Oct 2, 1925

I went to Shanghai leaving Kiang at Chanking and bought some write supplies.

We had a normal and uneventful trip from Yenching to Kiangsi.

Kiangsi was very busy, having lost our Chinese doctor (Dr. Wu) soon after I left. Now I am busy for Kiangsi has gone to bring the folk home; a two weeks job. However, Dr. Chen will be back from Peking in four or five days and then things will be more normal again.

Sutherland wrote a detailed account of the summer experiences that he and his wife and Grace had. It is very interesting, really exciting, and quite large. He gave me a copy. I will make another for you when I get time.

P.S. Those things you are wondering about in a Chinese writing art. Think I need the little black stick with Chinese ink. They dip it in the black stick on the slab which you called Douglas, and then rub the end of the black stick on it till they have thick ink. Then they use the little brushes to write with holding it straight up and down.
Dear Dad,

Your sleepy letter came today, twenty-three days on the way, signed "Your Son, Wm Corpron." It sounded rather strange. I hope it will be the correct closing about twenty years and four months from now.

We are well, want to stay in China as long as we are useful and wanted, getting fine experience of many varities, and get a bit more than plenty of real excitement. G race is as happy as a clam now that she is home and running her own house and making gardens and watching her flowers grow. She doesn't worry about all of the things she could worry about if she wanted to; she lets me do that. I'm not getting thin over it but the responsibilities of a full hospital, which could be twice as full if we had the room, and of a too large a daily clinic I have no time to play now that Dr. Vierling and Dr. Chen are still away. Other things come up every week to make one's life as exciting as a walk down an American auto infested street, Viz. The coolie who went with me this summer I laid off upon our return because he was useless and a troublemaker. He threatened to raise a mob to attack me because he claimed I still owed him money which I refused to pay. He had the date set for my exit from church one Sunday morning. Chinese friends warned me not to go to church that day. I went and waited for things to happen; but all was quiet. His blackmail stunt had failed.

A little later it became my duty as acting Superintendent to discharge two hospital servants who were gambling so late nights they couldn't do their work the next days. It took me one whole afternoon to fire them. One knocked the bottoms out of all the hot water boilers he had been caring for and poured kerosene on the water her had carried for the same. The other returned and tore the clothes off of the gate man who had orders not to let them in. You say, "Well, why didn't you call the police?" I didn't report it to the police for they are powerless. I could do more singlehanded than the whole police force; and that's the truth. Nor did I report it to the Yamen. Protection there is almost a negative quantity. There are about a hundred soldiers in town, and they are at the point of riot all the time. Really God is our only protection from dangers. I gave the chief of the Theaves Guild, who reported to se of what assistance he could be, two hundred coppers to see that the trouble makers didn't return; but one did once.

The next week the soldiers were due to riot. They had been mistreated by the head man here. He beheaded two and hadn't paid them for a long time. So they were going to raise trouble and incidentally money and were intending, so the report went, to carry off some of the foreigners as hostages so they wouldn't be followed too hotly. One night I got a note from the postmaster, who writes English, asking if his wife could stay in the hospital over night for the riot was coming off that night. But it didn't come off. Nor has it occurred yet. But that was something to think about while the scare lasted.
My dear Mae,

Congratulations on your Billy Ray. I can wish you no more than that he is as big a joy to you as is our small son and their twins. Nothing much amounts to that.

We are sending you a small box today - it is a pair of little red shoes - tiger shoes which Charles has worn for years at occasions. Also there is a silver chain and lock, which a Chinese boy baby wears around his neck and plays with as soon as he can use his hands. My Bilkie had this like it given him and some trinkets with it. He is just getting to the stage now where he can have lots of fun with them.

I have an unusually good group of servants this fall and so I have more time for loving my hildies. If I had to do all my own work it might be a different story. I am doing quite a bit of dressing the and the happy part of dressing this year. It’s wonderful to be well enough to do it. I hate to think of the miserable weeks I spent in last spring flat on my back and not knowing what was happening to my hildies or how clean the kitchen was. I feel so much better now that it all seems like a bad dream - I tell Doug that I feel as tho’ I had come back from the dead - and I guess I did almost. We live an easy life out there but are constantly
in danger from their tropical diseases.

