Diary 1850
Kept by Richard Hayter
on Board the Ship Isabella
Hercus bound to New Zealand
chartered by the Canterbury
Association
Commander Mr Houston
Sail’d from Gravesend on
Thursday the 24 Oct at 12 o’clock

Thursday 24th
Felt rather giddy went to Bed at 9 o’clock could not Sleep on account of the seamen making such a
noise & the Cock Roach’s crawling about in the Cabin. Anchor’d at the Nab about 11 o’clock P.M.

Friday 25th
Spent the greatest part of the day arranging our cabin. Saw a porpoise & a great many Sea Gulls.
Hannah & William rather squarmish [sic] did not get up till the afternoon. The sea rough &
unfavourable wind until 1 o’clock when it changed for the better but very cold. Did not feel the
least ill myself, on Deck till ½ past 11 o’clock P.M. Pilot left us some time in the night.

Saturday 26th
Slept well all night, got up about 8 o’clock no appetite for Breakfast, went on deck saw them kill a
sheep, Land not to be seen in any direction. William & Hannah very sick & the greatest part of the
passengers, several degrees warmer on Deck, a splendid wind 10 knots an hour, had our provisions
served to us in the Afternoon viz Preserved Boiled Beef, Suit [sic], Flour, raisins, Mustard, Tea &
Coffee, all of an inferior quality, saw two Vessels from Deck about 10 P.M. a beautiful night
Moon & Stars shining, went to bed about 11 P.M.

Sunday 27th
Got up about ½ past 8 o’clock nothing to eat but Biscuit & Butter & the remains of some
dreadfully salt beef, Church Service read on Board, Psalms sung & a Sermon in the morning,
Prayers in the Afternoon. Preserved Meat for Dinner, a cold wind, went to bed about 9 o’clock the
Sea rough.

Monday 28th
Did not get up till 12 o’clock felt very squarmish but not sick, could not sleep, had not a wink from
about 11 o’clock it was so tremendous [sic] rough a great many Cups Saucers etc broke during the
night, our Boxes Books etc. were not properly fixed for such rolling & pitching about therefore
every single thing was laying on the Floor of the Cabin such holloring [sic] & screaming in the
Steerage with the children expecting every time they heard the Sea washing over their heads the
Vessel would sink, Cabins near the hatch very wet, Pumps continually at work, not a Soul in the
Fore Cabin could eat nearly all ill, almost blew the Cooks Box to pieces, the Sea was very much
calmer towards the Evening. Bill was very ill did not get up all the day said he would if he could
give everything he had on Board to be put on shore very sick indeed, I felt to [sic] indolent to
put our Cabin in order all day went to bed about 7 o’clock.

Tuesday 29th
Still remaining ill felt very uncomfortable the Deck being in such great confusion & very dirty, in
bed the chief part of the day, no appetite, could not fancy anything.
Wednesday 30th
Up to breakfast, William & Hannah better, Henrietta, John & self able to get about. Pea Soup for Dinner which I realished [sic] very much, the Child continually crying & sick Hannah very miserable said she would rather stop in England & starve, put the Cabin tidy preventing their falling down for the future, managed to smoke a cigar which was the first since Sunday, had a word or two with the Commander about the place being so dirty he felt rather vexed but soon sent two men to scrape it.

Thursday 31st
Felt quite myself again & all of us were able to pick at one of the Bear Hams viz rasher for Breakfast & ½ of it boiled for Dinner which was a great treat after so much Salt beef & Pork & nothing to eat with it but beastly preserved Potatoes & some Biscuits which are good to those that like them but a very poor substitute for Bread especially when sick. Two or three small showers of Rain during the day, lost a knife Spoon & some of our Food in the night which I suppose the Seamen or some of the Steerage Passengers handed off when we were asleep, Latitude 45-40, very close between Decks, Steerage smelling rather unpleasant.

Friday Nov 1st
Up ½ past 7 o’clock A.M. went to work cleaning our Deck & making the place comfortable, Bill squarmish the rest of us able to get about in fact there has been scarsely [sic] anything the matter with Henrietta not sick once she says all the time, passed two Vessels homeward bound the nearest I believe was two miles from us Latitude 44-50 at 4 o’clock P.M. a very unfavourable wind. Bill got up to Tea no appetite thought he was getting very thin bought a Bottle of Port Wine to gain strength. I find from the Second mate we are still in the Bay of Biskey [sic] very cloudy all day, passed two or three hours at cards & heard two or three Songs for the first time.

