

SOUTHERN MISSION.

Tierra del Fuego.

SANDY POINT.



THE Rev. Thos. Bridges writes:—

“ *Sandy Point, Magellan Strait,*
“ *July 26, 1885.*”

“ To-day the ‘ *Araucania* ’ arrived with our bishop on board. With him I have spent a most enjoyable day. Finding it more necessary to proceed to Monte Video, he has determined to do so, instead of now going to Ooshooia. The German steamer, ‘ *Cambyses*, ’ is due to-morrow, and in her the bishop will leave for Monte Video. We shall immediately upon his departure go to Gente Grande Bay, and do all we can to open up a good understanding between the sheep farmers and the Ona natives. If we can, we will also take one or two lads from there to Ooshooia, in order to teach them, and to learn their language. Also, I purpose going to Admiralty Sound in quest of information of the natives. In short, we shall make as thorough a cruise as possible, so as to give you reliable and important information, and as early as possible. We will well utilize, with the help of God, the great advantages steam power gives us, and it is very likely a month, or even two, will be now devoted to this necessary investigation. May the Divine blessing richly rest upon this earnest endeavour, and guide us happily in a wise use of means.

“ The three cases of packages we have safely received, per the ‘ *Aconcagua*. ’ Having much cargo on board, after making a cruise round the coast of Ouisin, from Gente Grande round by Useless Bay, Keat’s Sound, Admiralty Sound, and so round by Sarmiento inside the Prowse Islands, and so *viá* London Island, we will proceed to Ooshooia. From there we will probably go eastward as far as Good Success Bay ; or further if necessary in quest of the Eastern Ona, with whom we will try to enter into negotiation ; bring back some lads to Ooshooia, place some of them in fit quarters there, under the special care of Mr. Lawrence. Others of them I would, with their concurrence, bring here ; so that they may be utilized by the sheep farmers as labourers, and in opening up amicable relationship with these northern Ona ; so that these may be kept from making themselves so obnoxious to the sheep farmers, as to lead to the use of rifles to keep them in subjection. Unless we do something material in this way, we must expect the almost total and speedy annihilation of this most interesting tribe. We purpose then making a second cruise round Clarence Island, thence westward and southward among the many islands in that direction, doing the utmost

investigation our large coal supply will then permit. We shall then return to Sandy Point, and send you the results. We may then make a third cruise, westward and northward, and thus complete our investigations of the whole archipelago ; which would fully enable you to decide what shall be done here, what and where stations shall be made, or otherwise. Whilst we will do our best to make these researches thorough, they shall at the same time be made with all possible despatch.

“ Please communicate with the Bible Society; tell them of my safe receipt of the two proof sheets of St. John’s Gospel, which, at the earliest possible date, I will finish revising and send back.

“ And now, realising the supreme importance of the Divine guidance and blessing at this critically difficult epoch in our mission, and with earnest prayer that these may be abundantly granted you and us.

“ THOS. BRIDGES.”

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SANDY POINT.



THE following has been received from the Rev. T. Bridges:---

“ *The ‘Allen Gardiner,’ Sandy Point,*
“ *August 10, 1885.*”

“ On the 25th ult., shortly after our Bishop left in the ‘Cambyses’ for Monte Video, we left for Gente Grande. In accordance with the Bishop’s wish, we took Mr. and Mrs. Felton, that they might see their brother, Mr. W. Bartlett, Jun., who is manager there, and a partner. Our object was to see the natives there, gather all the information we could about them, receive some of them for instruction, and prepare a way for the happy settlement of the ever-difficult native question. With strong wind in our favour, we reached our anchorage in good time, but the wind was so strong we could not go on shore till mid-day following. The land was afresh covered with snow, and the wind still strong and cold. The next day the weather prevented us landing till evening. On the fourth day, in spite of the biting wind, we went out on horseback for a long ride in a vain search for the natives. The horses, being in poor condition, could not be ridden two days following; also the weather forbade it. On the sixth day we again went out, and had repeatedly to dismount to warm ourselves by exercise. We came across natives in the afternoon. They had fled and scattered as soon as they spied us, and when we approached their huts we found them deserted. Eventually, we ran down two poor terrified men. They had bows and arrows, and were dressed in much-patched guanaco mantles. They were gaunt, powerfully made, and about 5ft. 8in. in height. We had with us Anaci, an Ona from Keppel Island, who is engaged by Mr. Bartlett as a regular *employé*. On hearing him speak they abstained from shooting, though they several times put their arrows to do so. Through Anaci, we soon made them feel assured of safety, and of our friendship, and we talked to them for a full half-hour. When we gave them a present they wept their thanks. This was evidently to gain our pity for their helplessness. A poor woman we shortly after overtook did the same. We tried to arrange for a meeting on the morrow, when we promised them every kindness, and gifts of knives and blankets. So great, however, are their fears that this was even in vain. I had hoped to show some of them our vessel, and to have induced some lads to come with us. After the two poor fellows had been made happy, and we had seen them smile, we left them, but not before

