

LETTERS WRITTEN BY LUCY LLOYD ABOARD THE ROMAN MARY, 1874
ADDRESSED TO JEMIMA BLEEK.

May 1st 1874

As some of dear "Brothers" at Mowbray expressed a wish for a chronicle of our ship-life, I am trying to write one; - 1st explaining that my head is very weak still, although it is a great interest and amusement to me to write things down for them. But I cannot hope to do it well; at all events yet a while.

To begin from the beginning: April 25 you know we came on board the Roman. In the eveng I wrote a long letter to you all (directed to dear Wilhelm), telling things so far. The next mornng, the 26th, I was adding a trifle to it; having heard that we were not likely to start until 12, noon; - but in the midst of my writing, and certainly before 12 (between 10 & 1/2 past Miss Schunke says) the Stewardess advised us to make haste, if we had anything to go on shore as we were just going to start (the bell for [1.2] the departure of non-passengers was then ringing); so I went quickly on to the quarterdeck, taking my letter to you, and Miss Schunke's to Wellington, in my hand (upon each of which we had put a Cape 1 [currency?] stamp), and, looking about for any one at all reliable, to whose care I could entrust the letters, I saw, near me, Col. Pitt (who had come on board, I believe, with a young officer from Natal who goes home on sick leave) & asked him to be so kind as to take charge of them. I hope you got mine safely. I thot, as one was addressed to Wilhelm, he would not like to be careless abt them. We went out of dock, giving either ourselves or the edge of the dock some little injury, notwithstanding the aid of a little hard swearing on board. The vessel became at once upon going out so unsteady that I could not even wait for her to round the breakwater, & had to go down to settle a few last things [1.3] and get undressed. However, the rolling was such, that I became very giddy and ill, & with gt difficulty could even finish undressing & get into bed; & to add to our delight, the soapy water, wh Mrs Stewardess had omitted to empty, began to come out and run across the cabin (luckily, not at all where the box of pictures was), & Steward & Stewardess appeared (neither of them well-pleased with each other, or somebody) in the midst of my undressing; & the damage was arrested before any real harm but soaking part of the carpet & wetting my boots & slippers was done (I view the washing-stand arrangements with much distrust since.) That afternoon I was even more faint, & ill, than I ever remember to have felt the 1st day on board a steamer; wretched ly so. And poor Shushu [?] was I believe a little ill, & of course very uncomfortable and, I am sure, [1.4] feeling very lonely & out of her element too. This was my only very bad day; tho of course it was succeeded by other wh were uncomfortable enough. But I may be very thankful to have escaped, this time, so comparatively lightly.

(continued Saturday, May 2nd)

April 27th

I was in bed; & Miss Schunke, I believe, on deck part of the day. She used to come down (very kindly) often, to see if she could get me anything. On this day Shushu [?] pronounced the days on board to be "Fearful" in point of length, "and so horribly dull". She had her Kôlnische Zeitungen on deck, wh was the only place where she could keep tolerably well. This day, she came down & made some Liebig's beef tea for us abt 11 a.m.; wh made me comparatively comfortable for some hours, and able [2] to get some sleep (dreaming in it very often of dear ones at Mowbray);

April 28th

I was able to get up and go on deck before luncheon, & stayed there until just before dinner, to wh I tried to go, on Miss Schunke's account, chiefly, as she had not been well-used about our places at table. But again, this night, we had more annoyance, & as I could obtain no redress from the steward (who had probably been [illegible] by the one person too many who had forced himself into our bench; wh Miss Schunke had been told would only contain 3 men besides ourselves). I left the table & spoke to the Captain, telling him that I must ask him to do something, as 4 men were put into one seat with us, & we had no room to sit (This doing was quite needless, as there were several spare places at table, where the boy in question could have [2.2] been placed. Miss Schunke (who had been previously much annoyed, by rude remarks from the people in the bench on some of the times when I was absent) left the table with me but against my wish. We also spoke to the stewardess, who said that she thot, when her 7 or 8 (still) sick ladies all came out, that we should be obliged to have two sets of meals; eventually, she meant. I managed, also, to speak to Major Erskine that night on deck, (he had not known that I was on board, & I had not seen him at all to speak to before.) He introduced me, at once, most kindly to his wife, who is a lady, and seems a very nice little woman indeed. Later in the evening, I had an opportunity of telling him a little of how uncomfortably we were situated with regard to our places at meals, (without of course entering into any particulars; or blaming the [2.3] Captain, whose fault it really was that we were so, and asked him kindly to see if he could do anything in the matter for us. He said that he wd speak to the Capt. in the morning, & see what cd be done, & that anything that he could do for us on board I must tell him at once (words to this effect); so we went rather consoled to bed. And the next mornng we were back in our proper places at bkfast; & double meals were announced for that day, and for the future. Major Erskine told me after bkfast (at least some time that mornng, I believe) that there were now to be double meals, an earlier, and a later set; and that we could chose whichever we liked, only that the set (of meals) that we chose, we must keep to. I most gladly chose the early set; for both Miss Schunke & I had found the later breakfast [2.4] and dinner, very trying. What helps to make the new arrangement very much more agreeable for us, is this, - that, instead of, as at 1st, sitting quite among strangers, & 2ndly (when we had been put out of the 1st places assigned, wh were good, & among decent people) with very rough men (some of them from

