

The diary of Elizabeth Purdie, on board the sailing ship Mooltan, on its voyage from Greenock, Scotland, to Port Chalmers, New Zealand, in 1849

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Mrs Purdie's writings are an interesting foil to the loud complaints made about she and her husband, by another diarist on board the ship – Francis Pillans. Pillans, who was probably a far freer spirit than most of the Scotsmen on board, complained several times about Purdie wowsersism: "Did not get up our game at cards last night, as the fiddler was upon deck and all the sailors dancing like possessed ones. The doctor will be saying again that it is by indulging in this wickedness that the wrath of God is brought upon the ship – a piece of cant for which I would like to pitch him overboard."

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On Board the Mooltan 8th Nov. 1849

Must try now to recollect some of the past, that I may not forget the Lord's goodness. My dear husband left Edin. for Greenock on Friday 7th Sept. to look after his duties in inspecting the emigrants. Part of our luggage was sent off that afternoon; the rest excepting what was for the cabin, on Saturday. My dear Uncle David could not get time to go home to dinner those two days – I don't know how we should have got on without him. He and Aunt Marion came on Saturday evening to make arrangements for our final departure on Monday – eleven train. I was so much fatigued I did not attempt to go out on the Sabbath, the children went. Miss More came after church and took leave. It was a sad parting – her and our Margaret. Mrs Gibson, Auntie Jane and Jammison – and last of all Mr. Black, one of our deacons, saw us in the evening. Mr. B made family worship and read – psalm.

I shall not attempt to describe my feelings at the thought of leaving Edin. enough. We were ready next morning and, with Uncle & Auntie Marion, took our places in the Railway – our servant Mary also going to assist with the children. Dear Aunt Jane saw us into the evening. Our house furniture we left to be disposed of afterwards – a power of Attorney having been given to my Uncle David. Mr Hugh Rose & Mr Wei – to whose care the Dr. left charge of his affairs. At Greenock we put up at the Fortune Hotel, where my husband was residing. We slept there that night. On Tuesday morning Aunt and I went to the ship. We made the beds – Aunt swept both cabins out and made them look as comfortable as she could. Our dear kind friends Mr & Mrs More came in the forenoon to see us off. (Mr More brought, through Ince, large Bible) Also Baillin Duncan, Mr Cowan M.P., happening to be in Greenock at the time, and Mr Edwards, independent Minister, came to see us and say farewell.

It was intended that we should have had Divine worship before leaving Greenock but in the confusion occurring by the continual influx of visitors, this was impracticable. A steamer was therefore ordered to tug the vessel out to the Tail of the Bank. Our concern then was to get the children on board before her having to leave dock. Uncle & Aunt went for them. Meanwhile, Mr & Mrs More took leave – the children arrived barely in time to be pulled in, and it was all I could do to get a shake of Uncle & Aunt's hands – we saw them walking along the quay. I felt how bitter the pangs of parting – but I had little time to think, with so many little ones and – M to assist. I had enough to do.

We slept well the first night – after breakfast I wrote a note to Aunt Margt (I think I have stated that Rev. Mr Moris of Greenock came on too, about 7 O Clock last evening and had worship – he had an excellent address. He paid us a visit in our own Cabin and we had some sweet intercourse together. He expected us to imitate Abraham's faith – and one expression of his, I often thought of in the depth of our afflictions: "Be sure you hold hold a fast grip – don't let go).

A steamer came and tugged us to the Cumbrae heads and we bid farewell to the land of our fathers. It was I think about six when the Tug left. The Capt and Mate's wives, who had accompanied us thus far, returned with the Tug.

Owing to sad events which too soon followed our recovery from seasickness, I was not able to write for some time and then when I was, I wrote some hasty notes to send home – these I intended to copy from – adding or leaving out as it occurred to me. It were a pity to forget all the Lord's goodness to us, and, from past experiences, the things which we wish to remember most do slip out of our minds.

