

Letters Home: Rev. Henry Stewart Ferguson, and family in China

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A Short History

Henry Stewart Ferguson was a missionary in China from Feb. 15th, 1895, when he arrived in Shanghai, until 1932 when he was captured by Communist bandits (the Red Army) and executed. This volume is a collection of letters home and reports about Henry, his first wife Lilian Cobb, who died in 1911, most likely of typhoid fever, and of his second wife, Elisabeth (Bessie) Birch, who died in 1931, also in China, of some sort of unknown illness.

Henry was born on the Ferguson farm in Eversley, Ontario, on Mar. 20, 1868. He had three brothers, Albert, Thomas, and Walter, and a sister Alice. His grandfather Thomas, a cottage weaver, had emigrated from Ayr, Scotland in 1818, arriving in Ontario in 1826, where he purchased 400 acres of swampy forested land just outside King. His farm quickly dwindled to 200 acres which was inherited by Henry's father Mark. Most of Henry's letters were to his mother, Agnes (Scott), with others to Albert, Alice and his daughter Mary.

Henry started his missionary career, after a stint at farming and teaching, as a missionary for 16 months in the North West Territories. On April 6th, 1893 he applied to the China Inland Mission (C.I.M) to be a missionary. For some reason that application was withdrawn and he applied again the following year on June 20th, 1894. The referees found him "Thoroughly Satisfactory", except one who thought that he needed *tact*. His application was accepted by the council on Dec. 31st, 1894 and he left, a week and a half later, on Jan. 9th, 1895 from Toronto on his way to China. After a train trip across the continent, he left by steamer from Tacoma on Jan. 17th, 1895 for China. A month later he arrived in Shanghai.

His first job was to learn Chinese. The introduction was language school in Nanking which took almost a year. His entire career after that was spent in Anhwei province, mostly in Cheng Yang Kwan. On Sept. 19, 1898 he married Lilian Cobb, of Mt. Cobb, just outside of Scranton Pa. She, of course, accompanied him to Cheng Yang Kwan. Lilian and Henry had four children, Henry (1899), Mary (1901), Lilian (1902), and John (1905). Lilian (Cobb) died in 1911 and sometime after that he married Elisabeth (Bessie) Birch of Philadelphia. Elisabeth became the superintendent of the girl's school in Cheng Yang Kwan and did a lot of "women's work". She also appears to have been in charge of writing their yearly reports in the late 20s. Elisabeth died in 1931 of some unknown ailment.

This collection has many gaps. It is clear from the post cards that do exist, that in the early years Henry wrote letters home to his mother almost every week. The "letters" in this collection are a mix of postcards, longer weekly letters, and some reports. There are many references to letters that have obviously vanished. Henry also wrote yearly mimeographed reports that probably exist somewhere. I have found only two such reports, both written by Bessie and sent to Alice. Hopefully, in the future some of these gaps will be filled.

Through the kind offices of David Michell, Director for Canada of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the current incarnation of the China Inland Mission, and a volunteer helper, Miss Evelyn Weaver, I am able to include reports of Henry and family that were printed in their magazine *China's Millions*.

In May, 2001, I was able to travel to China and ride my bicycle to Cheng Yang Kwan, where Grandfather spent most of his 32 years in China. I was fortunate to be there on a Sunday, and accidentally discovered a church service in progress. The church was filled to overflowing. I am including that part of my China Journal at the end of the letters.

The Letters and Reports

1895

St. Paul Minn. Jan. 11th, '95

Dear Mother,

I am this far on the way. We reached Chicago yesterday afternoon and spent 4 hours there, visiting the Moody Bible Institute. We traveled last night in a sleeper and rested splendidly. The first night I was too happy to sleep, but made up for it last night, though not less happy. We have met nothing but kindness on the route. Dr. McTavish handed me an envelope from two of his people, on the platform at Toronto, in which was \$5.00. I will write you a letter soon.

Henry

Jan. 14th, 1895

Dear Mother,

We are now about 100 miles from Tacoma in Washington Territory. The Rocky Mts. are far behind us and we are climbing up the Cascade range. The scenery has been magnificent; steep mountains of solid rock with tops bathed in clouds. We have seen only a few snow-capped peaks. The weather is mild and very little snow along the route except in places on this side of the Rockies. I will write you a letter from Tacoma.

Henry

Tacoma, Jan. 16th, '95

Dear Mother,

We go aboard our steamer in Tacoma tonight and hope to be moving seaward before morning. Our party sat for a photo today and the negative will be sent home in Toronto where you will be able to get one if you wish it. God be with you.

Henry

Address — Care of China Inland Mission, Shanghai

Victoria, Vancouver Island, B.C. Jan. 17th '95

Dear Mother,

The Tacoma is taking on additional cargo here so we are sporting ourselves under the Union Jack for a while. Probably the last word until I get across. God be with you 'till we meet again.

Henry

Nanking, China, Mar. 4th, '95

Dear Mother,

I have not had time to write a letter this week so I send you this card. We are all hard at work at the language. Each of us has a Chinese teacher two hours each day, Sabbaths excepted. There are 27 students

here at present, all young men; the ladies school is in another city. We all are recruits for the C.I.M. and more on the way. We are having a very happy time here. The Chinese treat us well. I have not heard any of them call us foreign devils yet. They call us foreign teachers, "Yang sien seng". I received my passport today. Also photographs, which I will send home in a week or two.

Henry

Nanking, China, June 7th, '95

Dear Mother

This week I thought I would write on Chinese paper, but I find I will be obliged to use a pencil, as the ink spreads too much.

Last Wednesday evening as I was coming in from the usual walk outside of the city I found a small crowd gathered at the gate of chi "Te-su T'ang", Jesus Hall, as our home is called. On coming up I saw one of the missionaries greeting our opium patients. Earlier in the evening as two of our young men were walking outside of the city, about a mile distant, they were hailed by a party of Chinese who were running towards the city bearing a litter. They were calling "Yang Sien Song" (foreign teachers). Our young men waited and the party came up and laid the litter with a man in it at their feet and begged for medicine, saying the young man had taken opium. As the foreign teachers of course had no medicine with them, they told the bearers to run quickly to the North gates to the Jesus Hall and they would get medicine. Away they ran. Fortunately they were in time and the young man's life was saved. He was willing to be treated as he had repented of his rash act. The Chinese often take opium when in a passion and repent of it when too late. This young man's mother had followed the party in and the gratitude was touching to see. She knelt down in the street and knocked her head on the pavement before Mr. Westwood, who had treated the case. This is their way of expressing deep thankfulness. They do not do so in ordinary occasions. Last night we heard of another case but it had ended fatal. A young man had taken the drug and was dead when discovered. Such cases are of constant occurrence especially among women.

One of the missionaries is at present away visiting some outstations. His last letter reports three baptisms.

Sat. night, June 7th.

Our usual Saturday night meeting is just over. Mr. Hunt, the missionary who was visiting the outstations is back, and tonight gave an account of the work in the places visited. The name of the chief place visited is Ta-tong, about 30 miles down the river. There is native evangelists there, but no foreign missionaries. The evangelist and his wife are very bright, and are bearing a noble testimony before their fellows. Mr. Hunt says their faces preach. He spoke of one man, a shopkeeper, who not only closes his shop on the Sabbath, but also puts out a notice to that effect, that everybody may know why. Also he loses no opportunity of preaching Christ to those with whom he comes in contact.

We had also a long letter tonight from Mr. Baller who is escorting a party of new lady missionaries to the north. They have been travelling by the Grand Canal and making slow progress on account of the canal being blocked with junks, about 900 in number, taking tribute rice to Peking. Mr. Baller's party travelled 10 miles in 6 days, but that gave them more time for preaching by the way. He too speaks well of the brightness of the native Christians. They have left the canal now and I think are crossing Ho-nan. At one place the people asked some questions about the small country that had rebelled, that being all the information about the war that had percolated through their skulls. They think all the earth belongs to China and that some small country had rebelled. I do not think this war has humbled China much for a great many of the people know nothing about it, and those who know there has been a war think China has been gloriously victorious.

News by telegram has lately been received at Shanghai of a great riot in Chen-tu in the heart of the province of Sechuan. The report indicates that all mission premises have been destroyed and much of the

missionaries' effects, and the missionaries themselves driven to the Yamen for safety.

This evening I visited our burial plot for the first time. It is about two miles out of the city beside some rice field. There are, I think, four missionaries sleeping in Jesus there.

One evening this week as I was out walking with Mr. Knight he brought me to the face of a hill near the river on which are some very curious stone images. I do not yet really know their meaning as Mr. Knight could give no information. At the summit of the hill is a Chinese fort, but just a little lower down is what appears to be a large round flat rock, but closer observation shows it to be artificial, being built largely of cement. Leading down from it are two rows of stone images. There are two lying front down which appear to be images of women and which he cannot explain except in the stranger(?) words. I could not perfectly understand his meaning. But I gathered that these images were thrown down and broken during the great rebellion. Probably they had something to do with idolatrous worship and were destroyed by the rebels, for the rebels did trample idol worship underfoot and destroy idols.

This evening I went past a shrine on my way to the cemetery in which were ten idols.

Goodnight

Henry

P.S. I got the 5th letter from you this week, also one from Albert

P.S. Monday June 10th: Yesterday a woman came in from a village, 20 miles distant to be hospitalized. She is a Christian. She has unbound her feet.

Excerpt on the same rice paper

I had several other things to tell you which I have forgotten. I enclose you a bookmark worked by a Chinese woman. The words mean, "Jesus still lead on" and are part of the first line of a hymn. It is rather thick for a bookmark, the Chinese ideas being somewhat defective in that direction. I am enjoying magnificent health: am standing both the heat and the study very well indeed.

Write soon,

Henry.

Mailed from Yokohama, Japan, June 14, 1895

Addressed to Walter S. Ferguson, Eversley, Ontario.

.....the hospital at Wu-hu, more than 100 miles down the river. I do not know whether or not he will go.

There have been four mails since last I heard from home. I have received only one letter from America since the 4th of June and that was from the Rocky Mtns, not from the Great Lakes. I hear from my old fields with a good degree of regularity. I am sending out lots of letters but getting very few in return. But I suppose you have all been specially busy through May. Albert with exams, mother with garden, etc., and the rest of you with other things. I think I have heard from you only twice since coming here. I want you all to keep Prov. 25:25 in mind. I suppose you are getting the Kingdom(?) Tidings. If so, you will know how the missionaries are coming up. So far 16 have been provided for, one of them from this side. (Marks on the paper make it difficult to read - Chinese writing and also something like small red paws).

Mrs. Kaught has just sent us up a bottle of peach vinegar. It is something like raspberry vinegar only made from peaches. She says we are not to be afraid of it as there is lots more. So I have just been down filling tea pot with water and pouring some in. I offered Whittlesey a cup-ful but he said he would rather drink

Nanking, China, Aug. 12th, '95

Dear Mother,

Only a card this week again as I have not time to write much. The sickness has almost disappeared from our compound. Dreyer is moving around a little. Was down to meals yesterday and today. He is the last.

We have heard this week of an inhuman massacre of missionaries of Fukien, 8 women, 2 children, and one man. You will be able to get particulars later, perhaps through the Williams. They were not C.I.Missionaries. We have none in that province. Things are quieting down in Sichuan.

I read a letter from you last Tuesday.

Henry

Nanking, China, Aug. 15th, '95

Dear Mother,

Only a card this week as I am very busy today. The boat party came back today, three of them requiring attention which it was my privilege to bestow. Whittesey is quite well. We think it was not typhoid fever he had as he recovered so quickly.

There was a good home mail today; a letter from Alice (at last – hope she will not be so long again) Date June 21st. It enclosed letters from Elsie and Jimmie. One from Albert, June 18th. I congratulate him on his success at Varsity. Also a postal card from you. The text referred to should be Mark 16:15. They all came by San Francisco. There is a C.P.R mail due this week so I hope for more. I am well, standing the heat splendidly.

Henry

Sept. 2nd, 1895

Dear Mother,

Only a card this week. I am well and progressing with the language. Sam leaves us this week for Chefoo. We do not know what for unless it be to teach in schools. He is to meet Mr. Taylor at Shanghai and confer. I do not yet know when or where I will be going. He is the second of our party to go. Dooly being in the business department at Shanghai. Now that the hot weather is nearly over the rest of us expect to be going.

Henry — Make my destination a matter of prayer.

Nanking, Sept. 23rd, '95

Dear Mother

I have not much to write about just now so do not take time to write a letter. I do not yet know where I am going as nothing has been decided yet. We have not seen Mr. Frost and are not likely to as he does not intend to visit Nanking at present. Mrs. Goforth has arrived at Shanghai. Some of the brethren from Nanking who were there on business met her.

When is Thomas coming home?

Henry

Cheng Yang Kwan, Nov. 14th, 95

Dear Mother:

Here we are at a C.I.M. station. We arrived before 3 o'clock this afternoon having walked about 70 li or 23 miles since morning. We are about 3 days walk from my journeys end. We have had no trouble, having honest men with us. I am writing a book of travels (note-book) which I will send home after I finish my next batch of correspondence. I received a card from you and letters from Alice and Albert just as we were starting from Nanking. Letters will henceforth take some weeks longer to pass between us.

Henry

Tai-ho, Nov. 20th, 1895

Dear Mother,

Here I am at my new home; arrived yesterday, about worn out after walking 250 or 260 Eng. miles. I have written a diary by the way which I will send after I have written again to my donors. Our mailing arrangements here are peculiar. Our nearest Post Office is at Ying Cheo Fu, 70 li distant. We send a man down once a fortnight with letters and he brings ours back. I will not be able to post weekly any more but will be able to write as much as formerly. We have a good home here, thoroughly Chinese, and boundless scope for work.

With love to All. "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year"

Henry

Tai-ho, Dec. 5th, 1895

Dear Mother,

Brock and Barnett returned yesterday. Mr. Brock belongs to Cheng Yang Kwan, but being an experienced missionary he has been commissioned to open Ying Cheo Fu. I go with him for that purpose starting D.V. tomorrow morning. We will live in an inn in the suburbs and travel about the city and vicinity selling books, etc. and will endeavour to rent a house in the city. I will be able to let you know of progress.

Henry

1896

Ying Cheo Fu, Jan. 4th, 1896

Dear Mother,

Yesterday was your birthday. I wish you many happy returns. Mr. Brock and I returned today to the inn here after a three weeks intineration. We were over the Honan border at a place called San Ho Kien. At one place I sold alone, and had no difficulty, except to give out the traits and take in the cash fast enough. We have been well received wherever we have gone, and having found a very ready sale of our goods. Found a card from Albert waiting for me (26th).

Henry

Cheng Yang Kwan, Jan. 26th, 1896

Dear Mother,

I have not time for a letter and have not much to say, but as the mail is going out I send a card. This is Chinese New Year time – a week from today. This is a lucky time for burying people and the air is filled with the din of Chinese music day and night. The Lord is doing wonders for me in the matter of language. I preach with a good degree of freedom and the people understand i.e. if they pay attention.

Henry S. Ferguson

Ying Cheo Fu, Jan. 29th, 1896

Dear Mother,

We are still living on the main street and have so far enjoyed peace and quietness. The street officials however are beginning to take notice of us and are bringing pressure to bear on our landlord to get us out.

We haven't much to hold to yet, as we have only taken this place for two months, so may have to leave for a time.

Henry

Ying Cheo Fu, Jan. 4th, 1896

Dear Mother,

I cannot send you a letter this week as I am out of stamps. Anyway, I have nothing much to write. I was alone for some days, Brock having gone down to Cheng Yang Kwan. We have no house yet and no immediate prospect of one. We are all well and comfortable in this inn. I am going up to Tai-Ho tomorrow to spend the Sabbath.

Henry

Ying Cheo Fu, Mar 26th 1896

Dear Mother,

Your letter of Jan 26th came in tonight. You mention that a disciple minister in Aurora claims to have immersed me and the rest of my party before we set out. I was roused to a high state of indignation when I read that part of your letter. That claim is absolutely false. I have never been immersed. I have nothing against immersion as a mode of baptism believing it to be as legitimate as any mode. My views are broad on that point. What rouses my indignation is the falsehood. Only two of our party were ever immersed. They are Dreyer and Dooly, and they were immersed in Chicago when attending the Moody Institute. Saure is a most pronounced Presbyterian, about the staunchest I ever met. Whittlesey also is staunch. Our party was never all together before setting out. I never met Whittlesey or Dreyer until I met them at Tacoma.

Who is that Disciple minister? I have not slightest idea. Probably I have never met him at all.

I have just written to Mr. Amos about this. Show him this letter at the first opportunity to make sure of his hearing from one as there is always a possibility of letters going astray from the distance, and correct the falsehood as you may have opportunity. Mr. Amos will know what to do about the matter. I leave it to his judgment.

You may rest assured that if ever I should take such a step I will let you know about it. You are right in not believing the story because you had not heard it from me.

I cannot understand a minister of the Gospel making such a false statement as the one you report to me. I hope it was a distorted report that reached you and that he did not say anything of the sort.

I am well. We have left our ship and are living in a very comfortable inn inside this city.

Henry

Ying Cheo Fu, Apr. 9th, 1896

Dear Mother,

Two letters from you tonight, Feb. 9th and 23rd. Also one from Albert. I am still out of stamps so write only a card. I am surprised you have not yet heard of the receipt of the razor and all the books. I have mentioned it very often.

The weather is getting very hot. We have no house yet, but are very comfortable in this inn, five of us, 2 foreigners and 3 chinese in one room.