Saturday 2nd
Between Decks Holy stoned* Provisions for the week served out, Bill managed to smoke a Cigar for the first time since 26th, wind still unfavourable, Cards in the evening Latitude 45-28. Pigs teeth taken out to prevent gnawing through wood, very pleasant on Deck.

Sunday 3rd
Got up a little squarmish a very nice Sun shining day quite without a breeze. Prayers & Sermon as before. Text taken from Luke 7 & 47 Verse, Two or three in the steerage were found to be very dirty & I understand a little livestock crawling about them latitude 43-52 only sailing 2 knots an hour.

Monday 4th
Prayers on Deck in the morning, a very little wind, every person appearing almost recovered from sickness, Bill managing a Pipe on Deck before breakfast, Hannah beginning to feel comfortable. Prayers in the afternoon, a fair wind at 6 o’clock going 9 knots Latitude 43-53, a Vessel seen in the afternoon but a long way from us, the Vessel rolling & pitching very much not able to walk in the least without catching hold of some support, Prayers to be held every morning & afternoon throughout the voyage also schooling in the Steerage Twice a day for those that like to go. Thermometer 65.

Tuesday 5th
A dull morning, two vessels in sight homeward bound one passed within ½ a mile, the Doctor examining the Childrens heads one by one on Deck found possessed of live stock the greater of them, ordered to be washed with Soap & Water & combed with a small tooth comb, a very disagreeable smell between Decks, Clarified Lime thrown about, beginning to get tired of being on
board of ship, very much in want of some Ale or Porter as none can be obtained but some beastly bottled rubbish that I would not troubled [sic] to stupe [sic] to pick up on English shore, the wind still favourable all sails hoisted going 10 knots, Thermometer at 12 o’clock between Decks 66. Commenced taking in turns to look after our mess viz to wash dirty Plates etc, take the provisions when served out, a Porker killed, raining at 10 o’clock P.M. wind lower reduced to 7 knots.

Wednesday 6th
Each Mess presented with a Pail, Baking Tin, Panakin & a Tin Salt Pot, nearly a calm, going about 5 knots.

Thursday 7th
Hannah poorly, wind the same as yesterday, Steward opened a fresh Basket of Bottle Porter which was very good but the Captain has given orders not to sell any more to us, so I expect it is kept for the Cuddy** & we are to put up with the rubbish Ale, a man in the Steerage fell down the fore Hatch & is laying in a very dangerous state quite insensible.

Friday 8th
The man in the Steerage a little better, stormy throughout the day.

Saturday 9th
Wet & a very heavy Sea, got up very squarmish sick directly after breakfast for the first time, Bill & John in bed the greatest part of the day, nearly all on board sick, one of the Seamen met with an accident while in a state of intoxication fell on one of the Anchors, the Captain was very much vexed & declared if any of us gave the seamen anything to drink again that we should have to put up with water.

Sunday 10th
A high wind & unfavourable, everything uncomfortable not able to walk without catching hold, people that have been to Sea before say they never had been on board such a vessel to roll & pitch, some of the passengers tossed out of their bunks the cause of it is supposed to be from her being so very short & lightly burdened, no Church service in the morning or the afternoon.

Monday 11th
Sea getting quiet again but I was obliged to keep my bed the chief part of the day, the man in the Steerage & the Sailor are both recovering, Deck very wet & greasy there having been so much sea water shiped [sic], I went on the Poop at 11 o’clock P.M. smoked a cigar but could not manage to smoke it out, a beautiful Star light night.

Tuesday 12th
All of us able to get out on deck again but looking very pale. Rules & regulations which was made between is are to be put in force today & those that do not act up to them to be fined as stated in them, when the fines amount to 10/- to be spent in something between us, I suppose a drop of Brandy each. A French East India Vessel outward bound seen very distinctly with a telescope I should say it could not have been more than a mile from us, several Fowls keep dwindling off, I understand that the man that feeds the Stock that 2 Pigs & 1 of the Sheep were found dead this morning, scarcely [sic] any wind, day very dull & a very heavy storm about 4 o’clock P.M.

Wednesday 13th
Bill & self beginning to look dirty & wild on account of our not having shaved since we were on board neither do we intend to shave during the voyage, a beautiful day almost dead calm, all boxes marked wanted on the voyage were pulled out of the hold on to the Deck so that each person might
take out what they wanted, a splendid moonlight night, two Violins & a Flute playing on Deck, it was quite amusing to see the Steerage passengers dancing, the Baby very ill making Hannah very low in spirits.

