

“The Committee appointed by the Council on the 21st of January, to consider the measures advisable for the further prosecution of Researches into the Physical and Biological Conditions of the Deep Sea in the neighbourhood of the British Coast, beg leave to Report as follows:—

“The results obtained by the Dredgings and Temperature-Soundings carried on during the brief Cruise of H.M.S. ‘Lightning’ in August and September, 1868, taken in connection with those of the Dredgings recently prosecuted under the direction of the Governments of Sweden and of the United States, and with the remarkable Temperature-Soundings of Captain Shortland in the Arabian Gulf, have conclusively shown—

“1. That the Ocean-bottom, at depths of 500 fathoms or more, presents a vast field for research, of which the systematic exploration can scarcely fail to yield results of the highest interest and importance, in regard alike to Physical, Biological, and Geological Science.

“2. That the prosecution of such a systematic exploration is altogether beyond the reach of private enterprise, requiring means and appliances which can only be furnished by Government.

“It may be hoped that Her Majesty’s Government may be induced at some future time to consider this work as one of the special duties of the British Navy; which possesses, in the world-wide distribution of its Ships, far greater opportunities for such researches than the Navy of any other country.

“At present, however, the Committee consider it desirable that the Royal Society should represent to Her Majesty’s Government the importance of at once following up the suggestions appended to Dr. Carpenter’s ‘Preliminary Report’ of the Cruise of the ‘Lightning,’ by instituting, during the coming season, a detailed survey of the deeper part of the Ocean-bottom between the North of Scotland and the Færoe Islands, and by extending that survey in both a N.E. and a S.W. direction, so as thoroughly to investigate the Physical and the Biological conditions of the two Submarine Provinces included in that area, which are characterized by a strongly marked contrast in Climate, with a correspond-