

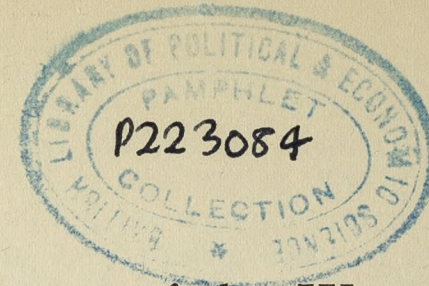
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**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
WOMAN SUFFRAGE
MOVEMENT IN
ICELAND.**

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
FOR SUFFRAGE AND EQUAL CITIZENSHIP**

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A Brief History of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Iceland.

In order to explain the development of the women's movement in Iceland it will be necessary to give a few characteristics of the Icelandic people. The first inhabitants of Iceland came from Norway in the 9th century. They left Norway because they would not submit to the rule of the king Harold Fairhair, and in 930 the settlers founded a republic in Iceland and a parliament, which has existed up to the present day with an interval of 40 years at the beginning of the 19th century. Some of these Norwegian chiefs had previously settled in Scotland and Ireland and they brought with them slaves from these countries, often of noble birth. It is considered that at least 12% of the first inhabitants were of Celtic origin, which may account for some of the peculiarities of the Icelanders, as for instance their power of creative imagination. In the 12th and 13th century the Icelandic sagas were recorded, those masterpieces of realistic narration, written at a time when other Northern peoples gave no thought to literature. The influence of the sagas on the Icelanders might be compared with that of the bible on the Jews. In most countries only the educated are acquainted with their history, genealogy and classic literature. But this little people (of 100,000 inhabitants, which in the darkest ages went down to 30,000) never lost touch with the past. Class difference has not been so marked as elsewhere, the poor man thinks himself as good as anybody else. There are no dialects, the written language is the same as the spoken one and so little has it altered that the sagas written in the 12th century are used as text-books in the schools and any child can understand them.

The women of these sagas are strong and independent. They tell us of such women as Guörún Osvífursdóttir, who arose at her own wedding to urge the assistance of the men of her household to defend a fugitive who had sought her aid against her bridegroom and his family. Or Thorbjörge the Stout who gave shelter to the outlaw Grettir, when the farmers had assembled to kill him. Her husband who had been absent blamed her for her conduct and asked her what she thought their neighbours would think of him for giving his consent to this. "They will think," she said, "that you ought to be proud to have a wife who had the courage to do such a thing, and that he must be a great chief whose wife is so free." Or Auður, the wife of Gisli Súrsson, who for 17 years braved the perils of a life with an outlaw, and who gave him the support of her love,

her intelligence and at last fought at his side to defend his life. Or her namesake the queen from Scotland Auöur the Profound, who, on coming to Iceland, left her brother with contempt when he offered hospitality only to the half of her retinue. When she was old and felt death drawing near she held a great feast, disposed of her property, gave freedom to her slaves and gifts to friends and faithful servants and on the third day she died with the same quiet dignity as she had lived. Or Bergthora the wife of Njál who refused to leave her husband when their enemies put fire to their home and offered to let the women leave the burning house. "I was young when I was married to Njál and I have promised him to share everything with him. I shall not go."

But we hear also of women who threw themselves between the fighters and who were able to conciliate bitter enemies when the men in vain had tried to act as peacemakers. Women like Hall-dóra the wife of Víga-Glúmur whose name alludes to his many fights. She brought home from the battle all the wounded, friends and foes, and as she was a renowned doctor she healed their wounds. On coming home her husband said: "If it had not been for you I should have gained a great victory." "For what you have done to-day," she said, "you will have to leave the district. If it had not been for my doings you would have had to leave the country as well."

Those women must be mentioned because they were the forerunners of the women's movement in Iceland.

