

No.

Herewith I send enclosed such  
Remarks as I made during my stay at Port  
Egmont Falkland's Islands, which I am to beg  
you will please to lay before their Lordships  
if proper

I am &

Beckham Sep<sup>r</sup> 29, 1774. S. W. Clayton.

A Short Description of Falkland's Islands, their produce  
Climate & Natural History.

These Islands are situated between the Lat.<sup>s</sup> of  
~~56<sup>o</sup> 26'~~ 52<sup>o</sup> 26' & 51<sup>o</sup> 06' S., & from 56<sup>o</sup> W to 61<sup>o</sup> W Long. from  
London. They are mountainous, boggy, rocky, & every  
where barren, (except in such spots as the different  
ships crews have cultivated & inclosed). They are overspread  
with a tufty long round-bladed four grass; a kind of  
broom low but pleasant to smell, the leaves very  
small, of a pale green; a wide Myrtle which grows  
4 or 5 feet high, & stands all the winter, is ever-green, &  
in March & April blossoms a white flower with a  
faint violet smell; there is a small annual shrub  
like wormwood which flowers about February.  
The wood-torrel abounds over all the Islands; it is very  
four or five anti-scorbutic; grows low, forms a round  
head with a number of leaves, & is very plenty.  
The roots of it resemble small cones of pine; in the  
spring season they blow a white flower forming  
a cup, & are most like the white roses which  
grow in our hedges in England. With Cellery

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A tongue grape abounds over all these Islands, with  
sunny grapes, also maiden hair, whose berries are ripe  
about March. A small shrub, with small narrow  
leaves creeping along the ground produces all  
the summer & fall of the year a plenty of berries  
of a pale red when ripe, in taste like a  
cranberry, but smaller than a currant; they last  
are the constant food of the wild geese thro'  
all the summer season. Early in September the  
ground is covered with an exceeding number  
of wild ~~flowers~~ flowers, their leaves are soft  
& plky like auriculars, but narrow; a stem  
rises from the center, & on its top spreads out  
a round head, with several petals of a white  
colour, but sweet to smell: I called them  
Maloume auriculars, as they resemble that  
flower the most of any others.

In very rocky ground, growing out of  
the clefts close to the sea shore, grows a small  
shrub, which in Feb<sup>r</sup> & March flows a  
beautiful flower, in the form of a woman's  
pocket, of a fine golden hue & rich ap-  
pearance: I called it the Queen's Pocket.

The seeds of these two last mentioned are extremely small & light. A yellow Tulip on a slender stalk with grassy leaves, of the species I think of the Lily, grows here. The common Dairy Butter Tulip & Clover I found upon the Island; & upon such spots as had been cleared of the native wide leafy grass, there grew up a grass of a much finer kind, & flat leaved.

The weather is mainly guided by the winds which happen to prevail. The S & SW winds are sharp cold & penetrating, but exceedingly healthy, & prevail near  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the year; they are very high in general, & stormy withal. The N & NW winds are mild & warm, open & cheerful while they last, & vegetation is much promoted by them. The winds from N. to S. bring misty, rainy or foggy weather, are mild & warm. But from E. to S. they are totally disagreeable, being cold blighting & tempestuous; when they come on the human frame feels the shock; Poultry are drooping, crippled, & those

one lamed never recover, but lingers & at length  
die with one side totally decayed: the bogness  
fused with the Stagger; the herbage is cut  
down withered & shrivelled; & seems as if fires  
had been made under them; the leaves crumble  
to dust. Providentially these winds are rare  
& of no long continuance; its duration seldom  
exceeds 40 hours. In general however, this  
climate is very agreeable to European constitu-  
-tions; & with temperance & good exercise  
health is easily preserved.