Notes of Voyage to New Zealand

24th September 1849. Passing between Tenerife and Gomera – Monday – have been thirteen days at sea – all appears to be a dream. The steamer left us at Cumbrae heads with a fair wind. We slept very well the first night. After that, it blew a stiff breeze and the gallant ship shot like an arrow through the water. On Friday night we cleared the dreaded Channel. During the first few days we all suffered more or less with sea sickness. Jane & Rose [Rose's actual name was Elizabeth) proving exceptions. I suffered most from weakness not being able to eat the hard biscuits and the bread – had a very musty taste, so much so I could not eat it. How often during those few days did I thank Aunt Marion for the contents of the tin box.

Crossing opposite the Bay of Biscay we encountered a severe gale, the ship pitched so much we had to hold on for fear of falling out of bed – we could scarce get dinner it rolled so from side to side. We were constantly in danger of being helped to more than our own share. We have often been very fortunate in having a kind Capt and Mate who are very attentive to their duties and especially kind to the children. During the gale when the sea was breaking over the ship and at each ~ she rolled to and fro like a drunken man. The Capt was on deck all night, yet he said it was no great storm and that we ought to be glad that our course lay right before the wind – carrying us at the rate of 11 knots an hour.

We were off Madeira on the 20th last, but being far to the west, did not see it. After the storm we had some days of heavy rain. Some of our beds were drenched, the water getting at the port holes – but we suffered no harm and had them all up on deck and dried the first good day.

Last Friday was a very sad day – a little girl died the night before and was buried in the morning. She had been ill for some days – sickness and purging – then excessive exhaustion followed. The Dr was engaged with her almost all Thursday – she died at night. The mother was ill also – a very delicate woman. It turned out a case of decided cholera – the child was scarce buried when the mother died. All the bedding was instantly thrown over board and the body instantly buried. Thus twice on that sad day my dear husband was called to read part of the burial service over the dead. The Lord sustained him through it, tho' his heart was almost breaking. All the passengers appeared very much affected by the recurrence. The mother was a young woman from Linds, where cholera was prevailing when she left. She has left a young infant and a little boy about two years old. We are in hopes that the infant may live.

Shall I record what was done on the Saturday following? I blush to do it. Some one had a fiddle and they commenced dancing with the merriment imaginable (of course I speak for the steerage passengers). Just as if nothing of kind had happened.

The first Sabbath we spent at sea was too stormy for holding religious service on board but yesterday was a most beautiful day and the waters of the ocean quite smooth. The Capt assembled the passengers about eleven for worship –

the Dr conducted it. Mr Harrison, a Baptist from England) assisted in prayers. I was not present, for our little Rose was very sick – but I can not tell how beautiful it was to hear the psalm as it rose from many fine voices in the midst of the ocean. "Lord thou hast been our dwelling place, in generations all" was then sung, and how delightful was the thought that He, whom we profess to worship, is Lord of these mighty waters.

All this day we have been gazing at the Peak of Teneriffe, the last sight of land we are likely to see for many days to come. The atmosphere is more than usually favourable for having a fine view. The Island itself is very barren and rocky on the coast – the hills are Alpine in shape and between these appeared some patches of cultivated land. We saw some villages near the coast – one of them was supposed to be Bainavista.

The ocean was so sullen that the ship had not made much progress today. The weather was very hot and has been so for some days – indeed we have had no cold weather – and the clothing we went on board with felt quite oppressive.

Rose and David have suffered much from the heat – we were obliged to get a person to nurse Rose as the cow's milk got to soon sour. Our dear little Rose still better – so is David. I wonder how all our dear friends are in Edin. How fast the time passes at sea – I have several times lost count of the days of the week. Now I have a little more leisure, as I have got a person to assist – but before, Margt and I were engaged from morning to night – and the Dr has also had a great deal to do – nothing could be done in the way of order, till after the sickness. The Dr was very sick himself at first, more so than I was. Some of the passengers still suffer from this curse – they are much better off being obliged to go on deck.

Mitchell at first was so ill that he lay like a log, but his Papa was prescribing and pulled him up. He was no sooner on deck than he felt better and was running about in a short time. The Dr had to pull a great many up in the same fashion.

We have all better appetites than at home. Margt may be seen eating pork to breakfast and that after having had porridge. The provisions we have are very good – except the potatoes – these were excellent at first, but now are spoiling every day. Great disappointment is felt at no fowls or eggs having been put on board. The ladies and children would have been much better of them.

