

658. *Surgeon-Major Pearless.*] You say you got nothing but milk and soda for the first few days in hospital?—Yes.

659. What was the matter with you?—I do not know.

660. Were you feverish?—Yes.

661. Do not you think the doctor would give you the best food for your complaint?—Yes; I do not complain of that. I said I was treated right.

Trooper CECIL HAROLD DAVIS examined on oath. (No. 27.)

662. *Mr. Millar.*] What contingent did you belong to?—The Eighth.

663. What squadron?—E.

664. What were you?—A private.

665. What occupation had you before you went?—A driver.

666. You volunteered to give evidence in regard to the "Britannic": would you kindly state what are your complaints about the "Britannic"?—In the first place, there was not sufficient accommodation—there was no sleeping-room. Whenever the men got into their beds they were bumping up against one another if they were sleeping in the hammocks. The food was not satisfactory. It was very poor food we got sometimes. In the wash-house, for the men to wash in, there was not sufficient water. As for the hospital, I cannot say much about that; but what men were there thought that the hospital orderlies did their duty, but there were not sufficient men to do the duty. That is all.

667. When you say there was not sufficient accommodation do you mean that there was not sufficient room to hang the hammocks?—When all the hammocks were up there was not enough room for every man to put up his.

668. Did that apply to your own squadron?—Yes.

669. Did you see many men who could not find hooks?—They used to sleep on the floor and on the tables, and elsewhere. I slept in the wash-house.

670. Any hooks not used?—No.

671. Do you think men would prefer to sleep in a hammock if they could get one?—Certainly they would.

672. What do you mean when you say the food was very poor—the quantity or the quality?—The quality.

673. Did you have sufficient of what there was?—Yes.

674. What was the fault with the quality?—It was not proper food to give to men at all.

675. What do you mean: was it unfit for human consumption?—I do not think it was fit for me.

676. What food was it?—Both the meat and the fish.

677. Are you referring to one occasion about the fish when it was lying about the deck?—Yes.

678. Is that all you know about the fish?—Yes.

679. On that occasion it was thrown overboard?—I did not see it thrown overboard.

680. Was it eaten?—No.

681. Did the men get other food?—Yes; bully beef.

682. Then, the attention of the officer was drawn to the condition of the fish, and other food was provided?—Yes.

683. Did the men not eat that fish?—No.

684. What about the beef?—It was very bad.

685. Do you mean tainted?—Yes, tainted.

686. Was the attention of the officer called to it?—Yes.

687. Did he get it rectified?—Yes, on several occasions.

688. Did you ever eat that bad meat?—No.

689. Was anything else substituted for it?—Oh, yes. If it was very bad we always got something else for it.

690. How often was that done, do you think?—On pretty nearly every occasion when there was a complaint made.

691. You have no complaint against your officers for not trying to rectify it—it is a complaint against the food supplied to you by the ship?—Yes.

692. You say there was not sufficient room in the wash-house?—No.

693. How many basins were there in your wash-house?—Six.

694. How many wash-houses?—Four.

695. How many basins in each?—There were four in two of the wash-houses and six in the others.

696. Was your wash-house on the deck?—Yes.

697. Was it 6 ft. high?—I could not say exactly.

698. Do you think the utensils provided for washing would be equal to a trough 21 in. by 16 in.?—No.

699. You had two squadrons on your deck: how many men would there be?—About 250 men.

700. You had fourteen basins?—Yes.

701. How long does it take a man to wash?—About five minutes if he can get the water.

702. Five minutes for each man?—Yes.

703. That is twelve men an hour for each basin, and there were fourteen basins?—Yes.

704. Then, there would be about seventy men who would not get a wash?—Yes; the water was turned on from 6 o'clock till 8 o'clock.

705. They took five minutes each to wash?—Yes.