the Fields), - Mr Hunt & his daughters, & a gentlemanly young officer from Natal (who goes home on sick leave) sit opposite to us, & our other companions in the bench, on our side of it, are a Mrs Green (the wife of a District Surgeon at Estcourt Natal, with whom Mrs Erskine appears on good terms, & who seems respectable, altho' somewhat common looking) and Mr & Mrs Woodroffe, also from Natal (Edmund Byron's friend, & his young wife, who appears delicate [3], just now, poor little thing). And the chief officer, who usually presides instead of the Capt at the earlier repasts, seems a courteously inclined good-natured fellow, a very great improvement upon his superior boor [?]. So you see that we might be very much worse off.

April 29th

Began to read a little Bushman again, but found my head rather too weak to profit much by it. I think I tried Buckle's [?] Hist. of Civilization too, this day; but found it too difficult, in the state my head was. But, from what I see of the book, I don't think it is one wh I shall care much about, even when well. Regretted rather the not having brt one new story-book with me, as, as yet, I did not like to ask any one to lend me a book. Miss Schunke gave me some German dictation.

April 30th

Found a little damp on one end [3.2] of Edmund's box of pictures (wh had leaked in from the Steward's pantry); wiped it carefully off, & propped up the box on a many-folded thick box cover, until I cd get some blocks from the carpenter to put under it. I said nothing more to the Capt, after at 1st asking him kindly to take charge of the case for me, because one of the stewards had spoken about this request to me, to the effect that it cd be put down in a certain hold, where it wd not be "very damp", or something to this effect. So I thot it better to ask the Capt no more, & keep a look out for it myself. This eveng I asked Major Erskine to introduce me to Mr Woodroffe, and spoke to him abt the matter, asking him kindly to get me the necessary blocks from the carpenter. But he said that what he thot better still, wd be to put them into one of the six berths [3.3] in the cabin he occupies somewhere forward on midships (having given up, to Mrs Green, his berth in the cabin wh his wife has, round the saloon where we are). I thankfully accepted this offer. He has been in the Navy, & therefore wd be more blaganipili [?] abt ship matters. (So the box went down to him today, Mat 2nd in good order. And my mind is much relieved abt it.) This day (April 30) I began Miss Schunke's English; wh she is very glad to be able to do.

May 1st

All these late days we have been going along very nicely in the Trades; generally, I think abt 11 knots an hr. But the cloudiness of the days & nights is so curious. The temperature has, for the last 3 days been very pleasant, & people are beginning to put on cooler clothes. But it is so strange [3.4] to see no sun by day, & no moon by night; altho' it must be really bright moonlight, were it not for the clouds where we are. I do not feel well, tho' I am most thankful to have so far, & so well got over sea-sickness. But the nights are very disturbed, with all the

bells, & the noises, for a light sleeper like I am now, & the food, tho' not bad, is very trying and unsatisfactory for people like Miss Schunke & me. I find so little that I can eat; & poor Shushu [?] now & then eats things (being hungry) that she had much better not. We have drunk claret, as I found the beer very bad. Miss Schunke is very glad of a glass of Pontac [?] at night. I have been most glad of the very nice raspberry vinegar I got from Mr Mally. Having it, when I cd take nothing at all else, has very much helped me to get [4] over the sea-sickness. I may remark, en passant, that the tea is really pretty good here, & the coffee drinkable, when one is well. Our hours are breakfast at 1/2 past 8; luncheon at 12; dinner at 5; & tea (for both early & late diners) at 8. The other set breakfast at 1/2 past nine, have luncheon after us, & dine at 7, I believe, or 1/2 past six.

One of the late evengs, Mr Woodroffe had up his banjo & sung some comic songs, not at all badly; & an officer who is not now in the army, but is, Mrs Erskine tells me collecting (natural specimens I believe), also sang for us. He is evidently a gentleman, & seems a very goodnatured fellow. Whether he has been always steady, I sometimes doubt. Mrs Erskine believes that he was in the Guards.) He also sits nearly opposite to me, at table. I wished that Edith cd have [4.2] seen him dance & sing "Sally, come up" when called upon by the Woodroffes, I believe. He dances it so capitally, that one thinks that one of the thin, lanky negroes off the cover of a song has suddenly appeared on the deck. But, setting all this nonsense aside, - it is a great comfort to have some gentlemen at our table; for at my left, we have, outside our bench, a most objectionable young man, or rather boy; & beyond him some rough fellows, Stonier [?] being by far the quietest of the party in that bench. And when this boy talks of things that he ought not, the two officers opposite to him (& me) are a great help. This night there was a short amateur entertainment on deck (on to wh the pianoforte had been moved the previous eveng, & an attempt to [4.3] dance had been made). The entertainment was, naturally, very bad indeed, excepting a song or two by Mr Woodroffe, & one by this officer, & one by a lady-passenger (whose name I cannot yet learn) who has a really sweet nice voice. A Miss Sabatta also sung twice, greatly to the delight of many of her audience. And the Hunt girls played a duet very badly. You wd laugh to hear Miss Schunke's very severe remarks upon the music; & also, almost daily, upon some of our fellow-passengers. She comes to me & says with intensity "I hate him" (or her, as the case may be); I only laugh - For, really some of the poor r's [?] are not at all bad in their ways; & as for hating, besides the mistake of it, it really wd not be worth the trouble. I had not an idea that she had so much [4.4] bitterness, or something of the kind, to spare. Among the treats, yesterday eveng we had to listen to a recitation so stupid, & so ill-done, that I was on the point of saying that we mt borrow the man to give us a sermon on Sunday. (He almost sent me to sleep as I sat.) But the presence of Papa's [?] ci-devant [?] Churchwarden is rather restraining, & properly so - for I do not want to say anything that will shock him, for Papa's sake. And he is a very respectable kindly nice old fellow, too.