I like being at sea very much and am never tired of gazing at the great Ocean. There is something soothing in the endless ripple when calm – and something awfully grand when its waters are lashing into fury, then to think of Him, who in a moment could hush it with a "Peace be Still." To think and say as the little boys did, "I am not afraid, my Father's at the helm." It is then that we can appreciate the value of religion and we learn in these moments of danger, to nestle quietly under the wing of Jesus.

Yesterday we were becalmed – today making more progress – 7 knots an hour.

27th: Another death from cholera, an elderly woman taken ill yesterday afternoon. She was one of the dancers on Monday night.

The Capt, Mate and rest of the cabin passengers approve and encourage dancing, in order to keep the people cheerful and prevent their being afraid of cholera. To us it was very painful to hear their merriment last night, after they knew that the poor woman was so ill as to be removed to the hospital. My husband would fain put a stop to it, but cannot. O that people were wise? That they would consider the end God has in view, in sending the affliction?

Our dear Rose continues very poorly – she and the baby whose mother died look very much as if they will not live long.

To whom shall we go in our affliction but to Him who bath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows in our ever present intercession – a God full of compassion. Removed far from the sympathy of other dear friends – let us cleave closer to Him.

They are now preparing to bury the body – there was no stronger looking woman on board than Mrs Barr. (Afterwards the husband and daughter behaved very ill to the Dr, reflecting on him. Their conduct was quite a contrast to the McNeils, who warmly expressed their gratitudes and said he had done all that he could do.)

28th: No dancing last night – but it would appear that sailors must have some fun, so we had a visit from Neptune ,alias our good natured black cook.

The potatoes have become unfit for use – they were brought up from the hold and many thrown over board, sacks and all. The stench from the hold was dreadful and made us glad as well as sorry to part with them.

We are now suffering from a tropical sun and with little or no wind are making but slow progress.

29th: O for a refreshing breeze to carry us swiftly across the line. I think we are abreast of Cape Verde islands.

How are all our dear friends in Edin? How often I often with them in Spirit – conversing with them – every varied expressions of their countenances coming up before busy memory. I am sitting at the window in our cabin, alone, a very rare occurrence. The boundless ocean is before me, yet I can scarce believe I am distant from those I love and dream so much about.

What a noisy place a ship is – I wanted the Captain very much to let me climb up the mast a little way to have a short respite from the incessant hum and racket.

Whenever the sun goes down, it is almost instantly dark – no twilight. Then the sailors and steerage passengers commence dancing. After the dancing, song singing – first at the forecandle, then on the poop. Occasionally we have heard psalmody.

The children appear very happy they are going very wild and fond of the Captain.

Tuesday 23rd October: What shall I write today ? So much – so very much has occurred lately to engage both mind and body. To you, my dear Miss N, I in particular address myself, tho from the pitching of the ship, I am afraid what I write will be scarce legible.

Open your atlas, my dear young friend – turn to the map of Africa. Between 12 – 10 North latitude and 20 Longitude, midway abreast of the river Gambia and Rio Grande. Then open your precious Bible. Rev 20-13: "And the sea ate up the dead which were in it".

Our sweet Rose – I mean all that was mortal, slumbers 'neath those vast waters. The heat had affected her head. She refused first the nurse's milk, then the arrowroot – at the end her papa said she was much the same as Uncle David's little boy.

On Thursday 4th October – in our little cabin – with all the children gathered around – with her head on my bosom – she gently drew her last breath.

And yet we felt thankful that she died not of cholera –that she was not hurried immediately from any access, and bedding and all consigned to the deep.

No we had a coffin made for her and the Capt very considerately said that if the Dr would allow him, he would put the body into one of the side boats till night and, when I was asleep, he would see it buried. But our trial, tho' great, was light compared to others.

We have had, up to this date, 14 deaths of these with two exceptions – our own and another baby – all from cholera. [Dr Purdie's official report said his daughter had indeed died of cholera.]

The day before Rose died, Mr Perkins, the Father of one of the Scotch Baptist families, died, leaving a widow and several children. Also Mr & Mrs Harrison, the Father and Mother of the other Baptist family – leaving 5 Orphans – one an infant at the breast. These individuals were seized in the morning, and before night, their bodies were in the deep. Mr H. made no profession but I believe the other two were christened. They were missed by some down stairs as they used to have family worship every evening. The orphans are well looked after and baby thrives very well.

