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Arrival of the Merkara

The B.I.S.N. Company's R.M.S. Merkara, Captain Phillips from London, via ports, arrived off Cape Moreton early this morning, and anchored at the roadstead at a later hour. The steamer Boko towed the Dorunda to the bay this morning, but it is doubtful whether she will have time to bring up the Merkara with this evening's tide. It is therefore more probable that she will bring her up on tomorrow morning's tide. The Merkara had for Queensland ports 478 souls, equal to 413 statute adults, under the charge of Dr. Dunkley, surgeon superintendent, and Miss M'Alister as matron. Classification: 42 free, of whom 27 were English, Scotch, and 14 Irish; 400 remittance and free nominated passengers, 192 being English, 41 Scotch, 151 Irish, and 16 from other countries; 2 indented, and 35 full payers. The free and remittance and free nominated passengers paid a total of £378 towards their passages and ship's kits. Occupations: 89 female domestic servants, 46 farm labourers, 66 general labourers, 1 gardener, 21 miners, 1 blacksmith, 1 engineer, 4 carpenters and joiners, 1 painter, 1 plumber, and 26 others whose trade or occupation is not specified. Social condition: 46 married couples, 155 single men, 117 single women, and 48 male and 50 female children between the ages of 1 and 12 years, and 16 infants.

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The R.M.S. Merkara was assisted up the river yesterday morning by the Boko, and is now berthed alongside Messrs. Purbury, Lamb, and Co.'s South Brisbane wharf. Mr. A. B. Moule, the purser, supplies the following particulars concerning the voyage : The R.M.S. Merkara left the Royal Albert Docks, London, on the 19th September, and on the following day embarked at Gravesend 16 first-class passengers and 461 emigrants; at 4.15 p.m. unmoored and proceeded on the voyage; stopped off the Isle of Wight at 7.25 a.m. on the following morning to discharge the channel pilot.

Fine weather was experienced down the channel and in the Mediterranean, passing Malta on the 29th, and arrived at Port Said on the 3rd October; received coal and fresh provisions; entered the canal at 5.30 a.m. on the following day. The ship was delayed here owing to a block in the canal till following morning; arrived at Suez at 1.10 p.m. on the 5th, and left again at 2.5 p.m. For a few days hot weather was experienced in the Red Sea; arrived at Aden at 5.25 p.m. on the 10th, and received mails the following day from the steamer Ganges; coaled and proceeded on the voyage at 3.30 p.m.

Fine weather was experienced across to Batavia with the exception of two days previous to reaching the Sunda Straits, when a high south-east sea was encountered; arrived in Priok Harbour at 1 a.m. on the 27th: coaled under quarantine, and left at 8.12 on the following morning; fine weather was experienced to Thursday Island, where she arrived at 6 a.m. on the 6th November: obtained pratique, discharged cargo, and left at 10.30 a.m.; arrived at Cooktown at 5.40 a.m. on the 8th; transferred mails to Birksgate, and discharged cargo, and left at 1.40 p.m.; arrived in Cleveland Bay at 0.40 p.m. on the 9th; discharged cargo and sailed at 5.15 a.m. on the 11th: arrived at Bowen at 3.30 p.m. on the 11th, and left at 5.40 p.m. same date; arrived off Flat-top Island at 5 a.m. on the 12th, and sailed again at 4.50 p.m.; arrived in Keppel Bay at 10 a.m. on the 13th, and sailed again at 5.40 p.m.; passed Sandy Cape at 6 a.m. on the 14th, arriving off Cape Moreton at 3 a.m. on the 15th. The ship was detained here for four and a-quarter hours waiting for a pilot. She arrived at the Pile Lighthouse at 9.30 a.m.

Fine weather was experienced to Rockhampton, thence a fresh south-easterly gale with a very high sea was encountered. The voyage throughout was a particularly successful one, there having been no deaths; there were two births. The health of the people was, on the whole, remarkably good, there being only one case of a serious nature— that of a young woman who burst a blood vessel, and whose condition caused considerable anxiety to Dr. Dunkley, and on arrival had to be sent to the hospital. Various amusements were got up in the shape of concerts, charades, and athletic sports, the latter providing a considerable amount of amusement to both performers and spectators. The single women, not to be outdone, got up an exhibition of plain and fancy work, which did them considerable credit, considering the disadvantages they laboured under, and showed they possessed some skill in the use of the needle. This was followed by a tea-party, and concluded with various amusements. The children also came in for their share. They have been fortunate in having a properly qualified schoolmaster to instruct them. He took both pains and pleasure in his work, so

that the school was not the farce it usually is. Upwards of 30 books were given away as prizes, after which the children were regaled with cakes, sweets, &c.

The Merkara is under the command of Captain George Phillips, Dr. Wilberforce Dunkley is the surgeon-superintendent, and Miss Macalister the matron. She landed 5 immigrants at Thursday Island, 19 at Cooktown, 72 at Townsville, 18 at Mackay, and 42 at Rockhampton, leaving 307 for Brisbane. Fifty-four packages of cargo were discharged at Thursday Island, 889 at Cooktown, 4,204 at Townsville, 225 at Bowen, 609 at Mackay, 1,378 at Rockhampton, and she has now on board 11,070 packages for this port. The Merkara brought the following saloon passengers: For Brisbane - Mrs. J. L. Bale, Miss Bale, Miss A. Bale, Messrs. A. E. Bale, A. W. Bale, A. H. French, W. Harper, Hugh S. Heal, and R. Vicars Smith; for Sydney - Mr. D. J. Abercrombie.