

Kiaohsien, Shantung, China Sept. 23, 1947.

Dearest Edith, -

In my last letter I promised to send you a "fuller" report of what we have been through and witnessed. I'm sure Mother has written you about nearly everything, if so, you can just throw ~~away~~ this letter away, should you find something that you haven't heard before, you can pass it on to Margaret!!!!

I should really write this in Swedish, my English being so poor, you would get a better story if I wrote in Swedish, but Egon thinks I ought to write English, so here it goes and you have to excuse all my mistakes as you always have to do. -

Ever since the Communists got driven out from here in Aug. 1946 we had some nationalist soldiers in our city. The first group that came was a fine crowd. After some time they left our place and were sent to Weihsien. Then we got what they called "the Communication Police" and they were stationed in different places on the railway line between Tsingtao and Weihsien. The Communists were very strong everywhere in the country and ofcourse they would do all they could to ~~destroy~~ the railroad. During the Summer of 1946 they destroyed part here and there and all bridges were blown up, but as soon as the Government's soldiers ~~recaptured~~ recaptured Kiaohsien and Kaomi the railroad got under repair and the whole line - from Tsingtao to Tsinan - was rebuilt with American material. The Communication police were to protect the new railroad. How did they do it? They made their quarters in the towns, instead of at the railroad stations, and they made themselves a merry time: drinking, gambling, stealing and looking for girls and left the railroad to "the reds". Everybody was fed up with them. They were a terrible set. Egon can witness to that too, because he had to try to keep them out of our house in Nankuan. He talked and talked but they moved in all the same and went through the boxes ~~there~~, belonging to Hulda, and stole some of her things too.

As long as the repairs of the railroad went on there were plenty of people on the line, but right after Christmas the line was complete and they were only working at some bridges here and there. Then the "reds" got busy again and ~~every~~ every night there were parts blown up. The Communication police didn't care. They stayed where they were and had a good time. In the middle of Febr. the line between Tsingtao and Tsinan was open for a week! - but then the big destruction sat in and trains would run only between Tsingtao and Kaomi and a few days later only to Lantsuen, because the bridge over Tae-Ko hoa had been blown up. During Febr. the rumours about the communists' drive towards our towns were many and people began to be afraid and many fled to Tsingtao. In a few days our "good" soldiers began to urge the people to leave the city and soon they ordered them out. It was very cold ~~xxx~~ those days and the suffering was terrible. The road between Tsingtao and here was crowded as a market street, for days, and many died before they reached T. At Tsanko there was a kind of a gate, everyone was stopped there and asked if they had permit for entering Tsingtao. Ofcourse they had not. Well, then they were not allowed in and out there was no shelter what so ever and lots of people were freezing to death those cold nights. It was terrible with the smaller children. They got wet and during the nights there clothing was like a girde of ice and before morning they were dead. The soldiers ordered the people to leave ~~but~~ ^{in line} but Tsingtao did not take them in. Nothing was organized. Later on Tsingtao had to take them in, but they had no where to put them. Each one had to find a place for themselves.

Well, well! Today we write Jan. 6, 1948 and my "story" is still far from finished. I don't know how it is. We don't have anything to do - no schools or very little mission work - but I keep busy from morning till night. Of course I saw and prepare for our trip home, but all the same. We perhaps sleep too much!! It's awful to ~~xxxxxx~~ live like this. Now I hope to write this story down anyhow. With things happening all arround us, from day to day, this will be a never ending story. ----