Women of this cast we have had through the ages. "Give my love to my daughter Siguröur (his son) and my son Throunn (his daughter)," said the last catholic bishop, Jón Arason, when he was executed by the Danes for his resistance to the foreign power.

Civil strife put an end to the Icelandic republic. In the 13th century bloody feuds arose between the most powerful families and the king of Norway seized the opportunity of interfering in their affairs and was able to persuade the Icelanders to enter into a union with Norway. Later Iceland came under the Danish crown by inheritance. After the reformation the power of the king increased and the importance of the Althing gradually dwindled until it was abolished in the year 1800. But the people had not only to suffer the loss of their independence: earthquakes and eruptions, epidemics and scarcity of supplies from abroad were the joint enemies the Icelanders had to fight, the last evil being partly due to the establishment of a trade monopoly in 1602, which lasted for about 250 years to the great detriment of the people. In 1788, however, the trade was opened to all Danish subjects which was the first step towards progress. About 1830 the Icelanders began to work for the freedom of their country and self-government. In 1840 a consultative body was created in Iceland and called the Althing. In 1849 the king had renounced his absolute power in Denmark, but as Iceland was not included in the constitution he retained his power there. Now the real struggle for independence

began under the leadership of Jón Sigurðsson. In 1851 free trade was given and in 1874 when Iceland celebrated the millennium of its settlement, it got its own constitution and the Althing was granted legislative power.

But in spite of all the hardships of the dark ages the spirit of Iceland was never entirely broken. Through all the centuries the Icelanders produced literature worthy of that name. But gradually as the country became poorer the position of its women changed for the worse. Fewer women enjoyed the authority of the old dominating personalities. The married woman of the sagas was entitled to the possession of 1-3rd of the joint property, according to the law, but by the marriage contract it was usually stipulated that she should get the half and further she usually kept her dowry. If her husband was not considerate she could demand divorce and retain her property. Her honour was guarded. Kissing a woman without her consent was punished by outlawry. The education of girls and boys seems to have been similar. Both received physical as well as mental training, and the girls were taught as well the usual occupations of women. They were taught the ancient poems, carving of runes, the art of medicine and nursing. They were free to attend the sport feasts, they followed the men to the Althing even if they only came there as spectators, they travelled abroad as freely as men. We hear of skilled women physicians, of the visions of the sibyls, the sages of their age, of the narrations of women quoted by the recorders of the sagas as their source of information. In catholic times we hear of nuns who were renowned for their learning; but after the reformation there was a decline in the general education in the country, although soon books were printed (long before in Norway) and a new means found for spreading information to the homes. But the women who did not go to schools and were thought well educated if they could read and write still preserved the peculiar culture of Iceland; the art of story-telling, the love of poetry and treasures of folklore have through them been passed from one generation to another. They stood side by side with the men in all the hardships of the daily life, they had lived in intimate contact with nature and had learned from her to grow strong and observant. When all doors closed they found the way to their inner self.

Now in the years of national awakening their patriotic feeling was strongly aroused and the injustice of their position became clear to them. The bright picture of the old Icelandic woman, which was so familiar to them had also a reverse side. The women of the Golden Age were married, "given away", without their consent and it was not until 1275 that this was prohibited by law. According to the oldest law of Iceland women might be tortured in order to make them give the name of the father of their child, this was the law until late in the 18th century. About the same time the woman was given parental rights over her illegitimate child. In the middle of the 19th century women were still pub-

licly whipped for giving birth to an illegitimate child, if it was a repeated offence. The man was not punished. Women only got half the brother's share of inheritance. The higher schools were closed to girls, and there were no institutes for girls. No professions were open to them, in fact they had only the choice of marrying or becoming domestic servants, and then the salary paid to them was only $\frac{1}{4}$ of what the men got. All these truths dawned upon the women of the 19th century. The men were however the first to give voice to these sentiments.