There grows on these Islands a species  
of vegetation pretty remarkable. At first view  
they appear like large mole hills; but upon  
opening them are found to consist of a number  
of bodies like cones of Pines, the form ~~is~~  
run into each other; & the outside being crusted  
over with greenish leaves, but all white  
& firm, so as to bear a man's weight without  
giving way. From out these round hillocks  
comes a fine gum, in taste & smell like  
Balsam Tolu; a bottle I had gathered &  
have brought home. But one thing surpris'd

me, that tho' I was convinced all these vegetable  
hills grow, yet upon themselves grow the fruit  
shrub which produces the berry like cranber-  
ries mentioned before.

Wet soon abounds in these Islands  
In the valleys a high rufy grass grows, which  
Mathis in Jan. bears a head with a kind of seed,  
or grain, of the Rice-corn species, & I am apt to  
think with care & culture you would turn out  
fit for food. - I found a great quantity of Moss  
on these Islands, which turned every thing  
of a waste red when wet with water.

On my arrival the cold was at  $52^{\circ}$   
by a Thermometer of Fahrenheit's scale; this  
was the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1773; it rose to  $60^{\circ}$  the first  
week, & down to  $40^{\circ}$ : in April it gradually  
decreased to  $42^{\circ}$ ; in May from  $40$  to  $32$ , in June  
& July from  $36$  to  $20$ : during these two months  
when the W. came to S.W. it would fall to  $20^{\circ}$   
below freezing, & as the W. veered to N.W. rise  
above freezing. Unfortunately my Thermometer  
was broke by accident the latter end of July,  
which deprived me of a great amusement in

These solitary dreary Islands.

There is a nature of these Islands, but broader-leaved than the English. The seasons to sow all the kinds of garden seeds are about 3 weeks earlier in the Fall than directed by Muller's Kalender, on account of the weather coming on sooner w<sup>th</sup> than in England; & later in the Spring, because then the weather grows mild & young things come on sooner. As the weather is very fluctuating great precaution must be used & much care taken after stormy windy nights which are very common at this season: & as great quantities of ramble all Sept & Oct<sup>r</sup>, with flect & snow, & other sharp frosts in the night, come on, if possible young plants should be covered.

All kinds of birds, w<sup>th</sup> & some, w<sup>th</sup>le in August & September; & as the weather grows mild they begin to lay their eggs. The albatrop eggs we got first, & they continued good a month; then the Penguins; after them the sea hens; & then Gulls; so that till the end of Nov<sup>r</sup> there is no want of refreshment, and

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after Dec<sup>r</sup> commences the wild geese are grown fit  
food, & their young large enough to eat.

The Albatross is a large bird of the  
size of a small goose; their bodies white with  
dusky blackish wings; their bills are a dirty  
yellow, 3 inches long, hooked at the end a little  
& very strong; they breathe hard thro' two small  
holes on the upper part of the bill, & frequently  
make a sound exactly like the little toy  
trumpets sold to children at Fairs: These birds  
have very long narrow wings, with three joints  
in each wing; I have measured some 10 feet  
from tip to tip: Their feet are webbed, the  
web very thin; they have 3 claws; the  
outer claw has four joints, the middle 3, & the  
inner 2: When they repair on shore in Sept<sup>r</sup>  
they are in great flocks, & place themselves very  
regularly, one or other is continually sounding their  
bills: while on their nests they are very tame  
& never stir off approach or near as you will: if  
any one goes to remove them they give a prop.  
& where they take hold they take out a piece  
but as they are easily moved aside with a



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fish, their Eggs are early got. These eggs  
are larger than a Goose's; the yolks yellow, the  
white very clear, & boiled ever so long never hardens,  
being very transparent. They are excellent nourish-  
-ing food. The nest is made on the ground  
cleared of the grass, formed entirely of earth about  
10 or 12 inches high, & as much over, circular  
the top flattened in, on which the Dam sits.  
The male returns regular morning & evening  
with food for her which he disgorges: they tread  
in the morning & are upon the hen many  
minutes. - As soon as these birds have hatched,  
the young are able to leave the nests, they  
give place to the jumping Penguins, who take  
possession, & lay their eggs & hatch; the old  
birds go abroad for food, & leave the young  
Albatrop with the new families, who never  
molest them.

