

# ISELAND.



**I**SELAND is the greatest of all those Ilands in the Westerne 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 *Suelandia*, from the Snow: Also *Gardartsholme*, that is, the Iland of *Gardart*. The most doe suppose this to bee that *Thule* mentioned by the Ancients, which also *Ptolemie* doeth call *Thule*; the middle whereof he placeth in the 30. Degree of Latitude, and 63. of Longitude. *Solinus* placeth it five dayes and nights sayle from the *Orcades*. An Iland 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 seruiat ultima Thule*, may the farthest *Thule* serve thee. But *Sinesius* doubteth whether there were ever any *Thule*: and *Giraldus* writeth, that it was never seene, and the more Learned are doubtfull in their opinions. The most doe affirme (as wee said) that *Iseland* was heretofore called *Thule*: yet *Saxo* the *Grammarian*, *Cramerus*, *Milius*, *Ionius*, and *Peuceus* 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 noted, 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 sixe and fiftie *German* miles. It hath an ungentle ayre, and for the most part it is uninhabited, especially towards the North, by reason of the vehement Westerne windes, which will not suffer the shrubs (as *Olaus* writeth) to rise 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 grasse, that unlesse the Cattell were sometime driven from the pasture, they would be in danger to die, and be choakt with their owne fatnesse. *Ionas* himselfe confesseth, that they have no labouring beasts, but Horses 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 Lambes and Hogges: Also there are white Beares and Hares. Also (as *Islandus* witnesseth) there are Eagles with white traines: which *Pliny* (as he saith) called *Pyrgargos*. *Velleius* reporteth, that this Iland beareth no tree but the *Birch* and *Iuniper* trees: so that there is great scarcitie of wood through the whole Iland, unlesse by chance (which somtimes happens) some great trees being rooted up by the violence of the winde, are brought out of the Northerne parts, and like wracks cast upon these moores, which the Inhabitants use in building houses and ships. It hath beene subject to the King of *Norway*, (as *Ionas* reporteth) from the year 1260. in which they first did homage to him: In regard whereof, the King of *Denmarke* and *Norway* doth yearely send thither a Governour, who keeps his residence in the Castle called *Bestede*, whom they now obey, as heretofore they did their

The name by whom, and why given.

See *Heylin*. p. 8

The Situation.

(Which is a great circle rounding the Earth from Pole to Pole, and passeth through the Ilands called *Agnes*: See *Marg.* pag. 10.

The quality of the Soyle and Ayre.

The varietie of living Creatures.

Bishops,