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Departed Hamburg Germany 28 July 1872

Arrived Port Chalmers New Zealand 6 December 1872

Diary of Christen Christensen,

A passenger onboard The Palmerston

Written and translated from Danish

Arrived in Hamburg on the 21st July 1872.

Left there 29th July two children died in Hamburg.

August 1, entered into North Sea in heavy storm nearly everybody seasick. On the 4, one little child dead. Strong head wind, which drove the ship backwards for a good number of miles, which nearly brought the ship on the Cliffs of Heligoland. 6. Entered the English Channel.

7. Dropped anchor opposite Dover on the coast.

August 8. Left the Channel in fine weather and fair wind from the North.

9. A female child born by an unmarried woman from Jutland. 10. Bad behaviour of two German girls who went to bed in the evening with two of the ships sailormen, it came before the Captain who went to the sailors quarters with a whip in his hand and laid it on pretty heavy on the cohabiters in bed, and the unlucky poor girls had to leave the sailors sweet company, with the only garment of a nightdress and had to wait for their clothing till late next morning. Small quantities of black ryebread was supplied to each platoon or ward, and then dog biscuits. All our black bread we had from Hamburg is consumed by this time, only liquid now. Wind West.

14. We are now in Atlantic Ocean with good wind from the West.

15. One little child dead the parents belong to Sweden.

23. A female child dead belong to Sealands parents. South East wind. We can at this time see fishes double the size of horses.

24. One little child dead belonging to Polish parents.

25. Last night we come into trade wind and the passengers therefore had some enjoyment as a number of rockets and other fireworks were sent heavenward. We passed today the Island Maderia. Now we have sailed one month, and have now steady eastern wind.

One man dead today belonging to Norway. He was a widower and had 4 children. The three he left in Christiania and the fourth which was 10 years of age was on board. With him a rumour was circulated amongst the passengers that the man had been stealing a bottle of poison from some person on board so as to poison himself thereby. But that was not so, that was done so as to hide away the real fact, which was done by one of the stewards on board who had to attend to the fumigation of all the occupied quarters below the main deck. It was done once a week by ordering all the passengers below up on to the main deck for the time of fumigation, and the Stewards duty was to see everybody had left below before he started the steaming or rather smoking and to see all hatches and ventilators closed up as to keep all the fumes from escaping. Then the steward brought down two or three buckets of Stockholm tar and placed them on a creating and lighted a coal fire so as to bring the contents to boil for about an hour. But the steward had overlooked to see into the beds so as to make certain that all the people were out, and they were not because this Norwegian was still in his bed sleeping. Afterwards when the people went down again the man was discovered dead in his bed, of suffocation no doubt of the strong poisoned gases from the boiling tar.

Some ugly rumour soon passes amongst the passengers relating to the poor mans death, that gave the Captain some concern, as he did not like to have an investigation of the unlucky circumstances after the arrival in New Zealand because he would know it would likely be a serious matter for him and the steward, therefore he told the people on board that it was his intention to take the boy belonging to the dead man to bring him up himself as he had no children. That promise gave satisfaction to some of the passengers, not knowing the devious side of that promise by the Captain. The boy (later noted), was kept on board the ship until the last day before going away then the boy was told that he was to travel along with some person to serve in Oamaru district and to have a different name instead of his own. That was meant so he could not be traced by any of his ships companions, so ended that honourable promise of a German Ships Captain.

27th August died my lovely little daughter Annabel Christensen at 11.00 pm after 5 weeks illness. She was born on the 12 December 1870 and was 1 year 8 months and 15 days old.

Today Monday the 9 September died a four year old child born in Thyland north part of Jutland. These people had two children and both have died on the ship.

12. Dead a three year old child belonging to Polish parents.

16. A Norwegian girl gave birth to a stillborn child.

We are nearly over the strong hot climate which is just the middle center between the North and South Poles called the Sun Line, our passage across that Godforsaken part of our travel lasted almost for three weeks, and full of suffering for good many of the passengers. The first part of the three weeks was very still scarcely a breath of wind and in consequence thereof did the rigging of ropes and tackle stretch and constantly slack and therewith make an intolerable noise to such an extent that it seemed that the whole rigmarole would break down, and so did the topyard on the main mast. It was brought on deck in two pieces in the awful rolling of the ship on account of the heavy seas. But the worst of all was that our water tanks were almost empty at these times and the little which was left got rotten of the abominable heat and was churned backward and forward in the tanks. Then there was the rust from the old iron chains, so a good dose of vinegar was put down in the few buckets of water so as to take the bad taste of rust, for all that it was a horrible drink. It made even coffee or tea smell and tasted rotten. A lot of people could be seen after drinking to spit and cough for to cleanse their mouth. But the last half of their ungodly plimas time was a relief so far as water is concerned because it started with a down pour of rain like it came from a sluice gate. Men and boys undressed themselves and laid down on the deck for a warm bath and drank rain water till they were nearly bursting. Canvas was spread in the lower rigging so as to catch the rain water for the tanks.

