THE FALKLAND ISLANDS IN HISTORY

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AS considerable attention has been directed lately in the English press to the Naval Action off Coronel (Chile) in November, 1914, and as the late Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock made the Falkland Islands his base prior to his departure in search of Admiral von Spee, it may not be out of place to give a short account of those treeless and windblown islands that suddenly sprang into prominence a month later on the occasion of the destruction of the German squadron by Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, R. N., off Port Stanley on the 8th of December, 1914.

It has been alleged by some writers that the Portugese navigator, Americus Vespucius, saw the Falkland Islands in 1502; but if the account given by Vespucius of his own voyage is correct, he never came further south than the La Plata river in Argentina. Other writers—chiefly Spanish—maintain that the great discoverer Magellan must have seen these Islands; but Magellan, during his voyage round the world in 1519 and 1520, makes no mention of having seen the group, and it is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that he did not.

There is, however, considerable evidence that a few years after this they were discovered by some unknown foreign navigator. On two charts which were constructed for Charles V of Spain, one (anonymous) in 1527, and the other by Diego Ribero in 1529, they are shown as the "Ascension Islands". They are also to be seen under the same name in Gutiero's chart, engraved at Antwerp in 1562, also in the map of Fernao Vaz Dourado bearing date 1571. Some early writers have referred to them as the Sanson or Simson Group, but these names are evidently abbreviations of Ascension. Again, on Schoner's globe, made in 1520, and now at Nuremberg (Germany), they are called the Maiden Group, and are shown to consist of seven islands; while Plancius, the Dutch cosmographer, on his chart of America and on his General Map, both of which were drawn in 1594, shows the Ascension Islands.

And now, from the unknown foreign navigator, let us turn to the known British navigator. We must endeavour to imagine ourselves in Plymouth on the 26th August, 1591, and in front of us "three tall ships and two barkes" about to start for "the Philippines and the coast of China" via Cape Horn. These vessels were

The GALEON, under Admiral Cavendish, who was chief of the expedition:

The ROEBUCKE, under Vice-Admiral Cocke; The DESIRE, under Captain John Davis; The BLACK PINESSE, under Captain Tobie; The DAINTIE, under Captain Cotton.

After a severe gale off Cape St. Vincent, the Daintie returned home. In this tempest the vessels got separated; the instructions, however, were that they were to meet at Port Desire on the east coast of Patagonia. Here they afterwards met, and in due course they reached the Straits of Magellan, but there experienced the most terrible gales and blizzards, and—according to Cavendish himself—"In seven or eight days there dyed fortie men and sickened seventie, so that there were not fiftie men that were able to stand upon the hatches". The expedition was therefore forced to put back, and determined to return to Brazil. When in latitude 47 South the ships got separated at night; the Desire (Captain Davis) and the Black Pinesse, thinking that Cavendish had sustained some damage and would bear up for Port Desire, proceeded thither, and after much buffeting reached the harbour on the 2nd June, 1592, to find that the other ships were not there. The vessels badly required refitting, and were not ready for sea till the 6th August. The following extracts are taken from the journal of John Jane, the historian of the voyage:

And because famine was like to bee the best ende, wee desired to goe for Port Desire, hoping with seales and penguins to relieve ourselves, and so to make shift to follow the Generall (Cavendish), or there to stay his comming from Brazil. The 24 May wee had much winde at North. The 25 was calme, and the sea very loftie, so that our ship had dangerous foule weather. The 26 our fore-shrowdes brake, so that if wee had not beene neere the shoare, it had beene impossible for us to get out of the sea. And nowe being here mored in Port Desire, our shroudes are all rotten, not having a running rope whereto wee may trust, and being provided onely of one shift of sailes all worne...... Wee began to travell for our lives, and wee built up a smiths forge and made a colepit, and burnt coles, and there wee made nailes, boltes, and spikes, others made ropes of a peece of our cable, and the rest gathered muskles and took smeltes for the whole companie. Three leagues from this harborough there is an Isle with four small Isles about it, where there are great abundance of seales, and at the time of the yeere the penguins come thither in great plentie to breede. Wee concluded with the pinnesse that she should sometimes goe thither

