

Please circulate in the family.

Nanking, April 19, 1939

Dear Family:

I ought to get American mail tomorrow, but have decided not to wait for I fear that if I do this letter may not make the next boat. Besides mail has been such a disappointing proposition this last month that if I should fail to get it, I probably wouldn't be able to write. Darn this present administration anyhow if they are interfering with my letters. They are few enough at best.

I went to Chinkiang last week to visit the mission there. They had on Thursday what they called a church day and Marie and I went down to see them in action. Originally we had planned to go on the Wednesday morning train, but our passes did not arrive until too late for the train so we went early the next morning and were there only until the following p. m.

Apparently conditions in Chinkiang are much worse than here for the reason that there is a measure of economic revival here which there is not there. Everyone is on relief there. I asked how it happened that there were so many men at their meetings, and they told me that they were all without jobs.

Our trip was without excitement. We travelled third class with the "Lao Beh-sing" (the old hundred names) i. e. the common people. Apparently in the war, the old Chinese coaches were destroyed or carried off and there are new ones which are much better, although not kept so clean. When we arrived at the station, we were ushered into an office by a guard and registered and our baggage examined. One's baggage is examined when one gets on a train and when one gets off, so we were pretty thoroughly looked over. But the inspectors were courteous and not unduly officious.

The mission buildings at Chinking suffered much more than ours did. Theirs were practically stripped of everything movable, tables, chairs, scientific apparatus, pianos, beds from the dormitory. They are not being used for anything now, i. e. the buildings.

I have a Sunday school class now, supposedly in English, but they understand such a little English that I am resolved to practice my Chinese on them. I've been rather encouraged at the progress I've been making, it's been slow enough, but I find myself talking a lot more than I did in Chinese. I also attended the junior church. There were about ninety children there, a very forlorn ragged looking bunch of kids. The service was very poorly conducted. I'm making plans now to see if it can be improved. Poor kids, along with their other sorrows, they have to have me to practice on them. I'm preparing a story now to tell them. I have it pretty well in mind now.

The rest of the time, I "~~read~~ nien-shu" i. e. read my book, i. e. study. It takes a while to get back what one has forgotten but ever so often old friends come cropping up, words that I knew quite well in the past but had not thought of for some time.

I forgot to mention that I had gone into competition with Miss Golisch and am giving piano lessons. Unfortunately she is not jealous of me and has offered to give me some little kids which she was inveigled into teaching. So far I have three pupils. The first one is a girl whom I asked to come help me with my Chinese and I was hardly in a position to refuse her. I tried to tell her that I had never gone beyond the first grade in music, but she persisted. Then the word got around and two more came. I shall make them pay me too in Chinese lessons.

We had such a fine young people's meeting Sunday afternoon. It was really very heartening. I'm one of their "advisers" but the extent of my activity thus far was to see that they had some flowers in the room. Folks are so poor now that they appreciate them, so perhaps that was not so little. There were about forty present. A young man who works in the post office spoke on "service" and spoke so clearly and simply that I could understand them. There was such a nice spirit through out the whole service. There was some instrumental music, and several solos, which were nothing wonderful, but the group was so quiet and appreciative that everyone felt happy.

You can see that Sunday is a rather busy day for me. I've about decided that I cannot go to the English service which comes at four-thirty. Last Sunday some guests came in about that time and settled the matter for that day.

Miss Goldsch is taking very good care of me. She asked me yesterday if I was as happy here as I had been in America and I answered, "Happier because I've got a job here."

I'm getting up now at six because I usually go to bed about eight. There is nothing to do because we have no lights, except candles or little lamps. Three days a week I study at eight o'clock, or whenever the teacher comes. There is no standard of time around here, everyone's clock is different. Six times a week, another teacher comes at eleven, and on Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning, a third teacher comes, making eleven hours with teachers. I spent as much time or more studying by myself. I have a book, called "The Kwo-yu Primer" (Kwo-yu means National Language) which I study by myself. It is mostly review, but it discusses fine points of grammar, most of which I find I know, but occasionally I glean out something on which I have been slipping.

This week I started my English classes with the teachers here on this compound. That comes from four to five four times a week, one class is for junior high school and one for senior high school students. They are suppose to be English Conversation, but I'm not just sure how I'm going to conduct the senior class. The junior one went off swimmingly. It is more uniform. But the senior group had some college students in it as well as some who had had only a year or two of senior high school. In that I think I shall aim a little lower than I did the first lesson. May hit the needs of more of them. I enjoy these classes very much and it breaks the monotony of just study.

Nextweek, I shall have three more classes, from nine to ten at the school at the church. It is called a review school, and is of junior high school grade. I'm supposedly teaching a Bible class but it may turn out to be mostly an English class. They had their spring vacation this week so that I did not begin.

In between times I work in the garden. My tulips are about to bloom. They are not so nice as they were three years ago and after they are through blooming I shall dig them up and replant them. I've been trimming up the shrubs and rose bushes. It is a good way to get warmed up.

Then if I feel able, I top off the day by going to the "Family worship" a meeting of all the folks living on the compound, or as many of them as can come. They don't all come every night. Some never come I guess, but some come nearly every night. There are about fifty there usually about half of them children. Usually three dogs too, one of which has asthma and snores.

