

Abbie G. Sanderson Papers

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(ABBIE G. SANDERSON, SWATOW, CHINA. DESCRIPTION OF A TRIP ON A HOUSEBOAT) 1.
Oct. 16, 1919, and later.

The night is a beautiful starlight one, cool after the past few days rain (which delayed our starting) and travelling in the mission houseboat is a slightly different proposition from journeying on a Hakka river boat. We are in a large comfortable room with six windows and a door, a bed on each side, a good sized table (at which we ate supper and at which I am now writing), two chairs and an organ. A lamp and my big suitcase containing clothes are under my bed; Miss Sellman's things are under hers. Along each side of the boat are little deep drawers, in which we have writing material, books, shoes, comb, handkerchiefs and things we want to use right along. It is travelling in state, I can tell you! We are as snug as bugs in a rug. The boy has just been in getting our nets hung for the night, and I'm sleepy already, though its only 8 o'clock, so I'll say good night, and get a good rest for a day's travelling in one of the villages tomorrow.

I told Miss Sellman, mother, how fond you were of most of the things we had to eat. I'm not sure you could enjoy it to the utmost, though, because we are on a houseboat, and although the motion is very slight, yet there is a little, and you would be so sure you were going to tip out of one of the two by two windows that you wouldn't know whether you had scalloped corn or hasty pudding set before you! Oh! it is lovely, though! The river is so quiet, and the boatmen pole so steadily, walking back and forth two on each side of the boat; the bamboos on the bank are that same lovely feathery fringes, although now it is so dark outside that the banks are the dimmest of outlines only.

One of the first women I saw in the chapel this morning (at Thenghai) was a spare little old lady who reminded me of a college girl friend. Something about a gesture with her whole arm, her intent gaze when she looked at me, and her wide pleasant smile, I think. She went visiting with us all day long.

Here is an interesting story; she came to the hospital in Kakchich, and was converted, as well as cured of her illness. But when she went home her husband was greatly displeased, and scolded her and beat her. Still she persisted, in the face of many persecutions, even had almost nothing to live on. Her husband went away to foreign parts, and sent her no money when he found she persisted in worshipping God. But she prayed; and kept on praying. Mrs. Waters had told

her that if she prayed, a way would be opened, just as it was for the children of Israel. Sure enough, a field of hers, her only possession, that year yielded 8 carriers of rice; the field had heretofore been practically barren; this was her way opened for her! When her husband found she was persistent, he began to send her money, and not long ago he came back to her. He was sick, and was cured by medicine which a preacher from Swatow gave him. He heard the Word at the same time and now he has become a Christian. The woman had been praying. Doesn't that make you ashamed of the little faith that we, the enlightened ones have? She was so happy that she told everybody along the road who we were, and what we were here in China for. Now I must tell you about how we got back to the boat tonight. We walked this morning about a half hour, in fact, before we got anywhere. And we walked all through the villages and around, all day, but we had a little treat at the end. From Swatow to Theng-Hai is the queerest little railway you ever saw. I have seen the little cars from the housetop in Swatow, but I have never been very near one before, & of course never before rode in one. The name means "Light Convenient Machine." You can believe they are not very heavy when I tell you that the way empty cars are switched to make way for ones with passengers in is by being lifted off the track (two rails about two feet apart) by their motorman—engineer—conductor—or whatever you call him. There is room for four in each car, two seats back to back. And the "mote~~r~~ man" furnishes the power by pushing from behind. When enough speed is gathered he jumps on himself and we have a joyous happy coast for a little way. It seemed like a private little electric trolley, and quite the most rapid thing I've seen since I came to China. Miss Sellman had never ridden in one before, and she says she is sure they could beat the Chicago Elevated!!! We travelled nearly two miles in seven minutes. About half way we met another car with passengers. We all stopped, got out & changed, and then each car started off in the opposite direction from which it had been travelling. "Light Convenient Machine." Well, that is certainly a good name for it. I wish I could get a picture of one.

