

the Government a project for extended investigation, which was eventually approved of, and a committee appointed to prepare the plans of operation.

It was suggested that a vessel should be fitted out for a three or four years' cruise, during which time sounding, dredging, thermometric observation, and chemical examination of sea-water should be carried on continuously, with a view to a more perfect knowledge of the physical and biological conditions of the great ocean basins, of the direction and velocity of the great drifts and currents, of the faunæ of the deep water, and of the zoology and botany of those portions of the globe which are at present comparatively unknown.

H.M.S. *Challenger*, a spar-decked corvette of 2000 tons displacement and 400 horse-power, was selected to carry out these recommendations; and the necessary alterations to fit her for the service on which she was to be employed were made in the dockyard at Sheerness. With the exception of two 64-pounders, all the guns on the main deck were removed, so as to obtain the required accommodation. In addition to cabins for the Captain, Commander, and Director of the Scientific Staff, there were spacious compartments for surveying operations and analysing purposes, a laboratory for the chemist, and a studio for the photographer, all fitted with every appliance which skill and science could suggest. On the upper deck stood an 18-horse double-cylinder