This was now the last week of Febr. 1947. Johnny was in Kaomi for his schooling and Lally in Tsingtao. Our Chinese students went away like a smoke. The Schools were emptied out in an hour and all running to Tsingtao. Saturday was the first of March and then the Kaomi-car drove up here cramed full of people - the Jansson family, Johnny and some Chinese. They didn't like to stay in Kaomi. Still we had the Communication Police here and they told us ~~that~~ they would hold our city etc. During the first week in March we began to understand that our place would certainly also fall into the hands of the communists. On the third of March, Martin and I drove in to Tsingtao just for the day to get a few thing settled there. Later in ~~the~~ week Egron developed toothache and began to be so swollen in his face. He had to see the doctor about it and we also had letters to the Board and some money-business to do, so we decided to make an other Tsingtao-trip. We understood that we were facing a time of isolation here. On the 8 of March we started out real early. As we didn't dare to stay in Tsingtao over night, in case any change could take place here, we had devided up our errands to be able to get back by evening. The travelers were: Egron, Martin, Johnny and myself. When we went out the city gate just little after 6 o'clock in the morning, the guards were just smiling and waved us away. The day before we had asked them about the Tsingtao road and had gotten the answer that -going east is O.K. - We hadn't gone more than perhaps two Chinese li when we saw the tele^{ph}on lines were cut. Egron said - the 'reds' have been here. We better turn back home. - Martin said something about the 'reds' always being busy at night and they usually didn't do much during day time. - We went on, Egron murmuring something about the 'cut' being too near the city this time. Coming to the first village a couple of soldiers peeped out through a door. Johnny said - they were communists soldiers, let us go back home quickly! - Martin again remarked that some new soldiers had come up from the south and perhaps they had uniforms something like the reds. - We went on. We did get in to the next village before we were stopped by some soldiers, and then we understood that we were right in the arms of the communist soldiers!! - Well Egron and Martin had to walk to their Head Quarters while Johnny and I were allowed to stay in the car. After a while they came back and said that we were not allowed to go to Tsingtao, but we could return home. Very well, we turned the car and were so thankful to get away from them that quickly. Going past that village there Johnny had seen the soldiers, we now saw some more soldiers coming out from the houses. It was still early in the morning. Leaving the village behind us we had only 18 li to Kiaohsien, and we certainly were happy. But - right across the road they had put up some farmers' tools to hinder us from speeding away and looking aside we saw a man throwing a red flag up into the air and after that throw himself down on the ground. In ~~ten~~ same minute shots began to whistle arround us. They shot like mad. Egron and Martin went out of the car and waved their ~~xxxx~~ hands over their heads, but they kept on shooting. Johnny and I had gone down on the floor in the car. I could see how Egron ~~xxxx~~ went down into a ditch to take cover and I saw a shot just going over his head, so near it could go without hitting him, and then go into the bank. Still shooting they walked up to our car. They acted very nervous and yelled at us like mad. Egron told them that their Head Quarters had given us permission to drive back to Kiaohsien. Well, they didn't listen to that, they said that they had their own Head Quarters and we had to go there. (We understood very well that the man, who gave us the permission to go back home, had phoned these soldiers and told them to capture us.) After some talk they took Egron and Martin along with them and left 5-6 guards with Johnny and me. We were sitting in the car

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The guards were very rude at first and they asked me if I wasn't afraid. I told them that I was not, because I never had been afraid of Chinese and they were Chinese too. That answer pleased them and then Johnny began to speak to them in real Kiaohsien Chinese and they just laughed and had a good time. They are just like children. If you can lead their interest away on something, they just forget why they should be there to ~~waxxwx wachx~~ you. We waited for two hours and then at last we saw Egron and Martin coming our way, well guarded by soldiers. Right away I understood that they didn't bring good news, and soon Egron had told us that we now were prisoners!!! The car was turned the other way again and with guards on the running board we were taken to the Head Quarters. Next to their house was a small house, 3 rooms, and we were taken to the west room and were well guarded there. We crowded up on the 'kang' but it was so cold. The old lady, who lived in the house, had been so scared during that night when the 'reds' came in, and now, when they brought foreigners to her house as prisoners, she didn't dare to stay at home but ran away. It was a very cold day.

