

Enero 10 / 1878:

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Reclamo ante el Gob. de E. Unidos

Perito  
G. S. / 115

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In the year 1600, the islands now called Jason's Islands, or Selaldines, at the north-west extremity of the Falklands, were seen and named by Selald de Weert; and during the next two centuries many other navigators sailing to or from the Pacific, saw the Falklands; but it does not appear that any further landing was effected or even that any vessel anchored there, after De la Chesne, except the Saint Louis, of St Malo, until M. de Bougainville landed to form his settlement, in February 1764.

Several ships of St Malo passed near the eastern Falklands between the years 1706 and 1714, from whose accounts Mr. Trelzier compiled his chart, published in 1717; and in compliment to the owners of one of them (the Saint Louis), her commander, Mr. Fouquet, named the cluster of islets near which he anchored, the Amic Isles.



In consequence of the visits of these ships of St. Malo, the French named the islands 'Les Malouines'; but this was not till after 1716, when Trelzier compiled the chart in which he called them 'Les Isles Nouvelles'; although in his own narrative (p. 512, Amsterdam edition, 1717), he says, "Ces îles sont sans doute les mêmes que celles que le Chevalier Richard Hawkins decouvrut en 1593."

The Spaniards adopted the French name, slightly altered, by changing Malouines into Malvinas; even now the term 'maloon', a corruption of malouine,<sup>\*</sup> is sometimes used by English or Americans instead of island, in writing as well as in speaking.

During the early part of the last century France maintained a lucrative commerce with Chile and Peru, by way of Cape Horn and the advantages which might be derived from a port of refuge and supply at the eastern extremity of the Falklands did not escape her active discernment.

De Bougainville says 'Cependant leur pos-

tion heureuse pour servir de relâche aux  
vareseaux qui vont dans la mer du sud, et  
d'échelle pour la découverte des terres australes  
avait frappé les navigateurs de toutes les  
nations. Au commencement de l'année 1763  
la cour de France résolut de former un établis-  
sement dans ces îles. Je proposai au ministre  
de le commencer à mes frais, et secondé par  
M. M. de Kerville et d'Arboulin, l'un mon  
cousin-german et l'autre mon oncle, je fis  
sur le Champ<sup>x</sup> construire et armer à Saint-Malo  
par les soins de M. Duclot Guyot, aujourd'hui  
mon second, l'Aigle de vingt canons, et le Sphinx  
de douze, que je munis de tout ce qui étoit  
propre pour une pareille expédition. Sembab-  
uai plusieurs familles Académiques, espèce  
d'hommes laborieuse, intelligente, et qui doit  
être chère à la France par l'inépuisable attaché-  
ment que lui on prouvé les honnêtes et infor-  
tunes citoyens".

"A Monte Video nous prîmes beaucoup de chevaux  
et de bœufs à corne - nous atterrâmes sur les  
îles Selaldes le 31 Janvier 1764.

"La même illusion qui avoit fait croire à  
Hawkins, à Woods Rogers, et aux autres, que ces  
îles étaient couvertes de bois, agit aussi sur mes  
Compagnons de voyage, et sur moi. Nous venions avec  
surprise, en débarquant que ce que nous avions pris  
pour du bois en cinglant le long de la côte, n'étoit  
autre chose que des touffes de juncs fort élevées  
et fort rapprochées l'une des autres. Leur pied,  
en se desséchant reçoit la couleur d'herbe morte  
jusqu'à une toise environ de hauteur, et de ce sort  
une touffe de juncs d'un beau verd qui couronne  
ce pied; au soleil, dans l'éloignement, les tiges  
réunies présentent l'aspect d'un bois de mediocre  
hauteur. Ces juncs ne croissent qu'au bord de la  
mer, et sur les petites îles. les montagnes de la  
grande terre sont, dans quelques endroits, cou-  
vertes entièrement de bruyère <sup>qui prend aisement</sup>  
de loin pour du taillis." (Voyage autour du monde  
1766-69, seconde édition, 1772, tom. I. p. 66-69)

On the 17th of March De Bougainville decided to place his establishment on the spot where the present settlement stands, and forthwith disembarked to commence the laborious undertaking of founding a colony.

In the year 1764, a squadron was sent to the South Seas by George III, in whose instructions dated June 17th, 1764, it is said, " And whereas His Majesty's islands, called Pepys Islands and Falkland Islands, lying within the said tract, (the tract between the Cape of Good Hope and the Strait of Magalhaens) notwithstanding their having been first discovered and visited by British navigators, have never yet been so sufficiently surveyed as that an accurate judgment may be formed of their coasts and product, His Majesty, taking the premises into consideration, and conceiving no function so proper for enterprises of this nature as a time of profound peace, in which His Kingdoms at present happily enjoy, has thought fit that it should now be undertaken."



