

taken to preserve what still remains, and there is every prospect of success and of the wooded areas being increased by planting. The chief woods now are the *Fnjóskadal's* wood in the north and the *Hallormsstaða* wood in the east.

Iceland has not a luxuriant vegetation; of phanerogams and vascular cryptogams only some 400 species grow wild in the country. The grass is generally short, stands very close and is of very good quality. There is a great deal of difference between the mountain flora and that of the lowlands. As we ascend the grassy plots become rarer and the growth more stunted. The grass in the valleys and the sea-coast lowlands has always been the most important product of the Icelandic soil. Human habitations are placed within or near the grassy plots, mostly at a height of 200 metres or less above the level of the sea, and in no instance higher than 550 metres. The higher regions, of from 400—700 metres' altitude, are, however, by no means useless to the farmer, for they serve as mountain pastures and grazing grounds for his stock during the summer months.

In the lowland districts grass begins to grow late in April or early in May, but much later in the highlands, a fact of great importance, as the flocks grazing in the mountains and thus feeding on young plants during a considerable part of the summer, thrive extremely well, and their meat has a very delicious flavour indeed.

In the mountainous parts of Iceland is found the edible *Iceland moss* which formerly was largely gathered and proved a very wholesome article of food.

Of *foodplants*, potatoes and Swedish turnips are grown, but owing to the climatic conditions not even potatoes can be grown in the northern districts every year, and the home production is far from sufficient for the country's need. Barley was raised in Iceland in the first centuries after the colonization, but in modern times grain of any kind has altogether ceased to be cultivated.

Great quantities of *sea weed* grow along the coasts of Iceland, and are of no mean importance as fodder for horses and sheep, especially in winter. Formerly *dulse* (*söl*) was largely gathered for human consumption.

#### FAUNA

Of *wild mammals* there are very few species in Iceland, and none of them of any great economic importance to the population. *Foxes* which formerly were quite numerous, did a great deal of harm to the farmers' live-stock by preying on their flocks, and have in consequence been almost extirpated in several districts. Of late, however, fox-