



The Argus, Melbourne, Friday December 31, 1852

Original Correspondence Section

To the Editor of the Argus - "The Ticonderago" (sic)

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Sir - On Friday last I had occasion to visit the Bay on business, and while going round the shipping in the *Maitland*, we called alongside of the *Ticonderago* (sic), for the purpose of bringing the passengers up to town. Being a sea-faring man and curious to know the state of the vessel which had been the scene of such unparalleled disease I went on board, and very soon ceased to be surprised at anything which had taken place on board this ill-fated vessel. The miserable squalid appearance of the passengers at once attracted my attention, and on looking down the hatchway, the smell and appearance of the between decks was so disgusting, that though accustomed to see and be on board of slave vessels, I instinctively shrank from it. I have no hesitation in expressing it as my decided opinion that the disease in this ship was mainly caused by the carelessness and inattention to cleanliness on the part of the master and his officers, and the want of ventilation. Several people were lying about the decks, apparently in the last stage of disease, and the passengers were bundled over the side without any accommodation ladder or the least regard to decency and decorum. In fact, the captain and crew seemed to look upon them as perfect nuisances, to be got rid of on any terms. The invalid women were carried over the side on men's backs, and one poor creature was separated from her child of seven weeks old, another child of 5 years of age died on board the steamer before we reached the wharf, no arrangements were made at the wharf for the reception of the sick, and two women in a dying state, were taken away in common wharf drays. Bad as this is, I am sorry to say it is but an every day occurrence at our wharfs, and while our government, on the principle of straining at gnats and swallowing camels, is every ready to insist on ventilation of berths and limitations of passengers in Colonial crafts on short voyages, it never scruples to tolerate Yankees, and others, and proffer facilities, when they are smart enough to secure the presence of our illustrious Governor and his sapient suite to Sunday dinners in their well provided cuddies, when of course it would display great want of taste to talk about, much

less to examine, between deck berths or the miserable creatures who occupy them. What is the use of having Quarantine laws if they are not enforced and upon what principle do we for our own real or imaginary safety stop a vessel at the Heads for disease, without at the same time providing an hospital there for their cure as is done in every other civilized country - and why is this ship allowed to come and vomit her diseased and dying freight in the midst of an over-crowded city?

Men despair of the Government ever doing anything effective in these matters, unless it is forced upon them by the voice of the people through our independent press.

I remain Sir,

Your obedient servant,

OBSERVER