ABIGAIL HART SCOTT MEMORIAL SCHOOL

KAKCHIEH SWATOW CHINA

Jan 6, 1925

It is hard to realize that I am back in China again. I have been here nearly two weeks already and I still feel like pinching myself to see whether it is true or only a dream. Before I left home I greatly feared I should not be able to get here for Christmas, but a number of passengers on board the "President Taft" were anxious to get to Manila for the holidays, so we were hustled right along and made Hongkong December 22.

My dear friend and co-worker Emily Miller came to Hongkong to meet me; wasn't I the lucky girl? She had the reservations all made for me on the steamer that left for Swatow the next day, and thus my getting up to Swatow on time was assured. In spite of an exceedingly rough night of it- the weather had been none too good all the way across the Pacific- arriving at my "China" home the day before Christmas was a very happy occasion for me. It is so good to see these precious girls again.

Christmas was a truly wonderful day, with breakfast at one house and dinner at another, and all day long seeing again old friends, both American and Chinese. The Christmas service at the chapel in the morning commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the birth of our Br. Ashmore's father, a pioneer missionary in South China. After church the girls all came over to the Domestic Science building and had their Christmas tree. I wish you could have seen the admiring glances and heard the joyous little sighs when the girls caught sight of their dolls, the workbags, and the contents of the bags. We are very grateful for all those who helped make possible these gifts. The things that arrived late will find a use very soon for we have a number of country schools whose only taste of Christmas is when the missionary gets out there for examinations at Chinese New Year or in some cases as late as July.

Christmas night we were invited to the school for supper. Breakfast and dinner had been such imposing meals that I didn't suppose I should be able to eat another thing; but my wielding of the chopsticks managed somehow to dispose of two bowls of noodles, along with vegetables, various bits of chicken, beef and fish, and one of my long-desired Swatow oranges!

It rained a bit Christmas Day, but the next morning was fine and we all had our cameras out as we climbed the hill for the laying of the corner stone of our new Jubilee Building. The ceremony was not an elaborate one, but those of us who were present will not soon forget the simple yet impressive little service of song and dedication. It will be a happy day for us when this building is finished!

On Friday afternoon we were invited to a party at the girls' school. It was a Christmas celebration, a "welcome home" to me, and a farewell to Miss Miller and Miss Winn, - both of whom leave for America next month, - all rolled into one. The Christmas play itself was a lovely little thing, the story of a family of children who adopted a lonely orphan girl and thus learned the true meaning of sharing. This was followed by Christmas songs and Christmas scripture repeated in unison.

The next number was an English welcome song to Miss Sanderson, written for the occasion, if you please. I made my bow and thanked them in English and thought that was the end of my part. But there was more palaver - a nice little speech, and then my dear little Jun-kien (the girl who wrote

to me last year that she couldn't be baptized yet but she wanted me to keep on praying for her until she could) stood out and read a Chinese poem that she had composed for a welcome to me. I thought that all of these things were as much of a greeting as anyone could wish for; and when the next number on the program was announced as the "Diary of the Girls' School", I had no notion of what was coming.

The scene opened with our dean, Miss Helen Pae, teaching a class and at its close telling the girls it was time to go to say goodbye to the "Eng Kou-nie", who was about to leave for America. After a few tears and a general cry of regret at this prospective departure, the girls stood in a double line while Miss Sanderson and Miss Miller, arm in arm, marched between, nodding to the girls as they went along. I did not dream that any two of our Chinese girls could look so long and lanky! They had borrowed some long white dresses and fixed some ribbons at low waist-line the way we often do with our summer garments. The hairdressing, too, was lovely beyond words and took us both off to perfection. It was the most laughable thing I have seen for ages. Then at the end of the line if they didn't have one of the shortest girls in school, wearing a pink dress and a little cloth hat of Miss Calley's! The likeness was unmistakable, and we all laughed even more than before. It was all most realistic, even to singing the goodbye song that made me weep almost as much this time as it did a year and a half ago!

