

THE UNIVERSITY OF NANKING

American Office
150 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.
December 24, 1937.

To the Friends of The University of Nanking:

On November 10, we wrote of the life and work of the University and University Hospital in Nanking during the preceding month. All through that month there were air raids upon the city at all hours of the day and night. In spite of the attacks of bombing planes and repeated efforts to cut the Shanghai-Nanking Railway, the railroad to the capital had remained open. Mr. Oliver J. Caldwell, a member of the English Department of the University, on October 25, wrote a graphic description of a trip by rail from Shanghai to Nanking:—



“Three months ago the Shanghai-Nanking express made its run in less than seven hours. Three days ago it required nearly forty-four hours to make the trip, and it had become an adventure. For eighty days the Japanese had been making every effort to cut the railroad. They had rained thousands of bombs on bridges and stations, had machine-gunned trains, and taken thousands of lives, but they had not been able to overcome the railway crews, who repaired the tracks as soon as they were damaged and always kept the trains running.

“It was five o'clock when I reached the West Station. This is now the only station in regular use in the Shanghai area, the others all having been bombed. There are British troops stationed in the neighborhood, which perhaps accounts for the immunity so far of Shanghai West. Already there were probably two thousand refugees lined up, although the train would not be in for more than an hour. The organization was excellent. The passengers were kept as far as possible from the station building in order to save them in case of an attack. There was no disorder of any kind, nor any victimizing or profiteering.

“There was a pillar of smoke rising above the Commercial Press which looked like a volcano in action. In several directions, bombing was going on, but no planes came near us. The traffic manager introduced himself, and made an effort to relieve the tedium. When the train pulled in a little after six, he let the few foreigners waiting go ahead of the rest.

“We started at six-thirty, with a full moon which was almost as bright as day. It was perfect for bombing, and some of us were a bit nervous. However we had good luck at first. The stations we passed were all more or less in ruins, but business was going on as usual. In this connection a missionary in Hangchow reports that when the station there was gunned, passenger trains were dispatched from it before the fire was out.

“After we left Kashing the going was slower. Owing to troops ahead, we were obliged to wait on a siding from one o'clock until daylight. We had barely started again before there was a shout of “fei chi” (“airplanes”) and the train came to a sudden stop. We piled out through doors and windows, and sure enough, there were four planes coming towards us down the track. The ditches on either side of the embankment were filled with water, so there was nowhere to go. I found myself holding my breath as the planes drew near. It was a helpless situation. There was nothing to do but wait for the worst. They must have been out of ammunition, for they left, after inspecting us, without so much as firing a machine gun. It was not until they were out of sight that I noticed that three freight cars with their contents were burning on the next track. There were cans of white paint, iron cots, bales of burlap, and military underwear scattered all over the premises. We were luckier than the previous train had been.

“We stayed at this place for thirteen hours. From time to time there were alarms, but the planes were too busy bombing Soochow eight miles ahead to pay any attention to us. There was no food or water to be had on the train, and my lunch was running low. I crossed the Grand Canal, which ran parallel to the tracks, and found some shops in a country town where I bought some hot sesame cakes. Then I drank tea in the shade of an old ferry landing above the canal. The water in the canal was clear and green and restful. I was getting sleepy when the keeper of the shop began to ask me questions about my-

self. When I told him I was an American, the crowd expressed its approval. One old farmer said, 'We, too, are men with a country now.'

"It was nearly seven when we finally got under way again. We had to wait at various places while the tracks were repaired after the dozen or more raids of the day. In the moonlight, steel freight cars were strangely twisted and torn. Several had been blown bodily some distance from the tracks. The fact that trains were still running at all was a victory of skill and courage over airplanes and bombs.

"Thirty hours after leaving Shanghai we arrived in Soochow. There was little light in the station for fear of more raids. Here seven cars loaded with wounded were attached to our already heavy train, and hundreds of convalescents climbed through the windows, and wedged themselves into every cranny of the packed cars. I suppose there were hundreds of people there as tired as I was, and many of them were women and children. Their cheerfulness and patience were greater than my own.