Our dear friends at home, I am sure will think we have been sorely tried – yes, we have felt our Heavenly Father's chastening in more ways than one. The passengers were panic struck and for the time some appeared to lay the blame on the Doctor. Then, in the midst of our personal affliction, we had to encounter dark and scowling looks, and there were whisperings on the poop.

Forgetting, or not wishing to remember, that we left cholera very bad in Greenock. That we were all but becalmed under a tropical sun; abreast of the most deadly shores in Africa. The stench from the potatoes, before their being thrown overboard, was sufficient of itself to produce a pestilence.

They talked as if life and death were in the Dr's hands. I grieve to say it and yet truth demands it, that in all the conversation I heard there was no alluding to God as the Author of their trials – no talk of their having a prayer meeting – to confess sin and to humble ourselves before God. I once or twice attempted to suggest such a thing but was misunderstood as if I sought to trust all to prayer and did not use means.

And how did the Doctor feel? Deeply – keenly – as we went and told Jesus. Jesus sustained him – quietly – steadily he went on with his duties. I saw little of him during these sad days, he was so much down stairs, using all the means in his power – the ship having been provided with cholera medicines. The Captain and Mate assisted him all they could.

Lest any false reports should reach home about his healing his patients Homoeopathically – I think it right to explain that he treats them strictly Allopathically, according to his agreement. What may have given rise to the supposition was this:

Mr Perkins who died of cholera, was attached to Homoeopathy and had brought these medicines with him. His infant was seized with Water in the head – was very ill indeed and not expected to live. At first, not knowing that the Dr understood that system, he treated the child himself. Afterwards, when he did know, he begged the Dr to take him in charge and treat him Homoeopathically. The Dr explained how he did in the ship – that he did not

practice Homeopathy here. But if he preferred it, he would do so in his case. The child had a most unlooked-for recovery, yet we think that was the circumstance that made those who had nothing else to do – begin and criticise the treatment.

Sometimes I could scarce forbear a smile – for a while they would sit up on the poop discussing what might to be done. Everyone had their own favourite doctor's remedy. In short, to be pleased, every family should have brought their own Doctor with them.

To those who have injured us or tried to injure us, we freely forgive them. Our case is in our Father's hands. We seek the sanctified use of all our trials - we cling to the belief that "all things work together for good to those who love God."

One or two appear to be impressed – but you would be surprised to see how soon such solemn scenes appear to be forgotten.

Two of the sailors died – they were not treated by the Dr. After that, the opposition calmed down a good deal – their boasting was stopped. One little boy who was so ill as to be reported by some as dead, got better. It was then discussed whether it had been a real case.

I have been very low myself, but am now, thanks to God, better. Jane also has been very ill – the effect of the heat. But I will tell you – I give thanks to God for he is good – she is better.

We passed the line on the 12th. the weather has been much cooler since.

Wednesday 24th October 1849: Object lesson today is the island of Trinidad, a very barren, rocky uninhabited place. It has curious pillars called the Monuments or Nine Pins, rising to a considerable height.

Jane still better, hers has been a very unlooked for recovery. The rest of the passengers are well – how much we enjoy the cool breeze.

Near the Line we met with the "Fortitude" a brigg homeward bound. She lay to and signalled that she wanted bread. While our people were getting 2 bags of biscuits ready, her boat came alongside with the chief officer on board. They were from Rio Janeiro, bound for Falmouth. They had had bad weather, and their bread was also bad.

Before they boarded us, our Capt. had forbidden any to send letters by this opportunity, as owing to the number of deaths we had had, and the nature of the diseases he thought it would only increase instead of allay the anxiety of our friends. Notwithstanding this injunction, when the brig's boat left, there was a shower of letters thrown into the boat. Some of them fell into the sea, but were picked up by the sailors. Capt. Chivas called out to throw them all overboard. I do not think, however, that this order was fully obeyed and if so, if these letters have reached their destination and our friends have been wondering how they have received none – this will explain.

