



A FJORD ON THE NORTH COAST OF ICELAND.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SHORES OF THE ARCTIC SEA.

FAR up the Hrutafjörth is Melar, the first habitation reached by the traveller from the west. Let him, however, beware of staying there. Even Miss Oswald, whose work *By Fell and Fjord* is the lady's book on Iceland, in spite of the spelling of its place names, admits that 'the farmer has not fairly grasped the traveller's side of the innkeeper's trade.' Fortunately, there are other farms below, and ten miles down the firth are the trading stations of Bortheyri on the west, and an inn at Thoroddstathr on the east, near the steaming springs of another reykir. The eastern path lies high up on the hillside, commanding lovely views of the almost land-locked inlet. That on the west keeps to the seashore, where it can, leading at times through shallow pools with heavy fringes of seaweed, which the ponies will want to eat. By the water's edge are shell-beds, by no means common on this generally rock-bound coast. On the sandy levels delicate yellow poppies grow; and when headlands bar the way, and the track must