

University of Nanking,
Nanking, China.
March 8th, 1938.

DO NOT PUBLISH!

Dear Friends in God's Country,

Your answers to my Christmas letter mailed from here on December 4th are beginning to come through thanks to the Chinese Post Office in Shanghai. They are soring out mail for us and sending it up on the British and American gunboats. I told you they would get it through some way! The latest, dated January 18th, arrived March 4th. Here's hoping more come because it makes me feel as though I had some ties across the water again! We have been buried here so this winter, both in lack of connections with the outside world and with the immediate task, that we have come to feel quite isolated.

I could make this whole letter a rebuttal or supplementation of press despatches that have filtered back to us one way or another about Nanking. But the error that took the cake was the one put out about the time I wrote you in December in which it said that all Americans had gone on board the Pansy but the Embassy staff. It would have been more neerly true to say only the Embassy staff went on board. A letter from Mardie in Kuling dated December 15th (received here the last of January) said they would not believe that we were all at the bottom of the Yangtze. I had written in my last letter that got through December 4th, that we had just signed our death warrants to stay in Nanking through any "expected eventualities". Mardie remarked, "Thank God for that!" Well, while we have not had exactly a gay time here in Nanking this winter, we feel thankful that we did stay. We do not want to toot our horns any because it was merely doing our duty, but we do believe that we have reduced the amount of suffering for about 250,000 Chinese xcivilians who were caught here in the city. We have not done a perfect job by far and many Chinese were killed and many others suffered in spite of all we could do. But we raised a storm of protest so strong that finally General Matsui himself came to Nanking to tell his soldiers to be have themselves---but six weeks too late! If he had said that and made it effective on December 17th when he was here before, there would be a different tale to tell.

What most people feared for us was dangers from air raids and the battle. We worked right through the air raids those last days when the alarm sounded in the morning and did not sound any "all clear all day. We slept in our regular beds through the battle trusting to wake up if the barrage came any closer than the southern part of the city---and foolishly trusting in Japanese instructions to their artillery to respect the Safety Zone. Our hair nearly stood on end when on the afternoon of December 13th we contacted their advance guard in the center of the city and they did not have the Safety Zone marked on their maps! (Although we had notified them we were moving the civilian population into that area.) The Zone proved to be safe (excepting for 11 shells that landed along the southern border on the 10 four or five the afternoon of the 13th in the University area) for the simple reason that we followed the advice of foreign military

observers here and chose a part of the city that had the least military value. Because we disarmed all Chinese soldiers coming into the Zone on the afternoon of December 13th (trapped in the city) we had no sniping in the Zone at all. But that did not prevent orders from the high command of the Japanese Army from having every disarmed soldier found in the Zone and many civilians along with them tied up and marched out to be shot. We pled and protested but no avail. When we consulted foreign military observers afterwards they told us that no matter what we might have done as long as the Japanese army worked on that basis nothing we could have done would have saved them and if we had tried to scatter them amongst the civilians we would have just lost more civilians. But the case that still itks us most was that on December 26th, when they started registering the population in the camps, over two hundred men were marched off and some machine-gunned and others used for bayonet practice and others half dead finished with buring gasoline. How do we know? Several escaped after dark and found their way, one who had his eyes and face burned to a crisp with the help of a friend, to the University Hospital. And after these men had been told for twenty minutes on the University campus that if they voluntarily confessed to having ever been a soldier or part of a military labor corps they would be given work, but if they did not confess and were caught they would be shot. Now with inadequate organization, reimbursement, and protection of civilian labor in this area, some Chinese soldiers are being brought back from the front for labor but at the time Nanking was captured there was no such foresight.

