Abbie G. Sanderson Papers

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January 5, 1936

Dear Father and Mother,

When I read your letters which tell about Thanksgiving, I am indeed very very thankful. For last Thanksgiving, I was filled with doubts as to how we were getting along; I was still worrying as to what I ought to do about the matter, and things looked fairly dark in general. I recall that the happiest state I could seem to manage was a state of fatalistic resignation to the fact that whatever was to be, would be, and I could do very little about it.

God truly has answered...
prayer in a very wonderful way, beyond all we can think or ask—and it makes me feel very humble indeed. I often think of the lines from Tennyson that Father taught me to love: "There things are more fit by prayer than this world dreams of", prayer, that makes us all to be "bound by gold chains about the feet of God" (or words to that effect!). These chains certainly encircle the world.

But here in Swallow there are evidences, growing clearer to me all the time, that the Spirit is working slowly but surely—for while last summer one of the things I was horribly afraid of was the opposition that I felt sure would be raised at the idea of a Fellowship Group—
especially if it was given the definite name— Oxford group. Yet, the way things are working out now, it seems that such fears were quite unnecessary— I felt then, however, and now the name, that if we could get down to “red rock” without having any special name or “handle” attacked, it would be better.

What is happening is this: Many of us are realizing that we ought to pay more attention to the “important things” in life— as that isn’t it, we are realizing that in some respects we have been deceiving ourselves— thinking we had “laid all on the altar”— thinking we were doing our level best, when we weren’t at all. And many of us are deciding that we’ll do a little more opening of the beam in our own eyes.
and less criticizing of the mote in the other fellow’s eye — We have been realizing that we ought were missing a good deal by not sharing our experiences with each other more than we do — All this, and much more, has come out in our prayer-meetings this fall. Everyone almost has been a gem, and we have had — or at least I have had — more joy and help in these meetings than I have ever had before. The ripples set in motion by the flinging of one little pebble are going on in ever widening waves —
Maud Martin went to Kuliang and received tremendous help from the group — Anna Foster went to Kuliang and was also greatly helped — Anna came back to Swatow and people could see that she had something she hadn’t before. She talked to me a little but not much, but she put me in touch with Maud Martin, whom I had never known very well before — In the summer Maud went to Kuliang before I did and when I got there it was her eagerness more than —
mine that first took me to the fellowship meetings.
Marguerite was in Jutland and she was greatly helped by the group.
Clara came later and I took her with me to two of the group meetings.
Marguerite also talked with her about the matter.
Clara and I came back to Swedens and we had talks with Dorothy.
Dorothy was quite as much in need of a fresh start as I had been, and after some struggle, she made it.
Clara went to Sweden, and Marguerite did also — and they began talking with different Chinese people there — and a number of the Chinese there are thinking about the "surrendered life" in a new way.

Marion Stevens has had a very difficult year, and both she and Evelyn have had some hard discouragements and some serious disillusionments, so the point that both were almost ready to give up and...
Evelyn went as far as to write to the Board and design, but they wrote back and asked her to let the matter ride until furlough time. Marim was sick and finally went to Kitayang where she was sicker than ever, before she finally began to get well.

Then Marim came back home and Clara came with her to help out at the hospital. I had talks with Beatrice Ericson, Edna Smith, and Elsie Hubertz. Edna, Johnson, and Edith Traver—all of whom are traveling this "way", though they don't call it by that name—Clara had talks with many more people than I did. Dorothy and I, Clara and I, Edith and Dorothy and Clara, and I, at various times had talks together about each other's problems and about common problems—and had prayer together, outside of the mission prayer meetings.

I had a talk with Mai Che's daughter and she has decided to
To be the best kind of Christian she can and to be baptized at the next baptism, instead of later on as she had thought. I have talked with one of the village boys who expected to join the church five years from now. He is still on the fence, but now. He is still on the fence, but

if he is ready for it, I hope he will come to the point of decision soon.

I have had some other talks that aren't of value to put down on paper - but some real help has come to me from every one of them, and there are more to be written in the log.

Beatrice had a very special problem in regard to Dr. Beatrice Lee at the hospital; they had been too friendly and were not helping each other spiritually. After this surrender, she talked with B. many times without apparent effect; but just last week, Dec. 31, Beatrice decided to take a deeper hold on spiritual things and...
we are very happy about it.
Marian has in a way seemed
to be Dorothy's and my problem.
We realized that opportunity to
help her probably lay in the hands
of us two because we were closer
to her - and yet we couldn't go
at her hammer and tongs for
she is sensitive and she has
her own very high ideals - one
of them different from one of
ours - which would be criminal
to ignore.
So instead of talking to
her about our experiences, it
has seemed better to wait
and let her see. Though in
my case I have felt there
was precious little for her
to see!
But when my turn came
to pray at meeting last week
I found I had nothing to say except some bits from my recent experiences. I spoke with fear and trembling, thinking of Marion and whether what I was saying might help her or not. (Along with her discouragement and disillusionment she seemed to have lost a degree of confidence in herself professionally which adds to the problem. This is due in part of course to her prolonging ill health.) - Whether it helped or not, I don't know - but on Jan. 2, she led a prayer meeting which was the climax of all we've had. Almost all present followed Marion's lead in thinking back over the past year and putting the fingers on the "blots" that have stained the page, and in making resolves to avoid the same
kind of slits this year —

just that afternoon Marion

had opened up a little bit

and had showed me a

Devotional Meditation leaflet

which she had just received

and she expressed a desire to

share such things — as we

got more help when we talk

things over than when we

simply think about them.