May 2nd

At length, I have written up almost even with today, excepting that I have not yet told you the ins & outs of the trouble [5] that we had abt our places; partly, because the thot of the cheating of the steward makes me still angry, & partly because Miss Schunke is not on deck to give me dates, etc. I am so longing to know how you all are, & how dear Wilhelm has gone thro' the last two or three days, especially yesterday (wh was full moon again altho' the clouds wd have prevented our knowing it, as far as light went). Today, we see several pieces of blue sky, & the sun was out for a few minutes after 12. I go on reading Bushman (in the privacy of my cabin) but my organs seem stiff & not strong. I hope, as I regain strength, to find it all easier, & more natural again. I get up abt (or before) 1/2 past six, so as to dress out of Miss Schunke's way, & at 8, I escape from our warm cabin to the nice deck, & [5.2] get abt 1/2 an hour there before the breakfast bell rings. I dress 1st, for both our sakes, as I can bear the window open almost the whole time of my toilette, & Shushu cannot often risk this; & in bed, out of the way, she enjoys it. It is very trying thse warm mornings not to be able to go on deck before 8; but I shall consult some one who knows, and see if it may not be feasible to go a little earlier, at least during the hot weather, while there is such a necessity for it. Major Erskine told me today that we were in 12° at noon; & 12°45° at the time he spoke this afternoon. He says we are making 3 degrees a day, & shall be at the Line in 4 days if all goes on well. The Chief Officer today, at dinner, said that he thought between the 19th & 22nd (if nothing happened to hinder us) we shd get home. You would be sorry for poor Mrs Erskine (excepting that she seems thoroughly happy in [5.3] her marriage, wh is so very nice to see); for, here she is on board with one child of abt 2 years & 8 months old, and another, a baby of between 3 & 4 months, which she nurses entirely herself; and she has no servant. She is looking thin, & delicate, & suffers much from headaches, wh seem to come from weakness. Mrs Green & Mrs Woodroffe seem kind in lending her an occasional hand with her baby; and I try to help her with him when I can. She seems very grateful for any little thing that one can do with her. And the baby is a good, quiet, dear little fellow. Of course, he is not equal to dear little Doris; particularly being so much younger; - but still he is a pleasure to have, dear little fellow, & begins to be very comfortable with me; I suppose it is, that from watching him rather closely, I begin to understand something of his little ways. The elder child is a fine little fellow; [5.4] whom one can see at a glance to be a gentleman's child. He has been delicate all along, his mother tells me, & has had whooping cough for some months, from wh he has not yet quite recovered. Her baby was only born about a month after poor young Erskine was killed, & is named Robert, after him. It seemed to me to have rather a scared look, poor little man; & the shock & distress to his mother mt acct for that. She seems to have been much attached to poor Chinny [?]; & her great love for his father would have made her suffer, without that, in what must have been

a very heavy trial for them. She seems not to find the food quite sufficient on board, & no wonder, not that it is bad; for it is much better than I expected; but it is not of a satisfactory kind, nor just what one needs. I thought of the nice fresh eggs wh dear Jama [?] gave me, & wh, chiefly owing to my being [6] so very much better than usual this time, & partly also to little difficulties on board, I have not yet used. And I gave her 7; - keeping still 4 for ourselves, she was very glad to have them; & meant also to have one boiled for her elder boy's breakfast, who does not seem able to eat much. I hope to do the same, with one or two, for my own. But the poor Stewards seem to be in one incessant race from morn'g to night. There are many of them; but some are anything but good waiters. They seem to have, generally-speaking, the art of tumbling over one another in bunches, in doorways, & so on, - if you can understand what I mean. They are still up & about after 1.2 past ten at night; - at wh hour our candle is usually put out; & in the morn'g, I hear them about before five sometimes. Theirs is indeed a hard life. There are a few other children on board, but only, as [6.2] far as I at present see, five, besides the 2 little Erskines in this part of the ship. The farce of the firebell business was gone thro' today; after our luncheon, I think. But it seemed such a farce. The bell did not ring as if anything were really the matter. I can realize more & more, how very unfit a crowded vessel, like this, is, for any one who is really delicate, excepting for the nice mild climate, into wh it carries one so quickly. It is pleasant to hear how very much less bad coughing one hears than when one came 1st on board; & even the very bad coughs that are by no means over yet, are so much less frequent. I don't know how we are going to get thro' tomorrow; for, I shall have not to shock some of the Natal R's [?] and yet one must do something. The days here wd be indeed utterly dreary without that [6.3] enormous assistance.

