weather a bathing tub may be fitted for the women in any convenient place, with a contrivance for filling and emptying it by tubes.

The book should also contain instructions for the Master, Officers, and Matrons of ships.

I have at present little time at command, and the above are offered only as a very few incomplete suggestions for the proposed book. Many others may be suggested by practical and earnest men; and the Emigration Commissioners' instructions for ships chartered by them, though not entirely applicable to other vessels, contain most useful information, the result of their experience and care.

Were it required that ships should be provided with a copy of the proposed instructions for the special use and information of the passengers, the general knowledge thus afforded of the duties of Master, Surgeon, and Officers, and of the measures proper to be adopted, would greatly promote the observance of them.

JOHN D. LOCH, *Immigration Agent.*