Spain, hearing of the French settlement, immediately laid claim to the islands, as forming a part of her American possessions, and France, influenced by various considerations, agreed to deliver up to Spain her newly formed colony, upon condition that the protectors and colonists should be indemnified for their losses; an agreement honourably fulfilled by Spain.

On the 1st of April 1767, De Bougainville gave up possession to the Spanish officer appointed to take charge; the standard of Spain was hoisted, and royal salutes fired by the vessels present.

Some of the French colonists remained, but the greater part preferred returning to France, and passages were given to them on

board Spanish ships.

In 1770, a Spanish armament attacked the British colony at Port Egmont and obliged its small garrison to surrender to an over-powering force, and quit the place. England, indignant at the insult, armed for war, and demanded satisfaction from Spain for the injuries inflicted. At first Spain argued and temporized; but finding that Great Britain continued firm, and that the English people were more disposed for action than their Government, she relinquished her views—disavowed the act of her officer—and restored Port Egmont. England was satisfied—or rather the court party professed to be satisfied—but the opposers of government angrily declared that Spain had not done enough, and that, though compelled to make restitution, her insult was unatoned for.

In 1774, finding the establishment at the Falklands expensive and almost useless, England quietly withdrew it; but the marks and signals of possession of land and property were left upon the islands, and when the Governor departed, the British flag remained flying, and various formalities were observed, intended to indicate the right of possession as well as to show that the occupation of them might be resumed.

The reports made by officers employed at Port Egmont were of such a discouraging tendency, that no person at that time entertained the least wish to have any further concern with the islands—and for years they were unnoticed—though not forgotten by England. Spain, however, jealous of interference with her colonial possessions and regarding the Falklands as a vantage ground, from which those in the South might be suddenly or secretly invaded maintained a small garrison at the eastern extremity of the Archipelago, where her ships occasionally touched, and from time to time reconnoitred the adjacent ports, in order to ascertain whether any visitors were

<sup>#</sup> The first was in 1770, and was immediately upon the conquest of Port Egmont.

there. At what precise time the Spaniards withdrew this small garrison, and left the Falkland archipelago uninhabited by man, I am not certain; but it must have been early in this century, because from 1810 to 1820 there was no person upon those islands who claimed even a shadow of authority over any of them.

In 1820, a ship of war was sent from B.M.A. to Port Louis; her Captain, Fawcett, hoisted the Argentine flag, and saluted it with twenty-one guns, notifying, at the same time, to the sealing and whaling vessels present, that he was "commissioned by the Supreme Government of the United Provinces of South America to take possession of these islands in the name of the country to which they naturally appertain" — (Weddell p103) This act of the B.M.A. Government was scarcely known in Europe for many years: and not until 1829 was it noticed formally by Great Britain — Davis first discovered them; Hawkins first named them; Strong first landed on them and (excepting the French), Byron first took formal possession of them; and (again excepting the French) Macbride first colonized them.

Respecting the French claim, depending only upon first settlement, not discovering, naming, or landing, whatever validity anyone may be disposed to allow it, that value must be destroyed, when it is remembered that Spain asserted her superior claim, and that France actually admitted it, resigning for ever her pretensions to those islands. Whatever France might have been induced to do for political reasons of which the most apparent now is the continuance of the trade she then carried on with Chile and Peru, England never admitted that the Spanish claim was valid, and France having withdrawn the question is solely between Spain and Great Britain.

Spaniards neither discovered, landed upon, nor settled in the Falklands before Englishmen: and their only claim <sup>rests</sup> upon the unstable

foundation of a papal bull, by virtue of which Spain might just as well claim Tahiti, the Sandwich Islands, or New Zealand.

As to the pretensions of B.<sup>r</sup>A., I shall only remark that in a paper transmitted by her government to Mr Baylies, Charge-d'affaires of the United States of North America on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1832, the advocate of her claims asserts, "that it is a political absurdity to pretend that a colony which emancipates itself, inherits the other territories which the metropolis may possess."

~~Foot-~~ When Captain Jewitt arrived at the Falklands he found more than thirty sail of vessels engaged there in the seal fishery, besides others which were recruiting the health of their crews after whaling or sealing voyages in the antarctic regions. By the crews of these ships numbers of cattle and pigs were killed as well as horses, the wild descendants of those taken there by Bougainville and his successors.

