

acquirements, by the Admiralty; and the staff of civilian naturalists and physicists were nominated by a specially appointed committee of the Royal Society, who also furnished instructions and suggestions for the work.

On the 7th December, 1872, after having swung ship for adjustment of compasses and taking magnetic observations, H.M.S. *Challenger* left Sheerness, encountering very stormy weather on her passage to Portsmouth, which was not reached until the 11th; here a fortnight was spent completing supplies. On the 21st December all was pronounced ready, and the most important surveying expedition which had ever sailed from any country left Portsmouth Harbour. As the day advanced, in our progress down Channel, we fell in with miserable, stormy weather, which was our accompaniment for some time. Thus we left our native shores. The sensations were indeed painful; parting from home, with all its pleasing associations, and cherished recollections, had a powerful influence, and gave rise to melancholy impressions, happily relieved by the comforting hope that we should one day be permitted to return to all those so dear to us.

The weather continuing of the same wild and stormy character as we crossed the Bay of Biscay, it was not until the 30th December, nine days after leaving England, that an opportunity presented itself of commencing scientific work; when we were