we had pressed them to abstain from killing sheep and horses. We found proofs, in the refuse of their huts, that they had eaten mutton. Presently we saw other natives in the distance hurrying away. We pushed on in pursuit, and came up with a mother carrying her three children. The youngest could not have been less than two years, and the oldest was about seven. Outside her mantle (a very poor one) she had a band of thongs across her breast, and, thus supported, she was actually hurrying along for her life with this great burden. When we drew near she halted, and, beating her breast, deprecated our wrath with great vehemence, making us to understand she nourished a child, and for its sake wished to live. The poor children were crying dreadfully, being sorely galled by the thongs. When we would liberate them the mother resisted, evidently fearing we would take them from her. She kept up for a long time a loud weeping deprecation, but gradually she calmed down, and listened to what we said. We had the pleasure of seeing her happy before we left, and gave her some presents, and again repeated our invitation for to-morrow. One of the two men caught up to us, and was a deeply interested party at this meeting. What he was to the woman we don't know. It was now too late to force a meeting with others, who were all out of sight, but certainly our words and actions will have a good effect. The riding is very bad, because of the burrowings of numberless 'Cururas,' animals something like rats. We reached the station after dusk. Before our coming, Mr. Bartlett had effected a peaceable meeting with another party of Ona. These we searched for, but could not find. It is a hard thing to tell these poor people to go elsewhere to live because you have brought sheep, and you cannot let them any longer live where you have put your sheep, because they and their dogs will destroy them.

“The day following our meeting was very fine, and we kept a look-out for the agreed signal-smokes, but in vain, so we got under weigh and went round to Porvenir Harbour, near Cape Monmouth. On the way we saw two parties of natives near the shore, which supplies them with the chief part of their food. Though we were a long way off, they hurried up into the interior, apparently fearing they should be shot at. One continuous spell of bad weather from the S.S.W. kept us in Porvenir Harbour for six days. We visited the gold mines there. The natives avoid the miners, and are seldom met with. We learn, however, that they are decidedly more numerous than my estimate, as founded on information gathered from Anaci. I should think the Ona tribe cannot be less than 800, unless the southern and eastern Ona have been decimated by disease since Anaci gave me their names.

“On Saturday, the 8th inst., we went round to Useless Bay, where we again visited the mines. Mr. Wolff we have found very kind, and he is desirous of treating the natives well. He has a store in Porvenir Harbour, and his head quarters are in Useless Bay.

“At 4.30 P.M., on the 8th, we left Useless Bay and came here, which

we shall leave to-day at 4 A.M., to make further investigations from Useless Bay southward and westward, and go round to Ooshooia. Thence I purpose going eastward round Cape St. Diego, and as far north as San Sebastian Bay, in quest of information about the Ona. Thence we return to Ooshooia, and back here, whence I will further write on the Ona question. Till then, farewell.

“THOS. BRIDGES.”

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OOSHOOIA.



THE following has been received from Mr. J. Lawrence:—

“ *Ooshooia, Tierra del Fuégo, August 28, 1885.* ”

“ We have been looking forward to the pleasure of seeing Bishop Stirling at Ooshooia; but we are again disappointed, his visit being postponed at a time when we most need his wise counsel and sympathy, considering what has taken place since we saw him last, a little more than twelve months ago. Many are the trials and changes we experience even in a short space of time. How true it is: ‘ We know not what shall be on the morrow.’ But however much we may have to discourage and disappoint us now, we know that all our hopes and wishes will be fully realized when we shall be with Him in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

“ The parcels of clothing now received from England have been most acceptable.

