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## THE SWEDISH MAGELLANIC EXPEDITION: PRELIMINARY REPORT.

By CARL SKOTTSBERG, D.Sc., Leader.

### IV. EXPLORATIONS IN THE PATAGONIAN CHANNELS BETWEEN THE STRAITS AND THE GULF OF PEÑAS.

IN the original plan, presented to the Royal Geographical Society in Stockholm, I put the limit of our exploration of the Patagonian channels more to the south, for the only reason that I never thought it possible for us to extend our work as far as to the Gulf of Peñas. But as the Chilean Government, with great generosity, offered us the transport vessel *Meteoro*, of 650 tons, during one month, we resolved to reach the gulf. Mr. T. Hall, during this expedition, occupied himself with palæontological researches near Rio Grand (Tierra del Fuego) and on the Brunswick peninsula, where Darwin, on Mount Tarn, made the first discovery of Cretaceous fossils.

At our request Captain José Bordes, of the Chilean Navy, accompanied the expedition. Captain Bordes has great experience of the imperfectly known — partly not even mapped — channels, and his presence was of very great value to us. On May 21 we sailed from Punta Arenas. We first paid an interesting visit to the famous Evangelistas rocks, where stands the important lighthouse at the entrance of the straits. These barren rocks are almost inaccessible, and landing is very difficult, even after several days of calm weather. Situated far to the west, this station was important for the geological survey. After a short investigation of the lately mapped Queen Adelaide archipelago, we followed the track along the channels Smyth, Sarmiento, Wide, and Messier, up to the Gulf of Peñas, where we entered Baker inlet. On our way south we paid a visit to the system of channels west of Messier, explored by a German Government Survey in 1882, and also entered Peel inlet, where, in the south arm, we discovered a splendid harbour, called Port Témpanos, after the numerous icefloes carried there by the tidal currents from the extensive glaciers in the inlet.

We reached Punta Arenas on June 27. During all the time landings were made every day in order to get a complete chain of observations of the geological structure of a vast territory, as well as of the gradual changing of the vegetation. Special care was taken to bring us in contact with all the natives met with during the voyage. I only give the following remarks upon the result of the journey.

#### *Anthropological and Ethnographical Observations.*

One of the principal objects was to study the Patagonian "Canoe Indians," mentioned by all travellers in the channels. As is well known, the southernmost part of South America is, or at least was,

inhabited by three different native tribes—the Onas on the main island of Tierra del Fuego, the Yaghans in the Beagle channel and round Cape Horn, and the Alakaloufs (this is entirely wrong; they call themselves “Álookooloop,” cf. Fitzroy’s “Alakoolip”) in the Magellan straits and the Patagonian channels. The Yaghans have been monographed in the excellent work published by the French Expedition in 1882–83 (‘Mission Scientifique du Cap Horn’). This study was made when the Yaghans still lived in complete liberty. I hardly believe that there is one single family now living in freedom, but the last remnants of the interesting people are collected at the English Evangelical Mission, formerly in Tekeenika, where we visited it on board the *Antarctic* in 1902, now moved to Navarin island; some few individuals I saw at the Catholic Mission on Dawson island. We have thus come to the interesting result of having representatives of the two great branches of Christianity amongst the few members of a dying race, but I doubt very much whether they should be able to discuss the creed. . . .

The Ona people, considered to be related to the Chuelches of Patagonia, and differing much from the Canoe Indians, have been studied by Nordenskjöld in 1895, and by the staff of the *Antarctic* in 1902, when I myself made their acquaintance; and lately Dr. R. Lehmann-Nietsche in La Plata, the well-known anthropologist, has lived amongst them, and is now preparing a complete monograph. The third tribe of “Fuegians,” together with the Yaghans generally called “Canoe Indians” by the English, and here called “Álookooloop,” lives in the channels between the Magellan straits and the Peñas gulf. In the straits very few of them are seen nowadays, some few families pulling down to Port Gallant to sell their otter-skins to an Austrian, who is married to an Indian woman and lives there, or even reaching Otway through the Gerome channel. (Concerning the journey in Skyring, see my former article in this *Journal*.) From the Smyth channel northward the Canoes become more numerous, and we had good opportunities of studying the natives on land or sea, building their huts, repairing their boats, and collecting their food along the beach; inviting them on board, sometimes several families at a time, we made observations on their habits and manners. These Indians have never been visited by any mission, and therefore have kept their old customs. Still they have had some contact with “civilization” in the form of sailors and sealers, people often without conscience or morals—at least, to judge from the result of their influence upon the natives; they have given them liquors and conferred their diseases upon them, making them a miserable lot of beggars instead of a strong race, fit to struggle with a most unfriendly nature and endure the most terrible hardships from their early youth to their grave. We met many an unhappy subject, degenerated with syphilis or consumption, the two prevalent diseases now killing many of the Indians, rapidly

reducing their number. In our voyage we counted some eighty- and I suppose they altogether reach the number of three hundred, or perhaps a little more, not to rely on some doubtful information on "many Indians" living in the channels south-west of the Peñas gulf. We did not see one single Canoe during our short stay in this part.