Henry

Cheng Yang Kwan, May 11th, 1896

Dear Mother,

I 'll not write a letter tonight as I'll have my mimeograph letter ready next week. It works perfectly. I had a letter from you and a card from Albert yesterday telling of your visit to Toronto. There was a letter from Emma Scott too, a fine letter. I had one too from Allie Montgomery a little while ago. I wish all my little cousins would write.

Could you give me Aunt Scott's address. I will send her copies of my mimeograph letters.

Henry

Tai-Ho, May 19th, 1896

Dear Mother,

Brock and I arrived here yesterday. We left Cheng Yang Kwan on Friday; rode donkeys nearly all the way; spent Sabbath at Ying Cheo Fu. Brock is going on to Cheo Kia K'eo in Honan. I have not time tonight to write a letter but am sending you my last year's passport as a curio and another mimeograph letter with some words filled in as I am afraid you might not be able to make out all of the ones I sent from Cheng Yang Kwan

The man who came to our shop at the Hu before Chinese New Year and sat by the hour reading our books and bought a New Testament and other books to take home, has since died. He was a vegetarian, well reported of. He lived alone, his family having died before him. We can only hope that he died believing; there does not appear to have been anyone with him to hear his testimony. We have heard through our own native helpers who went to his village to see him and found that he had passed away.

Henry

Tai-ho, Aug. 21th, 1896

Dear Mother

I am sending you this long letter by Mr. Clinton printed on my mimeograph. I have been printing off one of my own today, (have not finished yet) which I will send next week.

We, that is Malcolm, Clinton and I, expect to start next Tuesday for Wuhu on the Yang-tsi to attend a conference of the workers of this province to be held from Sept. 21st to 24th. Barnett will remain here. I expect to arrange to see Wm. N. Ferguson and perhaps be present at his marriage as he expects to be married in September.

I wrote off the second of the six examinations in the C.I.M. course of study last week. I have at last heard the results of the Canadian elections and have rejoiced greatly thereat. The way Quebec has refused to be dictated to by the hierarchy is as gratifying as it was unexpected. I heard through Albert by the last mail, but even he waited 10 days before writing. I thought some of you would have written the very next day, knowing my interest in the matter. However I received a Montreal Witness, a Globe, and a Mail and Empire, by the same mail as Albert's letter, sent by friends in China, so I have been pretty well informed on the subject. I am well acquainted with Mr. Frank Oliver who has been elected to represent Alberta. He is a good square man, fit to be a supporter of Mr. Laurier.

Goodnight from your loving son,

Henry.

Shanghai, Oct 2nd 1896

Dear Mother

I have been at Shanghai ever since last Friday noon. I am having a time of very great refreshing so much so that I have not had time to write to you. I came down to attend the Mott conference. The Lord is giving us much blessing in it. Mr. Mott is a secretary of the student volunteer movement and a man of great spiritual power. I met him in Toronto University the year I was there.

I have just returned from a meeting at the Seaman's Mission which it has been my lot to conduct tonight. It is 10 o'clock, so I have not time to write much. A C.P.R. mail goes out tomorrow, and it may be I shall find time to write a few more lines by that time. I have very happy times with the sailors at the Seaman's Mission. Some of the crew of H.M.S. Archer come every night, and they are fine sturdy Christian men.

I may add that I have the pleasure of meeting my elder sister almost every day.

Oct 3rd

Dear Mother

The mail is soon going out, and I have been busy all morning. I haven't time to write any more just now as I am going to call on my elder sister (That's a secret; I just whisper it in your ear, but it need not cause any alarm)

Your loving son,
Henry

1897

Cheng Yang Kwan, Feb. 18th, 1897

Dear Mother,

I received 17 letters by the last mail, which came in a week ago. There was one letter and two postal cards from you among them and a letter and a post card from Albert.

The feast of lanterns was held this week and we are glad to be relieved of its incessant din and turmoil. It is partly a show, and partly a ceremony. Our Street Chapel has been well attended during its progress.

Henry

Cheng Yang Kwan, Mar. 5th, '97

Dear Mother,

I am sending two pair of scrolls tonight to Lloydtown for thee and Walter! That is their address is it not. If not you can send them a post card asking them to call there. I am well. Dr. Williams is back after an absence of several weeks. I hope to go out itinerating next week.

Henry

Cheng Yang Kwan, Mar. 30th, 97

Dear Brother Albert,

I want to tell you that you are the best correspondent I have, with the possible exception of mother. I returned from a journey tonight and the mail that came in during my absence brought me only one letter and one postcard, and both from you, there was also a roll of cartoons (I did not receive the roll you spoke of sending with your last, but a parcel of mail matter for us has been lost, or at least has not yet been delivered, in the native post office between Wuhan and here and it may have been it.) Your accounts of political matters are intensely interesting and are the only ones I get except through the Mail and Empire which is sent me regularly by a friend in Shanghai. I hope you will continue faithful in corresponding, even though I am slow, and exhort the other members of the family, particularly Walter and Thomas to be so also. Tonight although

it is midnight or after (and therefore really tomorrow) I must at least begin a letter to you. And first I must correct an erroneous but very natural inference you and R.G. drew from one of my letters to the said R.G. The person I attended to, whom I was particularly glad to meet at Shanghai is my elder sister, the best friend I have in China, but although we have not compromised on the "I'll be a sister-to-you basis" there is nothing between us such as you naturally inferred from my unguarded remarks. She is one of the true friends the Lord gave me when I first set foot on Chinese soil. It is she who supplied me with all the books needed in the study of the Chinese language, including the large Lexicon, a complete Bible, and some books not really needed in the language study. These books all have my name in English gilded on the covers, and it will be needless to say that I regard them as treasures. Nevertheless the inference you and R.G. drew was quite true to nature, (including my nature) and is therefore an evidence of your great skill in drawing.

I returned tonight from a visit to the city of Shau, or Shao Chau, 60 li down the river Huai from this place. It is an ancient city, like most of the great cities of this part of China, figuring in Chinese history, so my teacher tells me and I believe, more than 3000 years ago. (There is a city in the Tai-ho district, Po-cheo, which was a seat of Empire as early as 1760 BC and is still an important place). I set out last Tuesday 23rd, accompanied by my teacher, Mr. Mao, and a coolie. It is been raining with a remarkable degree of steadiness since the middle of Dec. but had been fine for a few days, i.e. three or four, before we started. (12:15 I must retire but will resume some other time)

The 31st

The roads were fairly dry but by the time we got to the first village, 20 li from C.Y.K. It began to rain again, and now nine days later, it is still raining with only short intervals of cessation, and the sun or stars very rarely showing themselves. At that village, Kien Ko Tsih, we were stopped for the day by Mr. Chang, whose eyes Dr. Williams had treated, who invited us into his house and we enjoyed his hospitality that afternoon and until the middle of the next forenoon. He is an elderly man and has six sons, and therefore his happiness is very great. His sons are extremely nice fellows. I fell quite in love with them. The father is an apothecary, Chinese fashion, and the two eldest have read the books and therefore have learned the trade; but the second keeps a school and teaches three of his younger brothers and three neighbor children to read and write. Over the door of his schoolroom he has a sign board with an inscription meaning The Happy Resting Place. In C.Y.K. there is an opium den which has the same sign. Alas! Alas! These people are all well disposed toward the gospel, i.e. friendly, but I failed to see that their Chinese self satisfaction is much shaken yet. A young man in the village bought a complete New Testament and a hymn book. The next day about 10 o'clock the rain ceasing we moved on, through mud and water. This was the main thoroughfare between two great cities but in Canada it would not be honored with the name of a road. We had not gone far before it again began to rain and we had to take refuge in a wayside inn. Here we preached, as our custom is and sold a few gospels and after about two hours we were able to move on. Towards evening we came to a river over which is no bridge. But there were quarried stones lying in its bed indicating that in the more or less remote antiquity there had been a bridge there. We were told there would be men there who would carry us over, but such was not the case,. So we had to strip off shoes and stockings, roll up our trousers and wade. The water was not much more than a foot deep. But fancy such a state of affairs on the main road between two great cities. In Canada it would not be allowed to exist between two such places as Eversley and Temperanceville. That night again was spent in a wayside inn, 12 li from our destination. Thursday forenoon, still picking our way through mud, we reached Shao Chau. All this time our coolie had been keeping up with us and carrying a load of more than 100 pounds, which shows what kind of fibre the Chinese are made of. But fancy taking most of three days to go 60 li. I have gone 70 li in an afternoon with good roads.

Shao Chau is a very large city but there is much empty space within the walls. One of the gates is walled up for superstitious reasons and the street leading up to it is almost deserted though it ought, if the gate were open, to be one of the chief business streets of the city. It is feared the water would come in and flood the

city if that gate were open, though it is high above the water mark. The city is 10 li from the Huai river, but is now completely surrounded by water, as is also this city, owing to the overflow of the Huai caused by the long continued rains. That river looks like the Yangtse at present. Wherever its banks are at all low it spreads out into a lake. There are consequently many thousands of acres of drowned wheat along its course. The space between Shao Chau and the river was sown in the autumn, but now only patches here and there are above water.

On arriving we took up our quarters at the best inn, probably the city affords. The conditions were as unsanitary as possible but that is a matter of course in China. Besides preaching and book selling we had another matter of business, to get the deed for our burial ground, recently purchased, stamped by the registrar. We remained five days. It rained hard every day, with intervals. We sold only about 2000 cash worth, but had many visitors at the inn to whom to preach besides conversing on the streets and in shops when out selling.

Back of the City is a fine range of mountains, or rather steep hills, being only about 1000 feet high. The north gate of the city is connected with them by a stone causeway, with arched bridges. On Sabbath we went over, the rain holding off, and visited a famous spring on the mountainside about a mile from the city. It is indeed a fine one. A garden has been laid out around it. It is walled up with stone and surrounded by a stone pavement through which a winding channel is provided for the water. Below are rockeries in all sorts of shapes, ponds with water plants and crossed by zigzag stone bridges. Behind is a large summer house with chairs, table and lounges, the walls hung with scrolls and other decorations admired by the Chinese, and there is in the enclosure a number of trees. The stream flowing from the spring is about 1/2 square foot in sections and quite rapid and beautiful clear sweet water, enough I would judge to supply the whole city. I told my teacher that if that were a foreign place the whole city would be supplied with that water. As it is no use is made of it and the city is supplied with dirty, contaminated water from the river and other sources, I was sorry I was not thirsty so that I would enjoy a drink for I have not had a drink of water since returning from Wuhu.

April 2nd

Today the rain has ceased, the sky is clear and cloudless. The water is around us for miles in every direction and is up to some of the city gates. It is like a great lake.

One of the mountains back of Shao Chau is crowned by a temple to a famous goddess. Every year in the 3rd month the people come from all directions in tens of thousands to worship her. That will be week after next, and I intend if God wills to go back and remain as long as the concourse last to preach and sell books. Another mountain is crowned by a pagoda. There is another pagoda in the city but it is very old, my teacher says more than 1000 years and it is in an advanced state of decay. Even the earthenware images of Buddha in its lower story have not been able to check the ravages of time.

When we set out for Shao Chau I intended to make but a short visit, and be back here for Sabbath, but was prevented by rain and also by delay in getting the deed of the burial ground stamped. This cost 7000 cash, of which 1300 go to the public treasury and the rest into the treasury of the men who look after the business. The cost of the ground was only 3500 cash. Last Tuesday, the rain ceasing for a time I said to my teacher that if the weather continued fine we would return next day, and we went on the street. But coming to the gate of the city and finding that there was a strong fair wind blowing I sent the teacher to engage a boat, and went back to the inn and prepared to start at once. The price for the whole trip of 60 li was 400 cash = about 20 cents. Our party consisted of three men, with bedding and a large box. We started at 1:15 and reached here about 1:30 sailing most of the time over the flooded fields.

On the streets of Shao Chau one day I was joined by a young stranger who was eager to enter into conversation, He asked me what sage we foreigners worship. I said we do not worship any sage, but Jesus the Lord of Heaven, who is greater than all sages. He answered, "We also do not worship sages." I said, "Who then do you worship?" He replied "Ma-Ham-meh-the." You will have little difficulty in recognizing

that as Mohammed, whose followers are very numerous in this part of China, I visited their mosque in the city one day. It is peculiar in being clean and having no vestige of idolatry about. They venerate Jesus as a sage, under the name of Er-sa, but deny that He was ever crucified. There is I understand in each mosque a sealed up doorway, (I saw the one in this city) and it is said to represent the door through which Jesus escaped from judgment hall when condemned to be crucified. So the name of Jesus though not the teaching of Jesus, was known in China long before the missionaries came. It is evident that whatever of truth there is in Mohammed's teaching he obtained from Jewish or Christian sources.

Do you know that in Kai'Feng Fu the capital of Honan there is an ancient colony of Jews. Until recently they had their own synagogue, observed part of the Mosaic ritual and had their Hebrew scriptures. Several copies have been obtained and taken to Europe. But now the last of their Rabbis who understood the sacred language is dead, they have themselves torn down their synagogue to sell the material of which it was built, they are beginning to mix and intermarry with the heathen and their children are now grown up without the seal of the covenant. They still have some of their ancient books, but with no one to read them, and the city is still fast closed against foreigners. The last foreigner to visit them, W.A.P. Martin, late principal of Peking University says that only a heap of rubbish and a stone tablet bearing the name of Israel and the word "Ichabod" the glory is departed, mark the sight of the synagogue. O that these people may learn of the realization of the hope of Israel before they forget their origin. They are very poor and despised by the Chinese.

I have now read the whole of the New Testament in Chinese.

Please write several times more before you get this. Send this to mother after you have read it.

Your Loving Brother,

Henry

Cheng Yang Kwan, April 3rd, 1897

Dear Mother,

I returned this week from a visit to the city Shao Chau, 60 li from here down the Huai river. I have written Albert an account of the journey which he will forward to you when he has read it. I mean to go again in a week's time as there will be tens of thousands of people coming to worship a celebrated idol whose temple is near the city.

Henry

Cheng Yang Kwan, Apr. 9th, 1897

Dear Mother,

Your letter and Thomas's to hand this week. China has an Imperial Postal System of its own now with the result that my postage expenses will be more than doubled.

I have been helping the Dr. this week administering chloroform to patients being operated upon. I return to Shao Chau next week to be present during a great idol festival.

Henry

I doubt that the post office will send this because it is Japanese, so if you don't get it, never mind. (around the margin of the post card)

Tai-ho, Aug 23rd, 1897

Dear Mother,

Mr. Gilmer and I are taking a short vacation at Tai-ho having come up here by boat last week. The brethren here are all well and we are enjoying our rest. The rains have ceased and the waters around Cheng

Yang Kwan must be subsiding. Much of the city was still under water when we left, but it had fallen some and will probably be out of the city now. I suppose that you will have seen Dr. and Mrs. Williams before this reaches you.

Henry

1898

T.K.P. Feb 3rd 1898

Dear Mother

Just a line to go with Thomas' letter. Of course he will let you see his so I need not add much. I do not think I told you before that the serge you sent me was not enough to make two gowns for me, but the surplus was just enough to make a good warm shirt and waist for Lilian, and she is wearing it every day during the cool weather. So you just guessed the amount exactly; could not have been better.

We are not in charge of the station yet and will not be before spring. Mr. & Mrs. Mills are still with us and have not yet been appointed to any station. They have had much sickness in their family but all are well now.

Last week I went to a village 20 li from here and on the way saw some idolatrous absurdities I had never seen before. In a small side room in the upper story of a temple is a female god, made of mud, properly put to bed, well covered with bed clothes. Beside her were lots of rag babies and little slippers. She is the one the women of the neighbourhood go to pray for sons. I have not had an opportunity of enquiring as to the superstition concerning her.

The road I travelled was the one passed over by the Emperor Hien Fuy in going from Peking to Nanking. At several points he alighted from his chair to relieve himself by the way. Over each of these spots a pavilion with an honorary tablet has been erected and still stands to commemorate the important event.

Feb 10th will be Chinese New Year. Today the local mandarin went out in procession to invite spring. I suppose winter would continue indefinitely if he did not.

I am getting a very good chance for study during this winter. I hope before another year passes to be through with the C.I.M. course of study. It is very difficult to get a good teacher and a poor one is not of much help with the classics. Lilian has written off the first exam in the mandarin dialect, but is not strong enough for constant study.

We had 11 letters last Monday, most of them from America, one from Thomas among them.

Good night for the present.

From your very loving son and daughter

Henry and Lilian

A Visit to Shao Chau (China's Millions, March 1898)

We quote the following short paragraphs from an interesting letter by Mr. H. S. Ferguson:

On arriving we took up our quarters at one of the best inns the city affords. The conditions were as unsanitary as possible, but that is a matter of course in China. Besides preaching and bookselling we had another matter of business, to get the deed for our burial ground, recently purchased, stamped by the 'registrar.' We remained five days. It rained hard every day, with intervals. We sold only about 2,000 cash worth, but had many visitors at the inn to whom to preach, besides conversing on the streets and in the shops when selling books . . .

