

# CRUISE OF H.M.S. CHALLENGER.



## INTRODUCTION.

NOT many years ago, in fact within the memory of the present generation, our knowledge of anything below the ocean's surface was extremely indefinite and obscure. It was even asserted that the specific gravity of the water at considerable depths would be so great that any heavy weight thrown into the sea must be arrested, and remain suspended for ever. It was argued that no animal life could possibly exist in the great depths of the ocean; and only some fifteen years ago doubts were entertained whether some starfish brought up by a line from 1200 fathoms had not attached themselves to the line on its downward or upward course, and the very nature and habits of the animal were so modified as to suit this view.

There can be no doubt that the invention of ocean telegraphy first stimulated the great desire as well as the necessity for a knowledge of the contour of the bed of the ocean. To insure success it was essential to know the configuration and the soundings of