So I was not surprised that

evening when she confessed

that she felt Worry and Anger

had been two of her great

“slits” — and that she was

resolved to take some time

in meditation this year than

she had — with the feeling

that it would help to overcome

these faults. All these may
see if you like such little things, and perhaps they are, but they are making more of an impression on me than before — and there seems to be more of a pattern in everything as "all" seem to be "working together for good."

There is much more that might be said, but you can see that much of what I have said must be regarded as confidential — especially about Marion and Beatrice Lee — Dorothy is so happy that she wouldn't mind my telling all about her "new beginning." She is a great encouragement to me, and so are Clara and Marguerite — Clara very specially so.

Mr. Burket went to Hong Kong and had a very helpful experience.
thanks to the fellowship there
Mrs. Milligan of Shanghai had
a meeting with us here which
helped answer questions. In some
people. These are all odd bits,
like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.
I think Clara has the most real
optimism of all of us in hoping
and believing that great results
are coming from all of this, soon
and she helps the rest of us —
still, we may not see the fruits,
all of them! Or the picture, when
the jigsaw gets put together!

Love X 4 u.
and to all

(Special X Grace Allen.)
this week!
Abbie
Swatow, China  
January 19, 1936

Dear Ones:

I have just finished typing the first draft of the circular letter which I have been trying for several days, nay, weeks, to concoct. I don't think it is very good, but I can't manage any better, apparently. It really is too late for me to be sitting up and writing another letter right now, but the thought that I have not written to Mother and Father for two weeks, and the fact that far too many such "accidents" have happened recently ("accident"—a slip of the pen, i.e., it slipped up and didn't write a letter that week) impel me to tap off a few words which may or may not have much meaning by the time I get to the bottom of the page if I continue to increase in degree of sleepiness as I crawl down the page.

In my printed letter (which I may have to cut down still more, since I can't afford to have but two pages printed) I didn't have room to tell about one of the best times I have had for ages—an all-day knitting party with our Chinese women teachers here last Friday. We asked them to come at nine in the morning and bring whatever handwork they wanted to do. Some brought knitting, others crocheting, one didn't like handwork but brought a book. We worked part of the time, started a jigsaw puzzle, played table games part of the time until dinner. Then after dinner we continued our playing, working, reading, talking, as we wanted, and the first thing we knew it was four o'clock and the teacups were brought in. It was just a lovely, homey time all together and I think everybody enjoyed it.

Jan. 20

As you see, I didn't get very far with that—so it is now Jan. 21, before breakfast. The boy who is helping me get my envelopes typed came and I had to take the paper out of the typewriter and it hardly seems worth while to put it back in for this last letter. I must make it short and get it sent off, even if I don't say anything worth-while in it.

Schools closed two days early by order of the government. That means that we have all of our term examinations to give at the beginning of next term, when nobody is in the mood and when the students have forgotten all they have
The students are very restless—they want to go out and save the country, and it is difficult to get them to see that playing in school quietly and studying will help more than any thing else. A delegation of college students, out on vacation (early) from the government university in Canton, came through Swatow arriving Monday night. The principal heard that they were coming over to our school to get the students to go out on parade, and he knew that the students would go, consent on no consent. Therefore, early the next morning before breakfast, school officials happened to stroll over to the school dormitory and sure enough, there were the representatives, making arrangements with the students, not with the principal! So the school really got ahead of them in one way; the teachers spoke appreciatively of their patriotic spirit, and said "You have done to help our students increase their patriotic spirit haven't you?" What are you planning today?
"A parade or something? Fine! Well, you must let us take you and introduce you to the student body properly, and have the thing done in order." Thus they were able to keep just one jump ahead of the students and have the parade without any insubordination — not too bad? The graduates wanted to be excused, but the principal told them that the college students were in charge of this day and they would have to go. So they all went. And came excused. They were fairly tired! The principal hoped until back fairly tired! The principal hoped until

We had a lovely party here at the Lodge last Friday. The women teachers all came for a knitting party, staying from nine a.m. to 5 p.m.— & I told
about that on the other page, didn’t I?

Well, it was lovely, anyway —

Now I have to hurry and go
to a committee meeting! Even
vacations aren’t free from that
kind of thing!

Much love to you,

Abbi
Dearest Sue,

It is half-past nine of a Monday morning and I am sitting waiting in our little downstairs hall-way which opens off the living room. I feel great expectancy as though something marvelous is just around the corner. Mr. Hung, who helped me translate Chinese poems a few months ago, has gone to Mr. Li's house to see whether he can get a poem or two from his son (the cripple mentioned in the printed letter). I have had letters from Miss Zilo Hobbs who is editing the anthology of Chinese poems and she wants 25 more Chinese poems which she expects to put in book form.

Jan. 30.

Now it is Thursday of the same week and this letter must be finished and sent off to you today, although I haven't my book with me to tell you which number this should have.

I am over in Swallow with the Bakers. They have been here for two days and are going home today. Mr. Hung came the other day, and that day and the next morning we translated twelve poems!
It is more fun than I can tell you—I still
must go over them to polish them but I
have the gist of the verses in English now
and shall try to improve them as I can.
The most I can hope to do is to get a
translation which will read along easily.

