

# HOME STATION.

## SICK RATE.

Average Sick-rate for Ten Years, 1078 6 per 1,000.

DURING the period embraced in the present return, seventy vessels of various rates and classes were employed in the different divisions of the Home Station and in the Channel Fleet. Of these a large proportion were stationary, such as guard ships, coast-guard ships, and training vessels; while those employed in moving about from one part of the station to the other were mostly small steam tenders and store-ships. Fifteen of the vessels composed the Channel Fleet, and this was the only part of the force which had in any way duties analogous to those devolving upon the different squadrons employed in active service abroad. The mean force, corrected for time, was 22,225, and the total number of cases of disease and injury placed on the sick-list was 20,279, which is in the ratio of 911·9 per 1,000 of mean force, and therefore much below the average sick-rate of the station.

Home  
Station.

A reference to Table I. of the Appendix will show the vessels that exceeded the average sick-rate of the station, and it is very satisfactory to observe the favourable position occupied by the iron-clad vessels in this respect; their average sick-rate being only 1·6 per 1,000 in excess of the sick-rate of the station, being a reduction of upwards of 200 per 1,000, as compared with their ratio of sickness during the preceding twelve months.

Of the iron-clad vessels the Achilles, Defence, Prince Albert, Prince Consort, Research and Scorpion exceeded the average sick-rate of the station.

IRON CLADS.

The sick-rate of the Achilles barely exceeded the average of the station, and the diseases which added the largest number of cases to the sick-list were comparatively of a trifling character.

Home  
Station.

IRON CLADS

character. In the Michaelmas Quarter of 1865, while at Portsmouth, much syphilitic disease was contracted by the ship's company, and in the Midsummer Quarter of 1866, while the vessel was stationed in Ireland, catarrh became epidemic, but speedily disappeared as the warm weather set in.

The Defence was almost exclusively employed on the coast of Ireland during the twelve months, and although her sick-rate considerably exceeds the average, there was very little disease of an active character amongst her crew. Casualties of different degrees of severity constituted by far the largest proportion of cases in her returns, and in the Lady Quarter of 1866, while in Lough Swilly, the ship's company suffered slightly from an epidemic of influenza.

The returns of the Prince Albert are only for a period of about four months, so that the reduction of her complement in correcting for time gives a somewhat exaggerated value to the number of cases placed on the sick-list. Catarrhal affections, while the ship was fitting out, and venereal diseases and common boils subsequently, appear in largest numbers in her returns.

The ratio of sickness in the Prince Consort is much less than during the preceding twelve months, which may in some measure be attributed to the more advanced period of the commission of the ship, and doubtless to the improved condition of the decks on which the men were berthed, in regard to light and ventilation. Catarrh, epidemic in the Lady Quarter of 1866; common sore-throat, venereal diseases, small abscesses, and casualties of different kinds, appear in largest numbers in the returns from this vessel.

Although the sick-rate in the Research was higher than that in any other of the iron-clads, there was really very little active disease of any kind worthy of commenting upon. Like most of the iron-clad vessels, her ship's company seems to have suffered more from catarrh than from any other affection. They apparently enjoyed a remarkable immunity from venereal diseases, only four cases of syphilis having been placed upon the sick list during the twelve months, although the men do not seem to have been stinted in their leave.

The Scorpion somewhat exceeded the mean sick rate of the station. The vessel being in her first year of commission

naturally presents a high sick-rate. During a large portion of the period embraced in the returns, however, she was at anchor and her crew on leave, so that no fair estimate can be formed from the sick tables furnished by her as to the influence the peculiar construction of this class of vessel may exert upon the health of her crew.

Home  
Station.

IRON CLADS  
continued.