Sunday, May 3rd

This a very nice day, still cloudy, - fortunately for us; as, otherwise, I am sure it wd be very warm. Last night was very close; & for Miss Schunke's sake, I did not like to propose having the port open; but she felt it very close, as well as I & perhaps, tonight, we may venture to try to have it open. It is after bkfast, & we are on deck, most of us, waiting for service, to wh I think I have persuaded Miss Schunke to come. She has never seen a deck service, I find, & I tell her that it is a pretty sight, wh it is a pity to miss seeing, if only for once. And to sit below, is so warm and unhealthy. The poor girl has been suffering from another gathering on her leg; - if it does not shew signs of dispersing, I tell [6.4] her that I think we must speak to the Dr abt it, & see what he can give her. Of course, she does not like the idea; but as she thinks that there is an elderly very respectable-looking Dr on board it will not be so bad. I can see more & more how innately unhealthy the poor girl must be. I find, with some relief, on inquiring from her, that the London so-called friends, are 3 cousins of her Swiss friend; viz 2 men, & a girl of abt 19, their sister. The men are, she says, in business with their uncle (one of them partners); in what business, she does not know; & the sister also lives with the

Uncle, & them. She (the niece) is not in business. Shushu says that she knows that the business is not a shop, & thinks that it is a bank; this latter seems to me unlikely. But, any [7] how, I am very glad to hear that there is a woman in the family. Miss Schunke thinks that the Uncle is married (as she says the girl wd be rather young, otherwise, to live there); but does not know this. She herself, five yrs ago, when the girl was 14, saw & liked her very much, in Switzerland. She says that these young people are all members of one large family; & that the fathers being dead, these two sons support the mother. She heard of their goodness from their cousin, her friend; when in Switzerland. I believe that the mother & the other children live in the same place that her friend does. She (the mother) is the widow of the brother of the father of the family where Miss Schunke goes. Just before service, we had the pleasant intelligence that there is a poor child (really an adult) ill with measles, in one of the maindeck cabins, this side of the funnel. [7.2] Poor Mrs Erskine is frightened on acct of her little ones; & tho' I don't say so, they are fair complexioned enough to catch anything. The awkward thing is that there are 3 [?] children still more forward in the vessel, who belong to some 1st class passengers; & who naturally run about from their end of the vessel to this. I think that this ought to be stopped; by getting some men to change forward; and letting this family, with the children, come at once aft. But it is not likely to be done. And, so, I fear, we may get the disease aft. We have only 4 children (little ones) sleeping round the saloon; but 2 young girls also. Passengers are growling, lest we shd not be allowed to land at Madeira (Shushu among the number), wh seems rather likey to be the case. I find that Mrs Green knows the Macfarlanes, & Banastre's [?] family [7.3]; her husband (succeeded Dr Purcell) and went to Estcourt abt a year ago. She has had fever & is going home for a year, for her health. She seems to like Banastre very much, & speaks as if he were a great favourite, generally. She says that he & her husband saw them over the bar when they left, & went back together. The latter seems to be B's family doctor. Mrs Green has no children, so can leave home the more easily. She has been 5 years in Natal, & does not like it at all. Our service this mornng was rather long, & the sermon of wh I only caught a few words, about Balaam or Balak, did not seem over-appropriate. But the minister has a kindly face. On inquiry from Mr Hunt, I find that he is a Missionary from Zululand; under Bp. Wilkinson; so I have asked Mr Hunt to introduce him to me, on [7.4] acct of the former circumstance; of course. I hope he may be able to tell me something, and also abt the Robertsons; and also, I want to see if I can interest him at all about the Native traditions. He, Mr Hunt tells me, belongs to the other church, yet, he adds, that he cannot be bitter, as he mentions Papa & the Bishop of Natal by their titles.

May 4th Monday

To our relief, the Stewardess says that we may come earlier than 8 upon the poop here. And as it was tryingly close & warm last nt, & this mornng, in our cabin, I came on deck at 1/2 past 7, & found it very nice, sitting down quietly to