Tuesday morning or rather Tuesday at noon
a requiem service for King George was held in
the English church and the whole foreign speaking
community, with specially selected Chinese officials,
I suppose! Then Mrs. Daken, and her sister, Clare
Smith, who has come out here to live with them,
came up to our house for lunch, then I came
on over with them for this little visit. Last
night the American consul and his wife, Mrs.
and Mrs. Hinko and Dr. Milne from the E.P.
Mission were here for dinner and we had
a pleasant, honey visit with them.

Please keep this letter to yourself until
the other copies arrive—I am sending copies
to various people in Santa Barbara and I
want to write letters on them, so I can't
send them all just yet.

Much love,

[Signature]
Dearest Ones —

Have I left out any who should have been put in? I'm putting in a few extras for you to use as you may have opportunity. I have the Eddie Goodwins on my list but I have a feeling they are no longer there. Is that right? I hope it will not be too much of a chore for you to pass them on —

The Book of Remembrance and Alumni Between Two Centuries have just come — Does the note on Mrs. Kelly's letter seem too short? I am
I do very much appreciate their sending the book, and
I hope you will tell them how much I regard their kind
thought of me —

I'm rushing, rushing to
get these 300 letters off!

Much love to you —

Abbie

Letter sent from Bakers should
have been 176, I well
Call this '177' though it's
a pretty poor letter!
Dear Ones:

I certainly am out of luck! Just yesterday I got word that postage went up to 25¢ again. If I had only known, I should have stayed at home last week and got my 300 letters off! As it is now I have all these letters on my hands, I ought to send them, but the postage bill really does appeal to me. However, there is no use in weeping now—and I'll just try to put together the ones that go to the same place.
most past, as in the case of the South Berwick ones—Then maybe I'll never write another circular letter—just send one to be printed in the Maine Messenger, or something! It certainly does cost a lot.

Love

A.
P. S.

Did I tell you that John Bruno Suebeck arrived Jan. 1, 1936? Everybody's happy now!

P.S. no 2.

Evelyn Cansaka sent me $5;
The Hussey Circle girls sent $25;
Mr. McGrotty sent $2.50;
Eva P. Owen sent $1.00.

So — while most of this, if not all, goes for tuition, yet I feel rich! Isn't it great?

Love again

[Signature]
Dear One,

Here is some paper that I got before I found the "Chinese Proverb" paper on which I had my circular letter printed. I think this is not nearly as good so what I finally did use I am sure of; one thing this paper is not nearly as good to write on with ink! But since I have started, perhaps I will finish on this unless it gets too "Bloody!"

After the between-term vacation we are back in harness again and it all seems quite natural. Today has been a fairly typical Sunday.
I did come home and have a little

time for reading this noon after

close. At half-past one I

went as usual to the Young People's

Service. Then they had a committe

meeting to discuss the matter of havin

a class or discussion group

for those interested in becoming

church members. Just what it

may lead to we cannot tell yet,

but shall hope for something with

while. Counting Mai Che's daughter

I know of 3 B.Y.P.U. members

who are considering have decided
to take the church membership step

and two others who are still

favorably considering the matter,

one who is being pressed to
decide but has quite strong

convictions that he cannot yet

conscientiously join the church.

Khai Jong, the boy who was
elected as president, has to stay
out a while and teach. So

Tang Chek, Min, who has just

graduated from Senior High, was
elected this noon to take his place for the rest of this term. It is exactly the one for it, I am sure.

After this committee meeting regarding the church membership business, Mr. Capez and I went upstairs to a meeting of a committee of our Academy faculty to discuss the arrangement of our School fellowship. That meeting lasted until almost 6.30 and we heard the last for evening service while we were on our way home to supper!

I wish you could have heard the extempore debate we had today on whether being in love brought sorrow or happiness! Everybody had to say at least a
few sentences and some of
the Y. P. said a good many.
Almost all the boys thought
that being in love brought sorrow,
and almost all the girls thought
it was a thing of happiness,
but there were exceptions in each
case. Chek Min said that
perhaps being in love brought
sorrow, but from what
he could see of the
young people
who strolled
about these
walks and
down the seaside and
Nakhchivan, he judged from
the expressions on their
faces, he thought they weren’t very sorrowful.
And then Mum
got up and
said she hoped Chek Min didn’t
think that just because people
strolled back and forth under
the trees here in Nakhchivan, that
meant they were in love! She
She admitted "walking to and fro" sometimes, but she had never yet been in love. "Being in love," she said, "is rather a sacred thing; I think. And when it is beautiful and satisfying and as it ought to be, it brings joy; when it is not beautiful and what it ought to be, it brings pain."

A good many words of wisdom were spoken in that hour, I can tell you! At the close they asked the advisers to say something, and Mr. Capen gave them a very good talk on the relationships between the girls and the boys. There wasn't need for me to add anything, even if I could have said: "Time for me to go to bed now, or goodnight!"

With my love,

Abbie
Swatow, China
February 19, 1936

My dear:

Do you hate to be written to on the typewriter, I wonder? I hope not, for I want to get a letter off to you and since I have my hand in a bit on the typing today I am going to see whether I can write a little faster on the typewriter. I ought to be able to, certainly but there is no sign that I am able to, alas! Just now it is after twelve o'clock and I am using this time before the others come to dinner, hoping that I can get this off to you on the pm mail. I shall have to hurry, for I have two (eh! that's the way the boys all spell "two") singing classes—two to four—and I have to get my books together for them and then start up to school a little early so that I can get my breath after I get to the top of the hill and then have time to arrange the music sheets in the order that they should be. I wonder why it is that I dread those music classes so? It seems a quite different thing to teach these compulsory classes in singing from what it does to have the Y.P. choir on my hands, an entirely voluntary group who sing because they love to and are eager to learn almost anything that you may choose to give them.

