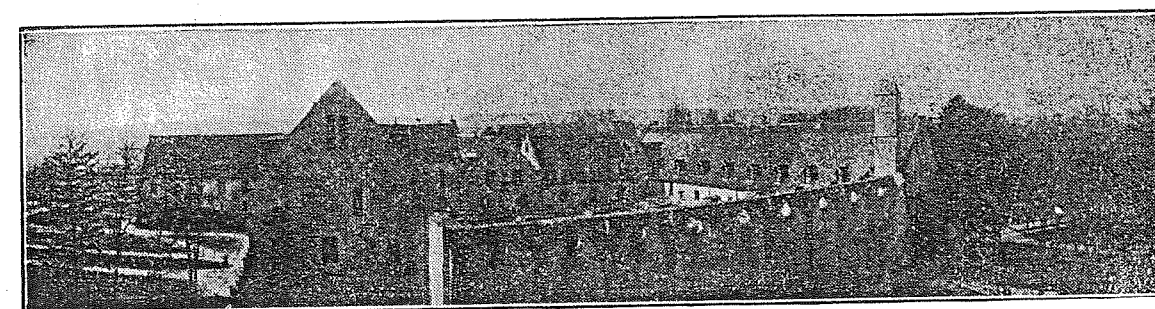


ROYAUMONT & V.C. ASSOCIATION of THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S HOSPITALS NEWS LETTER



JANUARY, 1969

No. 8—Series 2

Object of the Association: To maintain our war-time comradeship.
Subscription: Five shillings per annum, payable 1st January, for the year.

President: Lady Sanderson.

Chairman: Miss Ramsay-Smith, Whyteknowe, Peebles.

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Hon. Treasurer: Miss M. A. Stewart, Dunnydeer, Moniaive, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire.

Hon. Editor: Miss M. S. Miller, Meadowbank Cottage, New Galloway, Castle-Douglas.

EDITORIAL

The past year has been one of strikes and industrial conflicts. University students have joined the turmoil. These young lads, militant for the most part, arrogant and aggressive, have been fighting their way through college rules and discipline to the extent of causing much violence in the streets of many of our large cities. We hope that the year 1969 will bring peace and contentment to all concerned.

In the calm and quiet of country life, such as there is in this S.W. corner of Scotland, we can more easily get away from the disruptive influences beyond our boundaries and, in this frame of mind, I took down from the shelves of my bookcase an almost complete set of News Letters dated from 1924 up to the present day. My first duty was to search through the early numbers and find a poem called "IF" (with apologies to the late Rudyard Kipling), written by one of our orderlies, Geraldine

Mackenzie, whose tragic death occurred in Switzerland just after the First World War. It was MacGregor who asked for the poem to appear in our present number, and I am sure that many of the "old gang" will enjoy being reminded of those early days at the "Abbaye," so amusingly depicted in the verses of the poem. What a variety of interesting events rise in the memory while perusing these yellow pages (for yellow they are now, some of them). What a wealth of fun and amusement, of sad and serious things as there were bound to be, what wonderful endurance and courage during the escapes from Villers-Cotterets and from the Canteen at Metz!

And now to the present day. As usual we had a very enjoyable Reunion on July 9th, 1968, in Edinburgh. We went again to the Carlton Hotel where they must be beginning to know us now, for we have been there for the last few years. We get a

bright, spacious room for the luncheon. The flower decorations, done by a member of the hotel staff, I believe, are always beautiful. Some of our Royaumontites were very kind, producing wine and cigarettes at the right moments. We thank them very much for these much appreciated luxuries.

We were glad to see our President at the last Reunion. She suffers considerable pain from arthritis, but at the time of writing this we heard she had just gone for a rest and treatment to the local hospital which she says is very good. We hope she will feel all the better of her stay there.

Ramsay, too, has times of not feeling very fit but, like the Editor, she "bobs up" again and, fortunately for us, is always ready to take her place in the Chair at the General Meeting. She and her sister spent three weeks in Majorca in the early spring at a period of the year when warmth and sunshine can only be found in the far South (not this year, unfortunately).

The Editor thanks those members who send such interesting articles for insertion in the News Letter. For this number she suggests writing one herself about her three six-monthly visits to Finland. These took place many years ago and were, originally, in the form of a Diary. Life out there must have changed considerably since then.

We announce with great regret the death of "Big Andy," of "Banks" (Mrs Simmonds) and of Sister Dunderdale (Lady Clow). We have paid tribute to their memory in the Obituary column.

The Editor gets a visit from our Hon. Treasurer from time to time subject to weather conditions, for she lives "over the hills and far away" (to quote from a famous Scot). She does a lot of hard, conscientious work trying to get the "subs" in before the News Letter goes to the printers. The Editor wishes to thank those members who so kindly send contributions specially marked for the News Letter. We are not "in the red" yet, you know, but Thank you, and please remember to send in subscriptions at the beginning of the current year.

Letter from our President

Hare and Hounds Hotel,
Westonbirt,
Tetbury,
Glos.

Dear Members,

I am sorry I have little news for you this time for I have been laid up with an injured back for the last two months. I am better now and about again, so I am writing to you to wish you well and hope to see a number of you at our next Royaumont

Reunion which is always such a pleasant function. Many thanks to the Committee for all their kind help and interest in Royaumont affairs.

Yours ever,

SMIETON.

Letter from our Chairman

Whyteknewe,
Peebles.

13th March, 1969.

Dear Members,

I have just been looking over my last letter to you all and find, as far as I am concerned, this last year has been much the same as regards weather, but I hope you have all fared better. As I write it is blowing a gale and snowing steadily, and I long for some sun. I have been lucky to miss that bad snow-storm and 33 degrees of frost, as my sister and I were in Majorca all February hoping for sunshine, but, alas, there was a steady cold east wind and, to sit out, one had to wear a warm coat or even a fur one. We used our balcony to cool our drinks !!! The Island is very varied and interesting, but I expect many of you have seen it. We were lucky to see the almond blossom which was lovely. I believe there are six million almond trees with white or pink flowers on the flat parts of the island, but when one gets into the mountains the country is very bleak and rocky and dry with winding roads with hairpin bends for miles, and fine scenery of the rocky sea coast.

The luncheon, as usual, was a source of much talk and exchange of news, and we were all so glad to see Sinclair after the operation on her eyes looking so well.

With my best wishes to you all for a happy 1969.

Yours ever,

RAMSAY.

Annual Luncheon and Annual General Meeting

9th July, 1968

The Annual Luncheon was held on 9th July, 1968, once more at The Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh, where an excellent meal was provided.

Those present were: Stewart, Moffet, Mac-naughton, Manson, Miller, Smieton, Simpson, Rose-Morris, Nicky, D. Anderson, Ramsay-Smith, Leishman, Sinclair, Dow, Torrance.

Regrets were received from: Wilson, Sister Adams, Moore, Don, Banks, Leng, Forrest, Jackson, Jamieson.

The Annual General Meeting followed the Luncheon. Nicky gave a report, and after some discussion it was agreed that any residue from the Emergency Fund after the death or resignation of all the Trustees, should be given to The Bruntsfield Hospital for Women and Children, Edinburgh. Ramsay was instructed to have a short draft drawn implementing this decision.

Stewart reported a satisfactory balance in hand of £31 18s 9d.

Ramsay suggested that a copy of the Minutes might be sent to Committee members, but this was not considered necessary, but a list of the office-bearers should be put in the next News Letter, which was agreed to.

Office-bearers—President, Smieton; chairman, Ramsay; vice-chairman, Moffet; secretary, Leishman; treasurer, Stewart; Editor, News Letter, Miller.

Committee—Sister Rose-Morris, Dow, Jamieson, Manson, Nicky, Macnaughton, Simpson, Whitehorn, Howard-Smith.

Emergency Fund Trustees—Smieton, Ramsay-Smith, Miller, Nicky, treasurer.

In Memoriam

With great regret and with deep sympathy to their relatives and friends, we record the death of three of our members.

Middleton sends the following tribute in memory of her friend "Big Andy."

"Big Andy" (A. L. Anderson). "Big Andy," as she was known to us at Royaumont, retired from the present stresses and strains of our world on January 25th at a Nursing Home, as usual, thinking of others to the last.

Andy was born in Glasgow and educated at Cheltenham College. After leaving France, having been awarded the Croix de Guerre, she trained in midwifery and was always in demand. She travelled widely, staying with her uncle in Alexandria, and her sister, Lady Blood, in Ceylon, Sierra Leone and Mauritius, and we had holidays in Scotland, Brittany, Sicily, Italy, Austria and India.

During the last war she was in charge of a Red Cross Hospital at Bude, Cornwall, and gave valuable service.

Several of her nieces and nephews were able to attend the cremation service at Charing, and left

a lovely bank of spring flowers as a memorial to a life given to the service of others."

"Banks" (Mrs Simmonds) was one of our chauffeurs at the Abbaye. She died suddenly, on August 4th, 1968, at her home in Castle-Douglas, Scotland, after a long illness borne with great courage. Her son, Dr Ian Simmonds, in a letter of thanks to the Association for their sympathy on the death of his Mother, said "her family were glad she died quickly, for she so hated to be ill and no longer independent." This was very characteristic of Banks. She was one of the most hospitable members of the Association and, many years ago, when the Reunion Dinners were held in London, she and her husband opened widely the doors of their home in Putney to friend members coming from a distance, usually Scotland. One knows from past experience how grateful and thankful one is to those generous friends on occasions such as these.

Sister Dunderdale (Lady Clow K-i-H) died in Edinburgh on 14th March, 1968. Up to the beginning of her long illness she attended our Reunions in Edinburgh, and we missed her when she was no longer able to be present. We sent her daughter the sympathy of the Association and, in her reply, she said her Mother took a great interest in it and often spoke of her time at Royaumont.

Lady Clow received her decoration for the work she did during the war, as Governor's wife in Shillong, Assam. (Red Cross, W.V.S., etc.).

A Hospital in France

By Collum

Reproduced by kind permission of "Blackwood's Magazine" in which the article appeared in November, 1918.

CHAPTER V.

After the Evacuation of Villers-Cotterets

On the 31st May, 1918, began for us at the Abbaye the period of the greatest stress and strain our staff had ever had. The Villers-Cotterets hospital was officially evacuated on to us and carried on in amalgamation with us. Somehow or other we managed to provide 480 beds. They stood in a serried rank all round the four sides of the Abbaye cloisters. In this great surprise drive the Germans had swept away all the hospitals between

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Soissons and Villers-Cotterets. The wounded were taken by road to Senlis where a Hospital of Evacuation had been hastily set up in tents, and thence distributed to the scattered hospitals of the district around, again by motor ambulance.

In three days we were full to overflowing, in fifteen days we had brought in, X-rayed, and operated on one thousand wounded men. On several days our six drivers brought in a hundred cases from Senlis (a fifteen kilometre run) and evacuated another hundred. The work accomplished by our chauffeurs was tremendous. I do not remember how many men were brought in during the twenty-four hours of that first day, but I know that I, personally, made 85 X-ray examinations, and that neither my assistant nor the developer in the Dark Room got to bed until the dawn. If we were overwhelmed with work in the X-ray Department, the operating theatre staff was even harder pressed. Two extra emergency theatres were opened. With three theatres working all day, and two of them all night, it can be imagined how the surgeons were pressed, and how near the anaesthetists came to nearly being anaesthetised themselves. I do not think the Médecin-Chef or the "Second-in-Command" ever got more than three hours rest in the twenty-four hours during that first strenuous fortnight. We were able to cope by arranging shifts, working 18 hours and resting 6.