"From Soochow to Nanking we made much better time. The stations had almost all been bombed, and some were in bad shape. The area around the tracks had suffered severely. At Changchow there were two passenger coaches which had recently been bombed. They had been almost entirely destroyed, and the neighboring platform was a mess of charred wood, bloody cotton, and other things I did not investigate. There were some severely wounded civilians, but they had already received good care and were ready to continue their journey.

"There were a few more alarms, but nothing serious, before we reached Nanking. I stood for a while watching the unloading of the wounded. They constituted the largest mass of suffering humanity I have ever seen. There was no groaning or complaining, even from the stretcher cases which were borne past me by tired boy scouts. From beginning to end, this trip was a lesson in determination and courage."

For three months since the outbreak of hostilities in the Shanghai area on August 13, the Chinese armies had held the lines around Shanghai. In November, the armies began to withdraw toward the north. The University and Nanking Theological Seminary were the only educational institutions, large or small, that attempted to keep open in the city of Nanking. In the latter part of November, the decision was reached to transfer the faculty and students of the University up the Yangtze River to Hankow. A small group of American members of the faculty and hospital staff volunteered to stay in Nanking during its siege and probable capture. They were: Dr. M. Searle Bates, Mr. C. H. Riggs, and Dr. Lewis S. C. Smythe of the faculty; Miss Grace Bauer, Miss Iva Hynds, Dr. Clifford S. Trimmer and Dr. Robert O. Wilson of the hospital staff; Miss Minnie Vautrin, of Ginling College, also remained.

There was the danger that, if the defense of the city were prolonged, the attacking army would bombard the city both with planes and with artillery, and there would be widespread destruction of property and a tragic loss of life. On December 13, the city of Nanking was captured. For several days no word was received concerning the Americans who had stayed in the city, or concerning the University and Ginling College property. On December 18, the American papers carried dispatches, telling of the safety of all the Americans in the city and of the courageous service they had rendered in helping to set up a zone of refuge for Chinese civilians and in caring for the wounded.

Several of the University faculty and hospital staff and other missionaries in the city, had gone through the Nanking Incident of 1927 and they knew exactly what they faced by remaining in the city. Their brave spirit and their willingness to give their lives if necessary in the performance of their duty, were in line with the highest traditions of the University and of previous missionary service in China.

The American newspapers on December 18 and 19, carried appreciative accounts of the action of these Americans. We are quoting herewith extracts from the account in the New York Sun of December 18, written by A. T. Steele, Correspondent Chicago Daily News in New York Sun:-

CHINESE SAVED BY AMERICANS

Missionaries Intervened to Rescue Many Civilians

"Shanghai, Dec. 18—The fall of Nanking would have been infinitely more frightful if not for the courageous efforts of a handful of American missionaries and German businessmen, who stayed throughout the siege.

"Working solely for the welfare of 100,000 civilians remaining in the stricken city, these foreigners ran risks which came close to costing their lives.

"The intervention of American missionaries on behalf of Chinese civilians known to be innocent, saved many lives. The only foreigner wounded in the Nanking siege was a German who was cut by flying glass when a shell exploded outside his window, but all the sixteen Americans who saw the thing through could tell stories of hair-raising escapes. None of them went through a more trying ordeal than two American doctors, C. S. Trimmer and Robert Wilson, who took in all seriously wounded Chinese civilians who were brought to the doors of their Christian hospital.

"Amputations were an hourly routine. A shell burst in the hospital yard while Dr. Wilson was performing a delicate operation, shattering the windows and spattering the operating room with shrapnel, but the work went on.

"Other Americans braved shrapnel and bombs to go after food supplies for the destitute thousands concentrated within the so-called safety zone. Among the most active was Lewis Smythe, formerly of the University of Chicago, now of the University of Nanking, who showed complete disregard for his own safety.

"Miss Minnie Vautrin of Secor, Ill., who was in charge of 1,000 destitute Chinese women and children seeking shelter in the Ginling College, had a hectic time when Japanese shells burst dangerously close. Few, if any, missionary institutions escaped without some scars of warfare.

"The safety zone, created in the heart of fortified Nanking by the Committee of Foreigners, was built on a foundation of colossal nerve, for from the first, it was evident that neither side would respect it fully. Nevertheless, while a score of shells fell inside the zone, and the area was occasionally sprayed by stray bullets and shrapnel, it was probably safer than other parts of the capital."

