

Nanking, Janr 9, 1938.

Dearest! -

Yesterday I was able to get a wire ^(radio) to the Consulate General in Shanghai, asking them to inquire from Am. School & Boynton (Rec) whereabouts & plans of you and Bobby. I have no other word than your letter of Dec 16th by nichi-nichi, which said you expected to reach S. about Jan. 3-3, but was not clear about Bobby or whether you planned to stay or visit. I'll be glad to have you there, but don't see any possibility of travel either way under present military controls and conditions. Not even a foreign diplomat could get here till 3 days ago, & then only under limitations. No journalists, some hints to us that we cannot leave ^{for a moment}. All this aside from duties here & actual lack of transport. There is far from real safety here as yet, though I suppose the mathematical chances of shooting and rape are not very great for foreigners. But we don't know what may be the next turn, as there is no plian effort to straighten up here, and war activities hold officers' attention.

Tomorrow morning it is possible that a U.S. Navy tug from Panay salvage may take this — for Consulate direct, without censorship. I am writing on an old magazine with a fraction of a shadeless lamp. We may have electricity soon. Japanese officials and recently hospital have had it irregularly this month. They shot 43 of the 54 technical men of the plant, & ^{in charge} they were govt employees. So now can't run it. All this on top of bombing. A little water on lower levels. Not a store in Nanking. All thoroughly plundered, mostly by squads of soldiers with trucks; nearly all burned, even on smaller streets. Hardly anyone dare live outside the zone. From Tsing Liang Shan to Nan Chung Men along the normally busy little street next the wall, I saw three living persons. Two buildings in Hua Shih, our Boys' School, were burned, also Kiang Yang Chieh (Methodist) Church. Practically all cars (total 30) stolen from Brit. & Am. Embassies; entry to Johnson's & Ger. Ambassadors' houses; burning Sov. Embassy. All by soldiers only.

Our house has lost: victrola & records; some bedding, tho not much was there to steal; some table linen & clothing; probably a good many small things; front room rug; some Chinese pictures; a little food. Stuff all dumped out & pawed over several times, and I have been able to sort only a little yet. Some prospects of compensation. One of the familiar Wu men & compound family are in servants' quarters. The teacher (Stewards') Wan & his relatives in the house. They have all been decent, helpful, & honest, so far as I can see. Wan's wife & 5 children have been in Univ. since rasing became so bad. Daniels' lost heavily. Most places less than we, for they had little of articles chiefly sought: food, warm clothes,

bedding, money, watches, bicycles. I had taken to a portable silver, my father's watch, Chavannes, & the Renaissance books. Didn't know where else to draw a line. Mattresses put in locked & sealed rooms (which soldiers broke, of course), & are largely intact. My typewriters, most of my winter clothes, & some bedding here — much in Shanghai trunk.

Bombing & shelling were bad for three days, but much less so than the terror after entry. My closest calls were from violent & drunken soldiers. Am sending you some copies of reports.

If you are in Shanghai communication will be quicker and possibly easier when some kind of travel is open. Military train takes 2 days on irregular schedule. Army shows no interest in commercial openings, even for food. City faced a terrible outlook unless some brains turn this way. Life hardly exists outside the walls, & little outside the zone. Now Shanghai & Ninghai Roads are the most crowded in town, with tens of thousands in good weather. ^{second-hand & local} ^{signal scraps of} ^{radio news.}

I am very sorry for the distress over the Panay, and hope there ^{will be} ^{no} further strain of that kind. Just now there is ^{little or} no physical danger, ^{for me} but there is much struggle over spies, delation, & so on, in which the Umo. & its refugee camps & staffs seem to be a main arena. I get about one heavy jolt per day: yesterday violently shoved out of an office for trying to save the life of a useful interpreter who had stood with us thru threats & bribes. Today discovered one spy & a probable second in our main buildings. Lewis now takes turns with me for sleeping in Severance Hall. We have guards at main gate, but they are troublesome & not over-effective.

I love you dearly, Lilliath, and will be most glad when we can have a home again.

Searle