How we learned to hate and dread the deadly Gas infection! Many were being admitted and diagnosed as having it, and had to be given priority of operation. The aerial warfare was fierce. Almost nightly at that period the German machines dashed across the lines and methodically bombed towns and villages. That interfered with our work, for we dared not show a light when they were about. It was impossible adequately to darken our vast ecclesiastical windows. Hence we had to put out all lights in the corridors, halls, and staircases. Shall we ever forget those inky dark corridors full of stretchers being carried out of the theatre with unconscious men on them—the groping in the dark, with the noise of the guns all round, and then the shattering crash of a bomb.

I left France on the day when the high-water mark on the Vesle had been reached and the last bulge in the "pocket" finally pinched out. The second great and critical battle of the Marne was over, and the most brilliant soldier the war has produced was already planning his next great stroke on the Somme. Thousands upon thousands of Americans were arriving; their first self-contained army was on the point of completion; on every front their divisions and brigades and regiments

had already proved their quality in action; their guns and their aeroplanes had already made an impression on the enemy; their Army Medical Service was in full swing; their transport and re-victualling services showing the hall-mark of American business organisation. One felt that the most critical moment in the history of the war—for the Allies—had passed; we had topped the rise, henceforth we should be going down the hill. It was a good moment at which to have one's work suspended.

My last memory of the hospital is a typical one—an all-night sitting in the theatre, at which I assisted in the humble capacity of an extra orderly to help clean up. The last patient was carried away at 4 p.m., and we ourselves closed the door at 5 p.m.

a.

COLLUM.

From Far and Near

Barclay (Mrs Golding). Thanks for keeping us straight about Rhodesian affairs. We lose touch with them, they change so often, and there are so many long intervals of waiting between the Smith-Wilson exchanges. The latter never seem to produce anything concrete in the way of a final understanding. It is all very difficult, complicated and disappointing. Barclay seems to be quite pleased with the present status quo—"Three years of law and order," she says, "and good management of internal affairs in general." The Editor thanks Barclay for sending her the very interesting article written by her daughter, Elizabeth Rail. It was published in the South African "Farmers' Weekly" and describes life from the point of view of farmers' wives in Rhodesia and South Africa. We should have liked to have had it in this number of the News Letter, but space would not allow for it.

Daunt. We always welcome news from Daunt. Writing to Miller, she says: "I toy with the idea of seeing you all again though I know it is only a 'dream.' The sight of your writing on the envelope today was real joy. I had to leave it until I got back from 20 miles through sodden roads to see a friend in hospital. Now, I shall try and collect some news for the 'Letter.'"

"I shall begin by telling you of the rather trying experience I had lately. The mason who was repairing a ceiling got shot off the scaffolding and fell nine feet to the floor, I found him in a state of semi-consciousness when I returned to the room. However, he recovered fairly quickly, but it was a shock to me at the time. You have heard of

'my children,' over 20 of them from the surrounding district, who come to see me and play around in the grounds? They certainly keep one 'on the hop,' always just managing to avoid sudden death! One fell out of a loft on to concrete and had to be encased in plaster from chin to tummy. Another upset a pot of scalding tea over himself. As their fathers say 'One lives in a state of perpetual panic.' The children keep me company, for lately I have not been allowed to do any gardening and I miss this very much. It helped to fill in the day for me but, on the whole, I know I am very lucky to be able to hobble around and not be dependent on a wheelchair. I have friends who 'bob in,' and their visits give me great pleasure and amusement. It is only in the long evenings that life is 'grey.'" (Daunt asks: "Was there ever a 'Vi' Anderson at Royaumont?" Not that I know of. Can anyone help? Ed.)

Davidson (D. D.). "I am much better in my general health since I wrote you last and am able to get out for a weekly drive. I have lots of friends who come to see me so I don't weary, and when the weather is good I get into the garden. I have no reason to complain."

(With regard to Navarro's History of Royaumont the Editor gave it as a gift from Davidson to Littlejohn. Perhaps Davidson remembers her in the kitchen in 1915? She was with Swanson, I think that was her name. Littlejohn's daughter reads to her mother very often and I am sure that by now she has read Navarro's book to her. Littlejohn thanks Davidson for the gift, an interesting souvenir of Royaumont.—Ed.)

"The News Letter," Davidson says, "brings before my memory some lovely things about the Abbaye, and one of these is the song of the many nightingales that frequented our trees. I used to be quite a lot on night duty and had plenty of chances to hear them."

(We send our deep sympathy to Davidson on the death of a much loved brother. It is sad to lose the family ties, one by one.—Editor.)

Dow. Life seems to have for Dow many "ups" and "downs." In March she and her sister will be off again to Montreux, so let us wish them luck with weather and an improvement in health.

Dow heard from Rutherford at the New Year. At that time she was thinking of selling their old home at Matingars as all her family live now in Melbourne. Dow was wondering if the bush fires raging round Melbourne had affected them in any

way. If Rutherford sells the old home Dow thinks her grandchildren will miss it very much as they have spent their holidays there for so many years.

Large (Mrs R. V. Wilson). She writes: "You asked me for It—so here goes, knowing full well it is the Editor's privilege to 'cut' where she likes, so please do just that."

"The News Letter is always a joy to receive. It is our only link as we get older. I regret I have been unable to attend Reunions in Edinburgh."

"We live four miles from Eastbourne in a charming Close with a nice garden and bird sanctuary. A pair of blue tits have already rented the tit box. From our garden we look up to the Downs. This will sound paradoxical to those not living in Sussex, but our Downs rise to 600 feet. We visit the top of Beachy Head on Sunday morning before church. A favourite short journey from here winds up the hillside—rather like being in Scotland—to Firlie Beacon. From the top we look down on Glyndebourne, a name which thrills all music lovers. From here great opera is broadcast. It is in a very grand and expensive setting and it is sometimes a difficulty securing a ticket for a performance. Leaving Glyndebourne, one can return via Lewes, an interesting and historic town, near which is Sussex University. There are many compensations living so far from Scotland. Life here does not mean isolation. I have many activities, social, political and charitable. The most rewarding work is on the hospital committee, as 'Friends of the Hospitals.' We raised over £1000 at our annual summer fête which is generally blessed with fine weather in June. I am trying to give up some of my committee work, but people will not believe I am getting old. Will that suit your royal highness? Bless you for doing the News Letter." (Thanks, Large.—Ed.)