The only ship of the second rate, the *Edgar*, shows a sick-rate somewhat in excess of the average of the station. Her returns, however, were only for about five months, so that the ratio of sickness, when the reduction of her complement in correcting for time is considered, may be looked upon as much below the average. In point of fact, the health rate of the ship's company was particularly good; ephemeral fever, catarrh, venereal diseases, rheumatism, boils, and casualties of different kinds, made up the sum of her sick returns.

SECOND  
RATE.

All the vessels of the fourth rate were in excess of the average sick-rate of the station. In two of these, however, which show the highest ratios, the vessels were only recently commissioned; while in the third, the *Liverpool*, the excess is entirely referrible to the prevalence of cases of common catarrh. In the other two frigates of this rate, diseases of the skin and cellular tissue, and venereal diseases contracted while fitting out, were the most prevalent affections.

FOURTH  
RATE.

There is little to be said in connection with the *Gladiator*, the only vessel of this class. Her returns are for nine months, and her rate of cases placed on the sick list was 1386.6 per 1,000 of mean force. The diseases which had a numerical preponderance in her returns were syphilis, rheumatism, small abscesses, and injuries of a more or less trivial character.

SIXTH  
RATE.

It is scarcely necessary to enter into any details with reference to the other classes of vessels employed on the Home Station. Most of them are stationary, and the duties they are employed in quite different from those of ordinary sea-going vessels. Very few of them exceeded the average sick-rate of the station, while a large proportion were much below it. It is particularly gratifying to observe in Table V. of the Appendix that, as regards the sea-going vessels, the smallest ratio of sickness was in the iron-clads.

## INVALIDING.

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Average Ratio of Invaliding for Nine Years, 21·6 per 1,000.

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Four hundred and eighty-two persons were invalided during the period of this return, which is in the ratio of 21·6 per 1,000 of mean force, being not only below the average invaliding-rate of the station, but absolutely the lowest rate of invaliding that has occurred for many years.

By referring to Table V. of the Appendix it will be seen that the rates of invaliding in the iron-clad vessels, the second-rate and the stationary ships were almost precisely the same, in each of them being below the ratios in the training ships, the steam vessels, and the yachts. The lowest rate of invaliding was in the drill ships, and the highest in the sixth-rate. No comparison, however, can with justice be drawn between the different classes of vessels on the Home Station in this respect, the condition of each being so dissimilar from the other.

Of the 482 persons invalided, three were for the sequelæ of fever; sixty-three for various affections of the brain and nervous system; one hundred and five for diseases of the respiratory organs, chiefly of a phthisical character; sixty-four for organic or functional disease of the heart and blood-vessels; three for diseases of the alimentary canal; two for diseases of the liver; twenty-five for diseases of the genito-urinary organs, chiefly venereal; seventy-seven for rheumatism and diseases of the bones and joints; twenty-three for various affections of the special senses; thirty-eight for diseases of the skin and cellular tissue; eighteen for dyspepsia; and sixty-one for the results of wounds and injuries of various kinds.

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DEATHS.

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Average Ratio of Mortality for Ten Years, 8·8 per 1,000.

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One hundred and thirty-two deaths occurred on the Home Station during this period, of which one hundred and five were the result of different forms of disease, and twenty-seven of wounds and injuries of various kinds, and drowning. The

total ratio of mortality was 5·9 per 1,000 of mean force, being the lowest death-rate that has occurred on the Home Station during a period of ten years. Deducting the deaths from casualties, the ratio of mortality would be 5 per 1,000.

Of the one hundred and five deaths resulting from disease, nine were from fever; five from paralysis; one from delirium tremens; two from apoplexy; one from epilepsy; thirty-three from pulmonary consumption; eighteen from inflammatory diseases of the lungs; one from hæmoptysis; one from diphtheria; twelve from diseases of the heart; one from aneurism; one from constriction of the bowels, the result of organic disease; seven from disease of the liver; five from disease of the kidneys; one from pyæmia; two from erysipelas, and five from cancer. The nature of the fatal casualties is shown in Table IV. of the Appendix.

Home  
Station.

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