to fetch seales for us; upon which conditions wee would share our vituals with her man for man; whereunto the whole companie agreed. So wee parted our poore store, and shee laboured to fetch us seales to eate, wherewith wee lived when smeltes and muskles failed; for in the nepe streames wee could get no muskles. Thus in most miserable calamitie wee remained untill the sixt of August, still keeping watch upon the hills to looke for our Generall. and so great was our vexation and anguish of soule, as I thinke never flesh and blood endured more. Thus our miserie dayly increasing, time passing, and our hope of the Generall being very colde, our Captaine and Master were fully persuaded, that the Generall might perhaps goe directly for The Streights and not come to this harborough; whereupon they thought no course more convenient then to goe presently for The Streights, and there to stay his comming, for in that place hee could not passe, but of force wee must see him: whereunto the companie most willingly consented, as also the Captaine and Master of the pinnesse; so that upon this determination wee made all possible speede to depart.

The sixt of August (1592) wee set saile and went to Penguinisle, and the next day wee salted twentie hogsheads of seales, which was as much as our salt could possibly doe, and so wee departed for The Streights the poorest wretches that ever were

created.

The seventh of August towarde night wee departed from Penguin-isle, shaping our course for The Streights, where wee had

full confidence to meete with our Generall.

The ninth wee had a sore storme, so that wee were constrained to hull, for our sailes were not to indure any force. The 14 wee were driven in among certaine Isles never before discovered by any known relation, lying fiftie leagues or better from the shoare East and Northerly from The Streights; in which place, unlesse it had pleased God of his wonderfull mercie to have ceased the winde, wee must of necessitie have perished. But the winde shifting to the East, wee directed our course for The Streights, and the 18 of August wee fell with the Cape (Virgin) in a very thick fogge; and the same night wee ankered ten league within the Cape.

These were the Falkland Islands.

It is interesting to note that Davis himself is known to have written an account of his voyage, and it is much to be regretted that both his account and his survey are nowhere to be found. Admiral Berney, when writing the account of the second voyage of Cavendish to the South Sea, adopted the name of "Davis's Southern Islands" for the Falkland Isles.

Two years later, (1594), Sir Richard Hawkins sailed along the northern shores of the Falklands, and—being ignorant of Davis's discovery—named them Hawkins's Maiden Land, and thus describes them:—

The 2nd of February, about 9 in the morning, we descried land, which bore S. W. of us, which we looked not for so timely; and coming nearer to it, by the lying, we could not conjecture what land it should be; for we were next of anything in 48 degrees, and no sea card which we had made mention of any land which lay in that manner, near about that height; in fine we brought our larboard tack aboard, and stood N. E. all that day and night following; in which time we made account we discovered near three score leagues of coast. It is bold, and made small show of danger. The land, for that it was discovered in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, my Sovereign Lady and a Maiden Queen, and at my cost, in perpetual memory of her chastity and of my endeavours, I gave it the name of Hawkins' Maiden-land. The land is a good champain country.

Hawkins's account of his voyage appearing before Davis wrote his *Worldes Hydrographical Description*, published in May, 1595, and coming prominently before the public, the group retained the name "Hawkins's Maiden Land" until the visit of Strong nearly one hundred years afterwards.

Some two or three years after the visit of Hawkins, the Dutch Navigator Sebald de Weert saw the Jason Islands (which lie to the N. W. of the group) and thought he had made a fresh discovery. The States of Holland in 1598 termed them the Isles of Sebald de Weert, after their Admiral, which led to their being known as the Sebaldine Isles. They were likewise termed by the Dutch "Nova Belgia."

In 1693-4 the English navigators Dampier and Cowley saw three islands in latitude 51° to 51°-20′ S., which they rightly supposed were those seen by Sebald de Weert. Shortly afterwards, however, the editor of Cowley's narrative published a different latitude for the land they saw, and called it Pepys Island, after the then Secretary of the Admiralty, the author of the famous *Pepys's Diary*, and gave the latitude as 47 degrees south. This occasioned a good deal of confusion later, and several searches were made for Pepys Island.