Leishman. The Editor spent a very happy week with Leishman after bringing in the New Year in Edinburgh. So cosseted was she that she remained every day in bed until it was time for the evening meal when she rose and dressed! The evening in front of a lovely coal fire brought forth many reminiscences which lasted well on to the midnight hour when we sleepily retired to bed.

Littlejohn (Mrs Hedderwick). Just to remind you and Rachel of a promise that the caravan is expected to stop in front of the Editor's door when the good weather comes round, and that luncheon will be served to Madam and Mademoiselle.

Leng. Leng and a friend have been in Finland attending a Conference. They spent a delightful evening with a Mrs Winckelmann at her charming house

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on an island in the Gulf of Finland. After a marvellous dinner the hostess and her sister (both about 80 and Danish, Mrs Winckelmann married to a Finn, and her sister to an Australian) took up a guitar and sang folksongs from almost every country (including Scotland) in every language. They had the sweetest voices and gave me more pleasure than anything I have heard from professionals.

After her return from Finland, Leng flew out to Ottawa where she has many dear friends and returned by sea to recover from the parties. "How beautiful the Clyde is, compared to the enormous but dreary St. Lawrence!"

Macnaughton (Mrs Crowther). Macnaughton is just the same kind, cheery little person whom we all know. The Editor and she always meet in Edinburgh between Christmas and New Year and have a Royaumont tea, exchanging news and enjoying old stories. I am sure that the young generation is very fond of its Granny.

Morris (Rose). We hope that circumstances will let her come to the next Reunion. The date is not yet fixed. We can't very well do without one "Seester" at the luncheon party!

Moffet. Moffie writes blissfully about Bermuda. "It was great fun. So much hospitality from all Evelyn's friends, so much gaiety, and such lovely swimming, not to mention the sailing and going in the glass boats to see the coral and fish, etc."

The weather was very good though there were some wet days. The golf match I saw at Castle Harbour Golf Club was a friendly match between Gary Player and a Bermudian against Dai Rees and another Bermudian. It was a glorious day and everyone was very happy and friendly. We followed the players over the whole course—not bad for an old one like Yours Truly. At the finish up there was a big meeting in the Club House of players and friends. There were cool drinks to quench our parched throats after the long tramp uphill and downhill in the heat. Another interesting day was visiting the scent factory and seeing the distillation and the lovely flowers from which the scents are extracted. Then there was a party at Government House to which I was invited with Evelyn and some English friends of hers visiting Bermuda. It is all very interesting for a lovely holiday but not the life I would choose to live for always. It is too frustrating in many ways, and there is no future for young people. It might be nice to retire to if one has that sort of disposition, but pas pour moi."

Smeal is happier this time. I think her knee is not so painful, although she has never mentioned

what treatment she had. She is able to drive her little car and that, no doubt, calls for the big Hallelujah she talks about. Smeal had a very good Christmas with friends—three invitations to luncheon parties and a visit to an old friend at Steyning during Christmas week. Roads were all clear and "my little car purred along like six cats." (Thanks for sending Simms' letter, also the amusing little war poem for which there may not be enough space in this number, in which case it will be kept till next year.—Ed.)

Sinclair. She had an operation for cataract last year. It has been very successful and she can now read and write with ease. In spite of the defect Sinclair has been able to fly to Brussels and have a good time with her Belgian friend. She goes to see her every second year and the journey seems to present no difficulties. She is seen away at one terminal by a friend and is met at the other.

Simms. Thank you for the most interesting addition to our travelogue. We should have liked to have heard more about the ancient cities of Asia Minor, but their history goes back so far (1000 B.C.?) that one is afraid to tackle the subject. (There is neither time nor space.—Ed.)

Jamieson ("Jamie") seems much better and retains her youthful appearance to a striking degree. She says her sister and herself are not very mobile, not having a car, and are apt to stay "put" on the peninsula (Kilcreggan, Scotland) except for visits to Glasgow and odd holidays to the Highlands in summer. (We expect to see her at the Reunion this year. Date not fixed yet.—Ed.)

Summerhayes (Dr Summerhayes McRae). Some of our members have been asking for news of Summerhayes, but it is only recently that the Editor was given her address by Simms. Any member who would like to get into contact with her will find the address at the end of the News Letter. We hear she is a very busy woman, what with "Infant Welfare work and household chores." All the same, she might be glad to hear from any of her old friends.

Torrance. The Editor has hunted high and low for your letter and cannot find it, but she remembers your new address which she has put among the others at the end of the News Letter. She is glad you have now got an Edinburgh address. It will be easier to arrange a meeting with you in the city than it was when you lived in North Berwick!

Williams ("Peter"). Peter sends us three character sketches of three different types of

Spaniards with whom she has come in contact during the years she has lived in Spain.

After Easter, Peter will be in this country for some time, so the Editor has included her home address with the others at the end of the News Letter. On previous visits home Peter has seen her old friend, Wendy (Inglis) who now has a little cottage in Cornwall.

Simpson (Mrs Gray). Simpson wanted to give our winter a "miss" last year, so she flew out to Johannesburg on November 1st. After a few days there with her cousin and husband, they all set out by car for Blantyre, Malawi. The journey was a long one, and it took them 16 days to arrive at their destination. Simpson enjoyed the long journey and, having been accustomed to them in India, she felt she was able to cope with this one. They spent two nights in the Kruger National Park and were well awarded by sights of lion and elephant as well as other large animals. They were in Salisbury at the time when the Union Jack was taken down and the Rhodesian flag hoisted and it was all very sad. She thought Salisbury a lovely city.

At Blantyre they were 2300 feet up. She saw many trees and shrubs that reminded her of Indian days. Her cousin's husband was a retired tea planter and, with him, she visited several tea estates, "green and lovely," she said.

