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3 Ping Tsang Hsiang,
Nanking.
March 9, 1938.

Dear Nina:-

In what Mr. Rabe, who kept pretty full notes on what happened in Nanking, always called his "histoire de la guerre," I have in my "histoire" now brought you pretty well up to date save for some of the more recent developments. But before going into them, I want to say a word about Mr. Rabe himself. Besides being the Chairman of our Safety Zone Committee, he did a relief work of no small dimensions himself, having about six hundred refugees at one time on his own residence compound alone. This compound was not a large one, being the former German School near Gan Ho Yen, and the refugees there were pretty crowded, but they felt safe with him and they were. Mr. Rabe had one inflexible rule. If Japanese soldiers got into his compound through the gate, he let them go out that way; but if they came in over the wall, he made them go out over the wall! He would not let them out through the gate. Occasionally they got in when he was not there, but if he was at hand, he made them abide by his rule. Every one loved Mr. Rabe for his big heart. He said of Lewis that he (Lewis) could typewrite faster than he (Rabe) could think, but the two of them, as Chairman and Secretary, shared an office together and got on famously ~~together~~ with each other. They supplemented each other in many ways most effectively.

After the Japanese came in all of us were busy with police work for the first two weeks or so, or perhaps I should rather say with police work mixed in with relief duties. For some days I helped in rice distribution to the camps, riding the trucks partly to help deliver the rice, and partly to keep the Japanese from getting them. But after a while I was transferred to the job of going around with Mr. Takatama of the Japanese consular police to check up on American property and to put up Japanese Embassy proclamations thereon in an effort to stop the depredations of their soldiers. This task took the best part of several days. Later with Mr. Foster and two or three Chinese I was asked to inspect all of our camps and report on their condition, especially with regard to the amount of rice needed in each place. The Committee gave out rice on the basis of one picul a day for every two hundred and fifty persons. This was no very generous allowance, but it would keep soul and body together, and we felt it necessary to conserve our supplies, for we did not know what might be ahead. Even so we did not give out free rice to every body, but only to those who did not have any rice or any money of their own. Our task was to check up on the rice distribution on the above basis and straighten out as far as we could any irregularities that had arisen. I suppose that in this work I came about as close as I ever have to concentrated misery. Not that the people were complaining or that sort of thing, on the contrary they were surprisingly cheerful considering all they had gone through and all they were even then still suffering. But the misery lay in this, that there was not a family that was not uprooted, many had lost all they had except the little they had brought to the camp, many had had the son, father, or husband killed or taken away, and many at least of the women had suffered at the hands of the soldiers. To go in and out among these thousands day after day was one long contact with sorrow and hardship. Often and often we were asked by women if we could get their menfolk back for them, and one knew it was a forlorn hope, almost like calling people back from the dead. No more could we rebuild the burned

homes, restore the destroyed businesses, or revive the shattered life of those we sought to aid. All we could do was just to try to keep people from starving, that one little service in the midst of so much need!

Most of the delivery of food and fuel to the camps during December and January was undertaken by Sone and Riggs. Day after day in good weather and bad they rode the trucks and went with the coolies back and forth to their lodgings, for it was quite a long time before the coolies really felt safe to go about unescorted. During the time when I helped in this phase of the work, it was a queer little procession this ~~way~~ that went along the streets every morning. First I came with the chauffeur, sometimes I with an American flag folded over my arm and he with a small German flag, as the trucks either were German or under German protection, and then the coolies two and two behind us. I did not always display my American flag, but I don't think the chauffeur ever went out without his. One day when Sone was on a truck some Japanese soldiers stopped him and inquired why the truck displayed two flags. Sone replied that he was American, that the truck was German, and - pointing to our International Committee badge that all of us wore in those days - that the Committee was made up of people of different nations. That explanation satisfied them and no further questions were asked. It was always a real asset to us that we had a German chairman, some German members on the Committee, and a fairly large number of German as of American flags. By the way, speaking of flags, I expect I have spent more money for flags these recent months than was ever spent by a Presbyterian missionary in all the years of our work in China. I haven't the exact figures before me at the moment, but the amount is between two and three hundred dollars. But the expenditure was necessary. It was our only form of insurance; first the big flags about thirty feet by fourteen against air raids, and then the smaller flags for protection against Chinese or Japanese soldiers. The former were spread on the ground, or in the case of Ming Deh put on top of the building. At Community Center I had a big flag painted on top of the roof. Smaller flags were used liberally as the fighting became imminent around the city. From two to five were usually displayed on each compound, so that no one, no matter from what direction he approached the property, could claim that he did not know it was American. Flag making was quite an industry here in Nanking for a time as each one sought to mark the properties for which he was responsible. One day in December after the fighting had started around the city Bob came home from the hospital. All the University buildings were flying flags, and Bob said "It certainly looks like the Fourth of July around here." "Yes," said Mac or some one else in the group, "it sounds like it too!" And it certainly did.

Some time after the camp inspection work of which I have spoken above was over, I was asked to take charge of the so-called rehabilitation work, which was in one sense an outgrowth of our inspection work. This has developed since that time, as was natural, until it is now the major part of our Committee's undertaking. It had to be so, for in one sense our whole job is to try to get people back on their feet. Of course we can't do it adequately, for funds are limited and the needs are limitless, but we are trying to do what we can. To date we have given some special aid to nearly six thousand families. This is given after careful investigation of the needs of each family. We have a staff of some forty people who are now working at this task. There are probably at least ten thousand families now waiting investigation. A good staff has now been developed and Mr. Liu, formerly manager of the Metropolitan Hotel, is at present in general charge of the work, serving most enthusiastically and voluntarily. The Japanese military are occupying his hotel, so he has nothing to do there now and is finding an outlet for his energies with us.

Plumer