

II.

MEDICAL REPORT

ON THE

ESKIMO DOG DISEASE.

Stoneham House, Winchester,
8th January 1877

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to forward the enclosed paper on "Eskimo Dog Disease," drawn up by Fleet Surgeon Belgrave Ninnis, M.D., late of H.M.S. "Discovery."

The information contained in the paper is of great value, and particularly so to the Danish authorities on the coast of Greenland, and the Eskimo on the west side of Baffin's Bay, where no remedy for the disease, which is constantly occurring, has previously been discovered.

I have, &c.

G. S. NARES,
Captain, R.N.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

Eskimo Dog Disease: Its Symptoms, Treatment, and Pathology.
By Belgrave Ninnis, M.D., Fleet Surgeon, Royal Navy.

For many years there has existed among the Eskimo dogs of the western coast of Greenland a disease which has resisted all attempts at successful treatment, and which threatens, if not at once grappled with and overcome, to annihilate the breed, in which case, as the inhabitants of many settlements along the northern coast are almost entirely dependent upon their dogs for the means of locomotion and hunting, it becomes a question whether, in saving the lives of these most useful and much maligned animals, we are not really preventing the Greenland Eskimo from becoming extinct. It would be out of place in a paper like the present, which is intended to give some practical hints relative to the nature of this disease, its symptoms and treatment, to enter deeply into the origin of the Eskimo dog; but a few remarks respecting those which were on board H.M.S. "Discovery," 1875, 1876, and amongst which the following cases occurred, may not be without interest. We embarked 25 dogs at Retenbenk, to all appearance sound and in good health. From the accounts we had received of their ferocity and wolfishness they were confined to one side of the deck, but this being found inconvenient, they were allowed to run loose on the top-gallant fore-castle. The usual battles of course took place, but not with the usual result, for instead of the one assuming unlimited sway over the rest, after the manner of Eskimo dogs, the pack was divided into two factions, the leader of the second one yielding but very reluctant homage to the "king." Among the most rebellious were two grisly but fine-looking animals exactly alike, apparently brothers. These never submitted to either faction, but held themselves aloof from both. In vain did the "king" attempt to enforce his authority. No sooner did he attack one, than the other hastened to his assistance, and fighting shoulder to shoulder, they beat the enemy off, unless overpowered by numbers, when they were frequently cruelly bitten. Lamed each in a hind leg, they still retained their freedom until one died. The