

Copy

Montevideo 31th March 1837

Mr Thomas Lewis



Dear Sir,

I have your esteemed letter of the 27th Instant before me. It gratifies me much to see the interest you take in my welfare and the warm adhering your possess for me individually.

The communication I received by this last packet from the British Government is to me utterly incomprehensible. I can scarcely believe my senses when I see that notwithstanding my conduct has enjoyed the esteem of Messrs Parish, Hamilton, Maudesle & the British Admiral, that government should now treat me so contrary to British law itself. — I can not explain to myself this cruel procedure against me except by attributing it to that unfortunate contract with Lavalleja, as that Govt may perhaps not well conceive how a South American Govt would lower himself to attend personally to an estancia; it requires a residence in this country to know that. But what could I do? you know I endeavored in vain to obtain assistance from other quarters, to put my cattle business and seeing again on a good footing, that I even came to Montevideo for that very purpose in Jan^y of last year, and that Lavalleja was the first to enter into the concern. — The British Government would seem to consider me capable of going to the plain with a number of gauchos, and collect all the cattle into the interior and defend it there as my property; but if it thinks so it is widely mistaken, for however just my cause may be, and altho such conduct might be perfectly justifiable before God and man, I shall never sever from a straight forward legal course of proceeding. And agreeable to these principles I can not enter into your proposal

of collecting ~~some~~ secretly even of the tamed cattle, of which several thousand are dispersed over the Island and are gradually getting wild again. It is of this tame cattle that Lieut Smith is supplying himself and has collected about 200 head with the assistance of the only gauchos that has remained on the Island and with the horse I transported whether or I presume he has recruited some sailors to assist, but as for his getting perfectly wild cattle caught he has not the means for it. — However I thank you for your kind intention, but you must be aware that every thing which is just is not legal. —

A voyage to England I see is the best course to be pursued; but my dear Sir, I would have done so several years ago had I had it in my power. Mrs. V. will have told you of the flight of my debtor, & to recover will now take a considerable time; but eventually I shall secure the gentleman, for I have been entangled in so many strings that he can not escape justice, even in his own country.

I received Mrs. V.'s letter of the 13th inst.

I am really very sorry you should have lost the chances you have had of employment, for my sake; but you see likewise that it was not my fault — but to convince you of that I kept you informed of every thing. — You will recollect there is yet one matter pending, namely the result of my communication to the British Admiral of October packet which he sent to his Gov^t asking for instructions regarding my application, which was the Query whether I would be permitted to continue my business at the Falkland, upon some other principle than that

of being owner of the Cattle, leaving the question of ownership to be decided afterwards. The next packet ought to bring an answer. However you must judge for yourself whether it is best for you to wait any more for me, the only thing I can assure of is that if I get permission to work there you will of course be the man I shall employ as agreed, provided you are then at liberty and disposed.



It is true that the hides and seal skins there amount to about 30,000 paper-dollars, but the British Govt speaks only of allowing the skins originally deposited there to be taken away by me; the Lieut may not think himself authorised to deliver what has been acquired since, although acquired by the gauchos in my employ and with my horses & boats. The original property may be worth about 15,000 paper, and it is not worth the expense of a vessel. On the other hand again the Lieut values to my agent much more than the original property, and I should hardly think they would take the surplus out of his hands again. On this head I had also written to the Admiral in October packet.

I am sincerely yours
L. V.

Mont' 31 March 1837

To Mr H. Green

on King st F. J. D.

R. W. de George del. pub.

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