

# THE WOMEN'S PAGE

## ICELAND the WOMAN'S LAND



the Ice Land Woman



A Family Group in Iceland



A Typical View in Iceland, Harbor of Reykjavik



the Ice Land School Boy



Along the Hvera River

### Every One Is Happy and the Goose Always Hangs High in the Little Island Since Alcohol Has Been Banished

**I**F YOU were to go to Iceland, you would believe it very much of a man's land during the first couple of weeks of your stay. For the rest of it, you would have no doubts at all that it is the woman's land, coveted by the women for ages in all other parts of the world.

Yes, it is cold and bleak. It is a place of so few amusements that the women of a big American city would agree it furnishes no diversion at all. It is a place of steady, unflinching work; so that those same big-city women would be inclined to revile it as an island of almost penal servitude.

But they would never find there the heartaches and worries with which their haunted splendors alternate. They would not live in anguish of the nerves one week, and in desperate clinging to some doctor for relief the

next. They would not grieve over some dear one gone to ruin amid the city's perilous temptations, nor would they dread the home-coming of a husband who was once a jolly good fellow, and has at last become the shell of a gentleman covering a distillery.

For in Iceland all these troubles and trials of existence, so familiar to the familiar world, are simply absent. Life flows along with the deep placidity of complete comradeship, complete satisfaction in love and the home—in complete freedom from all the horrors which, directly, and so greatly indirectly, have scourged woman's soul and body through the curse of alcohol.

There is no liquor in Iceland. So there is no unhappiness, except the petty cares of life and the griefs that are inevitable to death. And even they are mercifully mitigated, as though, throughout a whole people, some blessed benison had passed, acquitting them of the penalties humanity commonly bears.



the Ice Land School Boy

They are not only important factors in the government, but they are far more important individually than the women of other countries. When they wed they do not lose their family name. They keep their original patronymic, but it is now prefaced with the word "Frau," which corresponds to "Mrs." in English. So a wife has not even the shadow of man's domination over her.

The most fruitful source of expense and disturbance is minimized for her, too. She is not afflicted with the fashions of the men, because of the convenience and economy of man's modern garb, dress like the rest of the male world of Europe. But the women still cherish their simple and beautiful national costume, so admirably adapted to the climate and so excellently adapted to the moderate display of vanity's follies. The black cloth dress, the close bodice, the white, starched linen, all neat and all pretty, serve for ordinary days; but on festive occasions silks and satins, with deep tints of gold embroidery, and a splendid headpiece, called the falda, of white linen, make them regal to the sight.

The woman with little of the world's goods can look attractive; the woman with much can look wealthy. But both are relieved of that constant variety in attire which makes poor and handsome clothing alike cost four times as much as they ought to.

their inheritances from medieval times, possess as a matter of course what other nations scheme and contrive to possess as the rarest of luxuries.

The same rule of the substantial applies to their tables. They may have among them some who are poor, but they have none who are beggars. No drunkards, no paupers, come pretty true with these total abstainers of the north. Men and women who, all their lives, look strictly after the main chance, always providing an abundance of food, always keeping in health, always able to work at some task or another—the old men are not a bit ashamed to do knitting for the family wardrobe—stand small chance of being in want until the bitter claims of death.

The climate is severe, but not with the liver coldness some sections of the United States can provide. Its inclemency lies rather in the length than in the chill of its winters, for the Gulf stream tempers the Arctic winds; yet it is such a long winter as other peoples find ruinous to peace of mind and nervous health. For their shepherds, the Icelanders have planned a number of indoor occupations, which keep them busy until the hard rush of farmwork comes in the quick spring and the swiftly passing summer. So they find time at all times to get into the mischief which, rather than the climate, harms a people.

The one radical difference between Iceland and the rest of the world in its manner of living is the complete absence of alcohol; and the one consequence upon that difference, especially felt by its women, is complete contentment and happiness.

### Sponge Orchards in Florida

**I**T is commonly supposed all sponges grow as they cling to reefs and rocky cliffs in the depths of the sea, but such is not the case. In many sections along the Florida coast they are being planted in a very unique manner.