Dunny was telling me his letter how Phyllis
Ann is going to kindergarten. She just thinks
it can hardly sit still to eat her breakfast.
She is so eager to be off. She is given four hours
and thus I have a wonderfully free for myself
and thus I have a wonderfully free forenoon
Perhaps I can really start and write letters
once again. I have not been able to do it at all
this summer for Phyllis was constantly at my elbow
as always, questions or getting into mischief. You know
how it is. I have lost touch of a good many places
by it. I have been too sick and
friends just because I have been too sick and
had done with babies to even write a proper letter.
I was almost blind for a long
of thanks - till too I was almost blind for a long
and the early part of the summer. It came
forenoon - big brown eyes and round plat nose.
I wonder if your sonny boy will look
like his Grandpa too. Ours is every bit
comparison. His brown eyes and round plat nose.
This 'hari is sort of questionable what there is of it
but it will chune just as Phyllis did. Hers is
yellow now - but is hopefully getting darker.

Have you succeeded in teaching Marjory Ann
table manners? I despair at the hash. Seems as
this I have made no impression at all and the
stand half our meal in correcting Phyllis. She will
behave and take too much food around and let
her food get cool unless I am continually keeping her
at it. Please control my end and tell me your
child does the same thing. I'll write the rest in another letter some
soon.
Dearest mother,

I was in the hospital office when the telegram came telling of pappa’s illness. It had only been about a week since I had received a letter from him and I had answered it at once. I took it from that letter that he was well, happy, and working at the usual satisfactory pace. So the cablegram of his illness took me completely off of my feet. I thought, as soon as I could collect my thoughts, that I should pack a bag and leave for home at once. But then it dawned upon me that I couldn’t take Grace and Phyll’s Ann, nor could I leave them behind in the uncertainty of this place. Then I realized that I couldn’t do anything to help him get better any more than was already being done even if I could get on an aeroplane and get there the next day. But it would be at best three weeks and by that time pappa would be well on the road to recovery or it would be too late. So I had to cable my inability to come; and am anxiously waiting for more encouraging news. I have been dreaming about him every night. He has been sick in these dreams but gradually recovering. So I am waiting for that news.

My cablegram, replying to your cable, was in code sent to the U.C.M.S. office, where it was to be deciphered and forwarded to you by wire. It was as follows:-

GO SFLOLIDOSM
XINXKWHOLF UFSILLCGR IXCASJIOZL MRPHOAFYF

The translation is:—U.C.M.S.—St Louis, Mo. Please telegraph following to my mother—deeply grieved to hear the sad news; accept sincere sympathy—regret my inability to come—on account of family affairs.—We hope—improving steadily.—Love.—Dr. Corpron.

There is another war in and around Shanghai and Vierling is on his way home, passing thru there, I don’t know when he will get here. So I am still here with a hospital on my hands.

We are now beginning to really realize what it means to be a missionary. Since our summer experiences and now pappa’s illness and our inability to come to him, has made us realize as we have not had to before that there are sacrifices to be made.

I am hoping and praying almost continually that recovery is now well on the way. But I also hope he will take it easy from now on and not try to make next year the greatest year in practice as last year was. We need him more than he needs the money.

I am anxiously awaiting further word.

Love,

Douglas
Dec. 20, 1925

Dear Florence Ann,

Just got your letter written a month ago on the end of Community Day. You were living in dread of the morrow and hated the drudgery world in general. Seems to me you got more than your share of this most tedious business. Guess I was luckier than I knew. It must be a plight of a job. Your school system is as progressive and community minded that you can't escape it, I suppose.

You speak of not having a letter from me in two months and not knowing whether I was home or not. I wrote my first letter to Burlington on Oct. 25 and I am sure I wrote soon after getting home here the last of Sept. There must have been a letter lost. I have been home safe and happy for almost three months now. This long distance correspondence surely is a drag. It's like I used to tell Doug when we hadn't seen each other for a year and he was East and I was West. The limits of communications are down and we can not write as we used to. I get so lonesome for you & Mother. There is no one here who can do anything near fill your shoes. I have only three married women to choose from this year and two of them are swamped with kids. I held standing for Golightly to choose to. I learned how much she was last summer - but now she lives a trinity minute walk away and is busy teaching in the girl's
school as well as trying to run her house hold.

I have been sick in bed last week, haven't seen a soul
except the other Dr. Farmer who paid me a call to see how
we are getting on. Doug picked up a mild case of diphtheria last
mon. at his chins! I hope Anyhow I had a bad patch in his
throat & eyes for several days. we all work around though
he was well by Thurs. & we can be almost again but
I won't risk it. But it's been done some of course, couldn't
have lived with Doug since he isolated himself
as much as possible. He hopes to get the negative
cultures before Christmas - I surely hope he does and that
none of the servants get it.