When we left Cheng Yang Kwan I intended to make a short visit and be back again for Sabbath, but was prevented by rain and also the delay in getting the deed of the burial ground stamped. This cost 7000 cash,

of which 1300 go to the public treasury and the rest into the treasury of the men who look after business. The cost of the ground was only 3500 cash

On the streets of Shao Chau one day I was joined by a young stranger who was eager to enter into conversation. He asked me what sage we foreigners worshiped. I said, 'We do not worship any sage, but Jesus the Lord of heaven, who is greater than all the sages.' He answered, 'We also do not worship sages.' I said, 'Who, then, do you worship?' he replied 'Ma-ham-meh-teh.' You will have little difficulty in recognizing that as Mohammed, whose followers are very numerous in this part of China. I visited their mosque in this city one day. It differs from other heathen temples. They venerate Jesus as a sage under the name of Er-sa but deny that He was crucified

Shao Chau is a very large city, but there is much empty space within the walls. One of the gates is walled up for superstitious reasons, and the street leading up to it is almost deserted, though it ought, if the gate were open, to be one of the chief business streets of the city. It is feared the water would come in and flood the city if the gate were open, though it is high above the water mark and is about 3 miles from the river.

1899

T.K.P. Dec 11th, 1899

Dear Mother,

The great event has taken place. Lilian gave birth to a fine healthy boy yesterday morning at 3:40 the anniversary of his Father and Mother's wedding. She had a very moderate labor, which did not exhaust her strength and is now as bright and happy and restful as possible. The initial pains began before daybreak on Saturday morning, but she did not have to lie down until late in the evening. When she lay down the pains were slow and too weak to be effectual and she fell asleep between them, so that she had to rise once or twice to her feet to stimulate them. When it was over she was slightly torn externally. She is in highroad to speedy and complete recover. She had no sickness or nausea during labor, her appetite is good and her food does not now cause her any inconvenience. The baby's name is Henry Stevenson. Lilian thinks no name good enough for him but mine, but he will be distinguished by the second name, that of the Deputy Director of the C.I.M. who was as a father to my wife in Shanghai and gave her away at our marriage. His Chinese name we have not fully decided on but think we will call him En-lee (Chinese characters – Grace and Truth), which is as near the sound "Henry", as you can get in Chinese. We feel quite proud of being the first to make you Grandmother.

With much love from us both, I mean all three.

Henry

1900

Chinkiang, Dec 4th, 1900

Dear Bro. Albert

We had a long letter from you a few days ago, also from Alice and Mother by the same mail. We hope you will not work too hard; you seem to have abundant opportunity to do so. We have not so much to do as usual just now, but I hope and am endeavoring to put in a good winter's study. Chinese furnishes a subject of study to last a Methusaleh for life, and were it not that we study it for what we can put into the language, not for what we can get out of it, it would be scarcely worth the trouble. There are some excellent Christian books in both the Mandarin and literary styles which are well worth reading for our own personal profit, in addition to their value as a language study.

I hope to go up to T.K.P. tomorrow or the day following, to visit the Christians and re-settle our evangelist, who moved away at the beginning of the trouble. I hope to return after one week, for our consuls will not permit us to remain inland any length of time.

The Br. Cruiser Walleroo, the Australian contribution to the imperial defenses is on guard at this port. She is well armed and four torpedo tubes. We have meetings on board twice a week. There are about a dozen Christians in that crew. There is also a German gunboat here and until yesterday a formidable looking French battleship. Yesterday morning she left for Shanghai but had not gone far before she ran aground. She stuck there all day and in the evening after the tide came in the Walleroo went down and pulled her off. Doubtless the German also would have helped had its assistance been required.

I am sending the Celestial Empire now to Scranton friends. I will send you some more copies later. I am glad you like it. I may say that the Shanghai press is not responsible for the tremendous lies which emanated from Shanghai last summer. They were either manufactured or gathered from Chinese sources by the correspondents of the London and other dailies. The Shanghai foreign press is by no means as bad as it might

We are all well. I have quite recovered from the summer's dysentery. Lilian is not so well as she might be but is perhaps as well as could be expected at present. Little Henry is as well as possible. He very much enjoys the morning of his life, and his pretty, loving, happy baby ways are a great source of happiness to us. We have a strong young Chinese nurse for him who delights in caring for him. She is a married woman, 19 years old, without children of her own. Her wages are \$2.25 (gold) a month and she pays all her own expenses. She is able to live well on this and save about half of it to send to her home, so she is very well off in her own estimation and her family also are benefited so they and she are very glad for the arrangement to go on.

Events are at a standstill in China. It is hard to catch some of the men whose heads should come off as they have fled far west. The court itself is also completely in the power of the military commander, one of the arch-conspirators.

1901

Chinkiang, Mar 19th, 1901

Dear Mother,

Tomorrow is my birthday and little Mary's. I am 33 years of age and she just one month. Two years more will make me half of the three score and ten, and Thomas will be that on the 5th of July next, and you are finishing up the three score, so we all getting old. Well, Lilian and I have some to take our places. One month has made a great difference in little Mary. She is a vigorous, hearty child and is doing very well indeed. Little Henry is also as well as can be, very fond of the open air. We have a carriage for him and when I am here I take him in nearly all my walks, to his very great enjoyment, as well as my own. It is quite a hardship to be separated from my family so much as I have been during the winter and will be during the summer unless I am allowed to take them home with me to T.K.P. which at present seems highly improbable. The consuls are still forbidding women and children to go into the interior. Little Henry is his father's boy and no one can take my place with him, and I also shall miss him very much.

Many missionaries are already returning to their posts, especially to the westward. Some are taking their families, on their own responsibility. The western provinces are far removed from the scene of recent troubles. The politicians at Peking are very slow in making peace, because the Chinese government is not to be trusted. It is trying to get rid of the foreign troops by speaking fair words, promising everything, and doing nothing, so the powers are waiting, not merely to make a treaty, but also to see that its terms are carried out. Lei Hung Chang is a great admirer of Russia and the Russians are trying to push a treaty

with him giving them Manchuria. That would soon make them the paramount power in the East and would eventually give them complete control of the situation or precipitate a universal war to prevent it.

I find much to encourage in the church at Ta'ing Kiang Pu. The trying times of last year proved the steadfast ones and revealed the unstable church members. There is a strong true Christian backbone in the church.

Lilian is much better in health since Mary was born. She has all her trouble before childbirth. At confinement, she has a very easy time, and while nursing enjoys perfect health and puts on flesh. She was never better in health than during the few months after Henry was born.

With love from us all.

Henry Lilian Henry, Jr. Mary

(Enclosed with previous letter - from Lilian herself) March 20th, 1901

Dear Mother

Henry has gone to Shanghai to get a box of summer clothing we left there. I am very well and so is little Mary Agnes and Henry Jr. Little Mary weighs (today) 9 lb., which is pretty good for a month old baby. I am sending you a lock of hair from each of their little heads that you may keep in mind how they look. Henry has a big head covered with flaxen hair and Mary dark hair that curls about as much as your does. I think she will look like you when she is as old as you are. We are very happy with our children but so sorry we can't get back to our work.

Your loving daughter,

Lilian

2 Enclosures: 2 locks of hair.

Whei-yang-hai, Taotai, Yamen, Saturday 2nd Nov. 1901

Dear Mr. Ferguson,

I am much obliged to be accepted with your kind invention to give me all the Bibles yesterday and being at present have my Earnest desire to make my children familiar to it gradually.

I have the honour to inform you that I was under the Confucius Religion already, indeed my Knowledge is quite limited that I have not the leisure time to effectuate my wish in studying the extra education and so I let my children to begin it first, however I myself will try it by and by if I could.

I am sorry that your loosen articles have not been entirely returned back and I have already ordered the magistrate to find it now; but as he will try with all his might that I think surely it can be succeeded.

Yours truly,

Shen Yu Chin

1902

Chefoo, July 14th 1902

Dear Mother

We received a letter from you and Alice just a couple of days ago. I have been ill for a fortnight but am well and at work again now. First I had tonsillitis (quinsy) so bad that for 36 hours I could swallow nothing, not even water. Then following this I had a light attack of dysentery. Mary has a running ear and but for that the children are well, and Lilian is as well as could be expected, better than she has usually been under like circumstances. [pregnant with Lilian Elizabeth born Aug 16, 1902]

I am very much interested in Thomas taking the farm. He has had a great deal of experience and is not afraid of work. We have always hoped that one of the family would take it, and make a home for you, taking

all burdens off your shoulders. I hope it will not mean more work for you. I will be very glad to help when I am home as much as my duty to the mission will allow.

A terrible tragedy has just occurred in connection with this Boy's School, involving the death of 13 of the lads. It was thought at first to be cholera, but was afterwards ascertained to be "Ptomaine" poisoning. The meat for Sunday dinner is usually prepared on Saturday. For Sunday, July 6th, five chicken pies were prepared, and put on ice to keep. When they were served, one of the Masters noticed that the one he was serving seemed to be somewhat tainted, but did not think it important. The one at the next table, presided over by the head boy of the school was apparently in the same condition. The boys did not complain, but most of them ate what was given them, a few only setting it aside. In the afternoon about 4:30 o'clock when the boys were lining up for the march to church, Graham Broomhall asked to be excused as he was not feeling well. When they returned he was found in his room unconscious, at the point of death, the condition of the room seeming to indicate cholera. In the evening others were taken ill. On Monday 8 more boys died. Monday night 7 more. On Tuesday 2 more. On Wednesday 1 more. The doctors from the settlement came and several doctors from the men-of-war in harbor, besides our own doctor. They determined the nature of the sickness, but could do little to check it. An American cruiser kept us supplied with two nurses who were a very great help: strong, quiet, capable, considerate. One pair relieved another at regular intervals. The cause of death was Ptomaine, an alkaloid formed by the decomposition of flesh. The formation in this case seems to have been favored by the fact that the crust was not perforated so that gases which should have escaped did not. It is strange that of five pies cooked at the same time and in the same way, two should have become in a short time deadly poison and the other three remain quite harmless. Among the dead are Dr. Parry's oldest son, Stewart Kay, the youngest son of the Shan-si martyr; Hugh Grey-Owen, the head boy of the school and his brother Norman, both lads of exceptional promise; Howard Fiske, youngest son of Mr. C. T. Fiske, one of our China council.

The leading Shanghai papers have published very sympathetic editorials on the subject. The bereaved parents too have in some cases gone out of their way to show sympathy for the school staff upon whom the responsibility falls. It is a crushing blow to many parents.

We resume school work today. The month of August is vacation so there will be only another fortnight. My own illness kept me at home during the trouble in the school so that I was not able to be of any help.

With our united love

Henry & Lilian Henry and Mary

1905

Tai-Ho, April 20/05 (from Lilian)

Dear Sister Alice

Your letter of Feb 12th to hand and it gave us all great pleasure. I have read it many times to the children and they talk about it and you and Grandma. I think I told you that Henry Jr. has said more than once "When we have taught all the Chinese about Jesus, then we will go back to Grandma's, and never come here any more." As to our journey on the houseboat, Henry always said he held himself in readiness to jump into the water after one of the children if they fell off, but I am very thankful they did not fall in. When we had a good tow, Henry always took the children for a run every day but it was difficult, for boatmen walk faster than fat little Mary wanted to, and they often wanted to stop and look at something, and the boat went on of course we could make it wait but we were anxious to get on as it got very cold before we got here.

Yes, I am putting on Chinese clothes on the children and you ask me if I want any material in a later shipment. Of course I would use it if you sent it, but I can buy Chinese material that would cost less than you would spend, and the cost of getting it here would be a good deal. I have bitterly repented of mother's not washing and boiling my wool as she did on what I brought out before we were married that made such

lovely warm light wadded clothes, but this crawls through the cloth as if it were alive and I have had to rip up our clothes and put cotton which is heavy and not so warm as you know. But I thought poor mother worked so hard I would not let her do any thing for me that I could help. We use the comfortables all right.

If you could send me a few whole cloves, a little sage and a few hops in the fall shipment I would be so glad. Dried apples would be grand but if you build the barn you won't have time to dry apples. We want to write to Tommy's and tell them how much we enjoy the apple butter they gave. It is so rich and good, we have really got more out of it than all the rest of the jars. The Jelly jars were all broken but one. O I forgot the blue plums! They have given us many a lovely treat. I take a small cup of the plums, 3 cups of water and 30 strands of "iang-tse", a kind of sea weed that the Chinese use to make jelly, boil it 20 minutes; put it in a jelly mould to harden, and it makes a pretty wholesome jelly and with our goats milk cream whipped, it is "de-ish-us" Mary says.

One goat had two little kids today and they are pretty little things too the children are very happy. We have a hen sitting on 20 eggs, I hope she may hatch some of them, but I have my doubts, still if you are in Rome, you must do as the Romans do and they always set 20 to 80 eggs under one hen. I did not set the hen for I did not understand Chinese hens and the Chinese do. We have 3 servants and all 3 cost us about \$4 (gold) and they are worth about that much. A woman who makes the beds, sweeps and cleans, washes and irons and sews, a man that buys and cooks (Henry says, "he won't have a Chinese cook, when he gets big, he is going have his Aunt Alice") and an old man who is the goatherd, he milks the goats, feeds them, leads them out to eat the grass about the grave mounds and road sides and sweeps the yard. I forgot to say the cook takes charge of the dining room and waits on the table and I, I study, have all enquirers, and have 5 meetings a week, besides the care of the house and the children. Our Cook, while excellent, from a Chinese standpoint, is the dirtiest man, about his work, I ever saw. The kitchen is dark and the stove smokes so I don't wonder he is careless, but Henry is going to have a new chimney and a big (?) glass window, we have only a paper window now, and it don't let in much light. Then I hope he will reform and keep things cleaner! We went out for a walk and picked handfuls of violet; cherry & peach blossoms are falling, and apricot and Jolibese (?) are coming out. I have planted all the vegetable seeds I have. We have very little room for a garden. The peas Aunt Lizzie gave me are coming up. I have 12 tomato plants from the tomatoes that Mrs. Ferren gave me and four hills of muskmelon and watermelon from the musk and watermelon seed you gave me, one of pumpkins and 2 of squash. My onion sets fill a place nearly as big as the table and I only brought a cupful, I have 12 hills of sweet corn and a few hills of potatoes. Except the melons, we can't get the things I have planted here in China, and I have given out two cups of beans to have planted agreeing to buy all they grow from them at the highest market price for beans.

Goodnight love to all.

Your sister & all the rest,

Henry, Lilian and children.

(written by Lilian)

May 2, 1905

(some of the following letter is missing, but the envelope indicates it was mailed on 2nd May 1905 and received in San Francisco on May 25th written by Henry S. Ferguson)

... concerning your peace.

First, On Saturday, when from within the (gospel) hall at To-ng Kiang Pu I went force to come to Antong (?). I did not first go into the presence of the dearly beloved great man the pastor.

Second, Sincerely I have offended you. Dearly beloved pastor, it was because our wheelbarrows left early, and also I was afraid the pastor might not yet have arisen: therefore it was that I did not go into the great man's presence. Leastly I have received of the dearly beloved teacher Miss Reid most considerate

treatment for which I am everlastingly thankful. May God be with the great man the pastor. Also may I trouble you great man to send greetings to the great man your wife. I will not speak many characters.

Written on the 18th day of the 2nd month.

”The younger brother in the church, Chu Yong Li salutes you.”

The last sentence is of course the signature. There are several glaring mistakes in the letter showing that his Chinese scholarship is not ripe by any means. One of the mistakes is where he writes of speaking characters. He is now twenty years of age and his friends are eager to have him married before he gets any older. If he had succeeded in making his \$90.00 Ilex (?) per month he would probably not have addressed me so profusely as great “man”. He might scarcely have condescended to look at me.

The cruiser now at Chinkiang, being larger than any that have been stationed there before, has a chaplain of its own as only the larger man-of-war have. He is very high church almost Roman Catholic, for he sometimes speaks of holy Mary, the mother of God. He is however very free and affable, and quite willing that we should have occasional meetings on the ship. He cannot pray however without a book or preach without a sermon to read. In a sermon which I heard him read he quoted from Homer, about Ulysses’ visit to the shades beneath and treated very much as he did the scripture.

I am sending you along with this a Celestial Empire which I think you will find some interesting reading. Or three copies containing nothing of importance I have neglected to send.

With our united love

Henry, Lilian, Little Henry, Mary Agnes

p.s. You see Henry says Mary is beautiful & of course she is. But it is because she looks like Mother and is so good. I hope she will grow up as wise and good as mother and one half as unselfish. I am not yet willing to think of her going out to nurse everybody who needs her skill. Oh no I am only willing for her to be one half as unselfish or self forgetful as dear mother is. She doubled her weight in six weeks

Lilian

1907

C.I.M. Hospital, May 15th, 07

Dear Mother & Alice

We received your letters of Apr 7th tonight. We are now all in Shanghai. We came down as you know taking the children to school and in order that I might attend the Centennial Conference. I left Lilian and the children at Chinkiang while I came down to Conference; afterwards I went up and brought them down. We are in the C.I.M hospital because my wife is poorly, bowel trouble, and has had to have all her back teeth out. She had them all fixed up before we left home but they began breaking again before we reached China, and as some of them had been filed down to the jawbone or very near it was no simple matter to pull them. She had to take chloroform. The work was done here in the CIM Hospital, Dr. Jackson of Shanghai giving the chloroform while Dr. Robinson, an American dentist here did the pulling. That was Monday morning, and her mouth bled profusely until today, Wednesday, noon. The blood came in great clots which often nearly strangled her in the night, in her sleep. The bleeding is now stopped, and she is regaining strength. Little John also has been poorly, bowel trouble again, but is doing nicely. The three older ones are well.

We have received all the things you sent, blankets, box of butter and large parcel of sundry purchases from Eatons. We have not opened the butter box yet. We will probably leave it here until we return from Chefoo. We received also at Tai-Ho the Christmas present Alice sent to the children, and I think the children all acknowledged it in their own handwriting.

There is a very great demand for Missionaries to distribute famine relief in the country around Ysing Kiang Pa. I would have been there now but for the illness in my family, and I may go yet, as soon as Lilian us sufficiently recovered to do without me.. A whole shipload of flour is on the way from the Christian Herald,

besides large sums of money which that periodical is sending out. It is desired to distribute all of this before wheat harvest in June, as wheat harvest will yield at least a temporary relief. In our Tai-Ho district there is a splendid, prospect for wheat, if it rains enough and not too much, but in Ysing Hiang Pu district the water did not subside soon enough to permit of much sowing.

I would like to tell you something about the conference but have not time tonight, so will leave this letter unfinished. May 19th. Am leaving for the famine district. Will write again.

Henry & Lilian & children

1908

Ying Chow fu. Feb 18th 08

Dear Mother,

This is the 12th day of the Chinese first month. We have had good times preaching in the streets and in the chief city temple, assisted by some of the Christians and enquirers. There are now eight men applying for baptism some of whom I think are ready and I hope to baptise them soon; others I think need longer probation and fuller knowledge. I have never found so much encouragement in the work since I came to China.

The Lord has answered our prayers with regard to the family health. Little John has been seriously ill ever since he almost bled to death in his sleep after circumcision in May last. It has since then been one thing after another as if death was unwilling to relinquish his pursuit, and was trying first one dart and then another. For nearly six months he had very serious bowel trouble, so bad that at times it seemed as though he could not recover. When we left the houseboat the bowel trouble was acute, accompanied by high fever. We cried to the Lord, our only resource, and for more than two weeks he has been steadily improving until now he all but well, and has gained so much strength that he is able to run around again quite freely. Lily had a terrible racking cough after leaving the boat, but that too has almost passed; and my wife continues to gain strength, and to enjoy good general health.

We received your letters with the ribbons for the children, and also the handkerchiefs.

Mary is in terribly robust health, so full of energy that there seems to be danger of her bursting the house, not to mention her clothes, and of breaking the furniture. She is mature enough for school we think, as mature as children ever are at her age, and we will send her at the first opportunity, probably for the September reopening. The weather this year is as usual the most remarkable on record. I never saw so much or such continuous snow in a single winter since I came to China. It is nearly a month since we left the boat and my wife and children have not been off the place for a walk yet, on account mud and snow.

With our united love

Henry and Lilian

Henry, at Chefoo

Mary, Lily, John

Ying Chow Fu, May 14th, 08

Dear Mother & Alice

Your letters of March 20th and 26th reached us by the same mail, yesterday with the two photos of the barn. It is quite an imposing building. Who took the photo? Aunt Nellie's letter came a mail or two earlier. I am this year 40 years old. How old is Mother? Not 70 yet, but very near it.

I am again bereft of my family. My wife has gone to the coast with little John and Mary and Lily, in the hope of being able to save little John's precious life. I hope that it may be possible to send him home, and that my wife may go with him. He has chronic dysentery, and I think he needs change of climate without

losing his Mother's care. I hope she will be able to go home with him and stay until he is out of danger. She has been remarkably well since spring set in. Mary and Lily will of course go to Chefoo, unless Lily can go home too. That would be good for her. She seems to have forgotten Grandma's, and the voyage back to China.

My family left Ying Chow Fu on Saturday, May 2nd, and I went with them four days, including Sabbath, when we rested. During the three travelling days we went 450 li, 85 + 95 + 270. The big run was made after we got out on the broad bosom of the Hwai. As they had fair winds on the succeeding days I think they must have got down very quickly. I got off at a station of the American Presbyterian Mission, and spent a day with them. When I returned overland, a distance of about 300 li, stopping two days, Saturday and Sabbath at one of our outstations 110 li from here, and coming in the 110 li on Monday. Now that I am alone I mean to devote myself to outstation work as much as the demands of the station will allow. Our most important work is at the centre of course, but the outstations have very strong claims. Our opportunity is very, and increasingly, great. The Chinese mind is becoming most unsettled in regard to old heathen beliefs, which is a preparation for receiving the Truth.

With very much love,

Henry

Boat on Ying Ho (river), Oct 2nd, 1908

Dear Mother,

We are now near the end of our return journey to Ying Chow fu. It has been the quickest journey we have ever had over this route. We are likely to reach home tomorrow night, just three weeks after starting. Last year we were 32 days. This time we were able to take a short cut only possible at high water, leaving the Grand Canal near Kas-yu and crossing the Kao-yen and Pao-Ying lakes to the Hong-Tsi Lake. We have had almost continuous fair wind ever since the morning of Tuesday, Sept 22nd. It has failed us only two days in all that time. Our progress before that had been very slow.

John has improved greatly on the journey. It was apparently just the treatment he needed. He sleeps right through the nights, his bowels have greatly improved, he is able to take and to digest more food, he has gained greatly in weight, has filled out and become solid, to a degree, his cheeks are red, and he looks like a well boy. But he is not over the danger line yet. He will be soon if he improves on shore as he has on the boat. But he is still very easily upset. His ups and downs succeed each other apparently as a matter of course. A part of our problem is to avoid the downs. His case never appeared so hopeful as now, since he was taken ill. His improvement since the beginning of this journey has been rapid. We are both very well, and we get very encouraging letters from the children at Chefoo.

This is a wonderfully good time for travelling. The autumns in China are wonderfully pleasant, the, the weather being, but for an occasional rainy spell, very even and moderate, neither hot nor cold, just pleasant. Summers are hot-wet and winters cold-wet.

I have written Albert a letter with all the news and asked him to pass it on to you, so I have not left myself much to tell you direct.

I seem to have quite recovered from my fever, and am none the worse. The boat journey has been just the thing for me too. I am glad to be getting back to my work. What a lot of change, and variety, we have in our life! How we run over the face of the country! But I greatly prefer the going straight ahead at home. I travel only from necessity, and to get there.

With very much love to you all, but especially to you.

Henry & Lilian

Henry Mary Lily at Chefoo, John

1909

Kan TuanTsih, April 15th 09

Dear Mother

I am at a place 100 li from Ying chow-fu, where there are some enquirers. I left Lilian and little John well yesterday. In your last letter received, you asked what missionary work Lilian does. She does the hardest work of all; she teaches the women and they are very much harder to teach than the men because their minds have never been trained in any way; their minds are indeed even more cramped than their feet. Three weeks ago I baptized three women, one over eighty years of age, another the mother of two Christians, about 55, and the third about forty, the wife of one of the Christians. At the same time I baptized their infant child. Last Sabbath, I baptized a young man of 32, whom I have known for four years, and who has proved well.

We have very much encouragement in the work I have a class of about eight young men who have decided for Christ, and who are eagerly striving to lean to read the New Testament for themselves. One uncouth looking young carpenter who decided for Christ two months ago has mastered the first ten chapters of Matthew and others are keeping pretty close to him, and still others following more slowly. Some who stood up in our evening meeting to decide for Christ a year ago and who went away and were lost sight of have turned up again still recognizing the step they had taken and desiring to follow on.

But the devil has taken alarm and has sent a new contingent against us, the 7th Day Adventists who teach that none are saved except such as keep Saturday as the Sabbath. They go straight for the Christians, and try to unsettle them. One of them, a Chinese came to our Conference last week and at once began teaching that doctrine and giving away tracts. One of the tracts he distributed contains the statement that "All men who are able to keep this commandment (the 4th), at the last day the Saviour will receive them to heaven. All who do not keep this commandment, at the end of the 1000 years will be consumed in the flame." None of our Christians seem to have been moved by this doctrine, however. Every Sabbath morning before the regular service I have a class with the men for memorizing Scripture, and I hope that through the Word in their hearts they may be strong to oppose with the sword of the Spirit all who would turn them aside from the Truth. In the New Testament there is no mention of the Sabbath in connection with the way of salvation, neither do I recollect a single exhortation regarding it. On the contrary, "by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified" Yet these people come in and teach that there is no salvation except for those who keep the Jewish Sabbath.

Did you send us a cheese last autumn? The butter and dried apples reached us safely enough, every jar intact, but we have not even heard of the cheese so are hoping it was not sent.

On this journey of 100 li, 33 miles, I have not seen a single field of opium. It is all plowed up. After I return, if all is well at home I hope to make a journey of 140 li to the west where last autumn I found 1/4 of all the land sown with opium. I hear from many that it is all destroyed too, and I believe it is. One man who had sown 60 mouru(?) = 10 acres, and who boasted that he would not plow it up unless the official came out himself and saw him do it, got his wish, or rather the contrary, for the Tai-ho chief magistrate came out in person and saw that he did it. The anti-opium reform has won a sweeping victory in this district this year for the destruction of opium appears to be complete. The victims of the habit will have to get rid of it as best they can.

A poor old woman, about 66 years of age I should judge, attended our conference, and has visited two or three times before, who is running the roads in search of her son who went away a year or so ago with a company of men doing business, but who did not return with them; neither were they able to give any satisfactory account of him. She has walked to Hankow and back and to many other places. Ying-chow-fu is 50 miles from her home. She says, "How glad my boy will be to meet his mother on the road," She seems to think she only needs to keep on the road and she will meet him. She believes in the Lord, and prays and

preaches as she goes, but I am not sure that she is altogether right in her mind, and I do not know what she preaches besides the name of God and of Jesus.

With very, very much love from us all
Henry & Lilian,
Henry, Mary, Lily, John (at Chefoo)

Ying Chow fu, June 11th, 09 (from Lilian)

Dear Mother and Alice

I went away for a visit of 10 days! The first time I have made a visit without Henry for medical purposes, in China since I was married. I went to Tai-ho our old station where Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm live. It is like country and I enjoyed it so much. John and I went to visit the old places where Henry Jr., Mary and Lily used to go with us. Sometimes I would forget and almost call out for them, fearing they had strayed out of sight, then I would come to my self, and be thankful that they were at school even if my heart did ache for them. At Tai-ho we watched the reapers and gleaners, rode our donkeys and wheel barrows, and walked out in the country. Oh how I enjoy the country, the sky, the fields, the trees and the river. I had not been out of this great city for eight months and only three times out of my own door. I have been so well for nearly a month and it is a great luxury. My school girls have come home and I have opened a school, in the mornings for them. I have some women too. When I got back home, I found a good many flowers had come up. I had only sowed half the seed and we just put in the rest. It may be a little late, but the season here is long. Thank you again for seeds. We sent to Toronto for Crown jar rubbers and we got Mason rubbers which are too wide. It was a very great disappointment. If you can get cheap crown jar rubbers, please send me two doz. by mail. They will miss the peaches, but I hope to have tomatoes. I say cheap because the dear ones are all too wide. It is hotter here than at home and we have to be more careful to make fruit keep. Henry says is your letter ready.

With very very much love
Yours in His service
Lilian Ferguson
P.S. Could you send me some lettuce seed to plan in the Autumn

Ying Chow fu, June 11th 09

Dear Mother

The summer is now fairly upon us, though the time of extreme heat has not yet arrived. Our little John is quite keeping very well indeed, quite disproving our fear that his trouble is only waiting a little provocation to return. He is delicate enough yet, for it takes a long times for bowels so long disturbed as his were to get back to perfectly healthy tone.

The wheat harvest is now past. There has been so little rain since mid-winter that it looked for a time as if the wheat would just dry up. But a light shower or two came during filling time and proved just sufficient, and the result is a most abundant crop of plump hard grain. Flour was selling at 40 cash per catty (1.5 lbs) before wheat harvest and is now down to 28, and will doubtless come down still more. That indicates very great plenty. The whole great flat of the river Hwai, fertilized every summer with deposit from the overflow of the river and usually sown every autumn but the crop very often lost through the overflow coming before reaping time, will be reaped this year. And now plentiful rains have come and given the languishing spring crops a good start, so that this promises to be a year of unusual plenty. And there is no opium in these parts this year. Only a few of the provinces however have stopped the production this year. A great deal has been produced in others. The task is apparent by too great to be accomplished in one year. I hope the Chinese government will persevere to the end.

We have masons and carpenters working for us still. They have been repairing roofs and walk, and now they have almost finished rebuilding our street chapel. We found roofs and walls in very in very poor order, (of that building) when we took it over.

This place has 11 buildings; three of them are brick dwellings with massive tile roofs; three are brick chapels with lighter tile roofs; two would do for school rooms, for Chinese schools; and others are good dwellings for servants, and for store rooms, etc; and comprises about 3/4 of an acre of land. The whole cost 1266 taels, is about \$750.00. *The buildings would cost much more, (added by Lilian)*

The masons and carpenters work for 5 cts. A day and board themselves. They begin very soon after daylight and work steadily, though without a bit of hurry, stopping time for meals and as often as disposed to drink tea, which we provide. They do their work very well, with great attention to detail and with tremendous economy of material, making use of every piece of broken brick, or stone or tile: 5 cts = 150 cash; so the whole of an artisan's day's wage will buy only about 8 lbs. of flour. How they support families on such wages I do not understand; it is no wonder so many children die very early. The vast majority of the Chinese live on the barest necessities of life; they have no luxuries and very little pleasure except the bare pleasure of living.

There is a woman here now, come for medicine for her only daughter, who has had she does not remember how many children but certainly much more than 10; she thinks 19, and only one is living. The others died of sickness and famine; and that is a very common story among the multitudinous poor. They are married young without being consulted, and their children are born to die. This woman and her daughter are Christians. Her husband is now a regular attendant at services. The daughter, grown up, teaches as a pupil teacher in a mission school in Honan for less than a dollar a month. She is now home for the summer; we will employ her as Bible Woman until time for her to return. The distresses of the Chinese are very great indeed. Yet they are quiet and patient, accepting what they do not know how to prevent, and while death makes havoc among them do not appear to be distressed.

I enclose two Ying Chow for clippings from the Celestial Empire, and a letter from a protg who is studying English, etc. in a school of the American Presbyterian Mission at Hwai-yuen, 100 miles from here. He has made great progress in English as well as other branches. He pays his own way. We have another whom we are supporting.

With very, VERY, VERY much love from us all

Henry and Lilian

Henry, Mary, Lily, John (all at Chefoo)

P.S. We will let you post or deliver the enclosed letter to Miss Robson.

Ying -Chow fu. Sept. 1st '09

Dear Mrs. Helmer

I enclose herewith our little Lilian's report for the last term, and her letter. Will you please show them to Mrs. Haskyn of Beulah Hall; I think they will like to know what became of it, and what the recipient says about it. Afterwards please forward them to my mother; i.e. the letter and report.

We are glad to be through the summer. It has been one of the hottest I have ever experienced in China. We are both well, but little John was quite prostrated by the heat. He is not well yet but is now doing nicely.

This has been an excellent year agriculturally in these parts. The first harvest, wheat, was excellent, the second, giant millet, was very good, and the third, beans and sweet potatoes, planted on the wheat land after the wheat was reaped, is shaping splendidly. It is a year of abundance.

There is a tremendous eagerness among the farmers to sow opium again, the price having gone up so that the profits will be very great. They are backed by the great array of opium victims who are beginning to feel the pinch of scarcity and dread the terrible ordeal of breaking off. None was gathered this year at all.

We are having steady encouragement in our work, notwithstanding our new adversaries, the 7th Day Adventists, who try to turn the Christians back from the gospel to the law from the New Covenant to the Old, making the point of time to be observed as the Sabbath the most important thing in the whole law. We have a small but steady little band of enquirers, already decided for Christ, under instruction and probation, who we hope soon to receive into the church by baptism. But we are continually oppressed by the consciousness of failure to overtake our share of the present unique opportunity in China.

Yours faithfully
H.S. Ferguson

Boat in Yuf Ho (River Jing), Sept 16th, 1909

Dear Mother

We are now on a houseboat, taking a cruise for the good of our health, after the heat of summer. I think I told you how that little John was prostrated by the intense and prolonged heat. He did not have dysentery, but an extremely watery copious diarrhea, with fever and extreme weakness. We thought a boat journey would help his recovery, and do us all good; also we wished to consult a doctor. The nearest doctor, American Presbyterian Mission, is at Hwai-yuen on the river Hwai, 150 miles (450 li) away by water. So we engaged a house boat and left Ying- Chow Fu on Monday, Sept 6th. We reached Hwai-yuen on Friday noon, found the Dr. away, spent until Tuesday morning with his brother, and are now returning. We travelled 30 miles on Tuesday, 60 miles on Wednesday and then left the river Hwai for its tributary the Ying. We hoped to reach home early on Saturday, the remaining distance being only 60 miles. But today we scarcely went 10 miles, the river Ying has risen several feet in the night, in consequence doubtless of very heavy rain in Honan and is therefore flowing against us with a powerful current, like a mill race. It requires a strong wind to make any headway against it and the river is so crooked that a fair wind becomes a head one around the next bend.

John was taken bad again on the way to Hwai-yuen, apparently through the condensed milk we gave him not agreeing with him, Milk, unless pre-digested, is one of the things he cannot take when ill. He is now almost well again however, but we will need to be very careful of his diet for months to come. The autumn is usually very favorable to recovery from bowel trouble. His trouble this summer, due to the great heat, was very different from that of last summer and the summer before. He has on the whole we hope made very great progress and every year will we trust make him stronger.