Bushman in a shady corner. Poor Shushu is not very well, & does not eat well; I tell her that if she is not better very soon, I shall speak to the Dr about her. He is only a [8] young man, unfortunately; but quiet-looking. The elderly man is a Capt. Koopman, a Dutch captain (of the Dutch navy, I believe) going home. (The stern-looking quiet man whom Miss Schunke mistook for the ship's doctor; & whom I think I have already mentioned.) Now, I must tell dear Wilhelm that Mr Jackson (the missionary) was presented to me yesterday by old Mr Hunt; & seemed much pleased. He told me some Zululand news; - among other things that poor Mrs Robertson is very ill; & quite confined to her room. Happily she does not seem to suffer much; & does not wish to be removed to D'Urban. It seems uncertain yet, whether her illness will end in her death, or her recovery, poor thing. Mr J. told me that he had hoped to have seen Dr Bleek, while at [8.2] the Cape; Mr Lightfoot was going to have taken him; but going out to Rondebosch to stay & not returning until the last night, I understood, prevented it. He seemed quite sorry to have missed seeing you, because he thinks that you could have told him many things that he does not know. He has just lately met with your paper on the B. language, in "The Cape & its People"; & seemed much interested by what you there said as to the two families of language in S. Africa. He had previously himself thot that there were two or three, even among the Kafir languages. He, however, hopes to see you on his way out again. He has been nine years among the Zulus. I told him that I [8.3] had with me one or two papers of yours, that mt interest him, and I have just fetched up the little vol wh contains your paper "On the Concord". He was asking me today abt your Comp. Grammar wh he says he has not seen, & must get. I slightly regret now that I left mine at Mowbray, as a more useful working copy for you; as, in this instance, you would be more glad for it to be here, so that it could have been looked at. I lent him your notice of poor Mr Appleyard, wh seemed to interest him. He is a kindly honest-looking man; I must find out, tho', whether he is related to the poor Jackson, just dead, who used to annoy us so much in the old days in Natal, by preaching to the kafirs when they went to fetch water. I saw the death of the latter in the Natal Colonist wh dear Wilhelm gave me to bring with me on board, [8.4] wh contained a great deal of various kinds that was of interest to me. I have not told you that (to our grt surprise) they actually gave us another service yesterday eveng, after 8 o'clock tea. I think that in many ways, it was an unsuitable & thoughtless proceeding. Miss Schunke wd not remain, & rather foolishly retired to her very warm cabin, instead of sitting quietly a little in the shade on deck, as some others did, & as I did. Mrs Woodroffe is rather a pretty little thing. I must go down, some time today; to put a few things right, in the cabin, I mean. But one dreads even going down for a few minutes. I put on my holland polonaise [?] yesterday, & find it a comfort. The boxes come up tomorrow, & then we must find something still cooler. Miss Schunke has [9] much enjoyed & laughed over the 1st vol. Of "Hard cash", & is looking forward to tomorrow to get the other vols. out of her hold pt. manteau. We have lent the 1st vol. now to a funny-looking elderly woman (very

common-looking) who generally seems very dull, & who asked Miss Schunke for our "Argus" this morn'g. Little Herman Erskine (the elder child) hardly speaks anything but Kafir; & gets quite impatient, poor child, they say, when not understood. At first, he would not play with the other children (Major Erskine told me Herman "hated" children, & had never been used to them); but now, luckily, he begins to play a little with them. It relieves his mother, & will, of course, teach him English, too. He is named Herman after a German brother-in-law of Major Erskine's. I did not know that the latter could [9.2] speak German. He says that he can, having been five years (first & last) in the country. He has been glad to borrow a vol. of Buckle from me (as it is a very favorite book of his), finding the yellow novels here on board unreadable; & he also wishes to have some of the late Kölnische. Shushu gets on comfortably with him, & is not as stiff as she is with many of the others whom we know. And she is kind and helping in little things to Mrs Erskine, where she can. The girl is to me a very odd mixture. Of course, there is the inevitable flirtation of the ship officers, & some of the girls. I only hope, that one of the poor Hunts who is very young & simple, will not lose her heart on board to a huge chief officer. I do not, at [9.3] all, think that the other person means any thing but amusing himself. Now, I have told dear Brotheis [?] the chief of our ship nonsense; saving one thing wh amused S. & me rather yesterday; - but wh I don't write here at the moment; not being sure that a Cape woman may not be near enough to peer over my shoulder - & not wanting to turn round to look.

5th May

Today after all was not box day, so we have to wait for tomorrow; & I have had courage to put on my quite old blk & white cotton (wh was rather stared at on deck), in the absence of another cool dress.

6th May (Wed)

I could not get time to write more yesterday. I had to fold up & put away most of my warm things, ready to get them into my [9.4] hold box today, so as to leave our little cabin cooler & freer. And, being busy downstairs, was very warm work. I was much interested to hear from Major Erskine that the Dutch naval Capt. on board is the man who was in command of the 1st Atchin [?] expedition. I wish I knew him. I think he cd tell me a good deal that wd be interesting. I forgot also to mention that the poor R. who is said to have measles is not a child; but an adult, who shipped at Port Elizth. I cannot easily learn how he is getting on. There seems to be an endeavor to keep the matter as quiet as possible; but the general impression seems to be that we shall not be allowed to land at Madeira. I wonder how we shall get our letters safely posted. [10] Today, we have a good breeze again, wh is a gt relief, after the 2 days of gt heat we have had. But the sea seems a little inclined to be rough & the vessel moves a good deal. Finding that Mrs Erskine had been in the habit of getting a cup of tea at the children's tea, at 4 o'clock, & hearing her complain that it was now so bad that she cd not drink it, I instituted our teapot yesterday afternoon at that hour, & gave her a cup from it.