Thursday 14th
Dull morning, sea same as yesterday but very close between Decks, a whale in sight which in the course of the afternoon came within a yard of the vessel. I find from the first mate we are near St Mary’s in the Atlantic Ocean, a vessel in sight, the Captain gave all the Passengers & hands on board a glass of punch or grog to drink being his birthday & several Bottles were given by some of the Cuddy passengers to the Steerage & Seamen, a vessel seen in the afternoon appearing to be homeward bound at a distance of six or seven miles from us, Child much better.

Friday 15th
Wind better, about 7 knots but not going our right course, Thermometer between decks 72. The Cow going dry, the voyage taking that effect which will not make the slightest difference to us as it is only used for the Cuddy passengers, I find the cow belongs to Mr Wilson the Clergyman, one of the Western Islands seen about 7 miles from us seen distinctly with a glass, Child very sick.

Saturday 16th
Sea a little rough going 7 knots & nearly our right course

Sunday 17th
The ship rolled very much in the night but ceased during the day a little, it was found out that the Cow was not going dry but some person made a regular practice of milking her in the night when we were in bed. I should say some of the Seamen, Latitude 29-17.

Monday 18th
Sea nearly calm going 7 knots, had some preserved Salmon for Supper which was a great treat, Thermometer 74, Between 9 & 10 o’clock P.M. got into the trade winds set our sternsails & going at a clipping pace, An Awning was spread over the Poop Deck & a wind sail down our Hatchway which blows very refreshing.

Tuesday 19th
Felt squarmish nearly all the day, not going so fast as yesterday but still in the trade wind, Latitude 28-16 Thermometer 74½ between decks. A very heavy shower at 7 o’clock P.M., a splendid moonlight night at 12 o’clock, wind blowing fresh & favourable.

Wednesday 20th
Very much tormented with Cockroach’s obliged to burn the lamp to keep them away, Captain and several passengers beginning to wear light clothes, a great many Flying Fish seen this morning, Thermometer 75 between Decks, Wind still blowing fresh & favourable latitude 23-7.

Thursday 21st
Wind same as yesterday, A small Spanish Vessel seen about 2 miles from us going the same course Latitude 19-42 about 7 knots Thermometer between Decks 76, warm but very little sun.

Friday 22nd
I was woke this morning at break of day by the Seamen we are close upon land, they kept exclaiming, being a great treat to see land again I was very soon on Deck in fact the first, it was a splendid sight being a very large mountain & the sun rising behind it, of which I give the outline of the Rock, it appeared to be uninhabited & by what I can learn it is supposed to be the Island of St
Antonio. Before the Island was out of sight we came almost close to a French Vessel, there being a person on board of her who spoke the English language, he asked us at a distance of about a hundred yards where we came from, the name of the ship, where bound for & if we had any news, which we answered & found there vessel was named Mouisé & bound to Brazil, they gave us two or three cheers & waved Handkerchiefs to which we returned the same. The Seamen were dressed in Red jackets, at the same time a small brig was steering in the same direction at a distance of five or six miles a great many people on her Deck. Thermometer 76 Latitude 16-3 going 9½ knots at 8 P.M.

Saturday 23rd
Warm but very little sun Thermometer between Decks 78. Two Flying Fish found in the chains which were cooked by some of the Steerage, Two or three Dolphins & several Porpoises seen, Latitude 14-23 about 8 knots an hour.

Sunday 24th
Slept quite naked on the top of the bed it being so very close when we were all in bed & the Cabins shut. A Vessel seen homeward bound from Calcutta one of Green’s which the Captain made signals too [sic] & asked him to report us, did not come within a mile of us. Another one seen homeward bound but a long distance from us. Thermometer at 12 midday 82, a beautiful breeze which makes it very pleasant on deck, going at 12.8 knots. This last three or four nights & mornings there has been a Bath provided which was very requisite for a great many in the Steerage, the awning was drawn round a large Tub standing in the corner against the Cuddy then a large leather pipe put to the Pump & the water poured out of it all over them with great force, Child much better but almost reduced to a skeleton, the Doctor gives but little hopes of his recovery saying he will not live if he gets over this. Our water beginning to smell very nasty & if any left in the washstand for an hour will turn putrid. Several flashes of Lightning but not very strong, in the evening a little rain, wind going down.