Last summer after the great rain, the greater part of the city of Hwai-yuen was under water so deep that it came up to a man's neck in the main street. Cheng Yang Kwan was very little better. The city of Show-chow, 60 li from Cheng Yang Kwan is surrounded by a good wall, and channel up all the gates to keep the water out, which reached halfway up the walls on the outside. Close to Show-chow are mountains with gently sloping sides with lots of room for the whole city safely above the high water mark. These floods occur every summer, but were higher this summer than usual. The present downrush of water means a renewal of these annual floods, though we hope not to the usual height. One would wonder why the Chinese choose such sites for their cities were it not that in many cases, Show-Chow, the sites were chosen thousands of years ago, perhaps as early as the time of Abraham. Hwai-yuen has moved over, the old city wall still stands enclosing an empty space, the new city being back a short distance farther from the river. Sept 19th This is the anniversary of our wedding, last year we spent it on this same boat, coming up from Chinkiang. Today we are anchored by a large village 75 li from home, and I have preached on the street, it being Sabbath. We have been 3 days coming 35 miles, though we have had a very fair wind, on account of the strong current against us. The water is going down rapidly however; it has fallen fully 4 ft. within 48 hours.

What queer people the Chinese are in many respects; what odd notions they have. They seem to be able to believe anything but the truth. I am thinking about their medical practice, as I often have occasion to do. One of the Christians at Ying Chow Fu has a child sick with enlarged spleen, a disease almost

certainly fatal; and extremely common among Chinese children. A Chinese doctor, or pretender to medical knowledge (Chinese doctors undergo no examinations and many cannot even read) told the parents that if he ate a certain quantity of dead child's flesh, he would recover, and the heathen relatives gave a beggar 500 cash to find it. That would not be difficult as so many dead children are put out to be eaten by dogs. It would not matter what the child died of, smallpox or what. The father came to us for advice, with the result that he did not allow the remedy to be taken. Another doctor ordered medicine made up with chicken manure, which was taken. I was speaking of this one day to a young scholar whose father is a Chinese B.A. Yes he said, my father took that medicine once. Another remedy tried with the child was piercing him with long needles. Natives tell me that these needles are sometimes run right through a sick child, and the Chinese have no idea of the vital parts. Scorpions and centipedes are favorite remedies with them and command a good price; scorpions at least are often eaten raw. The remedy for a kind of ulcer which they call mouse ulcer, is cats flesh. These are only a few samples of their medical notions.

Walls and furniture, tables benches, etc. in many houses, and in inns swarm with a certain wingless insect we call by the musical term "b-flats". This insect swarms with a kind of cockroach which can be seen in all the cracks during the day and swarm over the boat at night seeking crumbs and whatever else they may be able to devour. It is also infested with a kind of black ant, which also goes about seeking what it may devour, which seems fond of human flesh, and gives a very painful bite. Also almost every China-man's head and body are abundantly inhabited. These things are not nice to write, but they continually press themselves upon our notice, one knows China as it is without knowing such things as these. A proverb says that "The Emperor has three pearly lice on his sacred person." That seems to justify his subjects in having any number.

Sept 22nd

When I was at Cheng Yang Kwan, before I was married, I never knew the highest water to approach our compound, but last summer it filled the whole compound, the highboard floors of three of the rooms being the only submerged surfaces. There would be fully two feet in the kitchen and the chapel, and about 3 feet on the main street.

On Monday night, Sept 20th the shop of one of the Christian shoemakers who employs a large number of helpers collapsed. It was a heavy tile roof and seven or eight men were sleeping under it. The shoemakers 12 year old son was wakened in the night by a noise like some pressing against the street boards, or doors. He called and now one of the men who struck a light and saw that the building was shifting. He called the sleepers, who had just time to scramble out as they were before the building was down; i.e. they were out with nothing on, and had to dig for their clothes among the rubbish. No one was hurt, seriously, however.

The children's letters from Chefoo bring us the sad news of the death of Florence Ferguson, Wm. N. Ferguson's daughter, of cholera, in the Preparatory School. Our children, being her only relatives, are wearing mourning. We wait anxiously for the next letters to be assured that the disease has not spread, as it does not seem to have done. Wm N. Ferguson, one of our Mulmur cousins, who came out with Rynhart, is in the far west, as B. & F. Bible Society agent at (?) in Si-chuu province. He has recently published a book on "Independent Yerlo-land, the Thorn in the Heart of Si-chuan." Price 20 cts.(?)

John is perhaps holding his own, since we left the boat, but is not yet making the progress we hope for.

Alice has not told me anything about old friends lately. Do you know anything about Mr. & Mrs. Hopkins, Gertie Housley that was? How are Mr. & Mrs. Phillips? He was in his 79th year when we were home and still working the farm. He cannot be doing so still, surely. How is Annie? Where is she living! She is married is she not? How is our mutual friend Charlie; quite a staid old maid by this time? Do you ever run across Angus Williams? I suppose he still sits in his office every day. Do you know if he has a client yet? Tell me about any you know of.

Lily is first in her new form in the Preparatory School at Chefoo. Mary is 8th. There are 20 in it. We would like to have Lily come home to play with little John but one does not like to call her away when she is doing so well.

With very, very VERY much love to you all, Mother, Thomas, Alice from
Henry and Lilian
Henry, Mary, Lilian at Chefoo
John

Lilian asks for Aunt Alice's address, which we will send to her.

P.S. Wm N. Fergusons have only one other child, a boy not yet in school. Florence was 10 years old and would have gone up to the girl's school.

P.S. I enclose Henry's First letter from the Boy's School. He has done well in the Preparatory School, seeing that he has passed through it in two years and is able to enter the upper II from in the Boy's School, instead of that Ist or lower II.

Compulsory play means that at certain times the boys have to play whether they want to or not; they are not allowed to lounge or wander about or read books at those times. At other times they are allowed to do as they please. There is never any difficulty about the compulsion.

Pomegranates and dates are the fruits now in season. We have a nice lot of both on our own trees, two trees of each. We have been able to buy some nice grapes on the street. John continues to improve.

Ying Chow fu, Sept. 22/09 (from Lilian)

Dear Mother & Alice

Your most welcome letters received on our return from (?). I will answer questions first. As to Henry's socks he can get along this winter. They are very thin but I always wash and mend his socks and usually change twice a week and this makes them last longer. You ask if there is anything else we want. Henry thinks we will have to outfit John for School. He will be but 5 years old, but this place don't agree with him and he will have Mary & Lily in the same school and Henry only a little way off. If he waits till he is six years old he would be in the Prep. Class. Now I am going to tell you what I want and if it is too much don't send it. First, two pairs heavy dark blankets for medium fed; their beds are single beds but the principal said they did not like single blankets for they were always falling off on to the floor and the little ones catching cold, and one nobby little suit for a six year old, for autumn wear. Chinese tailors make very comfortable ones, but they are all alike and so coarse and plain, (I would be glad if it any kind of a bargain) If Mrs. Helmer was well and not rushed I would write and ask her but I am so fearful that it would be too much. These things can be sent any time March or April, next year the last shipment or when every you or Alice happened to be in town early or late would make no difference. We just heard of the death of W.N. Ferguson's daughter, Florence; she was about a year older than Henry and went to school at the same time. We were together a great deal during the summer. She i.e. Florence's mother was one of those mothers who was bound up in her children. I don't know how she will stand it. Also the youngest daughter of Mrs. Bothan a widow who was also a particularly fond mother. Mrs. Bothan took care of little John for a while when he was ill in Chefoo. I hope to make most of John's clothes here. He has to have a quilt, and lots of things as you know by the list I sent you when I was getting the others ready. I did not know what to do when I had three to get ready all at once, but dear little John don't seem much except such things as I can't get & can't make.

Lilian

Ying Chow fu. Nov 9th 1909

Dear Mother

We received your letters of Sept 26th last week. We had one from Mr. Helmer dated Sept 25th a few days earlier. He says he sees you occasionally, and thinks you are keeping usually well, although he can see that your strength is failing in general. According to a former letter of yours Albert says the same. It is

natural that it should be so. You will be 68 next January and a person of 68 cannot be expected to be like a person of 28, or 38 or 48 or 58. We continually pray the Lord to give you rest in the evening of your life. We are anxious for you to be preserved until we come home again, and for as many years thereafter as may please the Lord. We are now nearing the end of our fifth year since furlough; it is already five years since we left home. We plan to remain until Henry finishes in Chefoo. That will be another five years or a little more. You will then be 73 years old, not an advanced age if not prematurely broken down. I think we would then be justified in staying home as long as you live if the work here can spare us. Mr. Barnett, our predecessor here, had to go home on account of his wife's health. She has recovered, but he is remaining at home on account of his aged parents.

We baptised six adults and one child on Sabbath, Oct 17th or rather, five adults and one half grown boy. That is 10 this year, and far in advance of my previous year. There are others on probation, whom we hope to baptise next year.

We have a good street chapel building now; we rebuilt the old shop on the street after purchasing. We did it with our own money at first sending an estimate to Shanghai for the greater part of the cost afterwards, which was granted.

Little John is stout and strong again, but we still have to be careful of his food, both as to kind and quantity. I do not think that anyone but my wife would know how to feed him up to the highest point, i.e. give him the greatest possible benefit, and what change to make if he is not just right, having learned in the school of long experience. If he were sent home to you not fully restored to health you would have to begin at the beginning. Yet I think he only needs the Canadian environment to grow up a strong and healthy boy. Having done as well as he has in China, how would he not develop in Canada!

Henry and Mary have both had dysentery in Chefoo this autumn and we have written authorizing the principals of the schools to send them all home for the holidays. We would not be able to send them back again until the spring. They would all miss a term.

As for little John we will wait the Lord's clear leading. We have sent in our application for him to go to school next summer. With very very VERY much love from

Henry & Lilian

Ying Chow Fu, Nov. 10th 1909 (from Lilian)

Dear Mother & Alice

What a comfort the telegraph is during these anxious days! When we get a letter telling us that one of the children are seriously ill we know that it must be better by the time we receive the letter or we would have had a telegram. Thank you very much for the sweet William seed. I want to tell you that the Pagoda stamps, like are on this letter are very rare, limited, edition. So please preserve them for someone who will. Prize them. We have only rec'd two and they were two ct. ones.

I have a very earnest class of women. I wish you would remember a Mrs. Song who heard the gospel nine years ago, and whose son was baptized, and she hardened her heart or else she did believe for she refused salvation but now she comes and try as hard as she can to learn. I think she truly is a believer. I was struck with her face when she first came nearly three months ago and she has not missed a meeting since and is learning to read. Please remember her especially. John just said it has been such a long time I didn't go on the city wall. And I said I would tell Grandma that he had been such a good boy to play all day alone and not go out in the rain. He said, tell Grandma I did be brave. He don't like rainy days any better than any other little boy. We have painters, masons and carpenters. I will be glad when we are finished, it upsets the work more or less.

With very much love ‘

I am with grateful remembrance

Yours Lilian

P.S. You speak of sending us some other cheese in January as the one now on the way is so small. It is quite unnecessary to send the second one; the first will be quite enough. If it is small we will send less to our friends. The things you send us, butter, dried apples, cheese, jelly are a very great boon to us indeed, especially the butter.

1910

Ying Chow Fu, Jan 22nd, 1910

Dear Mother

Your letter and Alice's of Dec 5th reached us night before last. Lily and John were delighted with their handkerchiefs and ribbons.

What a hard time you have had with Thomas laid up with a broken leg. I am sorry you have lost two good ones, Eva dead and Jane lost her milk and has to be turned off. Was it either of these that kicked Thomas? If so there is some consolation in their fate. With these losses and no page ready for sale you must be pretty short financially. You know that any things you send us you are at liberty to charge through the home in Toronto.

I send Thomas herewith some seed potatoes. He will find them on the enclosed postal card which a Mrs. Taylor at Chefoo gave to our children. I hope Thomas can grow some 1/100th part as large. One wonders by what trick the photo was taken. It looks genuine enough and the camera has the reputation, claimed also by little Georgie Washington, of being unable to lie.

We get the Witness without fail, and value it next to our home letters. We learned of Mr. Fotheringham's death through it. We always look to see if any of our friends have been born or married, or have died and quite frequently learn things that we do not get in our letters about persons we know. But I value it most for the editorial pages, my wife for the home department, and both of us for the general news. I learned of the death of Mr. Brian (?) Inspector in Pickering, through the Witness a few days ago too.

I thank Alice for some news about old friends, such as it was. She is not much nearer some of them than we are. So Angus Williams has gone to Ottawa. You do not know I suppose what department he is working under? Who is minister of Justice? Has Angus' legal learning qualified him to work in that department?

We think we will not send John to school for another year; we will wait until he is six years old. We hope to arrange for him and my wife and perhaps Lilian to spend next summer in the mountains where he will be comparatively safe from heat and dysentery. He is a fine robust looking boy now and such a comfort to his mother. I do not see how she will be able to live when they all go to school and when I itinerate. Little Lilian was very happy at school, but is happier at home. She does not want to go back.

It is 1200 miles from here to Chefoo by the route they have to travel. Railroads are building however that will shorten the distance very much and the time still more.

China is doing grandly in the suppression of opium. I do hope Gt. Britain will not lag behind. China cannot stop the import from India but Gt. Britain can. The price of opium here has advanced more than 10-fold since the suppression began.

We have received all the money you sent us. It is only three or four weeks since I received the amounts sent by Allie Montgomery, Mrs. Smythe and Mrs. Henderson. I have written to Allie since. Money and things reach us very slowly. Money waits regular times of sending and things come by Chinese methods of transportation. Several boxes for us, some from Shanghai, but the cheese and butter doubtless with them, were shipped from Leuanchow, only 120 miles distant, a month ago, and have not arrived yet. Tomorrow is Sabbath, and it would be just like them to come then just while we are at worship. They come of course by heathen boat, and the boat people send them up to the house.

Jan 24th. They did not come in however yesterday.

Do not send us the other cheese you speak of, as we can use it only in cold weather, and this one when it comes will keep us going until hot weather.

Our city is so difficult of access. When the new railways are built, if it is not too late, we may hope to get our children home for the long winter holiday. They will be forgetting home, if they don't get home sometime.

We had a letter from Charlie Simpson a few days ago, the first letter since we returned from furlough. She is so busy that she does not have time to get married as all the others have done. Her bright cheery letters are quite a refreshment.

I am sorry to hear of old Mr. Phillips' blindness, but it is one of the evidences of bodily weakness incident to old age. He must now be 85 years old, or very near it, and I suppose she is not much younger.

Do you get the pagoda stamps on these letters? They are a limited issue, issued in honor of the first year of the present baby Emperor. They will soon fetch a high price from stamp collectors. They are already looked at with envious eyes and there is danger that these may be taken off before the letter reaches you, and be replaced by others. Only 3 kinds were issued, 2, 3, & 7 cts. And I have heard of \$5.00 being paid for a set; but I cannot vouch for the truth of the report. They have long been exhausted except in distant places like this, and even here they are exhausted except for the supply that I have bought up.

We have the 7th Day Adventists strongly opposing us in our district. They teach that the 7th Day of the week Sabbath is God's seal and, the first day of the week Sabbath the mark of the beast, and that more are saved except such as keep the Saturday Sabbath, i.e. since they began preaching, for since then no one can plead ignorance. Christ defers his coming until all true believers have accepted the 7th day of the week Sabbath. With such teaching as this they pursue the Christians everywhere seeking to turn them away from their faith in Christ along. Their headquarters are in Chow-kia-kow, Honan.

With very, very, VERY much love from us all.

Henry and Lilian

Henry, Mary at Chefoo

Lily, John at home

P.S. The cheese arrived this afternoon. It is perfect, and quite enough for this season. The butter has not come yet, but will doubtless come soon. (Jan. 24th)

P.S. If you should send us anything, address to Shanghai & we will give orders there where we want it. (Lilian)

Chefoo, Sept. 2nd 1910

Dear Mother

We have had a lovely summer with the children. Henry and Mary were in school during July, but Henry came to us out of school hours, and we were able to walk with Mary on the beach occasionally, i.e. almost every day, her school being quarantined for measles. But we had them all out together during August, which is a vacation month, and the Preparatory School quarantine having expired. They all entered school yesterday, including little John, and we are about to return childless to our station. We are to attend a conference of the missionaries of our province on the way and the date set for that allows us a week here after school opening. This is one of the Lord's gracious leadings. It will enable little John to make the change from home to school life gradually, without the heartbreak of sudden and complete separation from us. He has gone in very bravely. We had dinner with them in the school yesterday while we remain. We will be leaving Sept. 8th.

We have had a fine time together in the sea and on it, during August. We went boating quite often. Henry and Mary row very well. We bathed almost every day except Sunday. Henry has made a good beginning at swimming, and Mary and Lily a less beginning. Mary swims very well on her back. I have improved very

much in my own swimming this summer. I often swam half an hour at a stretch in deep water, and I can float by the hour, but am unable to swim with speed. The school boys had half mile, mile and two mile swimming tests in August. They do such distances very easily and quickly. Some have done five mile tests and some of the girls in the Girl's School have done three. These are wonderful schools. I doubt whether there are any better in the world. They are very much appreciated outside of the China Inland Mission, as well as in it.

The sea has a great deal in it to interest children, not to mention grown-ups. It has many strange forms of life. One of the most obvious of these is the jellyfish. In August the water swarms with them. When out boating, we could catch any number with our hands over the side of the boat. Sometimes in swimming we continually strike them. Full grown ones are from 6 to 8 inches in diameter. Some, perhaps more. They are quite transparent, continually expand and contract and look like bubbles or filmy flowers, floating through the water. They are very delicate. It is quite easy to make two fingers meet through one; and they are good for nothing except whale's food. Even the Chinese do not use them.

