

DESCRIBES CHINA IN LETTER TO PARENTS

Dr. Lois Greene, Highland Park Woman, Tells of Interesting "Old World"

Following is an interesting letter from Dr. Lois Greene, who is now in China, which was written to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George G. Greene, of Lincoln Avenue in July. Since this letter was sent Mrs. Greene has passed away. Many of Dr. Lois' friends will be delighted to read this most descriptive letter from her.

Dear Friends: Sitting in a window where the cool Peking breeze blows in, I find I can now go back and tell you a bit about Changsha as the summer was coming on. The most important event from the standpoint of the hospital was the arrival of a committee from Nanking to look over the public health situation. The group consisted of Dr. Yen, now head of the medical school and Red Cross Hospital in Shanghai, but the real founder of the Yale medical work in Changsha, Dr. J. Heng Liu, head of the health administration in Nanking, Dr. Grant of the Rockefeller Foundation, and Dr. Borecc of the health committee of the League of Nations. The aim of the group as I understand it, was to evaluate the public health program as proposed by Hunan, to offer suggestions and to see what financial assistance could be extended. Just recently the hospital has obtained a grant of \$60,000 Mex. from the British Boxer Indemnity to be used over a period of three years for equipment for public health. Just how this money can be used to the best advantage of the whole hospital and the public health is quite a problem. The two are so intimately connected that money with a string on it is not always easy to use to the best advantage.

After their departure our next excitement was the arrival of Mr. Dickson Leavins, who during Yale's early and expanding years was treasurer of the mission. He had not been back since the evacuation in 1927 until he came this year with Mr. Rogers, sent out by President Roosevelt to investigate the silver situation. After Mr. Rogers went back he still had investigations to make and he planned the work so that he had ten days in Changsha. As both of the Yale hostesses, Ruth Greene and Mrs. Ruth were in Kuling, it became our privilege to run a mixed mess for undeparted bachelors, temporary widowers and Mr. Leavins. It seemed good to hear of the old times, when there was plenty of money to run things well, there were many foreigners, and the communists had not yet swept down. Mr. Leavins came by air plane from Shanghai to Hankow, and then on to Changsha, over part of the Peking-Canton run. Roughly distances in China can be measured in units of time as well as miles and they say that what took weeks to do by sampan or chair, can now be covered in days by bus or hours by plane. The fare is \$50 Mex by plane to Hankow, \$16 by train first class, and \$25 by boat.

The first of July the operating schedule started at six in the morning instead of in the afternoon, and the clinics at eight instead of nine. Even with that arrangement, it was fairly warm. The last mastoid I did, the perspiration not only ran down my back, but down my arms so that it leaked out at the elbow of my gown, making it hard to keep a sterile field. With rolled stockings not much got into my shoes, but I did develop fine prickly heat at the stocking top level, and on the back of my neck. One reason that I stayed on to the middle of July, was to finish up some operating on students that had been unable to get away from school earlier. There were two mastoids and a radical sinus that needed to be done, and when I felt that they were in a safe condition I left, July 16, with Miss Kavoughian. Storm clouds gathered through the day and broke somewhere so that we had a cool ride and reached Hankow after a bad heat wave had been broken. The day before it has been 105.6 officially. Hankow is more damp than Changsha because of the Yangtze and Han rivers, making the summers very trying. We had to stay there two days in order to get the express train rather than the local, to Peking, and much of the time we spent in naps, really getting vacation sleeping done up early. So often the first week at Kuling is just one nap after another for people who have been working down on the plains.

The Shantung plain is the site of a very dense population, so dense in fact, that it is beyond the margin of safety and any drought or flood causes vast loss of life. Crossing the plain from north to south, and parallel with the ocean is the grand canal which was dug to enable rice to be brought from the southern provinces to Peking, for in the north no rice is raised. Beside forming a

water way, the canal also serves as part of a vast irrigation system, enabling the water to be more evenly and without much erosion distributed to the coasted portion of the plain. It has been suggested that such a canal might well be constructed on our own eastern seaboard, to prevent the tremendous loss from erosion.

Shortly after crossing into Honan I began seeing donkeys and the big two wheeled heavy carts characteristic of the north. Wheel barrows also were different, with the wheel in the center and the load carried on both sides. The land looked dry and much of the rice I am sure was ruined, while corn was not very large. The morning of the second day brought us much nearer Peking, here the rain had been more abundant, but they were still irrigating certain crops. The water came from wells scattered over the fields, under trees or protected by awnings. The water was elevated by buckets on ropes, the ropes being wound on windlasses, or by means of an endless chain arrangement, turned by a mule, cow or donkey.

The villages here were pretty desolate things. Each was surrounded by a yellow mud wall, the same wall forming the back walls of part of the houses, which were also, even to the roofs, of the same color. Upright posts support the roof whose major beams are also of wood. The door frame and windows are the only other parts of wood. The walls themselves are of sun-dried brick, bearing no real weight. Do you recognize the principle of sky scraper construction? The roofs are made of bundles of kaoliang stalks, butts down and covered with straw and finally a coat of mud well beaten down. There seemed to be no grass in the villages but plenty of trees took away some of the barrenness. Many children ran around as naked as any African, and also the color of the yellow brown dirt. Life is very laborious—no drug store cow boys, and they have little of what we call fun except at the holidays such as China New Year.