This gruesome tale has its own irony. The very day the Japanese Embassy, Navy, and Army came to the Headquarters of the "unrecognized Safety Zone" to ask us to help find the men who could start the electricity works, other Japanese soldiers were busy shooting 43 of the best workers of the electric plant! As one British official remarked, "I know the Japanese did not intend to bomb the Panay. It was just a part of their complete lack of co-ordination." Germans here remarked that they had learned how weak an ally they had in Japan. If their Army were up against any well-equipped modern Army it would go to pieces. The Allison incident was only the end of a long series of slapping incidents in Nanking beginning with a Major slapping a soldier he caught in the very act of rape and then letting the soldier go! After two weeks of this, it soon became evident that either the Army did not want to stop it or could not---or some of both! Now the latest is from the Japanese paper that they have found eleven Chinese armed robbers who were to blame for it all! Well, if they each raped from 100 to 200 women per night and day for two weeks and got away with the reported \$50,000 they were pretty powerful Chinese when the Japanese Army had pre-empted all those rights in the city! Even looting by Chinese common people did not begin until after nearly three weeks of destruction and then they started to pick up the pieces in the ruins of burned and looted shops. Cases of armed robbery by Chinese did not begin until a few weeks ago---after ammunition had been left lying about the streets along with dead bodies for weeks after Japanese entry. Even the main road along which General Matsui himself rode on December 17th was not cleaned up until it was known the American Embassy people were due back in a few days! Just two

weeks ago the Red Swastika Society reported there were still 30,000 bodies to be buried, nearly three months after the Japanese took the city, and the Army not lifting a hand in the process!

Well, now we are thankful that nightmare is passed. The Japanese have moved out their troops and trucks to attack our Chinese friends farther north and west. But the sad part of it is that every indication is that the same is true of all the occupied territory in the Yangtze valley and the claim that it is "too dangerous for foreigners" is that they might be horrified. There is no danger from the Chinese snipers for us! The only danger we have faced is that from Japanese soldiers. How we all escaped when we were almost "insolently" policing the Japanese Army---they calimed their 17 military police in the city were inadequate (as they were) but 22 foreigners made a good attempt at it---is more than any one of us can ever explain. One night when things were at their worst---two days after Matsui's triumphal march through the city---the fellows at our house remarked at supper. "The first fellow that gets killed we are going to carry his body over and put it in the Japanese Embassy." Several piped up, "well, I am willing to either be so carried or do the carrying!" Each night the doctor acting as "Mama" of the household would look around the eight of us and wonder who would be missing the next night. He said, "We just can't all get through this alive." Well, we did. The worst was a bayonet scratch in the neck that McCallum got the day after the Allison incident. The greatest paradox of it all is two pacifist missionaries throwing out through a hole in the wall a Japanese soldiers they caught in bed with a Chinese girl near their home, and then laughing at his trying to run up the street and hold his pants up because he had left his belt behind him in his hurried exit! A German comrade has a New Year's story that out does that but it can only be printed in the German Embassy's official report, not here! Well, we wondered if we could keep our minds. But we had enough who could laugh at some feature of the worst of it and we came out nearly sane! Japanese actions and statements were absurd enough to provide absurdities to give us release in laughter! All the folks who left before December 10th had to have a vacation because of the strain they had been through. Well, we had to take our vacation right here.

In the midst of all that excitement we had to feed 69,000 people who had crowded into the public and institutional buildings we held till the last minute as ~~x~~ reservoirs for those who could not make private arrangements for a house in the Zone. Originally we estimated by crowding, we could put only 35,000 in these buildings! The panic of women in private houses every morning during the first week swelled the total by 20,000 because they were relatively more safe in the crowded camps, especially at Ginling College and the University of Nanking. With all this disorder about us, with every truck or auto taken by stray Japanese soldiers if there were not a foreigner sitting right in it, we had a desperate time getting food to them. The first two nights we had to take rice in private cars to some of those camps to keep people from going more than two days without food. Then we faced the daily fear our rice would not hold out because if the whole population were dependent upon what we had hauled in so desperately during the defence of Nanking, it would only

last the 250,000 people one week. But we were soon to learn that our two chief assets were the ingenuity and endurance of the Chinese population and good weather. The Chinese are more accustomed to disaster than we so every family that had anything had brought all the rice they could possibly store before we started hauling--- all rice shops were closed by them. And that individual foresight has saved the population because the Japanese have not released for sale enough rice for two weeks' total consumption in the three months they have been here. And they confiscated enough from the Chinese army, private stocks, and from our stocks, to feed the population more than three months.

