



## Synopsis

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In 1839, Charles Darwin remarked, with some amazement, about the occurrence of glaciers at sea level in the Gulf of Penas, latitude  $46^{\circ} 40'$ . One glacier he referred to was the San Quintin Glacier. This remark must have triggered the interest of Professor Otto Nordenskjöld, the famed Swedish explorer and geographer. In 1920, Professor Nordenskjöld led a small expedition to explore and document remote parts of South America. The second phase was to the ice covered terrain of Chilean Patagonia, specifically the North Patagonian Icefield and its largest glacier, the San Quintin.

This is the story of that episode as told by Nils Pallin, the expedition's surveyor, with additional extracts illustrating the challenges they faced in this unforgiving region from Allan Bäckman's letters. In the process of researching this expedition, 200 uncaptioned photographs were assembled and a selection has been added to enhance this story. A chronology of significant events affecting the region has been included together with a summary of subsequent exploration.

Whilst Professor Nordenskjöld may have left this dynamic region feeling that the expedition had not achieved as much as it might have done due to the challenges of the terrain and the inhospitable weather, the expedition's photographs were later used to reveal the mind shatteringly fast disappearance of the

smaller glaciers together with the rapid thinning of the largest glacier, the San Quintin.



*Left to right: Nils Pallin, Allan Bäckman,  
Professor Otto Nordenskjöld and Sten von Rosen*