

A. J.

**Men's Training Home,
China Inland Mission,**

Anking, Anhwei.

Dear Friends

March 29, 1933.

The last time many of you heard from me I was on my way to China asking you to pray even if you didn't hear much from me for the next six months while I applied myself to the work of studying the language.

The six months are past, and so are the exams and the designations, but I'd better go back where I left off and take up the thread. We arrived in Shanghai on October 12th. Many of you know of my engagement to Miss Elisabeth A. Scott, but for the rest, let me say that it surely was cause for a few extra Hallelujahs to find her in Shanghai when I got there. Neither of us had expected it could be arranged, for she had come down earlier in the summer to meet her parents as they returned to China. They were unable to sail when they expected to, so she failed to see them then, and was called to the coast from a considerable distance inland later on by a telegram when they did arrive. Then it was discovered that she had tonsil tissue which should be removed, and the China Director decided it might as well be done at once. You can imagine how glad I was to get an answer in the affirmative to a very important question which I hadn't felt free to ask until I was sure I was going to China last year,—which was only about six weeks or two months before I sailed. And so the Lord did work, and we had a very happy week in Shanghai together.

The trip up the Yangtze to Anking was interesting, especially the landing which was in the dark, for we landed not at a wharf, but transferred to a smaller boat in midstream. Such a scramble you never did see—I always thought everything in the East took its own good time,—but certainly that isn't true of boat landings. Before ever the little tender was properly tied up, the Chinese were jumping on to it, and those who wanted to board the river steamer were pushing their way aboard at the same time. It reminds one of the meeting of the tides, with noise enough for it too.

Then through Anking's busy narrow streets, paved with wide stone slabs, and for all the world like big steps where you go up a grade, until we come to the Training Home.

We've had a blessed time here, and with English, Austrians, New Zealanders, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Scotch, Canadians, and Americans, it has been blessed to see the unity of the Spirit despite widely differing national, educational, and family backgrounds, and a range of temperaments from the "rushingest" Yankee in the lot to the most dignified Englishman. The fellowship has been wonderful.

You will be glad to know too that your prayers have been answered in regard to health. I've gained strength steadily, and if you could see me at basketball these days during our exercise time, you'd have no doubt that I'm physically ready for about anything.

The Lord has abundantly answered too in regard to the studies. Never have I been more conscious that folk have been praying for me, and while at first it certainly did look like a frightful language to learn, yet the Lord did give understanding and interest, and helped me to remember: so much so that in less than five months I passed the First Section Exam; and in one day more than five months had the privilege of leading Chinese Morning Prayers for the first time. If you've never tried to speak in a new language before a crowd, you don't know what it feels like, but while I wasn't perhaps as cool as usual, my heart was full of praise to the Lord that He had given me ability to get at least some little bit of His word across to the people. With so small a vocabulary as we still have its far from easy to express yourself. That morning as we were singing the opening hymn, I thought again of the words of the Lord Jesus, "For this cause came I unto this hour," and realized that for me too, all the background of life and training has been to prepare me for this hour,—a thought which has often helped me in difficult places.

On Monday our General Director, Mr. Hoste arrived for the designations. Eighteen of the twenty-five of us did not know where we were going, and you can imagine the interest and suspense. As each man came back from his interview the rest would want to know where he was sent.

Mr. Hoste had a cold the second day, and so remained in bed, and I shall never forget my time with him. When he walks about, his erect bearing, the cut of his beard, and everything remind you that he was an army man; but sitting up in bed, even his beard failed to keep up that impression, and he looked more like a tired patriarch. Into my mind immediately flashed the picture of Jacob leaning upon the top of his staff and blessing his sons,—an impression that was deepened as he began to pray, praying specially for the Lord's blessing upon Miss Scott and myself.

For the present I am designated to Suancheng, Anhwei Province. Ningkwow is the old name which you will probably have to look for on the map. I am to be there for some time engaged in language study, and in getting my start in the work. Address any mail there c/o China Inland Mission. After that it is intended that we should open Tsingteh, a new station to the Southwest, so if I'm not a member of the Two Hundred, it looks as if I shall go into forward movement work after all. Praise the Lord.

May I just add these items of praise and prayer.

Praise Him for Himself my sure foundation, and for His word, my guide.

Praise God that ever He brought me to China.

Praise Him for health, and for help in the language.

Pray that I may be kept close to Him, and learn to know Him better.

Pray that from the start the Lord will make me a blessing to those to whom I go, and that He will lead me out into the work.

Pray that God will make me a blessing to the young men.

I feel specially drawn to them.

Pray for a good language teacher and for help in the language.

Pray for health during these trying summer months.

Pray for grace and gumption to keep my nose to the grindstone and keep right on with my studies during the heat.

Pray that the Lord will guide as to when we shall be married.

Begin to pray already for Tsingteh.

I cannot write about the people, for this past six months has been devoted exclusively to language study; but you will be praying that the Lord will give His servant a ministry that will result in the salvation of souls. I shall write more of the people as I get into the work. The next letter you receive may be a joint one from "Betty" and me, for since most of you know me by the name of "John," you might as well know her by the name of "Betty."

I close with these verses which have proved a blessing to me

"See the streams of living waters,

Springing from eternal love,

Well supply thy sons and daughters,

And all fear of want remove;

WHO CAN FAINT WHILE SUCH A RIVER

Ever flows their thirst to assuage?—

Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,

Ever flows from age to age.

"Saviour, if of Zion's city

I through grace a member am,

Let the world deride or pity.

I will glory in Thy name.

Fading is the worldling's pleasure,

All his boasted pomp and show.

Solid joys and lasting treasure.

NONE BUT ZION'S CHILDREN KNOW.

Yours in His Happy Service,

John C. Stamm.