We were questioned the whole day long. One or two soldiers, some of them were Officers, but you can't tell that by their uniform, but they are a little bit more clever and have at least some education. Everybody gave us the same questions. Perhaps they wanted to find out if we gave the same answers or not. They asked us, and we asked them when we could go home. So it went on the whole day and it began to be late afternoon. They were fighting with the city soldiers and we could hear the fight going on. The only answer we got was that it was war and too dangerous for us to travel. I went up to one of them, an Officer, and asked as kindly as I could if we wouldn't be allowed to drive home before dark, because we have our old Mother and a small child at home and they were expecting us home this evening. The only answer I got was a smile and some words about them also having Mothers and small children at home!!!!

We had no food along and in that village was nothing to be had because all the people had fled when the soldiers came in. But Mrs. Feng had sent some Chinese bread to her children in Tsingtao and I brought 20 eggs for rally and seeing that we couldn't get home we asked if we could have a little bit of straw from the yard and make a little fire. We boiled some eggs and ate some dry bread, but we were not hungry. About 7 o'clock they told us to sleep!!! We tried to make us as comfortable as we could on that hard kang' - well knowing that it wouldn't be much of sleep for us. Even though it was dark they kept coming in to our room and flashing a light in our faces and counting: one, two, three, four!!!! In the next house, their Head Quarters, they were having a Conference about us the whole day. (Here I must tell some thing. When the Nationalists came in here in aug. we had a visit from one of their Officers, who said that he and his soldiers were on the other side of the river that day when we were taken. They had their spise out, and even in the village where we were kept, and they knew everything about it. He told us that some of the 'reds' wanted to kill us in order to get the car. They talked the whole day about it, but some were against it because we were foreigners, and because of that they compromised, and that I'll tell you now.)

At ten o'clock a man came in, not an Officer, and told us that we could go home!!!! We haven't traveled at night here in China, perhaps for twenty years, and now, when everything was upside down, we certainly didn't like to do it. ~~wexx~~ We asked him if we could stay till towards the morning because we didn't like to travel by night. He went away but came back with the order that we had to go. The reason was - they said - that they were all leaving that village and if new troops came in during the night, we would be taken prisoners by them. In the evening we had witnessed how their spise came in from different places. It was terrible to be in it, but afterwards you are glad for the experience, because we saw some many 'inside things' during our stay with them. We had to leave, that was all to it.

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We felt very bad about leaving, and felt like we would be walking in to some kind of a trap. It was a cold night and we couldn't get the car started. We heated some water, but the car stood where it ~~xxxx~~ was and didn't seem to have any intention to move. We also worked very slow because we felt so uneasy about driving away at that hour. It was a moonlight night. Gorgeously bright and wonderful. We wouldn't have to have the lights burning on the car, which was a good thing. We again told the 'reds' that we didn't feel like going, but they said that their soldiers would all be going north that night and that they who had been at ~~the~~ the big road had already left. But the car didn't move and our friends left us, and we were just alone in the outskirts of the village walking on the car. The clock was almost 12 at midnight. - Then we saw some shadows coming up from the roads and the ditches towards the village. They walked closed to the houses and walls and kept very quiet. We understood that new troops were coming our way and we also made as little noise as possible. After a few minutes we were all surrounded by soldiers. They were also nervous, had been fighting the whole day, and saw enemies in every ~~xxxxxxx~~ corner. We told them our story, which we thought they all knew before even if they acted differently. I suppose we were very near to be captured again, but one young fellow knew how to drive and he got interested in the car. Egron told them that if they only would give us a push perhaps we would be able to get away, and talking and playing with the car they didn't know till the car started and we quickly in to it and drove away. Before we got the car started a man walked up to Egron and said: "You know you shouldn't drive out now. It's very dangerous." - He was a bit older than the rest and looked like a decent fellow.