31st: Two degrees south of Capricorn. For three days we have had a heavy head swell and our vessel has rolled and pitched a great deal. Even now I am writing in our cabin with my paper on my knee – sitting on one trunk and pressing my foot against another.

Yet we get accustomed to being knocked about. "I believe all the Cabin passengers agreed with me and our elbows being black and blue. You would be

surprised to see how well the young children steady themselves, sailor-fashion, and keep running about while the elders are tumbling.

My husband is now suffering from fatigue and want of night's rest when Jane and I were ill. There are also some suffering from sea-sickness but otherwise we may be reported well.

There is a good deal of preserved meat on board, we have at table preserved potatoes and carrots – sometimes a nice cut of salmon or roast beef – also preserved plums, currants for Tarts. Bread is baked by the Steward every morning.

The Steerage passengers bake a great deal . They save their flour and make scones and puddings. Some of them brought a lot of nice things with them. When I was so ill that I could not taste anything within our reach, a kind person (Mrs Duncan) brought me some eggs preserved in salt. My husband immediately gave one to our cook to make a pancake. It was the first thing I ate. Before that I was supported by Wine and Brandy. Another of the passengers brought me some scones of her own baking. Our Steward, Benjamin Thickett, was most attentive throughout.

So far as I can judge, my dear husband is likely to live down all opposition. The people below, with one or two exceptions (and even they appear more friendly) receive him kindly. We are happy with the cabin passengers with the exception a gentleman [Francis Pillans]. We were warned of his troublesome character before we left.

We must have some indifferent characters on board, as there has been a good deal of stealing. The guilty party not yet found out.

I wish to tell my dear Aunt Margt. and Jane that I derived, in my distress, great comfort from reading a book of *History of the Reformation*. [Author's name unclear – possibly John Knox, who wrote a book of this title.] The suffering which the Martyrs underwent shut my mouth from repining. I read also the *Life of Lady Colquhoun* by Hamilton of London, with profit.

Miss Hall, the Teacher, has been a nice companion for Margt. She appears a well-principled girl.

When all around appeared dark and frowning and when, but for the sure promises, my heart had sunk within me, I well remember that opposite the Bight of Biafra, tho many hundred mile distant, I went to that side of the ship and I cannot tell what an uncontrollable desire I had for one half hour of Mr Messick's company. I said Ah – he could, and would, sympathise with me.

Nov 2nd: Read over many of the kind letters I received before leaving home. Packed up in the Trunk, the cream jug I got from dear Aunt Margt. the last time I took Tea with her, lest it should be injured.

Saw whales yesterday, Cape pigeons and an Albatross. Some time before, we saw flying fish. Weather very pleasant – neither too cold or too hot.

I suppose we are parallel with the Cape just now, but far to the west. During the very hot days we had a large awning, and we were on the poop as much as possible. When so many died, many of the passengers from below slept on deck all night under tents. But now we have all resumed our warm clothing.

Our kind love to all our dear friends in Scotland.

Sabbath 4th November: Forenoon very heavy rain since last night. Vessel pitching and rolling very much. Jane and David asleep and I watching.

My dear husband in the Cuddy arranging some tracts for distribution, as there can be no public service today (he afterwards had service below). It was said of Jesus that the common people heard him gladly, so my dear William finds him self best received and has most freedom below. There, as far as we can judge, he gets a cordial reception. The good word of the Kingdom addressed to their individual attention, is, at all events, listened to with apparent interest.

There are one or two of the Cabin passengers with whom we can talk about these things. (I found, afterwards, a different opinion – that whilst they spoke fair to me – that they were behind back the most assiduous in speaking [against?] us. That, and other causes, made me doubt their Christianity).

The Capt shares a great respect for religion, but there are others who scoff and seem to think that those who make more than an ordinary profession of, are hypocrites.

All well today except Mr Gebbin Rose's kind Auntie. [Not clear what is meant here. Gebbin should be spelled Gebbie.]

Monday 5th November: Awoke between twelve and one this morning by noise on deck.

"Land close on the lee bow," was the cause.

The Dr., half dressed, had gone on deck, and this was the information with which he returned. We were within half a mile or ten minutes of being dashed on the rocky coast of Tristan d'Achuna, an island 1500 miles to the west of the Cape.