<sup>pp 238. 239</sup> In 1823, the B.<sup>r</sup> Syrian Government took another step, in the appointment of a "Comandante de las Malvinas," and in the same year, Lewis Vernet, by birth a German, in concert with his friends at B.<sup>r</sup>A. solicited and obtained from the Government, the use of the fishery and of the cattle on the eastern Malvinas, and likewise tracts of land thereon, in order to provide for the subsistence of the settlement. This undertaking did not prosper, but the next year M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet prepared a second expedition in which he himself sailed. His own words (translated) are: "After many sacrifices, I was enabled to surmount great obstacles, but still that which we expected to effect in one year was not realized before the expiration of five. My partners lost all hope, and sold me their shares. I bought, successively three vessels, and lost them; I chartered five, one of which was lost. Each blow produced dismay in the colonists, who several times resolved to leave that ungrateful region, but were restrained by their affection

for me, which I had known how to win, and  
by the example of constancy and patience which my  
family and myself held out to them.

In 1828, the Government of B.R. granted to M<sup>r</sup>  
Vernet (with certain exceptions) the right of  
property in the Falkland Islands and in Staten  
Land; "It also conceded to the colony exemption  
from taxation for twenty years, and for the same  
period the exclusive right to the fishery in all  
the Malvinas, and on the coast of the continent  
to the southward of the Rio Negro, under the  
condition that within three years M<sup>r</sup> Vernet should  
have established the colony."

About this time merchant vessels of all nations  
visited the Falkland Islands, both on their out-  
ward voyage and when returning from the  
Pacific; but advantageous as their visits were  
those of numerous sealers had a very different  
effect; for, instead of frequenting the settlement  
their crews killed the seal indiscriminately at  
all seasons and slaughtered great numbers of  
wild cattle. "For this reason," says Vernet, "I reque-  
sted the Government to furnish me with a vessel  
of war, to enable me to cause the rights of the colo-  
ny to be respected. The Government was aware of  
the necessity of the measure; but not being then  
able to place a vessel at my disposal; it resolved to  
invest me with a public and official character,  
and for that purpose issued the two decrees of the  
10th. of June; the one establishing the gover-  
norship of the Malvinas and Terra del Fuego;  
and the other nominating me to fulfil that  
office".\*

In 1829, Vernet warned off some North American  
sealers; and in 1831, upon their repeating the sealing  
excursion of which he had complained, he detained  
them by force. This act, and various circumstances  
arising out of it, drew upon him and his unfor-  
tunate Colony the hasty indignation of Captain Silas  
Duncan, of the United States corvette Lexington, who,  
on his own responsibility, without waiting to  
communicate with his Government, sailed from

The Plate to the Falkland Islands, surprised assault-  
ed, and made prisoners of many unoffending people,  
and unwarrantably destroyed both property and  
buildings in Brisbane and several others were  
put into confinement, and carried away, on  
board the Lexington to B. I., where they were  
delivered up to the R. Argent. Government in  
February 1832. The United States supported  
their officer and immediately despatched a char-  
ge-d'affaires to B. I. with instructions  
to demand compensation for the injury done  
to North American trade, and full reparation  
to all North American citizens for personal wrongs.

When the Fine and Cleo sailed, after a very  
short stay at the islands, no authority was  
left there, but the colour were entrusted to an  
Irishman, who had been M. Vernet's storekeeper.

Those who may wish for more historical infor-  
mation on this subject - for further details of  
former negotiations between Spain and En-  
gland or of the late discussions between North  
America and B. I. - Should refer to Dr.  
Johnson's "Thoughts respecting the Falkland  
Island" (Johnson's Works, vol. viii. p. 96 Mu-  
phy's Edition, 1816); to Junius's 42d Letter;  
and to papers published at B. I. in 1832 in  
addition to general history. <sup>X</sup> Not long before the Cleo arrived  
<sup>X</sup> In the early part of 1834 no inhabitant fell ill of the disease of which  
and the Powers of Green Escomienda of  
will be numbered again. The cause of my name being so much  
In the winter there is not generally so much  
wind as in the summer, and in the former  
season the weather, though colder, is more  
settled, and considerably drier.

