March 1<sup>st</sup>

We arrived early in the morning at Port Louis, the most Eastern point of the Falkland Islands: The first news we received was to our astonishment, that England had taken possession of the Falklands islands & that the Flag was now flying.

These islands have been for some time uninhabited, until the Buenos Ayres Government, a few years since claimed them & sent some colonists.

Our government remonstrated against this, & last month the Clio arrived here with orders to take possession of the place.

A Buenos ayrean man of war was here, at the time, with some fresh colonists.

Both they & the vessel returned to the Rio Plata.

The present inhabitants consist of one Englishman, who has resided here for some years, & has now the charge of the British flag, 20 Spaniards & three women, two of whom are negresses.

The island is abundantly stocked with animals. — there are about 5000 wild oxen, many horses, & pigs. — Wild fowl, rabbits, & fish in the greatest plenty.

European vegetables will grow. — And as there is an abundance of water & good anchorage; it is most surprising that it has not been long ago colonized, in order to afford provisions for Ships going round the Horn.

At present it is only frequented by Whalers, one of which is here now. —

We received all this intelligence from a French boat, belonging [to] a Whaler, which was [now] lying a wreck on the beach. Between the 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> of January, the very time when we suffered from the gale off Cape Horn, this fine ship parted from three anchors & drove on shore. — They describe the gale as a perfect hurricane. — They were glad to see us, as they were at a loss what to do. — all the stores are saved & of course plenty of food.

Capt: FitzRoy has offered to take them 22 in number in the Beagle & to purchase for the owners, any stores which we may want. The rest must be sacrificed.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Mr Dixon, the English resident, came on board. — What a strange solitary life his must be: it is surprising to see how Englishmen find their way to every corner of the globe. I do not suppose there is an inhabited & civilized place where they are not to be found. —

March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Took a long walk; this side of the Island is very dreary: the land is low & undulating with stony peaks & bare ridges; it is universally covered by a brown, wiry grass, which grows on the peat. — In this tract, very few plants are found, & excepting snipes & rabbits scarcely any animals. — The whole landscape from the uniformity of the brown color, has an air of extreme desolation.
March 4th

A grievous accident happened this afternoon in the death of Mr Hellyer. — One of the residents brought the news that he had found some clothes & a gun on the sea coast. — We made all haste to the place & in a short time discovered the body, not many yards from the shore, but so entangled in the Kelp, that it was with difficulty it was disengaged. — It was quite evident he had shot a bird & whilst swimming for it, the strong stalks of the sea weed had caught his legs & thus caused his death.

March 5th

Mr Hellyer was buried on a lonely & dreary headland.

The procession was a melancholy one: in front a Union jack half mast high was carried, & over the coffin the British ensign was thrown; the funeral, from its simplicity was the more solemn, & suited all the circumstances.

March 6th — 9th

Several ships have arrived; we are now five sail in the harbor: An English schooner has agreed to carry the Frenchman & all his stores (which we could not have done) to Monte Video & to receive 20 per cent at the auction.

During these days I have been wandering about the country, breaking rocks, shooting snipes, & picking up the few living productions which this Island has to boast of.

It is quite lamentable to see so many casks & pieces of wreck in every cove & corner: we know of four large ships in this one harbor. One of these was the L’Uranie a French discovery ship who had been round the world.

The weather generally has been cold & very boisterous.

Sunday. March 10th

In the evening it blew a tremendous gale of wind. — I should never have imagined it possible for such a sea to get up in so few minutes.

The Barometer had given most excellent warning that something uncommon was coming: in the middle of the day it looked like a clear; but at dinner the Captain said at dinner the glass says we have not had the worst: — about an hour afterwards it reached us in all its fury: The French Brig let go four anchors; the English schooner drove drifted; & a little more would have added another wreck.

At night our Yawl was swamped at her moorings; she did not sink, but was towed on shore & emptied, — some of her gear & sails are lost:

March 10th to Sunday 17th

This is one of the quietest places we have ever been to. — Nearly all the Ships are gone; & no one event has happened during the whole week: The boats are employed in surveying.

I walked one day to the town, which consists in half a dozen houses pitched at random in different places.

In the time of the old Spaniards, when it was a Botany Bay for Buenos Ayres, it was in a much more flourishing condition.
The whole aspect of the Falkland Islands, were however changed to my eyes from that walk; for I found a rock abounding with shells; & these of the most interesting geological aera.

Sunday 24th

We have never before stayed so long at a place & with so little for the Journal. — For the sake of the fossil shells, I paid a visit of three days to the town. In a long ride I found the country no ways different from what it is in the neighbourhood of the Ship.

The same entire absence of trees & the same universal covering of brown wiry grass growing on a peat soil.

The inhabitants are a curious mixed race; their habitations are in a miserable condition & deficient in almost every accomodation. The place bespeaks what it has been, viz a bone of contention between different nations.

On Friday a sealing vessel arrived commanded by Capt. Lowe; a notorious & singular man, who has frequented these seas for many years & been the terror to all small vessels.

It is commonly said, that a Sealer, Slaver & Pirate are all of a trade; they all certainly require bold energetic men; & amongst Sealers there are frequently engagements for the best "rookerys". & in these affrays Capt Lowe has gained his celebrity.

In their manners habits &c I should think these men strikingly resembled the old Buccaneers. Capt Lowe brought with him the people belonging to a vessel which was wrecked on the SW coast of Tierra del Fuego by the great gale of the 13th of Jan. — Thus we already know of the loss of two vessels & a third which was got off shore.

Capt Lowe considers this Summer to have been the most boisterous he has ever seen. It is satisfactory to have felt the very worst weather, in one of the most notorious places in the world, & that in a class of vessel, which is generally thought unfit to double the Horn. — Few vessels would have weathered it better than our little "diving duck".

March 26th

A short time after our arrival here, a small American Sealing vessel came in; — Capt. FitzRoy entered into terms for buying it, on condition of its return by the 25th. — As the vessel did not keep her appointment, we supposed she had failed to find her consort, & the Captain therefore purchased Low's Schooner. — She is a fine vessel of 170 tuns, drawing 10 feet of water, and an excellent sea-boat. If the Admiralty sanction the provisioning & payment of men, this day will be an important one in the history of the Beagle.

Perhaps it may shorten our cruize, anyhow it will double the work done; & when at sea, it is always pleasant to be sailing in company; the consort affords an object of attention to break the monotonous horizon of the ocean.

March 29th

The English Schooner will not conveniently carry all the Frenchmen of the wreck; The Captain offered to carry some, & to day three of her officers came on board.

April 4th

Our Schooner sailed for Rio Negro, in order if possible to catch M² Wickham before he & M² Stokes set out in their little vessels on a surveying cruize. — M² Chaffers has at present the command. — M² Wickham will have it eventually.