

March 16, 1938

Dear Friends:

Our letter No. 2 was written to you from the River Steamer as we were returning to our new work in Nanking, little dreaming then what proportions the "China Incident" was going to assume, and that we would shortly be separated for another indefinite period (now four months). The week in Yangchow and the ten days in Nanking were extremely busy and tiring, as in the first we were dismantling our house and leaving things packed to be sent later to Nanking, while in the latter we were running a six-ring circus.

It took the first few days in Nanking to get the Magee's house adjusted to a new routine, and to get used to the constant coming and going of many people. Simultaneously Ernest was balancing Mission accounts to give to Leslie Fairfield, who had come up to Nanking with us, was giving examinations to a candidate for Holy Orders, interviewing people, helping John Magee in his plans for relief work among the wounded soldiers, and getting started in his new parish work. In the midst of this our cook, having been on the way from Yangchow by junk for a week, arrived at the back door with some of our furniture and all of our food supply, while our five Wusih missionaries, having been bombed out of their station and the Christians scattered to the country, arrived by motor at the front door. Our "refugees" were with us for five days of fine comradeship and exchange of experiences until they proceeded to Shanghai by boat, leaving the car for our use. Thousands of wounded soldiers were pouring into the railroad station and all help possible was needed for their care. Then suddenly all the Government Departments and the foreign embassies began moving "up River", and Nanking was thrown into a panic. Mr. Hall Paxton, of our Embassy, tried to get all Americans out, but we "stubbornly" refused to go, and were then offered the Panay as a place of safety in an emergency. Clarissa, not knowing the language and not having medical training, was finally persuaded to go to Hankow via the boat chartered by the German Government for its nationals. Ernest and John Magee stayed at Nanking and shortly moved inside the city wall to the so-called Safety Zone, which had been agreed upon by all parties concerned. They faced together with the other foreigners and Chinese the horrors of the succeeding months, which it is useless at this time to dwell on, as many incidents have already reached the outside world. Many bombing incidents, including the Panay, happened in rapid succession. We might easily have been on the Panay, but that was one incident that we were spared.

Clarissa, receiving a cable from Bishop Roberts, proceeded (after two weeks in Hankow living with Elise Dexter of Massachusetts, and studying the language) to Shanghai via the constantly bombed railroad to Canton and Hongkong. She left Hankow on December 10 when things were so critical in Nanking. She was, for those terrible days, outside of all communication with Nanking, living in uncertainty as

to the fate of Ernest and John, learning of the Panay incident and not knowing whether or not they were on the boat. She was in Hongkong two weeks awaiting a passage and having no word from Ernest, but receiving on Christmas two cables, one from Mother and Father and the other from brother Irving. With these happy messages, a beautiful midnight Mass, an impressive Christmas morning service, and two festival dinners, Clarissa and Bessie Sims boarded late Christmas night the Italian SS Verde for Shanghai, where they arrived on December 28 (Mother and Father's wedding anniversary) to be given a warm welcome by the Shanghai mission family. Clarissa received a batch of mail from Ernest which was brought down from Nanking by Mr. Durdin of the New York Times. Since that time there has been fairly regular communication with Nanking (every ten days and sometimes oftener) via the United States and British gunboats. By this method Clarissa is able to send supplies, etc. to Ernest and John. It seems very strange that in such a short distance (180 miles) it is still impossible to get back and forth to see each other. Ernest will probably get down to Shanghai now in a short time for a visit.

In the meantime, Yangchow was entered and our Mahan School and Church compound completely looted of all belongings, and the buildings taken over by the Japanese and used as their barracks. The other two compounds in the city were not treated so badly. Our Christians had gone en masse to the country and were having worship together. Our Chinese priests returned at intervals to the city and have finally been able to move back. Many Christians have made their way with difficulty to Shanghai bringing recent news of conditions, which is not too good. The foreign Yangchow staff here in Shanghai has made repeated attempts to return, but the Japanese command will not allow them to return.

In Nanking, Ernest writes that conditions have eased somewhat, and that he is starting in regular parish services since he has moved from the Safety Zone to our residence compound not far from St. Paul's Church. Many Christians are beginning to return and are glad to find the Church open after three months of enforced closure. Quite a little damage from bombing, looting and fire occurred on the Church compound and to a lesser degree on the residence compound.

Sunday, February 20, was a day of great rejoicing, as on that day Ernest was able to hold services in St. Paul's Church again, having had it cleaned and set in order. It had miraculously escaped the shells which struck the parish house twenty feet away, but many window panes had been broken by the explosion of the shells, and Japanese soldiers had entered the church building and used it. They had started a fire on the concrete floor of the Sacristy, burned up all festival hangings, and the wardrobe for vestments in part. Ernest had succeeded in saving all the communion silver and altar ornaments. Thus the material damage to the church was not very great. That first congregation consisted of sixteen persons, including a Japanese soldier who was a baptized Christian. The service consisted of Morning Prayer, the baptism of an infant, and ending with the Holy Communion. Paul Tong helped with the service, and after it was over Ernest took movies and photographs of that memorable occasion. The next Sunday there was a congregation of

thirty, and on March 13 there were about fifty in the congregation including children.

Nanking is a city of depression with buildings burned for blocks on end, with dead bodies unburied and sickness becoming more prevalent with the approach of spring and the fear of atrocities not yet over. The problem of relief and rehabilitation everywhere is demanding the greatest ingenuity and planning.

Throughout all of these experiences in China, reports from all quarters are unanimous that the opportunities for Christian witness and service have never been greater than today. By hundreds and thousands people are asking for the strength and courage which they have seen the Church profess. Chinese have exhibited wonderful courage, faith, and forgiveness under very trying circumstances.

Regular classes and services are held daily at Ginling University where Ernest has spoken to large groups of women and girls, and at Nanking University. On March 14, there was a workers' meeting to decide about lending further help to Ginling University, which now has over one thousand women and girls enrolled in twenty-two classes, studying the life of Christ as recorded by St. Mark. They are very short of teachers, so they have appealed to Ernest and John Magee to help, in addition to their taking the preaching every afternoon. This will give you some idea of the opportunities before us for the spread of the Gospel.

Special classes for inquirers, for those wanting baptism, etc. are demanding not a little time. Childrens' services with instruction, as well as some special classes for young people, are under way. Because of limited space, the number at women's meetings is limited to four hundred. We also understand that tickets are issued so that those desiring to attend will not always miss out. Truly the fields are ripe unto the harvest. Shanghai is overcrowded with thousands of refugees and tremendous camps are in full swing. One of the large ones (over 17,000) was forced to start moving its people to other places because the Japanese came along and demanded the buildings. So, even in greater Shanghai, each day brings new problems to which we have to adjust ourselves.

As this letter goes to you the Lenten season is half over and Easter will soon be here. In our St. Paul's rectory garden at Peh Hsia Lu, violets have been in bloom for some time, with bachelor buttons, daffodils and hyacinths.

In listening to the daily radio broadcasts we can scarcely hope that this Eastertide will be a time of peace and joy for most people in the world. But those of us who do believe in the Risen

Lord and in His Message to go forward in His Name must constantly turn to Him to renew our courage, hope and faith. Arms and ammunitions will not usher in the Kingdom of God, but only a fearless witness of the God of Love, in the midst of this fast rising tide of selfishness and hate.

With sincerest wishes for a beautiful Eastertide and that the coming summer months may bring you joy and relaxation.

Sincerely,

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