I hastily threw on my dressing gown, and during the Dr's absence, went into the Cuddy. All was quiet there. A light burned in Mt Oats' cabin, and the door was ajar. I found Mrs Oatts dressed. My first consideration was whether or not to awake and prepare the children. On ascertaining that the boats were lowered and that a heavy swell was causing the ship to drift ashore, we decided to get them ready. I first hastily dressed myself and then our little David and Jane. Poor little dears – I had no expectation of ever dressing them again – then Margt. and the rest were dressed.

Then again I went into the Cuddy – Mrs Todd and her sister Miss McAdam with some of the children had joined W.O. The gentlemen, with the exception of Mr. Oatts, who went backwards and forwards to bring information, and my husband, who was busy collecting some papers, were on deck.

We had knelt, at first in our own cabin and again we united in the Cuddy to cast ourselves on the Lord – we knew that if he did not interpose, vain would be the help of man. Mrs T [Todd], read a portion of Scripture and I was delighted to witness the composure of all. Even the children appeared to understand, and quietly seated themselves in a corner on the floor with their Bibles.

On the table lay my bonnet and green tartan plaid (Miss Campbell will know which) to be ready. How painful is the state of suspense – we saw the black mass from our stern window – it looked quite near and we saw the current drifting us toward it. First we were told that the two boats were trying to tow us off – then that there was a slight breeze favourable – next that the breeze had died away. This occurred two or three times. How we longed for daylight. At

last it came and we saw distinctly – the Bold – rocky – Surge [?] island. By this time we were two miles off.

By six the boats had returned and we were reported out of danger. It was then I first went on deck and I will not soon forget the Capt's. appearance. His first words to me were "Out of danger now, thank God." He, as well as the rest of the Ship's company, had been up all night and were drenched to the skin – it having rained heavily since yesterday.

Some of the emigrants were of great use in manning the boats and a hard work they had, for some hours.

This island Tristan d'Acuna is inhabited on the north side and we had been looking forward to seeing it on the Sabbath afternoon, for some time past. Then, however, we were told that we were too far west and would pass it so far to the South that there was no probability of getting a glimpse of it. And why we did, was owing to the foggy weather we had for two days – occasioning a wrong calculation. Why we escaped – the Capt. told us (and the gentlemen corroborated the statement), was, that when the danger was most imminent, two slight puffs of wind pushed the ship a little out to sea, at the very time she appeared on the eve of destruction. This happened when we were at prayer in the Cuddy.

We desire to put our souls in gratitude to Him who, 'tho his arm be strong to smite, 'tis also strong to same." And we pray that this [?] may lead many to repentance and be [?] to all. Truly we have had a great deliverance, for allowing that boats had outlived the heavy surge (of which, with so many souls there was little hope) and allowing that they had landed us all in safety – where would we have been for shelter, food and clothing, on a small island with few inhabitants and seldom visited by ships?

During the danger, very few of the people below were aware of the extent of it – it was well. However, they were told to get the children all dressed. I may mention, what I am sure our dear kind friend Miss C will wish to know – we did not forget the Orion belts. They were inflated and laid on the bed ready to buckle on, and when we waited in the Cuddy, we ate some of her Cayenne Lozenges – singular. I had just been reading an account of the loss of the Kent.

This is twelve noon – we are all very tired and sleepy. We are now about 20 miles from the island, wind contrary. The thoughts and doings crowded into the past night are like a dream.

I ought to have mentioned that when the breeze sprang up which saved us, we were in 7 fathoms of water – the anchor was ready as a last resort, but the breeze prevented the necessity of using it.

Tuesday 6th: Fine sunshine – 60 miles from the island – on our course again straight for New Zealand. Sea calm. All well. Jane was on the poop today and wishes Aunt Jane to know that she saw an Albatross, some Bishops and Cape Pigeons. And that she remembered Hugh and Charles Rose and all the rest in Amandale Street, and her hair being shaved. Mamma trimmed a cap for her out of the contents of the doll's bag she got from Mr Millar.

Wednesday 7th: Sea smooth as glass – a boat has been lowered. Will you have a sail, Mr Rose, on the South Atlantic? The Captain, Doctor, Margaret, Jessie – Mitchell and Henry and Miss Hall – all just returned from a nice trip round the vessel. This is the third party who have been out.