Still nearer Peking occasional walled towns or almost cities were seen. These were the big walls, turreted and wide enough for soldiers on top, that really presented a fairly adequate defense in the old days. I imagine the walls were 20-30 feet high, but even so the wind in one place had blown the soil up level with the top.

The history of Peking probably goes back 4,500 years, the early part more or less legendary. Why was this site important for so long? It is not on the sea coast and there is no good river connecting it with the sea. The land is a plain, not particularly beautiful or unusually fertile. The climate is trying though bracing. The nearest marble is three hundred miles away, and how can one have palaces without marble, while the huge timbers for the buildings had to come from long distances, some of the most magnificent from Oregon in sailing vessels. The key seems to lie in the ways in which great migrations and foreign contacts entered China. We think of the sea coast as the portal of entry for a country, while for China the table lands and deserts, Mongolia, Tibet and Indo-China, were the high roads. Over the mountains and down the river courses came the ancestors of the Chinese, pushing the aborigines to a narrow strip along the southeast coast line, then in other waves came Mongols and Tartars and Manchus, blue glazes from Persia and Arabia, and finally the early Singer sewing machines. With the material importations came cultural and new racial characteristics, all to be absorbed into what we know as China. No foreign culture has ever absorbed or drastically changed China, but China has absorbed and changed each race coming and living within its borders, and at the same time has been the source of much of the Japanese and Korean culture. An old story says that a Korean princess mated with an ape to produce the Japanese, but don't tell them so. Peking, commanding Nan kow pass, an important trade route, became the

goal of Mongol and Tartar, and the Chinese themselves varied between Nanking and Peking for their capitals.

It was in this city of ancient hopes and tragedies, not the least of which were the destructions by foreigners in 1860 and 1900, that I was awakened by the bright northern sun which gets up almost an hour earlier in the summer than it does in the south, and the very present calling of the street vendors. The Language School, or as it is now called, the College of Chinese Studies, is a wonderful place in which to stay. The hosts are modern and the friendly spirit of Dr. and Mrs. Pettus seems to pervade the whole place. Dr. Pettus is head of the school and a distinguished scholar of Chinese and he and the others connected with the school, thru past experiences, know how to give the most valuable advice to visitors. In addition, the school library is excellent and open to summer visitors and auto and train trips are arranged as people desire them. The school rickshaw men know English and can take one to the different shopping districts, or show places.

The first few days I rather tended to the sightseeing, thinking that was the first thing to do of course. There were two pleasant girls from Takoma that I enjoyed being with and the time passed quickly. The forbidden city is of course the chief place of interest and to tell about it would take pages and pages. Here inside a red wall and moat, the royal family and retainers lived in their gold colored tile roofed palaces and quarters. Across marble courts came processions and tribute, while behind latticed doors plots were made and ceremonies conducted which kept alive the imperial structure. One is bewildered by the multiplicity of courts, all in red with yellow tiles on the walls and roofs, but a view from Coal Hill as it is called and shown on my sketch just to the north of the Forbidden City, shows the magnificent symmetry of it all. Each building, audience chamber, ceremonial room, or living quarter is raised on a marble platform, but the building itself is of wood. Mighty pillars of chestnut support the huge roof beams, and these carry the beautifully paneled and painted ceilings. All the wood is covered by a plaster of fiber and filled and upon this base was applied red lacquer, gold leaf or painted designs. In the throne room the pillars have a raised design in the plaster and over this is applied gold leaf and a clear lacquer which has darkened with time. The original furnishings have been largely removed and probably only a fraction of the museum pieces are here, the rest being in Shanghai and Nanking where they were taken at the time of the Japanese trouble. With what remains here, several exhibition rooms have been fixed up and considerable time can well be spent here. The old Dowager was very fond of clocks and one large room is filled with magnificent specimens of European clockmaker's art. She seemed to enjoy action and when the clocks were wound, birds sang, butterflies fluttered and glass fountains and streams seemed to run.

In the National Museum, one of the palaces, is a splendid array of ceramics, jade and golden objects. Before so many were removed it was considered the best in the world, but how it stands now I do not know.

While much gracious living undoubtedly went on within these

walls, one cannot but feel the sinister presence of the Dowager Empress or Old Buddha, as she liked to be called. An ignorant, determined and unscrupulous old woman, she blocked progress in China when it would have meant so much, appropriated millions of public money for

her own pleasure and did away with those she saw fit to eliminate. Her son Kuang Hsu was apparently a man of some ability and he, realizing to some extent the need for meeting the foreign influence squarely, proposed reforms. At the end of one hundred days, the old

empress could stand it no longer, and imprisoned her son for the rest of his life in one palace or another, and cancelled all the reform orders. China must not have dealing with the barbarians! She even went so far as to have a special audience (Continued on page 8)

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