The man who sold it to dear fan was quite right; it does hold two of our large ship breakfast cups full – Of course the Miss Hunts defend Natal and Natal things; & on one of the earlier days of our voyage, I am sure Wilhelm wd have had a hearty laugh to have heard the discussion abt it. The Chief Officer was abusing it, but it came out that he had only seen it from the [9.2] vessel, never having landed there. This wd rather have turned the laugh against him; but he proceeded to say very quietly, “No; I have never been ashore there, but still I have my own opinion abt it.” And proceeded drily to relate that one person after another came on board their ship from Natal with “Well. I am thankful that I have got out of that hole of a place!” To this, the young ladies could not find much to say.

The Zulu missionary told me the 1st day that we spoke together, that he is going home to try to get money to continue his work, and I found, on further conversation, when he returned the book, that he wants to establish a mission also among the Bushmen [9.3] in the Transvaal; he said that when you published on that subject, he shd be very glad to see it; at that moment, I was nursing Mrs Erskine’s baby, who wanted to cry; & I cd not manage to talk further; but yesterday, I explained to him that as yet, there was only last year’s printed Report wh I cd shew him, & therewith lent him my copy of it (with the letter); and added that there wd be another, longer one, published this year. He said of course you were going to publish the results of your inquiry. I said yes; but time and money wd both be required for that. I told him that you had had Bushmen for the last 4 years; & had collected books full of their stories. He seemed to think that must be a very interesting collection; and asked [9.4] if I took any interest in the language (!). I said yes; that you had thot it wd be of use for me to learn it too; as also I had more leisure to give to it. I must tell you that he told me yesterday, that he had been told on board that I was “writing a book”, & wished to know on what subject. I said I was not sufficiently industrious and when we came to talk later abt Bushman, said that that was one of the things that I was reading; so as to endeavor not to lose it. (It is probably some one who has seen me sitting with the M.S. book before me, who imagined me to be writing one.)

May 7th

We were thinking on the 5th that a few lines wd be [11] starting from you to us. And, also, all these days, we are thinking that dear fellows are probably (especially Jannies [?]) hard at work at the Report. And also, we are thinking, with gladness, how very near the Lib [?] Meeting, & dear Wilhelm’s holidays have drawn. Yesterday, we were abt a degree N. of the Line. The day, thanks to a good breeze, was wonderfully bearable, on deck. But I am getting weak, I dislike almost all the food; & my ankles [?] are weak now to get about; - tho’ a few days ago, I was (for me on bd ship) wonderfully well. If this weakness continues, I shall probably try to get a tonic. Yesterday was luggage day. We had to open our boxes just outside the smoking room, in rather an awkward place. [11.2] However, that is over for a week. They certainly abuse the poor boxes; my nice

new one was forced some two inches or more open (by ill treatment, I think) at one end, so that any water cd have poured in, from the strain, it wd neither lock nor unlock. I had to send our steward for the carpenter to rectify matters. Mr Woodroffe told me yesterday that he thought another fortnight wd take us home. Having seen the measles patient up & on the bridge, he concluded him to be better – yesterday, Major Erskine came, announcing a forthcoming newspaper, & asked if I wd write for it. I, of course, said no. (I don't expect that it will be well-conducted here – that it will be vulgar, I mean – so I did not even like to promise to try to contribute towards it.) Yesterday morn'g the missionary brt us some maps to look at, one shewing where his station is in the Transvaal, & he shewed us where the Bushmen are, in the mountains near him (wh seem to be a continuation of the Drachensbergen.) Derby is the name of his station; it is near Wakkerstrom. He says that he is going home to tell the people that he cannot carry on the station without more money. He says that protection is wanted for the Bushman, & that, he seems to think a Mission Station wd give. He says, when he was just now on his way down, he saw a whole line of Bushman women & children, going out with their digging-sticks, to dig roots. He says that they (the B's) are wild, & that some man (who he knows), as the only way of getting hold of them, used to ride them down, & catch them, by throwing a riem over their [10.4] heads; he then took them home & fed them well for two or three days; & let them go back home with a blanket. They then saw that he treated them well, & said that he was their “father”, & afterwards wd return to him of their own accord. I want to hear more, - but it is rather difficult on bd ship, what with one interruption & another. He says that some of the B's speak Kafir, & that so they cd hope to reach them, tho', he thinks it wd be better, & wd lead to a better understanding of the people, to learn their own language. And he seems to hope that this may be done. Just about where these Bushmen are, there are no, or hardly any Dutch, I forget wh he said. But I understand that the [12] Bushmen go to the uninhabited parts of the country by preference. Some of them, Mr Jackson tells me, have begun to cultivate gardens.