The Álookooloop are generally considered to be very closely related to the Yaghans. It was thus of importance to try to obtain anthropological measurements also from the former race, and to this object Prof. Retzius, in Stockholm, kindly provided the expedition with modern instruments. It, however, proved very difficult to carry out the work. The glittering steel machines frightened the ignorant natives, and often not even the eloquent persuasion of our old female interpreter could remove their firm belief that we intended to do them harm or even kill them right away. Especially I remember an old stupid cacique in Port Grappler, who, seeing the sharp-pointed edges of the anthropometer directed against his chest, fled in great terror, and strictly prohibited all his people to enter the laboratory, thus spoiling what could have been a good piece of work. We managed to get complete measurements of twelve individuals of both sexes.

It is very astonishing that two tribes having the same aspect and customs, living in the same region and not separated by any natural obstacles, should have their languages so entirely different as the Yaghans and Álookooloops, not one word being the same. As the language of the former people had been skilfully studied by the French, and I wanted very much to collect some materials in order to compare the two, I tried to pick up, from the interpreter who followed us the whole trip, as much as possible of her native tongue. I had, however, to confine myself to a small vocabulary of more important words. It was very difficult, not to say impossible, to get an idea of the grammar, all depending upon Akichakwarrakwiltee's (this word means "the great water," the name of the place from where the interpreter came; persons are often called in that manner) imperfect knowledge of the Spanish, the neutral ground upon which our spirits met.

In the French monograph Dr. Hyades also publishes a list of words, obtained from two Álookooloop women, who for some time resided in Orange bay. I was greatly astonished to discover that our interpreter did not understand one single word of this list. I hardly believe the author to be so mistaken or misled, that the pronunciation or meaning of the words should be completely incorrect, and for the present I must believe that there has been once some third tongue talked in some part of the region, because I am convinced that it is neither Yaghan nor the language used in the channels from the straits to the north, and only gradually changing a little as to form a southern and a northern dialect.

By means of giving the natives bread, clothing, and some tobacco,

but never liquors, we could bring together a good collection, including canoes, huts, weapons, clothing, and ornaments, household articles, etc. Most of the Indians seem to have given up the use of bow and arrows, and only use harpoons and lassos of different sizes.

*Botany.*—The branch of my botanical studies favoured in this voyage was naturally the phytogeography, and seldom has anybody had such a splendid opportunity as I had to follow the development and gradual changing of the subantarctic flora. With great certainty I am able to tell where the first northern elements appear and where they begin to gain ground, in such a manner that the forest loses its subantarctic character. This change takes place in the south part of the Peñas gulf, where *Nothofagus Dombeyi* replaces *N. betuloides*.

In Peel inlet I could continue the studies I started in Skyring water in order to survey the influence of the glaciers upon the vegetation in their immediate vicinity, and came to the same conclusions. The investigation of the marine flora gave as principal result, that the natural associations I have tried to distinguish in the Falklands and Tierra del Fuego, during this expedition and in 1902, keep their character as far north as we have travelled, though getting considerably poorer in species in the channel region.

*Geology.*—Mr. Quensel, later on, will give an account of the geological structure of the west Cordillera after he has visited certain parts not reached in the voyage referred to above.

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### THE TRIBES OF NORTH-WESTERN SE-CHUAN.\*

WE publish in the present number a map showing the routes of journeys in North-Western Se-chuan carried out in 1906 and 1907 by Mr. W. N. Fergusson, one of the British and Foreign Bible Society's agents stationed at Ch'êng-tu. Of the two journeys, that carried out in 1907 (July and August) was the more extended. Mr. Fergusson took plane-table observations over a route which, starting and ending at Kuan Hsien, covered 625 miles of rough country, part of which, so far as is known, had never previously been traversed by any European.

This country, lying to the west of the upper Min river, is occupied by a number of independent or semi-independent tribes, who greatly resent being described either as *Fantze*, *i.e.* rebels, a term which finds place on some English maps, or as *Mantze*, *i.e.* barbarians, the term usually applied to the tribes by the Chinese. The exercise of Chinese authority is mainly confined to the Ta-chin and Hsiao-chin valleys. Mr. Fergusson describes the country occupied by the tribes as one of the most picturesque that he has ever traversed. Its extent is about 250 miles from north to south and 350 miles from east to west. A

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\* Map, p. 648.