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1946-11-11, Letter from Grace Roberts to James Russell Alder

Grace M. Roberts

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Changsha, Hunan, China.

Nov.11, 1946.

Dear Mr. Allder:

After much waiting, we finally started from U.S. shores Sept 30th and reached Shanghai Oct. 15 and then reached Hong Kong Oct. 22. Others remained on there for a week, but I was anxious to get going, so with my sister Florence's assistance we got tickets on a small river boat going to Canton and had baggage transferred to the other side and left Tuesday night and reached Canton Wednesday afternoon. Again my good sister chased over the city all afternoon trying to get a ticket for me on the train while I was tending to baggage. Finally she secured a ticket for me to leave the next morning for Changsha, that was indeed marvelous for it saved staying at places, which is terrific here in this country now. Prices are sky high and still going. I wonder what the outcome will be! I started off early Thursday morning and supposed to be here Friday night. I didn't send a telegram to Charles, for everyone said I would get there first anyhow, so I surely surprised him. He wanted so badly to come down to meet me but he could not get away for [sic] a day, he has been so closely tied down here. The train was delayed and I got here at 3 AM. It was an unearthly hour, but I got a ricksha and finally got into the gate but didn't know where to go. At last I found Charles and was he ever surprised at such an early hour? It was good to finally get here and also to see such a transformation on this place. I was amazed. During this year to see the progress, it is indeed most gratifying and I have told Charles that he should be most encouraged. If you could see the other places that are still down and then see this place that has been fixed up and a school going in a repaired house and 3 small cottages for teachers and the other work down here on the compound I have been thrilled. School is going nicely, I have music with them every morning after prayers, then I have english classes and evangelism, so I have become initiated at once. The outside opportunities are legion. Last Monday Charles spoke to 600 boys in middle school. He spoke in english on "water", the importance of it and Jesus the water of Life. They gave him wrapt attention. Then I sang several hymns. They want us to come every Monday night. It is a long distance out to the north gate but marvelous opportunity. I wish I had several thousand Gospels of John in english to give them and other students. Yesterday, he preached twice, Presbyterian church in the morning and at the YMCA english service in afternoon. He taught them a few choruses, Safe am I, For God so loved the world, Joy, Joy, Joy. The big building houses 450 homeless children. Chas spoke to them the other day and here also is another big opportunity. Milk is given out each morning to folks coming from outside and you can see long lines of people coming in the morning for it. Then refugees come with their baggage and stay here a few days and are sent on again, then food and clothing is distributed to needy here and inland from here. There have been so many appeals from other places needing help, I don't see how we can manage so much. The situation is different from any time I have been in China and the demands are very different. There are no hymns books, so I use choruses and have them translated, then I shall give them the music to write out of different hymns. The fact that all equipment has been destroyed is making things very difficult but we are carrying on. I wish you could see the way Charles has been living here in the dormitory. He had it fixed up before I came and I know we shall be very content to carry on. I am enclosing a letter for Amer. Pres Lines which I am asking if you would take it up with them and see what can be done. It is the most discouraging thing to bring the food all this way and have it disappear when it was so needed. Chas hasn't touched dried fruit and he was looking forward to a taste of it. If people at home complain of food, then tell them to come out here, it would cure them.

[The following is written on the right side of page 1]

kindest Greetings to all at B. I. Yours in His service, Grace M. Roberts
 Enclosed is the expense account & 100 which you forwarded to me