Later:

I didn't get very far before dinner, as you see. The dinner bell rang and we ate and from then on there was no time for anything but school work. The music classes were not so bad after all! I told them each a five-minute story, one about troubadours and another about some Roman flute-players, and thus we got started in good spirits. I tried to take them along, too fast, though at the beginning of the lesson and I suddenly found that they were all, or most of them, following by ear alone and hadn't the remotest idea what it was all about or where the part was that they were supposed to be singing. One difficulty is that the music is mimeographed and it isn't very clearly done. But the youngsters were pretty good and even those who couldn't sing paid fairly good attention. Maybe by the end of the term I will decide that I like teaching singing better than teaching grammar. Well, maybe I will, but I doubt it!

Did I ever tell you that John Bruns Luebeck was born Jan. 1, 1936,

Love,

Abbie
Swatow, China
February 23, 1936

Dear Sue,

Isn't this pretty—writing paper? Mrs. Hanley gave it to me for Christmas. I decided to write a letter on it so you just to show you how pretty it is—!

I don't feel very—Sunday fried tonight, somehow. Conference begins the end of this week and there is planning of various programs, extra music, tea, and a Conference Luncheon—so we are getting started with things. Mrs. Waters and our house are the group to plan for Conference Luncheon. Mrs. H. came over here tonight at 5:30 and we planned
what we should eat, made out
the list of plates and dishes and
silver and glasses and linen
available, reckoned how much we
should have & borrow, etc.
Then after supper I typed the
notice and it is ready to be
sent around & the various
houses. The first step is to
find out what each house
would prefer to give, then tell
them what they'd be expected to
give besides that. Now it is
time for bed, and I haven't
any letters written. I was up
late last night, though, and
must get to bed earlier tonight.
For tomorrow, I feel in my bones
is going to be "one of those days".
When there is more to do than
really, humanly speaking, can be
Clases from 8 to 11 in the morning—Lin Seng, one boy, comes here while I am gone and copies music from 8 to 10. Then stays on and practices typing in my study until 12. Chek Huei, Mai Che's daughter, comes to my bedroom to type on the old machine for about two hours—perhaps more. In the afternoon Mondays, Chek Min comes to help me from 2 to 3. It is grand to have him, for he can do anything from correcting grammar and spelling questions to translating songs for the choir. But I always have to get the work ready for him. At three I go up to the top of the hill and come home for class. Then I come home for a music lesson with 4 beginners. I rather imagine that in the evening there will be a committee.
meet to plan for a concert to be given in a little over a month but I'm not sure.
(Hope not!) Aside from all this, there are six sets of exam papers to be corrected, the grades of which they want to-morrow—but can't get from me. I'm afraid!

I was so happy to get your splendid long letters written Jan-21 and 27—Pa—you done noble! Do it some more, will you? I like to get letters from you!

Glad to know you have wood—enough to last a while—I have been hearing about the terrifically cold weather and I have been wondering how southern Maine fared.

Love to you—Abbie
Dearest Ones,

We have jumped into Conference already. Friday night was the opening session; yesterday afternoon we spent awaiting the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Inness and Dr. Rushbrooke. A Chinese reception was scheduled for them at 3.30, but the boat did not arrive until 4.00 p.m., and Dr. Rushbrooke was the only one who came. Mrs. Inness had suffered slight sunstroke in India so they were delayed and will not get here at all. But the reception was held at 5.15 and I was very proud of my four boys who sang a four part song "We can, by God's grace, if we will", without any accompaniment. This was the first meeting for Dr. Rushbrooke in all China and it was a reception given by Chinese and planned by Chinese. We foreigners were only guests. The Ling Ling Convention scores high on that count! Sorry Dr. Inness was not able to come.

Dr. Rushbrooke spoke on Baptists last night in the church; I enjoyed him more when he spoke this morning about Andrew, a Common Disciple on the text "He brought him." He will speak again in the church tonight - Mr. Ling does the interpreting.
Dr. Rushbrooke has a few days still he is here; this afternoon he went to Swatow to speak at Swatow Christian Institute; tomorrow he will speak to the missionaries as we meet in our conference. I shall enjoy that more because I sit on pins and needles when he has to be translated. He is not easy for us Americans, at least, to understand, and I marvel that Dr. King gets as much of it as he does.

Tomorrow noon we are to have a conference luncheon in his honor. This is the first time we have had a big get together when Chinese and foreigners all joined in a meal. Many afternoon teas we have had but not a dinner. Those will be about forty present. Our House and Mrs. Waters is the Committee to see about it, as we have been busy making plans. All the missionaries here in Swatow will share in providing the food and we hope that there will be abundant fellowship as well.

We are fairly excited about the recent assassinations in Japan. We can only surmise what it all may mean for China, but some of the predictions are too bright. South China may be
a focus on Japan's aggression in the future.

