

**THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
COMPANY, A STUDY
IN COLONISATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649242443

The South Australian company, a study in colonisation by George Sutherland

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GEORGE SUTHERLAND

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ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY, FROM N.W.

From a drawing by Colonel Light, 1737-8.

THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COMPANY

A STUDY IN COLONISATION

BY

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LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1898

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ANNALS OF THE
LITHUANIAN SOVIET
YEAR 1957

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THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COMPANY



CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

THE story of each successive effort made by those who have been aptly termed the British Empire Builders will be found, on examination, to present curious and interesting parallel features to those of similar enterprises which have preceded it. In Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Year, when so much has been said with practical unanimity of assent, about the immense value to England of that 'Greater Britain' which lies beyond the seas, it is difficult for the average reader to realise how enormous is the change in public sentiment which this consensus of opinion represents. At

the date of her Majesty's accession, as well as for some years before and after it, enthusiasts in colonisation were looked upon as nuisances and disturbers of the public peace, or, in other words, very much in the same light in which Mr. Cecil Rhodes is regarded at the present day by the most reactionary among the 'Little England' Party.

The despatch of the pioneer vessels of the South Australian Company, without waiting for that official sanction which had so long been sought in vain, as narrated in the succeeding pages, may be taken as a type of what happened at the founding of almost every settlement by British colonisers of that date. When the New Zealand Company, which founded the present capital of the southern colony, failed to pass its Bill in the House of Commons, and quietly fitted up the ship 'Tory' to convey a party under Colonel Wakefield, the British Government despatched the warship 'Druid' to chase the expedition and bring its leaders to their senses. When Batman and others of his colonising association, tired out with waiting for official sanction for their proposed settlement on the present site of Melbourne, crossed Bass's

Strait with a few sheep and began pastoral operations near Port Phillip, they were warned that they could not be regarded in any other light than as trespassers and intruders. Even in New South Wales the introduction of the first free settlers, which was the real beginning of the true settlement of that great colony, was opposed most bitterly by officials and legislators.

No active hostilities of course were, in any of these cases, initiated against the enthusiastic colonisers. That would have been too ridiculous. But the spirit in which every application for leave to colonise any portion of the immense undeveloped territory of the British Empire was received, found its ordinary expression in some such appeal as that of the statesman who was continually exclaiming, 'Why cannot you let it alone?' It almost seemed as if, in this regard, the settled policy of England had been framed and interpreted on the principle laid down by another eminent politician that 'To do anything which you are not obliged to do, must necessarily be wrong.' At any rate it was in tacit recognition of such an understanding that the Empire Builders of those days generally