

removal of the sick to hospital. The very straw upon which they had lain was often allowed to become a bed for their successors; and I have known many poor families prefer to burrow under heaps of loose stones which happened to be piled near the shore rather than accept the shelter of the infected sheds.

"I must now advert to what has been the great blot upon the Government arrangements—the steam transmission up the country. The great principle, that the due regulation of passenger ships is a duty of the State, is admitted by the Passengers' Act. The Government itself enforces the heaviest penalties for the infringement of its provisions; but yet, when the Government itself undertakes to transmit emigrants from Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, and Toronto, how has it acted? I state upon the authority of Mr. McElderry, the able and indefatigable emigrant agent at Toronto, who has fallen a victim to his zeal and humanity, that the government made an exclusive contract with one individual for the steam transmission of all emigrants forwarded by the State, at a certain price per head, without any restrictive regulations. The consequences were frightful. I have seen small, incommodious, and ill-ventilated steamers arriving at the quay in Toronto after a forty-eight hours' passage from Montreal, freighted with foetid cargoes of 1,100 and 1,200 'Government emigrants,' of all ages and sexes. The healthy, who had just arrived from Europe, mixed with the half recovered convalescents of the hospitals, unable, during that time, to lie down, almost to sit. In almost every boat were clearly marked cases of actual fever—in some were deaths—the dead and living huddled together. Sometimes the crowds were stowed in open barges and towed after the steamer, standing like pigs upon the decks of a Cork and Bristol packet. A poor woman died in the hospital here in consequence of having been trodden down when weak and fainting, in one of these barges. . . .

"I do not make any apologies for troubling you at such length, because you requested me to write to you upon the subject, and because I am conscious that my observations have, at least, been patiently made, without prejudice or motives of self interest, and under circumstances which have enabled me to see, with my own eyes, facts which have probably never been detailed to you by a wholly disinterested witness."

This letter is signed, Stephen E. DeVere, who in a postscript adds:

"Would it be possible to give a small pension to the widow of poor McElderry, who, I believe, is in great distress? I never saw greater zeal or intelligence than his; and to his utter recklessness of danger in discharge of duty he owes his early death."