Monday 25th
Almost a calmn [sic] having lost the trade wind, Thermometer between decks 82. A Shark seen several times, a line with a piece of salt Pork was put out but it was not hungary [sic] enough to take it, A small quantity of Lime Juice was served out to us this morning which makes a very nice cooling drink, I saw four birds about the size of a Swallow called tropic birds as they are never seen outside the Tropics. A very dull but close day. A very dark night the Lightning very grand the wind blowing a gale with a little rain.

Tuesday 26th
Weather more settled nearly calm again going 5 knots. Saw one of the Blyth’s Vessels homeward bound which the Captain expected would come near enough to us to be able to lower a boat to send our letters, but she did not come within a mile therefore it was a complete sell as all had sealed their letters being told to do so by the Captain & seeing the sailors preparing to go on board her. Another Vessel outward bound about 5 miles from us had one of her sails split by the late gale could only be seen by a telescope. Thermometer between Decks 82½ A Star light night Latitude 5-

Wednesday 27th
Fine & making moderate sail Latitude 5-25 Thermometer 83. The Vessel that was seen outward bound still in sight.

Thursday 28th
Fine, going about 6 knots, Sun very powerfull at 12 o’clock midday. Vessel still continuing in sight latitude 3-30 Thermometer between Decks 81.
Friday 29th
This morning at ½ past 7 a young woman of the name of Franklinham was found dead in her Bunk in the Steerage, at 9 o’clock she was carried on deck when the Doctor has scarcely commenced examining the Body before it was found death was caused by tying a piece of string three times round her neck and then drawing it tight which caused strangulation, A Sail being drawn over her on the Poop, a consultation was held by the Captain & three or four of the Cuddy passengers when it was found she had committed self destruction being in a state of Temporary Insanity, her boxes etc. where hauled over and an Inventory taken of them & given to the Captain to deliver up to her relations who are living in the City of London, at 11 o’clock A.M. the body having been sewn into a hammock was launched overboard being kept very private by order of the Clergyman and Captain, it was astonishing how the body smelt & had only been dead 7 hours. I should say it was owing to the intense heat, a person that knew her who had been living fellow Servants together in England says she had the palpitations of the heart & had been disappointed in love which caused her to do the rash act. I had frequently heard her say she should never reach New Zealand. It was noticed by a great many persons ever since she had been on board, her being so quiet & low spirited & never to speak unless spoken too, it is the opinion of a great many persons it was her intention to throw herself overboard but never could get a favourable opportunity there being persons always on deck, two sovereigns were found sewn up in her stays & six or seven shillings in her pocket, it was very strange the persons in the same berth did not hear her struggling in the agonies of death, according to the evidence given by one of the women she heard her making a noise as if she was dreaming she accordingly asked her if she had got the Nightmare to which the reply was no, very shortly afterwards she got out of her Bunk being disturbed in her intentions & was going on deck in her night clothes had not two men been sitting on the Steps she asked them if the intended to stop there all night to which they answered yes as they were appointed to act as Constables she then went back & carried out her wishes no Letters or writing of any descriptions were found, that would relate her intentions in committing suicide, her bedding clothes she died in etc. were thrown overboard. We were at the time she was buried about 200 miles from the Line. This is the second case of the kind as a Sailor, it was supposed jumped overboard rather than go the voyage when the vessel was at Gravesend, he was on board the morning we sailed and his clothes, Knife, money etc were found in his Bunk. The day warm but little wind & the late occurrence causing a gloom all over the Ship, Latitude 2-10 Thermometer 83½

Saturday 30th
Got up very queer first thing I heard it was the Goast had been seen & the persons who had been sleeping in the same berth did not go to bed being afraid they would see the deceased. At 12 o’clock today just 7 miles from the Line, a little breeze, sun very warm. A vessel seen outward bound Latitude 18. Did not feel the heat so much today as on former occasions. Crossed the Line this evening but no shaving allowed to be done to the passengers, some of the Sailors came round to collect money which the greater part gave to buy them some grog Thermometer 83

Sunday Dec 1st
Up at 6 o’clock, sun very hot at 12 o’clock, Clergyman preached a Sermon touching the death of the poor young woman. A very good breeze latitude 2-15 South The Magellan clouds seen Thermometer 84