Properly speaking, sponge orchards are being set out. A number of pegs are placed in cement blocks, and young sponges, which have been removed from coral or rock formations, are attached to the pegs. The whole is then lowered to the bottom of the sea, where the young sponges not only grow rapidly, but produce others of their kind. In places the rocks and reefs which have been barren are being set out with sponges.

Those who are conducting the rather curious experiment declare they will in a short time increase the sponge production considerably.

Orchards of a similar character will be planted in other parts of the sea where sponges do not grow naturally, and in time it is thought they will be produced in many parts of the world where they have never been known to grow.



Ponies Offer the Only Means of Locomotion in Iceland

### Pothangers Instead of Baskets

**E**VERY lover of flowers admires a pretty hanging basket. Several things prevent many from having such an ornament to the veranda or window garden.

The price for a good basket is usually a little high, the moss that should be used for filling is often scarce, and the soil dries out too rapidly, for the plants do not do as well as they do in pots.

Pothangers are rapidly taking the place of the baskets. They can be had in sizes to fit any large-size pot, and they can be attached or detached, as one may wish, and in this way pots that contain certain plants can be tried to see if they will grow well in a hanging position. A pleasing effect can be produced in changing pots quite often, and another way to secure variety is to group pots of various plants.

If common flower pots are not large enough for some tastes, fancy ones can be secured, and many who are slightly artistic can paint or otherwise decorate the pots. While the wire hangers are cheap, any person who is handy with tools can manufacture enough for a home in a very short time, and the latter will be as serviceable as those purchased. All of the plants raised in hanging baskets can be grown in pots.

### Cleanliness in Bohemia

**T**O LETTERS from manufacturers of various sorts of goods used to subdue horses, J. I. Britain, the United States consul at Prague, Bohemia, has replied to the effect that there are no flies in or on that country. He informs the manufacturers the reason there are no flies in Prague is because there are no breeding places for the pests.

All houses are made of brick, stone or concrete, and the river docks are constructed of granite. Streets and sidewalks are composed of granite blocks. No wooden sidewalks, porches, stairways or anything of the sort are found in the place, and the streets are cleaned continually. No garbage or decayed vegetable matter is allowed to accumulate, and there are no open sewers or drains.

The place is certainly a model of neatness and cleanliness, and the people have no need of window or door flyscreens, or for any of the preparations used in this and dozens of other lands to rid the cities and towns of the disease-spreading housefly.

**L**IQUOR of all kinds has been banished there for years, until the people of Iceland know its taste no more than the ancient Greeks knew the odor of tobacco. Its savor, like its effects, is now a thing merely forgotten. It is something which, to the majority—virtually all—of the Icelanders, has not been known. It is not missed because, by the generation who now make up the mass of the population, it has never been tasted. They are modern Arcadians, living the pleat and least stimulated of existences, to whom the calm and equable content which makes their hours pass in serene satisfaction brings enjoyment of their own normal bodily functions up to the zest of continual pleasure, while the mind and the nerves know no perturbations, no alarms.

It was like cutting off some useless, hampering burden of disease, like the removal of some excrement which had choked the breathing of the race. A nation—for the Icelanders, few as they are, have preserved a distinct identity—which until then had known what natural existence was, suddenly entered upon normality, and did so as a whole.

That is a total abstinence radically different from total abstinence by spots and patches; for, however slight any individual is in preserving its natural powers, it cannot reap the whole advantage of its self-control while its numbers either fling it back upon itself or perpetuate within a range too limited, or force it into contact with neighbors for relations that contaminate the breed.

Iceland, in making its choice of absolute prohibition of alcohol, was freed from either danger. There was no appreciable danger of intermarriage with alcoholics—caricature, moderate or spasmodic—because its own people were singularly domestic and its foreign visitors are few. There was no appreciable risk from local intermarriage because the actual number of the population was large enough to prevent harmful inbreeding. In effect, Iceland was as safe for the remarkable experiment as were the North American States before the advent of the white man, and the Indians became after our advent, and our rum, we know.

