down, are deposited in the lower parts of their courses to such an extent as to be for ever raising the river beds. Owing to this, the rivers often change their courses in the lowlands, various side streams striking off from the main currents and seeking the sea separately.

Lakes there are many, the largest being the *Thingvallavatn* and *Mývatn* in both of which fish (char and trout) is caught in considerable quantities. Many other lakes are also full of fish.

GEOLOGICAL FORMATION AND SOIL

From a geological point of view Iceland is a very young country. It is built up of basalt during the latest periods of the world's history, when a long succession of volcanic eruptions piled hundreds of basaltic layers one on top of the other, so that the aggregate thickness of the strata thus deposited measures about 1000 metres.

Between the older (tertiary) basalt formations which are chiefly to be found in the western, northern, and eastern divisions of the country, there are very meagre intercalated layers of other materials; but in the midland districts and in the south, where volcanic eruptions were frequent during the last stages of the Glacial Period and later, there may be seen, besides the basaltic layers, clastic materials in great quantities, as tuffs, breccias and conglomerates, formed of volcanic ashes, pumice-stone, moraines, riverine deposits, and the debris born down by *Jökulhlaup* (jökull bursts). The surface of these districts has changed considerably since the Ice Age, for the species of rock, of which the strata are made up, are rather soft and have therefore been unable to withstand the erosive agencies of air and water, while new volcanic eruptions have spread sheets of lava over large parts of them.

During the greatest development of the Glaciál Period the entire land was glaciated, except a few peaks which, like nunataks, rose above the ice. It was a moving mass of ice, projecting into the sea on every side, scraping off all loose material and carrying it forward and deeply grooving the sheets of basalt as it advanced. The valleys and furrows already in the basalt were then broadened and deepened by the discharge of ice from the interior icefields. When the ice disappeared, terminal moraines were left where the edge of the glacier had stopped for a time, and these traces of the Glacial Period are still visible in the shape of kames and gravel ridges.

Excepting the volcanic parts in the southern and midland districts, the surface features of the land have, on the whole, changed but little