An Albatross was shot and brought on board in a wounded state. It is a large beautiful bird. Also we got two pretty specimens of seaweed. Some whales playing about.

Thursday 8th: Got a monthly box, it was like a visit from home.

Friday 9th: What crowd is that we see at the cuddy door. It is an Auction of the Bo'sun and Sailmaker's clothes (the two seamen who died). To me it was a very sad sight. Happens that on a long voyage, this is the usual practice. The proceeds are handed over to the Captain for the benefit of relations. I understand that the articles sold high.

Little motion today, beautiful sunshine – water quite smooth, sailing slow. I write this with an Albatross pen.

12th: Yesterday cold, had worship – a public thanksgiving for our great deliverance from shipwreck. It was rather tardy, you may think. My husband wished it earlier, but there was always some excuse for not assembling the passengers. On Monday the Officers and Crew were so drenched that it could not be, on Tuesday all were busy with the swinging stones drying wet clothes 'tween decks. Today is warm and as we are becalmed, the boat is lowered to get the sides of the vessel cleaned.

13th: Always something new – half the main deck covered with shavings like a carpenter's shop. Our main top gallant yard was broken and we are getting another made.

Scarce making any progress – bright sunshine with cold wind. Splendid view of the stars at night.

14th: More progress today – have time to talk more about home, and the great kindness shown to us before leaving.

19th: Rounding the Cape – squally weather since I last wrote -- most of the passengers seasick, children excepted. Yesterday was Sabbath. We met for worship, we thought and spoke much of you, dear brothers and sisters in Elder St, in connection with our once dead but now exalted kinsmen.

Grieved to behold so many instances of the natural enmity of the heart to divine things. At public worship, all is outward decorum – yet those who try to carve out the principles of the gospel must be content to be called hypocrites – but the disciple is not above his Lord.

Saw two ships yesterday in the distance – a very interesting sight. Fair sunny day – light wind. People at home will be glad of a bright fire.

I find that by the observations made today, we are in Latitude 37, Longitude 20, so we are a good way past the Cape.

Another squall coming on – it is on – all hands ripping the sails loose, articles flying in all directions.

9pm The children had their tea on the floor of the cuddy – at ours, the sugar basin and sugar were pitched into my lap. A severe gale – one of the chains belonging to the mast snapped and came down with a crash – no one hurt. The wind is in our favour, but it will stand hard with the homeward bound.

22nd: Called up at five this morning to see a ship we had signalled yesterday afternoon. A beautiful morning, smooth sea. The Captain using the speaking

trumpet. She is the Recorder from Liverpool for Calcutta, out 74 days and we 69. The Mooltan is a fast sailer. The Recorder is now far astern.

27th: Very squally weather since I last wrote. Again our new top gallant yard broken quite through. Amidst the ups and downs we are exposed to, we have the comfort to think we are making great progress – 450 miles during the last 48 hours.

Last Lord's day had worship in our cabin. Miss Hall joined us. Observed, for the first time, the Ordinance of the Supper – a precious season. In the afternoon, the Dr met with the emigrants below.

Captain Chivas told us at dinner today that while with us it was a few minutes past four, with you it would only be a few minutes past twelve noon.

1st December: Saturday – morning frosty with bright sunshine and at night most splendid moonshine. Still subject to sudden squalls – all well.

David walking again – he is getting quite ruddy. All the rest are getting plump. My own health is much improved and the Dr too is looking better.

Had beautiful clean water at dinner today – cleaner than we sometimes had at home. We have always had as much water as we wished for drinking and, excepting during the hot weather when we used as little as possible, it has been good. It improved again as we come into colder latitudes.

I now get a good deal of sewing done and there is a great tear and wear of clothes on board of ship.

Everyone is talking of landing now – the Dr has been examining his business papers, for, strange as it may be thought, he has had no leisure for this hitherto. In looking forward, we look upwards for direction and it is sweet to think that our Father careth for us.

6th: Squally – wet weather since I last wrote. Today cold but dry. Got a nice walk on the poop.