May 8th, Friday

Today has been very wet since bkfst time; but I managed to sit on deck some hours this morn'g, in a dry place; to get out of the very close cabin, wh still makes me feel ill, very often. It is now afternoon. Shushu, fearing the damp, has not ventured up at all, & is amusing herself with “Hard Cash” downstairs. I have had, for the last 2 or 3 days, face ache, - wh has come on badly today. I believe only from the very gt want of nourishing food. Yesterday I cd not go down to dinner, or luncheon, feeling the motion so very much. And the day before I cd eat very little either. Indeed, for some days, I have been able to get hardly any thing fit to eat. The food is very bad now; [12.2] puddings with apparently little but water & grain in them, hard pastry, hardly any vegetables excepting cabbage, & badly cooked potatoes, & worst of all, very hard meat now, for some time. The soup at dinner is the only thing worth eating; & that not always. We have I believe five poor

consumptive men on board, & of course, this is worse for them than for any one. The cheese is not bad, but one can't live upon that; & the beer is so bad, I don't care to drink it. Shushu complains that she is becoming very thin. And so, I think, will all who are not ostriches, before we leave. Yesterday, in a heavy shower on deck, old Mrs Myburg happened to be sitting by me, & she began to talk. She said something abt my being married as I was away from Natal. I said no, that I was living with a married sister (at the Cape) she asked married to whom and hearing [12.3] it was Wilhelm, said at once that she knew you, & proceeded to explain that she had often met you at Dr Fleck's [?]. She made herself rather pleasant, poor old lady. She seems very anxious abt her son-in-law; whom she does not think as well, & says how he misses the nourishing food he had on shore here. The Doctor appears to have said, that if he can only keep up his strength, he may recover. He is suffering, not from the lungs they say; but from a third attack of abscess on the liver. He coughs sadly, at times, poor fellow.

What I said had amused me the other day, was this. One eveng Major Erskine sat chatting rather confidentially in the saloon with me, Shushu was with me. Some of the Captain's party of passengers were sitting there too. I said to Shushu afterwards that it was not a bad thing for us; - wh made her rather indignant. However, the next day, the Capt., who had never taken the least notice of me, or said any thing further [12.4] abt my request regarding the pictures, appeared suddenly before us on deck, & asked if I had not come down with him abt 7 years ago, from Natal. I said that I had come down in /67 with Capt. Oxwell but that I did not remember him. He alluded to my having come on board to them in the outer anchorage, & to other incidents of the voyage & then said, with regard to the pictures that I had asked him abt, he could put them into the mail room for me. This, he had never offered before. I said that I was much obliged, & shd have been very glad to have had them put into the mail room but that Mr Woodroffe had now kindly taken charge of them for me, in his cabin, as I found the water from the pantry leaking into mine. I said did he think that one of the berths in Mr W's cabin was a good place? he said yes. Today a large brown [13] butterfly was nearly caught, Mr Hunt told me. I did not see it, being below at the moment. Yesterday, we were, they said 150 miles from land. Swallows were flying very near the ship. One even over the poop; it was very pretty to see them. I find the stewardess very kind & obliging to me; about my having meals on deck, & everything; but some of the ladies complain of her being very disobliging. The fact is, she is elderly; & I think likes to be properly spoken to. And I like her - wh perhaps makes also a little difference. Any how, it is a comfort to feel that when one has to stay on deck, things are willingly brot. I can't afford now, to do without anything that I can take. We hear from the Ship Officer that we are likely to pass the "Anglian" on Sunday - & that Capt. Ladd [?] may perhaps take letters for us. I hope he may; [13.2] for then, dear brothers wd hear quickly of us. The last two days have been long, as I have been too weak & poorly to do much. We have only had two very hot days; but today the warmth is of a trying steaming kind. I

had a long chat with Mr Jackson this morn'g (who gave me his place on a dry bench where Mrs (Dr) Green etc were sitting); & learnt that poor John Forbes went quite out of his mind, while travelling in the Zulu Country, & was brt back by his Kafirs to Mr Robertson's station; from whence Mr R. sent down for Robert Forbes, who came up, & took his poor brother away home. He was violent at times, & one day suddenly felled Mr Jackson by a blow, but Mr Robertson being close by came out & got hold of him, before he cd do further mischief. It is very sad for the poor fellow, & his family.

9th May, Sat.

Today we [13.3] are near land. We do not see it yet; but we can smell it, & the sea is pale green. We did not know where we were, having for two days been unable to take the sun, but luckily this seems to have been satisfactorily accomplished this morn'g. There was some large reef (supposed to be somewhere ahead of us) last night, Major Erskine told me; & we certainly were going at slow speed part of the night. I cd hear the slow revolution of the engine. I was in very great pain for some hours yesterday eveng & night, in my ear & face & one shoulder; a regular sharp attack of neuralgia. But thanks to two doses of quinine, the last of wh made me deaf, I became easy at last. Altho' today, I feel as if I had been beaten; & of course weak & tired after the severe pain. Poor Shushu got it abt 4 this morn'g; she is otherwise not quite well; and [13.4] I have persuaded her to stay in bed, for breakfast; and have asked our Steward to make us each a cup of cocoa for bkfast this morn'g. Mrs Woodroffe was so kind to me yesterday eveng when she saw me suffering, & offered me some of her quinine & gave me some cloves. She seems a kind little creature.