In 1847 the Althing passed a bill granting women equal inheritance rights with men. In 1850 this became law. In 1861 majority was granted to unmarried women at the same age as to men. In 1870 the first women's associations were founded. Both in the country districts of North-Iceland, by farmers' wives. The aim of one of them was the training of the members as good housewives and the procuring of labour saving appliances. The aim of the other was to give mutual aid to those who had lost a cow. It was the first insurance-company in Iceland since the days of the republic, when such mutual insurance was obligatory in each district. In the great year 1874, when Iceland got its constitution, Reykjavík's first women's association was founded, by the women who had collected to bind wreaths for the unveiling of the statue of Thorvaldsen, the great Danish sculptor who was the son of an Icelandic father. They called it the Thorvaldsens' Association. Its aim was charity.

The first claim raised by women was for better education. In 1871 25 ladies in Reykjavík in an open letter in the papers urged the public to collect funds for a school for girls, which was opened in Reykjavík in 1874. In the following years two other schools were opened in the country. Yet the women did not demand political freedom for themselves, but in 1882 the vote for parish and town councils, district boards and vestries was given by the Althing to widows and unmarried women over 25 years of age, who were the heads of households or independent. In the following years a bill passed granting women eligibility to the town council of Akureyri, but was refused the royal assent. In these years the first articles appeared in the papers claiming enfranchisement for women. In 1885 an article appeared in the "Fjallkonan," by the editor, and later in the same year the first article written by a woman appeared in the same paper. The writer, who later became the wife of the editor, was the pioneer suffragist Bríet Bjarnhéöinsdóttir (Mrs. Asmundsson). She had written a similar article when she was a girl of 18. Her views were expressed very clearly, mentioning the independence of the old Icelandic women and claiming enfranchisement and better education for the present generation. She says that she was prompted by an intense feeling of the lack of opportunities for girls. In the same year a man, Páll Briem, gave the first lecture on the enfranchisement of women and two years later, Bríet Bjarnhéöinsdóttir caused a sensation in Reyk-

javík by being the first woman to give a public lecture. It was on the position and rights of women. In 1886 women had been allowed to pass the preliminary and final examinations at the latin grammar school, and the medical school was opened to them, also the theological school with some restrictions. No scholarships or professions were available to them.

The struggle for the independence of Iceland was carried on from year to year, and women took part in some of the political organisations, in one of the rural districts at least. The sister of one of the political leaders made herself known as an excellent orator. Her name was Thorbjörg Sveinsdóttir, the first trained midwife in Reykjavík. In 1888 a political meeting at Thingvellir with delegates from all parts of Iceland claimed among other measures full political equality for women. Soon after Skúli Thoroddsen introduced a bill in the Althing granting eligibility to women in municipal affairs. It was repeatedly passed but was refused the royal assent. In 1895 the motive of the King's refusal was stated to be that women had not demanded these rights and that by such a law duties would be imposed upon them which they might not care to accept. In 1894 the Icelandic Women's Association had been founded under the leadership of Thorbjörg Sveinsdóttir and her niece the eloquent Olafía Jóhannesdóttir. Mrs. Asmundsson was also among the founders. The aim of the association was to work for equality between the sexes and for the participation of women in public matters. The first claim raised was for the foundation of a university in Iceland and the women began raising money for that purpose. On hearing the reason for the refusal of the royal assent they sent in to the Althing a petition with 3000 signatures demanding political equality. The demand for parliamentary franchise was not heeded by the Althing but the bill giving eligibility to women for the bodies for which they already had the vote was passed until it got the king's sanction in 1902.

In the meantime (1899) a bill introduced by Skúli Thoroddsen had been passed, by which married women got the right to their own property and earnings. Mr. Skúli Thoroddsen was one of the leaders of the opposition to the Danish rule and served the cause of women both in the Althing and in his paper the "Thjodviljinn." His interest in the cause may have been partly due to the influence of his wife, the highly intelligent Theodora Thoroddsen, who since his death has become known as a gifted authoress.