My wife occupied herself very much during the vacation going over the children's outfits, and so very often was not with us in the sea or on it. You cannot prevent mothers working for their children.

We have had all our children baptized on August 25th by Dr. Corbett, one of the grand old missionaries of China. He came out in 1863 with two others. They became a great trio, of which he is the last. The others were Drs. Matus and Nevius. Our children all believe with us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith is not assent to a system of doctrine, but trust in Jesus Christ Himself. The same confidence which a child reposes in its parent, directed to the Lord Jesus Christ, is saving faith. Young children are more, not less able to believe than adults. We believe in Christ to salvation from the dawn of intelligence on the testimony of their parents. Children naturally believe their parents, and believing their parents, they believe their parents' testimony of Christ, and believing, they trust Him. We do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is waiting to cooperate with the testimony of Christ, and where faith in Christ is there He is without fail. Conversion is passing into faith in God and in Christ and is usually a quiet unobtrusive experience. It may be accompanied by great, soul-shaking experiences or it may not, but these do not institute conversion. Conversion is placing confidence in Jesus Christ. It is for every one to place confidence in Him; to take Him at His Word, and then to leave it to Him to send what experiences He sees fit. We are in the world to have experiences, and to learn the lessons of our experience, and where a man has received Jesus Christ by faith, there will be Christian experiences; experience of the power of sin and of conflict with it, and of the power of Christ against it. There will be conscious experience of God's dealings; and very much other experience; but every man's salvation depends upon one circumstance and one only, viz., his relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and the life is in His Son. He that hath the Son has life and he that has not the Son of God hath not life" 1 John 5:11-12. And the only way to receive Christ is by Faith. "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." John 1:12. And Christ enters into the heart of the trusting child, as truly as into the heart of the trusting adult.

Had there been an infant in our household, it would not have been left out. The children of believers are holy. 1 Cor 9:14. That is, they belong by right to the Lord. He has a right in them and they accordingly have a right in Him. Every child of Christian parents has a birth-right in Jesus Christ. Such a child who on coming to maturity rejects Christ and His Gospel and Esau despising his birthright. One who remains out of Christ from ignorance is ignorant of his birth-right. It is for parents to claim their child's birth-right for him, and to see that he is in a position to appropriate it, that he does not come short of it through ignorance of it. We believe too in the right of parents to covenant on behalf of their children. This is continually done in affairs of the world and there is abundant precedent for it in the record of God's dealings with man, every covenant into which God has entered with man, with Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, having involved their future generations without depriving anyone of his personal responsibility. You see that I have been learning some lessons in the Lord's school of parental experience.

I am sending the certificate of baptism to Mr. Amos, as I wish the baptisms be registered in the records of our own home church. You may also let him read this letter.

We have had a photo taken, and will send you copies when they are ready. There are none ready yet.

With our united love

Henry & Lilian Henry Mary

All here Lily John

This excerpt was attached to the end of the next letter. Perhaps Henry forgot to include it in a previous, but missing letter.

What great changes a short time can bring. Dec. 2nd we got word that John was coming. Some kind friend unknown to us, having provided his expenses. How joyfully my dear wife set out the next day for Tai-ho to meet him. How joyfully she led him into our compound here a day or two after. How happy we all were. Henry had not been home for nearly four years. But I have written enough. I rejoice in the Lord "Even so, father, for so it seemed good in thy sight". May the Lord comfort you as he does me, and I trust the children too.

with much love,

Henry

1911

Ying Chow Fu, Jan 17th, 1911

My Dear Mother,

I have to write you a very sorrowful letter this time. At dawn this morning my dear wife passed through the pearly gates.

On Tuesday Jan. 3rd, your birthday, she went for a walk with us, Henry, John, and me on the city wall, but she walked slowly and without vim. John would run ahead & race back to meet her, so happy to be with his mother. His idea of happiness is simply to be with his mother. In the evening she acknowledged herself ill. In the morning she tried to be about but had to give up. From the time she gave up she went down rapidly. She said she had not been well for fully a week, but, had hoped to keep up as long as the children were home. We found she had a high fever. She abhorred nourishment; could only take a few teaspoonfuls of liquid; and for fear her fever might be infectious, she did not want Henry and John to come into the room. On Monday, Jan. 9th, I took them back to Tai-Ho to resume their journey to Chefoo. They bid their mother a cheery good-bye through a closed window. On my return, from Tai-ho the next day I was delighted to find her greatly abated. We were now most hopeful but it soon became evident that she was no better. She still abhorred food. She spoke with extreme difficulty, sometimes incoherently, and frequently lapsed into sleep — like unconsciousness. These symptoms increased day by day. On Saturday she asked for the communion which we had together with Mr. & Mrs. Walker. We still hoped to love her back to life but she still continued to slip away from us. I remained with her day and night. This morning at day-break I noticed a change in her breathing, a shortening. I called Mr. & Mrs. Walker and soon after the breathing ceased.

One of the last things she did before taken ill was to call a tailor & entrust him with the task of putting a fur lining in my wedding gown. This was done during her illness and was brought back shortly before her death & paid for after. She must have had the gown, a good silk one re-dyed, for its color, somewhat faded with time was again bright and fresh. This garment is a reminder of the beginning & the end of our married life. She was always more thoughtful for her loved ones than for herself. I and the children are amply supplied while she herself had only what was positively necessary. And now I know sorrow though

not the hopeless sorrow of those who have no hope in Christ. We had hoped to grow old together and to rejoice together in the development of our children.

How God undertakes for us in all things! How hard put to, I would have been if I had been alone when all this occurred; the children with me to accentuate the sorrow. But Mr. & Mrs. Walker joined us just a month before she was taken ill. She has had a valuable year of medical training, and is abundantly endowed with capacity and sympathy. They helped most tenderly and ably, taking the chief burden during this illness, and when death came at once overtook the preparation of the body; so tenderly and beautifully. My dear wife looks so beautiful in death I love to stand beside her and I look upon her face. I never saw a beautiful corpse before. And I dread the time rapidly appearing when the body will have to be placed in the coffin and hidden forever from my sight; not forever, but until resurrection glory. I am like Abraham, trying to purchase a possession for a burying place. Failing this, we will take the body to Tai-ho where we have burial plot.

The poor children! They loved their Mother. To little John she was everything. I never saw anything so beautiful as his devotion to her. How he loved his Mother! I telephoned Shanghai and Chefoo. Mary and Lily will doubtless be told this morning. Henry & John will not reach Shanghai until the end of this week. They will be heartbroken. I am glad they are not here as their sorrow added to my own, would be too great a burden. I have learned in God's school of experience to acquiesce in the will of God to accept what he does. The children still have this lesson to learn.

Shao Chau, Oct. 13th, 1911

Dear Mother,

I am making a round of my outposts. These are Ying Shang Hsien, Cheng Yang Kwan, Shao Chau, and Kan Twan Tsih. The last is a large market town. The others are all large walled cities. The whole round is 160 miles if I travel direct but this time I went out of my line and the distance this time will be 180 miles. The weather is delightful for walking. I am still encumbered with flannels and the weather is not hot. A walk of 20 miles in a day is a delightful pleasure jaunt, and under present circumstances of road, weather, and health I could double that distance if occasion required, without serious inconvenience. The pleasure one takes in walking long distances makes one conscious of being in perfect physical health and strength. I did not think when I used to walk to and from Newmarket that I was practicing for China. My work here suits me, though there is so much in it, or one sees so much, to cause heartache.

It is not the custom in these parts to bury children who die; as if there was not room for them in the ground. They are cast out to be devoured by dogs. Before leaving Ying Chow for this journey I saw a newborn babe being exposed to die on the city wall. On the way to Kan Twan Tsih, I saw the body of a sweet faced child of about seven years lying in a pool of water by the road where it had been thrown. At Kan Twan Tsih, a week ago last night, one of our enquirers informed me that his three year old daughter was dead. On inquiring I found that he had not been near it since noon, and it still had breath then. It was night when he told us. I sent him to find out if it was really dead and to let me know, that I might arrange for Christian burial. He returned the next morning and told me that it "is not". I thought this meant dead and began to give directions for burial. Then I was told that it was not in existence. It had died during the afternoon, and had been cast out, and when he returned home, the dogs had already left no trace of it. Walking last Tuesday from Ying-shang Hsien to Cheng Yang Kwan, 20 miles, I saw the scattered remains of two such children, the skull of a third, and the body of a child that had just been put out, on a plot by the roadside, and which the dogs had not yet found.

Yesterday, walking from Cheng Yang Kwan to this place I saw a child's skull by the roadside, the body of a half-grown boy with two big wolfish dogs devouring it, and the scattered bones of an adult which the dogs had torn from its very shallow grave. These facts will give you some idea of how horribly common

this horrible custom of leaving children unburied is. This has been no very unusual experience in traveling such a long distance.

The people are now harvesting and threshing their beans. The crop is a good one. The persimmon orchards are beautiful now with their ripening fruit. Indeed this is a country “Where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile.”

With very, veRY, VERY much love from
Henry

Mrs. H. S. Ferguson (China's Millions, March 11, 1911)

We regret to announce the death, at Ying Chow Fu in Anhwei, of Mrs. Ferguson. She passed away on January 17th. Mr. Stevenson who communicates this sad news writes: – ‘We had heard from Mr. Walker that she was down with fever twelve days before. She never was very robust, and suffered a good deal now and again. We feel most deeply for her husband and the dear children.’ Mrs. Ferguson, prior to her marriage was a Miss Cobb, and a member of the Women’s’ Union Missionary Society of America in Shanghai for some years before she joined the C.I.M. She leaves four children, two boys and two girls. The eldest, a boy, is twelve years of age; the youngest, also a boy, is five and a half. We commend the motherless ones and the bereaved husband to the sympathies and prayers of our readers.

1914

Ying Chow Fu, Report 1914 (December)

Part I. Local Circumstances — Henry S. Ferguson

1. Food Supply: The wheat harvest in June was a sad failure, owing to the drought of last year having prevented the sowing at the proper season. Summer drought this year instead of the usual copious rains, made most of the other crops light; so all kinds of grain are at famine prices. The artisan’s wage is 180 cash per day, or about six cents. Wheat flour is eighty cash per catty or sixty cash per pound. Other grains, beans, giant millet, and ordinary millet are cheaper, but wheat is the staple food.

Though the season is distressful, the outlook for next year is good, the wheat having been sown under favourable circumstances and the weather thus far being all that could be desired. At the time of writing (December), foodstuffs are showing a cheapening tendency, indicating that people are hopeful.

2. Opium: The Chinese Government perseveres in its policy of opium suppression with most commendable determination. Last year a considerable sowing was made in this district, but it all had to be rooted out before maturing. This year no sowing is being attempted.

I think it quite within the mark to estimate that nine-tenths of the former opium-smokers have, perforce, broken with the habit. The temptation to grow the drug is very great if it were permitted. When the price of opium was one-tenth that of silver, it was the farmer’s most paying crop; now it is five times the value of silver, weight for weight.

Part II. The Year’s Work — Henry S. Ferguson

In the cities of Ying Chow Fu, Tai-ho, and Cheng Yang Kwan, and the market town of Kan Tuan Tsih, the street chapel work has been steadily carried on, largely — and in the out-stations almost entirely — by native agency. We pass back and forth from place to place, spending two or three weeks at a time in each, our colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. R.G. Walker, conducting the work in Ying Chow Fu.. The distance between Tai-ho on the northwest and Cheng Yang Kwan on the southeast is eighty-four miles. Kan Tuan Tsih is thirty-five miles east of Ying Chow Fu.

The baptisms this year have been: —

- Ying Chow Fu 5
- Tai-ho 4
- Cheng Yang Kwan 14

In our street chapel work we are able to use an unlimited number of good Scripture pictures, such as the Sunday School Lesson picture rolls. We would like to have at least one complete set of the 1913 Old Testament lessons and 1914 New Testament lessons. They enable us to make a combined attack on eye-gate and ear-gate. A good picture of Noah's ark will hold the attention of an ordinary street chapel crowd while we tell the whole story of the deluge and the lessons it teaches. A picture of the rich fool re-building his barns will hold the attention while we tell them all about the parable. On the wall of our street chapel here, we have mounted a series of eight pictures of the parable of the Prodigal Son. Almost everyday this parable, with its precious teaching, is rehearsed to attentive audiences, who are eager to know the meaning of each detail of the pictures. Sometimes a small company of men come in from the street, go straight up to the Prodigal Son pictures, and one of them begins to explain them to the others, showing that the pictures and their message have made an impression.

Part III. Women's Work: Elizabeth S. Ferguson

In this North Anhwei district the work among women is much behind the work for men. This is not due to a greater stupidity of Chinese women; still less to a greater reluctance on their part to receive the Gospel. The causes will be seen if we make a tour of inspection to the different centres where work is being carried on.

On January 2nd we set out on our two days' journey to Kan Tuan Tsih. Here there are no baptized Christians, but over thirty registered applicants for baptism — all men. Previous to this, my first visit, they had only been visited by a woman missionary once in five years. The evangelist and gate-keeper occupy the premises in the missionaries absence, conduct meetings on Sundays for believers, and on market days to reach the unconverted. As there is no woman living on the compound, it naturally follows that no self-respecting woman would attend these meetings. During my visits in January and May the children came daily, sometimes as many as twenty at once. Girls of all sizes and boys under twelve were welcomed, and taught Scripture texts and hymns. As small picture cards were given as rewards for memorizing texts, they soon learned a number: probably fifteen or more children could repeat three or more texts, as well as "Jesus loves this I know" and several other hymns. They very much enjoyed singing the hymns, so no reward was needed to induce the children to learn. The women usually came after dusk in the evening, probably rather shy of being seen coming to our compound. Very few would attend the Sunday services, and only two or three women would remain to the close. It was our intention to go to Kan Tuan Tsih again early this autumn, but rainy weather and bad roads prevented, until we were due at Cheng Yang Kwan to meet Elder Hsieh and begin our series of conferences. These lasted twenty days, in November and the first week of December; and were held in five places from Cheng Yang Kwan to Tai-ho.

At Cheng Yang Kwan the work is more advanced: here is an active church, led by several brethren of good preaching ability, who are the means of leading others to Christ and preparing for Church membership. But at the beginning of the year there was only one woman member of the church, an elderly relative of one of the leaders. During previous year Mrs. Entwistle of Liuan Chow had occasionally visited this place; and when we spent three weeks there in early spring, I found a number of women whom I recognized as really interested, and two or three who could be considered enquirers. One old lady over eighty, who asked for baptism, still had an idol in her house which she was afraid or unwilling to take down. There being no woman resident in the Mission compound, only a few elderly women attend Sunday services regularly.

During my visits twenty-five or thirty women were usually present on Sundays, both morning and afternoon, and on Wednesdays as well. During the year four women have been received into the Church, including the lady referred to, she having decided to take down her idol during our third visit to Cheng Yang Kwan. There are also three or four women whom we hope to receive shortly.

In the little church at Tai-ho there is a group of women enquirers, most of them brought in by Mrs. Ch'in, the mother of our colporteur. They are country people who walk three or four miles to attend services, and seem eager to make good use of their opportunities to learn the Scripture texts, which Mrs. Ch'in helps them repeat as they journey home and when they get together during the week. Our evangelist's wife and daughter seek, with less success, to interest the city people; but in our absence the attendance of both men and women are small, owing to a lack of preaching ability. A young Mohammedan girl, from a rather wealthy family, is an applicant for baptism: but as she could not overcome the temptations by which she was surrounded in a government boarding school, we are waiting until her decision not to return there is agreed to by her family, and they consent to her being baptized. She is eighteen years of age, and is a former pupil of Mrs. Malcolm.

During most of the year, Mrs. Walker has conducted the women's meetings in Ying Chow Fu when we were absent at other stations. At the beginning of the year a new women's compound was opened, and Mrs. Song was engaged as the doorkeeper. She was a member of the Church of five years' standing; a widow who had to earn her living by hard work, so had not learned to read. During this year she has had leisure to acquire some twelve hundred characters, is able to tell new-comers the way of salvation, and to teach women and girls hymns and the catechism. During the summer three promising enquirers were added, who first heard the Gospel from her. Last Chinese New Year, after the great crowds of visitors had ceased, we had a small study class, in which some sixteen women came daily (or remained on the compound) devoting the time to learning to read and having lessons in Genesis and the Life of Christ. Several who started to learn characters then have continued to progress as they have had opportunity. Those who make an effort to learn to read are much more intelligent listeners at services and appear to be more in earnest spiritually. Our most spiritual Christian here among the women is the one who has made the most rapid progress in her reading. She came from her country home to stay with us a few days in the autumn of last year, only knowing a few characters from memorizing Scripture texts. During the last fifteen months she has applied herself so that she is now reading many books of the Old Testament. She usually walks six miles on tiny feet, and returns early afternoon the next day. As often as possible she brings several other women from her village to attend Sunday services. This woman, and two others were received into the Church this year. The eldest was eighty-six: she has since passed away. She was eighty-three when she first heard the Gospel, so her knowledge was very limited; but we believe she was trusting the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. The third, and youngest is over forty years of age, a busy mother who lives a couple of miles outside of the city. She is very eager to learn to read, and has made a good start: she also memorizes hymns and texts very well. Unfortunately those who have been members for years are not at all so satisfactory. They come once on Sunday, and think they have done their duty. We need to pray, not only to be able to evangelize those that have not yet received the truth, but also for grace to shepherd the flock, and feed those whom the Lord has purchased with his blood.