The "Diary" went on with the year of work that intervened. In a geometry class Miss Pae cheered the girls by reminding them that they could always write letters to Miss Sanderson and send them through Miss Miller. In an English class taught by Miss Miller the sentences given were such as these: "I was sorry when Miss Sanderson went home", "I shall be glad when Miss S. comes back", and so on. Then Miss Miller read the letter saying that Miss S. expected to arrive at Christmas time. Not long after that Miss Calley brought in the telegram which told of Miss Sanderson's arrival in Hongkong and what coast steamer she would take to Swatow.

There was much more than this and it was a very clever take-off from beginning to end. They put in a lot of little funny things about us all the very truth of which made them doubly ridiculous. The last part of it was the getting ready to go to the jetty to meet their returning teacher. Somehow they got it all in, from the way the fire-crackers almost wouldn't light to the way I stopped to speak to the girls and the fling of my long arm, as I caught Miss Pae by the shoulder and went off chatting with her. I heard some of the girls declaring that the performance was "heart-satisfying to death"; that's just what I thought myself- I was delighted! No doubt a good bit of it was Chinese politeness and flattery, but it was heart-warming all the same. After all this fun came the more serious part; the farewell speech and parting gifts to the two teachers who are leaving. The whole affair was well carried out and time was saved by putting three occasions into one.

It is wonderful to be here again and I am so grateful for my happy, happy furlough and the safe return journey. There has been some special happiness or blessing every day since I came back. On Sunday morning twenty-nine were baptized down at the pool in the open-air court. The most of these were from the boys' Academy, but two of our girls were there and two women from the Women's School. With Miss Miller and Miss Winn both going home, Miss Calley and I will be up to our ears in work. How to manage will be a big problem, and we need your prayers that we may be strengthened, encouraged, and guided aright.

Abbie G. Sanderson

THE APPEAL OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK

The topic before us implies looking back over previous times and finding out in what ways the situations of "now" differ from those of "then", that we may know how the approach to the task here in China today ought to be different from what it has been, 10, these many years.

Political

Not many years ago, although civil wars were frequent within the country, and threats of aggression by enemies outside the country were present though not as immediate nor frightening as now, yet the common people seemed more or less unaware of them or at least aloof and unrelated to those evils. The young people of the country as a whole if aware of the dangers were not alert to their significance or at least not awake to the possibility of their doing anything about the matter themselves. In recent years this has been changed, and to day any discussion of the problems of young people must include, some discussion of the country's problems, so vitally are the two related.

Educational

In Education the ancient system has been abandoned and a modern school system imported from the West; imitation of foreign methods, has not proved to be entirely the thing that China needs. Discontent has been followed by disillusionment, and the discovery has been made that the right educational system for China now must be one which not only meets the needs of the times but is also thoroughly Chinese. Help brought from foreign countries must be adapted, not adopted. There is now a danger of such regimentation in education that individuality will be lost and students will come out from the schools one like every other as far as the type of training received is concerned.

Religious

In religion, first there has been a movement away from "superstitions" (all kinds of religion, including Christianity, classed in that category); then there has been a movement "back to the old gods", restoring in some degree the old-time reverencing of the sages. At present the suppression of idol worship and ancestral worship is being sufficiently enforced (in limited areas) to attract attention. This may not agree with in principles of religious liberty, but it shows a determination to do something about practices which thinking people have come to regard as a wasteful, useless delusion, and it creates a rare opportunity for passing on the message of a "better way". While the Christian message is being eagerly received in many districts, yet among non-Christian students there is still a definitely hostile feeling towards Christianity. The Christian students for the most part incline away from emotional and towards practical religion.