Of the Penguin there are 4 kinds, differing  
in plumage & size. The King is the largest,  
beautifully marked with golden stripes about the  
head; the back a fine lead colour; the neck,  
throat & belly a clear white - The Red, so

named from its red shaper about the head, is less  
 than the King, the back dark-coloured, the white  
 on its neck breast & throat not so clear, but  
 white. The Holey is only black & white streaked  
 about the head, is less than the Red, & burroughs  
 under the sand-hills like rabbits. - The jum-  
 -ping Jacks are very small, & take up their  
 abode among the Albatropes when they come  
 on shore; the plumage is the same as the two  
 last species. - All the Penguins walk upright,  
 or rather waddle like naughty children; as  
 soon as they enter the water, they dart  
 through under the surface with an amazing  
 swiftness. In my opinion these 4 species of  
 creatures partake of the nature of Swifts  
 Birds & Fishes: their wings are short & covered  
 with thick downy feathers; in the sea these  
 wings serve them for fins: their eyes are very  
 good, & the yolks of the colour of the Red or  
 yellow King Penguin: their flesh is rank &  
 not fit to eat.

of Geese there are three sorts. First  
 the mountain goose is a small sort about the

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one of a mapovg Duck, mottled on the back, & growing greenish with a glossy blue near the neck: under its throat it is brownish: the wings are beautiful with glossy golden coloured feathers: the flesh is excellent & delicate. - Secondly, the common wild or painted Goose, nearly coloured as the others, but much larger: the Gardens are black & white mottled: these are very good food. - Thirdly, the Sea Goose, feeding always along shore, mottled black & white: the Gardens of these are <sup>quite</sup> all white: they are only eatable when made into soup. - The two first kinds of geese feed entirely on grass, & in summer on the wild cranberries: they lay in Sept & Oct, & about Dec, being moulting time, are easily run down & taken. Tho' they soon take to wheat, yet if ever they can get loose, & see any of the flocks of wild ones, away they join them directly.

Wild Ducks are here plenty but rather fishy. The Teal are very good. There is one species of wild Duck here which never flies, their wings being very short, heads large (these named logger head Ducks.) They only flutter along the

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water; they keep in great flocks, & are easily dove  
on shore, when they run very fast. Their flesh  
may be eat made in soup.

Here are numbers of Sheldrakes. They sit  
in rows on the rocks & pendent cliffs. In low  
water they leave their labours to seek food.  
The sea hens very diligently watch their return,  
& a battle ensues until they drop part of their  
food down, upon which the sea hens plunge after  
it, & the Sheldrakes fly away. These birds  
when young are pied black & white; but as they  
grow old they grow quite black.

Snipes are very plenty, & so very tame  
that they may be knocked down with great ease.

There is a bird as large as a Magpie  
with a fine parlet breast, spotted on the back  
like a partridge with a long bill, slender. It  
has small feet with crooked claws. Has a  
single note of the mocking bird.

Another bird with a dun yellow breast,  
& brown back, sharp claws, in fore throat,  
good food.

A beautiful little bird like a goldfinch,

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with a pretty note, but very troublesome in the  
feed time,

A kind of Sparrow & Tomtit are here.

Two kinds of little birds whose plumage  
is light brown, one with the white throat & fond  
of coming about our houses like the Robins in England

Here are 3 kinds of Hawks; the Eagle, Osprey  
& Sparrow, very voracious, yet the Seamen eat  
them with great delight when made into  
broth.

Of Owls there is but one sort, & that exactly  
like the European one.

Our Game Fowls, Ducks & Engl<sup>d</sup> Geese  
all paired in Aug<sup>t</sup> & Sept<sup>r</sup>, laid & hatched at  
the season regular. Our Doves all hatched in  
July & August, & stood the weather very well.  
Our Hogs thrive, but getting down to the sea  
shore grew so fleshy, that they were scarce  
eatable; & they are a stock which is not  
worth keeping for that reason.