### EVERYBODY'S HAPPY

To see an entire population unremittently, quietly, happily doing its daily round, with its men quietly and wisely directing their families, and its women as quietly and wisely attending to their home duties, does, on the surface, look like a male paradise, readily won by mere abstinence from drink. But to the observer who recognizes the fact that all this is tributary to the contentment, health and happiness of the woman in the home, it speedily assumes the air of Eve's own Eden, tempered, of course, by that inevitable brow sweat which follows the original curse, even in chilly Iceland.

That woman who has never trembled for the welfare of a husband, a son, a father or a brother within the charmed circle of her own vaunted civilization is the only one who can truly afford to laugh at Iceland's peace, its toil and its wealth in the essentials of woman's Utopia, unattainable elsewhere.

Why, they've had equal suffrage for years. Church and state are one for all purposes of government which vitally affect the people, and the women have full franchise in the churches, together with the vote in all municipal government. The suffragist who should go to Iceland to start a campaign would be met by its women with:

"Why, you poor thing! Hurry up and become naturalized and help run our island."

As for divorce, the woman who really needs it can have it; but the woman who doesn't can't get it. The Icelandic system works automatically.

Jan has remarked that, when he was younger, he certainly did like eyes with the genuine violet tinge to them. Now, as Jan is 29 and you are 28, you don't have to remember very far back to bring to mind the hateful features of the fair Anne, the tassel of whose cap, held by its engraved silver ferrule, used to lay so coquettishly over the shoulder of her short black jacket; whose sheepskin shoes peeped so daintily from the edge of her skirt's gold and silver embroidery, as she laughed in Jan's face against Vayrnafjedyr's harbor for her background. So Jan is thinking of that heartless little minx, is he, even

after he's been married for five years and you have borne him those two dear children you thought he loved so much? Well, let him go to his false Anne.

These harsh things thought, you speak them, with your own bright blue eyes flashing the fires inherited from your old viking ancestors. Jan, who is some viking himself, asseverates his fondness for violet blue, for the first time forgetting that china blue has a sweetness all its own. So, you both agree, that settles it.

Fortwith you part. But mind, you're not divorced—not by three long years. You must wait all that time to find out whether Jan really doesn't care for china blue; and he must wait those three years to find out whether you are the demon of jealousy he thought you were when he passed back, or merely a natural-born, human woman who should have been kissed a whole lot and lectured only a little bit.

Anne can come sailing around Jan, trying to catch him again, and one or two of your own old admirers may venture to be extra polite to you, although their attentions, during the interim, can scarcely conduce to your reputation's enhancement. You are still a wife, and all Iceland seems in league to let you know it isn't forgetting it.

You two quarrelers stick it out; the three years pass; your divorce is due. But now comes the crisis; for, while you have the right to take the younger child, that hateful, obstinate Jan can keep the older one, which is just as Jan's heartstrings as exactly as it does as yours. There are not many husbands and wives whose ransom survives those three years of trial divorce, and fewer still whom

## THE ENGLISH GIRL BEGINS GUM CHEWING

**I**F THERE was one grand reproach our British cousins could bring against the American girl during the last twenty years it was that she had the chewing-gum habit.

They never failed to hale forth that old, awful indictment when all other charges failed. Let them observe that she hadn't any physique, and some plaining patriot pointed out the thrilling circumstance that she had Parisienne grace clad with the camel's.

Let them accuse her of the banality of slang, and her admirers concerted action just to make her show what damage she could do to the king's English.

Let them charge her with incurable frivolity, and their pet brothers hastened to pursue her for the sake of being amused.

But once they said "She chews gum," there was no defense.



**A**LL HERB say laughter, all her restless charm, became vulgarized under that shocking attendant. No woman who is well bred can afford to indulge in mastication after the fashion of a cow. It might not be exactly sinful; but English society has before this condoned sinfulness where it condemned sheer vulgarity. This American girl, even though she might have abstained from gum from the hours of her innocent childhood and its innocuous blisses, could not escape the reproach of her national environment. She was a gum-chewer by heredity in the eyes of the jealous British maid and matron.