In Malawi there is no freedom of speech. Say anything against Banda and the ruling powers, and the guilty one is very quickly deported. She was sorry for the Indian merchants having to leave the country. They had been there for generations in both Zambia and Kenya and were most successful business men and law-abiding citizens. After a change to nearer the sea in Cape Province, Simpson returns home at the end of March.

Armstrong writes from Australia. Many years ago Ashton and I visited Royaumont. I thought we would begin our day with coffee at the Cheval Blanc, but we could not find it, and a young woman told me that the Cheval Blanc "n'existe plus." She seemed entirely vague as to there ever being a hospital at Royaumont. Then it suddenly occurred to me that she had been about 10 years of age when we left! After this disappointment, we went to Royaumont and got permission from a sort of caretaker to go over the Abbey. He, too, was quite hazy as to what our intentions were and why we had been there, and then we recalled that, in the long, long history of Royaumont, the four years of our occupation, which appeared so important and significant to us, were "but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

These places, to which one returns after a period of years, appear smaller, but the Abbey seemed even more enormous than I remembered it, and I think with amazed respect of the pioneers of our Unit who undertook to turn that colossal ancient building into a modern hospital. (Have any of our members experienced those feelings that Armstrong describes here?—Ed.)

Happy Days in Finland

By the Editor

I am taking pen in hand this time, and hope those leaves from my Diary, written in Finland many years ago, will interest the readers of the News Letter.

I visited Finland three times, and each visit lasted six months. These have left with me such delightful memories that I have a great desire to pass them on to others. It will be easier to divide the article into two parts—Finland in Winter and Finland in Summer.

FINLAND IN WINTER No. 1

My first peep of "Strawberry Land" was not the one suggestive of that luscious fruit, but a land buried under a thick mantle of snow, approached through a frozen sea, solid as a rock. Miles ahead, as we ploughed through a track formed for us by the ice-breaker, the church of Hango (my destination) could be discerned dimly, but that was all that could be seen outlined in the midst of a dreary waste of frost and snow. The cold was intense. We had crossed the North Sea in a blizzard, and there was no improvement in the weather when we got into the Baltic and sailed northwards towards the Gulf of Finland. The port of Hango lies on a small peninsula at the extreme south-west of the country, and at the entrance of the Gulf. The few passengers who joined the ship's captain and myself at Copenhagen were mostly Finns and Russians returning to their land of birth after some business done in the Danish capital, and words were far and few between us. No one seemed to know English well enough to speak it, but, in the woe-begone condition I was in after four days of violent seasickness crossing the North Sea, my tongue had got silenced, and I was not by any means in the humour of making myself even a smiling companion. We got into the port of Hango on the first day of March, a day of biting cold, with a wind that seemed to penetrate to the marrow despite the many wraps each had provided himself with. The quay was crowded with a motley collection of sailors and

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dock labourers, who, in thick leather coats and caps of fur and leather, ran here and there shouting salutations to their friends on board in a language, to my almost frozen ears, was quite unintelligible. I expect it was Finnish they were speaking, a language I was never to learn. My friends spoke Swedish, and, before leaving the last time for home, I spoke it quite fluently. When once the gangway was placed in position, friends joined friends and everyone seemed very gay and happy. After satisfying a company of burly Custom House officers, who swooped down on our baggage like a lot of vultures, I found myself in a Finnish sleigh drawn by a hardy little pony, the bells round his neck making a merry jingle as we glided at quite a good rate through the snow towards the town.

From November until April the Arctic snow-cap is pushed south to the shores of the Gulf of Finland. The whole land is buried in a thick mantle of snow. The lakes and rivers are frozen hard. The peasants come into the towns most days by means of skis on which they make their way along through the very deep snow that lies for six months every year in the forests. At Helsingfors (Helsinki), the week after my arrival, I was present at an exhibition of ski-ing. I was astonished at the feats performed by youngsters who appeared to get a lot of amusement from the sport. Competition started from a great height. In the middle of the track was a high terrace of snow which had to be jumped, and, to my unaccustomed eyes, it was terrifying to see the competitors leap up into the air and then down again, each on his skis, before completing his descent. There were, of course, some who failed to find a footing after the jump, and nothing was to be seen then but a dark form on the snow, two long skis waving wildly in mid-air, and a fur cap rolling swiftly down the track. It is marvellous that so very few accidents occur on these occasions. At Helsingfors I saw many exhibitions of skating. A frozen sea made an ideal rink, flags were flying, the palisades were hung with evergreens, a band was playing Strauss's waltzes, while the competitors went through all the figures of fancy skating. The scene was most picturesque. It reminded me of a winter Christmas card!

A Night on an Ice-Breaker

During the winter I had a most interesting excursion on board an ice-breaker, two of which were stationed at Hango. Without those ships there could be no communication between Finland and the other countries to the west and south-west as long as frost and snow held Finland in its iron

grip. But then we had the ice-breaker and it was a great experience to be on board such a ship.

Laden with coats and wraps of all kinds, we set out for Tarmo, the ice-breaker. It had been a glorious day, and now at 4 o'clock the sun was moving slowly towards the western horizon. On arrival at the port we were introduced to the Captain who spoke English very fluently. There were quite a number of people on board besides ourselves shouting good-bye to their friends on the "Urania" en route for Hull, whose passage through the ice, Tarmo was about to make. "Urania" followed about a quarter of a mile behind us. On the ice-breaker one could actually feel the invisible forces beneath us wrestling with the great blocks of ice that had to be crushed to pieces before "Urania" could safely pursue its course to green England. Very often we had to stop and go back, then come on a second time, before an obstinate block would give way. Now and again we came upon a stretch of open water which had been freed from the ice by a strong wind, and, on one of these, we got a good view of some seals disporting themselves merrily. It was a truly Arctic scene. At 8 o'clock the sun began to set in great flames of red and gold, and their reflexion on the snow was beyond description lovely. Half an hour after it plunged down into the depths of the frozen sea, leaving behind it, on the horizon, trails of gold and scarlet that mellowed and deepened as the night wore on. Then by means of the searchlight on the mast, scrutinizing the south, we could discern, not far off, a dark patch which, widening and widening, we proclaimed that the icebound waters had freed themselves and were now ready to carry "Urania" to the more sheltered shores of Denmark. Tarmo then turned back towards Hango, and we went downstairs and had a glass of rum to warm us up.

