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1927-05-13, Letter from Frank Keller to Fellow Workers

Frank A. Keller

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Room No. 303, Missions Building
23, Yuen-Ming-Yuen Road
Shanghai, China

May 13, 1927

Dear Fellow-Workers:

Yesterday I sent a letter to you by the President Grant, and today a mail is going out by the Empress of Asia, so I want to add a few lines. There is so much to write about that I wish I had time to type a half dozen pages, but I fear that I must be satisfied with one or two sheets. First of all, please note the slight difference in my address. The desk in the Stewart Evangelistic Fund Offices has been a very great convenience and blessing, but as so often happens it has been *## [sic]* a kind of guide post to something far better. Four persons are at work in this office, and we are often in each other's way. It is not possible to have quiet and confidential interviews, and also impossible to have united prayer. One other thing the lady stenographer who is at work in the office is very fond of ventilation, as well, so am I, but she opens a window from which the wind does not blow on her, but does blow with much force right on me, and I have contracted a very severe cold. This morning it occurred to me that there might possibly be a small vacant office in the building, so I went to the manager and to my delight found that a nice little office, just suited to my needs has been vacated quite recently, so I am moving in tomorrow, how I do praise God for it. Mr. H, FC and I had our first season of prayer there this morning. So please think of me as in No. 303, and be sure to only think of me there, but also address some letters to me at 303. Yesterday I referred to Mr. T's letter just to hand, but did not have time to quote in detail from it. He wrote that he had made several visits to our compound and found conditions there quite good, also that the servants are looking after things well, but that conditions in the outlying districts are increasingly worse. Mr. T is looking for a house on the Liu-Yang Gate main street, as he finds his North Gate too far away from the Liebenzeller Mission. The fact that he considers it safe to move in to the Liu Yang Gate street is a good indication of real conditions. Mr. H told me this morning of a condition in Changsha that will interest you and will be useful to you in your talks about conditions in China. The young students have a society, the "T'ung Tzu Chun", they are armed with knives or guns. They decided that riding in rickshas was a luxury that should be taxed, so they began. One morning they met a gentleman riding in a ricksha, they stopped the coolie and forced the man to get out, they demanded a tax, one dollar. He said that he did not have that amount with him, but offered him a few brass coins, "All the money he had with him." They immediately began to search his pockets and discovered six dollars which they appropriated and then began to revile him. They also cut off the skirts of his gown at the waist line and told him that he did not deserve to wear a long gown, then sent him on his way. They carried out this propaganda with such thoroughness that people were afraid to ride in rickshas, and the five thousand ricksha coolies in Changsha were out of work and therefore out of food. They had a meeting and made representations to the Government, but nothing came of it, so they decided on drastic measures, they said "We will die of starvation if things go on in this way, and we might better die fighting than to starve, so they planned an armed attack on the T'ung Tzu Chun, with the determination to kill as many as possible of these youngsters.

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This plan came to the ears of the Government and the "T'ung Tzu Chun" was speedily put out of commission, and the rickshas are once more running, though it is said that a private ricksha is rarely if ever seen on the streets now. Writing of private rickshas reminds me of report to hand recently that the officers who were living in our administration building were using Grace's and Elizabeth's rickshas, nothing was said about Beth's two rickshas, possibly the informant wanted to spare my feelings. The report is that when the sixth army left dormitory No. 1, they took with them all locks and knobs from the doors, all electric bulbs from the rooms, also the meter and the meter and bulbs from the new dining hall. They broke into the fourth floor of the same dormitory and thoroughly looted everything that was stored there!! Only the first floor of dormitory No. 2 was occupied, and we have not had reports of any damage done there. It is reported that the Farmers Union is looking for TPC, thinking that he has the deeds of our property which they hope to get from him. How we do need to pray for these young men. BT and his cousin, Miss T are now in Shanghai. Their school has shared the same fate as others, has been completely looted, and they have been robbed of all their possessions. Yesterday there was not time to address envelopes to each of you, so I sent all the letters under one cover to Beth and asked her to send them on to you. Today I have taken the precaution to address the envelopes first, so each letter will go separately. I do hope that yesterday's letters will reach Beth before she goes East, so that they will get to you promptly. Beth's steamer was due at Seattle on April 25, at 3 p.m., and a steamer of the same line was scheduled to leave there on the 26th at 11 a.m. You can imagine what a big question and hope filled my heart. How I did long for a letter! I do not think I ever desired a letter so earnestly, and I prayed that one might come. Last evening when I went home to supper four long and delightful letters awaited me, can you imagine my delight, and what a happy evening I did have! There were not only Beth's letters, so full of interesting details of the trip, but a fine letter from Otis with a splendid report of special meetings on the ship, and then Beth thoughtfully enclosed letters of welcome which Helen, Antoinette, Mrs. Black and Walter had written to her, what a feast of good things I did have, and I do thank you all. I have never in all my life missed Beth so much, and yet, I am so glad that she went when she did, it was the only right thing to do, and I am sure that it was truly for the best. I have been so busy, from early until very late every day, that it seems strange that there should have been time for ##### [sic] loneliness, but it was here just the same, and big too!! Lots of love to you all, please pardon the slips,

Frank

[Handwritten note on bottom left side of page 2]

Please show to Mr. Hale and Mr. Welles if convenient