

hatchway and close to the hospital, whereby the surgeon can have immediate access to the medicine after he has seen his patient.

*Combinations of Hatchways flimsy, &c.*—These were of the same substance as customary, and of sufficient height; had they been higher, women and children would have difficulty in clambering over them. And with regard to the surgeon's remarks, "if the decks were swept the hatches would have floated away like match boxes, and it is doubtful whether any human being would have been left to tell the tale, as the ship must have filled her between decks," I can only state that the surgeon might have seen the upper deck hatches stowed conveniently on the between decks against the contingency of the upper deck being swept by heavy seas, ready for battening down the upper-deck hatches; and if the surgeon had attended, as he should have done daily, to the cleaning of the between decks, he could not have avoided seeing those hatches.

*Inadequacy of Galley.*—The galley was of the dimensions for 200 passengers; there were only 173½ on board.

*Condenser faulty.*—This was passed by Board of Trade Inspector, and reported efficient.

*Single Men's Hospital the only one on Deck.*—If I had been guided by the charter-party which was made in the colony, there would only have been two hospitals in any ship, but against all opposition I have insisted upon having three, one of which shall be on deck, to be used either as a male or infection hospital; and when it is possible to place them all on deck I do so.

*Coals brought through Single Men's Compartment.*—The surgeon should have seen that this was not done. There was a scuttle hatch before the single men's compartment through which they should have been taken on deck, but it was easier for the cooks, I suppose, to take off the fore hatch, and it was too much trouble, I presume, for the surgeon to see that they were not allowed to use the fore hatch for the purpose.

18th September, 1874.

EDWD. A. SMITH, R.N.,  
Despatching Officer.

—  
"SALISBURY."

*Letter No. 24, dated 6th February, 1874.*

*Store Room in Married People's Compartment.*—I cannot agree with the Commissioners that this should be on deck. I consider that the most fitting place is abreast the main hatchway, into which place the stores can be readily got up from the lower hold without exposure to wet. It is also most easy of access for the bulk of the passengers, who are generally the married people, and I am supported in my opinion (the result of more than twenty years' experience) not only by most of the emigration officers, but by the colonial authorities' own referees, Captains Edwin and Johnson (*vide* their memorandum dated 2nd February, 1874).

*Booby Hatches flimsy, and a large Beam across the Hatchway, which must have been very inconvenient.*—The booby hatches are of the same description as fitted ever since I have had the honor of acting as your Despatching Officer. They are very much more substantial than were ever before fitted in emigrant ships, and are stronger than those fitted generally in Her Majesty's troop ships. The beam (fore and after) was in this ship inconvenient owing to the narrowness of the hatchway, but it was necessary to have it fixed there for the security of the hatches, which might otherwise have been dashed in if any heavy seas had been shipped.

18th September, 1874.

EDWD. A. SMITH, R.N.,  
Despatching Officer.

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"WOODLARK."

*Letter No. 129, of 7th May, 1874.*

COMPLAINT that emigrants could not have been embarked on a worse day—London covered with a dense fog; yet so eager were the authorities to get the ship away, that the emigrants were hurried on board, bedding and baggage strewn on deck for hours. Surgeon's opinion that spread of scarlet fever was greatly accelerated by dampness of bedding and clothing, caused by exposure to the fog.

It is quite true that the emigrants were embarked in a dense fog, but how could this be avoided? There was no depôt for the reception of the people, and I presume no person would have advised their being sent into lodgings when the ship was ready to receive them; by such a step much greater risk of disease would have been run; besides, when on board the ship they were under the supervision of the surgeon-superintendent, and during the time that intervened between the embarkation and the ship getting to Gravesend (she could not get out of dock until Saturday, the 13th, owing to the dense fog prevailing), there was ample opportunity for the surgeon to examine every soul on board, which it was his duty to do; and it should not have been left to Dr. Humphries, in the hurried march past of inspection, as it is termed (a charge against that officer which is most unwarranted, as no person can be more particular than he in his examination), to discover the case of suspected scarlet fever in the family which was landed at Gravesend. While the people were on board I did all I could to insure their comfort by having dry sawdust thickly strewed over the between decks, to absorb the moisture necessarily carried below by a number of people living on board a ship during the prevalence of such a London fog as this was; and I had charcoal fires in the between decks, sanctioned by the dock authorities on my urgent request, such a thing being totally against the dock regulations.

Another source of inconvenience is stated to be the lavish expenditure of stores and medical comforts during the passage down Channel, and then it is added Patterson is the name of the person who expended these stores.

I never heard of such lavish expenditure, and had it been represented to me at Gravesend I should have caused any deficiency to be made good before the ship left. As to Patterson being the party to blame, he did not go down Channel in the ship, but only was on board to see to the people being properly supplied while the ship remained in port. The lavish expenditure is much more likely