Sabbath Dec 9th 1849: Still squally, wet and dreary. Are you praying for us? You promised you would, and each time we bend the knee, we remember you. Often in our quiet affliction – especially when cholera was cutting down our numbers, when all faces gathered blackness, we said to each other: "I am sure they are praying for us at home."

My dear husband held worship below this forenoon – the subject was following Christ afar off – Mat 26-58. The sermons he reads are from the Free Church Pulpit and very good. Sometimes he adds a few words himself. Today he spoke a word of warning to the infidel and blasphemer – for I am sorry to say we have such characters on board – aye even at our table – one gentleman (the same who has caused us so much trouble) holds those sentiments. And the Mate scoffs at all that is good – of course not in our presence.

Wednesday 12th: Still the same unsteady weather since Sabbath. The vessel rolling very much, especially at night. Today it is clear and dry but very cold.

William commenced on Monday to hold worship below every evening to expound the parables. He uses Barnes' notes and adds a few words himself. The people listen with apparent attention. I don't know what those in the cabin think (none of them go down). Why should we care – time is short and souls precious?

The Cabin cook very ill – he is so delicate the Dr says he ought not to have come. He has been often very ill during the voyage, and his complaint is incurable. Harrison's orphans have hooping cough. The Baby appears dying – she has been pinning away for some time past. McNeil's baby (whose mother was the first cholera case) is quite well now and thriving.

I may whisper to our kind friends of Picardy Place, that we often talk of her and that the Dr has her last letter among his most treasured things. It made us both weep when we read it, and often we wonder how dear Mr Wemyss has stood the winter, but I must stop. Miss Hall and Margaret are paying you a visit today (i.e.) writing home.

Sabbath 16th Dec: A beautiful day- sea calm – slow progress. Partook of the ordinance of the supper in the evening along with Miss H desire to love Jesus more, we sang this hymn.

Morning service on deck as usual. Spent some time in self examination.

Monday 17th: Expected to have sighted Van Diemens land this morning but owing to the wind being ahead, have had to tack south and are not likely to see it – hitherto we have had a splendid straight run from the Cape, as our chart can testify.

19th: Most delightful summer's day. Going our course, but very slowly. The sea is smooth as a lake, The crew are very busy, cleaning and repainting different parts of the ship , so as to enter port in style. One of the small boats was lowered today to try a sail they have been making for it. Mr F [Ferguson]shot two large birds and the children have got some of the long feathers , so caps and feathers is the order of the day.

The baby Harrison died last night – Hooping Cough was too much for its wasted strength to bear.

23rd: Heavy seas – with rain – worship held below.

24th: Very cold. Got no solar observations at noon yesterday – which caused some regret as we knew we were approaching land. Great anxiety felt to get the sun today. We did get it, and, after dinner, land as the Captain expected was dimly seen. We soon neared it sufficiently so as to see first Long Island, then Stewart Island and now, past ten, we are rounding the Southern Capes of it.

Fine smooth sea and bright moonshine. We desire to feel thankful to our Heavenly Father that it is so, and not foggy as at Tristan d'Acunha. That affair has very seasonably tempered our joy at seeing land again. Yet it is a gladsome sight, and if all's well tomorrow morning, I have no doubt but there will be some stronger demonstrative of feeling.

Mitchell and David coughing very much – think they are taking Hooping Cough, as several children on board have it

In the prospect of landing in our new adopted country – with its new faces, new customs, new joys and sorrows, I feel myself as a little child in my Father's hand. His promises are all yea and amen in Christ – may he grant us more of that faith which overcomes the world.

25th Christmas Day: Beautiful sunny day, but bitter cold wind. Sailed along the coast of Middle Island – much pleased with the scenery. Before dark anchored at the Tairoa Heads – a St Andrews cross. The Pilot boarded us – told us the tide did not suit. He stayed all night, and early next morning we crossed

the bar without difficulty and anchored before Port Chalmers before breakfast. The scenery on going up was very fine –we passed several clearings and native pahs.

Captain Chivas, Mr Todd and Mr Oats and Dr Purdie took a boat and went up to Dunedin to wait on Capt Cargill. The accounts they brought regarding the prosperity of the Colony were discouraging and the rest of the gentlemen who went up next day confirmed them. Everyone spoke of the amount of Drunkenness that prevailed.

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