

AUSTRALIAN STATION.

SICK-RATE.

Average Ratio of Sickness for 10 Years, 1323·3 per 1,000.

THE squadron on the Australian Station comprised six vessels, of which one was a frigate of the fifth rate, two were frigates of the sixth rate; there were two sloops and one gun vessel. The mean force was 1,080, and the returns from each of the vessels were for the whole twelve months. The total number of cases of all diseases and injuries placed on the sick-list was 1,595, which is in the ratio of 1476·8 per 1,000 of mean force.

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One frigate, the two sloops, and the gun vessel exceeded the average sick-rate of the station.

The sick-rate of the *Esk* was 1660·8 per 1,000. During the Michaelmas quarter of 1865, the vessel was cruising for some time amongst the New Hebrides and Feejee Islands, and the sudden transition from a temperate climate to a tropical heat, placed a large number of men on the sick-list, with small painful abscesses and boils. In the Midsummer quarter of 1866, catarrhal affections were frequent, consequent upon cold, raw weather in New Zealand; and during the whole twelve months the men seem to have suffered a good deal from rheumatism.

FRIGATES.

Although in both vessels of the sloop class the sick-rate much exceeded the average of the station, there was really very little disease of an active, and none of an epidemic character in either of them. In the *Falcon*, rheumatic and catarrhal affections were the most frequent; while in the *Salamander*, a vessel employed on surveying duties, the crew suffered a good deal from rheumatism and diarrhœa. This latter vessel, which shows the highest ratio of cases of any on the station, makes annually three trips to Cape Somerset, a small settlement on the extreme north-east point of the continent, situated considerably within the tropic, and during her stay there, there was always a marked deterioration in the health of the crew. This was evidenced as much by the loss in weight which a majority of the men sustained, as by the frequency of trifling ailments of various kinds with which they were affected.

SLOOP.

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The Eclipse was almost exclusively employed in New Zealand during the whole twelve months, and a good many cases of fever appear in her returns. As a rule, however, they were not of much severity, the average duration of each case on the sick-list being only between six and seven days. There is nothing otherwise in her returns of sufficient moment to call for any comments.

INVALIDING.

Average Ratio of Invaliding for 10 Years, 28·8 per 1,000.

The total number invalided during the twelve months was twenty-nine, which is in the ratio of 26·8 per 1,000 of mean force, and, therefore, below the average ratio of the station.

Of these twenty-nine, two were invalided for diseases of the brain and nervous system; eight for diseases of the organs of respiration; four for diseases of the heart and blood-vessels; six for rheumatism and diseases of the bones and joints; three for diseases of the skin and cellular tissue, chiefly ulcers; three for general debility; and three for the effects of wounds and injuries.

DEATHS.

Average Ratio of Mortality for 10 Years, 13·7 per 1,000.

Fifteen deaths occurred in the squadron during the twelve months, being in the ratio of 13·8 per 1,000 of mean force, which is almost precisely the average death-rate of the station taken for a period of ten years. The death-rate from disease alone was only 6·4 per 1,000.

Of the fifteen deaths, four were from diseases of the respiratory organs, three of these being from phthisis and one from diphtheria; one was from malignant disease of the liver; one from acute inflammation and abscess of the knee-joint; one from psoas abscess; and eight from wounds and injuries, and drowning, as detailed in Table IV. of the Appendix.