But never again. England has all at once, this very year, found itself living in a glass house on the chewing-gum question; today the tables are turned enough to let the American girl enjoy her morsel of chicle when she's over there without fear of elevated eyebrows or covert sneers.

Until now, such was the wide extension of the British prejudice against the delightful habit, that the girl or boy who dared indulge in chewing gum was regarded as a creature forever lost to gentility; and, besides, they couldn't get it. Trade needs some encouragement, at least.

But the chewing-gum industry, some months ago, determined that England had lingered too long in its morass of ignorance, and opportunities for the purchase of gum were thoughtfully provided on a more generous scale.

Its resistless fascination did the rest. In one of the open confessions to which British journalism is occasionally addicted, the admission has been made that the habit is becoming universal.

You meet one of their primp and placid misses, who tramps along the street with that solid, stolid heel-and-toe gait they have, guaranteed for four miles per hour, with no stops for flirtation. Her expression is one of

soleful content, but her face looks as though she has the mumps. You sympathize with her, and note that if it isn't the mumps, she certainly is suffering from gastritis to her upper right molars.

But, an hour afterward, you encounter that same girl returning. It is strange, but either her mumps have shifted or the tooth swelling has changed over to the left of her upper jaw. You feel that you are in the presence of some rare and unnatural phenomenon.

After a few days you grow accustomed to seeing these swellings, and you comprehend their cause. They are the signs and portents of a fresh contingent of British society that is breaking into the chewing-gum habit; and they're doing it just as the kids at home do when first let into the blissful pastures of chicle, or, if their papas are rich, of spruce. Those girls simply don't know either

moderation or dissimulation. Beside them a boy in the primary grade of an American public school would look like a perfect little gentleman while he was giving his well-known imitation of a gasoline engine feeding the engine-blower.

Pretty daughters, with the long, slim lower extensions topped by abbreviated skirts, such as are shown in the home-joke picture page of Punch, horridly the lace-cap variety of matrons by inserting pink fingers between cherry lips and hauling forth a yard or so of gum from clenched but pearly teeth, and then chewing it all back again. This, too, is recognized by the experienced American visitor as part of the neophyte stage in the ancient and honorable practice of gum-chewing, usually abandoned on this side of the Atlantic when a girl is past 7 years of age.

But all the evidences of expertness are to be observed when one penetrates into a district which is already so enlightened on the subject as Lancashire. There every body chews, and the numerous factory girls chew most gum of all, with teeth that are already becoming famous for their whiteness. The rule-of-thumb regulations in the Lancashire factory district came down at first like a thousand of bricks on the inaptitude gum habit—not because it was unhealthy, but because superintendents and foremen surmised that a working girl couldn't work and ruminate at the same time.

### OLD STORY, OLD SEQUEL

The old story had the old sequel. As soon as it was ordered that any factory girl caught with chewing gum must be fined, no factory girl was without her chewing gum. The whole evasive lot of them reduced their chews to discreet size, and there wasn't an Argus-eyed boss in a single shop who could note so much as the tremor of a jawbone. Lancashire lassies overnight had become gum experts.

The very slightest of hand which enables the dear, innocent, wide-eyed American maid to pass a negligent finger across her rosy mouth and, in the instant, abstract her wad of gum while she listens to her escort reading off the menu card, has been acquired by the dearest of English maidens. And the wad goes in the same old place it goes here—under the seat of her chair, awaiting the stoic grin with which Scotland greets his bill of six shillings threepence. Then there is another careful touch, and she is helping digestion by chewing after appetite with the boon the new world has so long accepted and the old one has been fool enough to reject until now.

For the present, England has condescended to chew gum, but is still a bit doubtful whether social status must be sacrificed for its dear sake. The majority of the population live in ardent hope that Queen Mary will give a chewing-gum party and make it as much of a social institution as tea and muffins, than which of the social commandments, so far as England is concerned, are not more faithfully complied with—probably less.