In 1690 Strong in the Welfare not only sailed between the East and West Falkland, but anchored repeatedly and landed. The journal of the Welfare written by Strong is in the British Museum, together with Observations during a South Sea Voyage written by Richard Simson, who sailed in the same ship. It is curious that the name "Falkland" given by Strong to the Sound after the then Lord Falkland, the Treasurer of the Navy, should have obliterated that of Hawkins's Maiden Land and become the English name of the group.

Between the years 1706 and 1714 French ships belonging to St. Malo passed near the Falklands when proceeding to and returning from Chile and Peru, countries with which France then had a lucrative trade, and gave the islands the name of "Les Malouines".

On the 8th of August, 1740, the English Government despatched an expedition to the South Seas, under Mr. (after wards Lord) Anson, consisting of the *Centurion*, *Gloucester*, *Severn*, *Pearl*, *Wager*, and *Tryal*. It was foreseen that a war with Spain was inevitable, and it was considered that if attacked in her distant Settlements she would be deprived of the returns of that treasure by which alone she was enabled to carry on war. Although Lord Anson never visited the Falkland Islands, he did more than any other person either before or since to draw attention to their importance; in fact, had it not been for his recommendations, it is doubtful whether the Union Jack would now be flying over the colony. These are his own words:

Thus having given the best directions in my power for the success of our cruisers, who may be hereafter bound to the South Seas, it might be expected that I should again resume the thread of my narration. Yet as both in the preceding and subsequent parts of this work I have thought it my duty, not only to recite all such facts, and to inculcate such maxims as had the least appearance of proving beneficial to future Navigators, but also occasionally to recommend such measures to the Public as I conceive are adapted to promote the same laudable purpose; I cannot desist from the present subject, without beseeching those to whom the conduct of our naval affairs is committed to endeavour to remove the many perplexities and embarrassments with which the navigation to the South Seas is, at present, necessarily encumbered. An effort of this kind could not fail of proving highly honourable to themselves, and extremely beneficial to their country. For it seems to me sufficiently evident that whatever improvements navigation shall receive, either by the invention of methods that shall render its practice less hazardous, or by the more accurate delineation of the coasts, roads, and ports already known, or by the discovery of new nations, or new species of commerce; it seems, I say, sufficiently evident, that by whatever means navigation is promoted, the conveniences hence arising almost ultimately redound to the emolument of Great Britain. Since as our fleets are at present superior to those of the whole world united; it must be a matchless degree of supineness or mean-spiritedness, if we permitted any of the advantages which new discoveries, or a more extended navigation, may produce to mankind, to be ravished from us.

As therefore it appears that all our future expeditions to the South Seas must run a considerable risk of proving abortive, whilst in our passage thither we are under the necessity of touching

at Brazil; the discovery of some place more to the southward, where ships might refresh and supply themselves with the necessary seastock for their voyage round Cape Horn would be an expedient which would relieve us from this embarrassment, and would surely be a matter worthy of the attention of the public. Nor does this seem difficult to be effected. For we have already the imperfect knowledge of two places, which might perhaps, on examination, prove extremely convenient for this purpose; one of them is Pepy's Island, in a latitude of 47 South, the other is Falklands Isles, in the latitude of $51\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, lying nearly south of Pepy's Island.

After the decisive battle of Quebec in 1759, Canada became British; M. de Bougainville, Knight of St. Louis, and Colonel of Infantry, who was one of Montcalm's officers, returned to France with his mind full of a great scheme whereby his country was to be compensated for her colonial losses. The story is best told in the words of Dom Pernety, the historian who accompanied M. de Bougainville in his expedition to the Falkland Islands in 1763 and 1764:

After the peace was concluded by a cession of all Canada on the part of France to England, M. de Bougainville, Knight of St. Louis, and Colonel of Infantry, conceived the design of indemnifying France for this loss, if possible, by a discovery of the southern continent, and of those large islands which lie in the way to it. A perusal of Admiral Anson's Voyage round the world fixed his ideas for finding the Malouine Islands, and determined him to make them the first object of his expedition, and to form a settlement there. He communicated his project to the Ministry, who approved it. To carry it therefore into execution, M. de Bougainville caused a frigate and a sloop to be built at St. Malo at his own expense.

In due course the frigate *Eagle* and the sloop *Sphinx* left St. Malo (8th September, 1763) and on the 31st January, 1764, the Falklands were sighted. It is desirable at this point to lay emphasis on the fact that Bougainville had on board his vessels everything that was necessary to start a settlement, including settlers, cows, calves, goats, sheep, hogs, and horses. These animals were brought from St. Catherine's Island, Brazil, and Montevideo.

To continue Pernety's journal:

On the third (1764, Feb.), we discovered an opening of a bay, the entrance of which appeared so fine that we went into it full sail as into a well-known and commodious harbour....

On Saturday, the 17th, in the morning, we put into the great boat the two Acadian families we had brought with us to make a

^{1.} Subsequently proved to be mythical.

settlement on this island, and to people it. At nine in the morning they landed with all their clothes, furniture and necessary utensils, provisions, and some tents to accommodate such of the crew as were to remain on shore to assist in establishing the settlement....

On Saturday, the 25th, M. de Bougainville proposed at breakfast to both land and sea officers to undertake the erecting of a fort upon the rising ground forming the hill, on which the habitation or place of residence was built for the colonists who were to remain on the island. We all unanimously agreed to erect it with our own hands, and to complete it without the assistance of the rest of the ship's company.....

As we had determined to raise a pyramid in form of an obelisk in the centre of the fort, I proposed to place a bust of Louis the fifteenth upon the top, and undertook to execute it in terracotta.

(5th April, 1764): All the company being assembled at the fort, the pyramid was opened; I then solemnly sang the Te Deum. We cried *Vive le Roy* seven times, and fired twenty-one cannon. We cried again seven times *Vive le Roy*. M. de Bougainville then produced the King's commission, appointing a Governor in the new Colony, which was delivered to M. de Nerville, who was immediately received and acknowledged as such. M. de Bougainville, in the King's name, likewise proclaimed the other officers, who were in the same manner unanimously acknowledged....

(June, 1764): M. de Bougainville having given the King (Louis XV) an account of our expedition, His Majesty ratified the taking of the Malouine Islands, and immediately issued orders

for the Eagle to be got ready to return to these islands.

The French colony, however, although started under such apparently favourable auspices, was destined to be but short-lived. Spain, hearing of the settlement, at once took exception to it, and laid claim to the islands as forming a part of her South American possessions; which France, under pressure of various considerations, agreed to deliver up her newly-formed colony, subject to the payment of an indemnity to the projectors and colonists of some £25,000. This done, France gave over possession on April 1st, 1767, to the Spanish officer appointed to take charge. The standard of Spain was hoisted and royal salutes fired. The group hereafter became known by the Spaniards as Islas Malvinas or Islas de Magallanes.

It is apparent then that the Falkland Islands have at successive periods been designated by the following names: Davis's Southern Islands; Hawkins's Maiden Land; Isles of Sebald de Weert, or Sebaldine Isles; Nova Belgia; Falkland Islands; Pepys Island; Anican Islands; Iles Nouvelles; Les Malouines; and Islas Malvinas or Islas de Magallanes.

It seems doubtful, however, whether the transfer to the Crown of Spain was altogether appreciated by the Spaniards, whose duty compelled them to reside at Port Louis. The following extracts from Thomas Falkner's account of the Falklands, published in 1774, is interesting: "The Spaniards transported with their colony two Franciscan friars, and a Governor or Vice-Governor; who, beholding their settlement, were overwhelmed with grief; and the Governor, Colonel Catani, at the departure of the ships for Buenos Aires, with tears in his eyes declared that he thought those happy who got from so miserable a country, and that he himself should be very glad if he was permitted to throw up his commission and return to Buenos Aires, though in no higher station than that of a cabin boy."

In 1764, and as the outcome of Lord Anson's representations, a squadron was despatched to the South Seas by the order of King George the Third, under the command of Commodore the Hon. John Byron. It was this same John Byron who was on board the unfortunate vessel *Wager*, one of Lord Anson's squadron, when she went ashore and was lost on the Chilian coast to the north of the Straits of Magellan in 1741, and had such perilous experiences before he reached England in 1746.

The Royal Instructions already referred to, and dated 17th June, 1764, ran as follows: "And whereas His Majesty's Islands, called Pepys Island and Falkland Islands, lying within the said track (the track between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan), 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 juncture so proper for enterprises of this nature as a time of profound peace, which his kingdoms at present happily enjoy, has thought fit that it should now be undertaken."