1915

Kan Twan Tsih, Mar 9th, 1915

Dear Mother,

Tonight a messenger came in from Ying Chow Fu bringing a jar of butter and some dried apples, and 10 tins of condensed milk. The last we had ordered from Shanghai. So the butter has arrived. Both it and the dried apples are perfect. They reached Ying Chow Fu two months after their arrival at Hankow. Things reach us slowly but surely.

We are spending a fortnight at this place, 100 li, or 35 miles, east of Ying Chow Fu. I came up from Cheng Yang Kwan last Thursday and Friday, a distance of 140 li. I am very strong for walking still, can do 35 miles in a day quite easily, and could do more in a pinch. But I am not equal to the Chinese, for no matter how far I go, any coolie usually keeps up, pushing a wheelbarrow. The messenger who came from Ying Chow Fu this evening came the whole 100 li in the one day, carrying his load.

Well Bessie started out from Ying Chow Fu last Friday to meet me here. She reached the half way village by night, pretty early, but too late to make the next stage, so she put up there. During the night a very heavy rain fell, which changed the roads to slush. The rain continued on Saturday and Sunday. I walked back the 50 li through mud to meet her. It was a good drying day and the road improved as I advanced. Reaching the inn, I found Bessie quite well and happy, having a good time teaching the women who came to her in the inn, and quite able to "paddle her own canoe". She would have started out the next day even if I had not come. Well, I engaged men to pull five barrows. My wife rode one barrow and her Bible woman another, and the other three carried bedding and boxes. The road was still very bad when we set out yesterday morning, but being another good drying day improved as we proceeded. The softness of the road, at the beginning, and the imperfect hardness even at the end, made progress slow, but we got in here in one day. We look forward to spending two weeks here, and, if the Lord so lead, to some baptisms. They will be the first at this outstation, though it has been worked for many years. Bessie is the first woman worker to have spent any considerable time here. She is enthusiastically welcomed here, as elsewhere. She is always bright and cheerful and brings sunshine to the poor Chinese women, as well as to me.

With very much love from
Henry

1917

Cheng Yang Kwan, May 6th 1917

Dear Mother

I have been remiss in the matter of writing of late. It must be nearly three weeks of not more since I wrote home last. Three weeks ago I set out to the city of Shao Chau a second time, to be present at the great idol festival being held there about the 15th of the 3rd Chinese month. I am writing an account of it for my mimeograph so will not say anything about it now.

About a week ago last Sabbath an old woman of 70 years who had heard the gospel here brought her idols and burned them, and is now coming daily for further instruction. Mrs. Williams and indeed all of us, are much encouraged as are also Misses Wilkins and Webster from the neighbouring station of Lah-an Chio who were here for a two weeks visit at the time.

We had a severe trial here just a short time before. A man came in from a country place to be treated for a diseased jawbone. A part of the bone protruding through his cheek was speedily removed and he was invited to stay with us for further treatment as his case would require time. For a few days all went well when suddenly he was taken ill and after one days illness died. The neighbors very kindly helped us all they could under the circumstances, and the man's brother came and took away the body. The Lord has not allowed this to hinder the work and patients instead of being frightened away are coming in steadily increasing numbers. But Dr. Williams felt the trial keenly.

Dr. and Mrs. Williams expect soon to go on furlough and when they do will probably go by America, so you may look out for them. I am sorry you did not meet Mr. And Mrs. Knight when they were in Toronto. You may have a chance yet. If you do you might invite them up to spend a few days with you. I hear Mr. Knight's health is improving very slowly.

Alice has not sent me that poem of her own composition which was published in the Globe yet. Good night..

From your loving son
Henry

1918

C.I.M. Kan Tuan Tsih, Oct 1st, 1918

Dear Mother

We have now begun our autumn itinerations. We have been here about two weeks and will be remaining over next Lord's day. D.V. (?) bean harvest is just finishing. There is always about as much land planted in beans as in wheat. They are not nice beans like we grow at home, but a very hard, small yellow bean that won't boil tender and which to any but a Chinese digestion would be absolutely indigestible; they are so to me. But they also grind them into flour, make their bean curd from them, and also oil. After the oil is extracted great cakes of pulp are left, like grindstones which are used for feeding animals. Nothing is wasted. After the bean curd is made, a soft pulp is left which is fed to pigs. Bean curd is a very strong food, and takes the place of meat to the most of the Chinese. It is a sort of cheese. It is unfortunate for our purpose that we came out here on the eve of bean harvest as all hands are occupied in harvest here. They rush their work by employing many hands, The cutting is all done by hand with sickles, and the people who are not out cutting are likely to be gleaning, picking up what they can. This locality is rejoicing in all crops good this year; wheat millet (giant), beans, cotton, indigo, melons, fruit, etc. The Chinese grow three indigo plants that bear no resemblance to each other. They look like three totally different plants; they appear to produce different shades of blue. I have been having an opportunity these days of watching the process by which they extract the indigo from the plants. They soak the whole plant, stalk, leaves, seeds & all, in a big pit, if they are operating on a large scale; in one of their immense water crocks, if on a smaller scale. The blue liquid that results is dipped into immense crocks. Lime is added to it after which it is stirred at a great rate by two men with paddles for a very long time, and after about a day indigo results. I presume there is a great deal of waste to dip or pour off, for the residue that I have seen them taking up has always been much less in bulk than the original contents of the crock. The stalks with their leaves and unripe seeds are then dried and used for fuel. They say the indigo is in the leaves of the plants.

We look forward to baptizing two women and a lad of sixteen, a bright Christian, the son of Christian parents, next Lord's Day. Others are under consideration, but may not be decided in time for this occasion.

Bessie thinks she has found here the material of which to make a Bible woman, one of four women baptized here before furlough, a Mrs. Yuen, a widow, of 53 or so, the age you were when I came to China, her children grown up, married and settled, a woman of quick mind, eager and able to learn, but very much hindered by defective eyesight. This may be remedied by suitable glasses, if ever we can get her eyes tested and properly fitted. We have arranged to take her with us. We will pay her wages for doing our housework to begin with, supplemented perhaps from a special fund, and this will leave her most of her time for study, and for helping Bessie in her work with women. The present stage is experimental of course. One of the greatest problems of our work is the finding or making of suitable native helpers, both men and women. When we get them they multiply our usefulness. In fact it is almost impossible to prosecute the work without them.

On our first visit here after furlough I had to exclude a very unsatisfactory member who during our absence had taken his son to a temple and had offered him to the gods with much incense burning and letting off of fire crackers and spreading of feasts. This was to secure for the child protection of the gods through life. This man wants all he can get from both sides, God and devil. I was glad to cut clear of him. He could talk the nicest of any of our members but from the beginning I expected him to make trouble. He appeared to aim at being the head one in the church. He appears to have been able to influence two others to stay out with him. If they are like minded with him it is best that they should. There are always two sides to a battle and the wars of the Lord are no exception. There is gain and loss.

With very much love from
Henry

Our last word from Henry was dated June 25th, and was about two months on the way. That letter sent is the longest wait we have had for a word from him.

1919

Aug. 18th, 1919

Dear Mother

Your letter of June 26th & July 6th reached me today. I am glad to learn that the farm is now clear of debt. But I do not want Thomas to make any effort to pay off my share. I want to leave that in tack, in order to be able to help the son of mine who will undertake to redeem (?) the place that much. I have never had any plan in regard to the place; so far as my children were concerned I was planning nothing that might come between them and the mission field. But now that Henry has married, and will have to settle down to earning a living, I hope that he will set to work to master farming, and that eventually he may redeem the home farm. I have never been content to think of it passing out of the family altogether so long as we need a home on earth. I hope that Henry has married a good wife. The very best women have reached out a helping hand to our soldiers. Also the very worst have thrust themselves in among them; also all the grades between the best and the worst have been more or less busy. I am hoping most strongly that Henry has married one of the best, a worthy young woman, who will climb the hill with him. I have been praying for him all the time he has been away, and these women were my dread, more than German bullets, shells or gas; the bad and doubtful ones, that is. I hope Henry has been saved from them. If he has a worthy wife he can make his way in the world..

I would like John to have a hive of bees of his own, and two extra hives to put fresh swarms in; and for him to learn to take care of them. I will be glad to pay for them. I wonder if Mr. Ross could make the hives? Perhaps then he could get the swarm from Thomas, i.e. catch one, when they come off. Bro. John began life with bees, and the first farm he bought, a bare 50 acres without buildings, was bought with the proceeds. I was very sorry a few weeks ago to hear of his death. He was about the same age as Thomas The hand of the Lord has been very busy this year upon my relatives in Scranton. Brother John's death followed hard upon Nephew Roy's: each leaves a widow and two small daughters. Bro. John had bought too much land and was not able to work it to advantage, and so his estate is found to be heavily encumbered. Roy, besides his estate, carried heavy insurance.

We have passed through the summer in the very best of health, except that Bessie has had a touch of throat trouble that extended to her ear. It is about well now. The oppressive heat is over. Her throat appears to be her weak point.

I am glad John passed his years examination. It was hard for me to believe that he was ready for high school at all. I would not have been surprised if he had failed. He has picked up wonderfully well during the year.

With very much love from Henry.

1921

A Visit to Cheng Yang Kwan, June 16 (China's Millions, Oct. 1921)

A letter, dated June 16, 1921 from Mrs. Elizabeth (Bessie) Ferguson:

Remaining in this place all through the spring has brought unusual opportunities for city visiting; and the young teacher, Miss Wong, has been a helpful companion in this, on Saturdays and after school hours

on other days. Until last summer, Mrs. Keng supplemented Mrs. Wong's efforts in the women's work, and I trust that Miss Wong will soon be able to fill the latter's place. There have been new women coming about in encouraging numbers, partly due to the girl's school, and partly as a result of our visiting homes and getting in touch with them. One woman, whom I regard as an enquirer, came the first time after we had visited a member living in her courtyard. She is the first woman who can read and write to become an enquirer here. Her husband, who is a teacher by profession, has become quite interested too, reading her New Testament and other books at home. It is hard to get a hold on the scholar class in China; they are proud of their learning and look down on the illiterate who compose the most of the church members. This man has at last overcome his pride sufficiently to come here, and we trust he will come until he is truly saved, and then continue coming to worship.

156 Delma St., San Francisco, Oct. 25th 1921

Dear Sister Alice

Here we are in the home of Mr. & Mrs. W.S. Horne, formerly of the C.I.M. We bought Mrs. & Miss Horne and George and Alfred home from China with us in 1916. Mrs. Horne is one of those whose nervous system gave out under the strain of China life, and they cannot return on her account. The daughter and the two boys are now married and settled in life, and doing well.

This seems to be a cheap city to live in; we got our breakfast this morning down town. I for 35 cents and Bessie for 25 good and plenty too. At dinner, also down town those figures were reversed; I, 25 and she 35 because she took a cup of coffee extra. This is much cheaper than we were able to do out east.

San Francisco, as far as we have seen it, does not compare with Los Angeles for beauty, but I presume we have not yet seen the best of the city.

Our ship sails tomorrow noon, 12 o'clock sharp. We had to go before the proper authorities and get a written, and printed, permission to sail before we could get our tickets or have our baggage sent on board. I found a crowd of returning Japanese and Chinese ahead of me in the same errand and had to take my place in the queue. Some of their business took a very long time, but mine took but a couple of minutes as our passports made everything clear. Apparently they all had to satisfy the authorities that their taxes, income taxes on the money they had made in U.S.A. had been payed up before they could be permitted to leave.

The weather prospects are for a very fine voyage. The weather is very fine here. I am sitting in our room with the window wide open and my coat off toward evening. We are dipping down into the tropics at a time of the year when heavy storms are not expected in these seas. The equinoxials are long past and winter is not yet near.

With very much love from Henry

1924

Boat on Chien Tang Apr. 22nd 1924

My Dear Mother

I have finished my visitation of the southern stations of Anhwei and am now on my way to Hang-chow by boat, en route for Shanghai to report to the Director. Since leaving Wuhu in the Yangtse, I have walked 810 li or 270 miles, some of it over very muddy roads, and some of it over the highest mountain rang in Anhwei. The ascent was 15 li and took 2 1/2 hours of very hard walking. Then came a level walk of about 10 li, in parts very steep; but both up and down was by a good stone road, with stone steps; so it was like climbing up, and down, an endless stairway. Evidently the valley to which we came down is much lower than that from which we went up.

Flowers abound on the wild mountain sides, chiefly azaleas, some red, and some purple. There are also yellow one but these are rare. Bridal wreath also abounds, a shrub that covers itself with a profusion of beautiful white flowers, each flower being a beautiful little rose. I have seen it in Toronto as a lawn hedge; but here it grows wild. Also high up on the mountain sides I found a great profusion of wild fruit trees in bloom: peach, plum, cherry and apricot.

The river on which I am now travelling is quite romantic. Mountains rise abruptly from both sides, some of them quite high. These are ruggedly, grandly beautiful. Rapids abound in the river, most of them very rocky, requiring great care and skill in navigation of them. They delay us much. The rare ones that are not rocky facilitate our progress.

Apr 26th. After four days steady travelling, with considerable difficulty with rapids we reached a town 210 li or 70 miles short of Hang-chow to which launches ran. We had our boat tied up to a launch and reached Hang-chow in time to catch the 1-20 train for Shanghai where I arrived about 7 o'clock the same evening. I have to stay here several days on business to see the heads of the Mission about the questions I am bringing from the stations. I am in haste to get back to my own field. Bessie has already gone out to K'an Twan Tsih, our farthest outstation, 150 li alone, and I want to join her there. My time there will be short in any case, as we must get back to C.Y.K. before wheat harvest, which begins toward the end of May.

Among the letters I found awaiting me here were yours and Alice's of Mar 9th. I am always so glad to hear from you, but I know how hard it is getting for you to write; in your 83 year.

With very much love from Henry

The question of our meeting again on earth is with the Lord. He is love, and He is able, and His will is best.

Conditions in China, (China's Millions, September 1924)

From our 'Shanghai Letter' just received as we go to press, we learn that lawlessness still prevails in several districts. Mr. Stark writes: The city of Liuan Chow is evidently in the hands of the *Ta-tao-huei* (Great Knife Society), who, we learn from Mr. H. S. Ferguson, the Superintendent of our work in Anhwei, have driven out the Magistrate and set the head of coolies in his place. The provincial military authorities have been hurrying forward soldiers, and their wounded are being brought back to Cheng Yang Kwan.

1926

Box 50 R.D. 2 Delano Calif. Sept 28, 1926

Dear Ones at Home

Here we are at our present objective where we expect to remain four weeks. We are 203 miles from Los Angeles and 281 miles from San Francisco. This is land that was a desert and would still be but for irrigation. Brother Edgar has over 2" miles of pipes on his 160 acre vineyard, fed by a gasoline engine pump, pumping up from a depth of 500 feet, where there appears to be an unlimited supply of water. It keeps a 7-inch pipe flowing full and strong day and night in the growing season. It is not kept so busy now. The pipelines cross the rows of grape vines and let out the water to flow along both sides of each row. It cost \$3,000.00 to level this farm and grade it so that the water would flow over the whole of it. It cost \$7,000 for the well and pump, and another \$3,000.00 for the piping itself. The raw land cost about \$250.00 per acre. There are more than 71000 grape vines on it. It is now valued at \$1000.00 per acre, and so is difficult to sell. It takes a capitalist to buy the unimproved land and to bring it under cultivation, and it takes still more of a capitalist to buy an improved farm. Lanes of pipes cross the rows of vines 1/8 of a mile apart the insure the whole ranch being well watered. One well and one engine do it all. We will be fed up on grapes while here. The raisin crop is finished but there are still lots of table grapes on the vines. The amber grapes, one of the very best table varieties, are just beginning to be gathered.

Across the road from us here in one direction is an orange plantation, and in the another direction one of cotton. This morning I saw an olive orchard. Pomegranate trees are very much in evidence, loaded with fruit. I see too long rows of plum trees along the roads serving the (?) as well as fruit. Their season is passed.

This has been a very light year for grapes. Bro. Edgar has had only 75 tons of raisins this year, instead of 175 tons as last year. The vineyards, when young, and this one is only 5 years old, are apt to balance a good year by a lean one, but as they get older they become more steady and regular in bearing.

This is a splendid country, the orange blossoms being among the best honey flowers, and of course there are many others. There is usually some rain in the winter making grass and flowers grow and wild flowers are abundant in the springtime; and last May there was a great flood that put the whole countryside under about a foot of water. It greatly refreshed the whole set of plantations.

This is a great alfalfa country. The first crop is cut in April and they get a fresh crop every month until Sept. A crop is being cut now. What grows after Sept. is pastured.

Today I saw some olive plantations loaded with fruit: both forenoon and afternoon on different roads.

This is a country of palm trees. In Los Angeles the date palm flourishes and produces an abundance of dates, but they do not mature as well and are not equal to those produced in the tropics. I suppose our cousin Tennyson Guringlis ' plantation is farther south still. He expects his when they get to full bearing to produce \$500 per acre per year of value. I sent you today a folder of California pictures.

When in Los Angeles we saw the outside of Aimee Semple MacPherson's temple. She is on trial this week with appearances very strong against her. She has been trying to be a very great one and has had a fall. In California there is an auto for every four people. It's the way everybody gets about.