On the 17 September we saw Cliffs of stone as big as an ordinary City that was what is called St Paul's Rock, Height 3042 Ft. A young single man dead.

Wednesday 18th September. My wife has born us a daughter at half past eleven last night.

29. Very calm.

October 2. Today's sailing has been very slow as the wind is coming from the West which is against our course. Just now it blows almost in full force and heavy waves dash against the ships and some of them come aboard. A person cannot stand or go without holding on to something. During the day heavy snow has been coming down. It is the first snow we have seen on this side of the Equator.

5. It is very cold. We must take to our woolen garments and underwear. We have still stormy weather in the passage at the southwest coast of Africa which is called the Cape of Good Hope, or in Danish the Gode Haabs Forgerg, but of course the ship was perhaps 400 or 500 miles out in the Pacific Ocean at the time.

6. There was some misunderstanding between Danish and Norwegian companions, against some Germans.

7. October last night at 2 O'clock died a boy of one and a half years belonging to a Shellan parent, Yensen by name, the little fellow had been ill for about three weeks.

11. A girl born by a Polish married woman.

29. Died a girl by name of Serinne belonging to some place in Jutland.

November 1st. A son is born of a Swedish mans wife. My son Christian has been laid up in the Hospital for 8 days suffering of scarlet fever, but will soon be well again.

November 3. My son Christian is out from Hospital today. A Polish married women has born a female child.

November 8. Died a boy seven and a half years old, his parents come from Jutland.

13. Died one and a half year old boy belonging to Polish parents. Until today's date are 17 children born and 15 dead in this ship all told, of less than 300 passengers and far from the end of the voyage.

It is today the Captains Birthday, consequently a great flare up in the evening and all the men got a big knobler of brandy and the women folk got wine. The children each a packet of currants and prunes. And afterwards dancing and also some sing song. For all that, the corpse of a boy was laying ready for to be sent to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. But he was put at the one end and the dancing was at the other end of the married passengers saloon.

I will give a little description of the interior of that Compartment which serves for bedrooms, dining room, sitting room, tea room, and I may mention dressing room also and in bad weather as laundry. Therefore it cannot be wondered at that so many unlucky children have to go overboard and the worst of all in extra bad weather the Gangway from below on to the deck is always blocked by fastening the hatches over the sternway to prevent the seawater and heavy rain to come down in the Saloon which contains first, second, and third class passengers, but no distinction in the crowd. We are all as one in our unhappiness and painful surrounds, Because here in this ship are happenings going on which can baffle and astonish the most astute person. Our Quarter (excuse me) Saloon is midship about 130 feet long and the full width of the ship, 40 ft.

The bunks or shall I call them beds are on the two and two principle, one above the other and 3 ft 6 in broad but how long I will not mention. In front of all the beds is nice seats made of nine inces boards, no doubt for comfort. The dinner tables are constructed so as to be hung up under the desk to allow more floor space when not needed to serve for our dainty menu or meals. The seats along the tables, for we have no chairs, are top heavy and cannot stand by themselves when they are not lashed by weight of occupation when heavy seas are running and that is almost every day and night. This is called the Pacific Ocean, but oh what a misnomer - truly. The single mens habitation is forward of ours and girls or unmarried women just behind, the reverse would not do as the crew occupy the forward part and the Captain and the Doctor and other officers also as well as the Hospital and Chemist Shop. November 17th. A girl is born of a Shetland parent.

27. A girl born of Polish parents.

29. We had a narrow escape as the ship in a dense dark spell was within a few feet of a towering cliff which the Captain stated in the morning was not marked on the sea chart. If the ship had got in touch with the rock there would likely not

have been anybody left to tell the horrible result of such a casualty because the ship at the time was running under full pressure with all sails set in a half storm on account of fair wind blowing right into every stick of canvas on the four masts. It was stated by the sailors that the ship for the last 36 hours had been running fully 19 Miles per hour in such a speed against the rock would result in the ship going to atoms.

December 4. A child dead belonging to a married parent from Thyland in North Jutland. Also a middle aged girl from Bavaria. She had been laid up in the Hospital nearly on the whole voyage. 5. Great joy on board as we can see New Zealand, but unfortunately no wind to bring the ship forward. 6. A Steamer is in sight which will take our ship into Port Chalmers Harbour. Here is beautiful forest on both sides of the Harbour where the birds are singing and cattle on grass amongst the trees. We have received provisions from Dunedin consisting of fresh white bread, milk, bacon, vegetables also liberality of freight and good fresh water. 16 December. Two families who had each a sick child were sent from the ship to Quarantine on a small island near Port Chalmers. 24. We left the ship for the Emigrants Barracks, Princes Street, Dunedin and had dancing and music there for Christmas Eve, after a fortnights spell on board with a liberal supply of victuals from Dunedin."