The expedition started. On January 13th, 1765, land was seen, and on the 15th a commodious harbour was entered, to which was given the name of Port Egmont in honour of the First Lord of the Admiralty. On the 23rd, Commodore Byron went ashore with the Captains of the *Dolphin* and the *Tamer*, "where the Union Jack was erected on a high staff, and being spread, the Commodore named the whole His Majesty's Isles, which he claimed for the Crown of Great Britain, his heirs and successors. The colours were no sooner spread than a salute was fired from the ship".

Commodore Byron's report on the Islands was so favourable that Captain Macbride was sent out in H. M. S. *Jason* to commence their colonization, and he arrived on the 8th of January, 1766. He

erected a small blockhouse and stationed a garrison at Port Egmont. Cattle, goats, sheep, and hogs were introduced, and found to thrive. Captain Macbride, however, was less favourably impressed with the country than Commodore Byron. He reported that geese were scarce, and foxes abundant, and that the number of sea-lions and penguins—which he termed "vermin"—was incredible. To quote his own words, "The garrison lived upon Falkland's Islands, shrinking from the blast, and shuddering at the billows"; and then again, "We supposed that we should be permitted to reside in Falkland's Islands the undisputed lords of tempest-beaten barrenness".

Notwithstanding the drawbacks above mentioned, the colonization continued without incidents of special note until the 28th November, 1769, when Captain Hunt, the military Governor, observing a Spanish schooner hovering about the island and surveying it, sent the Commander a message requiring him to depart. The Spaniard returned, however, in two days with a letter from the Governor of Port Soledad, the name given by the Spaniards to the settlement at Port Louis, complaining that when Captain Hunt ordered the schooner to depart he had assumed a power to which he had no pretensions, by sending an imperious message to the Spaniards in the King of Spain's own dominions. In reply, Captain Hunt warned the Spaniards from the islands which he claimed in the name of the King, and as belonging to the English by right of the first discovery and the first settlement. On the 12th of December the Governor of Port Soledad formally warned Captain Hunt to leave Port Egmont, and to forbear the navigation of these seas without permission from the King of Spain. Captain Hunt in reply repeated his former claim, declared that his orders were to keep possession, and once more warned the Spaniards to depart. After some further interchange of letters in the same strain the correspondence ceased for a few months.

Early in June, 1770, however, a Spanish frigate, the *Industry*, commanded by Commodore John Ignacio Madariaga, anchored in Port Egmont, bound, as was said, for Port Soledad, and badly in need of water after a passage of fifty-three days from Buenos Aires. On the 3rd June she was ordered to leave, as explained in the following letter from Captain Maltby of H. M. Frigate *Favourite*:

Copy of a letter from Captain William Maltby, of His Majesty's Frigate the *Favourite*, to the Spanish Commodore, dated in Port Egmont, June 3, 1770.

Sir:

As you have received the Refreshments of Water, etc., you stood in Need of, my Orders from His Britannic Majesty, my

Royal Master, are to warn you forthwith to quit this Harbour and Islands, called Falkland's, having first been discovered by the Subjects of the Crown of England, sent out by the Government thereof for that Purpose, and of Right belonging to His Majesty; and His Majesty having given Orders for the Settlement thereof, the Subjects of no other Power can have any Title to establish themselves therein without the King's Permission.

I am, etc., (signed) WILLIAM MALTBY.

Three days afterwards four other Spanish frigates entered the port, and on the 8th June the Spanish Commodore wrote both to Captain Farmer, who then commanded the garrison, and to Captain Maltby of the *Favourite* ordering them to quit the port, and threatened in case of their not doing so to proceed to hostilities. The following is the letter to Captain Farmer and his reply:

Copy of a letter from the Spanish Commodore John Ignacio Madariaga to Captain George Farmer, dated in the Bay of Cruizada, the 8th of June, 1770.