Some tracts of land, especially those at the  
south of East Falkland, differ in character,  
being low level, and abundantly produc-  
tive of excellent herbage.  
The settlement now consisting only of a few  
huts, some cottages, and a dilapidated house  
or two, occupies the place originally selected  
by Bougainville, close to Port Louis at the head of  
Berkeley Sound

By the French and afterwards by the Spanish colonists, a number of black cattle, horses, pigs and rabbits were turned loose upon East Falkland; and by considerate persons, engaged in whale or seal-fishery, both goats and pigs have been here multiplied exceedingly: and, although they be left upon smaller islands near West Falkland. These animals have multiplied exceedingly: and although they have been killed indiscriminately by the crews of vessels, as well as by the settlers. There are still many thousand head of cattle and some thousand horses, besides droves of pigs, perfectly wild, upon the eastern large islands: while upon Carcass Island, Saunders Islands, and others, there are numbers of goats and pigs. In 1834 the smallest estimate exceeded twelve thousand cattle, and four thousand horses; but there were no means of ascertaining their number, except by comparing the account of the gauchos colonists, who were accustomed to pursue them, not only for ordinary food or for their hides, but even for their tongues alone, not taking the trouble to carry of more of the animal so wantonly slaughtered.\* The wild cattle are very large and very fat, and the bulls are really formidable animals, perhaps among the largest and most savage of their race. At B.S. As the ordinary weight of a bull's hide is less than fifty pounds but the weight of such hides in the East Falkland has exceeded eighty pounds. The horses look well while galloping about wild, but the gauchos say they are not of a good breed, and will not bear the fatigue of an ordinary day's work, such as a horse at B.S. As will go through without difficulty. Perhaps their softness, as it is here called, may be owing to the food they get as well as to the breed.

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\*The settlers, when they abandoned the eastern island left behind them several

horses and horned cattle, which have increased so much, that on going a few miles into the country, droves of both animals may be seen. I have taken several of the bullocks by shooting them they are generally pugnacious and will attack a single person and thus, those who hunt them are enabled to get within pistol-shot of them by the following stratagem. Four or five men advance in a line upon the animal, and by appearing only as one person, it stands ready to attack, till within one hundred yards when the numbers spread themselves and fire, endeavouring to shoot the bullock either in the head or in the fore-shoulder. The horses will also attack a simple person and their mode of doing so is by forming a circle round him and prancing upon him but by means of a musket they may be readily dispersed." — Wedded's Voyage, pp. 102, 103

f 250 — Le loup-renard ainsi nommé parce qu'il se creuse un terrier, et que sa queue est plus longue et plus fournie de poil que celle du loup, habite dans les dunes sur le bord de la mer. Il suit le gibier et se fait des routes avec intelligence, toujours par le plus court chemin d'une haie à l'autre: à notre première descente à terre, nous ne doutâmes point que ce ne fussent des sentiers d'habitans. Il y a apparence que cet animal feut une partie de l'année, tant il est maigre et rare. Il est de la taille d'un chien ordinaire dont il a aussi l'abondance, mais foible. Comment a-t-il été transporté sur les îles? Voyage de Bougainville, seconde édition, tome 1, p. 145.

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Forster, as an exception saw no difficulty in accounting for their involuntary migration Mr. Forster, Anglais de la Société Royale, qui a fait à cet ouvrage l'honneur de le traduire, a accompagné sa traduction de plusieurs notes — "Je dois dire que toutes ces

notes ne sont pas également fastes : par exemple, dans le chapitre de l'Histoire Naturelle des Iles Malouines, il est surpris de ce que je le suis d'avoir trouvé sur ces îles un animal quadrupède, et de mon embarras sur la manière dont il a été transporté. Il ajoute qu'ayant passé comme je l'ai fait plusieurs années en Canada, j'aurais dû savoir que des quadrupèdes terrestres se trouvant sur de grandes glaces au moins, où elles sont détachées des terres, sont emportés à la haute mer, et abordent à des côtes fort éloignées de leur pays natal, sur lesquelles ces masses de glace viennent échouer. Je sais ce fait, mais Mr Forster ne sais pas que jamais les voyageurs n'ont rencontré de glaces flottantes dans les environs des Malouines ; il que dans ces contrées, il ne s'y peut pas former, n'y ayant ni grand fleuve ni même rivière en peau considérable. — Voyage de Bougainville, seconde édition tom. 1 pp. XIV et XV.

