

Anking, Anhwei
Jan. 21, 1935

Dear Folk:

No mail from home this week, but I did get so big a pile last week that I don't at all wonder at it, specially when I think of the usual business at Christmas time.

It has been cold here all week, with a good deal of snow on the ground, and I don't think one day of sunshine the whole week. The dampness does get one, and my hands have been just a bit tender with a little chill-blain trouble. However, I'm otherwise very well and happy and full of thanks to the Lord for all His great goodness.

Just received word yesterday that one of last year's boys has already gone on to meet the king. The coastwise steamer he was travelling on went down about four hours out of Ningpo and there seems no hope that he has survived. He was one of the brightest and most spiritual fellows here last year, and except for the fact that we do know that "He doeth all things well", it would make us wonder about things. While the work will suffer from his loss, its great to know though, that there's no sorrow at all required for him, for him it is all joy,--which is a good thing to remember when things are so uncertain as they are these days.

The Glittenbergs with whom Betty has been staying at Fowyang have had a good deal of sickness, recently too. I wrote about little Lois dying, then little Milton took the measles, and now little Ruth has double pneumonia. I haven't heard from Betty for over a week, but the news of the last sickness comes through the provincial superintendent. Betty has been pretty busy these days, I take it, taking care of the sick.

Had a good letter from Ernie Carlburg, which will come on to you after it has gone up to Betty. Its full of news about a trip from up country, horses falling down, getting caught in a ravine with no way out but up, having to cross a flooded river at nightfall, and coming home to find that soldiers (bandits) had visited the place while he was away, and taken some of the stuff, but that most of his stuff had been preserved.

We had quite a celebration here for my birthday, have for everybody in fact. They usually try to stage something that will be more or less appropriate to the man, and they surely did go in for it on Wednesday. The snow was thick on the ground, but we had a basketball game anyway, which ended by giving yours truly, the referee, a good rolling in the snow, etc. etc. as you can imagine some healthy fellows are likely to do.

But they certainly had it in for me at suppertime. Somebody had gotten Betty's picture during the afternoon, and I served notice on the dormitory that I considered it a great compliment to the young lady that somebody should swipe her picture. It turned up at suppertime, festooned in paper draperies and an American flag, plus a whole load of things, typewriter and the p'ukai filled with things. Just so you know what all I got for my birthday, it was all my own stuff. Quite a habit around here, where you can't get anything, to give a fellow all his own stuff, and see his eyes open in surprise as he opens up a great big package and finds nicely done up ties, (all his own), etc. etc. The dinner ended with cake and ice cream, though, yes, sir, with ice around, you can quite bet your bottom dollar that Miss Nesland would find a way to make ice cream.

I couldn't help thinking, and recounting to myself, during that day and the previous night, all the wonderful way in which the Lord has led these

past years, and how wondrously he has provided for every type of need.

Had letters from Dr. Scott and Mrs. Scott this week, and another book from Dr. Scott, the sixth one since I've come to Anking. This last one a volume on American History by James Truslow Adams.

Several times I think I have promised to write you what a "p'u kai" is. Well, its the Chinese name for a bedding roll. Its just amazing what will go into one of these bedding rolls. In my case, it held the thin mattress, all the bed clothes, and the bed linens, plus my bathrobe. Then covered with waterproof canvass, and wrapped up in a cocconut fibre mat, its ready to hold down its end of a carrying pole. Everybody in China travels with bedding, when you're away from home. You can see p'u kai's of all sizes and conditions come down the road as you go walking. Sometimes just the thin mattress itself. The first time I met Mr. Yen, or rather saw him, was coming up the river on the steamer, where the C.I.M. men who had met us at Wuhu saw him down in the Chinese part of the boat wrapped up in his p'ukai. That's the first time we saw him.

This letter's rather jumbled up, being written here by the fire where there are three typewriters going on, and several conversations. Its good practice in concentration, though.

May I suggest that after the last week in February you hold up any further magazines until you hear where my next address will be. Mail, that is, first class mail can come right on, as that will always be forwarded, although I suppose magazines would be too.

Yours in His Happy Service,

John

Dad asked about Mr. Ferguson. He was reported dead some time ago, and for some time the Mission held out little hope. The Mission sent up a missionary to the source of the information, and the Roman Catholic priest who sent it on said he got it from one of his parishioners, and the parishioner seemed to say he got it from the priest.

Another missionary investigating reported that he was seen well and healthy on Nov. 15. He had been given a personal servant and was treated very well for the needs under the circumstances.

It is believed that the reports that he is still living are more reliable than those of his death, so keep right on praying. Ferguson right now is not more than several hundred miles from Anking, perhaps not more than one hundred miles away, up in the mountains.

J.C.S.