With the Japanese order in the midst of the "Great Cold" for all the people to go home in less than seven days, people did begin to move out and now our camps are down to one-third, 23,000. By hook or crook we have held on to and secured enough rice to carry that many another three weeks yet. As soon as that movement home started the first of February we began to shift as much as possible to cash relief because the people could buy rice outside of the Zone, though irregularly and with difficulty. So now we are putting out more relief in cash than in rice---about \$1,000 per day or \$3.85 per family in Chinese currency (i.e. US\$1.14). To date we have helped over 6,000 families in this way.

March 9th. Well, if reading about December is as disturbing to you as writing about it was to me last night, you won't sleep after reading this. It brought back the sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach that I had up until about two weeks ago. The trouble was we were foreseeing what the future had in store for this population. On the 20th of December when Mr. Fitch and I drove around the southern part of the city in the gathering dusk and found the Japanese Army systematically taking the remaining goods out of stores and loading it in Army trucks, then setting fire to the buildings we realized that it was deliberate destruction rather than accidental. The Y.M.C.A. building had just been fired when we got there. We fully recognized that this deliberate destruction of the city would mean the finish of the local economic resources with the population had some chance of staging a comeback. In the month following they burned over three-fourths of the stores in town (all the large ones, only some small ones remaining, and all of them were completely looted. Now they are hauling all the loot and wrecked cars etc., out on the railway to Japan. Reminds one of the Punic wars!

When we talked about how badly the Japanese Army was treating Nanking, some of them came back with the remark that it was just like all armies did and instanced Belgium. Our good German comrades did not like that! One of them had seen service in Belgium and while he admitted acts by individual soldiers said this was much greater in extent, and there soldiers caught in such actions were shot. One of our number who had been with the British army in Mesopotamia said the only case of rape they found there was of a Kurdish woman and the soldier was shot before the whole brigade of 5,000 men. Since a lull in our policing job, we have been reading up on Belgium and have about decided that the Japanese killed more civilians and burned more buildings here in one city than the Germans did in all Belgium! When they

objected to the German representative here calling it disorder, he quickly asked, "Do you mean to tell me that this was all ordered by Japanese officers?"

I know some of my pacifist and neutrality friends will wonder what stand we took on American rights. When the Zone was started we all definitely decided that it should not concern foreign property or rights. We stayed at our own risk and did not expect any succor. But when the Japanese got here they would not listen to any humanitarian appeal at all. They credited us with only the most narrowly selfish interests for looking out for ourselves as foreigners and our property. The first spark of interest we got from them on the welfare of the refugees was when we finally told them that their soldiers were mistreating refugees on American property. They got excited at once and did nothing! But gradually guards were established at those places (containing nearly two-thirds of the refugees in camps) and we went through a "guarded stage." (But not of our private residences though we had to argue one whole afternoon to prevent that!) our German chairman told them when the Chinese were safe we would be safe.) After the American representatives got here they took a stronger attitude on the illegal entrance of American property than we had thought of, although they based their attitude on a large body of precedent in China. It was merely an attempt to carry through the request that the Japanese ask for permission to search American property that led to the Allison incident. From the very first night the Japanese were here, we had not objected to any legal search. But what gave the trouble was stray groups of three to seven soldiers who would come around and when caught would claim they were looking for Chinese soldiers! Lest I misrepresent the facts, I must insert that after December 27th, the Japanese finally came to do what we had asked for on December 14th---to station guards at the entrances to the Zone and order all soldiers to stay out. That improved the situation but because ineffectively carried out did not clear it up.

Some will think the above is an incitement for America to declare war on Japan. Far from it. When things were at their hottest, one of our group kidded a pacifist, "Well, are you still a pacifist?" He came back, "Yes and becoming more so every day." While it does not excuse the Japanese and they seem to have set a world's record for a modern (?) army, it is true that the background of all this is W. R. It brings out the worst in men. (Yes, even the Japanese as soon as they got to Nanking told us, "This is war," though their propaganda at home and abroad calls it an "incident". They seem to want the advantages of calling it a "war" without assuming the responsibilities of doing so!) Even our own thoughts have been coarsened by it---we discussed rape at a dinner where ladies were present on Christmas day. No, for the United States to go to war with Japan would just spread this mess around the world. Nor will an isolation policy of "save our own skins" really help solve the problem. We are beginning to have to pay for that now. The decade of hope for some form of collective security has passed and with British capitulation from that formula the die is quite definitely set toward an armament race in which each nation looks out for itself and the devil take the hindmost. Under present conditions it is either collective armament on an economical basis or else individual armament on a competitive and expensive basis.