10 May, Sunday

We have got thro' another Sunday; - this morn'g we saw a good piece of African coast near & at Cape Verd [?], wh was very interesting. Had it not been rather hazy, we cd have seen better still; as it was, we cd see the forms of some trees, & a lighthouse or two; & some pretty broken-looking rocks, as well. Today at noon we were Long. 18° and a half, & lat. 15°. I think we have got on well. We had service again on deck this morn'g; and a more practical sermon; wh I think owes [14] at least a trifle to a last week's argument with me. I don't know, though. I occasionally say a trifle of what I think to the r. I did not mention how the day before yesterday (a very damp, close, & oppressive day), a poor invalid; whom we have seen but seldom, but whom I had noticed that morn'g as looking particularly weak & ill; - was taken out of the saloon at our tea, looking very faint. The next day he did not appear at all, & on inquiry from different people, I learned that he had broken a blood vessel the night he was taken out of the saloon; & that they had sat up with him all night, fearing that he would not last thro' it. Yesterday the poor fellow felt easier, & today they brought [14.2] him up on deck for a good many hours, looking better than I had expected to see him. He is very thin, but does not look nearly as ill as poor Sevan [?] did the last time he came to see us at Mowbray. He seems very very anxious (from what I hear) to get back to

his friends; & I trust that he may, poor fellow. I have not spoken to him, but hope to do so the 1st day that he looks fit. I find that one day since we have been on board before this attack, he had been left from 12 noon to 8 p.m., with no one going near him, the steward being very busy. Is it not sad? I am sure that there are kind men on board, who wd have seen after him had they only known his need. He says that he was much better; - but travelling down from [14.3] Grahams Town to Pt Elizth in some conveyance made him very ill, & he lay 3 weeks at the latter place very ill, before he cd continue his journey. I am now so sorry that I did not speak to him the 1st day that he came up on deck, one mt have foind out something of his extreme delicacy, & have been of some use in getting him better looked after. Today, if I see a little thing that is wanted, I go & tell the stewardess, who is an elderly woman, & goes, since his attack, now & then to look after him. I got her to take up pillows this mornng & make him very much more comfortable on deck, & to put him into a more resting chair, than whatever stupid man had done, who brought him up. He looked so much more comfortable afterwards, that I was well-rewarded for [14.4] the little trouble & difficulty I had had in getting him better seen after.

11th Monday

Head wind, & rough sea. I was ill again, & unable to do anything. Poor Mrs Erskine's baby has got a bad cold (from the cold wind on deck on Sunday). I got a chill on deck from the cold wind today.

12th Tuesday

Head wind still, but sea better. I very porly [sic] most of day; with severe neuralgia; so stayed chiefly in our cabin. I was afraid of the cold wind outside; & when I did sit out a little after dinner, remained on the quarter deck, where the other ladies chiefly were. Mrs Erskine's baby much worse last nt, this mornng; but the Dr had a mustard plais tea [?] put on, wh much relieved it; & it was able to drink [15] again, poor little thing. When I saw it today, it was asleep; but not breathing at all nicely. But it was much better than it had been. The Dr appeared to have told Mrs Erskine that it was suffering from a slight attack of inflammation of the throat & chest. I have not liked to go in again this eveng but I hear from its father & Mrs Green a much improved acct.

13 May, Wed

Baby still better; tho' by no means right yet. But its parents look happier abt it. Today was, happily not so cold. We still had head wind, but not so strong. The motion has been far from comfortable; & I have been weak & good for little all day. It has been box day again, & we have been able to get out our warmest things [15.2] whi is a comfort. We are to see the Peak of Teneriffe [?] tomorrow mornng. They say that we cd see it tonight, were it daylight instead of night. I wanted to have written to you today, but have not been fit to do so; & now tonight I am stupid with headache & must wait to see if I am better tomorrow.

14th May

Not well. Passed Teneriffe [?] abt 4 in the mornng, & Palmer later.

15th May

Madeira in sight when I went on deck (before bkfast). Anchored somewhere abt on after 12 noon – Went on shore with the Erskines. Drove up in an ox sledge to Reid's Hotel. A quaint house outside; but in a most beautiful garden, full of bright flowers. Major Erskine ordered luncheon for us there; to wh we were to return at 2 o'clock. We were to be back on board between 3 & 1/2 past. The Erskines went for a drive, but we preferred walking about [15.3] a little, & making our purchases; as we knew that there wd not be time for both. We walked about, posted my letter to you, wh after all, I fear, will not reach you any sooner than this; as I understood afterwards at the Post Office that the letters now had to go via England to the Cape. The 1st person to whom I spoke I understood otherwise from – probably from not understanding his talk. But I hear from others that the steamers outward do not now call at Madeira, & have not done so since Septber last. Whether this be true, I cannot say. We very much enjoyed our little time on shore - & got back on board a little late, - owing, I believe, to Mrs Erskine's being detained with baby after luncheon. We were off again before 4.p.m. I never cd have imagined so quaint a place as Madeira. I shd dearly like to be able to spend a few days there & see a little more of it. [15.4] We there learnt that [nothing recorded here]...

London 25 May

I must see put as a p.s. that the poor invalid landed safely, & I saw him starting [?] with a rather stronger invalid by the London tarin from Sth Hampton the day we did. He looked a trifle better, I thot, latterly [?]. The Erskine's baby also got well; but little Hermann landed with a bad cold & cough at Plymouth. [Ends here].