Passing the first village the guards there didn't stop us. They knew the story!!! I can still feel the movements of the car and also hear the noise from the engine! We felt we would have gone absolutely soundless, but in the stillness of the night that car made such a noise. The Moon spread it's light over the fields and we saw far away over the fields to small villages around. I don't know if you are able to recall that road at all. Just 12 lis from our city is a temple with a pagoda. We had just ~~reached~~ reached that spot when the shots began to whistle again and this time much worse than the last. I hadn't been afraid during the whole day and even when they shot at us I sort of had a reassurance that the shots would not hit us, but we hadn't experienced any thing like this last shooting before. Soldiers rushed up from every ditch and came running over the fields towards us. Egron and Martin went out again into the shooting and waving their ~~xxx~~ hands. Johnny said to me: "Now they'll kill us, Mother." Johnny and I were still in the car and if I ever prayed in my life it was then, and still I can't understand that we came out of that inferno and back home again. Nothing but a wonderful answer to our prayers. Hundreds of shots were fired at us, but none of them were allowed to hit us. Those soldiers were real bandits. They held Egron and Martin on the road there while they searched them. Egron lost the golden watch! His precious gift from Father Rinell. --- While they went on being rude to the men, they took Johnny and me up to the pagoda and we were not allowed to walk, we had to run, as ~~xx~~ fast as we could and with their guns in our backs. Coming up to the temple two Officers received us like we would have been their ~~xx~~ very best friends. They had a fire in the middle of the room and they urged us up to the fire and said, in a most kindly voice: "How is it that you are out at night, when fighting is going on? Aren't you cold? Please come right up to the fire! etc." I was talking back to them as nice as I could but tried to keep an ~~xxxx~~ eye on the road to find out what had happened to the men. The soldiers were busy preparing stretchers and I thought that Egron and Martin had been wounded after all. After a while the men came, walking on their own legs, and that was some thing to be thankful for. (That Officer, who came to tell us all about that day, he also told us that when they couldn't get majority among their own people to kill us, they had finally decided to send us out in the middle of the night and they would shoot and the whole thing would be an --- accident.) Well now this group said that they had nothing to do with that group who had held us prisoners, and because of that they would take us to their Head Quarters and see how to handle this question. Again Egron and Martin were gone and Johnny and I sitting in the car, well guarded, and waiting, waiting.

r guards were just very young boys and they soon began to talk to us and they were very hungry they wanted something to eat. We had a bit bread left, that Chinese bread, and they were so pleased. After a while I asked them where their Head Quarters were and was told --- 60 li from here!!!! Well, then our men can't be back before tomorrow I said. The clock was going towards 2, but the night was as bright as a day. Then one of their soldiers came and told our guards that they had order to go north. All were leaving that place. One of them, a little fellow, perhaps 16-17 years old, walked up to me and said in a grim and stern voice: "If you start the car, since we've left, ~~xx~~ both you and your son will be shot. Do you understand?" - I told him to "fang sin" - I had no keys, Martin had taken them along, so I would be there alright. In my mind I was thinking - who would shoot us, they all had left!!!! They went and Johnny and I were all alone on the road. I was so happy to have him along and he was very brave the whole day and as he has a very pleasant way in dealing with people he made friends with our guards and made the whole situation much easier. Just after two o'clock Egron and Martin turned up, and now I must tell you their story.

They had been taken to a village north of the railroad. When they asked where the Head Quarters were, they were told that they had just moved to Kaomi district that day and they had to walk 60 li - ~~xxxx~~ exactly as our guards had said. Ofcourse our men were not willing to do that and they talked all they could about our ~~xxxx~~ planned trip to Tsingtao and how we were taken and how we now had gotten the promise of returning home. Then one of the soldiers said that they had a small Office in the village and he took them there. Coming in there they met two young men and one of them asked if Egron knew Mr. Culpepper of Hwanghsien. When Egron said no, the fellow said: "he was my teacher". Well, that was something to talk about and after a while he also told Egron that he had ^{been} here in Kiaosien when the Communists came in here 1946 and he knew Egron and also talked about our Schools etc. Talking like that they finally got to the point about our trip to T. and 'man-man-di.' Egron asked if they couldn't grant us the permission now to go back to Kiaohsien. They did. Then Egron and Martin wanted escort back to the car, but they were not very willing to give that because they had order to go north. The men insisted on it any how and they got some guards along, but when they had taken them part of the way they returned leaving the men alone. Egron and Martin protested, but they said that all their soldiers had gone now, so they could easily walk alone. That was a terrible feeling for them - walking all alone in the night not knowing if some soldiers were hidden among the graves and bushes. Suddenly they saw a group of men coming towards them, and they were calling out to Egron and Martin asking for the 'watch word' - and they had none--- some minutes past, filled of tensness and ~~xxxx~~ fear. They could hear how they had their guns prepared and in that way they came closer to each other. Egron thinks that that time was the very dangerous moment during our whole trip. What a blessing that Egron was there with his good Chinese! and even this time he talked till he got them calm and again our men asked for escort, but they were not willing to give it because they had to go north, but this time they said that nobody would be coming after them, they were the last party.