The Icelandic Women's Association also took great interest in the fight for temperance and founded the White Ribbon in Iceland. It also published 2 year books (4 issues) with articles on the women's movement and in 1900 a translation of Mill's "Subjection of women." In 1903, after the death of Thorbjörg Sveinsdóttir, the association however gradually turned from its political activities. In the meantime two women's papers had been founded. The first one, Kvinnablaðið, edited by Mrs. Bríet Bjarnhéöinsdóttir

was for the home and education, the other 'Framsókn' stood for politics and temperance. When the latter ceased to appear, Mrs. Bríet Bjarnhéöinsdóttir resolved to let her paper take up the women's question. In 1906 she attended the Copenhagen Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and brought home new impulses. Early in the following year a Women's Suffrage Association was founded in Reykjavík under her leadership. It was resolved to collect signatures for a petition to the Althing, but the Women's Association awakened to a renewed interest in women's suffrage and organised a petition to the Althing which bore 12,000 signatures. It was well received but coincided with a movement in favour of Manhood suffrage. A women's suffrage amendment was tacked on to the other bill but it was postponed for that session, while another bill was passed extending the municipal franchise to all men or women, whether married or single, who paid taxes. This victory caused much enthusiasm and now the Women's Suffrage Association devoted itself to the task of educating the new voters. On its initiative an electoral committee consisting of representatives of all the women's organisations in Reykjavík was founded. Courses of lectures were organised on such subjects as the legal position of women, proportional representation, and municipal politics. Although only 23 days elapsed between the day when the law became valid and the elections, there were found four women to stand. They were all elected on a non-party women's list. The total number of the councillors elected was 15, of which $\frac{1}{4}$ were women. By this victory a great impetus was given to the movement in Iceland. Early in the New Year the Women's Rights Association approached its supporters in the different constituencies asking them to have the question discussed at the political meetings before the session of the Althing and to urge on their deputies the necessity of pressing women's demands in Parliament. During the summer Mrs. Bríet went from place to place often on horseback, giving lectures and starting branches. In the Althing a promise was given that Women's Suffrage should be considered in 1909 when there was to be a revision of the Constitution.

The Constitution of 1874 had been given to Iceland without consulting the Althing. It was far from satisfying the Icelanders and the fight for home rule was continued. The parties were divided according to how far their demands went on this question, not according to the conservative or liberal views of the M.P.s. In 1904 Iceland had got a special minister in Iceland who was to be an Icelanders of birth. Mr. Hannes Hafstein, the first minister, was an ardent supporter of women's suffrage. In 1909 the question had been postponed but in 1911 Hafstein introduced a bill giving parliamentary suffrage and eligibility to all women 25 years old. At the request of the women's Rights Association he also introduced another important bill which was passed by the Althing, by which women were granted the right to higher education, scholar-

ships and to all professions, including all judicial functions and the State Church.

The suffrage bill being an amendment of the constitution had to be passed unaltered by two successive Althings, for the latter of which a new election had to take place; but in 1912 the bill was postponed once more. This was partly for the reason that the Icelanders wanted to take up again the negotiations with Denmark about the political connection with Iceland, which had been dropped in 1909, the settlement of which would have required an amendment of the constitution; and partly because the party in power did not want to risk their seats by a new election. In 1913, contrary to the expectations of the women, the Government were compelled to propose an amendment of the constitution and this time women were granted restricted suffrage subject to an age limit which was gradually to be lowered. At the subsequent elections the minister lost his majority. In parliament the bill was passed but the new minister declined to submit it for the king's sanction, which was not because he was an adversary of women's suffrage, but for other reasons. At last on June 19th in 1915 the bill got the king's sanction. On the same day Iceland got its own flag.