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*Clusters of trees are often found floating, which have fallen off a cliff, or have been carried out of a river; & once in the ocean, they are drifted along partly by currents & partly by winds acting upon their branches or exposed surfaces.*

Rats & mice were probably taken to the Falklands by the earlier navigators who landed there, whose ships were often plagued with their numbers \* That they have

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\* In Viedmas diary of an Expedition to Port San Julian in 1780 he says El Bergantin San Francisco de Paula, entró en el Riachuelo para descargarse y dar suministro a las ratas (The Brig San Francisco de Paula went into the Creek to be unloaded & smoked, to kill the rats (or mice) ratas signifying either). In Magellan's voyage (1520) I find la Patagonian seeing the Spaniards throwing mice into the sea desired he might have them for food, and those that were afterwards taken being given to him, he denied them on the - Birney vol 1 p. 34. Perhaps some of these mice reached land alive, as the ships lay close to the shore. Many other vessels, however, afterwards staid some time in Port San Julian, particularly those of Drake. —

Varied from the original stock in sharpness of nose  
length of tail, colour, or size, is to be expected  
because we find that every animal varies more or less  
in outward form and appearance, in consequence of  
altered climate, food or habits, and that when a certain  
change whatever it may be, is once effected, the race no  
longer varies while under similar circumstances; but  
it fancy that every kind of mouse which differs extremely  
from the mouse of another country is a distinct species,  
is to me as difficult to believe as that every variety  
of dog & every variety of the human race constitute  
a distinct species.

254 On East Falkland there are numbers of rabbits  
whose stock is derived from those carried there by  
Bougainville or the Spaniards. Among them were  
some black ones (when I was there) which had been pronounced  
indigenous, or, at all events, not brought from Europe.  
A Specimen of these pseudo-indigenous animals has been  
carefully examined by those to whom a new specimen is a  
treasure, but it turns out to be a common rabbit.

Sea elephant & seal (both hair and fur seal)  
were abundant along the shores of the archipelago in  
former years, and by management they might soon  
~~be expected~~ encouraged to frequent them again; \* but  
now they are annually becoming scarcer, and if means  
are not taken to prevent indiscriminate slaughter at  
any time of the year, one of the most profitable sources  
of revenue at the Falklands will be destroyed.

Whales frequent the surrounding waters at par-  
ticular seasons, and they are still to be found along  
the coasts of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego (within easy  
reach from the Falklands) though their numbers are  
very much diminished by the annual attacks of so  
many whale ships both large & small, which have

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\* On the little island Lobas in the river Plate passed  
and therefore to a certain degree disturbed daily by shipping  
seals were numerous, being preserved like game, and  
destroyed only at intervals.

equi  
made the Falklands their head-quarters  
during the last twenty years <sup>1833</sup>.  
A valuable source of daily supply, and  
by salting, of foreign export is the inexhaust-  
ible quantity of fish which swarm in every  
harbour during the summer. The descrip-  
tion which most abounds is a kind of  
bass, from two to three feet long, and  
six inches in depth: it takes salt well  
and has been exported by cargoes to the  
river Plata\* and to Rio Sancho; and there  
are delicious small fish in the duck shoals  
that our boats' crews were sometimes obliged  
to let a large portion escape from the net  
before they could haul it ashore without  
tearing.

Mr Vernet said, "We have a great abundance  
of fish in all the bays, where they come at  
the beginning of spring to spawn. In the  
winter season they retire. They enter regu-  
larly twice in the twenty-four hours, at  
about half flood. They are caught in such  
numbers that ten or twelve men salted  
about sixty tons in less than a month. Gene-  
rally, they are caught with a net but  
they will also take the hook: they are of  
a species between the mullet and the  
salmon and become very fat towards the  
end of the summer. They are very good  
eating and when salted, some prefer them  
to the cod-fish" — Vernet, M. S. 1831  
<sup>257</sup>

Another natural production of  
more value than it has hitherto been  
considered, is the common sea-weed  
or Kelp \* and I am told by Sir Woodbine  
Parish that the arctia or orchilla weed  
obtained there by the Spaniards.

<sup>258</sup> It has been also ascertained that  
meat takes salt remarkably well in that  
climate: and as salt of excellent quality, as  
well as saltpetre, abounds on the coast of Patagonia  
there is no reason why large quantities of salt meat and  
salt fish should not be prepared there and exported.

to the Brazils, to the East, to Chile, and Peru; besides supplying a number of the ships which would touch there.  
~~But~~ There are alleged disadvantages to cotton against which must not be overlooked for a moment.

