

children. In 1921—25 the death of children in the first year of life was only 52 per thousand (excl. still-births), that is, lower than anywhere else in Europe, Norway excepted. In this respect there is a vast change for the better, as the mortality amongst children in the first year of life was for the years 1871—80 189 per thousand (excl. still-births), and for 1841—50 even 313 per thousand.

The most common *causes of death* are pneumonia, tuberculosis, and weakness due to old age (*debilitas senilis*), which together account for more than two-fifths of the deaths. Of all the deaths in the years 1921—25 15.8 per cent. were due to pneumonia, 13.8 per cent. to tuberculosis (pulmonary alone being responsible for 9.1 p. c.), and 12.0 p. c. to old age weakness. In the same period 8.1 p. c. of the deaths were due to accidents and 7.5 p. c. to cancer. Accidents are thus among the more prominent causes of death, especially deaths by drowning amongst fishermen along the extensive coasts. In 1921—25 more than four-fifths of the deaths caused by accidents were due to drowning. Suicide is comparatively rare in Iceland, and murder does not occur for years and years together.

RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION

In spite of the great increase of the population since 1890, there has from 1880 been a steady decline in the number of the rural population, all the increase having gone to the towns, which in consequence have grown very rapidly. Formerly almost all the people were farmers. In 1880 there were but three towns in the country with a total of 3630 inhabitants, or 5 p. c. of the then population. Now there are 8 towns with a total of 41000, or about two-fifths of the nation, besides 21 coastal villages with from 300—1200 inhabitants each, or 12000 in all. If these are included in the town population it attains to 51 p. c. of the nation. The changes that have taken place in this respect are shown in the following table:

	Towns	Coastal villages with more than 300 inhabitants	Rural dis- tricts	Total
1880	5.0 p. c.	95 p. c.		100 p. c.
1890	7.5 —	3.6 p. c.	88.9 p. c.	100 —
1890	12.9 —	6.8 —	80.3 —	100 —
1910	21.1 —	11.1 —	67.8 —	100 —
1920	30.7 —	12.0 —	57.3 —	100 —
1928	39.4 —	11.2 —	49.4 —	100 —

In 1928 the town population was as follows: