

phesy ever he spoke, though he knew not whom he spoke of.

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VI. *An Abstract of a Book, viz. An Account of the Islands of Orkney. By James Wallace, M. D. and Fellow of the Royal Society. To which is added, an Essay concerning the Thule of the Ancients., 8o. London.*

**T**Hese cold barren Islands being under the Protection of a *Great Man*, and here described by a very observing and judicious *Physician*, are like to make some figure in the world, especially amongst those who prefer the certainty of *Nature* to meer notional Speculations.

The work consists of eight Chapters; in the first of which, the several Names, the Longitudes, Latitudes, Boundaries, the Ebbings and Flowings of the Sea, the Harbours and Merchandizes are treated.

The second comprehends the *Plants, Animals* and *Fossils*. The Vegetables alone amount to near 300, all or most herbaceous ones, there being no indigenous Trees; only here and there some planted in Gardens, but they prove dwarfs, seldom bearing any mature fruit, whereas in more Northerly parts of *Norway* Trees

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rise strong and lofty, thriving even on small Rocks, surrounded by the Sea. The Herbs have the names of *Caspar Bauhins* in his *Pinax*, as the shells (very numerous in these little Isles) have those of *Dr Lister* in his *Hist. Animal Eng. and in his Synopsis. Conchyl.* wherein the *Author* shews himself to be a master in this sort of writing, for without some such method of referring, the Reader is oftner confounded than instructed. The Birds and Fishes may be reduced to *Gesner*, and Mr *Ray* as some of the figured Bodies to Mr *Lhwydys Lyihophylac-Britan.* He takes notice of the several sorts of *Phaseoli*, commonly called *Molucco Beans*, (but found by *Dr Sloane* in *Jamaica*) cast upon these Northern Isles; also *Sperma Ceti*, *Ambergreife*, *Sponges*, *Cuttlebones*. He describes the *Finn-man*, and their Boats observed on the Coasts, and relates many strange effects of storms. He is curious in the Diseases, and some of their particular cures.

The Country lies about 59 degrees, and 2 minutes *Northern Lat.* the compass varying 8 D. so that the longest day is above 18 hours. At Midnight it is so clear for a great part of *June*, that one may read a Letter at his Chamber Window; yet it cannot be true what some *Writers* report, that from the Hill of *Hoy*, a man may see the Sun at Midnight, for that may be only the Image of it refracted thro some vapours or clouds about the *Horison* (as may be demonstrated from the late *Astronomical* observations of the *Swedes* at *Torneo* in *Lapland*, lying about 66 *Deg. N. Lat.*) Amongst the great number of smaller Herbs growing in these *Islands* none of the *Mallow* kind could be found, nor several other Plants very common in the like *Climes*; not so much as any Bush or Shrub to be found wild,  
except

except some few *Roses*, the *Juniper*, the *Myrtillus*, and *Heath* ; yet some Kitchen Herbs arrive here to as great a bigness as about *London*, and *Artichokes* to a greater than in any other place. The Sea runs very high round all these Isles, and in Storms dashes the Salt water far into the Country, frequently throwing up abundance of several *Species of Whales, Stones and Algas*, with which they manure their Land.

The little Cows yield a great store of Milk, and the Ewes generally produce two Lambs at a Birth, some three and four. The Horses small but strong, great herds of Swine, and rich Coney Warrens. Plenty of most sort of Fish, and vast conveniences for the *Herring* and *Cod* Trade, if any ways encouraged. The *Natives* are very healthful, and live sometimes married 80 years, sometimes bearing Children beyond 60. For other natural observations of this kind, the Work itself ought to be consulted, many curious particulars will occur upon the Birds, the Testaceous and Crustaceous Animals.

Yet the Ancient *Monuments*, the Civil and Ecclesiastical *History* are not neglected ; in all which the *Author* has discover'd a large compass of knowledge, especially upon the *Pights* or *Picts*, *Belus*, and *Ganus*, the ancient *Norwegians*, the *Sinclars* and *Earls of Orkney*, the *Stewards* and *Douglasse's*. What he delivers of the *Obelisks*, the *Causeys*, *Urns*, and *Burial Places*, of the ancient state of the Church of *Orkney*, of the propagation of the *Christian Faith* there, and of the particular customs of the Inhabitants, are very remarkable.

The whole is illustrated with an exact Map of all the Islands together, with the Soundings and the setting of the Tyde of Flood ; and with a Copper Plate, containing the *Icons* of some rarities mentioned in the Book, as of a very beautiful *Fish* (spotted like a Peacocks tail, a sort of *Turdus* without doubt) a *Patella articulata cymbiformis*, very elegant ; a *Penna Marina*, the *Ember goose*, the several *Exotick Beans*, cast upon the shoars, the *Bernacle shell*, many naturally and artificially *figured Stones*, a *Pecten*, and a *Fibula*.

At the end is annext a learned *Essay* concerning the *Thule* of the Ancients, for which the Reader is refer'd to the Book itself.

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