Fowyang, An.
Jan. 24, '33

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Stam,

I have been trying to write to you for months and months, and did not know what to say. John says he is a little in awe of my father, too. You see, our family has had so few "in-laws" up to the present that we don't know how to act toward new relatives by marriage. But I do want to answer your kind letters to me; for I surely did appreciate them. And it was a real privilege to meet you before, and be in the fellowship of your home in Paterson. Even before then, John had spoken often of this, and that that happened or was done at home, and much about different members of his family. You have certainly been lovely to me, and also to Mother and Daddy. I don't know how to thank you for all this. I am sure that John is as nice as he is, to a large extent because of the father and mother that he has, and the kind of a home that he has; and because of that, I could never thank you enough for him. I know that he is really too nice for me, and that I don't in any measure deserve him; and I did not even know for a time whether we were really suited for each other at all; but John seemed to be a little surer about it all than I was, and everybody respects John's decisions; so, you see! I am glad, however, to know that he does put the Lord first, and His work before any plans of his own; and for that reason one has all the more confidence in what he says and does. I am afraid, nevertheless, that he could have chosen a much better person for himself in almost every way; but the Lord seemed to have been leading so definitely in circumstances especially that there seemed nothing to do but accept what was "too good", really, from a sensible point of view!

Now the future designation is unknown, but the next step will come in due time, I am sure. In the meantime it seems as though I am not doing very much of anything, not even getting much farther in my studying; but am learning a great deal in the Lord's training school.

No doubt John has told you something of this station, which is fairly well established under the Chinese church and leaders, but which has tremendously many illiterate persons coming under the wings of the central church, people who cannot read and are too poor to go to a school (if there were any available), but who yet have recently heard the Gospel and are interested, as far as their knowledge and experience goes. My fellow-worker, "Katy" Dodd and I, have hoped to be able to help country women, and others, to learn to read the Bible; but so far have not done much along that line. We have gone out visiting in the homes with the Bible women, and given out some tracts. One of these tracts that was given out the first time we went out visiting found its way to a woman in another part of the city, and was used to her conversion; later we were taken to see her in her home, and it was a real joy to see how happy she was, and how her testimony was having its influence in her family and among her neighbors.

A great deal of our time, during the three months we have been here has been spent in nursing our sick fellow-missionaries and their children. It was indeed a shock when the Glittenbergs' dear little girl died of dysentery, before we had been here many weeks. After that, Mrs. Glittenberg and the little boy were sick for weeks, she with flu, and he with something that couldn't be located, but which made him get thinner and thinner, and apparently not be able to keep his meals. Then, when the two older children came back from Chefoo school for Christmas vacation all three children broke out with hard cases of measles, one of the children having a pneumonia complication on top of the measles. The latter was so serious, and, again, it was a freak case, Ruthie having a low temperature, but unexpectedly developing spells of not being able to breathe, even missing several breaths at a time and apparently getting ready to sink into a coma, that our Senior missionaries telegraphed to Shanghai for a Doctor or nurse to come up. By the time the nurse arrived, Ruth was much better, and

since then she, as well as the other patients, has been rapidly improving. During the time they were sick, the four of us girls in the station took turns being nurse continually on the job, to keep the patients from doing anything for themselves, as well as taking charge of the housekeeping and some of the accounts. Mr. Glit was more than busy with station affairs, and also did night nurse duty for weeks before he would allow any of us to relieve him.

The Glittenbergs have been very good Senior missionaries to us, and we appreciate the fact that they have a keen sense of humour, especially exercised at meals.

Now it is the New Year season. The big day is tomorrow, when everybody in the nation adds a year to his age, and dresses and eats according to the highest scale possible in his means. We are letting the servants off, and taking charge in the kitchen. Speaking of a kitchen, don't imagine a gas or electric stove, running water, or spotless white cupboards, or even a sink. The average utensil in a kitchen out here is twice black, and the idea in the servants' minds is to ~~take away unwashed things and left over food in drawers, etc - with the idea of taking as much as possible (that presumably won't be missed) home later.~~ The picture of the two "boys" washing and drying dishes after meals is decidedly a slow-motion film. And as for water - well, a nice old man named Old Six (being the sixth son in his family) carries water to both our households once or twice a day in buckets from the river or from a well, and the water is stored in large earthenware crocks called "gongs". Of course it is boiled in cooking and for drinking.

The vendors of new things, red candles for ancestral worship, pink and green sugar cakes, and many other interesting luxuries for the holidays, are busy as can be, as tomorrow everything shuts down, and nobody does work, or even collects debts, for nearly a week.

