



H. M. S. Challenger.

CHAPTER I.

Selection of H. M. S. CHALLENGER—Her Fittings—Description of the Decks, Workrooms, and Laboratories—List of Officers—Departure from Sheerness—Arrival at Portsmouth—Appendices.

THE deep-sea investigations conducted on board H. M. Ships “Lightning,” “Porcupine,” and “Shearwater,” in the years 1868, 1869, 1870 and 1871, and the subsequent correspondence between the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Council of the Royal Society, and Dr. W. B. Carpenter, C. B., F. R. S., have been referred to in the preceding introductory chapter.

The practical outcome of these preliminary expeditions and negotiations was the decision by the Government and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to equip an Expedition for the examination of the physical and biological conditions of the deep sea throughout the great ocean basins. The proposal to defray the expense of such an Expedition out of the public funds received the cordial assent of the House of Commons in April 1872.

The work connected with the despatch of the Expedition from England was at once vigorously taken up by Admiral G. H. Richards, at that time Hydrographer to the Admiralty. H. M. S. Challenger, a steam corvette, with a spar upper deck, of 2306 tons displacement, and an indicated power of 1234 horses, was chosen for this service. Captain George Strong Nares, an experienced surveying officer, was selected by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to take command of the Expedition. Captain Nares received his appointment to the Challenger in May 1872, and all the arrangements and fittings which were necessary in order to make the ship suitable for the peculiar