

lies between latitudes $41^{\circ} 30'$ and $45^{\circ} 30'$ N. Its flora is strictly temperate and sub-arctic, though it embraces also several representatives of more purely tropical families.

The Kurile Islands extend north-eastward in a narrow chain, between latitudes 44° and 52° N. Their flora is but meagre, and chiefly arctic and sub-arctic.

The insular condition of the country causes important modifications of climate highly favorable to vegetation. From the South China Sea, an oceanic current—the Kuro Siwo—flows northward and eastward, along the south-eastern coast of Kiushiu, Shikoku, and Honshiu, doubtless exerting its influence upon the climate of these islands, close to the shores of which it flows. Its influence is lost in the north, however, since but a short distance north of Yedo Bay, it turns somewhat eastward and crosses the Pacific to the coast of California and Oregon. The northern portion of Honshiu and the whole of Yezo and the Kuriles are thus deprived of that ameliorating influence which is so conspicuously illustrated in the climate of Great Britain. On the other hand, the winds blowing across the Japan Sea from the north-west encounter the cool mountain air of both Yezo and northern Honshiu, and deposit their contained moisture, thus making these districts areas of great precipitation.

In Yezo, the annual snow-fall is 12.5 feet, commencing about the last of November and continuing until the middle of April, without mid-winter thaws. This alone is by no means indicative of severe winters. The frost, which rarely penetrates more than six inches in early autumn, soon disappears from the soil under the influence of the deep snow, and when the latter finally disappears, vegetation springs forth at once, and the soil may be prepared for planting without delay.

These considerations would guide us, therefore, in separating the country as a whole, into four regions, which would embrace (1) Kiushiu and Shikoku; (2) Honshiu; (3) Yezo, and (4) the Kuriles. Yet a further important division might be made in Honshiu, between the more temperate flora on the one hand, and the more sub-tropical on the other, a division which would be very appropriately defined by the distribution of the camellia and tea plant; both of which find their highest limits of distribution not far north of Tokio, in about 36° or 37° N. latitude.

The special region considered in the following pages as Northern Japan, embraces the island of Yezo alone, unless otherwise specified. From the insular character of this region, we might infer an influence

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