There are four species of seals. The  
largest the people called Clapmatchers, but for  
what reason I know not. Their bodies are as

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large as an Ox: a slight probe on their nose will  
bring them down: they are amazingly full of blood  
& very fat: the Sealion on L. Anson's voyage is  
a very good likeness of them. - The Sealion, however,  
is another species of a smaller kind. - The  
common Seal, & furced Seal, are two other  
species. All these animals bring forth their  
Young in Dec<sup>r</sup>, & soon after they gender; I  
apprehend they go ten months with young.  
While they are whelping it is rather dangerous  
to approach them, for then the male guards  
them, & will make at any thing that draws  
near; at other times they always make for  
the water when attacked.

Wild Foxes are pure, & are the size  
of a Mastiff, of a reddish colour, & very shy,  
they seem more of the wolf kind than the  
fox: How or by what means these quadrupeds  
came upon this island is all conjecture.

The Fish to be got here are Mulletts  
Smelts, transparent Fish & Loggerheads; & in  
the Rivers a Fish the size of a Heming, we  
called them Trout as they are fresh-water

Turnell, Celery Turnygrap, Crepes, Broccole, & I think  
will always have some Turneps & Cabbages from the  
Stock left in the ground with Potatoes & other vege-  
tables. I think it a good Port to touch at for  
refreshment on the passage round Cape Horn.

N.B. On the S-W side of Saunders Island are three  
flocks of wild goats, which from their distance from  
the common landing place, & therefore not being  
disturbed, will doubtless increase. Some English  
Rabbits are also on this Island & on Marble  
Island. I also left a ram, with a ewe big with  
Lamb, & some tame Pigeons which I hope will  
increase, but of these two last I doubt, as the  
Whore-Islander I left behind might destroy  
them, though the Master gave the strongest  
assurances he would not. Of the Goats & Rabbits  
he knew not.

S. W. Clayton.

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I think it necessary to mention that future Navigators may not be too sanguine in their expectations on that head: all the water comes filtering through the Bogs from the mountains, of course a dry summer makes a scarcity: at all other times there is no great want, for it rains enough & often too much.

Wood is not to be had about these islands, except what is driven by the SW wind from the Strait of Magellan, but peat or turf may be got, however that is not fit firing for ships.

There is a great quantity of moss upon the hilly parts of these islands, which put in water tinges it a coarse dark red, & when a Linen is stained with it, will not easily rub out again while wet, but if suffered to dry cannot be washed out.

The Harbour of Port Symont is spacious, deep, & the bottom good holding ground, & ships may ride in great safety: it is easy of access & nothing that can take up a ship but what can be seen if she comes in to the northward of the Keys: and as there is at all times great plenty of wild-geese about the different Islands



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fish, & have somewhat the taste of a Trout. The  
Mullet I have taken with the rod & line & the  
& with the seine 7 lb weight. The Smelts often  
measure 13, 14 & 15 inches in length. The Trout  
-parents Tish are as clear as Crystal, shaped  
like a Pike, but not larger than an Herring:  
when cut they do not bleed red blood, but a  
clear liquor flows from the wound.

Small sand-crabs are to be got in the  
sandy bays, & some in trawling & dredging a few  
small Crayfish were caught, & little Scallops.  
The Crayfish were very sweet.

I do not by any means approve the  
water at Port Egmont. It has a fine look, but  
after being some time in casks, it grows rosy  
foul & thick, neither do I think it wholesome  
unless full boiled; true it is decried to the  
North or in dishes for water. Nor would I expect  
to be well & poor supplied were I to put into  
in Jan<sup>r</sup> or Feb<sup>r</sup>; for should those months  
prove dry as I found them, very little water  
can be got. I have had a barrel under the best  
shout a whole day, & not got it filled: and this