

Taken from the University of Waterloo genealogy site:

<http://jubilation.uwaterloo.ca/~mari/genealogy/voyages/newspapers1847.html>

Last Season's Emigration.

“Among the landlords who last summer were desirous of providing an asylum for portion of their tenantry, was one who was actuated by far other motives than merely getting rid of so many people. We trust there were others urged by similar motives, but there were some not very creditable exceptions.

“Steven E. De Vere, Esq., a gentleman of fortune, and the proprietor of some estates in the South of Ireland, having heard a great deal about the evils and benefits of emigration to this Province, and hearing also of the sufferings of many poor people who had been sent from the country, determined to try the experiment himself. This he came to the conclusion to do, not by making arrangements for the transport of so many hundreds of thousands of his tenantry, and remaining at home to hear as much, or as little as might be, of their fate; but he would see for himself. He accordingly picked some dozen volunteers from among the numbers who would gladly have accompanied him, and with them took shipping for Quebec, in the steerage of one of the regular passenger ships.

“Landlord and Tenant fared alike, the former taking careful notes of the events of the passage. Of the voyage we need say nothing more than that it was of the average character-there was all the disease, ill usage, and wretchedness of which our readers have often been made perfectly aware; - the state of things which imported the fever that carried off many of our most valued friends and citizens. At Quebec, proceedings were commenced against the Captain, which were ultimately compounded upon his paying a certain amount for the benefit of the suffering Emigrants. Mr. De Vere proceeded to Upper Canada, and closely observed the whole process of transportation, to the very last destination-the graves of the fever-stricken people.

In Toronto this philanthropic gentleman attended the emigrant office, and rendered much assistance to the lamented and indefatigable agent, Mr. McElderly, boarding with him every steamer filled with the wretched cargoes, and transmitting to the "proper authorities" the result of his laborious experience. He was well pleased with the management of our hospitals; but shocked, as every one was, with the mode of transporting the poor people hither. Some of the steamboat cargoes were sufficient to recall to the mind the horrors of the sea voyage. Mr. De Vere's people suffered from fever, but recovered, receiving his constant personal attendance. The fact of this gentleman's investigations being laid before the Colonial Secretary, and some members of the House of Lords, coming as they did from one well known, and who could not possibly have any interest in writing, but the benefit of his countrymen, has had a good effect, and he merits well of the people of this Province, as well as the emigrating population of the mother country.

Few men are found to act from such pure disinterestedness in these days, and it is gratifying to observe the result of such labors.

Mr. De Vere returns shortly to England, and, by making his views public, will, we hope, be the means of obtaining further improvements, as those already made are by no means sufficient. One fact is certain, his information may be implicitly relied upon by government; for he has obtained it

himself, on the spot, and by the most careful, and indeed dangerous investigation, as the above mentioned facts fully show.

It was the author's intention to confine himself to the occurrences of the year 1847; but as the publication of the foregoing narrative has been delayed longer than was anticipated, it may here be observed that he had strong hopes that judicious precautions would have been taken to prevent the repetition this season, of the tragic scenes of the last.

Some legislative enactments for the further regulation of Emigrant ships have been passed by Great Britain, during the last session of Parliament; but it is much to be feared that they will prove quite inefficient. It is painful to observe the very unfavorable accounts from some of the Ports of the United States, as well as of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

As regards Canada the prospect is exceedingly gloomy, to judge from the conduct of the executive government in forbidding the publication, or issue of any reports from the Quarantine Station, respecting the state of things there.

Were not the trials of the wretched emigrant already sufficiently great, that he must "To such unsightly sufferings be debased?"

The Press has boldly taken up the matter, and it is to be hoped that the appearance and repetition of such articles as the following will tend to the repeal of the obnoxious and cruel edict."