Monday 2nd
Saw vessel about a 1000 tons Burden & hoisted signal’s which she did not answer. Captain said it was a Yankee. A good breeze a little rain & warm going about 7 knots. Fell down the Steps leading to the intermediate & very much bruised my ankle. Latitude 4 -- Thermometer [no figure]
Tuesday 3rd
Felt very ill all day did not go on deck all day my leg being so much painful & not able to eat a single bit of anything, splendid wind being the South East Trade, Latitude 8-10 South Some beautiful water was served out of the tanks to the Cuddy as clear as spring water, I am sorry to say there was no chance to get a drop. Thermometer 82

Wednesday 4th
Very warm with a good breeze, a vessel in sight but a very long way from us Latitude 9-20 Thermometer 83

Thursday 5th
Felt poorly & my leg very much swollen, warm but cloudy, An American Vessel in sight & hoisted ensigns we cannot signalize them as they do not know our signals Latitude 12-12 Thermometer 83¼

Friday 6th
Up at ½ pat 8 could not eat any breakfast went on deck & it was quite amusing to see all the Steerage passengers washing being the only day it is allowed to be done. A very good wind, Sun very powerful, Leg much better being able to walk quite brave again. A Vessel outward bound which came within 30 yds of us crossed our head part of the Vessel, the Captain spoke to her when we found she was a Frenchman named Henri & Louise & bound for Buonos Ayres [sic] a very few on board and rather small, Latitude 14-33 Thermometer 80

Saturday 7th
Had a beautiful sleep got up as well as if I was on shore, pleasant on Deck & a slight breeze. I have seen during this last three or four days some curious games so called Cock Fiting [sic], The Priest of the Village and some other curious games latitude 16-36 Thermometer 79½

Sunday 8th
A beautiful Sun shining day very warm at 12 o’clock being exactly over our heads. Sea calm but a refreshing breeze. Had some preserved Salmon served out to us which was very nice I think better than our own. Water quite dirty, smelling dreadfully, as bad as a dead Dog or any other animals after being left exposed to the air for a month to decay, it is only real thirst that compels any of us to drink it Thermometer between decks 80 Latitude 18-20

Monday 9th
Still fine weather going 5 knots Latitude 20-20. A Vessel seen at a distance of 10 or 12 miles crossing our Bows supposed to be by the Captain an American Coaster. The Islands of Trinidad was in sight at 12 o’clock which we passed about 10 o’clock P.M. at 3 miles distant could not see much of it the Moon having gone down. Another game I saw between the Sailors quite laughable called Simons Laws.

Tuesday 10th
Got up rather unwell, the day dull, but a favourable breeze going 7 knots Thermometer 78½ Latitude 21-35. Henrietta could not make herself agreeable with the mess & John & her were always quarrelling therefore we all thought it would be the best way to give her the fifth part of the provisions & let her provide for herself which has been done, omitted to put down in yesterdays transactions that we had admittance to the Hold, but could not get at my box it having been put so far behind when stowed away at the Docks which puts me to a little inconvenience being in want of several things out of it, we took the remainder of the Provisions out of it found the Cheese just beginning to go, saw some of the Steerage Passengers looking their boxes over & the Fustin [sic]
& Cord Clothes were in a very bad state. The Barrel of Biscuit we found to be very good which is very acceptable as the Ship Biscuit was made of rather inferior quality & is at the present time full of insects & occasionally find some with maggots in. While Bill & me were on deck smoking about 11 o’clock P.M. a flying Fish flew over our heads against the main mast we first thought it was a bird but could not see as it was only star light & being fluttering about amongst the Ropes & the Pump, however we very soon obtained a light & caught it, the first Mate told us it was a very fine one said we might catch Twenty & not get one so large again, it measured from mouth to the tip of the tail 12½ inches & the wings from tip to tip 13 inches the Body about the size of a Herring & similar in colour Head a great deal like a Toad in shape there were also two wings under the stomach, the other two we cut off close to the Body & put between the leaves of a Book which very much resemble the wing of a Butterfly, it died in a very few minutes.

Wednesday 11th
Up at 8 bells cooked the Flying Fish which was very delicious there being only a taste for each of us. Several of the Cuddy Passengers amused themselves by shooting at a Bottle with a long piece of string attatched [sic] to it and then thrown as far as possible into the Sea which if not broken was drawn in again. Wind favourable all the Sternsails set.
The Captain is very ill obliged to keep his bed and from what I understand has been bled. A woman in the Steerage has been dangerously ill but is now out of danger. Thermometer 79 Going 7 knots.