I don't blame you any for wanting our Edison.
Our machine fills in a large blank in our lives
& I don't know what we'd ever do without it. We
have only three Christmas records and I have been playing
them to death these last vi days - I am thinking of
selling one and borrowing some of the neighbors Christmas
records for a day. This is the week when they mean the most.
Our machine plays Edison as well as Victor. I love the
Edison ones and have a Rachmaninoff at the pianos.
They cost twice as much as the others, but are well
worth it. They are perfect and of such high quality that
one never tires of them. The Edison also reproduces
the count especially well. You love the violin as much
you can't get the most famous artists like Kreisler & Elgar
but I suppose there are others not as famous that are good.
We have decided always to buy the very best records we
can get for we find we never tire of them as we do
of a cheap jazz one that costs 50c or so. Gwilt has a
small phonograph and some thirty good class from the
records that a small church in Ohio sent them.
but I seldom play it. Irene can make better music herself. Well, as much for that. Here is my topic sentence at the bottom of my paragraph: "One excellent $5.00 record is to be preferred to six medium ones." But I don't need to tell you all this. I remember how you have always shown much good taste in the kind you preferred and how you always gathered for the ones with the unpronounceable names.

Your new dress sounds lovely. It's the same kind of cloth I made my soft woolen dress of. I just used the skirt of mine of last year and made a play coat for Nell. You don't have anything on me when it comes to a change of clothes. I have to wear woolen dresses now and I am reduced to one thing that will go around me. It's not beautiful. I had the tailor remake my blue serge I made my 1st year teaching and have worn off so I have to get some tailored grey flannel and added a front and collar and cuffs. Split the blue down the front so that it flaps like a cape. It looks like a picture I saw in the Pictorial. Or rather it would look that way if I had a normal shape. It's the first time I have found a way to make over three lowish (but not low enough) waist lines. I am going to try my dressing gowns that way after Billie comes. I saw a beautiful pink and brown gauze pattern silk that I think will go with it beautifully. These Chinese silks are good enough to eat. I wish I needed a silk dress. But I still have three more of which are worn out. We don't dress up enough out here to wear such a thing out.
We have to wear sweaters over them if we wear them in the winter at all. You spoke of sending me a sweater. I hope it will stretch over my silk maternity dress and then I’ll have something new for a dress up outfit. It’s upstairs now in one of mamma’s trunks and we have only three more days to wait. Can’t Christmas come.

I have some felt pajamas put away up stairs and Dony’s folks can’t have yet. Dony did his Christmas shopping last year when he was in Shanghai. He has a locked trunk upstairs that he won’t let me get into. Also I stumbled on a scrunny pair of goldish tone satin stockings that he had put in one of his drawers and not covered up really enough. I did not have any chance to shop for him so I had Edith send out chocolates and beef stew and gin for him and the tailor is making him a lovely wool shirt and some ties. Dony washed his in on me too early and walked thru the room where the tailor was working. He didn’t say anything but I have a real fear he saw his shirt.

That is the one that it’s really fun getting ready for. It has been such fun this year. Really, the preparations are over half the joy. Dony got his block + dishes and a slate etc. in Shanghai and he is having our nice old carpenter make her a cute little toy wheel cart that she can push her dolls in out on the side walk. I also had the carpenter make a lovely big doll bed. Big enough to put at least three dolls in. Its just like ours only bed only tiny painted white. The tailor made it a nice mattress and sheets + pillow cases and quilts. It will just keep her busy for hours I know. And the outfit was so much easier to get here than it would have been if I ordered + shipped it.

Edith sent her the dandiest little “Big Boy” dollie. Its face
is exactly like a two weeks old baby and my God how he can cry! In fact he cried all the way from America to China. When my cookie dumped the box down on the table, I turned is over to look at the address, it let out a wail and I knew at once what was in it. So I opened it up and smeared the baby for I wanted the piece of washing clothes for him, and its hands and a gyp. Last night I handed tiny diapers, two booties, and shirts and a little white online. Today the tailor is making a brown fuzzy pumpkin printed suit. And tonight I'll see if I can manage a green felt suit and everyone of some kind. I can just see Ethyl's sitting down and leaning him while I am cutting my hair. She can get on her own shoes and stockings now but can't lace the shoes yet, but she'll soon learn.

I'd give a whole lot if Mother & Ethyl could see her Christmas morning. They'd get as big a kick out of it as we do.

Doug's mother has another grandchild, I am happy to say. She is probably a big comfort to her now. Mother sounds as happy as a clam, because she has Joe to fuss over. How I hope he will stay by her awhile and not go rushing off to Maine right away. He'll do it eventually, I suppose but he certainly hasn't money enough now.

I feel so sorry for Doug's mother. Poor soul, she is just lost. She is going to live with Max & Roy, has enough to live on for the present at least. Her last letter said she didn't want Doug to leave his choice work now for she couldn't be happy if she had dragged him away. With she would go into some state missionary work. She needs a job. She is such a managing sort of a person that she
is in misery without an occupation. Doug & I are only just beginning to be worth anything to the society that counts us out and they have invested thousands of dollars in us. We'd be grand reports to go back on them this early in the game. Wouldn't we?

