

"Beagle" left England in 1826 to survey the Strait of Magellan, although it was known that the whalers employed in the south-sea fishery visited the outer coast of Patagonia, and anchored in a port in lat. $51^{\circ} 30' S.$, for Mr. Arrowsmith in 1806 had a plan of this port which he had received from a vessel employed in this fishery.

The "Adventure" and "Beagle," with the schooner "Adelaide," between the years 1826-30, traced the Inner Channels from the Strait of Magellan to the Gulf of Penas, and a most interesting narrative of their proceedings was published by the late Admiral Robert Fitz Roy, the officer who commanded the "Beagle;" but it was not until 1848 that these channels were used, the first vessel to pass through them being H.M.S. "Gorgon" in September of that year. She left Sholl Bay at the southern end of Smyth Channel on the 28th August, and reached the Gulf of Penas on the 12th September. A few of H.M. ships, and also an occasional Chilian steamer took the inner passages after the successful trip of the "Gorgon," and H.M.S. "Nassau" surveyed on a large scale their narrowest parts, viz., Smyth Channel and the English Narrows in 1868. The Peninsular Steam Navigation Company sent their vessels by this route in 1870, but discontinued doing so in 1872 owing to numerous accidents, as their ships, being 380 feet in length on the keel, were very unhandy to turn in the narrow harbours or the English Narrows. Since 1872 the mail steamers pass into the Pacific from Sea Reach, unless circumstances make it inadvisable to face a gale, when they use Smyth Channel and enter the Pacific by the Gulf of Trinidad.

The chief difficulty in using the Inner Channels from the Strait of Magellan to the Gulf of Penas is the want of anchorages suitable for large vessels. The first anchorage after passing through Smyth Channel is Isthmus Bay, at its northern end, but even here the largest swinging scope is but one and a half cables. From Isthmus Bay to Puerto Bueno (a harbour rather larger and better than Isthmus Bay), a distance of 75 miles, no place is at present known where a large vessel could find shelter, although there are a few anchorages fit for small craft, viz., Columbine Cove, Mayne Harbour, &c. Again, from Puerto Bueno to Port Grappler, a distance of 115 miles, the knowledge of the channels does not permit at present of positive assertion as to whether there are suitable anchorages for large vessels or not, although it appears probable that there may be some good harbours in Madré Island; Port Grappler itself is but two cables in width. From Port Grappler to the English Narrows the distance is 35 miles, but on each side of the Narrows is a fair anchorage. From the Narrows to the Gulf of Penas the distance is 80 miles, and here again the anchorages are deficient, although either of the three known, viz., Connor Cove, Island Harbour, and Hale Cove may be used if necessary; Hale Cove, however, is probably the best.

Although the chief difficulty in using the Inner Channels is the want of harbours, there is another and very serious difficulty in two parts of these otherwise safe passages, viz., the sharp turn a vessel has to take both in Smyth Channel and in the