It is not until the middle of April that the sea manages to free itself from ice. While the ice is in the process of melting the small boys find great amusement dislodging a block of ice from the edge of the half-frozen water, and, getting up on this, they paddle their improvised canoe in quite a dexterous fashion.

Now, I hear some reader say: "What about warmth and indoor comfort during all this cold weather?" Finnish houses are never cold; in fact, they are often overheated. The large stoves, such as there are all over Europe, can be seen in Finnish houses too. When I stayed there wood was the fuel used and wood was used in the railway trains. Their methods may be quite changed nowadays. Some of these stoves were very large, occupying

one side of a room. Away back in those days I missed the warm blaze of an English coal fire, but coal fires in our country are getting fewer and fewer, and we are becoming more accustomed to do without.

Throughout the winter we went occasionally to Helsingfors mainly that I should be shown the beauties of this "Athens of the North." The originality and variety and, sometimes, the eccentricities of its modern architecture form the most interesting features of Helsinki. The strong contrast to some parts of the city is the cold classicism of the University, the Senate, and the Nicholas Church, the work of the great Engel.

It was on those occasions that I saw Sibelius for the first time. He conducted his Symphony Orchestra to a crowded hall. Another evening we went to see the Royal Russian Ballet with Pavlova dancing. After all those years I still remember very vividly the beauty of every movement in the "Dying Swan." As for Sibelius, I came home from one of his concerts and vowed I should "practise" every day until I had conquered Valse Triste. I think I did in the end. In Helsingfors I saw that curiously tragic woman and lovely dancer, Isadora Duncan, of whom stories were rife at the time.

FINLAND IN SUMMER, No. 2

Summer comes with a rush in Finland, and for three months the sun shines from the depths of a cloudless blue sky. Barely a star is to be seen, and when the first faint star appears, it is a sign that autumn frosts have arrived and the days are on the wane. The bright nights account for the extraordinary rapidity of the growth of trees and shrubs. One cannot fail to be struck by the enormous amount of foliage on the oak and hawthorn trees as compared with that in Britain. The forests in Finland consist almost exclusively of pine, fir and birch, the tender green of the latter brightening up the dark foliage of the pine which seems to take root in every crack and crevice. Every hill is wooded to the summit, every island to the water's edge. Summer in Finland is heralded in by a wonderful fête on the first day of May organised by the students. A week before that date, the first ship of the year has been able to enter the port of Helsingfors. It is a gala day for everyone. The whole population is wild with delight at the return of the warm sunshine. It is the Students' Day. To celebrate it, they hold a national fête in which old and young

participate. Every student who has passed his "Matric" and is ready to enter the University, is presented with a white velvet cap. It is the crowning glory of the "Sixth Formers." Their relatives and school friends adorn each from top to toe with flowers and these, surmounted by the cap, present a very gay and flowery scene. The Esplanadgatan, the Kaisiemi Gardens, the Restaurants and Hotels and Concert Hall—all are packed with a noisy but cheerful crowd. Even the conductor of the Orchestra and his players have to submit to a certain amount of gay tomfoolery. With its balloons, coloured paper ribbon and confetti, the scenic value is quite outstanding. To escape from the crowd and to view it safely from a distance, my friends hired a droshky hoping we would get to the top of Esplanadgatan in this way. But just at that moment the confetti was released, we were surrounded by students who entwined us in all sorts of paper decorations, but the confetti was the worst. We were only one group of many who had to suffer the same fate. But it was great fun.

The Finn loves excursions in the summer when, in his little sailing or motor boat, he and his family, laden with picnic basket and hammocks, leave the mainland, and land on one of those islands which stretch in a bewildering chain along the north coast of the Gulf of Finland, leaving almost landlocked passages for small steamers. These all conspire to make the existence of the Helsingfors bourgeoisie probably the pleasantest in the world. At 9 a.m., from May to mid-September, the banker or merchant leaves his "little wooden hut" on one of the islands, strolls round his garden, and saunters down the forest path to a "little wooden pier" from which a floating omnibus conveys him in a short time to a quay on the mainland within five minutes' walk of his office. What more could the heart of man desire? Russians arrive by every boat and steamer from Leningrad and Moscow, and most of them have summer houses on the islands. We had one which we took full advantage of. One of the memories which I retain most vividly refers to an adventure with a large goose who came down to the pier to escort me home. She was not a very nice goose, for she grabbed me from behind and brought me to a standstill. I was terrified, for her hold of me was fairly tough. I screamed to my friends who I knew were on the verandah. They shouted to me to "turn round and face the bird" which I did with a little caution, for she had me still tightly held by something I did not know what. However, in the end she had to give in and, frightened that I would pay her back for her cruelty, she goose-stepped away at

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a tremendous speed back to her poultry yard from whence she had come.

When we stayed on the island, one of our most exciting excursions was fishing for pike—of all fish! We had a lovely little motor boat and we used to spend hours on the Gulf, just lying and gazing up into the blue sky. This, perhaps, became a little more exciting when a Russian torpedo boat, with its band on board, discoursed sweet music in the distance. This Russian community was quite a long way from us, but the strains of "The Merry Widow" popular at that time, remains one of my most charming memories. Now, about the pike. I thought it was a strange, rather a cruel fish, and I certainly never had tasted pike. But we fished for it in Finland. I was told it was a big fish and very cruel to the other fish, so I was a little frightened. One fishes for pike with a very long line, and we had to keep our boat going as silently as possible in case he heard us and fled. At the end of the line we had for bait a flat, bright metal fish (was it silver? It looked like it) and I must say we had an exciting time when we caught it and started getting it into the boat. I leave the rest of the story untold.

