

Methodist Girls' High School
Nanking, April 1, 1939

Dear Ellen:

I've been here a week already, but it seems much longer. I think one has a rather desolate feeling until one has had time to get the first mail from home, and since there are not so many boats as usual coming into Shanghai, mail comes not oftener than once in two weeks. I hear that the Dollar line is going to put on more ships again so perhaps things will improve with time.

Your Mandolin is here and safe. I laughed when I saw it for you asked me so many times where it was and I couldn't remember because I had lent it to Joy and couldn't remember if she had returned it to me or not. I haven't had time to try it, but a glance at it seemed to indicate that it was all right.

I wonder what your plans are for next year. If you plan eventually to return to China, I would urge you to come soon. It seems to me that we were never more needed than we are now in Occupied China, and it seemed to me also that our work is not going to be interfered with too much by the powers that be. Outwardly things look very normal here. The city is not the lively bustling place it was two years ago of course, but in the remnant that is left ~~nothing~~ life seems to have taken its usual routine. Wild rumors are afloat, but it would not be surprising if these people here are sick of war and are ready to give the authorities here some degree of cooperation. They've suffered enough to deserve a little peace.

Kiukiang is not yet open, I think, but rumor has it that it will be by fall. However if it is not, why not come to Nanking and work with me in Kuilan church. I never had such a welcome as this time. It seems to me that there is a lot of work needing to be done in the churches which can only be done by foreigners for obvious reasons. I'm tremendously glad that I took the plunge and came when I did.

I wonder what you would have thought about the church service I saw today. It was palm Sunday, so they had the Junior Church in with the adults. This is the church that was burned and they were holding the services in the gymnasium. It is a large three-story institutional. The building was practically fireproof, so that the walls and floors were left, the roof and the doors and windows were burned. They patched it up and used it anyhow, covering the windows with matting and using the upper floor for a roof, except for the auditorium from which the roof was gone. The gymnasium was in the basement. The room was packed in spite of the bad weather. The children marched in carrying branches and singing, and the Junior choir sat on the platform. There were some pews, but about half the audience sat on backless benches. The aisle was so narrow that the children had to march in one by one. But what's the use of trying to describe it to you, you with your picture of Wash. Ave. church in your mind. They have the chapel fixed now and will use it next Sundays. The people are destitute, and you will be interested to know that the money about three thousand Chinese dollars, was raised from among the missionaries. (It was all done before I got here so I feel free to mention it).

April 2, Sunday.

2/1/39
I spent the day down in the South city at our church there and I never came so near to freezing in my life. It was raining and there was a cold wind blowing and standing and sitting in that for about four hours, well you can just imagine. I must be a sort of hot house flower because it isn't really cold, you know. If you could see the clothes I have on, you'd be shocked. Woolen underwear, woolen bloomers, a heavy skirt and jacket and heavy coat and woolen hose and shoes and golashes. Obviously I didn't have on enough clothes but if I had worn any more I couldn't have gotten my skirt fastened. I suppose I'll get used to it. I know I always suffer from the heated houses when I first

get home from China. There are fewer fires than usual because coal is expensive and scarce. There was a fire in my room when I got home for which I was very grateful. I have a cold and a hollow sounding cough so you're likely to hear of my unhappy ending. But No, warm weather will soon be upon us and we will be crying about something else. In these damp climates, it is either freezing cold or roasting hot. There is very little in-between weather.

I've decided to help in the children's church here. It is already going and for a few Sundays I'm just going to go and see what they are doing, and when I get around to it I shall prepare a story to tell them some day. I may also take charge of a kindergarten. It is a sort of an orphan, nobody wants it, and while I know conditions will be such that it will be impossible to apply any of the bright ideas I got from Miss H. 's class, yet who knows, I might find one that would fit. For one thing there are a hundred kids. I'd like to know what an expert would do in a case like that beside send three-fourths of them home. That remedy happens to be impossible as well as undesirable.

4/1/39
I've been here just a week. I decided I would take a week to look around and get settled and rested, and adjusted to the new conditions. It has been a very busy week too, for there have been some of my former students in to call on me, some places to visit. I have my schedule somewhat in mind and it is shaping up very much as I had hoped it would. I shall probably stay here all summer, so I've spent some time getting settled, moving into a new room. I have the little picture up over my mantle piece to remind me of you.

We have no electric lights yet in this house, although the house is all wired and ready for them. I don't know what the meter has not been connected up, unless it is that there is a certain sense of impermanency about everything here now. I bought all my things however and have them all unpacked. I've decided that I shall live in the present and not let things dominate my living any more than necessary. If we had some good oil lamps it would not be so bad, but the house is so dark and lonely after night comes. Probably in a month or two, we will have the electricity and then life will seem more normal.

But the bright spots in our life out here are our Chinese friends. One can't be downhearted after talking to them. Strangely enough they are not pessimistic but face the future with courage and hope. It does me so much good just to be with them that I wonder if I shall ever be able to do anything ~~me~~ like as much for them as they are doing for me. I suppose that living the sheltered secure lives that we do in America, we are likely not to realize the resources which even an ordinary person has in adapting himself to a new situation. We are all, I suppose, stronger than we think we are.