“ During the absence of the Rev. T. Bridges in the ‘ Allen Gardiner ’ I had the pleasure of distributing the same, with clothing lately received from the ‘ Ladies’ Working Party ’ and other friends in the Falklands.

“ The natives who were the happy and thankful recipients of these most welcome gifts were about eighty. Also the proceeds of the collection in Stanley during my visit there have been disposed of to the most needy natives. The gratitude of these poor people for the many tokens of love they receive from their kind Christian friends is always most heartily expressed. Many are the wants and necessities of the Fuégians, owing to the country and climate, and their impoverished and helpless condition. A few weeks ago we had a very pleasant gathering in the schoolroom; between fifty and sixty natives sat down to a good, substantial meal about 4 P.M., and being winter—short days and much snow on the ground—to make it interesting we showed them the magic lantern, which amused them very much, and concluded with singing and prayer. At the request of some of our Christian natives I have resumed our daily morning services, at which we have a very fair attendance. I am thankful to say that, with the exception of a few cases, our people are better in health than they have been for some time. Though it is now the beginning of spring, in some places the snow is five feet deep. The weather

being very bad, and the short space of time, it is thought, will not allow Mr. Bridges to accomplish the mission, with success, of finding the Alaculoof and Ona Indians. You have much to discourage you at the present time, but I trust that all will work together for the good of the cause in which we are engaged, and the honour and glory of God.

“J. LAWRENCE.”

The Rev. T. Bridges writes:—

“*On Board the ‘Allen Gardiner,’*

“*Friday, September 18, 1885.*”

“We are now quietly at anchor in a cove in Dyneley Sound, Clarence Island. It is perfectly calm and mild; the snow has entirely gone from the lowlands. The sun is trying to shine through the misty clouds. We are here in order to obtain wood and water. Our coals are spent. Tomorrow we hope to be at Sandy Point, whence, after taking in coal, I purpose leaving to make our Alaculoof trip.

“Thirty-seven days ago we left Sandy Point in order to commence this trip. Our plan was to skirt the shores closely, specially such parts as were unknown before, and those where we expected to find natives. Having previously visited from Gente Grande Bay to Cape Boqueron, we first made for Useless Bay, where we had heard many natives are generally to be found; but though we went up well nigh to the head of it, the weather was so thick, wet, and cold, and the land so covered with snow, we could see nothing clearly. The wind was moderate from the east. I wished to anchor there, but our captain did not think it safe, as this bay is very exposed. We accordingly got out round the South Head before dark, not having sighted the south coast at all till then. The next day we steamed up Admiralty Sound against a light east wind, accompanied, as yesterday, with foggy rain and snow. We skirted the south coast, but beyond a deserted canoe we saw no sign of human life. We anchored for the night in Parry Harbour, at the head of the Sound. The next day we left early, and skirted round the head of the Sound and the north shore, but the weather still being foggy, snowy, and cold, we could see nothing plainly, and saw no signs of natives. That night, being our fourth from Sandy Point, we spent in Brooke’s Harbour, Admiralty Sound. The next day, weather being still unchanged, we steamed down into Fitton Inlet and Ice Sound, but saw no signs of life in these dismal parts, where it almost always rains, and the rugged, barren land is most forbidding. We then passed through Gabriel Channel, and at dusk anchored in Hope Harbour, Clarence Island. The head of this bay was a field of ice, close to which we anchored. Left Hope Harbour early next morning, and steamed round Keat’s Sound, but there also saw no signs of natives. Weather still cold and dull, with slight rain and snow. Passed round by Sarmiento and inside the islands lining the south coast of Cockburn Channel, among which we anchored for the night. The next day

August 16th, got under weigh at dusk, for Ooshooia, which we reached early on the 18th. Ooshooia was then and has since been enveloped in deep snow, in places covering up the fences and blocking up every gateway. We landed the stores and goods, and with difficulty carried them up, all the able men (22) in the place gladly assisting in this work. After a pleasant eight days at Ooshooia, we left for the east, our plan now being to call at every place resorted to by natives from Moat Bay eastward to Good Success Bay, and thence northward round to Gente Grande Bay. To assist us, as interpreter on this voyage, we were glad to take in Dataminik, who is half Ona, and knows the Ona language as spoken by the east people. Whilst we were at Ooshooia the weather was cold and dull, with occasional snow. This weather followed us eastward, changed by two S.W. gales with heavy snow. We anchored the first night, August 26th, at dusk, in a harbour on the north coast called Manucatoosh, where we stayed the next day. Here a party of twenty natives arrived, and to these I was glad to make distribution of clothes, which they much needed. Before leaving I affectionately and earnestly addressed them, and prayed with them, and, with cordial farewells, left them. Land thickly covered with snow. As this is the place I purpose as my future home, I offered employment to the native men we found here, which they gladly accepted. They are to prepare garden land and fences. I left them provisions for eight weeks. I have every confidence they will do well. James Cooshi and his wife are in charge. They built two new wigwams on a fresh site, near the scene of their daily work.