We did not spend all our summer days on the islands, for Hango had many attractions—a Casino, a first class Hotel, and excellent boating and bathing facilities. We used to have a late supper at the Casino and enjoy dancing between the courses as they do in some places. Balls, given during the summer, mostly in the Casino by the officers and cadets of the Russian Navy, were very jolly informal entertainments.

Bathing, whether in the sea or in a Finnish sauna, is one of the chief delights of the Finnish people. One seldom sees a bathing costume. Gliding along in one's boat between the islands on a hot day, one is sure to see a row of bathers, stark naked, walking down towards the water's edge or sunning themselves on the rocks. The women's bathing pool at Hango was very well patronised. I used to bathe every morning with a Helsingfors friend whose Mother was away from home for part of the time I was there. On her return, we met on the steps leading down to the pool. We wore no chic bathing attire (I assure my readers). To me it was one of the most ludicrous moments to choose for a formal introduction, but, oh, how funny it was. And, even now my gravity is sorely disturbed when I recall the incident.

Midsummer Day is the day of the year. A succession of lovely days led us to the 23rd of June, and it proved to be no less beautiful than its fore-runners. As we sat on the verandah of the Hotel Bellevue on this lovely summer night, with the Gulf

of Finland stretched out before us, we were all struck by the exquisite beauty of the midnight sky, a blending of soft grey and pinks reminding me of the delicate tones of the frescoes of Puvis de Chavannes in the Pantheon, Paris. Little boats, their coloured sails spread out to catch the faint breeze that rippled the surface of the water, were to be seen dotted here and there—a picturesque touch of colour between sea and sky. On the mainland, on the islands, on floating rafts, bonfires were burning—the "fires of St. Jean"—taking one back to the pagan days of Sun Worship. Late as the hour was, the shore was crowded, for no one would dream of retiring early on this lovely Midsummer evening. Every house in town, every boat out in the bay, both were decked in greenery—branches of the sacred birch tree. The vehicles on the roads, the ships in the harbour, the boats on the lakes, all were crowned with the fresh green of the birch tree. Orchestras discoursed sweet plaintive melodies of the country on the balconies of the hotels and restaurants, for there were still some groups loitering over their coffee loath to go home. A quartette of male voices sang Swedish folkslieder. When we left about two o'clock in the morning the sun was about to rise again in all its summer glory, but, alas, Midsummer evening had passed and gone and the days were on the wane again.

Such are my impressions of Finland and its people. It is a rapidly developing country. It provides Britain with butter and its huge forests supply our builders with timber. Let those who have not yet discovered its charms make haste to do so, and they will find much to interest them. "Why is it called Strawberry Land?" I hear some of my friends posing the question. Well, this is the answer. Finland abounds in berries—bilberries, cloudberries, cranberries, raspberries and, prime fruit of all, strawberries. The marvellous abundance of these sweet little wild strawberries has given to Finland the name of Strawberry Land. In July they are at their best. The peasant children come round, they even meet the trains, and sell the wild strawberries in little baskets made from the bark of the birch. They are so fresh and sweet with the morning dew upon them, and the breath of the pines still seems to linger among them.

MILLER.

Nicky in Kenya

It is difficult to believe that it is nearly three months since I baked in the sunshine of Kenya, although actually the weather disappointed me rather, the sun not seeming to me nearly so warm

as I remember it on my last visit thirty years ago. We had no intense heat, and, during the first week, a good deal of rain.

I left home on the 11th of November and was met by my cousin's wife and her niece when I landed in the early hours of the next morning at the Air Terminal at Nairobi. After a good breakfast we did a bit of shopping in Nairobi, and then left on our 300 miles run to Hoey's Bridge, which we reached before dark. There is now a beautiful tarmacadam road all the way instead of the old red brick road which left one with a nasty complexion some days after a long journey. There are, of course, many changes in Kenya since those days before the Second World War and the recent coming of independence to the country. Although the natives do not seem any keener on work than they used to be, they appeared to me to be much healthier and cleaner. There is a great deal of Africanization going on, and the farms and businesses are being bought up by the Africans who can raise the money to pay what the District Commissioners consider to be a suitable price. Some of the new owners are making a go of it. Others have had to give up and have gone back on being employed by foreigners, and others are under training in one of the depots or farms supervised by Europeans. Many of these are young men who are relatives of friends of the European farmers. I visited a neighbour of ours from Prudhoe. She has charge of a dairy farm, very up to date, for the milking was done by machinery, as was the water supply. Most of the farms near Hoey's Bridge and Kitale, the nearest town, are dairy farms, and there is often a great scurry to get the large cans of cream to the station in time to catch the train which takes them to the depot where the cream is made into butter. There is also a pig train which collects pigs from the farms for the pig factory where sausages and bacon and many other products are produced. During the war we were very grateful for sausages, etc., and not all the cream nor the pigs went to the factories, the balance providing the farms and farmworkers with much delightful food.

It is a very difficult matter for men and women who have lived for many years abroad to decide what they are going to do when they get their money for their land. Many are so used to the good climate that they cannot bear to think of coming back to settle in our damp climate. My cousin has farmed very successfully in Kenya for over thirty years, and has a son and three daughters all born in Kenya. He has for years been prospecting other parts of Africa to see whether he would like to

settle in the country, but a part of the continent where he thinks he would be happy in is either Australia or New Zealand, and with, perhaps, this in view, he and his wife are purposing to visit them before they reach a final decision. I fancy and hope that they will find their home in Northumberland from which they both hail.

Being a keen gardener I was interested in seeing the variety of plants which grow in the gardens and hedgerows. My cousin's wife is a very good and energetic gardener, and, during the time I stayed with them, I got the name of at least 100 plants which grow in her garden. Some are native plants, some she grows from seed which she takes back with her on her visits to this country, and many come from plants which have seeded themselves, such as petunias, antirrhinums, begonias, border carnations etc. I brought one or two cuttings home with me and hope they may grow in my greenhouse or garden.