We have chosen the latter course and now we will have to foot the bill. As I tried to point out last fall (but the Christian Century would not publish it!) the purely negative solution of the Neutrality Act would be unsatisfactory and it would probably be swept aside by a tide of belligerency. If we did not want to go the full way of collective armament, there was the form of guarantee of world security for all by the use of international economic sanctions against aggression. But we so feared that would lead to war that our fears have put us in the way that leads to war! And we are so hamstrung by the new-found conscience over our past imperialism that we can do nothing to stop the spread of aggressive imperialism by others. Just because we have engaged in "punitive expeditions" and now realize that such things are not best for world welfare, it is not enough for us to fold our hands any say "We cannot object, because we committee the same sin". Rather we must ask all the nations of the world to live up to the most recent revelation of moral insight. Well, Stanley Jones is stating the moral issue much more clearly than I can! Either the nations of the world must cooperate for a better international order or else all will live in the mess of an anarchical world.

We are having to slow up our relief work because it is reported that the American Red Cross campaign is not progressing favorably. From all indications we are only at the beginning of the relief problem in China, both behind the Chinese lines where the chief problems are care of the wounded soldiers and refugees from the war areas, and behind the Japanese lines where the chief problem is the care of civilians in a war-torn area. We have found the latter problem more difficult than the relief problem created by the Yangtze River Flood of 1931. With an "Act of God", such as a flood, relief work can proceed with full force immediately; with an "act of man," the devilry seems to have only begun and relief work is hampered on every side by the men who committee the act. In 1931 shiploads of wheat were shipped immediately; now we, an international relief committee, are prohibited from shipping anything on either foreign boats or Japanese boats. (Compare this though with Belgium where the American Relief Commission shipped in food supplies long after German occupation.) In 1931 people could return to their farms as soon as the waters had receded; now farmers do not dare return to their fields three and four months after the fighting has ceased. If the winter wheat crop is harvested in June by then the worst may be over; if depredations against farmers by both Japanese soldiers and Chinese bandits continue, we will face serious famine conditions in the fertile Yangtze Valley by late summer and fall. So leading relief workers in Shanghai are telling us to out our cloth so that it can be spread over at least a year. That includes what is expected from the American Red Cross campaign. If that campaign fails, the suffering here will be much worse. With all the hindrances on our work, with actual cash resources we can find a way. Without the resources, we can do nothings.

(About Chinese banditry, I should explain that the situation is worse now than it was for any time during the last ten years. Japanese destruction of constituted authorities in this area, and assuming no responsibility for a new one, coupled with destruction of the very bases of economic life, is driving the country sideto banditry.)

We have been so borne down by the Japanese period of the Safety Zone that we have nearly forgotten the "Chinese period". The foresight of the Chinese Mayor of Nanking in giving our Committee over 2,400 tons of rice and 500 tons of flour and \$80,000 Chinese currency for our work has been the chief salvation of this population through this winter. Now other funds have been made available in Shanghai. If we had the 1,400 tons of rice and 800 tons of flour the Japanese confiscated from the above amounts, we would not have to worry about food for the people on relief for the next few months. The Chinese agreed readily to withdraw all military establishments from the Zone but there was a difference of opinion on the question of time. We urged speed. They said that the Japanese would not be here for two weeks. So we did not get the Chinese military out until it was too late to send any final notification to the Japanese via the ill-fated Panay. But the morning of December 13th I checked up on the southern boundary of the Zone myself and there were no Chinese soldiers there. At noon when we went back twenty bodies lay in the road ---they had run when the Japanese forces reached the boundary!

In my studies of Sociology I have heard a lot about the terrors of the "interregnum". We passed through the siege of Nanking, the retreat of the Chinese soldiers on the night of December 12th, the period of no authority from the time the Chinese general left Sunday afternoon until the Japanese high command arrived on Wednesday without a single disorder by civilians! The only disorders were by the Japanese soldiers beginning from the night of the 13th. It sounds like a fairy tale and very different from we expected. It may be that the fact we had the Zone organized, that the heroic Chinese workers kept the light, water, and telephone going until the evening of December 12th which preserved such perfect order in a sea of disorganization. But only a clerk remained of the former City Government and even the head of the police had fled! The burning referred to in news despatches was outside of the city wall, not inside. In other words, we had here a set-up perfectly arranged for the Japanese to take control of the civilian population peaceably and to have had the essential services going in a day or two. They missed that opportunity by being too blind to see it!