"Enterprise"

Perhaps the difference discernible in the present situation which we are facing in young people's work may be summed up in the one word enterprise. This suggests an attitude of thinking, of planning, of initiative, of activity- an attitude of doing rather than of simply following.

It may be that we are not sufficiently aware of the terrific mental through which Chinese youth have been passing. In a visit here a few years ago Sherwood Eddy deplored the lack of life and spirit among the young people of China. He feared a lethargy and laziness and indifference which was far more dangerous than the hot, rebellious, ready-to-strike attitude of a short time before.

Recently, however, a Chinese University president (Chiao Tung University, Tang Shan) expressed himself in much more hopeful terms regarding the young people of China. He said:

"The Youth movement...is developing a new turn of attitude toward life, a new method of working out our national salvation, and a new way of fulfilling one's own responsibility. Instead of following leaders.... the earnest Chinese youth nowadays prefer freedom and independence. Instead of assertive passion, impatience, restlessness, headlong but wandering attempt, they regain and hold a balance of mind and poise; and their self-control, self-respect, self-realization displace the habit of irresponsibility.... They are willing to learn, eager to be educated..... they want concrete achievement...; they desire constructive service of a permanent nature. Instead of violent agitation, direct action, mass formation, they adopt sympathetic criticism, humble appeal to reason, deliberative conference, consultative and steady study, and creative activity. No longer self-centred, they strive to establish a new national foundation which they intend to support.

"There are now young men and women who have come to understand what defeat, suffering, humiliation may mean. They are willing to die, eager to serve, and glad to work; self-sacrifice or hardship is no longer difficult for them to go through if only, as they say, "a better life, a better future, a better society may be ensured". There is a new conception of patriotism. There is a new tendency in our endeavor, which has as its background world history and geography and as its foundation religion and education (in the broad sense). Instead of "down with" the motto has come to be "up and on". There is a determination to read just, to rebuild, to enrich and stimulate one's own life. A new spirit is appearing."

Young People and The Church. "Then" And "Now"

Mr. Ang Teak Chia of our Kak Kwang Academy faculty reporting at a Y.M.C.A. conference at Kowloon last month classified the young people of the Swatow district in four groups; first, those who will listen to anything you say to them as long as you talk to them about fighting against Japan; second, those who are much interested in Russia's ideas

and quite willing to line up with the communists; third, a pessimistic group who are discouraged and see nothing but a hopeless proposition ahead whether they look in the direction of fighting, communism, or religion; and fourth, a group of earnest Christian young people who are willing to sacrifice and ~~take~~ and take their full share in the work of the church because they believe that in their religion is to be found the solution of life's difficult problems. That group is small but it does exist.

And that is the group on whom we pin our hopes. Anyone who had even a glimpse of the Young People's Retreat here last summer, with delegates in attendance from ten societies throughout the field, could see the kind of enthusiasm and determination which is bound to accomplish things. Plans are already well in process of making for another meeting this coming summer.

The spirit of enthusiasm and consecration, however, of which that meeting was so fine an expression did not spring into being over night. It had to be for years no more than a dream and a prayer in the hearts of those who were longing for the young people to come into a realization of their privileges, their possibilities, their powers. Such a thing may be cherished and nurtured, but it cannot be forced into being.

I remember very well a Young People's meeting one Sunday afternoon only a few years ago in the old chapel. It was a meeting of the discouraged few. When the question was put as to how many would be willing to try a little while longer to hold the society together, only two hands were raised. The verdict was, too little interest, too many hindrances, too great a difference between the "old people's" ideas and the young people's ideas, no feeling that they were a vital part of the church or indeed that there was any of the church work that they were qualified to attempt. I remember struggling to get committees to meet and plan some kind of program besides inviting some one to come and speak. I remember difficulties that arose in connection with getting special songs ready to sing in church. (Not that we never have difficulties now!) The translations of the songs did not fit the music; the choir loft was much too conspicuous a place to sit in; it was hard to find time to practice songs to sing once or twice a term. The point is, we were conscious of lacks and we were pushing all the time. We were trying to put interest into the young people, trying to make them want to do these various things and help in the various activities.