Our little affairs here in Natchitoches are progressing almost more rapidly than we can keep up with them - or rather, than I can keep up with them. Today is the regular Sunday schedule has been in force, with an extra choir practice; a special meeting in which a splendid appeal was made to our young people to make a definite decision to follow Christ. There was a large attendance at that meeting. At the same time there was going on under Mabel's supervision over here at our house the election of Officers of our Staying Endeavors - a splendid meeting, with 28 present - I am so glad that the interest kept up while Mabel was gone on it seems to be better than ever now.

Louise Campbell is coming here for supper - she has just arrived - now! So I'll say goodbye - and begin again the next time.

Love you!

Robie
March 9, 1936

Dear ... 

I am in the midst of a very happy experience. I don't remember how much I wrote last year about attending a few sessions of the Religious Education retreat which was held down in the Rest House (just below our house) in Takelich, with about a dozen people. I was able to attend only a few sessions, but I enjoyed those few very much. Mr. L. Johnston, Chief and I had charge of the Young People's Discussion. I did not eat any meals with them - I was not one of the real members, but they voted me in in a very informal way. Last year they paid a servant to prepare the meals and do the cooking.

This year we have come over here to Long Creek where the Grosebecks used to live. There are seventeen, including the pastor of our Takelich church, our two South China field workers, a kindergarten teacher, and another teacher from Natag – and several men, women, and another teacher from Natag – and several men, women, and one pastor, Edith Travis. Enid Johnson, Clara Back, leaders and parishioners. We have the caretakers in the home to help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things – help us carry water and do a few extra things.
The first night things were a trifle stiff in the meeting - but all went better Saturday. Darai's talk Saturday night on the fellowship way of life started some questions, and Sunday p.m. after the church services were over, we had a very informal group talk in which one or two of us gave some better personal experiences. Then little groups of two and three continued the discussion until suppertime. Mr. Liebeck is not much in sympathy with some of the methods he has seen and heard, but he had a splendid follow-up for what we were trying to get across in his devotional service which came to me as the burden of almost each prayer was that our hearts might be cleansed and God be allowed to work in and through us. In me it was a real time of coming closer to those in the groups than I had been before, and closer, too, I felt to God.

Wednesday p.m. The better things far was mitten Monday noon after the dishes were washed in the brief interval between then and the afternoon meeting. The whole retreat kept getting better and better to the very end. Some of the discussions involved a good deal of talking - more, it seems to me, than should have been necessary - but at least people's attention was called to the necessity of training Sunday School teachers, preachers, lay leaders, young peoples workers, and so on - And the spiritual element was no small part of it all.
On Sunday we went to the regular church services, some of us to the Leng Che' church (there in Chaoyang) and some to Hai Ming (Sea Gate) a half-hour's boat ride away. Most of the guests had some share in these services. I was asked to prepare a song—and so we had a quartet, using one of the special songs which Chek Min was helping me to teach to the people who were at the retreat.

The last day they suggested that we foreigners should cook a foreign meal for them! We didn't see how we could do it, with no implements—we no pans, kettle, cups, knives, forks, spoons, plates! But we managed a supper of hamburger steak, candied sweet potatoes, cabbage, turnip, baking powder biscuit, fruit jam, orange custard pudding and coffee! It was not first class, but it was the best we could do. We ate it with chopsticks!

Some of them were surprised to find out that we were Chinese food. The last day they suggested that we foreigners should cook a foreign meal for them! We didn't see how we could do it, with no implements—we no pans, kettle, cups, knives, forks, spoons, plates! But we managed a supper of hamburger steak, candied sweet potatoes, cabbage, turnip, baking powder biscuit, fruit jam, orange custard pudding and coffee! It was not first class, but it was the best we could do.

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The last evening was the climax. We had a little singing as usual to begin the meeting—then Mr. Luebeck held a devotional service followed by a Communion Service. The spirit of it was very...
fine indeed. He called on two of the members for prayer before the bread was offered, and on two more before the cup was given — and all were of the quality which lifted us into the very Presence. Then at the close we stood in a circle with joined hands and sang “Praise Our Almighty King” and continued standing thus in a closed position, with silent prayer after the singing of the hymn.

Chek Min came afterwards and thanked me very much for introducing him to this Retreat. It was the best meeting he had ever attended — and very “touching,” he said. Some day, not too soon, I shall try to explain to him the difference between “touching” and “stirring”!

He said, “I’m so glad of the older Christian leaders in a way I mean — those who have shown what their spiritual life really means, in such a wholesome, spiritual atmosphere, could be there. It would be a good thing for a young man’s ministry.”

We came back Tuesday a.m. Some by bus, and some by boat. Clara and the Chinese women came by boat. I and some by bus. C. went directly to Kitang. Bruce and I came by bus.

Now, I got back in time to teach my 11 a.m. classes — and I must get back into routine again — with many papers to correct! Much love,

Abbie
Dearest One,

Spring is coming fast & furious. It is amazing how quickly we have to shed our sweaters, wool dresses, heavy underwear, under socks, padded coats, scarfs, caps, wrattles, knee caps, mitts, and the many other articles of clothing which we pile on top of each other in winter out here in an attempt to come somewhere near keeping comfortable. I suppose before long we shall be following about it being too hot! Mawm says she will never say "too hot" again as she has suffered so much with cold this winter.