About the middle of the last page, it was time to close for the night, and now it is Jan. 25th. This morning I had a letter from John, in which he enclosed several letters from his sisters and from Africa. I was much touched with the money gifts that Sis and Amelia and you had sent for me. Thank you very much indeed. John has already sent them to be put to my account in Shanghai. I was thinking just yesterday about wanting to buy some brown blankets like army blankets for use in itinerating, and in fact any travelling where one has to spend the night in a Chinese place; and had gotten a small booklet about the kinds of wool blankets they have at the Shanghai C.I.M. Home (which I thought were dandy for such purposes). But, not being sure whether I should spend the money now, as I have quite a few very nice light-colored blankets given to me, so nice that I didn't even bring them up here, I asked the Lord to send me in about \$5 gold just for my own use, soon, if He wanted me to get these blankets at this time. So you see! I have not been getting sums designated as gifts for a long time, and Christmas is over, so I had no way of expecting anything at this time. But it was very gracious of the Lord, and kind of you. (I might add, too, that it usually seems best to keep bedding especially for country itinerating, and then everything can be hung right on the line when you return, perhaps in the evening, and the other bed can be all made up, clean!)

Now I must close, with much love to you both.

Lovingly yours,

Betty

Anking, Anhwei
China
January 28 1933

Dear Folk

Another week has passed, and it's time to write the home letter again. It's been cold this week again, and the temperature has gone down to our record temperature of 11 degrees. However, we are well, and in good health, and full of praise to God for all of His great mercies and goodnesses.

I'm enclosing a letter which I received this week from one of our workers here who came out in 1929, a Miss Nellie De Waard. I don't know her, but it's evident that she had been blessed by the Star of Hope paper. (I do hope it has been possible to get out another issue). She is at present working with one of the girls I used to know at school, a Miss Hayes. The letter is self-explanatory, Dad might want to write her and encourage her along a bit.

Thanks to Dad for his good letter December 21st. Give my regards to the Pontiers. Congratulations to Amelia and Douw, and many wishes for a very, very blessed, useful, and happy life together. I haven't heard from Dr Huizenga at all. I wrote him after I got here, but didn't receive my letter back, nor any answer from him. Perhaps he's very busy,--most likely is.

Thanks to Jake very much for the sermons. I received those for three weeks this week, and thanks very much too for the list of birthdays. Betty's birthday is february 22nd,--Washington's birthday,--which we shall henceforth celebrate with double honours. Glad to hear you're after the Master's degree. Looks as if you're turning the clock backward, old boy, you once went under the name of Master Stam, and graduated into M, and now you're reversing the order again.

Thanks very, very much to Paul for his good letter, I was glad to get the good news Paul, write me some more, and the rest of you little folk too. I like to hear about school, and about your teachers, and about the family.

When you go to church next Sunday, Paul, and Helen, Dotsy, and Ruth, and see Mr Cooke and the rest of the men taking up the collection, just take a good look at them, and then go home and think of the difference between what you see on Sunday as the deacons take up the collection, and what I see. I'll just describe our two deacons to you so you can get a picture of them in your mind.

One man comes up to the front, dressed in Chinese dress, which includes many, many layers of Chinese gowns with great big sleeves that he can put his hands up to keep them warm. The funniest thing about him is the way he dresses his head, for on top of his head he wears a great big fur cap with enormous ear flaps that are tied on top with a piece of black tape. Looks just like the fur caps I've seen farmers wear.

Then the other deacon is a dear little man. You can see that he loves the Lord by the smile on his face, and by the way he greets us foreigners too. He's much funnier. On his head he wears,--and that means he wears it while he takes the collection, and while he prays, and while he sits there all through church time,--on his head he wears a knitted cap something like our skating caps, but all piled on top of his head in a very funny heap. Then he wears a big pair of glasses down on the end of his nose, and crooked too, with one side way up. He wears a heavy foreign coat, but with nice big Chinese sleeves so that he can keep his hands warm.

When it's time for collection, this last man first comes up and reads off the list of what the people have given, or promised to give, and then perhaps finishes off by telling the people that it isn't enough. Then the pastor hands them the big red wooden plates and they go around getting the collection, most of which is in big copper coins, much bigger than our pennies at home. The people put them on in little piles,--it takes about fifteen of them to make one of our pennies at home. Some of them put theirs up in nice little white bags.

Then they come up to the front, and everybody rises, as we always do for prayer. It's just great to know that these folk, and we are one in the Lord Jesus, and that they do love Him too. We can see it in their faces.

But for all that, the old man I just told you about has rather queer tastes when it comes to meals. Imagine it could, he just loves to eat snakes. One day they caught a snake here on the mission compound, and somebody said, not to throw it away, keep it,--the old deacon just loves to eat snakes.

But what's the difference, whether he likes the snakes, or miscetti, or gehacht, or chicken,--he loves the Lord Jesus. That's the big thing.

Now I must stop. It's getting later, and I have a lot of letters to write, and want to get to bed.

The Lord bless you all abundantly.

Yours in His Happy Service,
Your Uncle,
Brother,
Son

John

P S Dad asked about sending money. Once in a while mail gets lost, but generally I suppose it's safe. However, it is by far the safest course to send it to the C I M at Philadelphia, marked "For transmission". In small amounts it's probably easier to send it direct, and I can send it to Shanghai. No one has lost money in the mails recently, but Miss Nesland tells us that she has lost two Five Dollar bills in the mail some years ago.