of the Moselle, in France, extending over 408 square miles, It is divided into five cantons, and these into 117 com­munes, having a population of 87,520 persons in 1836. The capital is the city of the same name, situated on the right bank of the Meuse. It is one of the strongest of the frontier fortified places of France, and was attacked by the Prussians in 1792, but without success. In 1836 it con­tained 5680 civil inhabitants, principally employed in the manufacture of hats and hosiery. Long. 6. 5. 25. E. Lat. 49. 21. 30. N.

THIRLWALL, a hamlet within the parish of Halt­whistle, in the west division of the ward of Tindal, in the county of Northumberland. It is remarkable from being situated on the Picts’ wall, at the place where the Scots made gaps to force a passage into England. It has an an­cient castle built on the north side of the wall, about twenty yards long and twelve broad, with walls nine feet thick. It is curiously vaulted underneath, and on the top are six small turrets. Though this place had in 1831 only 328 inhabitants, they have rapidly increased, and are still in­creasing, in consequence of the railway from Carlisle to Newcastle, which passes by it, and from the extensive fields of coal which are in its neighbourhood.

THIRSK, a town of the wapentake of Birdforth, in the north riding of the county of York, 223 miles from Lon­don. It is situated on the river Coldbeck, by which it is divided into two parts. The town has some trade in making coarse linens and sackings. It is an ancient borough, and returns one member to parliament. The church is a fine old building. There are also various places of worship for dis­senters. There is a market on Monday, and several fairs. The inhabitants amounted in 1821 to 3502, and in 1831 to 3829.

THIRSTY Sound, an inlet or bay on the east coast of New Holland. Long. of the northernmost point, 150. 0. 10. E. Lat. 22. 6. 53. S.

THISTLE, Order of the, or *of St Andrew,* a military order of knighthood in Scotland, the rise and institution of which are variously related by different authors. Lesley bi­shop of Ross reports, that the night before the battle between Athelstan king of Northumberland and Hungus king of the Picts, a bright cross, in form of that upon which St Andrew (the tutelary saint of Scotland) suffered martyrdom, appeared to Hungus ; who, having gained the victory, ever after bore the figure of that cross on his banners. Others assert, that Achaius king of Scotland first instituted this order, after having made the famous league offensive and defensive with Charlemagne king of France. But although the thistle had been acknowledged as the symbol of the kingdom of Scot­land from the reign of Achaius, yet some refer the begin­ning of this order to Charles VII. of France. Others place the foundation of it as low as the year 1500. The chief and principal ensign is a gold collar composed of thistles and sprigs of rue interlinked with amulets of gold, having as a pendant the image of St Andrew with his cross, and the motto Nemo με Impune lacesset, “ Nobody shall provoke me with impunity.” The ordinary or common en­sign worn by the knights is a star of four silver points, and over them a green circle, bordered and lettered with gold, containing the said motto, and in the centre is a thistle; all which is embroidered on their left breast, and worn with the collar, with a green ribband over the left shoulder, and brought under the right arm : the pendent image of St An­drew, with his cross, in a purple robe, is within an oval of gold enamelled vert, with the former motto ; but sometimes they wear, encircled in the same manner, a thistle crowned. About the time of the Reformation, this order was dropped, and James 11, of Great Britain resumed it, by creating eight knights. the Revolution again unsettled it ; and it lay ne­glected till Queen Anne, in 1703, restored it to the primi­tive design, of twelve knights of St Andrew.

THISTLE’S Island, an island on the south coast of New Holland, at the mouth of Spencer’s Gulf. It is about twelve miles long. Long, of the north end, 136. 31/2. E. Lat. 34. 56. N.

THOMAR, a corregimiento in the province of Estrema­dura, in Portugal, on the borders of Beira and Alentejo. It comprises twenty-six cities and towns, seventy-nine vil­lages, and 21,748 dwellings, with 108,740 inhabitants. The capital is a city of the same name, on the small river Na- bao, in a delightful country covered with olive and orange trees. It is well and regularly built. It has an ancient castle, four churches, four monasteries, a poor-house, a hospital, and 1100 houses, with 5400 inhabitants. From the oil produced there, they make abundance of soap ; and some of them are occupied in making cotton goods. It stands on the site of the ancient city Nahancia, which was destroyed by the Moors.

THOMAS of Erceldoune, sometimes called Learmont, and sometimes the Rhymer, has long been recognized in the venerable character of a prophet and poet ; but the history of his life and writings is involved in that degree of obscurity which may well be supposed to attend so re­mote an era of our literary annals. His very name is not ascertained beyond all doubt or controversy. Accord­ing to Macpherson, the accurate editor of Winton, he re­ceived his surname of Learmont from Hector Boyce : but it seems unnecessary to suppose that the inventive faculties of this historian were so unprofitably exercised ; and if credit is due to an excellent genealogist, his family name is sufficiently established by its occurrence in authentic docu­ments. In one charter, says Nisbet, he is called Thomas Rymor, but in others of an earlier date, Thomas Lear- mount of Ercildoun. Certain however it is that no writer who preceded Boyce has yet been found to describe him by the surname of Learmont : by Robert of Brunne, Bar­bour, Winton, Bower, and Mair, he is named Erceldoune, while Henry the blind poet designates him Thomas the Rhymer. In a charter granted to the Trinity House of Soltra, the poet’s son describes himself as Thomas of Ercil­doun, the son and heir of Thomas *Rymοur* of Ercildoun ; but whether this addition is to be considered as an ordi­nary surname, or as an epithet commonly applied in allu­sion to the father’s poetical character, cannot be positively determined. It must at least be recollected that Rymer is a surname in both parts of the island, and that it has been traced to the poet’s own age, and to the particular district in which he resided. Thomas the Rhymer is the name by which he continues to be best known among the common people of Scotland. Erceldoune, from which he derived his other appellation, is a village situate in the county of Berwick, at a small distance from Melrose ; and the west­ern extremity of this village still exhibits the ruins of a tower which was once honoured by his residence. His estate was afterwards acquired by the earl of March, who at the opposite end of the village possessed another place of strength, called the Earl’s Tower ; and hence the ancient name of Erceldoune is supposed to have been gradually cor­rupted into Earlstoun.

The period of his birth it seems impossible to ascertain ; but it is evident that he must have reached the height of his reputation about the year 1286, the date of his famous prophecy respecting the death of Alexander the Third ; and in the year 1299, his son and heir conveyed the estate of Erceldoune to the convent of Soltra. It is therefore ob­vious that his father must have died during the interval. Patrick Gordon refers his death to the year 1307, but this cannot be considered as any competent authority. An in­dividual who enjoyed the reputation of a prophet may naturally be supposed to have attained a venerable age. Whether he himself aspired to the character of a prophet, it must now be fruitless to enquire ; but it is at least certain,