

and are formed by the great flakes which the river Oby almost continually brings there; they attach themselves along the coasts, and heap up to a considerable height on both sides, but the middle of the strait is the last part which freezes, and where the ice is the lowest. When the wind ceases to blow from the North, and comes in the direction of the Strait, the ice begins to thaw and break in the middle; afterwards it loosens from the sides in great masses, which are carried into the high sea. The wind, which all winter blows from the north over the frozen countries of Nova Zembla, renders the country watered by the Oby, and all Siberia, so cold, that even at Tobolski, which is in the 57th degree, there are no fruit trees, while at Sweden, Stockholm, and even in higher latitudes, there are both fruit trees and pulse. This difference does not proceed, as it has been thought, from the sea of Lapland being warmer than the Straits; nor from the land of Nova Zembla being colder than Lapland; but solely from the Baltic, and the Gulph of Bothnia, tempering the rigour of the north winds, whereas in Siberia there is nothing that can temperate the cold. It is a fact founded on experience, that it is never so cold on the sea coasts as in the inland