What a relief to see the men coming! How we did thank the Lord for his wonderful protection! After that we had to push that old car (the battery was too low) for some li and when we at last got it started we drove up to a village, 3 o'clock in the morning, waiting there till about 6 o'clock before we dared to drive near the city. The city gate was closed with sand bags and on top of the wall our wonderful Communication Police had their guards. They told us to wait a moment and they should take away the sand bags and open the gate for us. They did and we drove in without them asking us a word about our trip - although it had been fighting going on the day before. They looked as dumb as even. You would think that they should be very eager to know about the situation east of the city and even wanting to hear where we had spent the time because they must have understood that we couldn't get through to Tsingtao. --- We got home in the morning before Mother and Anna were up. They had been a bit anxious, but

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thought that we probably didn't make the trip in one day knowing also that Egron had to see the Dentist. That was Sunday morning.

Monday we heard the fighting going on outside the city and people had left now, so there were not many left, but still the soldiers were here. In the evening, just as we had our Supper, we heard terrible explosions and running out we saw big fires in four different places. Our neighbours filled our yards and everybody was scared to death. Soon we realized that our beloved Communication Police were destroying their munition and it was a most tremendous noise when all these things exploded. When they had burnt it all up they just walked out through the east gate and left our place to the 'reds'. In the morning we had a new regime here.

Then it began - our long isolation time. For six months we didn't have any mail. Now and then we could get some small notes through to T. our Chinese friends kindly carried them for us, mostly hidden in the broad hems of their clothing. In that way we were also able to get money. We got the money from people here and they could draw it in Tsingtao from our folks there. It would be too tiresome for you, should I go in to all the small happenings during those six months. I shall only mention some of it.

The soldiers came all ~~the~~ time. They come right in to your house and they go to every room and they open your drawers and everything. Sometimes they came early in the mornig before we were dressed and late ~~at night~~ ^{the evening} they sat here and the whole day long too. One good thing - they didn't come at night. That they did in Chucheng. Matilda said that she hardly undressed for a long time because when they came you had to open right away, other-wise they broke the doors open. Some of the soldiers were very stupid, some were rude and terrible and some were nice, country boys who just simply came along with the others. We always felt that those soldiers coming from Chucheng were a bad set. One day a crowd came in. They were everywhere and all of us had to watch and follow them arround. Mother was then living in the downstairs livingroom and she ~~try~~ had visits all the time. Egron and I had to move ~~around~~ around and 'entertain our guests'. I didn't notice that one of them went upstairs and was very surprised, when I after a while went up to the bedroom, to find one there in front of the mirror. When I came he went away, but out in the Hall was a great big flod!!! I suppose he wanted to show his disgrace and felt that was a good thing to do. I had to laugh, the wall was wet far up and the floor was like a little lake. --

Egron was wonderful during that time. Those men came in great flocks and Egron received them as they would have been his most beloved friends. He talked to them for hours, and you had to know what you said too, because they had lots of questions to put up. Egron's mind is quick, and it certainly had to be during those days. When they came like that I felt as I would have like to disapear somewhere, but Egron was wonderful.

Margareta also helped us a great deal. Many of them had never seen a white child before, and they couldn't get over her light hair and then at the same time listen to her Chinese. They just marveled and often we felt how they sort of forgot to be rude when Margareta was there. We also have a pretty bird, it was given to Margareta by an Officer in the Nationalist army, and that bird also took their interest. Times when Johnny was at home he also helped a lot. There are many small stories from those days. If I ever get time for it I would like to write them down.

