

Ship St Peter Friday July 9th 1847

The wind continues very strong and gradually increasing accompanied with very hard squalls from the westward. We carried on to the old ship as long as we dared to and till we almost drove her under but we obliged to double reef again at 8 P.M. We beat furled the mainsail, fore and mizen topsails and jib, leaving nothing on her but double reefed main top sail, foresail, fore spinnace and fore topmast stay sail. It now blows a gale of wind in earnest. The wind howls through the rigging affording a grand requiem. Our masts bend like whipsticks and our good ship plunges into every wave as if bound to stave her head in kipped in this sea toms.

Saturday July 10th

At this morning a tremendous sea broke over us taking the waist boat from the crane and smashing the galley considerably hurting the cook very bad. We then furlled the foresail as quick as possible and took in the remainder of the waist boat which was only about 4 feet of her stern, clumsy cleat, hoisting straps & a short time after took in the fore spinnace but set it again at daylight. We rigged the galley at 8 and got a fire going but our breakfast and dinner will be none the better for that. I took the office of cook after dinner he being unable to do duty. This morning saw a brig sounding to the eastward with nothing out but reefed fore topsail and foresail. The wind continued to blow with unrelenting violence during the day. Headed Southward and westward.

Sunday July 11th 29.57

The strength of the gale is broken this morning and at 6 set double reefed topsails. We shook out the reefs as the wind fell and at 2 P.M. set the main topgallant sail. At sunset it was almost calm with a light squall. A small brig is just to leeward under short sail.

Monday July 12th 34.54

The wind was light this morning and all sail was set but towards noon it began to blow fresh and between 2 & 3 P.M. took in topgallant and flying jib. Stowed the coals and deck put below got out water forced the broken davit & I gave up the office of cook this evening. Stood at 4 P.M.

Tuesday July 13th 30.40

Stood at 4 P.M. with as much wind from W as we can carry main topgallant sail. In the evening it felt almost calm and the fore and mizen topgallant sails were set. We are now nearly 200 miles from the land and are trying to get to the westward where we shall find a strong current setting to the S.W. but we can head no better than N.E. and N.W. by N. and we are making a tedious passage of it. The weather is growing cold and shoes and stockings are found to be very comfortable. Even a homemade vest which I brought from home is very acceptable, but that I was alongside of the one that made it. This delay is almost beyond endurance. Headwinds in the early morning noon and night. Blow fair breezes blow and soft me to the shores of my native land again.

Wednesday July 14th 38.36

Light winds from W with pleasant weather. Steering N.E. by N. At sunset it fell calm. The sky was as clear as it possibly could be nothing but a few fleecy clouds floated in the horizon to the southward. The sun set in all its splendor and as it went down I watched its last lingering rays and almost wished that I could follow him for a few short hours for it will soon rise in its beauty on hills and valleys of my native land. And even more, it will shine upon the home of my youth. The old rocky tree, under which I used to sit and pass away the hours of my childhood and youth will be warmed by its bright rays and I am far away from them the sails are sluggishly slapping against the mast as if to mock my anxiety to get there. A heavy sea is from eastward.

36.16

Ship St Peter Thursday July 15th off coast of Natal

We are again beset with a fair wind. At this morning a light breeze sprang up from N.E. & set fore topmast and main topgallant studding sails. At daylight blew fresh from N.E. & set lower studding sail. Steered N.E. & weather clear and fine. In the afternoon the wind fell to a moderate breeze and hauled to N.E.

Friday July 16th 30.43

About 2 this morning the wind hauled to the westward. Hauled down the stunsails and braced up the yards steering southerly. At daylight tacked to W. by N. and set fore and mizen topgallant sails and flying jib (these having been taken in after we came to the wind). The wind is fresh with cloudy weather. We had just 24 hours fair wind for our comfort. At 11 past 12 sighted the coast of Africa and stood in till 3 P.M. when we was about 3 miles off shore. Tacked and stood off S. by E. At sunset it was almost calm but it came on to blow fresh in the evening and was obliged to take in topgallant sail and fly jib. This is the coast of Caffraria where the English had had so much fighting lately. The land is high and well wooded. Saw a large number of fires ashore in the evening.

Saturday July 17th 33.08

Whew! It pipes this morning as if it would take the stick out of her. Took in sail during the night so that at 8 were under double reefed topsails, mainsail, furling & S.W. wind increasing furlled the mizen topsail and jib and close reefed the fore topsail. At noon it came on a squally blowing very hard & continued. At sunset the wind fell but the sky is overcast with dark heavy clouds and the weather is quite cold. Turned reef out of the fore topsail and set the jib. More ships at 5 P.M. and stood N.W. by W.

Sunday July 18th 33.34 33.00 & 30.

It continued squally during the night but this morning the wind became steady but strong from S.W. steering the course. Shook the reefs out of the topsail and set the fly jib at 8 A.M. At 9 the wind lulled a little and topgallant sails were set. The old ship had as much as she could do to carry all the sails. Sighted land at 3 P.M. but held on to the westward till 4 P.M. and then tacked to S.W. At this time the wind fell and became very baffling. Tacked again at 11 past 11. The weather saw a small brig standing off from land a little before sunset.

Monday July 19th 34.19

Light and baffling winds steering S.W. by W. At 8 A.M. set fore topmast and main topgallant studding sail. We are running along the coast to day about 12 miles off shore. The land is generally rocky and well wooded. At 3 P.M. were off Chavon or Bird Island in Lat 33.48 S. Lon 30.22 E. on which the Crossbones & Indianman was lost and the crew all perished but 3 in endeavouring to get to the cape. A few miles to the westward is Goddington Rock on which the Goddington & Indianman was wrecked. At 3 P.M. took a squall and hauled down the stunsails but the wind coming fair they were set again in the evening at 11 P.M.

Tuesday July 20th 35.43

We was busy all the morning with setting and hauling down stunsails bracing the yards & till 4 when the breeze became strong. Gave her the course of N. by E. and set the lower studding sail. At noon altered the course to N.W. by W. In the evening it came on squally, the wind hauling to N.E. and S.W. in fits.