

Methodist Girls' High School, Nanking
May 21, 1939

Dear Olive and Helen:

Marie brought up a letter from each of you for me to read and that has inspired me to sit down and write you about things here. If you are like I was, there are a lot of things which no one has thought to tell you. I probably shall omit some too, but at the risk of repeating what you already know, I'll proceed.

First as to the house and compound. There were two shells fell a few feet from the house, on the southeast, one landing in the rose garden and destroying the trellis which Olive had along the north side of it. The other fell in the lawn about fifteen feet from the corner of the house. They broke the windows on the east and south sides of the house, and scarred up the brick wall a bit and loosened the tiles on the roof. There is a hole through the window frame of Katherine's room where a shot came through. There are also holes in the ceiling of her room and the room below hers. But aside from that, the house was very little damaged.

And as to looting, Anna Moffet says there really wasn't any done in the foreign houses. Soldiers entered this house several times, and took things and ever once in a while one has the experience of trying to find something which is gone, but really what was taken was not very much. The trunks, and doors were all broken open where they were locked, but very little was really carried off. The table linen and silverware was not taken. Miss G. explains it by saying that the servants carried the buffet into the kitchen and set it with the drawers toward the wall and used it for a kitchen table, but ----- Nearly all the bedding was taken and the sheets, etc. but not those in the closet by the bathroom. They were looking for things of special value of which of course they found very little. If Olive's phonograph was here, it is gone. The bed and mattress out of my room were taken but the rest are here. The clock from the dining room is gone. But you could walk into this house and not realize that it had been through a war, things are so nearly as they were. Helen's and my things which were stored in the same room in the attic are all mixed up together because they took everything out of the trunks and the servants put them back.

Chinkiang suffered a lot worse. They lost practically everything. Everything in their school building except seats fastened to the floor and heavy furniture was taken. Even pianos.

There is a measure of economic recovery here in Nanking which there apparently is not in Chinkiang. Things are bad, but I think that the worst is over here, for the present at least. The invaders are confiscating property and rebuilding, and I've been told that they pay workmen fifty cents a day which is not bad wages and of course that helps out everybody. If you overlook the ruined buildings, things on the surface seem fairly normal.

Nearly all the shops up and down Chung Shan road are Japanese now. Kiangtanchai is what Lulu calls "free" China. You see almost more Japanese on our street than Chinese. Soldiers, red cross nurses, business men. They must be pouring in by the hundreds. Every train is filled with them. Occasionally some of them come to church. They are usually treated very courteously by the Chinese.

There are a number of girls coming here this afternoon for tea, mostly teachers in the primary school that is being conducted in our building here. That is why I have not gotten more done.

Just at that point the first of our guests arrived and two hours have elapsed while several people have come and gone. First was a former student of mine who is going to help me with my Chinese a couple of hours a week. She is a graduate of our school and started in at the National Central University to take a course in Dentistry, but as the University has closed because of the war, she has nothing to do. She is at present as she says studying medicine at the hospital, but is really an assistant to the doctors there and learns what she can from watching operations. Eventually she expects to enter a medical school somewhere. She has one of the keenest minds of any student we have had.

Two boys came next. One of them is the ^{brother} ~~husband~~ of a girl who is a graduate of our school who was recently married. I was very much amused because when he and the girl I was telling you about started talking, the subject was the recently expected baby to be born to the bride, his sister. It is hard for them to understand some of our inhibitions on such subjects. Perhaps their attitude is the healthier one.

The next guest was a teacher from the Presbyterian school, a former student of mine (although I could not recall her for I taught her only one year about eight years ago) who worked as a Bible woman before the war. A pastor from the Quaker church called then. He has a daughter in school in Shanghai and wanted to know if we knew of anyone going to Shanghai by whom he could send her a new dress. Then four guests came, teachers from our school. None of them were my students in the past, one of them being from a government middle school. We served them all tea and talked to them and Miss Golisch had them practice an Easter song, and now all have gone, but it is only four-thirty. However since they eat at five, probably we shall have no more today, at least from the school.

The weather has been very damp and chilly since I came. The nice warm buildings there at K.C. N.T.S. have spoiled me for living without some kind of heat. I haven't the right kind of clothes for it. If I put on enough to keep warm, I can't get my clothes on, so I've shivered around, worn my big coat most of the time. I have on woolen underwear and bloomers, and a heavy skirt and sweater, and I was still cold. Result is that I have developed a cough, but we are due for warm weather most any time now, so I don't worry. Next winter, if I'm still here, I'm going to invest in a Chinese fur-lined coat. It is not expensive according to our standards, probably cost me less than ten dollars American money, but then I can keep warm. And when one is with the Chinese, there is no choice but to dress as they do.

There is not much to write about although we are busy all the time. Every afternoon we serve tea to our Chinese friends and always have several guests although not usually the same ones. There is so little going on now that the Chinese are glad to have some place to go. They come in and talk for a while and then go away. The foreign community is so small that there is no social life among them. We rarely see any of them, except at church.

I have three different Chinese teachers, one who comes every day one who comes three times a week and one who comes only twice a week. In addition I have a girl from the school who comes over twice a week. I give her music lessons and she teaches me Chinese. She is a former student of mine. In fact I have two music students, believe it or not. They are just beginners and to my great consternation last week I tried to play the lesson to show her how it sounded and found I couldn't play it much better than she could. It is like these typewriting exercises. The beginning ones are so hard that an expert typist has difficulty with them. Of course all I can play is hymns and anything different is impossible. However if she can learn to play hymns she will be satisfied too. I'm hurrying her through this first book and then I shall have her play "Jesus love me." I'm sure I can play that.

I also have another friend a married woman come to help me but she has a little baby and two other children and so she is rather irregular. It is all right anyhow because I have more teachers now than I really need. The idea is that you get so that you can understand one teacher very well, especially these professional language teachers. They get into the habit of using simple words which other people don't use. This woman also has a little brogue which means that I can't learn any new words from her. It is good practice however to listen to her and as she is a great talker, I get a lot of chance to do that.

I'm glad to know you are enjoying Muriel Lester. I thought her book was a real inspiration. I haven't read all of it, but it is the sort of book I would keep around to read when I felt blue. There is a certain quality about her that I think it is good to contemplate. I've seen her a couple of times and of course that makes me all the more interested in her. I wish I could appear pathetic enough so that Ruth would give me that book. But she seems to reserve it for her more serious cases. I don't know how you managed to get it from her, probably because I took her sort of unaware. Wrapped it up and sent it off before she had time to think of someone who needed it worse.

We had guests this afternoon for tea and Miss Golisch is planning a couple more occasions for guests this week, probably four of them on Sunday and one other some other day soon.

I had my trunks repaired which were borken into by the looters. Cost me \$2.40 Chinese money. The steamer trunk was not much damaged. I had the same lock put back on, but had to buy a new lock for the big trunk. However I have adopted a policy of not keeping them locked so of anybody wants anything out of them they won't have to bust the lock. The most of the damage done to this house was to doors which were locked.