The enthusiasm of the women was great; on the initiative of the W.R.A. all women's organisations in Reykjavík decided to celebrate the event with a festival and a procession through the town. Outside Parliament, public speeches were given and a deputation brought the thanks of the women before the Althing. It was decided that the 19th June should every year be celebrated as the festival day of women, and so it has been every year since then. It was decided by the representatives of the women's organisations that the first cause for which women should unite should be the establishment of a national hospital in Reykjavík and that funds should also be collected for that cause.

In 1916 for the first time women had the opportunity of using their vote. It was decided to join the political parties and try co-operation with men. But the seat given to the woman candidate, Mrs. Asmundsson was a hopeless one, although the party had promised her a safe seat. And the elections took place at the busiest time of the year when the women in the country had great difficulty in going to the polling places, neither could all the members of a household get ponies. The result was that she was not elected.

In 1917 Danish and Icelandic Deputies drew up a bill which was passed by the parliaments of both countries, and according to which Iceland was to be a free and sovereign state in union with Denmark. The act was put to a referendum and got the majority required. Owing to this change the constitution had to be revised. An amendment granting full political suffrage to women was introduced and passed by two Althings so that in 1920 the final victory was won.

As the members of the Lower House are elected in constituencies with one or two members, except in Reykjavík, which has four

representatives, there is hardly any chance of getting any woman into that house. There might be a chance in Reykjavík where there is proportional representation, but neither the conservatives nor the socialists have up to this been willing to give a safe seat to a woman. The members of the Upper House are elected by the proportional system. The electoral period has been 8 years, 3 members being elected every 4th year. After 1931, however, the period will be 6 years as for the Lower House, and the 6 deputies will be elected simultaneously. Then it ought to be easier to have a woman elected. The only woman M.P. in Iceland was elected in 1922 on a non-party women's list, supported by various women's organisations. Once in Parliament, she found it necessary to join a party. This was a cause of great discontent to her electors of other parties. She has been severely attacked both in Parliament and the press, the chief reason being that her opponents wanted to prevent a woman outsider being returned to Parliament on a later occasion. She has however been an able and conscientious M.P. As the president of the Committee of women's organisations working for the erection of a national hospital, she has chiefly devoted herself to that cause. As year by year the building of the hospital was delayed, the women decided to offer to give their fund of about kr. 300.000.00 to the state on the condition that the Parliament granted the necessary money to finish the building, which should be ready in 1930, before the celebration of the Millennium of the Althing. Our M.P., Miss Ingibjörg Bjarnason succeeded in getting this offer accepted and next year the hospital is to be opened. She has of course supported all bills affecting women's rights, such as the Marriage Bill of 1923 and other measures in the interest of women, raising of their salaries, subsidies to women, the Electricity Bill, etc. She has more than once taken a different stand to that of her party, for instance in such unwomanly matters as the question of the Bank of Iceland, where her well grounded speech won the reluctant admiration of her opponents. She has been blamed by women for voting against a state-subsidy for a new school for rural housekeeping which women wanted established, but she wanted the school better planned. On the whole she is a woman with the courage of her opinions. Nevertheless there is no doubt that her position would have been stronger if she had not joined any party in the Althing.

Before she came into the Althing the Women's Rights Association had worked for various reforms in the position of women which had been granted. In 1917 at a big public meeting of women a resolution demanding the revision of the entire family legislation was carried and was put forward in the Althing where it was carried unanimously. In the Althing of 1919 the Government introduced the following bills:

On the contracting and dissolving of marriage. On the position of legitimate children. On the position of illegitimate children. These laws are very liberal. The grounds for divorce are

the same for both sexes, both parents are joint guardians of children born in wedlock. Both parents are obliged to contribute to the maintenance of illegitimate children according to their means, the education of the child to be according to the standard of the parent who is better situated. The child may inherit from the father as an illegitimate child, if it has been acknowledged or the paternity proved. The law on the position of illegitimate children is similar to the Norwegian law, but still more liberal.