We read in Bougainville and Wallis, that thousands of young trees were taken up by the roots in the Strait of Magalhaens, and carried to the Falkland Islands; but no traces of them are now visible either at Port Egmont or Port Louis. Perhaps they were taken out of their native soil at an improper period, exposed to frost or salt water, while their roots were uncovered, and afterwards planted by men who knew more of the main branch than of gardening. Bougainville, however, had industrious families Acadiennes with him under whose care the young trees ought to have fared better than under the charge of Wallis's boatswain. Mr. Brig. B.  
told me that he had brought over some young trees from Tierra del Fuego for Mr. Vernet; that some had died, but others (which he showed me) were growing well in his garden. From the opinions I have collected on the subject, and from what has been effected on waste lands, downs, and exposed hills in England and Scotland, by planting thousands at once instead of tens, I have no doubt whatever that trees may be grown upon either Falkland, and that the more are planted the better they would grow - assisting and sheltering each other.

f261  
There is a shrub, or rather creeper, of which the French made a kind of beer, thought to be wholesome and anti-scorbutic: and there are other vegetable productions which are of little consequence perhaps, except to botanists: and as most of them were long ago well described by Bougainville I may beg the reader to refer to his fourth Chapter (*Détails sur l'histoire naturelle des îles Malouines*) for a very faithful and wellwritten account, to every statement on which, as far as my own knowledge goes, I can bear testimony.

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Local circumstances, such as the relative position  
of the land, the set of the tides and currents, the  
prevailing winds and the accessibility of Port  
William or Berkeley Sound contribute to make  
the easternmost part of the Falklands safer  
and more easy to approach than almost any  
place that I am acquainted with.

With the supply of shipping and the es-  
tablishment of a frequented free port in view  
as the first source of prosperity, colonists  
should augment the number of animals  
birds and vegetables which they see thrive so  
well there, and take little thought about corn  
except for home consumption (unless indeed  
oats should be found to grow well) They  
should assiduously increase their stock of  
cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry, make butter  
and cheese, rear calves, and breed horses.  
They should salt meat and fish, bring wood  
and lime from Terra del Fuego and Patagonia,  
and turn their strong backs to supplying ships  
with water, fuel (perhaps dried peat) and  
provisions in the quickest and cheapest manner.  
Hides, pig - skins, goat - skins, sheep - skins  
wool, foxes' fur, rabbit skins, bird - skins  
and down, horns, salt meat, salt butter, cheese  
potash, orchilla weed, potatoes, salt - fish, seal  
skins, seal - oil - whale - oil, and whale - bone  
would form no indifferent return cargo for  
vessels. Carrying there implements of husbandry,  
stores of various kinds, flour and biscuit, clo-  
thing, lumber, furniture, crockery - ware, glass,  
cutlery, and household utensils. North Amer-

riean vessels, laden with flour or lumber, might make very profitable voyages.

f 264 But to whomsoever it may happen to colonize these islands, there can be no doubt that industry will be well rewarded that health, safety, and a frequent communication with the mother country, will be as certain as in any other colony, and that the only drawbacks to be anticipated are those likely to be caused by wind and deficiency of solar heat.

Animals increase rapidly, and the quality of their hides or fur improves. Cows give a large quantity of excellent milk, from which good butter and cheese may be made. Not long since a letter was received from the Hon George Gray, Captain of H. M. S. Cleopatra, in which he said that the milk and butter at Howick was not superior to that which he tasted at the Falklands. In the event of steamers engaging in the navigation of those seas a port of supply and repair, in short a maritime depot would be required, in or near Terra del Fuego; but no such establishment could easily be formed there without a military force, and occasional hostilities with

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The ~~native~~ natives, whereas at the Falklands  
the only native opponents would be  
foxes, horses, and bulls. This immense  
advantage over most habitable and  
fertile countries - the having no aborigi-  
nal population - should be duly consid-  
ered by those who may contemplate planting  
a colony there. Weddell says "it settle-  
ment at this point of the South Atlantic  
would evidently afford great facilities  
to navigation" —



1265 — Far much of the produce of  
the Islands such as salt meat and fish,  
potatoes, oil, butter, cheese, tallow &c. a  
ready market would always be found on  
the coast of South America, while other  
articles previously mentioned, would have a  
free sale in Europe and North America. While  
~~other~~ should any accident happen to a ves-  
sel in doubling Cape Horn obliging her to  
make for the nearer port at which she can  
obtain supplies where can she now go? To  
the River Plata on one side, or to Chile  
on the other - either of which is twelve  
hundred miles from Cape Horn!

and to do in due course what I can. But it  
seems to me that we must go on  
and do it. And this will be done  
as soon as we can well do so and when  
we are ready to make a final decision. Then  
we will not be compelled to act at once  
but we will have time to consider  
the matter, and we will have time to  
make a final decision.



Berkeley Sound / besides many other ports, would contain a large fleet in security, while around it are coves and basins in which any repairs might be carried on.