I was amused at what you wrote about the groundhog! Mabelia believes in it implicitly and so and behold, just according to her predictions, we had one very warm day which was supposed to indicate a great change from the cold, blustery weather we had had. But it only lasted one day — and now the Chinese proverb which corresponds to the groundhog idea says that the change begins to manner.
When I was reading your letter I read the sentence about the ground-hog to Marion, who has been poking fun. Mabelle's idea along with me - we were all ready to be kindly tolerant of "old-fashioned people's ideas," when out popped your second sentence with the caustic comment "Is there any sillier superstition than that in China?" Then you may imagine how delightedly we both laughed at ourselves, and I never did read the excerpt to Mabelle at all!

With Chek Min's help I am gradually lowering the pile of notebooks and papers that accumulated while I was in Conference and at the Retreat. New ones keep coming along, however, and I find it difficult to keep up as I should like. Tonight is a good example of how I shall not correct papers.

A Young People's Music Committee meets here tonight at six-thirty, and that is when I am eating, but I shall eat in a hurry and go downstairs to join them as soon as I can. Then just before eight I must leave and go up to the principal's house to meet in an English teachers' meeting - and that...
will take well on two hours—perhaps more. And so
it goes. The English teachers meeting tonight will
probably plan extra work too. I've heard rumors
of forming an English club in school and if
it goes through I have an idea what that means.
I shall be glad, though, for any extra contacts
with students for that counts for a great
deal.

Must quit and get this into an envelope

Love to you—

Abbie
Sevaton, China  
March 29, 1936  

Dearest One,  

This week's letter from you has not yet arrived, consequently I feel rather at loose ends and don't know just where to begin a letter to you — I keep thinking back to Father's being up on the peach roof, and Mother's having a bad spell (much worse, probably, than she wrote about), and it seems a very long time until July 1937, the date when I shall hope to be leaving on furlough. I shall not offer to have my furlough post-posted — I think! And I don't dare think about it out loud anyway, for so many missionaries are being asked to stay over — though none of our Board this year, I'm glad to say — that the hammer may strike anywhere — but I'm going to keep on hoping, anyway.  

Today the weather has turned warmer again — and it seems a little more likely that it will stay warm this time — for a
little while, at least. The Chinese don't talk about the weather as we do—but I don't know how many have spoken of it today; lovely sunshine—spring is coming—makes everybody feel happy and so on. Today we celebrated Children's Day, in accord with the Chinese plan of having April 4th (or some other week) celebrated as a holiday all over China. I rather think the regular Children's Sunday School exercises will be held as usual on the second Sunday in June—in addition to the usual.

Geneva S. took her language examination last Thursday and did very well indeed. She will need more practice in conversation, but she'll get that if she pays a little more attention to it. She is naturally quiet and it hasn't been so easy for her to try to converse with people as it is for some people.

This coming week will be fairly full—dinner guests one night, invitations out two other nights—two nights prayer meeting, two nights cinema released, one night study hall—can you count 'em—all in one week, too, and I have only counted six days!

Much, much love. Abbie
Dear Ones,

No letter has gone to you this week — and this isn’t a letter either, but it will show you how I’ve spent some of my Spring Vacation time (Apr. 4-7). I should have written many more letters. Now school begins again this morning.

Last night we had a big farewell party for Naters, Mrs. Speicher, and Hobarts — all of whom leave next month for Yarmouth — Burlesque opera in which all of them were “taken off” formed the evening’s entertainment — All
were present except Marion, who is in bed with amoebic dysentery and other complications. I've just written a letter asking Clara to come down from Nityang and see her. It's such an insidious disease, and she must see a less doctor herself.

Mail time.

Love

Abbie
Swatow, China
March 30, 1936

Mrs. J. Charles Humphreys,
W. A. E. F. M. S.,
152 Madison Avenue, New York

My dear Mrs. Humphreys:

Just how many letters I shall need to write to you before I can get a "beginning to catch up" feeling, I don't know. "It" won't all be said in this one letter, I'm reasonably sure.

Perhaps it will not be amiss to begin by telling you how very grateful we all are that the furloughs of the Woman's Board missionaries in South China have not been delayed this year. The furloughs due this year are all quite necessary, or so it seems, and delay for some of the workers might bring more than disaster. We are glad that we need not face that kind of situation.

We are also very happy at the prospect of having a new worker come to join us soon. We shall await further news about her and shall hope nothing will prevent her being sent out at the earliest possible time. Elsie Kittlitz received the joyful word from Miss McKeay first, and your letter came soon. You will be glad to know that Miss Sollman still is making progress; she seems to feel very much better.

It was very fine that Velva Brown could be the doctor to take care of Kagawa. We do wish we might know how her physical condition is at present. For some reasons we wish it might be possible for her to be here this year at the time of the annual Ling Tong Convention; but coming back to South China at this time of year is a procedure which Dr. Brown herself would not favor for any of the rest of us, I am sure. She probably ought not to come into the heat in such a way herself, unless she is in unusually good condition. Thus we find ourselves in a quandary, feeling that she ought to be here when important medical questions are being discussed and important medical decisions made, and yet feeling at the same time that Safeguarding her health is imperative. We do hope that she will come out at the earliest moment that it is right for her to come.

