ISELAND.

ISELAND is the greatest of all those Islands in the Western Ocean, which are subject to the Kings of Norway: it takes this name from the cold, wherewith it is partly frozen. It is also called Sueelandia, from the Snow: Also Gardarsholme, that is, the Island of Gardar. The most do suppose this to bee that Thule mentioned by the Ancients, which also Prolemie doeth call Thule, the middle whereof he placeth in the 30 Degree of Latitude, and 63 of Longitude. Solinus placeth it five days and nights flyle from the Orcades. An Island the most famous of all other with Poets, when by this, as being the farthest part of the World, they would intimate any thing farre distant. Whence Virgil saith, Tibi servias ultima Thule, may the farthest Thule serve thee. But Senecius doubteth whether there were ever any Thule: and Giraldis writeth, that it was never seene, and the more Learned are doubtfull in their opinions. The most doe affirm (as wee saie) that Iseland was heretofore called Thule; yet Saxa the Grammarian, Cranlius, Millius, Ionius, and Pencerus are of a contrary opinion unto them. But of this enough: I returne againe to Iseland. It is situated not under the first Meridian, as one hath norted, but in the eighth Degree from thence. The length of it is an hundred German miles, as the common Writers have it, and Ionas addeth to these foure and fortie. The Latitude or breadth is fiftie and fiftie German miles. It hath an ungentle ayre, and for the most part it is unhabinited, especially towards the North, by reason of the vehement Western windes, which will not suffer the shrubs (as Olaim writeth) to rife up. The Land is unfit for tillage, neither doth it beare any graine; but all that have written of this Isle doe report, that it hath such abundance of graffe, that unleas the Cattell were sometime driven from the pasture, they would be in danger to die, and be choak't with their owne fatness. Ionas himselfe confesseth, that they have no labouring beasts, but Horfes and Oxen: and here all the Oxen and Kine have no hornes, nor their Sheepe likewise. They have little white Dogs, which they very much esteeme. They have abundance of white Faulcones, and white Crowes, which prey upon the young Lambs and Hoggies. Also there are white Beares and Hares. Also (as Islandes witnesseth) there are Eagles with white traines: which Pliny (as he saith) called Pygargos. Velleius reporteth, that this Island beareth no tree but the Birch and Juniper trees: so that there is great scarcitie of wood through the whole Island, unleas by chance (which somtimes happens) some great trees being rooted up by the violence of the winde, are brought out of the Northern parts, and like wracks cast upon these moores, which the Inhabitants use in building houses and ships. It hath been subject to the King of Norway, (as Ionas reporteth) from the yeare 1260. in which they first did homage to him: In regard whereof, the King of Denmarke and Norway doth yearly send thither a Governour, who keepes his residence in the Castle called Besfede, whom they now obey, as heretofore they did their Bishops.