Probably some intercourse might be opened with the Patagonians, and, by them, with other roving tribes on the continent, who would exchange guanacos, horses, cattle, poultry, hides, horns, tallow, and hair for hardware, clothing, cutlery, ornaments, saddles, spurs, bridles, &c. and as the guanaco is so warmly clothed in the high southern latitudes, and is capable of being domesticated,\* it might be found a valuable animal to encourage among sheep and cattle at the Falklands. Mr. Brisbane told me that some wool, sent by M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet from East Falkland to Liverpool, sold for nearly double the price of R.S. of wool. and this was the produce of sheep which had only been a few years on the island of the B<sup>r</sup> Pyrenean stock, unmixed with any superior breed. To shew how well the little Colony established by M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet, was succeeding, prior to its harsh and unnecessary ruin by Captain Las Duncan, I will give an extract of a letter received from a brother officer who visited Port Louis.



The settlement is situated half round a small cove, which has a narrow entrance from the sound. This entrance, in the time of the Spaniards, was commanded by two forts, both now lying in ruins. The only use made of one being to confine the wild cattle in its circular wall when newly brought in from the interior. The governor, Louis Vernet, received me with cordiality. He possesses much information, and speaks several languages. His house is long and low, of one story, with very thick walls of stone. I found in it a good library of Spanish, German and English works. A lively conversation passed at dinner, the party consisting of M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet and his wife, M<sup>r</sup>. Brisbane, and others; in the evening we had music and dancing.

The room was a grand piano-forte; M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet, a B.<sup>t</sup> Syrian lady, gave us some excellent singing, which sounded not a little strange at the Falkland Isles, where we expected to find only a few sealers.

M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet's establishment consisted of about fifteen slaves bought by him from the B.<sup>t</sup> Syrian Government, on the condition of teaching them some useful employment, and having their services for a certain number of years, after which they were to be freed. They seemed generally to be from fifteen to twenty years of age, and appeared contented and happy.

The total number of persons on the island consisted of about one hundred, including twenty-five gauchos and five Indians. There were two Dutch families, the women of which milked the cows and made butter; two or three Englishmen, a German family, and the remainder were Spaniards and Portuguese, pretending to follow some trade but doing little or nothing. The gauchos were chiefly B.<sup>t</sup> Syrians, but their capataz or leader was a Frenchman.

Such was the state of Vernet's settlement a few months before the Lexington's visit, and there was then every reason for the settlers to anticipate success, as they, poor deluded people, never dreamed of having no business there without having obtained the permission of the British Government. They thought naturally enough that the B.<sup>t</sup> Syrian Government could not have sold the islands to M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet unless the state of La Plata had a right to them; they believed that the purchase money had been paid, \* but they were not aware that the British Government had protested formally against the pretended claim of B.<sup>t</sup> Is., so quiet it was that fact ~~right~~ by the Argentine Government, although the solemn protest was made by Mr. Parish, the British consul-general in November 1829.

However unjustifiably M<sup>r</sup>. Vernet may in fact have behaved towards vessels belonging to the

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United States of North America, it must be remembered that he had a commission from the B.<sup>r</sup>. Argentine Government, empowers him to act as civil and military governor of the Falklands. That he believed the B.<sup>r</sup>. Argentine authority valid; and had no doubt in his own mind that he was doing right. Mr<sup>r</sup>. Vernet, therefore, was no robber - no pirate as he was termed by Captain Duncan because he tried to uphold his situation and prevent his settlement being robbed by people who had no claim whatever upon any of the islands. However wrong Vernet's actions may have been, he was responsible to his Government for them: and those who acted under his order, he having a legal commission, certainly did not deserve to be seized as pirates, put into irons, and so carried to the Plate! Whether was it just (setting mercy quite aside) to destroy the infant colony, break open or tear down doors and windows, search houses, drawers, and chests, trample over gardens, break through fences and ill-use the helpless unarmed settlers to such a degree, that for many months afterward, whenever a man-of-war was seen approaching, the frightened inhabitants at once fled to the interior, not knowing how they might be treated. Poor Brisbane (of whom frequent mention has already been made, and of whom I have yet to speak), was taken, with others, in irons to Monte Video, where the British consul obtained his release. He had joined Vernet in a contract to take seal upon the Falkland, and was left in charge of the settlement at the period of Captain Durcan's hostility. At that time Vernet himself was absent having gone with his family to Rio de Janeiro in order that he might attend at the ensuing trial of those sealing vessels which had been detained by him for repeatedly taking

seal upon the Falkland Islands, after he  
had truly warned them off.

I have heard much of Mr. Bent and his  
proceedings, from various quarters - from  
enemies as well as friends - and although  
I never met him, and therefore cannot  
be partial from friendship, I do sincerely  
pity his misfortunes; and it is my belief  
that he has been much misrepresented.