Your questions about Dr. Dye's language study expense came just about the time when Dr. Dye was preparing final review for her first language examination. You will be glad to know that she passed that examination very creditably and is now hard at work on the next lessons. A language teacher here in Kuchichu is paid at the rate of $15.00 per month for one hour a day; thus the salary is $20.00 or $25.00 depending on the number of hours. Dr. Dye began with four hours a day but she has recently been studying five. The salary of an amount somewhere between $240.00 and $300.00 per year is not large, and there is an additional allowance for rent of $40.00 (cut from a former amount of $70.00). This year we had the expense of sending a new teacher to Shanghai for a short-time course in language study methods; travel, tuition, and part-time salary for that extra study came to $74.77. This amount was taken from the Woman's Reserve Fund. Usual expense for first or second year language study for one person studying alone is thus between $230.00 and $340.00. Expense for two studying together is half this amount at the beginning, or as long as it is satisfactory for the two to do identical work.
As to the matter of South China missionaries studying in the North, you are correct in assuming that the South China Mission as a whole considers study at Peiping impractical because of the South China dialect. There are a few of us who feel that the few unsuccessful trials we have made are not sufficient proof of the impracticability of such study, and who are of the opinion that in the present day here in China a ground-work of Mandarin, as well as other work obtainable at the language school, is the best kind of foundation for a missionary's life in China. But the majority opinion is that beginning in a different dialect slows the process of learning the nono-too-easy Chao-Chow-hua. A difference was made in the case of Carl Gepen partly because of the foundation he already had in the Swatow dialect. We shall be tremendously interested to see what the Gepens get out of the year of study up north.

Your request for reports on first term missionaries is noted. The matter was brought up in committee at conference time and we shall hope to tell you in a later letter some of the things you would like to know.

Reports of the "Forward" movement are most encouraging to us, as we know they are to you; and you may be sure that our prayers go with you all as you face problems that are bound to come whether giving increases or decreases.

Preparations for Easter have already begun. We look forward to a special baptismal service on that day and we hope that "New Life" may truly begin for many on that day.

Sincerely yours.

Also added word about Maria's recurrence of amoebic dysentery. (I'm sure worried about her - I shall certainly be relieved when I hear that she is safely home.)
Swaros, Chana
April 16, 1936

Dearest Ones,

These days I really believe I'm trying to do too many things all at once. One result of this is that no letter has been sent to you this week. Shameful! It is rather crazy for me to start a letter to you just now for I am likely to crawl off into oblivion long before I get to the lower right-hand corner of the page. I am so sleepy! I'm over in study hall and it is almost nine o'clock and time for the bell to ring. The students are getting all sorts of notebook work and hand work ready for our exhibition which comes next week in connection with the school 38th year celebration. So they have not come up to the desk to ask many questions tonight. Just before supper I started to write a letter which might be sent to two or more separate people - done on the typewriter. But I could not bear myself think somehow - and so I didn't get very far.
April 19 - Marion and Evelyn were going to go through Europe - Marion has been in bed for three weeks now. Here it is Sunday - and no letter went to you last week at all. I'm enclosing the sheet that I started telling about Easter. I'm sending the same sheet to Arthur, Helen Fielden, Helen Clark, Emily, LuLu Pezzan - with explanations when necessary. Yesterday I corrected notebooks until I was dizzy. I had bitten off more than I could chew. One of the sets was eighteen notebooks, each containing fifteen groups of sentences with twenty sentences in each group—Do you own multiplying? Another set was forty notebooks, each containing answers to eight questions on literature and twenty definitions, ten in English only and ten in both English and Chinese. The notebooks didn't come in until Friday noon and I worked on them every spare minute until fairly late last night. They go to the dean's office for inspection tomorrow morning - and are put up for exhibit on Friday and Saturday.

Tonight I want to write letters to Dreambell, Ling, and Helen Ling. Dreambell is thinking of transferring to Toronto where her sister is - I wish the students would not hop, skip, and jump about the country so nondescriptly! It seems better to me to stick to the place where you begin - I shall write that to her.

Much love to you -

Abbie
My dear:

Easter is over, therefore the time is now here when I thought I should have plenty of leisure to write many letters, make myself a new dress or two, do some house cleaning—clearing up of old papers and other things that have been clamoring for attention for a long time but alas! Examination papers from week before last have not all been corrected; our school thirtieth anniversary celebration comes next week with an exhibition (including English notebooks!) and a musicale (which means practicing!) and various other doings, such as dramatics and a school track meet.

I do not intend to grumble, though, about lack of leisure. This Easter was a busy one, yet there was lots of fun and some really deep happiness for me in the preparations and in the carrying out of the plans. It's the young people again, of course! Since the ones we have in the choir now have some of them been singing for three of four years together, the result is that we have a bunch who have learned to love to sing and they have learned how to go about learning a fairly difficult four-part song in the shortest possible time. Elsie and I have been working together with them for over two years. She plays, and I "beat the air". Last Easter we attempted an Easter vespers service of music, and carried it through in spite of the fact that Elsie was sick and Dorothy Campbell had to do some marvellous "pinch-hitting" for her at the last minute. This year we had more singers—twenty-four voices—and we tried again. This time the program included two solos, a duet, a trio, a male quartet, a mixed quartet, a double quartet, a sextet, and three fairly long chorus selections. The most ambitious of these was the opening part of Stainer's oratorio, "The Crucifixion". There were scratchy places, of course, but on the whole I think they did splendidly and I am pretty proud of them.