But since the occupation by the troops of the Rising Sun, I have come to fully appreciate the value of organized society. In the deluge of vandalism that broke upon this city not a shop dared remain open---our specially organized rice shop had to close because its workers were taken away and the rice stolen by soldiers. Not a ricksha or bicycle dared show itself on the road, much less a car. The streets were deserted excepting for a brief time for curb marketing early in the morning. Then the agony of getting a rice shop started, a simple exchange shop run by college graduates, rice delivered by one of the leading missionaries of Nanking and later for six weeks by an American Professor of the Old Testament, coal hauled by our Professor of Agricultural Engineering after he could be released from the "policing job." Then he organized a trucking service for hauling all food supplies for the whole city and still supervises it. To do this he had to piece together trucks damaged by the Japanese while hundreds of Japanese Army trucks stood idle about the streets of the city! What about the much talked of "cooperation"! All these services were taken for granted in Nanking under the Chinese. And the telephone service

has not been restored yet, nor the mail, nor the banks, nor the movies, nor.....! The first function of the "Self-Government Committee." when called together by the Japanese on December 22nd, was to organize three houses of prostitution for the Japanese Army---and many were those who blessed the event! But it was then we learned with whom we were working. Representatives of our office manager went to the campuses of Ginling College and the University of Nanking and from the midst of the 10,000 refugees at each with a snap of a finger called forth 28 prostitutes! So we laughed and said the International committee was carrying out its work with American missionaries, Chinese Christian workers, German Nazi business men, Chinese Red Cross, Chinese Red Swastika, and the underworld! But we all surged with the feeling of common humanity in that crucial hours. The five barred flag of the new city government was raised over Drum Tower on January first by a former second hand merchant---for a second hand government!---now Food Commissioner and head of the Department of Labor and Commerce for the city. He told us about "self-government": "When the Japanese say 'Yes,' we do it!"

We have come to understand the Japanese much better than we did. A week before their entry I preached to our retreating University group and gently blamed them for leaving and urged them to have faith in the goodness and humanity of the Japanese. The Chinese that remained are still laughing at us for our innocence! We soon learned that the Japanese sincerely believed from the common private up through the highest men here that while it was necessary to show some regard for foreigners they could do anything to a Chinese. While part of our success in meeting them was possibly due to our looking them straight in the eye and a certain feeling of moral rightness in our position, we realized that our nationality probably protected us from death. But Chinese who went about relief work risked death itself and some met it in faithful service. One refugee young man at the University Middle School had been a big help in keeping Japanese soldiers from molesting women there because he could speak a little Japanese. But when he refused to become a benchman for the consular police, he was arrested--- escaped machine-gunning once, then taken from the residence of a missionary who had given him refuge, and shot. When about New Year's some of us were invited to the Japanese Embassy for dinner, this missionary remarked, "Am I to go and eat with the murderers of Liu Wen-pin?" And yet we felt we had to be friendly in a personal way in order to try to get to some working arrangement for the sake of the 250,000 civilians depending on us for their lives, honor, and food.

We also better understand Japanese propaganda! Whereas in propaganda for the United States, Japan represents herself as defending foreign rights in China and preventing communism, in China the Japanese Army published statements in Chinese recounting her efforts to drive the white race out of Asia. In face she is rapidly "communizing China" in the old sense of creating economic distress which gives rise to banditry, as well as forcing China to turn more and more to Soviet Russia. After what we have seen here the following always gets a laugh: "In former times Khublai Khan's great armies rolled up the continent of Europe like a mat. So why should we oriental peoples, creators of the spiritual culture, sweetly submit to the western

peoples' greed and arrogance?" (Press Release by Japanese Army in local Chinese paper, Nanking, March 10th, 1938.)

In the midst of such great suffering in January, Japanese news squads went around staging pictures of Japanese soldiers giving candy to a child or an Army doctor examining 20 children. But these acts were not repeated when no camera was around!

