

Jan 31, 1933
c/o American Express Co.

Dear Mother -

It has been a long while since I have heard from any of you - the last messages being Christmas greetings for which many thanks, and hope you had the same.

You may be thinking that we have all been blown up by the Japs and I do not doubt that the new reports of the troubles here has been disquieting if not terrifying. You know more of what is happening around us than we do ourselves; a week ago the only English newspaper in Peking was suppressed by the Japs because it published the Korean Declaration of Independence. A friend of mine from Shanghai who has been visiting here for a few days left yesterday but is not at all sure of reaching his destination. Train service between Peking and Shanghai has been stopped and steamers are uncertain. Even the Siberian rail service was interrupted because of the Russian attack on the Japs in Harbin. It is true that we see only one side of the question from here, but it seems quite beyond belief that the Powers can allow the Japs to continue to carry on like mad dogs - and without provocation. One of the most shocking rumors is that of a secret alliance or agreement between Japan and France.

Yet daily routine goes on as usual. The Legation Secretaries are more dull and complacent than ever - getting fat with their continual round of dinner parties which they do not care to have disturbed - wars or no wars. I am complacent too - and completely idle. On Jan 13th I went back to the hospital again for a ten day rest and have now acquired the habit of doing nothing else but rest. The doctor encourages my idleness, as the last defence of my moral is broken down.

Last week we had Spring weather - the snow had completely disappeared - Today it is snowing again quite heavily - the City appears clean - for once. As even in mid winter houses, faces and clothing are usually coated with thick dark dust. Every once in a while at most unexpected hours martial law is proclaimed, it lasts for a day or two and is then forgotten, until the Japs guards of the Legation swing their bayonets around like scythes once too often in the middle of the boulevard, or stage a sham battle at mid night, and then the Chinese police and soldiers try once more to look ferocious in spite of not having received any pay for months.

I have recently read an extremely good book on Korean life which is very similar to the Chinese: "The Grass Roof" written by a young Korean Yung-hill Kang. You have already heard of the book "The Good Earth" by Pearl Buck - and you should read it.

My mind seems to be empty these days - I can't even think of anything to write about but never mind Spring is coming and new inspirations!

Do you remember nice Maude Clizbe of Paris? Yesterday I had a good letter from her, - after all this while - and also one from mad Sheila.

I hope Spring and Sunshine and new life is coming your way

Love

Scho.