

FALKLAND ISLANDS, fawk' -, Sp. ISLAS MALVINAS, ees'las mal-vee'inas.

British crown colony in the S Atlantic, E by N of the Strait of Magellan. The colony consists of East Falkland and West Falkland, with over 100 small isls. Area 4618 sq. m.; pop. 2250, nearly half of whom live in the cap. ~~St~~ Stanley, on East Falkland. The latter is separated from West Falkland by the Falkland Sound. The shores are deeply indented; the surface culminates in Mt Adam (2315 ft); small streams and lakes are numerous; there are now no trees, but peat is plentiful. The climate is healthy, but is characterized by severe gales and abundance of moisture. Occupations include sheep-breeding and whaling. Wool, whaling and sealing products, sheep, tallow, skins, hides, guano, and bone meal are exported. The Falkland Islands Dependencies comprise all land (over 3 mill. sq. m., incl. ice-bound sea) between 20° and 50° W long., S of 50° S lat., and between 20° and 80° W long., S of 58° S lat.; the area is economically important as the world's chief whaling-ground. The isl. of South Georgia, and the Sandwich, South Orkney, and South Shetland groups are whaling bases, and Graham and Coats Lands and the Antarctic sector to the pole included. The Falkland Isls, appear on Spanish maps of the early 16th c. as the Islas do Sanson. They were seen in 1592 by Davis and in 1599-1600 by Sibald de Weert. Capt. Strong landed on them in 1689-90, and the name, Falkland Sound, ~~wh~~ which he gave to the channel, was later diverted to the group. De Bougainville estab. in 1764 a French settlement from St Malo (which place, from the frequency of the visits of its fishermen, had already given the isls. the Fr. name Iles Malouines), but this was yielded to Spain in 1767. Meanwhile a British settlement had also been estab. in 1765, and numerous diplomatic difficulties ensued before Spain relaxed her hold in 1806. In 1820 the isls. were occupied in the name of the rep. of Buenos Aires, but in 1833 Britain asserted her possession. In 1908 and 1917 the dependencies were attached. The whole area has also been claimed by Argentina since her independence. Off the Falklands a British fleet (under Sturdee) defeated a German (under Von Spee), 8 Dec. 1914.

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