But - even though we had their unpleasant visits, we didn't have to go through what our Chinese friends had to do. All the rich homes, from whom we have had the children in our Schools, and those families, who had been so friendly and kind to us, were now absolutly looted. We didn't go out very much during those months, but you should have seen the wonderful things, in Chinese furniture and Chinese decorations and beautiful things that were sold out in the market or taken away to Tsingtao! I never thought that this town had anything like it. It was terrible to see how they did it. All the bad people they could get hold of, both in the city and from the country, helped to rob and steal. The communists themselves first took what they wanted, as gold and things like that, and then the mob could take the rest.

** This is the first time we saw big fires up at the railway station and after the railroad, every day. They burnt everything that was around. There were quite a number of shops burned after the line and.*

7 Most of the rich people had left before the Communists came in, but some were still here and some of them were killed. I could talk on here for a long time about those things, but I'll just mention a little episode that happened here just before Christmas. - One day a young, nice looking fellow came in here and asked if we had seen his Mother. He went all over the yard and even came in to the kitchen. He said that he had dreamed about her Mother that night and that she would be in our garden, because here it was nice and warm, he said. - That boy was the only son of a rich couple here in town. His Father was beheaded and had to be buried without his head, which is something terrible for a Chinese, and they also killed his wife. The son went crazy when he saw these things happening and now he is walking around here looking for his Mother and also talking about that they never did find his Father's head. This is only ONE story. There are hundreds of them. -

As you know we have ~~are~~ houses so scattered here in K. it was a great job for Egron to look after each place. We have 8 different places, and Egron ran like a watch dog between those places. The soldiers wanted to live in ~~the~~ houses or to go in and have a look etc. etc. I think those months were much harder on Egron than ordinary School work, even if he carries double as much as anybody else would do. Just the feeling that you didn't know what they would find out to do to you the next minute, was an awful tenseness. In the beginning of July we saw the 'reds' run like rats and the Nationalists troops coming in. What a joy! But after 6 days we saw the Nationalists run and the 'reds' coming back. Thousands of people had come back from Tsingtao during those days. Now they had to run again. Such a sight! It was raining like the skys would be open, and people wading in the mud to get away from here again. An other month brought the Nationalists back again and then they stayed here to the 21 of nov.

And that brings us up to this time. We had lots of soldiers here during the Autumn. we also heard that the Communists were very strong around here, but we hoped that the Nationalists wouldn't give up this place again after fixing the walls etc. and always talking about how important this place was for Tsingtao and so on. But we were told that several of the towns were left by the Nationalists, and soon people began to leave from here and Kaomi in great numbers. The soldiers were still here and kept telling us that this place they would hold, whatsoever. On the 16 th of nov. we began a weeks meetings here led by a young pastor Wang from Tsingtao. He stayed with us. He is such a nice fellow, well educated and speaks good English and is as a Chinese young man when he is at best. We had good meetings, and had even our Schools going again and felt like coming back to normal again. About Tuesday, Wednesday that week our students began to leave for Tsingtao and the people from the city left in crowds. Still the soldiers said they would not leave. Mr. Wang had to be back in Tsingtao Friday night and I was to take him in. Thursday nearly all our people had left and we asked Mr. Wang what he would like to do. Well, he said that as long as the soldiers were still here, we also could wait till Friday. Friday morning we found the evacuation going on and were told that the troops had begun as early as 3 o'clock in the morning. What should we do with our guest! We quickly had some breakfast and at the table we said that we would bring him over the river, because then he would be on the 'safe side' and we could get back here before the 'reds' came in. Egron didn't like me to go alone, when things were as they were, so he came along too. It took us 1 HOUR to the east gate!! The roads were blocked with civilians, soldiers and military cars and --- wheelbarrows and everything else. Mr. Wang knew how to drive, and as we were going out to the gate we understood it would be impossible for us to be able to go out 30 lis and then return before our new set up would be in. We asked Mr. Wang if he was willing to drive the car himself. Yes, he was, but was afraid of all the people, he thought they would just load him down. Egron quickly ran out and got hold of an Officer - we were just in the middle of six military trucks - and he was willing to take the responsibility for our car and he had two ladies

3. and a body guard whom he took over to our car. Egron and I walked back - waiting for the 'reds'.