Polish Births (From information received from family & school records with dates supplied from the dairy of Christen Christensen). 1872, October 11th - Girl (Married women) - Mary Buchols 1872,

November 3rd - Girl (Married women) - Mary Kowalewska 1872, November 27th - Girl (Polish parents) - Martha Michalska_

Polish Deaths 1872, August 24th - little child 1872, September 12th - 3yr old 1872, November 13th - 1yr old boy

"The Christian McAusland from London, and the Palmerston from Hamburg, both with a large number of immigrants arrived at Otago Heads, the former on the 5th inst., and the latter on the 6th. On enquiry, the Health Officer learned that there was a case of scarlatina on board the Christian McAusland, and she was at once placed in quarantine. On the arrival of the Palmerston, it was found that a number of deaths from typhoid fever and scarlatina had occurred during the voyage, and that there was one patient still ill, supposed to be suffering from scarlatina. (This, however was found a few days later to be a mistake). The vessel was therefore towed to an anchorage off the Heads Spit till admitted to pratique. As there is no housing accommodation on the small island, bunks for the single men have been fitted up in several lighters, which are moored off the island. Another case of scarlatina having been reported on Monday, the Health Board resolved to have lighters fitted up with sleeping apartments, and to take the whole of the Palmerston's passengers to the spit, the lighters to be grounded at high water, and the people to have easy access to the shore, so that they could ramble about. Tents have also been provided for any ailing ones, so as to keep them apart from the healthy passengers. Everything is being done to check the disease, and make all our quarantine prisoners as comfortable as possible under the circumstances."

"We are informed that the Dunedin German Society, the Deutscher Verein, sent, through Mr. Colin Allan a quantity of fruit, &c., to the children on board of the Palmerston. Mr. Marsh, of the Harbour Office, also kindly sent them a box of balls."**OTAGO WITNESS", 14TH DECEMBER 1872**

...As regards the Palmerston, some of the passengers were removed to the quarantine hospital, and the remainder of the immigrants to lighters prepared for them off the small island vacated by the single men per Christian McAusland. But the doctor of the ship, after inspecting the accommodation provided in the lighters, disapproved of it, and the passengers becoming aware of the fact, and having every confidence in him, declined to take advantage of the hulk accommodation. The authorities then decided to allow the passengers to remain on board the ship till the end of the term of their imprisonment, with the exception of the family to which the person suffering from sickness belongs, and which has been removed to the best of the lighters. The Palmerston is well fitted up, clean, and comfortable, and all on board enjoy good health. The passengers get an unlimited supply of the best provisions, including bread, fresh meat, tea, sugar, butter, milk, vegetables, potatoes, barley and rice. The liberal dietary scale makes them somewhat reconciled to their lot.

"OTAGO WITNESS", 21ST DECEMBER 1872.

The German and Scandinavian passengers per Palmerston were admitted to pratique on Monday, and brought to town by the first trip of the P.S. Golden Age. They look a fine, tall, and healthy lot. The families from this ship who have been infected with scarlatina are located at the small island, the two cases affected being looked after in isolated tents on the island, while the others are located in lighters in attendance.

"OTAGO WITNESS", 28TH DECEMBER 1872.

I have a few more remarks to make about the "little people", and I am glad that this time they are of a pleasant character. In common with many more, I was not a little interested and amused the other evening by seeing a number of the German women who lately arrived in Dunedin standing with their children outside a toy-shop, and eagerly gazing at its contents. The children were in ecstasies, clapping their hands with pleasure at the sight of the toys, while the mothers, well they seemed, if that were possible, to be even more happy than their children, at seeing them so delighted. I wish a Dickens or a Hans Christian Andersen had passed by at that moment. He would had done the scene justice. I can't.

"OTAGO WITNESS", 11TH JANUARY 1873

East Taieri (From our own Correspondent) The German immigrants, especially the feminine sex, are not being very well

taken care of by our Government, if the following is a sample. On Thursday last, a young woman who could not speak a word of English, a Dane, I think, was sent out to the Taieri with a couple of slips of paper about 1 inch wide, bearing the names of two farmers, one in the East and the other in the West Taieri, to seek for a situation from either, but not being able speak English no one could direct her, and so she wandered up and down the road until mid-day when some persons saw her who managed to make out what was wanted, and put her into the cart of one of the parties whose name was on one of the slips. The slips did not bear any signature, so that no one is to blame in particular, but there is reason to believe she came from the depot. Surely if they are worth bringing out here they deserve better treatment than that according to this one, and this not, I believe, a solitary instance of the paternal care shown to the new importation the Germans.

"BRUCE HERALD", 21ST JANUARY 1873.

Posted 5th December 2009 by [Ronald Andreassend](#)

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