

It is probable that your letters are piled up in Shanghai or Tsingtao. Some mail received here just before the Chinese went out was not sorted and has been stored. I wrote only once or twice to you after mid-November, since there was little prospect of reaching you directly; and by about 26 November it was clear that nothing would be despatched toward Shanghai from here. I will try now to discover whether a telegram is possible, and to inquire about the probabilities for post office facilities; but I'm not hopeful just yet. Because it might bear on communications, I will give you the list of foreigners with whom I have frequent relations: Trimmer, Hynds, Bauer at Hospital; Wilson and McCallum same work but living with Mills, Smythe, Sone, Fitch, Riggs (for food) and myself in Buck's house; Vautrin; Magee and Forster (formerly of Yangchow); John C. H. Rabe (Siemens Co.); Christian Kroger (Carlowitz). Dr. Fischer or Dr. Rosen of German Embassy staff would be friendly and ~~not~~ helpful; I suppose they are in the Shanghai Consulate-General at present. Mr. Matsumoto, the Manager of Domei (32 Ave. Edward VII) would be glad to send messages to his office in Nanking which is next door to us.

Now for some hasty odds and ends, which I'll add if I have time.

Later.

No worry at all about ~~ordinary~~ foodstuffs. Accumulated stores will soon be gone from kitchens of many, though a few houses have a surplus also. Good coal largely burned up, but little suffering for fuel. No tremendous change in familiar property north or south of ours, but the poor people just west ~~have~~ largely moved away or transferred with all their bedding, most of their food, and their winter clothes to refugee camps. Death is now almost extraordinarily frequent among the common people seriously crowded and subject to a violent digestive disturbance. At home, your crepe dresses hung right by the clothespress attract myriad small ants, literally. Remedies ~~only~~ partly successful, but slow and thus far inadequate.

Weather continues cold, though until just now it has been fortunately mild for the season. Found a pretty sprig of cassia (kuei hwa) on the road New Year's day, and we got poinsettias from the University Gardens for Christmas. Tell Bobby and Morton that there were three Christmas trees in Nanking, so far as we know: one in Aunt Minnie's Practice School attic; one in the Hospital; and a German one in Mr. Rabe's house.

In speaking of ants, I should have mentioned that in the house where I am now staying there are so many of the tiny beasts that they fill drinking water in our bathrooms. How would the boys like to brush their teeth with ants? They seem to like especially toothbrushes and the cups used for washing teeth.

To butter, coffee, and batteries please add safety razor blades and syringes according to specifications which will be added or enclosed. My ~~older~~ typewriter ribbon is doctored ~~not~~ irregularly with oil, but I think I can get another here.

These public letters are not inviting for expression of affection. But you know that you are in my thoughts constantly and that my wish to see you is restrained only by the necessities of the situation.

With much love to you and Morton and Bobby,

*Searle*