

NEWS FROM HANKOW.

We have received the following interesting letter from Miss Gladys Stephenson, Matron, and Dean of the School of Nursing, of the Methodist General Hospital, Hankow. Our heart goes out with affection to our colleagues in Hankow in the terrible conditions to which they are now subjected, and with admiration for their endurance and heroism.

DEAR MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

Your letter of May 16th only arrived this morning. Letters are very delayed, owing to the fact that only one much bombed and damaged route through Hong Kong and Canton is open into China. All other routes are in the ruthless invaders' hands.

Six of our Methodist Nurses went last December with a batch of thirty from several cities. They had to wear the padded uniforms because they went in the depth of winter to far N. West Shansi on the border of Suiyuan, not far from the Gobi desert. They had to travel in open lorries along newly cut roads round mountain passes and there was no heat of any kind save dried fuel for cooking. They had very little meat or vegetables, only some grain of varying kinds and occasionally one salted vegetable.

Yet they have written constantly, always in good spirits, glad to be doing something for their country. Two other batches of our Nurses have gone since, one lot to Hsuechow, which fell to the enemy some time ago, and one lot to West China to help fight epidemics. The horror of this war deepens daily, sometimes I feel one's mind cannot contain any more sorrow, and I wonder how our long-suffering Heavenly Father can be patient with man's folly and wickedness and the barbarity and inhumanity that is going on here daily.

Refugees continue to pour into the city in thousands upon thousands daily, in spite of the fact that many of the earlier refugees are being evacuated. Sick ones are treated free in this hospital and they swarm here in such crowds that the staff feels distracted sometimes. Added to that, so many parents have come to take their nurse daughters away further inland.

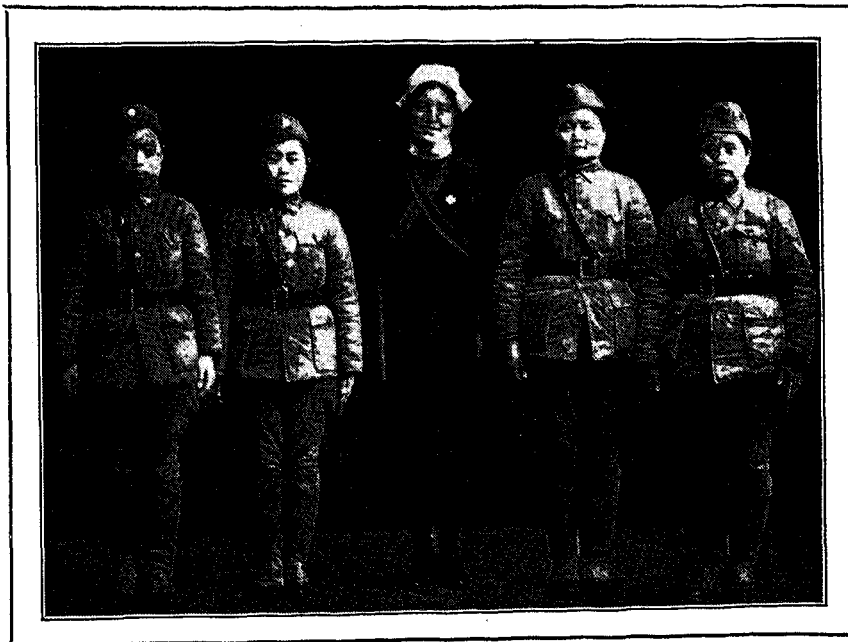
They dare not stay in a city that is shortly likely to fall to the enemy, because of the fearful fate that the bestial Japanese soldiery have meted out to womenkind. These are cold facts known to everyone here. The stories that one hears from the refugees (though they are loath to talk and it is only with difficulty one gets details—then usually from their relatives—just wring one's heart and I cannot urge any young people to stay.

It is mostly the student nurses who are leaving—four more went yesterday—the Staff Nurses and older ones are staying with us, though they will probably go just before the actual invasion. There are many who still hope against hope that Hankow will not fall. So with a reduced staff and so many helpless destitute patients these present days are very hectic.

I am due on furlough this summer, but it is quite impossible to leave, as only where there are some Britishers or Americans can any Chinese hope to be left unmolested. The Staff Nurses have promised to stay if I stay with them, so of course I have promised I will stay. Our Superintendent, too, happens to be a Chinese doctor (Edinburgh degree). He is as cool and courageous as can be, but I know he realises the difficulties ahead.

Life in occupied territory, too, is intolerable for them. So many of our young people won't stay, not because of fear, but because they deem it disloyal to stay and be forced to work under a puppet Government. Brave Cora Simpson

is living alone at the Nurses' Association in Nanking dealing with correspondence and doing all she can to keep matters going. They have no water, no light, no telephone or any such amenities. She has one servant who can obtain some well water and candles. The Chinese Nurse Secretary is here in Hankow and will shortly go to West China to function for all the Chinese Nurses in free Chinese territory. Preachers in the occupied areas have been warned that they are not to preach that only God is omnipotent as the Japanese avow that their Emperor is also divine and omnipotent.



Marina Wang. Isabel Wang. Miss Gladys E. Stephenson, S.R.N., S.C.M. Meta Huang. Bertha Chang.

Four of six Methodist Nurses who volunteered for field service in North West China, in the padded uniforms the Government required them to wear.

What is happening in the world to-day? Clearly great parts of it are seeing anarchy in all its nakedness.

Yet still the Chinese pray most earnestly and generously for their enemies. Last Wednesday a Chinese clergyman addressed our Staff meeting on the subject of "Seeking God." He felt that God was moulding a new soul for China out of this fiery furnace and he went on to say, "I do pray, too, most sincerely that Japan also may seek and find God through this distress and be made a new nation."

Unless we are bombed or burned out (we are in the native city which has been burned in many national catastrophes) we intend to keep open and serve the refugees who will be unable to leave the city, if by any means we can secure enough staff to carry on. Several volunteer nurses are with us at present.

Excuse more now. Kindest regards, from

GLADYS E. STEPHENSON.

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