Later we heard about Mr. Wang's trip. They had driven very slowly, the roads being filled of people, and then they came to the river. Three big trucks went first on the bridge and after that came our Ford and so three more trucks. Well on the bridge the first truck went absolutely dead. They did what they could, but the old thing would not start. What should they do! They already heard some shooting behind them and the soldiers wanted to get over and after that destroy the bridge. After taking it over they all helped pushing the truck into the river - and after that they drove away to Tsingtao.

In the afternoon we had some 'reds' here. Just bandits. For three days those bandits kept coming here and trying to get things. Sunday morning they came to get the car!!! We told them it was in Tsingtao. They ordered us to open the Garage - and then they saw that it was true. They told Egron to open Oscar's store room, but he talked them away from it. They took all our ~~telephones~~ telephones (5 of them) and said that they would go through all our rooms in the compound etc. (They never had time for that though.) Those bandits had three days here before the real troops came in. Evidently they were sent here to take things they needed before the army got in. I was so scared that time so I felt as I couldn't stay here. Perhaps I got a bit too much last Spring and I felt my heart beating and my whole being just sick when those bandits came in here. But I had to stay and I prayed that the Lord should take my fear away, otherwise I couldn't do a thing and would even have been a burden for Egron. I didn't sleep, was just waiting for them to come in etc. But I prayed and got a wonderful answer. All my fear went away and now I don't mind a bit being here.

Telling about how we have ^{it} now, we must say that we have it much better than last time they were here. They don't come very often to see us and those who have been here have been polite and O.K. Perhaps a couple of them have been a bit rude, but the whole they have been good to us. Their great leader has also given out some kind of proclamation now telling his people to behave and it looks like they are changing their tactic a good deal.

Everybody is waiting now to see what the other side will do. I'm sorry to say that we have not gotten very good impressions of the Nationalist either, China is in a terrible mess. Still we prefer the Nationalist to the 'reds' all the same. We know that they are friendly towards us and we have it much easier when they are here, the road ^{opening} to T. e.t.c. But the people suffer whomsoever governs this place.

You know by letter from Mother that Lally and Johnny were able to spend Christmas at home. We were so happy because of that. Their trip home went O.K. but they got into the middle of fighting just before they crossed the river. The bridge is no more, but now there is ice so there are bridges everywhere!! That makes it very easy for the soldiers on both sides!! Lally took the children by car as far as he dared to go, and after that they went on heelbarrow. Coming down to the river a group of 'reds' had opened fire at some kind of soldiers and people coming from Tsingtao came right into the line. Lally said that they threw themselves down on the ground, but the soldiers urged them to move on and get over the river. They didn't even have time to notice that Lally and Johnny were "whites"!!! When they lay ~~the~~ flat in the sand they saw a man falling down. People whom walked that way later found him dead. He had gotten a shot through his head. Egron met them by the river and two bandits got hold of him and taking him to be an American, and that is the biggest crime now a days. They said that they could see on his hair that he was American!!!! Egron had permit and everything for his trip, but they couldn't read!!! Such a mess. They were very rude and prepared their guns and like that. I think it was Johnny walking up and firing of some Kiaohsien-'to-wna' that eased the situation. When Lally and Johnny went back to Tsingtao they didn't want Egron to go along with them. They went alone with a servant. Also that time they heard some fighting, but were just passed that very place and came through O.K. Well, I must stop my talk. It's a never ending story, but you must get tired of it all. We are thankful for the Lord's protection and help during these dangerous times.

Kiaohsien Jan. 7, 1948.

Gerda R.