

40 Hwang Li Hsiang, Nanking, Nov. 27, 1940

Dear Family:

The newspapers warn us that if we expect to get mail home for Christmas we had better hump ourselves. So here I go to wish you all not to eat so much that you make yourselves sick, but on the other hand, here's hoping that it is not for lack of sufficient opportunity. I'd hope you could do it if you wanted to but that you wouldn't want to. Have I made myself clear?

We had a thanksgiving service last Sunday at the church. We asked our churchmembers to show their gratitude for the good that they had received by making a little gift to the poor. Some brought vegetables and other things to eat while some made gifts of money. The cash offering was thirty-five dollars, which we used to buy flour. Rice is considered a luxury. It seems that what they lack is vegetables. Then we picked out thirty or so of the very poorest families and invited them to come on Monday afternoon. The pastor gathered them together in the back of the church, prayed and talked to them a little, and then sent them out one by one to get the food which we had previously divided into approximately equal parts. He managed it all with sympathy and dignity, and I am sure that they also were glad that they had something to be thankful for.

I had the church decorated very nicely I thought. I got some branches of autumn leaves and tied up on the two sides of the platform, and under them I piled the vegetables. I sent my own cook out to buy some with color so that the pile would be pretty, and out of my own garden brought some carrots, and cabbages, but the things other people contributed also added a lot of color, being mostly sweet potatoes, red turnips or radishes and green cabbage. We invited Joy Smith to be the speaker and she gave a very good talk, I thought. She is more fluent in Chinese than she is in English, strange as it may seem.

On Thanksgiving day, The American Consul invited all the Americans and most of the other foreigners in town (except the Germans) to the Embassy for dinner. It was really a community occasion since everyone helped get it ready, although he paid for it. My cook cooked a ham for them, and we helped on the decorations. He had a committee of women in charge of it. Everyone had a very nice time. At least I did, and if I do, that means anyone can! The French Consul and his wife, who live next door were there, and the German Refugees, and the English Consul and his wife and all the British community people. There were about eighty people there. He did not make it an official occasion, however, but simply invited people as an individual because of the problem of having the English and Germans together.

We have a school especially for poor children and I am considering giving them something to eat each day, probably bean milk. It is a problem to get it made and ready for them at the proper time. The teacher's idea is to give it to them in the morning so that it will warm them up for the day's work. That would be a good idea in case there are some who do not have much breakfast or any. I'm hoping to get relief money for it. There is a special Child Welfare fund which I think will pay for it.

We are planning a Sunday School Christmas to be held on December 23, after which the Christmas holiday will begin to last until after the 25th. Each School will have its individual Christmas exercise on Saturday. The Half Day School (a school for women) is preparing a play to be given at the Woman's meeting on the 19th. It is a Chinese version of "Christmas Carol" called the Christmas Dream. The Junior Church is preparing to have a special occasion on the 26th. I thought they would like to see the play on the 19th. The Combined mothers' Club and cardle Roll will be on December 20th. I am also planning a party for the teachers and woerkers on my own. I'll have it either on the afternoon of the 23rd or 24th. I plan to give them what the English call a "High Tea" that is quite a lot to eat but something less han an actual supper. There will be about thirty-five in that group. Nearer forty, I guess on further consideration.

The various missions which have educational work have formed an advisory committee so that in their dealings with the government in any matter regarding schools they may act concertedly and not as individuals. Formerly whenever any problem came up, someone invited everyone whom he thought might be concerned, but this month they decided to organize formally asking each mission to appoint representatives. The Methodists appointed Pastors Wang and Chu, Mr. Kiang and me. We are the ones who carry the most responsibility in educational work. It is mostly a pooling of experience, in which one gets the ideas of a number of people on any matter. Its general effect is to give one more confidence in facing one's problems.

I suppose having mentioned Mrs. Ming and her baby, I should tell you the rest of the story. The baby died after a few weeks, mostly I fear because her mother did not see how she could take care of her. Any how she gave up hope rather easily. I tried to get her a job working in a cooperative store which Miss Ling Ni-li a teacher at Ginling College has started, but she did not like that, so I turned her over to Miss Ling to see what could be done for her. So her future is a little bit uncertain.

And so is Oscar's. Or perhaps it is her past on which there is a cloud. Anyhow the world is beginning to look upon her with suspicion. I may not have kittens for Christmas, but probably sometime after. I'm inclined to lay the blame on the Bible School. They are so troubled with rats that they tried to borrow my cat and of course I refused them, but perhaps Oscar is just trying to be accommodating. Anyhow, we have already arranged for one of her offspring to enter the Bible School. I'm hoping that before long, Joy's heart as regards cats may be softened and changed so that the kitten will receive the proper amount of affection.

Monday night Blanche and I were over to Stewards to supper. The Trimmer were also there and the other guests were our next door neighbors, the French Consul, his wife, and his wife's sister. His name is Pierre Salade, and his wife's sister is DeMotta. His wife is Portuguese, and she looks as if she were part Chinese. They have a little girl about three years old, named Sylvie, who is a very pale, peaked child. She is just recovering from a severe case of dysentery. It was a very cold night, but we came home with them in their car.

However the sun has come out and while it is not as warm as before, it is not bad for this time of year.

With love,

Jessie