Thursday 12th
Got up with a headache went on deck & shook it off there being a very refreshing breeze. Saw a great many Porpoises all round the vessel. The Captain gave two of the Sailors orders to try to harpoon one, they struck once but missed & then they all disappeared. Latitude 25-20 Going 8½ knots.

Friday 13th
Breeze increased going 9 knots Latitude 26-58 Thermometer 77½
The Captain much better appearing himself again. Another Flying Fish caught by one of the Sailors but not so large as the one we caught. Wind decreased only going at 11 P.M. 6 knots

Saturday 14th
Wind remaining the same as last evening. The sun not so powerfull & the nights getting cool with heavy dews.

Sunday 15th
Got up at 8 bells made a splendid Plum Duff. The day dull & nothing fresh to be seen, going 5½ knots Thermometer between decks 77 Latitude 29-6 course So:east.

Monday 16th
Wind rather unfavourable, day fine

Tuesday 17th
Tacking about with a strong breeze going 8 knots latitude 28-30 Es:Nor:Est

Wednesday 18th
Fine day Thermometer 72 find it is cold enough to put a Coat on again Latitude 28- almost calm only going 4 knots all the latter part of the day
Thursday 19th
Still continuing to tack about wind being very unfavourable Latitude 28-20

Friday 20th
Going ENE latitude 27-56 making shocking progress almost as bad as laying still, Several Cape birds seen.

Saturday 21st
Fine, wind & progress the same as yesterday
Latitude ---- Thermometer 72½ at 6 o’clock & 75 at midday

Sunday 22nd
Fine day, wind changeable Latitude 27-12 Thermometer 75. A shower of rain at ½ past 11 P.M. which I could see very distinctly coming several minutes before it came over our heads, as it gradually made the sea black & the roaring of the sea was tremendous [sic] when it was close approaching.

Monday 23rd
A beautiful sunshiny day very little wind Thermometer 75 Latitude 27-46

Tuesday 24th
Still fine but no wind the sea being quite smooth which made it very close.
A great many Cape birds & 1 Albatross were fired at several times by John, William, Self & others but none of us could shoot or wound any
The Captain lowered one of the Boats for a game being Xmas, when himself & 10 or 12 others rowed round the Vessel three times at a distance of about 2 hundred yards during the time they continually kept throwing water over each other & the latter part Pails full were thrown scarcely [sic] any of them having a dry thread which caused a great laughter & amusement to the people on board.
A small Shark seen at the stern but very soon left the vessel.
Passengers very merry in the evening. Cards etc.

Wednesday 25th
Great preparations for the Puddings being the only thing in the eating way to put us in mind of Xmas. Salmon was served out for dinner. One of the Seamen hung up in the centre of the main hatch a hoop ornamented with paper to serve as Holly etc where all the single women were kissed which caused a great deal of fun as a great many of them were carried up to the post refusing to come.
The Captain gave a bottle of Rum to each mess & caused a great deal of laughter during the day by painting peoples faces etc.
A Boat was lowered about 12 o’clock when nine of the passengers got in & rowed about, after they had been out an hour, a breeze sprung up & we sailed away from them 3 mile, the Captain hove to which stopt [sic] the progress & they gradually rowed up to us being very glad as they felt rather exhausted & some of their hands nicely blistered, the sun at the time was very warm which made them sweat very much.
Passed the evening at cards, a great many of the Steerage passengers dancing on deck. A Sailor & the man that attends on the Fore Cabin was very abusive to the Captain & Doctor being in a state of liquor at the time.
Thursday 26th
Neither of the men punished only cautioned not to do it again, if they did the Captain said they might depend upon being put in irons.
Wind refreshed, going 6½ knots Latitude 30-50 Thermometer standing at Summer heat. No wine or spirits allowed to be sold on board, as a great many were intoxicated the day before and it is likewise nearly consumed which put several down upon their luck being very much in want of a dram their Coppers being very warm which were cooled by Coffee & water frequently.
A great many Black Fish, Porpoises & Cape Pigeons seen this afternoon.

Friday 27th
Splendid wind going 10 knots on our right course latitude 31-46 Thermometer 76

Saturday 28th
Making moderate sail Latitude 31-12
The Hold opened again, which made the ship in great confusion being the day the provisions are served out for the week. A very heavy dew falling at 11 P.M.