You talk about drawing on your life insurance to come west to see us when we are home. Save your money and make a grand summer trip of it. However, I am hoping we get each ourselves. Doug will of course want to study some more – he talks of going back to his old West Point in Pittsburg. I can't imagine living without him the whole year. I have an idea we'll all go and I'll find some place out in the suburbs where my kids won't be run over by street cars and automobiles. I tremble to think of all those cars! Yet I sort of hope we can get a second hand Ford. There's a lot of folks in town I'd like to see – your & Grace & the Root folks and Uncle Bernt & who says Joe & mother won't be there then – and a car seems to be the only way of getting around the world in America. Oh! well a lot of things can happen in two years. Maybe you'll be teaching in Cal. like Hotte in Canton.

I am telling you I am only going to have two kids when I come home but maybe I'll change my mind later on. Everybody here in landmarks wheels to have more than they want. However I think Doug has a little more up to date information than most. I am glad he is my husband & not any body else. I just learned last night that Irene Goulet is pregnant again. Has been real sick for a while & probably will be from now on. That will spoil all their grand furlough plans of a trip thru Europe. Don't you think nature wants the way she takes a fellow by the noddle & makes you fulfill her aims? I love you, Grace.
Dearest Mother,

If all we had to do was the things someone had first worked out as best for us to do, considering all persons and things involved in that action, the doing would be nothing at all. The hardest thing is the deciding what that action must be. It took many a debate in my mind before I could get up courage enough to say the final word that decided my coming to China. After the word had been spoken, after the chance had been taken that that was the right course to take rather than some other, it was not so hard. Then things took their own course and went off quite smoothly.

Today I have had to make one of these very difficult decisions; perhaps the hardest of my life so far. Your telegram came at noon—"Pappa died, please come." Knowing a little of the great emptiness which has so suddenly come into your life with pappa gone, and how you would want me, your other sweetheart and image of him, with you to comfort you, every cell in my whole body went out to you and your call. "Please come," I wanted you as much as you wanted me, to be your strong right arm thru this time of sorrow.

I had to answer, "Can’t come." I fought all afternoon with the obstacles that made me answer thus; obstacles which on that side of the broad Pacific might not seem so great as they really are.

In the first place I knew that by the time I could get there you would have already gone thru the first shock of keenest sorrow without me and the parting that would have to take place again in a week or two at the most would be very hard.

Again, I would have to finance my own trip, which is impossible now. This month we got only $67.66 Mex. salary because my insurance and a Montgomery-Ward order came out of it. That is about used up to supply our table. The Mission is so hard up on their careful budget and coming school deficits (now that school enrollments are small due to the student trouble), so that if I did borrow by means of a sight draft it would have to be taken out of my next month’s salary, simply an advance of a month. In that case Grace would have nothing to live on the next two months for it will take all above actual food cost to cover coal bill this next month and the winter staple grocery bill, and the rent on the cottage last summer. I’d never think of you paying it, for you will need all of yours and pappa’s savings in the future.

If I did come I would have to do it alone. There is no question about that. There would be no good reason for taking the risks entailed in dragging her and the baby and the little one to be across the rough winter Pacific and back, if she did get one way it would then be too late to come back before the confinement; and then no telling when she would be in shape for the return. And Vierling’s are leaving for furlough next June and I have to learn all about the running of the hospital before that time, I could hardly think of leaving her out here in this bandit infested region either, to have her baby without me.

Now that pappa has been forced to take his rest from an
active life of service to mankind, he leaves a large practise behind. It is a big field for service in which he was so happy working, and so unhappy when unable to be at it. He has done a great piece of work. Also he has been broadminded enough to consent, even though it didn't quite fit in with his own personal dreams, to my answering My Call. Every day of my preparation for work and work out here I have increasingly come to believe that this is my particular piece of work. I now have two Heavenly Fathers and I believe they both wish me to carry on in China. And not be an unworthy substitute in pappas Yakima practise. I feel that I am just beginning to account for all of the offerings and prayers made for this work. Not that I am on the home stretch toward the finish.

I wonder if I should say these things at this time when you want me and I want you so badly to comfort each other over our great loss,— you your husband and lover, I my father, medical inspiration and pattern, and whom?

I am sure you will appreciate the fight I have had today to keep myself from throwing over all reason and tearing myself from duty and flying to you to receive and give comfort and consolation. I'm sure we will receive this comfort when we meet in prayer together with pappa before the Heavenly Throne, these coming weeks.

My best love and thoughts are with you and the girls at this time.

Love,

Douglas