

T H E
A U T H O R ' s
P R E F A C E .

THE discovery and knowledge of the Malouine Islands has been looked upon as an object of so much importance, that the English, having been informed of the expedition we made there in 1764, thought it necessary to establish themselves in those islands, notwithstanding that we had already taken possession of them in the name of the crown of France. In preparing for this voyage, which excited the attention of all Europe, they took extraordinary precautions. Commodore Byron was employed on this expedition with two ships, the Dolphin and the Tamer frigate, under his command. The Florida was afterwards dispatched to carry them provisions of all kinds.

We had taken possession of these islands in the beginning of April, before the Dolphin was off the stocks, and we quitted them the 8th of the same month on our return to France, where we landed the 26th of June. The English did not sail till some days after. On the 4th of December they left Port Desire, and took their course towards the South of the supposed Pepys's Island, at 48 degrees South latitude, where they made several unsuccessful attempts for the discovery of that island. They were then obliged, as they observe p. 69. of the Voyage round the world in 1764 and 1765 on board the Dolphin, to abandon that research, being well persuaded of the impossibility of finding this supposed island.

The 22d of the same month (December) being in the Streights of Magellan, five leagues distance from Terra del Fuego, they observed a smoke rising in several places on the opposite coast, which is that of Patagonia. They steered towards it, and casting

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