

APPENDIX IV.

REPORT on the HEALTH of the CREW of H.M.S. CHALLENGER during the Years 1873-76. By Fleet-Surgeon GEORGE MACLEAN, R.N.

THE medical history of the Challenger Expedition is, fortunately perhaps, of little interest. Considering the rapid variations of climate experienced, the large proportion of time spent at sea, and the trying nature of the seamen's work, the health of the ship's company during the Commission of nearly four years must be regarded as exceptionally good, and will probably compare favourably with that of an ordinary cruiser on any of the foreign stations.

Contrasted with most exploring expeditions of former times the medical history of the ship is chiefly remarkable for the entire absence of disease (such as scurvy) directly attributable to the nature of the dietary used on board—an immunity which was partly due to the fact that the duration of the various passages was limited and capable of being calculated with strict accuracy, owing to the use of steam; to the frequent interruptions, at short intervals, of the sea work by judicious stays in harbour where articles of fresh food, &c., were obtained and the monotony of the life varied; to the uniform and unvarying employment under all circumstances of water condensed on board; and, lastly, to the invariable rule observed of issuing a daily supply of lime juice to all hands when the ship was at sea.

The longest period during which the ship was absent from any inhabited region was in the passage from the Cape of Good Hope to Australia, when she visited the Crozets, Kerguelen, Heard Island, &c., and crossed the Antarctic Circle—three months being employed on this cruise. It is interesting to note that the men were glad to use, for making soup and as a vegetable, during this time the Kerguelen Cabbage (*Pringlea antiscorbutica*), which grows abundantly in Kerguelen—a vegetable which our wise old navigator, Captain Cook, compelled his ship's company to use—and that the health of the men during this period was exceptionally good.

The ordinary rations of the naval service were used during the commission, viz., salt-beef and pork, and preserved meat and vegetables at sea, fresh meat and vegetables in harbour, and the usual half-gill of rum daily. Lime juice, cocoa and tea, biscuit, and soft bread in harbour, complete the dietary (see Table). The average number of men on board