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 This man at first declined answering Mr Chaffers' questions, because his uniform buttons were (as he thought) different from those of the Tyne's officers; however, being a simple character, he soon became more loquacious than was wished. He told Mr Chaffers that he was ordered to 'hoist the flag up and down' when vessels arrived, and every Sunday; that there was 'plenty of beef,' and as for rabbits & geese, only the poor people eat them.



Meanwhile, surveying operations were begun and an officer despatched to the settlement, who informed me of the arrival of a merchant schooner 'Rapid,' four days from St. L. A. with Mr. Brisbane on board (as Vernet's agent as well as partner), who was delighted to meet our officer finding in him one of those who helped to save his life when wrecked in the Saxe Coburg in 1827. Next morning Brisbane came on board with his papers, and I was

241 Next morning Brisbane came on board with his papers, and I was quite satisfied with their tenor, and the explanation which he gave me of his banes. Some misapprehension having since arisen about his being authorized by Vernet to act in his stead, I may here mention again (though no longer of any material consequence), that Brisbane's instructions from Vernet authorized him to act as his private agent only, to look after the remains of his private property, and that they had not the slightest reference to civil or military authority. This settled, I went to Port Louis, but was indeed disappointed. Instead of the cheerful little village I once anticipated finding - a few half-ruined stone cottages; some straggling huts built of turf; two or three stove boats; some broken ground where gardens had been, and where a few cabbages or potatoes still grew; some sheep and goats; a few long-legged pigs; some horses and cows with here and there a miserable looking human being - were scattered over the fore-ground of a view which had dark clouds ragged-topped hills, and a wild waste of moorland to fill up the distance.

"How is this?" said I, in astonishment, to Mr. Brisbane,

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<sup>25</sup> I thought Mr. Vernet's colony was a thriving and happy settlement. Where are the inhabitants? The place seems deserted as well as ruined." "Indeed, Sir, it was flourishing," said he, "but the Lexington ruined it; Captain Duncan's men did such harm to the houses and gardens. I was myself treated as a pirate - rowed stern foremost on board the Lexington to - abused on her quarter-deck most violently by Captain Duncan - treated by him more like a wild beast than a human being - and from that time guarded as felon, until I was released by order of Commodore Rogers." "But" I said "where are the rest of the settlers? I see but half a dozen, of whom two are old black women; where are the gauchos who kill the cattle?" "Sir, they are all in the country. They have been so much alarmed by what had occurred, and they dread the appearance of a ship of war so much that keep out of the way till they know what she is going to do." I afterwards interrogated an old German, while Brisbane was out of sight and after him a young native of B. A. who both corroborated Brisbane's account.

At my return on board, I was shocked by the sad information that Mr. Heller was drowned.



<sup>24</sup> The German told me, among other things, that he had collected rabbit-skins at his leisure hours, and had made, at different times, above two hundred dollars by them. + It was a positive order on board the Beagle ~~that~~ no one should make any excursion, in such places, alone.

<sup>25</sup> During the month we remained in Berkeley Sound, & had much trouble with the crews of whaling or small sealing vessels, as well as with the settlers, who all seemed to fancy that because the British flag was re-hoisted on the Falklands, they were at liberty to do what they pleased with M<sup>r</sup> Vernet's private property, as well as with the wild cattle and horses. The gauchos wished to leave the place

and return to the Plate, but as they were the only useful labourers on the islands, in fact, the only people on whom any dependence could be placed for a regular supply of fresh beef & interested myself as much as possible to induce them to remain, and with partial success, for seven staid out of twelve.

While walking the deck after dark, I sometimes saw flashes of light on the distant hills which it was difficult to account for as "ignes fatui," because they were seen only on the heights and momentarily long intervals intervening between each faint flash. I once remarked similar instantaneous glimmers of feeble light like the flashing of a distant pistol, near Picket Harbour in Magalhaens Strait, during a rainy night, but on the hills, at the south side of Berkeley Sound, I witnessed such lights repeatedly. They were never bright or lasting—merely a faint sudden glimmer—exactly as I have said like the flash of a pistol, fired at a great distance.

278 a 79 *Buenos*  
Including the crews of some thirty whale-ships, hovering about or at anchor among the islands, the men of several American vessels, armed with rifles, the English sealers with their clubs, if not also provided with rifles; these cut-throat looking gauchos—the discontented, downcast Indian prauhers and the crews of several French whalers—who could not or would not see why they had not as good a right to the islands as Englishmen. There was no lack of the elements of discord, and it was with a heavy heart and gloom foreboding that I looked forward to the months which might elapse without the presence of a man of war, or the semblance of any regular authority.

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