Easter Sunday morning we had a good song service in the church. That doesn't mean that we went without the sermon! Mr. Capma preached a good one. But each group on the compound had prepared a special song and some of them. The twenty-four in the choir did their bit well, too. The best part of all the service for me was the baptism at the close, when there was the joy of seeing four of the girls and one of the boys from this choir of ours go down to take their place among the sixteen who were baptized. Of these sixteen, the five from the choir and the other boy are students in the academy; one other is a former student. Others are from the Woman's School and the community. It was good to see among them Mrs. Li Tseho Seng, the wife of our minister. She has held back for years, but is now baptized, after several of her children have already come into the church.
Dear Sue,

I'm sitting in East Hall in the music room waiting for three piano students to come. I doubt whether they will come, for the whole school is so upset this week that very little studying can be done. Knowing that the students were all very much excited, and would find it probably very difficult to do any assignments that were given them, I have chosen rather to go ahead and introduce to them some new work myself, instead of calling on them for something that would be like pulling teeth to get it out of them.

Whether we shall be able to settle down & do anything at all for the rest of the term, I don't know - I don't think so. I doubt it. And whether the anniversary celebration does not come every year, of course - and I suppose there are certain benefits which will accrue thereon. The school will sing - or which certain groups will sing - (One girl cares!!!)
Dearest Sue:

The 30th Anniversary Celebration is a thing of the past, theoretically, practically, on account of terrific rain yesterday, outdoor drill work (military, Boy Scouts, and some by girls) is still to be given tomorrow if the weather permits. The exhibition will still be on display tomorrow, in the classrooms, which means that we cannot have classes until Tuesday.

The 24th and 25th of April were set apart for the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of Swatow Academy - which marks the beginning of high school work here. A full and varied program was planned, and except for yesterday's rain, would have been carried out as planned.

At nine o'clock an interesting service was held in which the history and aims of the school were presented by Mr. Lee Tsin Long, our pastor.
2nd attempt.

Marvin and Evelyn left on Monday for America - Swatow, China, and Mr. and Mrs. Waters left on Saturday, K. Hobart and the children follow in a month. Seems there is a lot of work to do.

Dear Aunt Edna Smith, Mrs. Spiegel, Bertha E. Barnes, and Jadwiga Hraska also go this spring - President will reason only once that I began a letter to you.

As for this last week which was never finished - but I can't find it now. Oh yes, I remember now. I started to write about our 30th Anniversary Celebration and it sounded so cut and dried that I got very much discouraged with it. I want to write about it, so maybe I'd better begin over again.

Our two days of celebration really offered as varied and interesting a program as one could hope for. On Friday morning at nine we found the students already seated in the school assembly hall when we went up. The regular drum just then rang out and a service was combined with reading of the Bible and prayers, followed by a history of the high school, and mention being made of the beginning of the girls' school work. Previous to the existence of a boys' high school, although of the girls', school work was not at that time part of the girls' school. The names of Mrs. Johnson, Miss Held and others were remembered, along with Miss Johnson, and others were remembered, along with other leaders in the work of present and former leaders in the work of present and former leaders in the educational work. Congratulations messages and poems were read from 55 persons all over China, poems were read from 55 persons all over China, poems were read from 55 persons all over China, poems were read from 55 persons all over China.
of the mayor of Swatow, we listened to an address by Mr. Lo Siak Whn, representative of the Long Toy Convention. Then at the close of the service we went up on the roof of the auditorium — or rather up to all of the administration building —. The students had gone up first and by the time we got up there they were all arranged and the picture taking was over in ten minutes time. This was a great relief compared to the usual deadly half hour of waiting.

The same afternoon, beginning at 12.30, the school track meet was held, with all sorts of races, hurdles, jumps, and other activities. One fascinating part was to see the athletic directors leading all the students in school, top and girls both, in setting up exercises. The boys behind, in white, and the girls in front, with red blouses and long blue trousers. If you've never seen 400 boys and girls thus in really concerted action, you've missed something.

Friday evening we had substantial musical help from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow. The "Beautiful Song Club" contributed from Swatow.
Saturday morning rain threatened. I came down gently, stopped, began again. At nine o'clock there was a little rain, but we knew that they would not stop for a little rain, so we went over to the athletic field. By nine-thirty there were about 200 spectators, in spite of the rain. (They came to see the military tactics! I can't write much of a missionary letter on that subject! We all deplore the fact that how to fight is being taught in our Christian school, but I remember that it is only what Colby College was doing in 1917!) Right in the most interesting part of the drill work the rain became more insistent until finally the downpour came in such torrents that the principal gave the order to postpone the events - we plodded through the hills in rivers, with the "other" geese standing on rocks higher up beside the roadway laughter at the ones whose umbrellas and raincoats were such useless "feathers"!

In the afternoon the rain continued but people came to see the exhibit in spite of the rain - Paintings, sculptures, carvings, embroidery, notebooks on every subject from English grammar to algebra and logic & ethics.
showing various phases of school, maps of all parts of the world, history, biology, botany, specimens and physics charts, and other were on display in various classrooms.

In one room were to be seen the scrolls, mirrors, and other gifts from various organizations and other gifts from various organizations.

The rain still held for evening but that did honor of the occasion.

The rain still held for evening but that did prevent the whole countryside from coming to see the evening’s entertainment, for they knew that something given by Academy students and teachers working together would be worth coming to see.

Sometimes we feel there is a wall between students and teachers. One of the results, I think, is at least, of such an occasion as this is, that must grow between teacher and the bonds that must grow between teacher and student when they are working for a common cause.

I’m not going to send the picture because I hope to bring me home when I come next year.

Much love to you.

Athie.