Sunday 29th
A fine day, very little wind sails quite square both the lower sternsails set.
Bill slept from 3 o’clock A.M. till 2 o’clock P.M.

Monday 30th
A fine day averaging 5 knots. I proposed a game at Push Halfpenny & in less than an hour it was played at the end of every table it being something fresh & amusing.

Tuesday 31st
Being the last day of 1850 we had a bit of lush & a smoke which way it was passed wishing one another a happy new year Latitude 29-27 very cold on deck.

Wednesday 1st Jan
A dull day & a heavy swell Vessel rolling about very much, not going our course. Saw 2 Boobies a Cape Hen & several Porpoises.
Tripe for dinner which was considered a treat until it came down, the color [sic] of it being quite sufficient come declaring it had not been cleaned. I must say it smelt very strong & tasted salt, however it did not turn my stomach as I made my dinner off it. I cannot think this is Xmas the weather being so different & seeing no Roast Beef about.
I wish we were at our journeys end for I never was so cooped up before & nothing fresh to be seen. Bill when he feels dull turns in where he spends 2/3 of this time.
There is a person by the name of Shears in the Fore Cabin who is considered very much like Rush & a regular Lushington.
The Ship tacking about at 9 P.M. the fault of one of the Apprentices being put at the Helm latitude 31-26

Thursday 2nd
The ship rolling the current being very strong against us & little wind going our right course
An Albatross seen today.
The wind refreshing at 8 P.M. & continued to do so & at 10 o’clock we were going a clipping pace attended by a shower of rain, when the log was heaved at 12 we were going 12 knots. The main top mast sternsail boom & the main gallant top mast sternsail were carried away. Went to bed about ½ past 1 o’clock when it still remained to blow very hard, latitude 30-28
Friday 3rd
The wind abated going at 12 o’clock 9½ knots still on our right course
A great any persons looking as if they had shot the Cat & eaten it again reminding them of the Bay of Biscay Thermometer 66

Saturday 4th
Sea a little rough, a fair wind, sett [sic] the fore & gallant sternsail at 11 A.M. & rigged a new main top mast sternsail boom, the wind changeable during the afternoon. A sail to windward of us this afternoon, another sail on our weather quarter. The wind much fresher, sea running high Going 10½ knots Cloudy Latitude 30-18 and about 360 miles from the coast of Africa.

Sunday 5th
The Sea rough coming down the hatchway occasionally, saw an Albatross & several Cape Birds. The evening very cold, the wind increasing towards night.

Monday 6th
Was awake at 4 o’clock this morning by our going about & the little Infant thumping the Boards exclaiming (I can see land) which I did not believe & not feeling in the least inclined to get up however I was up at 6 bells & found it to be true as I could then discern land at a very long distance. A splendid game at the Cooks Crib to see the men in the Steerage going to get boiling water for breakfast some crawling on the deck being afraid to walk for fear of scalding themselves, several lost their water & a few of them got off without being burnt, every person standing up to Breakfast, the things rolling about so much which compelled us to drink our Coffee directly it was poured out, the Ship rolling & pitching with a large swell.
I ascertained this afternoon the land that was seen this morning was part of the African Coast below Orange River. A Sail in sight about 5 or 6 miles from us. The sea washed over our decks several times during the day. The wind high, latitude 28-37

Tuesday 7th
Fine day, wind much lighter, a very few clouds to be seen, saw several stormy petrels. Some person or persons I should say the Sailors had a finger in it however, somebody had the kindness to steal our Plum Cake from the galley oven dish & all this is the second time they have taken our Cakes. The Captain very ill today has not been seen on deck.

Wednesday 8th
Still fine, sea calmer, not on our right course
Thermometer 71 Latitude 30-53

Thursday 9th
Very fine day Thermometer 72
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Fine scarcely [sic] moving all the morning the sea almost as smooth as a sheet of Glass Latitude 33 omitted to put the date it being the 10th

