

40 Hwang Li Hsiang
Nanking
March 28, 1940

Dear Ruth:

Well the weather feels today as if April would soon be here. That is the kind of weather we have, one day one needs a fire and then the next summer is here and one jumps into wash dresses.

I had a little excitement this morning, the meaning of which I don't know. Before I got down to breakfast the cook called me to say that some policemen wanted to see me. When I got down they told me that there were some shells on the ground outside my gate. It was really ~~mean~~ the gate leading into the house next door, the "Bishop's" house which is now empty, the gate leading into the garage. I went out to look and found just as they said, several, eight or ten, brass shells, about a half inch in diameter and three or four inches long. They looked as if they were unexploded and were dirty and corroded as if they had been lying about for a couple of years. Neither they nor the servants had any idea where they had come from. They were very polite (the police) and asked me to tell them if a thief had been in the house and taken anything. But nothing was missing and I investigated the house next door without finding any trace of it having been disturbed. My cook is also caretaker for that house. I reported the matter to the consul however, just in case it has more significance than it appears to have. I think someone picked up those shells and has kept them for two years and decided to get rid of them, and picked that little niche in the wall by that gateway to put them where they would not be stepped on.

I don't worry about myself in a case like this, but it might be a plant to involve some of the Chinese connected with the mission, my cook for instance. He may be engaged in subversive activities, but I doubt it.

Anyhow, if you think I'm not enterprising, what do you know about my getting chilblains on Good Friday after not having had them all winter. Just one toe was affected and I have to sleep with my foot sticking out to keep it cool, change my shoes, as often as I get one pair warmed up. It looks like a burn.

Thank for the instructions for baby feeding. I'll file it away in case I ever want to use it, when of course I would not have time to send for it. I think I could get lactic acid at the hospital here all right. Lois Witham sent me a formula using soy beans, but it is in terms of grams so if I were going to use it, I would have to ask her to translate it into spoons. Next year, when I get in charge of things, I'd like to open a beanmilk station for small babies. With the mothers not getting enough to eat, there are a lot of them needing extra food.

I'm enjoying my house very much. I'm getting to that I don't feel like a visitor here and that helps. It seems that it is necessary for everyone to come call on me and since I am out a good deal of the time it is a little complicate. I ought to have a regular at home day, but can't make it fit into my schedule. I've invited folks for tea on Saturday afternoon a couple of time, but last week and this I had something on so I could not

This is the second letter I wrote to you, but I decided not to send the other. Perhaps the reason why you don't write more frequently is that you are tired of hearing the constant tale of woe of the hard times here. It is just because it is the most important thing in our lives at present. If a group of Chinese get together they talk about the high price of rice. We are starting a fund to supplement the salaries of the preachers, and since no one else has any money, we are gathering it mostly from missionaries. We were shocked into action by having the wife of one of the men nearly die for lack of medical attention after a miscarriage.

The American School children are home this week for their spring vacation and so the Methodist Mission invited them all to supper and let them take charge of prayer meeting. They were very cute, told us all about the Shanghai American School.

Marie and I have postponed our trip to the country until April 8th. I still don't have my pass. I hope when I get it that it will be dated for this later date but they usually make them extend over a period of time. We will go to look after some property, and will stay only the time required for that but it will be necessary to stay over night.

I have one chapel talk practically done and another one pretty well along toward completion. I have to prepare a story for children's church too before long. Everything seems to come upon me all at once. I told Pastor Wang that I would lead that chapel for him three times during the term, that once a month was too often, with the other things I had to do, I couldn't get ready, but he let it go so long that the three dates are just exactly a month apart. I had hoped that he was not going to ask me and considered that if I wouldn't lead every other week, that he didn't care if I lead at all. But no such luck.

Sometimes I get very discouraged about my Chinese and wonder if I will ever become fluent in it. But on the other hand, I can see that I have made a lot of progress during the past year. The first talks I prepared were like pulling teeth, very painful in the process, but this one except for an occasional word or expression which I did not know, went quite easily.

Hoping you are the same,

Lovingly, Jessie