

Nanking, January 27, 1940

John  
Inclined

McKay  
Mrs. Roberts  
Mrs. Ware

Dear Friends:

Well, here it is the winter vacation again and contrary to all my usual good resolutions, I have a pile of unanswered letters haunting me. When I came back last spring, I resolved that I would answer the letters as they came and never let them get the better of me, but things got stacked against me with the usual result. First there was our annual conference which took up all our slack for a couple of weeks and before we recovered from that, Christmas festivities began. The day after Christmas I went to Shanghai for a week so that again things began to slide, and then came the closing of school activities.

Life here has taken on more and more its usual activities with a few complications of course. Through the fall, I taught two English classes, both first year Junior Middle, one in the school on our Girls' High School campus, and the other in a junior middle school conducted in our church for both boys and girls. Next term, my work is to be different and I am to do no teaching. I find that a little bewildering after all my years of being connected with school work. I can't decide whether under the circumstances I am entitled to any winter vacation. It doesn't worry me too much for I don't seem to be getting any to judge from my lack of progress with my correspondence.

Miss Marie Brethorst, the missionary in charge of the work in the church in South City is scheduled to go home next summer and as I am slated to take over as much of her work as I can managed, I am planning to spend as much time as possible this spring picking up the many loose ends as she lays them down. No one ever does what another person can do. What one does depends so much on what one is, and two persons in the same position necessary produce different results, but there are some projects which she has started which I hope to be able to keep going.

Life has been very pleasant this fall because of an extra member of my family who was here from September until Christmas. She is Margaret Seeck and is a missionary in the Kiangsi Conference, which is to the southwest of us. Because of the war, she has been unable to go to her own field, and so she was loaned to our conference to work. She and I were very congenial, especially in our liking for walks, and nearly every evening we went out to explore the city. We were always interested in noting the attitude of the Chinese people toward us since they were invariably friendly. More than once they spoke of the service rendered by the missionaries who stayed here through the occupation, so we warmed ourselves in a bit of reflected glory of what some others did. Margaret left us however at Christmas, going to a place in the south of the province where the school she has always worked in has been moved to. She is now in Shanghai waiting for a chance to get through to her new appointment. It should be a very interesting journey through inland China, in the end to live in a Chinese village alone, except for a fellow missionary who goes with her. I wouldn't mind taking such a trip myself, but of course couldn't leave my work here.

My children's work is moving along too. I seem to have a better bunch of teachers this term than last spring. At least they seem to work together better. There has been a spirit of teamwork which has pleased me a great deal, and I feel that their service is a real expression of their desire to help the children. We have regular mobs of children. At Christmas, we did not even have seats enough for them through the opening worship service and often had forty or fifty children standing. We are glad that is over and are back to our normal attendance which is large enough. More than we can really do good work on.