Saturday 11th
Very little wind Thermometer 72 Saw a great many Cape Birds feeding on part of the carcass of a wale [sic] & two albatrosses with them which were so gorged they could not rise from the water.
---------------------------------------
On deck at 4 o’clock this morning sun just rising which is a fine sight to persons who have not seen it rise when on the sea. The Vessel scarcely moving this afternoon, saw a Shark astern the
Captain baited a hook with some salt Pork which soon brought him close along side followed by
two Pilot fish swimming round him as soon he saw the Pork he turned on his back & made a bite
at it but did not take it till the third attempt which he had no sooner swallowed than he was hauled
up close, a rope being made fast round his middle he was hauled on deck he then jumped about in
all directions showing great strength, all the Steerage passengers & in fact everyone person was on
the Poop pushing to get a look at it, the Sailors hauled him down upon the main deck where they
commenced to kill him by cutting the top of his nose off then ripped his inside out & afterwards
cut off the head the body jaws still continued to move for several hours, all the flesh was eaten by
the Steerage passengers & Sailors, the flesh was cut off the head & jaws the Captain wishing them
to be saved, it had four rows of teeth & the jaws when stretched open appeared large enough to
swallow a Child at 6 or 7 years of age. It measured from the tip of his tail to the nose 8 ft and
seems to have had nothing to eat for sometime as the maw was quite empty which held 4 Buckets
of water. The Pilot fish follows him till the last they are about the size of a perch & are marked
with blue bands running round them.
Latitude 34-28 Omitted to put the date again it being the 12th

Monday 13th

There is no explanation for the cessation of entries.

In another hand:
Extract from a contemporary diary kept by a passenger who arrived just previously in the
“Charlotte Jane” one of the first fleet to sail for the Canterbury Association: -
Lyttleton Saturday March 1st 1851
Cool and calm – rather foggy. A ship came in this morning and a barque seen beating off the
mouth of the harbour at the same time, conjectured at first to be the “Isabella Hercus” and the
“Salacia” – proved to be the “Jane Dixon” from Melbourne. But about six o’clock the “Isabella
Hercus” did come in, in company with a brig the “Pioneer”. Several of the passengers landed, only one of whom Mr Wilson the clergyman, only I had seen before. They bring 150 souls into the colony having had a passage of 125 days, one melancholy
death of a girl who committed suicide. As usual with newly arrived ships, New Zealand put on its
most forbidding aspect – gloomy & misty, ending with a really wet evening, a downpour the worst
that has been seen since we came.

On flyleaf in another hand:
21 Alexandra St
Richmond
Christchurch
N.Z.

No Hayter connection has been found to this address; in 1914 it was owned by a Joseph Porter
who advertised he had lost a bay colt, in 1929 by H.C.West who ran a poultry farm, 1954 by
Malcolm McAlpine a gardener. It appears to have been a smallholding.
However, the deposit was made in 1983; this was the year of death of Wilfred Edward Irons, who
was aged 8 when his father Charles Clark Irons emigrated to New Zealand in 1893 on the same
ticket number as Edwin Richard William Hayter, the illegitimate son of Henrietta Hayter who was
born in Christchurch in 1854. It is just possible that Wilfred had the diary in his possession having
been left it by Edwin, & Mrs Bastion the donor being a relation of Wilfred.

Transcribed by Jean A Murray [3 x grand daughter of Charles Hayter, brother to Richard snr and
uncle to Richard Ansell Hayter] March 2015
Notes:

* Holy stone: a block of soft sandstone used in scrubbing the decks of a ship

** Cuddy: At sea, this was the saloon cabin at the stern, in which the wealthier immigrants travelled in greater comfort than those in steerage. During religious services the separation between cabin and steerage was relaxed. On the Lord Auckland (1842) the captain initially read prayers to the cabin passengers in the cuddy (the saloon cabin), while the doctor read them to the steerage passengers and crew below. Later on this voyage, all the passengers assembled on the main deck for prayers. Finally steerage passengers were admitted to the cuddy for prayers.


*** Ann Freckingham [Richard has the name wrong] was born 1 Nov 1821 in Brownlee Street, Holborn, London, the daughter of Thomas, an oil man, & Arabella Freckingham and baptised on 10 Nov 1821 at St Andrew’s Holborn. Thomas Freckingham had married Arabella Hildyard in 1816 in Bigby, Lincoln. It seems certain this is the correct Ann as the Captain stated her relatives lived in the City of London. On the 1841 census HO107 piece 723 folio 10 folio 15, Bush Lane St Swithin, Ann aged 19 a domestic servant is living with her mother Arabella 40, stepfather William Penn 39 a printer, brother Henry 18, half sister Helen Eliza Penn 12. Arabella had secondly married William Cooper Penn in 1827 in Holborn.

Another account of the suicide:
http://www.peelingbackhistory.co.nz/suicide-on-the-isabella-hercus/

For a passenger list of the “Isabella Hercus” see
http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nzbound/ih.htm