

IRREGULAR FORCE.

SICK-RATE.

Average Ratio of Sickness for Ten Years, 1585·9 per 1,000.

There were thirty-six vessels of various classes in this force during the period for which this report is drawn up, and a small detachment of marines at Somerset, in Australia. The vessels comprised one armour-plated turret-ship, twelve frigates, of which five were of the fourth rate, one was a fifth rate, and six were of the sixth rate; there were seven sloops, three gun vessels, three steam vessels, one gunboat, four troop ships, and five store ships. Several of these vessels were fitting out for foreign service, while others had returned home, and were being paid off; so that the only ships sending in returns for the whole twelve months were two frigates, three troop ships, and four storeships. The mean force corrected for time was 3,760, and the number of cases of disease and injury placed on the sick-list was 6,501, which is in the ratio of 1728·9 per 1,000 of force, and therefore considerably above the average sick-rate of this force.

Of the vessels from which returns for the whole twelve months were received, the Terrible, the Tamar, the Urgent, and the Flora exceeded the average sick-rate of the force.

The sick rate in the Favorite is above the average of the force, but considering that the returns from her are only for about five months, and that this was the first year of her commission, it cannot be considered excessive. She was commissioned at Sheerness in February 1866, and, while fitting out, the diseases that prevailed most were catarrh, ague, and rheumatism. Subsequently, in the Midsummer quarter of the year, she proceeded to Halifax, and during the

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voyage, and indeed throughout the quarter, the sick-list was mainly kept up by small abscesses and ulcers, the result of trifling and neglected injuries.

FRIGATES.

During the Michaelmas quarter of 1865 the *Terrible* was employed with the expedition engaged in laying the Atlantic telegraph cable, and at this time her sick list was high, which is attributed to the damp foggy weather that prevailed at Newfoundland when the vessel was there, and to the enervating effects of indulgence in inferior liquor by the men when on leave at St. John's. Colds, dyspepsia, rheumatism, and boils were the most common affections at this time, as they were indeed during the whole twelve months.

The ratio of cases in the *Bristol*, *Octavia*, and *Topaze* are above the average of the force. While fitting out at Sheerness the crew of the *Bristol* suffered much from venereal diseases contracted there, not fewer than thirty-eight cases of syphilis, and twenty-three of gonorrhœa, having been placed on the sick-list. There were also many cases of rheumatism and of catarrh, which are attributed to the inclement state of the weather.

The high sick-rate in the *Octavia* was almost entirely attributable to the prevalence of venereal diseases, catarrh, and rheumatism, from which the crew suffered while fitting out; and the same remarks may be said to apply to the *Topaze*, although rheumatism was not so prevalent as in the former vessel. In the *Topaze*, however, were several cases of eruptive fever which necessitated her putting into Gibraltar on her way out to the Pacific.

The mean ratio of cases in the frigates of the sixth rate was below the average of the force.

SLOOPs.

In five of the seven sloops the ratio of cases exceeded the average of the force. These were the *Basilisk*, the *Greyhound*, the *Icarus*, the *Peterel*, and the *Spiteful*. There was nothing, however, to call for special comment in the sick returns from these vessels. The prevailing affections were common colds, venereal diseases, and various forms of disease of the skin and cellular tissue, such as small abscesses and ulcers. With the exception of the *Peterel* all these vessels were fitting out for foreign service. The *Peterel* had returned from North America, and was employed paying off.

The ratios of cases in the *Serpent* and in the *Star* were above the average. In the former vessel ephemeral fever and small abscesses were the affections of greatest numerical importance. In the *Star* there was no disease whatever of any moment.

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VESSELS.

Of the troop ships, the *Himalaya*, the *Tamar*, and the *Urgent* showed ratios in excess of the average of the force. The returns from the first of these vessels, however, were only for about four months. The principal affections appearing in her returns were catarrh, diarrhœa, boils, and more or less trifling injuries.

TROOP SHIPS.

During the first six months of the period embraced in the present return, the *Tamar* was employed in making the passage from China to England, and during this time fevers, some of a remittent, others of an ephemeral type, and diarrhœa, were the affections of greatest numerical importance. Subsequently, in the *Lady* quarter of 1866, she proceeded to the Mediterranean, from whence she went in the *Midsummer* quarter of the year to the West Indies, but on neither voyage had she much disease on board of an active, and none of an epidemic character.

Common colds, influenza, and diarrhœa were prevalent affections in the *Urgent*, and while on the West Coast of Africa in the *Lady* quarter of 1866, there were a great many cases of remittent fever. This vessel was at Sierra Leone when yellow fever was prevailing in the *Isis*, but by judiciously avoiding any communication with that or any other infected vessel, she escaped in all probability an outbreak of that fatal disease.

The *Flora* was the only store ship in which the ratio of cases exceeded the average, but this was more apparent than real, her complement being much reduced in correcting for time. There was no disease of any importance whatever in her returns.

STORE SHIP

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INVALIDING.

Average Ratio of Invaliding for Ten Years, 24·4 per 1,000.

One hundred and eleven persons were invalided from the Irregular Force during the twelve months, which is in the ratio of 29·5 per 1,000 of mean force, and consequently somewhat above the average ratio of invaliding of the force.

Of the total number invalided, two were for the sequelæ of fever; seven for various diseases of the brain and nervous system; eight for diseases of the organs of respiration; eighteen for functional or organic disease of the heart and blood-vessels; seven for diseases of the alimentary canal; three for diseases of the liver; eight for diseases of the genito-urinary organs; fifteen for rheumatism and diseases of the bones and joints; four for diseases of the special senses; nine for various affections of the skin and cellular tissue; ten for dyspepsia; and twenty for wounds and injuries of various kinds.

DEATHS.

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

There were twenty-three deaths in the force during the twelve months. Seventeen of these were the result of disease, and six of wounds and injuries and drowning. The total death-rate was 6·1 per 1,000 of mean force, and if the deaths from casualties were deducted it would be about 4·5. This is one of the smallest death-rates that has occurred in this force during a period of ten years.

Of the deaths from disease, one was from fever; two from apoplexy; three from inflammation of the brain; three from phthisis; one from pleuritis; one from laryngitis; two from dysentery; one from inflammation of the liver; one from disease of the kidneys; one from abscess; and one from pyæmia.

The fatal casualties are detailed in Table IV. of the Appendix.