The birds, too, in Kenya are wonderful and much loved. I got some very nice post cards and Christmas cards to send home, and there are also cups and saucers and glasses on which birds and wild animals are depicted. I was able to visit two game parks while in Kenya although it entailed another trip to Nairobi. One was the Nairobi game reserve where I saw a Mother cheetah training her four cubs to hunt. I also saw a lion, a lioness and babies and all kinds of deer, gazelles, wildebeest and many other animals, large and small. To my disappointment, however, I did not set eyes upon an elephant as these were said to have migrated temporarily to the foothills of Kilimanjaro. I wished I had time and opportunity to get up to Uganda where elephants abound, in the game parks at least. I also went a short tour to Amboseli, where I spent the night in a very comfortable tent camp and was awakened, just as the sun was rising, by small monkeys racing up the slope of the tent and then found myself gazing at an almost incredible sight — the great white-clad volcano Kilimanjaro with the sun rising behind it. After breakfast my driver took me another tour of the reserve during which we crossed the Kenya border into Tanzania and saw many more herds of buck and gazelle and other animals before setting off on the return journey to Nairobi.

I also spent some nights with another cousin, with whom was living, with her and her husband, a widowed daughter whose last child was born several months after her husband's death. She is thinking of bringing her children to England to be educated and is coming on a visit this summer to see what can be arranged and what the chances are with

regard to her getting a job for herself. At the same time she would like to find some part of England where she could bring her Kenya-born children to. She is a very capable young woman, both at secretarial work and on the land. (Has anyone any suggestion to make?)

I was very sad to leave Kenya at the end of a lovely five weeks holiday. It included, unfortunately, a rather wasted three days spent in hospital suffering from the effects of the high altitude. I did not enjoy having to pay for hospitalisation and doctors' fees after many years on the British Health Service conditions of which everyone appears to be able to take advantage.

I go back to England in time to spend a fortnight before Christmas and the Christmas holidays with my sister and her husband in a delightful Elizabethan cottage which they bought some years ago. Their two sons are each married with three sons apiece, and both live in or near Exeter, so we had a cheerful Christmas with plenty of young life around us. Now we are suffering the rigours of an English winter, but trusting, as usual, that spring awaits just round the corner.

Simms in Greece and Turkey

Again our traveller speaks: "This time, with a friend, we flew to Athens and then to Lesbos in the Aegean Sea. From this mountainous island we crossed by launch to the port of Izmir on the coast of Asia Minor. It is a great centre of commerce and has a fine harbour. We visited from there a number of very ancient cities, two of which attracted us very much, Pergamum and Ephesus. I must see these again. We continued on to Bursa, a large city at the foot of Mount Olympus. Our last port of call on the mainland of Asia Minor was Istanbul (the old Constantinople), which I had seen twice before. It has a wonderful situation on the Golden Horn which provides the city with a very fine natural harbour. The city, as you would expect, is full of interest and interesting things. On this occasion I saw the wonderful mosaics in the Gallery of the Church of St. Sophia. On my last visit they were not uncovered, so I was fortunate this time to have seen them.

I was very pleased with all the material comforts spread out before the tourist. The hotels are very good, the service excellent, and we had good food. Turkey appears to be going "all out" to attract the tourist. One can buy lovely leather coats in Istanbul at a very reasonable price and also have one made-to-measure within a few days.

Three Character Sketches from Spain From Williams

I. A friend who was going to America had to get a vaccination certificate, so went to an English-speaking Spanish doctor whom we shall call Don Eduardo. He said to her, on hearing her request: "But, Senora, do you require a certificate or do you require vaccination?" When, slightly taken aback, she said, "But can I have a certificate without being vaccinated?" His reply was to take her card, stamp it with the official stamp and not charge her a penny.

II. Soon after we first arrived in Spain we parked in a prohibited area, and, on returning, found a ticket in the windscreen. As such fines have to be paid on the spot, my sister went along to the police station. A most polite and correct sergeant sprang to his feet, saluted and said: "Senora, are you a resident or a tourist?" To which she replied that we were building a house here. The sergeant thereupon bowed again, saluted, tore up the parking ticket and threw it on the floor. Needless to add that we have never transgressed again.

III. The Guardia Civil (the armed police) never ask for a lift, but, if you happen to see one standing at the side of the road, it is correct to stop and ask if he would care for a lift. If he accepts he will get into the back of the car, remove his red satin-lined patent leather hat and never speak until he is ready to be set down when he will indicate the fact, then say goodbye and depart.

The point of this story is that the Guardia are trained to keep very much to themselves and are hated by the local population.

IF

(With apologies to the late Rudyard Kipling)

Dedicated to the night orderlies at Royaumont, and particularly in memory of June, July, August, and September, 1916.

I.

If you can make your walls of dusty sacking,
And in an unswept barn by daylight sleep;
When you can laugh when furniture is lacking,
And keep your things in one ungainly heap;
If you can smile when gramophones are braying,
And Etienne shouts at Cardew till he's blue;
If you can listen to the black boys laughing,
And make allowance for their laughing too.

IV.

If, when the marmite fire sinks lower,
And, spite of all your efforts, goes quite dead;
You then can face St. John's in gusty moonlight
And calmly meet the ghost without a head;
If, when your men are restless, and the kitchen
Echoes with laughter and resounding fun;
You still can keep your temper 'mid the turmoil,
And whisper gently—"Think of Blanche or
Jeanne."

y.

If you can carry stretchers by the dozen,
Polish the brasses, count three hundred sheets;
If you can work with all your heart, though knowing
The day staff always disbelieves your feats;
If you can crowd the unforgiving minute
With three hours' work and never feel the strain—
Yours is our world, and everything that's in it,
But—though I seek you—it is still in vain.

By the late GERALDINE MACKENZIE.

Dr and Mrs J. S. Henry—

Torrance—

35 East Trinity Road,
Edinburgh 5.

Williams ("Peter")—

66 Sandy Road,
West Kirby, Cheshire.

Dr Summerhayes McRae-----

Forrest—

Lystra,
Paul Mead Edge,
Nr. Stroud, Gloucestershire.

c/o Mrs Waterston,
7 Greenbank Avenue,
Edinburgh 10.

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