

them in the streets, at meetings, smiled, looked at their arm-bands in order to discover from what country each one hailed; now I no longer see them.

The whole long dark winter we were anticipating their coming, and perhaps that is why they became so dear to us. Photographs began to arrive from here and there, messages came from this one and that one, announcing her arrival.

"How many will be coming from Poland, from Japan, from England?" we asked each other.

"To-morrow there is a meeting of the Committee on Meals," said someone.

"Don't forget the ice-cream," said another.

"And what do you suppose the Chinese like to eat?" demanded a third.

"The day after to-morrow there is a meeting of the Exhibition Committee, but I have my English lesson before that," and "my lesson is not yet prepared," sighed another.

So we spoke on winter evenings while we went from one meeting to another, attended sewing meetings, studied English, and—*waited for you*. The stars in the frosty winter sky twinkled at our happy talk and joyful anticipation.

As time went on our days became busier and busier, and the hours of night grew shorter. News came from those who were coming to the Congress, and our expectations increased from day to day. The President of the National League of the Trained Nurses of Finland came one day to the office with a pile of papers under her arm. There were names of all kinds, and next them red and blue pencil markings, and hieroglyphics in ink—each meant something, and she alone knew their significance. I thought to myself if those papers should be destroyed what weeks of work would be lost!

I awake from my dreamy thoughts, look about me and—the streets *are* really empty: the International Congress of Nurses has taken place, our guests have gone! I want to hear what others are thinking and feeling.

I grasp the telephone receiver, and ring to the Chairman of the Feeding Committee—not because I am hungry, but simply because I want to speak to her, to ask what she thinks, and if she is sure no one starved during her stay in Helsinki (Helsingfors).

But an official voice comes over the 'phone, "Miss S. has left for her vacation." Again I make desperate efforts, but from everywhere I get the same reply, "Gone on her vacation."

Vacation—yes, but not only as vacation, I think, but to

*escape the desolation* all around us. Quickly I begin to pack my things for I realise that I too want to leave town.

In a last attempt I hopefully 'phone to the office of a certain newspaper. They also have quieted down after your departure.

"What news?" I ask.

"The Scandinavian Rifle shooters have arrived," the reporter replied, and intuitively I heard the sigh of relief on his lips. Transferred from a Congress of Nurses to a shooting match! I realised the many-sidedness of his profession, and how difficult it had been for him to keep in touch with the Congress of Nurses of which the language was English.

I resume my packing, but stop to reflect. How beautiful

were those summer days, because we had so ardently expected you, and you became so familiar, and so dear, a part of ourselves. We looked for your coming and wondered who was who. We heard that the Founder of the International Council of Nurses, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, could not come, and we felt so sorry because we had been waiting for her so much.

Some of you came in thick furs. We looked at each other and smiled, warmly, as our summer sun. One of you wistfully asked where she could find a department store—she had brought only heavy woollen dresses. Who would have dreamt that the North Pole had a summer! Surreptitiously, another opened her bag, revealing candles. She had come prepared, for some ignoramus had told her that Helsinki had no electric light and—she did not know that the mid-summer sun of the North Pole forgets to sleep! Someone else whispered to me confidentially, "But there are no ice-bears here!"

Now you are gone. And yet—you have not gone, because a part of every one of you remained here. And we feel that we are no longer alone in our

distant North, far away under the Arctic Circle; *together* with you we work to accomplish better things for humanity.

When this letter reaches you, we shall be in the midst of cold and frost here in Finland. Imposing Aurora Borealis lights flash in our northern skies, and on a winter evening as we sit before our open fires and think of you, we sing to you an old folk-song:

"My dear friend  
Dost thou ever remember me?  
At every sunrise  
I remember thee."

KYLLIKKI POHJALA.



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