On the initiative of the Women's Rights Association Miss Bjarnason introduced a Bill in Parliament giving married women the right to retain their nationality as long as they resided in their own country. This was passed by Parliament. She supported another measure on the demand of the women: the abolition of the privilege for women to decline election to municipal bodies. As this had proved a serious obstacle to finding women who were willing to stand for election to these bodies, the suffragists had previously tried in vain to have the law amended. This time the amendment was passed, so now women share the duties as well as the rights with the men.

The two causes which at present are getting the greatest attention from women are: Improved instruction in housekeeping and Widows' pensions.

The two women's congresses, which were organised by the Women's Rights Association discussed the former problem, and formed a standing committee to make further inquiry into the matter. The president of that committee has later been appointed by the Agricultural Society with another woman and a man to draw up the lines of systematic instruction in these matters. They have published an interesting report with similar proposals to those which had been adopted by the last women's congress.

The Women's Rights Association is at present making inquiries into the status of Widows and destitute mothers all over the country. All the women's organisations of Reykjavík are uniting for this cause which has won the greatest sympathy from women in all parts of Iceland. Next year it is hoped that it will be possible to lay the bill before the Althing.

The first 4 women elected to the town-council usually kept together in matters concerning women and children. One of them, Mrs. Asmundsson, served 10 years on the council and school-board, another Mrs. Cuörún Lárusdóttir, was Poor Law Guardian for a similar period. The women councillors did excellent work as guardians and introduced several reforms in the council, such as instruction in swimming for girls, free meals for school children, school nurses and physicians, playgrounds for children, (the latter by the support of the Women's Rights Association). They also interested themselves in various other matters; during these years the town got an aqueduct, a gas plant, electric works, cloak-rooms, telephone, better and cleaner streets, a harbour and other improvements. In all these matters the women have taken

an equal interest with the men. But when the parliamentary vote had been won and party feeling grew stronger, it was felt unnecessary and out of place to have a non-party list. Two women were then elected to the town-council of Reykjavík, one socialist and one conservative. But they were not accepted as candidates for the next election, the reason being in both cases that they did not follow their party in all matters.

After that for several years no women served on the municipal bodies in Reykjavík, until last year a conservative woman was elected councillor, which was due to pressure on the party executive by the conservative women.

Through all these years of struggle for the political freedom of women up to the present day, the pioneer Mrs. Bríet Bjarnhéöinsdóttir Asmundsson has taken part in the work, and as one of the members of the W.R.A. said in a speech, has been ever watchful at the helm when the crew and passengers were sleeping. She was a born feminist and has given all her strength to the movement, and has also suffered the usual lot of pioneers. Her paper *Kvenna-blaðið* she edited for 25 years. Its circulation was reduced owing to its adherence to the cause and it was for many years a voice in the desert. Later the "19th June" has also fought for women's rights and recently a new women's paper has been published. A magazine has existed for several years which has shown some anti-feministic tendencies. Although the ideas advocated by the W.R.A. were well received by the public, and the Parliament, as will be seen by the fact that the second petition received 12,000 signatures at a time when the entire population only numbered 80,000, the majority of the women left it to the little group of suffragists to work for their cause. By inheritance the Icelander is freedom-loving and even if he has also in his blood all the usual prejudices of his sex, he feels ashamed of publicly denying to women the liberty so dear to his heart. It is typical that it was not until quite recently that a party was founded under the name of "The Conservative Party," as it was feared that the name of conservatism would frighten the electors from entering. Recently a national conference of conservative delegates from all parts of Iceland met in Reykjavík. A committee was appointed to find a new name, as the present name was inconsistent with the constructive policy of the party. As remarked above it was not until Iceland became independent that the parties were divided on the same lines as elsewhere.

Now the parties are the following: Conservatives, Liberals (1), Socialists and the Progressive Party. The last-mentioned is now in power. It is a party of farmers and co-operators. The proportion of the parties has not been affected by the votes of the women electors.