How about today? The young people do the planning as well as the work now. The weekly meetings are still not up to the standard that we should like to see, yet a good bit of pride is taken by each committee in planning a program that will be better than other programs which have been put on. These programs are often most original, and they are planned by the young people without any shoving from behind! So is the daily vacation summer school for the unschooled children in the community. So is the Sunday School work which is just beginning out in the village of Sus-phou. So was the taking of the entire choir of 40 voices to Cheoyang to repeat the Christmas cantata. So is the preaching of the little bands that go out from time to time Sunday afternoon. So was the raising of money for extra chairs needed in the choir loft, as well as the raising of money for all the other projects mentioned above, and a few more. (It may be that you long-suffering ones who live here on the compound almost wish that the young people did not have so much enthusiasm about raising money or else less faith in your inability to turn them down

wh

What about us missionaries as leaders? Do we know enough, intellectually, to command the respect of the young people? What have we to give them, spiritually? Do we understand their problems? Do we try hard enough (all of us, not merely those who are specially related to the Y.P. work) to get their point of view? Are we trying to do some things which some one else who is available ought to be doing and could do far better than we can do it?

What about Chinese leaders? Why are there not more Chinese leaders definitely connected with the young people's work? Is it their fault or ours? Is it possible that the Chinese leadership of the young people cannot emerge and function as long as we are blocking the road? Some of our Christian teachers love and understand the boys and girls- love them as they do their own children, give them advice, and help them wonderfully in many ways. What might not be accomplished if they were also identified with the young people in their distinctly Christian hopes and aspirations, their plans and their programs?

We must think always of the young people and what is best for them. They need sympathy and understanding, sound advice, and the example of lives that are built "on sure foundations". They have gone ahead by leaps and we want them to keep on. It is for us to discover what kind of help they need and how to get it for them, that God's great purpose may truly be worked out in the life of every one of them.

Dear Mrs. Ashmore

The laying of the corner Stone of our new Girls' High School Building was set for Christmas Day. Christmas was full without it, however, and rainy besides; so when the next morning dawned clear and sunny we were glad we had postponed it to a time which proved more auspicious in every way. We climbed the hill just across the valley from the old mission compound, where the foundations of the building are set close among the big, jutting boulders of the hillside. As we stood out on the northwest corner of the cement first floor we ~~were~~ looked down across Swatow Bay to the city and out over the surrounding plains to the hills beyond, - the very places from which the most of our girls come. Miss Prescott, standing not far from this spot a few years ago, rejoiced with us that our girls were to be in a place so high and apart, - up in the clear air where it seems easier to find God and where the far look, to the mountains, to the plain, to the sea, is restful to both body and spirit. A finer view is indeed rarely found.

The girls began the exercises with their new school song, etc.

Will this do? I've been struggling with this last paragraph for hours - If you can think of improvements or see omissions that should be made - will you jot them down? Won't I be glad when its here! Shall I title it? or just put it in a letter -

"Dear Editor,"

"Corner Stone Laying, Swatow China" } which?
or
Girls' High School Building Swatow }
Perplexedly -

Ohie (over)

Laying the Corner stone
of the Jubilee building
Sowato, China.

Is this too long? if so
just - till it - as you
have it -

Corner Stonelaying
Sowato China.

The first paragraph
is very good. If the
rest is equal
to this they will
surely want to
print it all if
they have room.

J. S. S.

Wm. C. ...

Wm. C. ...

The first paragraph
is very good. If the
rest is equal
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they have room.

