

40 Hwang Li Hsiang, Nanking, October 4.

Dear Ruth:

There is something that distresses me and about which I wish we could try to think out some solution. I notice that every letter I get from you and the others, (with the possible exception of Clara) begins by saying "It has been a long time since I have written to you, but etc. etc." I find the same reluctance on my own part growing. It is harder and harder for me to write the longer I am away from home.

My original solution was for me to come home half way through my term, but that is impossible under present conditions, both because I cannot leave my work here and also because of the probability almost the certainty that I would not be able to return. I am now almost exactly half way through the five years. There is of course the possibility that circumstances may make it necessary to stay longer.

But I value my family and my relationship to them enough so that I don't want the close tie which now exists to wear thin. But it seems that time when combined with distance or perhaps I should say absence would have that effect.

This is Saturday afternoon. It is the morning after the night before apparently to judge from the way I feel. It seems to me that I feel better when I get more exercise but yesterday I apparently overdid my theory and walked until my legs ached during the night so that I had to wrap cold towels around them. And today I feel like something that had been left out in the rain. I'm the most terribly person to get stiff at a little unaccustomed exercise.

I nearly went to Peking this week to let P.U.M.C. diagnose my pain. The very serious doubt that they would be able to do so made me finally decide not to go. ~~I/With~~ Miss Tien, the Chinese secretary of the Nurses' Association of China, was going so that I would have company both ways, but travel is not very pleasant, and at best it meant being gone a good part of a month. Beside I look so well that Miss Tien (who is also going to have an exam and is fat and healthy looking) said that they would probably think we were mental cases. Perhaps I am.

Just what made me unwilling to go, I can't say. It amounted almost to an obsession. I went to see Dr. T. and he advised me to go, but somehow I just did not want to do. It is unlike me not to be willing to take a trip. I guess I'm getting to be a stick in the mud. Or perhaps if something happens to that Tuesday train, I'll think that it was a clear case of guidance. But there have been instances not of the foreigner being molested but of the Chinese with the foreigner being subjected to embarrassing questioning, etc. I was afraid that there would be unpleasantness.

I'm getting psychologically so that I just hate to go through the hocus-pocus that one does in a physical exam. Being thumped and mauled and asked the same question over and over (by different doctors of course) until it gets to be something like a third degree. I had avoided the doctor since my return from Shanghai but last week he asked me to come, but when I popped this Peking idea he didn't say what he had in mind. Except that he thought that pain ought to be "cleared up".

I have a group of workers at Wesley Church with whom I have the best time. We all went out into the country last Saturday ~~afternoon~~ ^{morning}. We spent the morning in a country village where we held a sort of three ringed circus, called a meeting, then ate our lunch by the roadside and got home about two o'clock.

There are three of them, an old (and very deaf) lady named Mrs. Yeh about whom I have written you, and two younger ones, neither very young however. Miss Chang has come there only this fall, although she was here before the war. Miss Tsou is the youngest and is fat and energetic and jolly. I suppose she is the oil on the troubled water there. My own conclusion is what a happy world this would be if only people would love each other. Yes, I know the answer to that, is that I ought to start the ball to rolling myself. But my job seems to be mostly to smooth out differences and frictions and like anything that one has too much of, sometimes it palls a little.

There is a prospect of relief for me in a new missionary being sent. I would enjoy being free to concentrate more on this south city work, at Wesley Church and the primary school. I have also a church and primary school in the north city and they are my great problems because in each I have more than a little friction between workers. If this new missionary comes, she will be given part of it, what part it is not for me to say. I think however with more time to give to their problems, probably something could be done.

I am going to Shanghai some time next week, probably Wednesday, to stay for a week. I think that I need a little change and if the new girl is appointed here, I can bring her back with me. She could come alone but I might as well go down. I don't especially enjoy Shanghai, so I don't look forward to the trip. I used to enjoy shopping but I don't have any money any more. Things are so expensive that it is no fun to buy them. Things that cost ten cents gold out here are about 2.65. A pair of shoes comes to about two hundred. Since the freezing order prices have shot up. The prices I pay for things now are comparable to what one pays in the U.S.A. I paid \$20 to have my shoes resoled with rubber soles, about \$1 gold, and so it goes. My living cost me \$545 last month.

I am invited down to Wesley church for dinner tomorrow. It is the 8th month feast and we are having a special thanksgiving service. I shall have to stop in a few minutes and go down and decorate the church. The people are supposed to bring gifts ~~now~~ to show their thankfulness. It also happens to be the World day of communion which interferes with our plans somewhat, but we figure we might just as well do the day up right while we are celebrating it. My three friends there said they were afraid that I would be lonely on the feast day alone all by myself. A little sense of humor certainly adds a lot of spice to life. I said we would not have the usual monthly prayer meeting this week because I was too busy getting ready for this feast day.

I led prayer meeting last week and had quite a nice time doing it. Did not have any time to prepare either so I took an article in the C. C. and used that for a basis of discussion. The Subject was "Do Protestants Worship?" meaning they don't. I thought that our little mission group approximated the early Christian church meeting in a home for prayer.

I don't seem to have been able to get rid of the job of training the choir. I finally got someone else to play but they say it helps to have me there for choir practice. We divide them up in groups and train the altos and tenors separately from the sopranos. I think I would just let them sing in unison, but that is the way Mrs. Sone did it and it is the proper way in the minds of her former students. Last week I trained the altos and did I have a time playing the alto part alone. It has to be purely mechanical reading of the notes and I kept losing my place or otherwise getting rattled so that the poor altos got worse and worse and less and less uncertain about the tune.

Hoping you are the same,

Lovingly, Jessie