

40 Hwang Li Hsiang, Nanking
May 8, 1940

Dear Family:

Well the deadline is fast approaching when if I am to get any letters off they need to be written. I guess it is a long time between boats this time for I can't remember where I left off last time.

First item of importance, I suppose, is to introduce you to Oscar. He is angry with me right now because I had to discipline him about a little matter. He is a little black kitten, so black that even the whites of his eyes are black, if you understand what I mean. I named him Oscar because the first few days he was here he was so wild. Somehow Oscar seems to be a very fitting name for him. He cried almost continually at first and stayed hid, but he is gradually acquiring a few more human characteristics, such as to have sense enough not to cry unless he is sure that there is someone to hear him. I don't know if he will ever become as affectionate as Percy or not, but he has shown some improvement. I can pick him up now (if I catch him unaware) without being bitten as I was the first day. It is amazing the number of places he can find to hide. He is so black that unless he moves, he is practically invisible. Well, enough of him for this time. You will hear more of him in the future. The only thing that really worries me is his sex. I may have to change his name to Oscurette or Oscarine, or what would you suggest?

I did not go to Wuhu, as you see, for Marie decided to go to Shanghai that week and thought I had better be on the job in her absence. I was not very anxious to go now, and really preferred to go a little later. I'm feeling rather low because of an attack of flu which lasted a couple of weeks which left me with a cough and cold from which I am just now recovering. However due to the Vit. B. pills which arrived just in nick of time, I'm feeling fine again.

Last week, we a very busy week, which is perhaps why I am so lazy this week. I had meetings four days in succession. On Wednesday I spoke at the woman's meeting in the afternoon, on Thursday I led chapel, on Friday I had a Mother's meeting at the kindergarten at which I had to preside, and necessarily say a few words. On Saturday morning I had to lead the Bible women's prayer meeting and by that time brevity had almost become a virtue with me. When I have a week like that, I find that I always have to slacken up for a while to get over it. At all of the meetings I felt that I did very badly, but perhaps not so badly as I felt. I was a little hoarse from my cold which added to my difficulties. All in all by Saturday afternoon I was feeling very sorry for myself.

The week before also needs to be reported on, as I spoke twice that week. After I've had a spell of this speaking I always decide that it is not worth while and refuse to do it for a while. But the next time I'm fool enough to try it again.

In spite of the imperfections of the principal's speech, I felt that the mother's meeting at the primary school was very much worth while. I've always felt that we should be doing a little more parent education along with our primary school work, and this was a gesture in that direction. My original plan was to have these meetings monthly, but I have been so busy and the teachers have also been so busy that we didn't get started. They put so much work on this one that it will take a while to recover from it. We shall perhaps have another one at the close of school.

Mrs. Kiang gave me a kitten, a little black one, which I just brought home yesterday. It is as Chinese cats usually are, very wild, and it cries all the time and refuses to eat, and yesterday when I cornered it and picked it up, it scratched and bit me like a wild animal. I don't know if it will ever get tame or not. I was afraid of that and so got it as young as it could leave its mother. I think it is a little better today because it comes into the same room with me now and swears at me in the most shocking language, or at least tone of voice. Originally I had planned to name it Felix after the cat in the funny pictures, but knowing its disposition, I'm inclined more to the name of "Oscar" because it is so wild. I'm not sure of its sex, so I might have to change it to what should it be, --Oscarine, or Oscurette, or even Oscara. Mary Trimmer cat, Timmy, has kittens and I am to have one of them, when it is old enough to leave its mother. That cat will have proper foreign manners I hope. Oscar is housebroke all right, but it is just his disposition is so bad.

I've been so busy that I haven't had any time to read. Pastor Wang wanted me to lead chapel everyother week, but I finally compromised on three times a semester, as I said once a month was too often, but when he made out the schedule, he gave me three dates just a month apart. One of them is over with and the other two are a threat in the near future. I do just about so much of this public speaking in Chinese and I decide that it is more trouble than it is worth. I led the woman's meeting at Wesley church this week, and last Sunday the children's church, and one chapel this week, and then the Bible Woman's prayer meeting this morning. I didn't have any time to prepare for that at all, so I just blundered through it as best I could, but I guess it was not so much worse than if I had had time to prepare.

Marie is going to Shanghai tomorrow to spend a week. She is still undecided when she will go, but will make a sailing date in Shanghai this time. She plans to go to Korea for a month, so she may well be here all summer. I marvel at what she gets done when I see the method she uses. I can see it is very good for working with young people, or with people of no training or initiative. Simply everything is in her hands, and if you want to get stepped on, just make a suggestion. I offered to take over fixing the flowers for the church, but even such a simple thing as that, she constantly interferes with.

But she has really been very good to me and I knew she was like that when I started in. I have just made up my mind that I can't go much but get acquainted a little until she goes, but she is planning everything for me as best she can. We are trying to get a Chinese principal for Chen Mei school. I insist that we must have one for I feel that I can't carry so much responsibility. That is one thing she has to do in Shanghai next week.

I do get a little lonely at times, especially during the week I was not feeling well. But I think that living alone is to be preferred to living to someone one doesn't care much for. There is really nobody in Nanking what I can be bothered with. Now if you were here--do you feel honored?--I would invite you. In fact, if you could come for the summer or part of it, I would love to have you. I've been curious at the reaction of the town to my pulling out and living alone. I think everyone respects me for it, although I can't say just why. I have had several Chinese girls come for weeks ends. They seemed to have gotten quite a kick out of it.