of the archduke Charles in 1796 drove the French from the east of the Rhine, and Bonaparte, who had conquered northern Italy up to Mantua, narrowly escaped destruc­tion before this fortress. But for the genius of the French commander and the wretched character of the Austrian generals and officers, the immense efforts made by Thugut at this time would have turned the tide of the war. Defeat after defeat seemed to make no impression upon his “ world-desolating obstinacy and, even when Bonaparte had advanced to within eighty miles of Vienna, it is stated that the empress had to throw herself at her husband’s feet when in conference with his minister, in order to overcome the resistance of the latter to an armistice. The subsequent peace of Campo Formio was hotly condemned by Thugut, who tendered his resignation. Then followed the congress of Rastadt and the murder of the French envoys, long attributed, but without any real ground, to Thugut himself. War was renewed ; the French were driven out of Italy by Austrian armies as­sisted by Suwaroff ; and it was determined that the allies should conquer Switzerland, and so invade France where the frontier is most open. Thugut, now at the height of his power, and far more anxious to recover Belgium than to overthrow the republic, took the fatal step of withdraw­ing a great part of the Austrian forces from Switzerland at the very moment when the Russians were entering it. The result was the destruction of the Russians by Masséna and the total failure of the campaign, followed by the se­cession of Russia from the coalition. Still full of designs for annexation in Italy, Thugut continued the war with the help of England. On the very day when he renewed his engagements with England the news arrived of the battle of Marengo, which at one blow made an end of all that Austria had won in Italy in the preceding year. Nothing daunted, Thugut continued, during the armistice which followed, his preparation for the struggle with Moreau in the valley of the Danube ; and, if he could have inspired his master with his own resolute spirit, the result of the war might have been different. But, while Thugut was actually receiving the British subsidies, the emperor, without the knowledge of his minister, surrend­ered the fortresses of Ulm and Ingolstadt to Moreau, in return for an extension of the armistice. Thugut’s passionate indignation on learning of this miserable act is impressively described in Lord Minto’s despatches from Vienna. He withdrew from office ; but Lord Minto’s pro­tests compelled the emperor again to place in his hands the direction of affairs, which he held until the battle of Hohenlinden made all further resistance impossible. He was then, in deference to French influence, banished from Vienna, and never resumed office. In his retirement he was occasionally consulted, as after the battle of Wagram in 1809, when he recommended the emperor to make peace at any cost, stating that the existence of the Austrian monarchy was at stake and that the dissolution of Napoleon’s empire was not far off. After the overthrow of Napoleon he returned to the capital, where he died May 29, 1818. Thugut possessed many of the qualities of a great man,—indomitable courage, calmness in danger, devotion to public interests, enormous industry ; but all this was spoilt by the persistent disregard of obligations towards allies in the greedy pursuit of Austria’s own aggrandizement, and by the intriguing spirit inseparable from this policy. The materials for forming a fair estimate of Thugut’s conduct of affairs from 1793 to 1801 have but recently been given to the world. Of his private life next to nothing is known.

THULE was the name given by Greek and Roman geographers to a land situated to the north of Britain, which they believed to be the most northerly portion of Europe, or indeed of the known world. The first writer who mentioned the name was Pytheas of Massilia, whose statements concerning it have been already given under the heading Pytheas. But it is impossible for us to deter­mine with certainty what those statements, which have only been transmitted to us at second or third hand, really were, and still more so what was their real signification. It is almost certain that Pytheas did not himself profess to have visited Thule, but had only vaguely heard of its existence, as a land of unknown extent, situated, accord­ing to the information he had received, six days’ voyage to the north of Britain. This account was adopted by Eratosthenes (though rejected by Polybius and Strabo), and accordingly this unknown land became a cardinal point in the systems of many ancient geographers, as the northern limit of the known world. Nothing more was learnt concerning it until the Romans under Agricola (about 84 a.d.) accomplished the circumnavigation of the northern point of Britain, and not only visited, but according to Tacitus subdued, the Orcades or Orkney Islands. On this occasion, the historian tells us, they caught sight also of Thule,@@1 which in this instance could only mean the group of the Shetland Islands. No further account of this mysterious land is found in any ancient author, except vague statements, derived from Pytheas, but mostly in an inaccurate and distorted form, concern­ing its position and the astronomical phenomena resulting from this cause. It is probable that what Pytheas really reported was that at the summer solstice the days were twenty-four hours in length, and conversely at the winter solstice the nights were of equal duration, a statement which would indicate the notion of its position in about 66° N. lat., or under what we now call the Arctic Circle. The skill of Pytheas as an astronomer would have been quite sufficient to lead him to the conclusion that this would be the case at some point in proceeding northwards, and the rapid changes in this respect that would be reported to him by any navigators that had really followed the shores of Britain to any considerable extent in that direction would confirm him in the correctness of his views. He had, too, a very exaggerated notion of the extent of Britain (see Pytheas), and hence he would be led to place an island which was six days’ voyage to the north of it much nearer to the Arctic Circle than its true position.

The statement of Pytheas on this point appears to have obtained almost universal belief until the time of Marinus of Tyre and his successor Ptolemy, who were led—apparently from their knowledge that the group of islands to which the name of Thule had been applied by the Romans was really not very far distant from the Orcades—to bring down its position considerably more to the south, so that Ptolemy places the island of Thule, which he still regards as the most northerly point of Europe, in only 63o N. lat. Unfortunately this more reasonable view has been discarded by many modern writers, who have gone back to the statements of Pytheas concerning the length of the day, and have in consequence insisted upon placing Thule within the Arctic Circle, and have thus been led to identify it with Iceland. The improbability of such an hypothesis, when we consider the state of ancient naviga­tion, is in itself a sufficient refutation, and there appears no reason­able doubt that the Thule of Pytheas, like that of the Romans and of Ptolemy, was merely an exaggerated and somewhat erroneous conception of the large group of the Shetland Islands, of which the principal, called Mainland, is in fact so predominant that the whole may well have been considered as one large island rather than a scattered group like the Orkneys. If we might trust to the accuracy of Strabo’s quotation (ii. 5, p. 114), that Pytheas called Thule “the most northerly of the British Islands,” this would be decisive on the point ; but unfortunately the verbal accuracy of such references by ancient writers can seldom be relied on, and Strabo had evidently never seen Pytheas’s original work.

It appears, however, to be certain that Iceland was really visited by some Irish monks long before its discovery by the Northmen, and is described under the name of Thule by a writer named Dicuil, himself an Irish monk, who wrote in the first half of the

@@@1 “Dispecta est et Thule,” Tac., Agric., c. 10.