LAYING THE CORNER STONE OF THE JUBILEE BUILDING, SWATOW, CHINA

The laying of the corner stone of our new Girls' High School building was set for Christmas Day. Christmas was full without it, however, and rainy besides; so when the next morning dawned clear and sunny we were glad we had postponed it to a time which proved more auspicious in every way. We climbed the hill just across the valley from the old mission compound, where the foundations of the building are set aloft among the big, jutting boulders of the hillside. As we stood out on the northwest corner of the cement first floor we looked down across Swatow Bay to the city and out over the surrounding plains to the hills beyond,- the very places from which the most of our girls come. Miss Prescott, standing not far from this spot a few years ago, rejoiced with us that our girls were to be in a place so high and apart,- up in the clear air where it seems easier to find God and where the far look, to the mountains, to the plain, to the sea, is restful to both body and spirit. A finer view is indeed rarely found.

The girls began the exercise with the new school song which they love. Their voices sounded especially sweet to me, just back from America two days. Miss Miller brought forward the pewter box which was to be sealed in a niche within the corner stone. Miss Culley gave a list of the things that were put into the box; a copy of Dr. Ashmore's translation of the whole Bible into the Swatow Colloquial, the latest issues of a Chinese Bible magazine and of the local church paper, a brief history of the school with some pictures of the girls and their two new school songs, and a silk paper on which were written the names of all the present pupils and teachers in their own handwriting.

The address of the morning was given by Mrs. Ashmore, one of the pioneers in girls' school work. She is our oldest worker among the Chinese girls here and has always had girls' work much on her heart. In her explanation of this latest gift from the women in America Mrs. Ashmore said:

"The women of America realized that they had something which the Chinese women did not have. What was it? It was the knowledge of the true God and His Son our Savior and Lord. When the realization came to them, they wanted to share this knowledge, and the vision and blessing it always brings, with the Chinese women so that they might have it too. How could they do this? In two ways; by coming themselves, or by giving money to send others. Many of them could not follow the first plan but wanted to try the second one. In order to do this they organized a society, which collected the money. Some of this money came from those who could give of their abundance, but much of it came from women who could give only their mite.

"The workers sent out soon had converts and these converts needed to be trained. It was well for them to be saved themselves, but how much better for them to know how to help save others! They needed to be taught many things. How should they be trained? There was only one way, and that was to have the women and girls come into the schools. This was done, but as time went on a building was needed where more of the girls could come together to study for Christian leadership. So the women of America, and the women of Swatow, laid this building, the corner stone of which is by

"When Christ descended he gave to his disciples his last commission. The first part of it was "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." But that was not all of it; the rest is important too, "Teaching them....all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That means not merely the education which comes in arithmetic and geography but the education of heart and soul which teaches how to live the Christian life. We need the arithmetic and geography, to give mind training and development, but we must never forget the ultimate aim of the school,- to help the students who come here to see how to do things and to learn how to make decisions and how to use their talents for God. This is the hope of the women of America as they send this gift to you, their sisters in China."

Miss Helen Pae, our dean, a graduate of Gialing College, made response as follows:

"Not many years ago the Chinese girls of this Swatow district were smothered in the darkness of ignorance. Such terms as education, social position, and home life, even, had little meaning to them. But since the time when the Missionary Society founded this school many students have gone forth from here and have been of service in some degree in the communities where they have lived and worked.

"Now that you have given us this another opportunity for further improvement, we shall strive with all our might to fulfil your hopes in us. We are deeply touched by this gift from you, and I wish to express to you at this time the gratitude of us all, teachers and students, to the women of America for the generous gift, and also to you who have yourselves come out to help us."

Then came the laying of the corner stone. The plaster box was sealed in place within the stone. Most fittingly, Mrs. Ashmore was asked to spread the first trowel of mortar. Mrs. Waters, for many years an enthusiastic and much-loved worker among the girls, offered prayer. The girls sang two Christian songs and then we went home.

Although the ceremony was not an elaborate one, those of us who were present will not soon forget the simple yet impressive little service of song and dedication. It will be a happy day for us when this building is finished !

Abbie J. Sanderson

December 30, 1924

(Laying Corner Stone)