With love to you all from Bro. Henry & Father

Alice, Please pass on to John; John to Lilian: Lilian to Mary: Mary to Henry.

1927

Cheng Yang Kwan, Feb. 9th, 1927

My Dear Daughter Mary,

Yesterday we received letters from you, Lilian, and John all at once. Thank you for telling us of Henry and family. I will try to give you all the information you require for your naturalization papers.

You were born in Chiu-Kiang, Kiang-su China on Feb. 20th, 1901, and your birth was duly registered at the British Consulate there.

We brought you home to Canada, with the rest of our children, in August 1916 by the C.P.R steamer "Empress of Russia (Asia?)", we traveling second class. We took you all straight to my home in Canada, which is on lots 4 and 5, 2nd concession of King, Ont., Canada.

Early in October 1916 we took you all to Philadelphia to meet your step-mother's people. I do not remember by what railway we traveled nor the exact day of the month, but the railway journey ended up at the Broad Street Station. While in Philadelphia we made our headquarters at the China Inland Mission, 235 W. School Lane, Germantown.

After about three weeks in Philadelphia, we sent you to your Mother's home at Mt. Cobb, Pa; and especially to your Mother's brother, W.J.Cobb, 835 Quincy Ave., Scranton Pa., with whom you have been domiciled ever since. Your arrived there about the end of October, 1916.

You were at that time 15 years of age. You entered the United States from Canada by train, with your Father, myself, a born Canadian citizen. As you were a minor you had no passport, but my passport had a note as to the number of children traveling with me. That passport has however long ago, on our return to China in 1918 probably, been returned, when making application or a new one.

I hope the above includes all the information you need.

With very much love from your
Father Henry Stewart Ferguson

PS. We are facing in China the gravest situation that has occurred since the Boxer outbreak. Missionaries have been called in from seven provinces, and all sailings from the homelands have been suspended.

Having entered the USA 10 1/2 years ago as a child of 16 with your parents there is naturally no record of your arrival. But it can be proved that you are now there, and your antecedents can be stated.

1929

Cheng Yang Kwan, April 20, 1929

Dear Alice,

Things have been very peaceful here during the last few months: only local robbers and rumours of trouble elsewhere disturb the man in the street. Famine to the north and west of us increases the cost of living and the number of beggars. Children, especially girls, are being led about for sale, hoping thus to have one less to feed, and the purchase money will feed others for month or more. I saw one little girl, about ten years old, sitting in the home of a Christian, a woman with her trying to get the family to buy her. She said her father was dead and she was the eldest of six. The price asked was fifty dollars (gold), which reckoned too high, and in any case the family did not need a slave. The effect on other members of the family is injurious, tending to pride and laziness, so I was glad they did not buy her, though sorry for the poor child.

The Chinese New Year (old style) occurred this year on Sunday February 10th. The progressives declare this shall be the last year the lunar calendar New Year will be observed. We shall wait and see. It is the great festival to which people look forward, and they cannot easily change. During the first month everyone is at leisure for two weeks at least: only the most necessary tasks are done. Food is prepared beforehand so as to be easily served, and everybody is invited to dinner by everyone else, so that it is difficult to know whose invitations to accept and whose to decline without giving offense. We got out of most of it by going to an out-station for two weeks. At Changpaitu the people are willing to spend some of their leisure in hearing and preaching the Gospel, and the Christian women in learning to read the Bible. Each morning from 8:30am till about 10:00, I taught the women and the girls, and told the Way of Life to newcomers. Then the bell called us, and all the town who would come, to the chapel, where either my husband or Mr. Yao (yow) led morning worship. The latter is a gifted teacher, and the work there is encouraging. After the meeting we usually had time for a few chapters in the New Testament to be read before dinner, unless new women stayed for a personal talk. Good progress was made by some of the readers, who came every morning and again from 3 to 5:30pm when another meeting closed the work and worship for the day. On the second Sunday of our stay, we had the joy of seeing five men and four women (including one girl of 14 years of age) confess their faith for baptism and join us in partaking of the Lord's Supper. The girl was the daughter of Mr. Yao: the whole family are now baptised except the youngest, her aunt, brother and brother's wife being among the new members.

We went to Changpaitu by land, my husband walking and I on a wheelbarrow, but we returned by boat, owing to the rainy weather. The strong favorable wind, which gave us hope of reaching home before night, became almost a hurricane, and in the bend of the river where it was against us, made progress impossible; so we only went six miles a day. The following day we arrived in good time.

On March 1st school opened, and several of our former pupils who went to the Government school in the autumn, are back, and we have a full class of beginners, so we hope for a good term's work in the school. On March 5th I had a dinner party to which the seven oldest lady members of the Church and Pastor Ts'ui's wife were invited. It was meant specially to give pleasure to our oldest member, Mrs. Field, who is eighty-five, and from her increasing feebleness, she seems not likely to be with us much longer. A few selections

on the victrola completed the entertainment, and one old lady remarked, "I could not enjoy heaven any more than this."

On April 6th, in company with a Christian woman and two big school girls, I visited a women enquirer who lives outside the south gate of the city on an embankment, which is high enough to protect the home from the summer floods. We had a very enjoyable and encouraging visit, reading and explaining God's Truth, and singing several hymns, the room being filled with neighbours. After about two hours spent thus, I rose to go, but Mrs. Liu, with great earnestness held me tight, saying, "Sit a while longer." I remonstrated, but she would not let me go: finally she whispered that she was cooking eggs for us, so we must stay to eat them – poached eggs and sweet tea! It was something of a feat to pick them up with chopsticks, but I managed it, and appreciated her generosity, knowing she would consider one egg a week all she could afford for herself – she gave us eight! After escorting us to the little ferry-boat, she climbed the embankment, and stood looking after us as long as we could be seen. She is diligently learning to read, and has already bought a New Testament.

To see the dark contrast, I enclose a snap of a shrine made to a stone in the city wall, originally meant to represent a lion. It is now so broken as to have very little likeness to anything. Over it, on the wall are painted four characters, meaning "Prayer will be answered." Each pole with a square at the top represents a supposed answer to prayer. People bring incense and burn, prostrating themselves before this stone, and then ask for healing, and then of course, a certain number of sick people recover.

Please continue to pray for us, for teachers and pupils, Christians (that they may witness for Christ by life and lip) and enquirers.

Yours for Christ in China, Affectionately, Bessie

1930

Cheng Yang Kwan, April 18, 1930

Dear Alice,

Since the last writing, we have had the unusual pleasure of three visits from fellow-workers: four C.I.M. members and three of their children, which has made a very pleasant change for us.

As anticipated, our spring enrollment of pupils breaks all records. We engaged a third Christian teacher, fitted up a third school room and accepted sixty pupils; and then had to decline to receive scores of nice girls, in spite of tears and all pleas from influential friends. One mother asked to be allowed to bring a bench and let her girl sit just outside the door! The reason for this is, that government schools have been ruined by soldiers and their funds used for military purposes. One school has since opened, charging school fees: but has only male teachers, and I am told they have less than twenty pupils. We have also allowed a boys' school to move into our front courtyard – which was not fully occupied, and so was a constant temptation for soldiers to move in. The school is self-supporting: we are not aided except by giving the use of the two rooms. The teachers are pledged not to teach any heathen or anti-Christian doctrine or practice. Teachers and pupils attend Sunday services and my husband and I hold meetings or classes (in Scripture) for the pupils four times during the week. Thus we have nearly one hundred young lives under Bible instruction. They make the chapel very full, benches being arranged to crowd in as many seats as possible. The singing on Sundays is sometimes more enthusiastic than tuneful — the new pupils in both schools having learned but few tunes in the five weeks since school opened — but they ARE learning, and the little tots are most charming. One gives herself a rapturous hug, and me a bright smile when her favorite hymn is announced. Another, whose small feet do not reach the ground, swings them vigorously, keeping time with the tune: while a third slips down and stands, with head held high and eyes fixed on the ceiling, as she sings with might and main (if not with heart and soul) praise God on high. They enjoy hymns specially. After a time spent in teaching a motion song for Christmas, I was requested – "Now let us sing hymns."

We have had several bandit scares in the city – once last month a large band was said to be less than two miles away. Kidnapping is very frequent, and families are in terror lest a child should be carried off – as several have been – if the family is comfortably fixed. Even small farmers have had to sell animals or land to ransom an only son or grandson.

(Page 2 is missing)

Yours for Christ in China, Affectionately, Bessie

1931

In Memoriam — Mrs. H. S. Ferguson — Elisabeth S. Birch (China's Millions, June 1931)

On April 3rd we had to cable North America the news of Mrs. Ferguson's death. Probably it was not a great surprise, as she has been ailing for so many months. Our hope was that with the coming of spring her husband might have been able to bring her to Shanghai for medical advice. During the winter months he was unwilling to expose her to the risk of a journey, seeing she was so susceptible to cold and damp. Nurse Hubbell has been at Cheng Yang Kwan for two month's at least, and Mr. Ferguson was in touch with the doctors of the Presbyterian Mission at Hwai Yuan, which was the best that could be done in the circumstances. Mrs. Ferguson has been unable to retain sufficient nourishment and suffered from severe pain at times. She had great powers of endurance and was very plucky. As soon as a measure of relief was given she was keen to be up and about her work once more, by no means inclined to give way, but hoped on in the expectation of restoration. The cause of illness was probably a complication that has never been diagnosed. She has been ill since last December. For a few weeks early in the year she appeared to make some progress, but a setback came in February, from which she did not really rally, although there was the ebb and flow of sickness. On March 22nd and again on the 29th the end seemed to be near, but it was not till the early morning of April 3rd that Mrs. Ferguson passed away peacefully apparently as she slept. She was a very active worker and much beloved by the women and children of the station. Her Girl's School always seemed to be as full of scholars as could be accommodated. Mr. Ferguson will feel his loneliness very keenly. He relied so much on the support and sympathy of his wife. May the Lord comfort his heart.

Years of Service: Mrs. H. S. Ferguson . . . 25

1933

"North-China Herald", Shanghai, Jan. 4, 1933

Hankow, Dec. 21, 1932

The mystery surrounding the fate of the Rev. Bert Nelson and the Rev. Mr. Ferguson who were in the hands of the bandits for many months, seems to have been cleared up by report received recently through reliable sources. It appears that the people who have sent these reports have been in intimate contact with the band who were supposed to have the two missionaries with them, but according to them, no foreigners at all were being held in captivity.

The information they got was to the effect that Mr. Nelson was executed at Lichiataitang, and Mr. Ferguson at Chachiataitang, both meeting their end by sword. This report more or less synchronises with the one received in October when it was stated that Mr. Nelson was shot near Chiliping on August 21, although at that time there was no mention made of Mr. Ferguson.

Subsequent search has failed to reveal the bodies of either, and they were, no doubt, completely disposed of. The fact remains that there is no trace of either missionary, dead or alive.

It will be remembered that last month a report was published in which two wounded bandits had been captured near Siangyang, and were in hospital at Changhow, declared that two foreigners, who were as-

sumed to be Messrs Nelson and Ferguson accompanied the band when they crossed the Kin-Han Railway in October. This report raised new hopes for their safety, but the latest report proves the story to be groundless.

The Rev. H. S. Ferguson (China's Millions, Jan. 1933)

A cable has been received from Shanghai to the effect that Mr. Ferguson, who was captured by Communist bandits at Cheng Yang Kwan, Anhwei on May 12th last, has died at their hands. The report has not been confirmed, and there is no statement to the cause of death — whether by murder, or from exposure or disease — but if indeed he has laid down his life, he has most surely received the martyr's crown. As Hudson Taylor used to say, the devil may hedge us about but he cannot roof us in, and our friend has been set free by divine intervention from those who 'kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.'

The latest news before the cable arrived was contained in a letter from Miss M. S. Jones, of the American Presbyterian Mission, Show Chow, Anhwei, dated October 29th. She had just had an interview with a Chinese named Chen, who was one of the two men to accompany a Flood Relief representative to the Red Camp. They failed to see Mr. Ferguson, but heard that he was very thin and emaciated. Mr. Chen brought news of the death of Mr. Gao, a Flood Relief agent who was captured with Mr. Ferguson, but released two days later. Instead of making good his escape he went to the Communist leaders to intercede for Mr. Ferguson. He was recaptured, and is now said to have succumbed from disease. We are also indebted to Miss Jones for the following beautiful story of a Chinese colporteur's courage and devotion. Miss Jones writes: —

'The Rev. H. S. Ferguson was captured by the Red Army from the C.I.M. headquarters in Cheng Yang Kwan about twenty miles south-west of Show Chow, on May 12th. About ten days later it was rumoured that he was a prisoner in one of the "Red" mountain fastnesses on the Honan-Anhwei border. Mr. Sen Bing-yueh, a devoted friend and disciple of Mr. Ferguson, had no peace day or night, and received sure guidance that he should try to see his friend. For a number of years Mr. Sen has lived in Show Chow, and the last two years he has been in the employ of the American Bible Society as colporteur. In a single year he traveled over an area of 4,356 square miles selling Scripture portions.

'Without telling his missionary advisor his plan to visit the Red Capital, he started off in the latter part of May with the usual carrying pole from which he suspended two baskets of scriptures. He traveled four days, covering a distance of about ninety miles, before reaching the Red lines. With absolutely no credential, other than the Scriptures and a radiant personality, he announced to a sentry that he was looking for a captive in their camp, a foreigner by the name of Ferguson. The simplicity of the man was mistaken for duplicity. He was roughly handled and commanded to tell a straight story. Beginning with a Gospel story and finishing with his own conversion and a touching reference to Mr. Ferguson's helpfulness in overcoming habits of wine drinking and gambling, he was amazed to find that his hearers were unconvinced of his genuineness. They strung him up high by the wrists. Sen protested that though they kill him he had no other story to tell. His tormentors questioned him about the Anhwei 45th battalion that had driven them back into the mountains, referring to some officers by name. Sen Bing-yueh stated he knew nothing of those matters but would like to tell them more about the Gospel story. Finally they became convinced that the man was not a spy and let him down to the ground level. There were deep cuts in his wrists, and with the great heat and infections he still had wounds a month later when he returned to Show Chow. From the moment the ropes were cut they treated him kindly, giving him food and providing a place to sleep, urging him to stay a few days. They talked Communism and tried to disillusion him about foreigners in China. He faithfully preached to them and witnessed to what God had done in his own life! When leaving he prayed for them, while they all stood around him. They would not allow him to see Mr. Ferguson, and he could get no news of his condition. However, they escorted Mr. Sen back to the border and offered him money and food on his home journey. The good man was unsuccessful in his mission of friendship to Mr. Ferguson, but who can say that the seed

may not be growing secretly even within the enemy's camp?'

The Mission Compound, Cheng Yang Kwan, Early 1900's

These are a few photographs of the mission compound taken when Henry and his family were living there. The first shows Henry in the garden,



**Rev. Henry S. Ferguson in Mission Garden
Cheng Yang Kwan**

the second a mission school class with some of the Chinese teachers,



School Class in Mission, Cheng Yang Kwan

and finally, a gathering of villagers inside the compound.



Villagers in Mission, Cheng Yang Kwan

A visit to Cheng Yang Kwan (Zheng Yuan), Sun. May 27, 2001

I left the hotel at about 6:00am and rode, and wandered the back streets. Cheng Yang Kwan is still a small town and it is very easy to walk and ride around most of its streets in a couple of hours. The streets and lanes were narrow, and the houses old, but there was nothing that definitely looked over 100 years.



"Rural" CYK ?



Cheng Yang Kwan (CYK)

I rode up out of town onto a huge dike that now protects the town from the river. Grandfather mentions a dike in his letters but I think this is a new one.



Huai river from dike, CYK

I don't know if this is the River Huai, from which grandfather and family took boats for rest and to get to mission outposts but it is plausible. One nice part of this ride/walk was that it was so early I was able to do it by myself.

I arrived, quite by accident, back on the street with my hotel, and stopped to have breakfast.

During this time my entourage of kids arrived, but more importantly, I saw a cross sticking above the roofs of the houses. After I finished, I walked down towards the cross. The church was hidden behind a wall with a small courtyard, and a lane down the left hand side. It was full to overflowing, the lane was completely full and benches were continually being added to the courtyard, while some people tried to find another small spot inside to stuff a bench. The music was the grand old hymns of the Presbyterian Church that I remember as a kid, but the words were all Chinese, except for the occasional "Halleluiah?". I was offered a hymnal and Bible in Chinese, but declined. The congregation were all ages, and kept arriving during the service. The minister was a woman, as were the servers. The mission of grandfather's day was, in a real sense subversive, because it taught women to read. A mark of a Christian woman was that she no longer had bound feet. I wonder if this is grandfather's legacy. I was moved by what I saw and heard, almost to tears.



Sunday Service, CYK



Sunday Service, CYK



Sunday Service, CYK



Sunday Service, CYK

I stayed for the hymns and prayers, but left during the sermon. I didn't stay to meet the minister because I didn't feel there was much chance to have a conversation. As far as I could tell, I, and my entourage of disruptive kids, were the only ones to leave. During the service I finished the roll of film in the camera and wanted to put in a new one, without an audience. I rode a long way down the street and stopped. As soon as I was seen to stop, the kids started running. I then continued and hid behind a traffic circle monument. I was not there very long before a new crowd, followed by the old one arrived. I put the film in, and decided to leave Cheng Yang Kwan. It was about 8:30am and I had had already seen most of the town. It was also clear that I would not be able to see any more in peace.