Other press dispatches sent from Shanghai at about this same time praised highly the courage and coolness of this group of American throughout the siege of Nanking and during the tragic days of its final capture. Special commendation was given to the services on the safety zone committee rendered by Professor Lewis S. C. Smythe, Dr. M. S. Bates, Rev. W. P. Mills, and Professor Charles H. Riggs. There were warm tributes, too, to the work of the University Hospital through his period.

A cablegram has been received from Miss Priest in Hankow dated December 16, which was forwarded through the American Embassy, as follows:-

"IVA HYND, GRACE BAUER, SEARLE BATES, LEWIS SMYTHE, CHARLES RIGGS, CLIFFORD TRIMMER, ROBERT WILSON, OF UNIVERSITY STAFF, AND MINNIE VAUTRIN OF GINLING STAFF ARE SAFE IN NANKING. NOTIFY FAMILIES. NO REPORT YET REGARDING PROPERTY. HILDA ANDERSON, OLIVER CALDWELL, PETER BANNON, ELSIE PRIEST IN HANKOW; CLAUDE THOMSON, RICHARD BRADY IN KULING; LOSSING BUCK IN HONG KONG. MAJORITY STAFF ENROUTE TO CHENG TU; REMAINDER LEAVE IN TEN DAYS."

We judge from this cable that the University plans to move to Chengtu, Szechwan, in West China. The West China Union University is located in that city and is extending facilities to the University of Nanking and to other colleges, which are moving to the far west. We will send further information when it is available.

The University is appealing, together with the other Christian Colleges in China, for gifts for the Emergency Fund for these colleges. A total of \$250,000.00 is being sought. A fine group of American leaders have become members of local and national committees supporting this appeal.

A luncheon was held November 19 at the Down Town Association at which Dr. C. T. Wang, Chinese Ambassador to America, spoke to a group of friends of the Christian Colleges. Mr. Paul D. Cravath, Chairman of the National Emergency Committee of the Colleges presided.

On December 7, a luncheon was held in the Jade Room of the Waldorf Astoria, which was attended by friends of the China Colleges. Mr. Arthur V. Davis, Chairman of the Eastern Division China Emergency Fund, presided. Miss Shih Pao-chen of Ginling and Mr. Lin Chi-wu, of Yenching University, spoke, as did Dr. Hu Shih and Dr. Leonard Hsu.

Of the total \$250,000.00 being sought, approximately \$100,000.00 in cash and pledges has been received. There is appealing need for funds for the University Hospital for surgical and medical supplies, and there is special need for additional gifts to cover the cost of transfer of the faculty and students who go to Cheng-tu.

Checks should be made to George W. Davison, National Treasurer and sent to Room 903, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

This letter is being written the day before Christmas. One of the most vivid memories of our life in Nanking, is that of listening to the familiar and appealing melodies of the Christmas Carols sung by the students of the University and of Ginling College on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. The students have been scattered and dispersed — there will be no singing of Christmas Carols by those students in Nanking this evening, or tomorrow morning. This will not be a Merry Christmas for many, many Chinese Christians. But, in the new location of the University and of Ginling College, outside of the war zone and throughout China, Christmas will be celebrated and the life and work of both institutions and other Christian colleges, will go on.

The Chinese spirit is not broken. The Chinese with whom I have spoken in this country and those who have recently come from China, are confident of the ultimate outcome of this conflict. And the Christians have a source of strength and inner peace that cannot be destroyed. Miss Mary Chen, a graduate of Ginling College, and a sister of Dr. Y. G. Chen, President of the University, has written from Nanking: "We are trying in every way possible to help the needy and sufferers. We learn to make bandages, cotton balls (medical) and sewings. What a blessing to be Christians — the 'Given Peace' in our hearts, though physically we are the same as others, greatly bothered by the air raids and the hostility done unto the innocents. Our hearts ache to see the scenes and ears hate to hear the bombs. It is altogether unbearable and pitiful to see people trembling with fear, never knowing God is their refuge and shelter during the air raids. Of course, we never know what is God's will; we might be bombed as others; but the 'Peace' inside is such a blessed comfort and protection from the necessary fears."

Sincerely yours,

W. Reginald Wheeler