

## GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

### POSITION AND SIZE

Iceland is a large island in the North-Atlantic, close to the Arctic circle, and comprises an area of about 103,000 square kilometres, with its extreme northern point (the Rifstangi) lying in latitude  $66^{\circ} 32'$  north and its most southerly point (Dyrhólaey, Portland) in latitude  $63^{\circ} 24'$  north, not including the islands north and south of the land; if these are counted in, the country extends from  $67^{\circ} 10'$  N. (the Kolbeinsey) to  $63^{\circ} 19'$  N. (Geirfuglasker, one of the Westman Islands). With longitudinal direction E.—W. it stretches from  $13^{\circ} 30'$  W. of Greenwich (the Gerpir) to  $24^{\circ} 32'$  W. of Greenwich (Látrabjarg). The skerry *Hvalbakur* (The Whaleback) lies  $13^{\circ} 16'$  W. of Greenwich, or a little farther east than the Gerpir.

### COAST AND SURFACE

The west, north and east coasts are very irregular and abounding in good harbours, while the south coast is remarkably free from indentations and has no safe harbour except at the Westman Islands.

There are comparatively few islands round the coasts of Iceland, with a very small area as compared with that of the main island. *Breiðafjörður* (*Broadfirth*) on the west coast embraces, however, a great number of islets.

Iceland is essentially a mountainous country; the most prominent lowlands are in the south, where they form a pretty long and, in parts a broad, stretch along the coast. There is also a number of valleys, branching out from the many firths and bays in other parts of the country. The whole of the interior is filled with plateaux and mountains, the highest peaks of which are to be found in the south-east, where *Öræfajökull* and *Snæfell* (the *Snowfell*) rise to an altitude of 2119 metres and 1975 metres respectively.