“ August 28th, left Manucatoosh at daylight, the deck being covered thickly with snow. Weather proving contrary and disagreeable, we put into Banner Cove at noon, and did not leave till 9.30 A.M. on the 30th. Weather continuously bad ; saw no natives. Our next port was Spaniard Harbour, where we anchored at 4.45 P.M. The day was fine and calm. Skirted the shore from Moat Bay, but saw no natives. Next day, 31st, left Aguirre Bay and skirted the coast to Good Success Bay ; saw no signs of natives. Weather boisterous, but mild. This afternoon, off Cape Good Success, an accident occurred, which necessitated the letting off of the steam and dousing the fire. This caused a delay of three hours. After repairing the joint, where the steam issued forth with great violence, the fire was re-lit, and we were able before dark to get into harbour. Here we remained weather-bound five days. It blew hard from S.W., and much snow fell daily. Finally, on September 6th, with fair weather and light west wind, we left, rounded Cape San Diego in perfectly still water close in shore, and at 10 A.M. anchored in Thetis Bay. Landed in different parts, spent some two hours looking about, and returned to our vessel much disappointed. We had felt sure of finding natives here. I ordered an immediate return to Ooshooia, and thence to Sandy Point.

“ On September 7th, at 3.30 P.M., we beat a retreat, being then six miles off the coast abreast of the Three Brothers. Under steam and sail,

with wind behind us, we passed Cape San Diego at dusk, and by midnight were off Cape Hall. Having by 11 A.M. next day cleared the engine, and the weather being moderate, we happily steamed into Good Success Bay. Here we could not have got under sail only. The day after was fine, but wind contrary and not strong. Towards night it rapidly increased to a hard gale from the S.W., with heavy snow. This continued till sunset next day. The day following (Friday, September 11th) we left in the afternoon in a calm, and did well till about midnight. The wind then strengthened and headed us, but soon moderated, and, after a boisterous night, daylight found us in a good position. The weather was very fine on Saturday, and by steam alone we reached Ooshooia at 6.30 P.M., having accomplished the voyage from Good Success in about twenty-eight hours.

“ During our absence they had much bad weather, and the place is sorely troubled with deep snow, which in some places completely buries the fences. The health of the natives is not at all satisfactory—not only there, but in other parts as well. Distribution of clothing was made there to over eighty persons. The people look comfortable and interesting, and attend much more to their personal appearance than formerly, and may be truly described as clean and orderly, and even neat in their personal appearance. *Attendance at our meetings is large, and the people are evidently much more alive to the duties of life than they were, and more inclined to live after a Christian manner.* Four deaths have recently occurred—Mary Wigellin, died on the 14th. Of her we can say she died an intelligent and peaceful Christian, in whom we had much comfort. We have at Ooshooia three adults lame from disease, and not a few are very sickly; others are scrofulous, and very subject to pneumonia. But few are in good health. Mr. Lawrence supplies the more needy with much care and kindness. On Tuesday, September 15th, at 9.30 A.M., we left Ooshooia for Sandy Point. We have had calm for the most part, anchoring at sunset and starting before sunrise. We are now in a snug cove in Dynevor Sound, getting fuel and water. By pushing on at night (they are moonlit, and have been calm) we might have reached Sandy Point yesterday. We have with us our two Alaculoof interpreters, who are much improved, and are very useful on board. We have burned some wood this voyage, and though it was green, yet with a little coal it answered admirably, and is a clear proof that with wood supplies prepared beforehand *we could steam about with wood fires, say, at half the cost of coal.* It would be as much as this, but on the other hand it would be employment for the natives. I conclude this account of our voyage, trusting that, though disappointing in the extreme, it will yet be profitable in determining you what ought to be done.

“ THOS. BRIDGES.”