

Mrs. Nancy Adams, President F.W.I.C. at the left, presents F.W.I.C. life membership badges to Mrs. Hugh Summers, Mrs. Gordon Maynard, Mrs. J. E. Houck and Mrs. J. R. Futcher in recognition of service in connection with the A.C.W.W. Conference.



The Rural Home

By Laura Pentinnen (Finland)

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WHEN a traveler arrives in Ilomantsi parish on the border of North Carelia and Russia, his attention is caught by a vista of rugged heights and seemingly endless forests of conifer. Most of our farms are perched on those heights which have also given names to the villages.

From our parish of Ilomantsi a winding, hilly road runs away to the east towards the Russian frontier. After five kilometres it climbs up to Kuuksenvaara Hill and then winds down a slope to a hollow. From there it rises again like a yellow ribbon and fades into a forest of pines with trunks of russet brown. Here spreads out a typical Ilomantsi hill village with farms and small-holdings.

At the fringe of the village is my home, about 50 metres from the main road. It is like a red strawberry on a hill with the fields spreading out like leaves on its northern and southern slopes. This is the centre of my life and endeavour to which I have dedicated myself. It is also my childhood home, the scene of my dearest memories. My mother's steps linger on the path leading to the outhouse where our provisions were stored. My father tilled the fields. My brothers cleared the land with the zest of youth until they had to leave us to defend their country. They never came back to harvest the fields again.

Now it is my turn to continue where those who are no longer with us laid down their tools. It is a binding inheritance. But I am not alone, I have my husband and my growing children, a boy and a girl.

On this clear spring evening I linger in our

courtyard. The bustle of work has ceased. The children's voices have died away. The whole village is asleep. Only the night-jar spins her mysterious hum over the fringe of the forest. The row of birch trees from the gate to the grassy courtyard was planted when I was a child. Their branches form a vault over the pathway. On the south side is the kitchen garden and a small orchard of apple trees.

The verandah made of beams is on the side nearest to the main road. The outhouses are on the right from the house and on the left a cowshed and barns. The yard is covered with short grass and hard-trodden paths criss-cross to the outhouses and cowshed. Farther down the hill are the thrashing and drying sheds. The tall, ancient mountain ash behind the house are opening their buds. Clusters of birch trees beside the outhouses and cowshed gently wave their pale green arms and a thrush has settled on the topmost branch of the tallest tree to tune her flute. Spirea shrub beneath the bedroom window extends its branches. The *Collius Europaeus*, with its golden bells will soon be in bloom and convolvuli on both sides of the verandah are shyly raising their heads from the ground.

The tasks of spring have not been finished yet and there is much to be done in the yard. The plan of the new garden is still only a blueprint though the surround of firs has been planted and a few apple trees in the orchard. With determination perhaps one day we shall see it completed.

I enter the kitchen—which is at the same time the living room—and the warmth and