

40 Hwang Li Hsiang, Nanking
May 29, 1940

Dear Family:

I know that you are very anxiously waiting for news from Oscar and I must report that he is doing nicely although I have had to change his name to Oscar May out of respect for his (her) sex. To give the name a little more balance, I have added the final name of Oceanwave. That is because he is like the waves on the beach, he does not run, he ripples. Usually I call him (or her) for short just Oscar Oceanwave. I don't know when I have ever known a prettier name for a cat. He is now very tame (I mean she is) and runs (or ripples) to meet me when I come home, thus cheering my sad and lonely old maid existence.

I have plans all made to go to Wuhu day after tomorrow. A member of the Christian Adventist, a French lady by the name of Cassidy, or maybe she is German, is going there and I am planning to go with her. I could go alone except that it is more fun to go with someone. I shall stay a week there. My friend, Frances Culley had a cablegram that her mother is very ill and she may go home, so I am not going to stay with her, but will stay with Miss Youtsey, our other missionary there. She was on the boat coming out you recall. She is also in evangelistic work and I am interested to see what she is doing.

I have started out to call on all the church members, that is the women members and am scheduled to spend two mornings a week at it. The Bible woman told me that there were about a hundred of them. She is greatly enraptured to think that I want to do it. Last Monday was the first time and we called in ten homes in two hours. You can see we didn't stay very long.

The poverty of three fourths of them ^{is} appalling. These are not the very poor who live in matsheds and other improvised huts, but rather a lower middle class, somewhat depressed by war conditions. The first family owned a horse and carriage and their living quarters were in a little loft above the stable. There was a widow and a daughter with a baby whom we saw. We visited another home where the man of the family is unemployed and there are six children, the oldest about sixteen. Two girls were sewing to make a little money for the family. They made less than ten cents a day, they said, about eight cents. Their house was nice and clean and the children were all clean and neat, but the two girls, one about sixteen and the other about ten didn't stop sewing while they stood and watched us. Of the ten we visited there were three who seemed to be quite well fixed, that is not rich, but with enough. Not in destitution.

Another very interesting project we have now is a poor children's school. Some money has been given to the different churches to provide one good meal a day for one hundred children. They are kept a couple of hours and told a story and taught to sing and then given all the rice they can eat. They reported that their appetites had improved so much by the second night that some of them ate four bowls and they ran out of rice. There was a great deal of amusement because of the presence of a little albino, white hair, very white skin which everyone said belonged to we foreigners.

But the most interesting part of this is the interest that everyone shows in it and their willingness to help. There is one woman in charge who is there every night and is general supervisor of the food, but each evening there are four volunteer helpers. The first two nights there were eight or ten helpers. Everybody came. The teachers are suppose to take turns which gives them about one night in two weeks, from four thirty to six. Of course they were needed the first night to get things organized.

It is just the practical sort of project which would appeal to the Chinese. It is always the poor who sympathize with the poor, of course. Each child was investigated and an effort was made to bring only children who were really in need, not actually getting enough to eat.

I got a nice compliment on my Chinese yesterday which made me feel very good. I am supposed to lead chapel again on June 12th but I have been so busy that I haven't had time to prepare, so I asked Pastor Wang, who speaks very good English, if he would interpret for me as I didn't think I would have time to get ready. He said, "Your Chinese is good. If you keep on, you will soon speak better than most foreigners." He doesn't know the hours of preparation which went into that last speech. Somehow I have not had two or three consecutive hours three to do any constructive thinking.

It is very warm today. I did not try to ride my bicycle today as I thought it was too hot. My cook decided that I was spending too much on rickshas so fixed up my flat tire and every other excuse I could make for not riding it. There is a very good wide road, not too crowded and fairly smooth down to the church and I think I shall ride it more or less there.

Did I tell you the sad story about the other cat. I can't remember. Well, a church member gave me a cat and when I got home, I discovered that it had sore eyes. It was a nice tame little black and white kitty and while I didn't want to keep it, I couldn't give it away because of its eyes. I named it Mrs. Foley because it enjoyed poor health so cheerfully. Well, I got some boric acid and a medicine dropper and mercuric ointment and did my best, but you know whenever I doctor anyone, my patient always rapidly gets worse. At the end of a week, it seemed to me that my treatment was not helping so I stopped it to see if perhaps the treatment was wrong, but then the poor kitty couldn't get her eyes open at all, so finally I decided that I would have to dispose of it. It was pretty big to drown in a bucket, so finally I took it out in the garden and hoped a dog would come along and do the job for me. There are some neighbors who have a fierce dog. About supper time I went out to see if it was still around and it was gone, and I found out the ricksha man hearing that I didn't want it, had taken it home. I asked him tonight how the cat's eyes were and he said much better. I said, what are you doing for it and he said, washing its eyes with water every day. In fact someone had tried to steal it the night before. So you will be glad to hear the story of Mrs. Foley and to know that at last she has a good home where she is loved in spite of her infirmity.

The only one I ever heard of who cured a cat's sore eyes was Ruth and her method was not very practical for me because I had no car. I'm not just expert enough with my bicycle to run over a cat with it even to cure its sore eyes.

But everyone says that Oscar Oceanwave is a very pretty cat. He is not very brave however for he is scared to go outdoors. Oscar is going to have a little brother too, as soon as I can persuade Mary Trimmer to part with him. I think I'll not bring him home until I get back from Shanghai.

Last week we had a representative here from the National Christian Council on the Christian Homes department. She visited all the churches. She is an English woman from Northern China who is not able to work in her own field because of the anti-British movement there. On Wednesday at noon we had her here for dinner, Marie and I, with several other guests, the pastor's wife and the officers of the mother's club.

Hwang Li Hsiang (Oriole Lane) is a small street leading off of one of the wide streets, Mo Tsou Lu. Every morning early on Mo Tsou Lu which is about a half block from here, there is what is called a "Black Market." It begins about three o'clock and is over with by day light. Two friends of mine suggested that they would like to see the market and since it is so close to me here, I suggested that they spend the night with me and we would get up. Their zeal was greater than I expected for they wanted to get up at three o'clock. I had thought to get up at four and then have breakfast at six. But they wanted to go back to bed and have breakfast later and so we did. One of them, Miss Ten had not been feeling well and she felt about as much enthusiasm for getting out of bed and prowling around the streets as I did but the other one, Mrs. Shih who is head nurse at the hospital, enjoyed it thoroughly.

However it was a great disappointment to us as there were not many things offered and at least at the prices we could bargain for, things were not especially cheap. I bought a little vase, a dish for Oscar to eat out of and a pint fruit jar. Mrs. Shih bought more than that.

Monday was a day all right. I got up at three o'clock after not being able to sleep very much because I was getting up early, and then from nine to eleven, I went calling with Mrs. Yea, and then in the afternoon, I studied Chinese for an hour and a half and then went over to help with the Children relief project which was just getting started. I got home about six thirty and felt that I had had a day of it.

On Tuesday morning I have an English Class with eight boys who work in the clinic in the building there. We have a book of medical terms some of which I'm not too sure about myself. They are trained to do certain treatments for example trachoma and they have a very large clinic every day.

Hoping you are the same. I must stop and go to prayer meeting.

With love, Jessie.

I don't know that I will get any more written. I'm afraid to wait until I get to Wuhu for fear I will miss the boat.