Year by year the women go in increasing numbers to the elections. Although they can hardly be said fully to realise the importance of the vote as an instrument for carrying out their ideas,

they are making the first steps in that direction. On the whole the Icelandic woman is interested in many questions, but she lacks leaders, money and organisation. Unfortunately the best situated appear to be the most indifferent. We do not possess any public-minded women who are ladies of leisure and able to devote themselves to public work. Gradually women are awakening to their responsibilities. We have already a few university women, a woman sculptor of distinction, two women painters, some woman authors and many poetesses, actresses, singers, and musicians, a good many business women and leaders of various enterprises, many teachers, clerks and shop-assistants (badly paid however), organised nurses, organised midwives, a trade union of women (founded on the initiative of the W.R.A.) and women engaged in various other occupations, besides the good old stock of housewives.

All the schools of the country are open to them, numerous new schools have arisen and are being planned. Water from hot springs is being utilized for heating in some of the district schools and for tempering the water in swimming basins so that these may be used during the winter. Physical culture is reviving. A band of Icelandic girl gymnasts have received much attention at gymnastic displays abroad. When we compare the life of the modern Icelandic woman with that of the woman of the 19th century the contrast is great.

The women's movement in Iceland was inspired by the national awakening of the country. It grew side by side with the struggle for independence and almost at the same time Iceland and her daughters became free. Incredible changes have taken place since this struggle began. Before that time Iceland had no roads, no bridges, no lighthouses, no regular steamship service and no ships of any kind—only rowing boats. Now it possesses a net of carriage roads and a comparatively great number of automobiles. All the main rivers, except those that are impassable, have been bridged. Numerous lighthouses have been built. The Iceland Steamship Company has 6 steamers making about 40 trips a year between Iceland and foreign countries besides the coastal service, and two foreign companies keep up a regular service between Iceland and the Continent and England. In 1925 the mercantile fleet consisted of 60 steamers of over 100 gross tons register. The fishing fleet consists of 35 trawlers and 500 motor vessels. The isolation is being overcome. Iceland has got the telegraph, telephone and radio. A regular flying service has been established. The Land has been cultivated, levelled, drained, irrigated, fenced. Forests are preserved and planted. New houses are built with modern comfort. Yet only a fraction of the Icelandic water power (about 4 million H.P.) has been utilised for lighting and heating purposes, but there enormous possibilities lie stored for the use of the future. The Icelanders are just beginning to realise the importance of the hot springs, the water of which is already being used

for heating, lighting and cultivating of flowers and vegetables.

Before 1874 there were only few physicians and hardly any trained midwives and no hospitals. Now besides the National hospital which is under erection, we have two sanatoria for tuberculosis, one new hospital for mental disease and many district infirmaries. The doctors, nurses and midwives are well trained and although the birthrate has declined the death rate has been lowered. The deathrate of children is only 52 per thousand and in respect of illegitimate children it is the lowest deathrate shown in any country.

Space does not permit of telling more about the development of the community of Iceland. I would only add that exports from Iceland with its population of 100,000 amounted to 77 million Icl. Ks. during the last year, imports being about 60 millions. Fish and fish products represent the greatest part of the export value. Next comes farm produce. Considering all this progress it is only natural that there should be some state debt. Still it is not so heavy as in other European countries as compared with the number of the population. This is due to Iceland's greatest advantage, her total lack of armament, which she considers as her greatest safeguard against war.

Much as been gained by the country and its daughters yet the goal is far ahead. The strength of the old Icelandic women lay in their individuality and powerful personality. In a country with a scattered population their sphere was restricted to a narrow circle. Now their daughters have to learn the difficult art of uniting and building up a community. The real independence of Iceland will not be won until men and women have learned to work together, shoulder to shoulder, in all fields of life. But the woman must dare to be free if she is to be the true mother of the race, able to give to men the spiritual support which they need.

