

[Opened by Censor]

Hankow, China

July 7, 1918

Dearest Mother:

I am South again, or at least much further South than I have been all winter. I came down to Hankow one week ago yesterday and I was so tired from travel and weak from former illness I stayed in bed nearly all day and of course wrote no letters. Thursday, I came to Chikungson, just a few hours' trip from Hankow where I am to spend the two hot summer months. Our school will open the first week in September so I will have to go down for that.

It was so hot and sticky in Hankow we had to fan for existence. In the middle of the night we would wake up and grab a fan and try to sleep the best you could. So I packed my things as soon as I could and took my teacher up here with me to study. But I have not started yet. Tomorrow is to be my first day. I want to learn how to read and translate all the Prayer Book before the autumn, which is no small job. I doubt if I can do it.

The air is very cool and bracing up here on the hill. Olive, Miss Buchanan and Miss Gardiner are up here also, - staying in the same place I am. This happens to be a school building for American girls in the winter. We are on the hill side, not so high up as others, - but we always have a breeze. Our rooms are very comfortable too, - but as everywhere else in China we had to bring all bedding, table napkins, toilet paper, and every thing we want to use. There are no stores up here and it is not easy to have things sent up from Hankow. Can't even buy shoe blacking. Thus, we are isolated from the rest of the world in quietude and peacefulness. There is a Union Chapel here, which we are permitted to use for services. We had a very lovely celebration at 8 this morning. Two of our clergy are up here, and one Bishop of the Canadian Church. Very soon some of the Canadian clergy will come up. So there will be a nice number of us. Several of our Language School students are here for their holiday, so I don't feel at all lonely.

My teacher for the summer is Des. Stewart's oldest daughter, - Margaret. She teaches Olive, Miss B - and I. Poor child! I'm afraid we will work her very hard.

She was frightfully train sick when we came up here, but as soon as she was on solid ground again she was quite O. K.

One of the Broome University young men came up with us also. He is rather a Western cow boy type, but very earnest in his work. It seems that my vacations in China have become associated with him. He brought me down to Hankow from Kuling last summer. But he can't speak much Chinese. He hasn't passed his 1st exam.

Des. Stewart and others seem pleased with my progress at the language during the past yr. I can speak more than Olive and she has been out two yrs. - but I know very few characters. I am glad I have had this start, because I can discuss lessons with my teacher much more intelligently, and also talk with the people, and that is more important than any thing else in getting the language. Margaret Stewart told me yesterday I spoke with a mouth full of Chinese words. This is considered a very gt. compliment from a Chinese.

Des. Stewart had the Bishop and two of our clergy, who are on the examining board, - to dine with us last Sunday Evening. The Bishop tried to quiz me on characters right in public until I pleaded off. I told him I would speak for him, but I couldn't read or write yet.

He was very much interested all the evening in a return Chinese student who has her degree in medicine from Pennsylvania. She wants to work for the mission and we need her, but there seems no means of raising her salary. We can't get it from America and the Chinese people won't give it. In fact the Chinese do not welcome the foreign trained doctors any where. They much prefer going on with the sticking in of needles and lashing the patients to make them well, and they eat rattlesnake skins, juice made from beetles & bugs et cetera.

Des. Stewart's little daughter was ill with stomachache one night last week. We suddenly heard her screaming at the top of her voice, so we immediately ran up stairs to discover the cause. The amah or nurse told us she had pains in the stomach so we gave her oil. No cries or sounds

July 7, 1918

were uttered while we were in the room and I thought perhaps it was due to the presence of Szyma (Dss. Stewart).

The next morning Dss. Stewart told me that the amah had been using the Chinese practise of curing pains on her daughter pinching the back of the child's neck between the knuckles of her first two fingers. We examined her neck and it was perfectly black. Sometimes they are bruised for life in this way.

No wonder the child screamed. And the amah is a Christian! You can imagine what the heathen are capable of doing.

X You asked me of the drowning of children out here in one of your recent letters. It is carried on still, especially in the country districts. The only instance I know of in my own experience, was a poor old grand mother who had lost her children in some plague and had several grandchildren on her hands. Two of them were old enough to do a little work, enough to support themselves or buy their rice, - just beginning their teens.

But there was one child about four and the grandmother could not care for her & she had no one to appeal to for money, - so she took her to a creek and told her to jump in & drown herself. "After you are gone, then I'll go too," said the old grandmother!

The little girl began to cry and said, "But Grandmother can't you get a husband for me? Then I'll be cared for." Some of the neighbors heard her and came & told the grandmother she knew of some Christians in the city who were kind to children in trouble, & perhaps they would help her. So they went to the Anglican mission in Peking & one of the Chinese workers became interested in the child & saw that both she & the grandmother were cared for.

Just being in a place and making your influence felt is a very great thing we can do. Always being ready and on the "look-out"! Who knows what a great power this child may become in the Church or in China when she is grown. And too, she has been saved from a life of slavery from babyhood in not "having a husband", - as so many or practical children. Either this or drowning them. Poor China! And when you see the return students who come back expecting a change

since the Republic has been started in China and see their disappointment, - it is heart breaking. They become so discouraged and unhappy you feel like weeping for them.

China's heathenism seems so much blacker to them and her customs so much viler, and the odors so much more objectionable. Some of them become so downcast they never rise above it. They can't return to America to live they know, and here they must stay, among their own people who have become very much degraded in their eyes since they left home.

It is a terrible blow to them.

Japan's treatment of the Chinese is growing worse every day. It looks very much as though ~~it~~ she is soon going to rule all of China and become in possession of the little wealth she has. It is sickening and very discouraging.

You spoke of Mr. Peatross speaking to the Woman's Aux. at the Council. He is Dorothy Norton's husband you know. You remember they met me at Yokohama when I passed through last summer. This last winter they were ordered home on account of Dorothy's health. He must be very discouraged about his work. He is rather old looking to be Dorothy's husband isn't he?

Yes. The Literary Digests all come. I have loads of them now to read. The ham hasn't arrived yet. I'm about to lose hopes. Tell J - the Ladies Home Journal & "Housekeeping" came as long as I was in Peking. I hope they find their way to Hankow.

Tell J - also I was disappointed not to receive "Over There" & "Keep the Home Fires Burning" in the collection of new songs. Everybody wants to hear them now and I can't find the music. The rest of the collection was fine. And above all, please thank her for the news of the boys who are or are not going to the front. I didn't know it before, and of course that's the thing of most interest these days.

I am so sleepy I think I'll have to take a nap. My address still is Hankow.

With heaps of love,  
Venetia