

40 Hwang Li Hsiang, Nanking,
April 15, 1941

Dear Family:

It looks as if winter has ended and summer arrived with a bang for the temp. has suddenly shot up to 70 degrees. Which is quite a rise when one is accustomed to fifty. I know you folks live in a temperature all winter of about 70 but out here it seems warm to us.

I am still not feeling very well. Last Wednesday (a week ago today) the doctor examined my stomach with the x-ray and discovered that the food was passing through it at a terrific rate, so he gave me some medicine to slow its action down a little. He also put me on a diet eggs and milk and starches. However it has helped I think for I no longer have the bad gnawing hungry pain which I have been having most of the time. I have another pain which I call a blotting paper pain more or less. I don't know how else to describe it.

Last Thursday I had my candle lighting service. Having it in the daytime of course interfered somewhat with the effect but all in all I was very well pleased with the reaction the women gave to it. I have a cross made of brass which I set up in the middle of the platform and banked green around and behind it, moved the pulpit to one side of the platform. I took down my bathroom curtains which are a faded shade of crimson and put over the table and the effect was really very good. It interested me to see that while the women were waiting for the service to begin, that they sat there very quietly, without the usual amount of chatter even though no effort was made to keep them quiet. The service consisted of scripture reading of the Trial and death of Jesus, and hymns suggestive of the reading sung partly as solos and partly by a small choir. When the service began I suffered a qualm for a moment that I was attempting something a little bit high-brow for the class of women I had, but within five minutes I realized that they were interested and even moved by the service. After she finished reading, the pastor conducted a communion service. I think the whole thing is worth trying again. I think they liked the dignity and solemnity.

One of my primary schools is in a rented building. We pay \$10 a year rent. Really they loaned it to us in order to give it the protection of American use. However the present situation being what it is, that protection has become of doubtful value, and so the son of the family who owned it came to see me last week and told me he wanted to rent the property to a government organization who wish to conduct an orphanage in it. Fortunately we have a written lease until July 1. However we are making some adjustments so that they can begin the repair work on it. There is a large dormitory in a field by itself which has been occupied by some of our teachers and their families. We finally agreed to vacate that so that they could begin repairs a little earlier. As the school was having Easter vacation last week, I decided it would be a good thing to get that moving done before school opened again. There were rooms in the front where the families could move. The school house we are to turn over to them about June 11th. That will shorten the term a little but not much, as they have promised to let us have the chapel for the closing exercises on June 16. But the whole thing has taken a lot of time to adjust, but I am glad that it is settled without serious trouble, or any trouble for that matter.

The result is that we will have to reorganize somewhat our primary school and other educational work. The pastor has also been living in this compound and we have first to provide a place for him. If it is necessary for him to live in the church, it means closing down some work there. I hope that some other plan will be possible.

The last mail brought me no letters at all from any of my family. Aren't you ashamed of yourselves? It seems to me that is what a family is for to have sense enough to stand by when everyone else lets you down.

Oscar is also being a disgrace to me. By some means or other (a complete mystery so far) she has disposed of her kittens. If she has had them (as obviously she has to judge from her sudden girlish figure) no one knows where she is keeping them.

On April first the American consul gave a party and invited everyone in town to come dressed up funny. There are not so many people in town anymore and more men than women. I put on my overalls and blue shirt and went as an old farmer. Several of the men dressed up like women with rather ludicrous results. I don't know when I've been to a party where everyone seemed to have such a good time.

The other bad news is that I have had to turn down two dinner invitations this week because of my diet. Worst luck.

My cook is sick in the hospital so that the household is very much disorganized. He has apparently ulcers of the stomach (but more severe than me) and apparently had had some bleeding for he suddenly got very pale and weak, too feeble in fact to object to being packed off to the hospital. He is better now after ten days in the hospital but we appreciate more and more what he could do now that we have to get along without him. However my diet does not include anything that is difficult to cook and Blanche is eating her noon meal over at the Bible School, so we have managed to get along with just his wife doing the cooking. She is however not very experienced and has two little children, the and four years old. She is rather slow and keeping them clean is quite a job. He is not likely to be home for at least another week. If it were not for my diet I would eat my noon meal at one of the neighbors but that is too difficult.

I just had to stop and go outside to comfort one of the children who was crying loudly. They are rather spoiled, but fortunately she listened to me and accepted the bribe which I offered for a little less noise.

Hoping you are the same,

Lovingly, Jessie

P. S. Did you know that you can send a message to me via the General Electric Short Wave Station on Treasure Island San Francisco, KGEI? I listen to it every Sunday evening (morning to you) at 10 o'clock. It is from six o'clock in the morning there. Even if I should not happen to be listening, someone else would pick it up and pass it on. For some strange reason, sometimes it is easier to get San Francisco than Shanghai. That has been true all the last week. Sometimes of course we cannot get it at all. Mostly the messages are very inane things, such as "Bobbie has the measles. Hope you are well." I think the limit is fifty words. Don't send it unless you have some news.