Some American friends had their houses pretty well looted by Japanese soldiers---oh yes, we caught them in the attics going through boxes and chased them out of basements where refugee women were hiding---but the fact that most of our houses were crammed full of refugees covered up much of our stuff! My house crowded to the attic with refugee families miraculously escaped looting though my refugee guests suffered both looting and rape. Two men stayed at home and protected the refugees in their houses but others of us felt to create such islands in the midst of so much suffering was useless. So we struggled to improve conditions in general and filed two protests with the Japanese Embassy daily for a month and did get the Japanese soldiers excluded from the Zone after two weeks. However, this was only partially effective. The house here where eight of us were staying and none of us could stay during the day to protect escaped. The Japanese soldiers only happened to come when someone was at home or at night. Several of us traded off sleeping at two of our camps and the University Hospital until into February to protect the women there.

What are the prospects of the University re-opening here? About zero for a year at least. I criticized our students and staff for leaving. Now I am glad they did as probably most of the students would have been shot with the Japanese in the mood they were when they took this city. Even the return of one or two Chinese Seminary professors from the countryside where they hid out has been a subject of much questioning. So if we ever get through with the refugee job here, we will probably filter out to Szechuen where the intelligentsia of China are now gathered. The Japanese only took the physical structure of Nanking and the poorest part of its population, not the 'Capital' as we knew it.

On the other hand evangelistic work here has a big opening. In our refugee work we have almost leaned over backwards to make sure that none of it was made conditional upon a man's being a Christian or to give Christians any favoritism out of funds given for the general welfare. (We have helped Christians out of special funds though.) And while we were laboring Sunday like any other day to keep the population fed and protected, the few Chinese pastors left in the city found the people very responsive to the Christian message. As one intelligent pastor expressed it! "Now they believe beyond all belief!" We are struggling now to get some more mission workers back so they can help in the continuing relief work for widows and others who have no home or family to go back to.

I came here last September against the express instructions of the American Embassy "Just for three days" and stayed through until now when the American Government is proclaiming that Americans have a

right to live and move about in China. The world do move! After all the effort last fall to get missionaries out and some of the thoughtless words that were said about it, I can only say that we were treated in the finest manner by our American representatives here and when they left some of them said they wished they could stay and help us. Since their return in January they have been a help as men as well as representatives of our Government. And without endorsing the policy of foreign gunboats (including!) on the Yangtze, we can express our appreciation of the fine way the gunboats of both the American and British navies have carried relief supplies and sent urgent radio messages for us.

Our personal plans are unknown! Mardie and the children stayed in Kuling until the American School there broke up on December 26th. The she travelled as far as Hongkong with the school but stayed there on Cheung Chau Island while the others went on to Shanghai. The children are enjoying a winter in that southern clime although the oldest, Margaret Ann, had dysentery after getting there--but got over it satisfactorily. Joan is thriving. They had hoped I could join them there but since we have been virtually prisoners here and now only go out under danger of not being allowed to come back---as well as the fact the work goes on needing us---keeps me from even having any hopes of getting to Hongkong this spring. Where Mardie will go for the summer (that is, May 1st there) remains to be seen. Baguio in the Philippines is most convenient for her and I certainly do not want to go to Japan! Would like to get where I wouldn't see a Japanese for three months. (oh yes, there are many fine Japanese I would like to see!) Still others say they have been sweetened on Japan after being inside the country. We are kind of at the back door here. If I go to Chengtu, Mardie says she wants to go with me. That partly depends upon the vigor of the Japanese southern campaign! Well, we might go around by Burma! (Until further word you had had better address us here in Nanking---but remember the mail will be censored in Shanghai. This letter will go by hand until it is safely on a foreign steamer out of Shanghai.)

Do I hate the Japanese? No. I dislike very much their policy and I dislike very much the way they are treating the common people of China. And I believe the truth will out and I did not want to stand in its way! But if I am ever given the opportunity of doing the same for Japanese as we have done here for 250,000 Chinese men, women, and children, I would do the same right over again. This experience has also convinced me that there is really no other way for the world but that of Christian love.

Let us hear from you. Thereby your may save our souls!
Your friends in China,
Lewis and Margaret Smythe

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