My dear Sir:

Finding myself with incomparable superior Forces of Troops, Train of Artillery, Utensils, Ammunition, and all the rest corresponding, for to reduce a regular Fortification, with 1,400 Men for disembarking, for which 526 are of choice regular Troops, as you may see, I see myself in this Case obliged to intimate to you, according to the Orders of my Court, that you should quit that begun Establishment; for if you don't execute it amicably, I will oblige you by Force, and you will be answerable for all the ill Results of the Action and Measures I shall take. I am always at your Service, pray unto God to preserve you many years.

I kiss your Hand, etc., (signed) John Ignacio Madariaga.

Copy of a letter from Captain Farmer to the Spanish Commodore John Ignacio Madariaga, dated at Port Egmont, the 9th of June, 1770.

Sir:

Your letters of the 8th and this Day's Date I have received, in which you threaten, pursuant to your Orders, to send me from hence by Force of Arms. Words are not always deemed Hostilities, nor can I think you mean, in a time of profound Peace, to put them in execution, more especially as you allow there now subsists the greatest Harmony between the Two Crowns.

I make not the least Doubt of your being thoroughly convinced that the King of Great Britain, my Royal Master, has Forces sufficient to demand Satisfaction in all parts of the Globe of any Power whatsoever that may offer to insult the British

Flag. Therefore was the time limited shorter than the fifteen Minutes you have allowed, it should make no alteration in my determined Resolution to Defend the Charge committed to me, to the utmost of my Power,

And am, etc., (signed) GEORGE FARMER.

On the following day (10th) Madariaga landed his forces, and as the English only had a wooden blockhouse, with a small battery of cannon, they were shortly compelled to capitulate and quit the islands. It is but right to say that the Spanish Commodore allowed them to leave Port Egmont with every honour, to remove anything they wanted, and that an inventory of all the stores and effects left was drawn up and signed for by the Auditor of His Catholic Majesty's Navy.

When the news reached England, there was great indignation, and satisfaction was at once demanded from Spain for the insult and injury inflicted. At first Spain argued and temporized, but as Great Britain continued firm she relinquished her views, disavowed the act of her officer, and in 1771 restored Port Egmont, and the colonization continued. The mobilization of the English fleet on this occasion, owing to the above mentioned strained relations, is interesting, as it led to the going to sea of young Horatio Nelson, afterwards England's greatest naval hero.

On the 15th November, 1772, the last expedition to Port Egmont left England. It was sent out there in the *Endeavour* storeship, and had on board in pieces the armed shallop Penguin of 36 tons, mounting ten swivels, and the occupation continued until 23rd April, 1774, when the *Endeavour* sailed into Port Egmont with instructions that the settlement was to be evacuated, but that the marks and signals of possession and property were to be left upon the islands to indicate the right of possession, and to show that the occupation might be resumed. On May the 20th a formal leave of the islands was taken, and the following inscription, engraved on a piece of lead, was affixed to the door of the blockhouse:

Be it known to all nations, That Falkland's Island, with this fort, the storehouses, wharfs, harbours, bays, and creeks thereunto belonging, are the sole right and property of His Most Sacred Majesty George the Third, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. In witness whereof this plate is set up, and His Britannic Majesty's colours left flying as a mark of possession by S. W. Clayton, Commanding Officer at Falkland's Island, A.D. 1774.

For years after this the Islands remained unnoticed but not forgotten by England, and on the 2nd January, 1833, H.M.S. Clio anchored in Berkeley Sound, and the British colours were hoisted and saluted. H.M.S. Tyne performed the same ceremony about the same time at Port Egmont. On the departure of the Clio the colours were entrusted by Commander Onslow to Mr. Matthew Brisbane, an Irishman.

On the 26th August, 1833, three gauchos and five Indians set upon and barbarously murdered Mr. Brisbane, Mr. Dickson and others, plundered the settlement, and drove the cattle and horses into the interior. The rest of the settlers escaped to a small island in the Sound. Brisbane fell by the knife of Antonio Rivero. Shortly after this H. M. S. *Challenger* brought Lieutenant Smith, R. N. to Port Louis as Governor, and he was given a force of some mariners and sailors to support his authority. These men not long afterwards captured the principal murderer.

From 1833 till 1842 the colony was in charge of the naval officers engaged in making the Admiralty surveys, but early in this latter year Colonel Moody took charge, and since this date

there has been a civil administration.