

Sound (latitude $81^{\circ} 44'$ North), on the 25th of August. After considerable delays, owing to constantly increasing difficulties in her northward progress, the "Alert" was, on the 2nd of September, in her turn secured in winter quarters near the north entrance of Robeson Channel, in latitude $82^{\circ} 27'$ North, a higher latitude than any vessel had ever before attained. The crews of the two ships were now occupied in preparations for the approaching winter; and expeditions, generally extending over a few days, but in one instance over so long a period as twenty days, and consisting of man and dog-sledges, were sent from each ship in order to explore the neighbouring coasts, and advance boats and stores of provisions in anticipation of the more important sledge expeditions to be undertaken during the following spring and summer. With the disappearance of the sun, on the 12th of October in the case of the "Alert," and on the 16th of October in the case of the "Discovery," the long arctic winter was entered upon, the sledge expeditions ceased, and the crews began the winter's routine which terminated only when the sun reappeared on the 29th of February, 1876, in the case of the "Discovery," and on the 1st of March in that of the "Alert."

The occupations of this prolonged winter included amusements of various kinds, and much besides to serve as interesting employment; but it was necessarily attended with comparatively little exercise in the open air, as well as by confinement on board ship for many hours during each day. Sir George Nares, however, was, at its termination, able to report that it "was passed by each individual on board with much cheerfulness and contentment."*

During this winter, and for some time anterior to it, the crews had been fed on a diet of a liberal description, in which the vegetable element was fairly represented, and daily rations of one ounce of lime juice were served out; while variety was obtained—occasionally in the "Alert," and frequently in the "Discovery"—by the issue of fresh meat.† It is worthy of note that the ration of rum was increased from half-a-gill to one gill from the 16th of October, 1875, to the 29th of February, 1876, in the "Discovery," and from the 26th of October, 1875, until the 3rd of April, 1876, in the "Alert."

On the reappearance of the sun, active preparations were made, during the month of March, for the spring sledging operations, which began early in April; but the diet on board ship continued to be represented by the winter scale, with the exception that a double allowance of lime juice was served out on board the "Alert" from the 4th of March until the 3rd of April. The number of men on board each ship at this time was as follows:—"Alert," 14 officers and 56 men (including 1 officer and 7 men from the "Discovery," who wintered in the "Alert"); "Discovery," 12 officers and 40 men. There is abundant evidence to show that the health of these 26 officers and 96 men was considered to be satisfactory during the winter and until the commencement of April (426, 560). Dr. Colan, of the "Alert," stated that the health of the men under his medical care was remarkable during the winter of 1875 and until he examined the men for the general sledging. "Taking the usual run of the service, it was better during that time than was that of the general run of ships that I have ever had" (1627). Dr. Moss, also of the "Alert," when invited to state his "general opinion of the physical condition of the men and their state of health immediately prior to the 3rd of April," replied,— "With one or two exceptions, I looked upon all as in good health and physical strength" (2203). Dr. Ninnis, of the "Discovery," when asked if the 52 men of his ship had good health until spring, replied,— "Very good health until the 1st of January or the beginning of the year, when I had my first case of scurvy" (2512); and, on being further asked if he was satisfied with the health of his crew, with the exception of this case, he answered,— "Perfectly. I think that everybody was in thoroughly good health; in fact, I am sure of it" (2532). Dr. Coppinger, of the same ship, considered that the health of the crew of the "Discovery" was generally satisfactory during this period, and that the absence of light and the confinement did not produce any obvious effects upon their health, except in the case of one man who suffered from scurvy during winter (2832-2834). Those opinions are confirmed by the "Returns of Sick and Wounded" prepared by Dr. Colan and Dr. Ninnis, the Senior Medical Officers of the two ships; which show that the illnesses were few in number and generally of a trivial nature—several cases of frost-bite and one of scurvy being excepted. It further appears from these returns that, within this period, the cases of illness were considerably more numerous on board the "Discovery" than on board the "Alert."

A new stage in the history of the expedition was entered upon with the commencement of the sledging operations early in April, and from this time until the end of

* Report of Proceedings, Arctic Expedition, 1875-6 (C.—1686), p. 18.

† See Report of Dietary of "Alert," Appendix No. 3; and of "Discovery," Appendix No. 10.