

25

3 Ping Tsang Hsiang,
Nanking.

March 13, 1938.

Dear Harriet:-

At long last your letters have begun to come through to us. I still think some of them are missing, as I believe you have probably written us more letters than we have received. There is as yet no regular mail service between Nanking and Shanghai, but the American and British gunboats have been very good about taking mail and supplies for us on their trips up and down. For about a month here in Nanking we were cut off from the outside world except for an occasional opportunity to send out mail through the Japanese Embassy, some of whose officials came back soon after the capture of the city. This method of communication, however, was far from satisfactory, as one was never free to say what one wanted to say. Since the American Embassy staff returned on January 6th, we have of course been able to send out anything we wanted to through that channel.

While we miss you very much, I am honestly glad for some reasons that you are at home. I do not mean merely ^{that} it is time for you to be at school at home. That is of course true, but what I am now thinking of is the fact that I am glad you are spared all the strain and sorrow that first hand contact with the situation out here would inevitably bring to you. And most particularly I am glad ~~as~~ that you are spared the pain of seeing the Nanking you knew and loved in its present plight. As it is, you will always have a happy memory of the city with its thronged and crowded streets, full of busy and for the most part happy people, now so largely burned, looted, and desolate. I do not want to exaggerate the picture. Mo Tsou Lu for example you would find just as you left it. So also all that area which was comprised in the Safety Zone, the University and Ginling and all the rest. But the principal business streets, and Fu Dzi Miao, where you used to go for New Year shopping, are now a sad wreck. Aside from the main business streets and the southern section of the city, most of the shops and houses in the city proper are intact, but they have all of them been looted, many of them damaged, and the great majority of them are unoccupied and desolate. The population of the city shrank, before the fighting, from a million to 250,000 and it will probably be a long time before the people will come back, so the city will doubtless wear its deserted look for many a day. Maybe by the time you come back to China things will be more normal again! At least let us hope so.

I said above that you would find Mo Tsou Lu today just as it always was. That is not quite true. In one respect it is greatly changed. It is now one of the busiest streets in the city! From having been a rather quiet street, it is now daily lined on both sides of the street with an extensive curb market. Wang-si-fu says you can now buy anything you want in front of our house! There are two explanations of this. First when the people were compelled the early part of February to move out of the Safety Zone, the shops that had opened in little temporary quarters along Shanghai Road moved, many of them, just south along Mo Tsou Lu. The other explanation is that most of what is now being sold on the streets, aside from occasional food stalls, is salvaged stock from former stores and shops. This is offered in a kind of curb market for whatever it will bring. What seems a busy street is really an evidence of the extent to which the normal life of the city has been upset.

More later.

With lots of love, *Daddy.*