

their physical and biological conditions, along certain lines. Dr. Carpenter's letter was referred in due course to the hydrographer to the navy, who at once threw himself cordially into the project and prepared a report, which resulted in the Lords of the Admiralty agreeing to the dispatch of such an expedition if the Royal Society recommended it, and provided them with a feasible scheme. A committee was appointed by the Royal Society, and a comprehensive scheme was drawn up.

The sagacious minister who at that time held the purse-strings regarded this as an important matter beyond the reach of private enterprise, and it was with the cordial assent of the House of Commons that Mr. Lowe agreed to defray from the public purse what additional funds might be required to equip a surveying ship in commission with all the necessary appliances for scientific research, and to associate with her complement of scientific officers a civilian staff of specialists in departments which do not come within the scope of the ordinary work of naval surveyors.

The Committee of the Royal Society, with Admiral Richards as one of its most influential members, met from time to time and offered practical suggestions. The *Challenger*, a spar-decked corvette of 2306 tons, with auxiliary steam to 1234 horse-power, and usually mounting eighteen 68-pounders, was chosen for the service; and Captain Nares, a surveying officer of great experience, and singularly well suited in every way for such a post, was selected to take command. When it was suggested to me at the commencement of the negotiations to join the expedition as director of the civilian scientific staff, the sacrifice appeared in every way too great; but, as the various arrangements progressed, so many friendly plans were proposed on all hands to smooth away every difficulty, that I finally accepted a post which to a younger naturalist, without the ties of a family and a responsible home appointment, would be perhaps among the most delightful the world could offer.