

EAST INDIES AND CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

SICK-RATE.

Average Ratio of Sickness for 10 Years, 1664-7 per 1,000.

THE squadron on this station during the twelve months consisted of eleven vessels, two of which were frigates of the fourth rate, three frigates of the sixth rate, three sloops, two gun-vessels, and a receiving ship permanently stationed in Simon's Bay. The mean force corrected for time was 2,030, and the total number of cases of disease and injury entered on the sick-list 3,603, which is in the ratio of 1774·8 per 1,000 of force, a considerable increase as compared with the previous year, and also above the average sick-rate of the station.

East Indies
and
Cape of
Good Hope
Station.

The sick-rate in five of the vessels exceeded the average sick-rate of the station. These were the Octavia, the Severn, the Iyra, the Penguin, and the Vigilant.

The ratio of sickness in the Octavia was 2753·5 per 1,000 of force. The returns from this vessel are only for six months, she having arrived on the station towards the end of 1865. This accounts in some measure for the high sick-rate; but, unfortunately, much of it was occasioned by a most extensive epidemic of small-pox, which broke out among the ship's company on the 19th of March, while the vessel was at sea, and at the time about 400 miles from Bombay. The history of this epidemic is as follows:—On the 1st of March a Krooman, who had been under treatment in the General Hospital at Bombay for measles, was discharged to the Octavia cured and apparently in perfect health. While in hospital he had been in a ward next to one in which there were two cases of small-pox. On the 5th of March he was attacked with symptoms of that disease, which assumed the confluent form, and proved fatal on the 14th. Three days

East Indies
and
Cape of
Good Hope
Station.

FRIGATES
continued.

afterwards, viz., on the 17th, a petty officer was attacked; on the 18th five more cases were added, and the 19th eighteen. The epidemic now spread at the rate of about thirty cases daily, so that on the morning of the 22nd, when the vessel arrived at Bombay, no fewer than 102 cases of confirmed or suspected small-pox were under treatment.

Prompt and most effective measures were at once adopted in dealing with the epidemic. The vessel, instead of anchoring off Bombay as usual, proceeded up the harbour to a small barren island of about a mile and a half in circumference, on which were several commodious and empty buildings, formerly used as barracks and sick quarters by the Indian navy. All the cases of undoubted small-pox (sixty in number) were landed and placed in one of these buildings in the course of the following day; and on the 24th the remainder (sixty-one in number), presenting incipient signs of the disease, were also landed and placed in another building about 200 yards from the one occupied by the confirmed cases. On the 25th, twenty more cases were landed; on the following day thirteen, and on the 27th three. No cases occurred after that date. Altogether, during the period of the epidemic, 165 cases of small-pox were placed on the sick list, and in six the disease terminated fatally. Three of these were in the persons of Kroomen, a race in whom, from their not, as a rule, being protected by vaccination, small-pox usually assumes a very virulent form.

On the 8th of May the last of the convalescents, eighteen in number, having performed their prescribed period of quarantine, were re-embarked, and the epidemic was considered virtually at an end. Previous to the outbreak of this epidemic, in the early part of the Lady quarter of 1866, measles had appeared amongst the ship's company. Only eleven cases, however, occurred altogether, and they were almost all at once transferred to the General Hospital at Bombay. There was a good deal of diarrhoea in the Midsummer quarter of the year, and during the whole six months venereal diseases and rheumatism were prevalent.

The sick-rate in the Severn only slightly exceeded the average of the station. During the Michaelmas quarter of 1865, while at Trincomalee, febrile cases, mostly of an ephemeral nature, were very common amongst the ship's company, and were also prevalent in the garrison on shore; and in the Lady quarter of 1866 there was an epidemic, not very extensive however, of influenza. Much of the sick-

ness in this vessel was attributable to casualties of a more or less trifling character. There was a good deal of diarrhœa in the Christmas quarter, consequent upon excesses of various kinds on shore at Bombay.

East Indies
and
Cape of
Good Hope
Station.

Although the sick-rate in the *Lara* is somewhat above the average, there was no epidemic disease, and very little of an active character of any kind on board. The vessel was employed for a short time in the Mozambique Channel, afterwards on the East Indian division of the station, and during the *Lady* quarter of 1866 in the Red Sea chiefly.

SLOOPS.

The sick-rate in the *Penguin* is very high. The vessel was employed much in the Mozambique Channel, and a good deal in River service there. Several cases of ague occurred after exposure in the River Rovuma, and the ship's company suffered much from small abscesses and boils. A good deal of venereal disease was contracted by the men while the vessel lay at Mahé, in the Seycelle Islands.

GUN
VESSELS.

There were several cases of remittent fever and of diarrhœa in the *Vigilant* while she was employed in the Mozambique Channel, in the Christmas quarter of 1865 and the Midsummer quarter of 1866, but otherwise the ship's company were tolerably healthy.

INVALIDING.

Average Ratio of Invaliding for 10 Years, 33·7.

The total number invalided during the twelve months was sixty-eight, being in the ratio of 33·4 per 1,000 of mean force, and almost precisely the average ratio of invaliding of the station. Diseases of the liver, rheumatism, and syphilitic diseases occasioned the greatest loss to the service by invaliding, after which came diseases of the organs of respiration.

Four men were invalided for diseases of the brain and nervous system; seven for diseases of the lungs, chiefly phthisis; six for functional or organic disease of the heart and bloodvessels; five for diseases of the alimentary canal; ten for diseases of the liver; nine for diseases of the genito-urinary organs, mostly syphilitic; ten for rheumatism and

East Indies
and
Cape of
Good Hope
Station.

diseases of the bones and joints; four for diseases of the special senses; two for diseases of the skin and cellular tissue; five for climatic cachexia; and six for the effects of wounds and injuries of various kinds.

DEATHS.

Ratio of Mortality for 10 Years, 17· per 1,000.

Thirty-nine deaths occurred in the squadron during the period of this return, twenty-seven being occasioned by disease, and eleven by wounds and injuries, and drowning. The death-rate was 19·2 per 1,000 of mean force, which is above the average death-rate of the station. This increase was entirely occasioned by the epidemic of small-pox which prevailed in the Octavia, and caused one-half the total mortality in that vessel.

There were two deaths from fever of the remittent type; two from measles; seven from small-pox; four from apoplexy; one from delirium tremens; one from pleuritis; one from phthisis; one from the bursting of an aneurism; five from cholera, three of which occurred in one vessel at Calcutta, and two in a vessel conveying liberated slaves, amongst whom the disease prevailed; one from obstruction of the bowels; one from dysentery; two from syphilis; and eleven from wounds and injuries, and drowning, as detailed in Table IV. of the Appendix.