

Abbie G. Sanderson Papers

Yale Divinity School Library Record Group No. 149

Finding aid for collection available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.149>

Series: I. Correspondence

Subseries: Family correspondence

Box / folder: 4 / 32b

Folder label: AGS to family, from Swatow

Dates: 1930 Apr - Jun

For copyright information see: <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/permissions.html>

Originals of collection held at:

Yale Divinity School Library, 409 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT 0511
(divinity.library@yale.edu)

Scanning and computer output microfilm prepared by Conversion Service Associates LLC, Shelton, CT with financial support from The Center for Christian Studies, Shantou University, 243 Da Xue Road, Shantou, Guangdong, China 515063

(261)

Swatow, China

Apr. 7, 1930

Dearest Mother -

This letter is written after your birthday, and it won't reach you until after Mother's Day. I am afraid - but I want to tell you, though I'm sure you know it without my saying it - that I think about you not only on those two days but every single day in the year, and - those days - every hour and pretty nearly every minute of the day!

There is one time when I may not think much about you - and that is the hour when I have my Freshman English class of over sixty students - They are young rascals - and it is a standing-up job to keep them quiet for a minute at a time - I have had them a month, twice some weeks and only once some weeks and I haven't learned all their

names yet. I have had them just ten recitations - The 14 girls I know - but the boys I don't see at any other time and there are still about 30 whom I'm not sure about - I shall try to call on the most of those again to-morrow, and I can learn some of them, anyway. It is a terrifically big class and ought to be divided -

So, perhaps I'm not thinking about you much when I'm almost standing on my head trying to get something into those 60 precious heads! But it is the honest truth that I'm thinking about you the most of the rest of the time - and I can scarcely - scarcely wait to get hold of you -

I'm still undecided about which route I shall take - It will probably be quicker to come directly ~~on~~ from Portland instead of going back up through Seattle to Vancouver - In that case I should go to Chicago and Albany - Don't believe I should

Have trouble as Father had for the
customs officers usually make it as
easy as possible for the transcontinental
passengers, going from Canada to U.S.
& vice versa - I had no trouble on
my way out -

I mustn't stop to write now -
I love you heaps and I'll try to
write a better letter next time -

Love

Abbie

Swatow, China

Apr. 16, 1930

Dear Ones,

A week ago yesterday I received the letters from you and Arthur telling about little Abbie Grace. Aside from the heart-ache because I knew Arthur and Gladys would be distraught, I have the keenest feeling of disappointment for I know I should have considered that baby almost half mine! I suppose by this time the other little things I sent have arrived - some little white embroidered dresses not yet made up, another little cap made by Tini Hong, and a little blue and white wool set knitted by blind children in Hongkong - I'm not sure whether

that little set has been received or not. If so, there was probably duty on it, and of course I want to pay for it.

As for your taking the money for Arthur, my only regret is that you didn't take more for him, if there was more to take - Nothing I could do at a time like that would be too much - or enough, even!

I suppose by this time you have received my letter 249, sent Jan. 26 -

We are busy getting ready for Easter this week. Music, and practices of all sorts. I'm

trying to get a little straightening
of my things done in-between-
whiles, but the thing that worries
me is prices is the everlasting string
of papers to be corrected! It seems
as though I can never get them
done.

Right now I must get off
to school. This letter is not
really worth ten cents - except
to let you hear from me and
know that I am all right.

Much love

Oblige

Suatou, China

Apr. 27, 1930

Dearest Ones,

My latest letter to you was written Apr. 16, nearly two weeks ago. Much has happened since then. That very night at prayer meeting we learned that Miss Cheng, a girl who would have graduated from our Junior High School in June, was in hospital at the point of death - while we were in prayer meeting the doctors operated - and Mabelle stayed over at the hospital to find out what they could tell her after the operation. She had been taken sick only the day before, sudden terrible pain near the stomach. They found that the pancreas had somehow broken and practically deposited itself all through the abdomen - in effect partially "digesting" the membranes wherever it touched. There was no hope almost from the first. Early the next morning I took her a rose - and she was conscious enough to thank me with her eyes a little. That was the last time I saw her - for she left us that evening about 7.30, not long after we were singing Easter songs, and praying for her, over at the girls' dormitory -

Mui Cheng was one of the leaders in our little young people's group and we shall miss her sorely. I'm enclosing a picture of her and some of her classmates taken last November. At the right ^{edge} of the picture sits Mary Cheng, Principal Ling's youngest daughter, and Mui Cheng is the other girl. Behind Mary Cheng stands Thuan Hun, who was baptized this last fall. Next to him is Tong Tek, son of Pastor Tang, and cousin of Mui Cheng - (Mui Cheng's father is in America). Some pretty fine boys and girls we have. The loss of this girlie is a sad blow to us - and it struck us all of a heap because it was so sudden —

Your letters of Mar 26, 27, and 30 all arrived last night - Thank you much for sending the rubber article - It is just what I need - and just the kind I want, and I needed it sadly right now! ^{##} I was greatly shocked to learn about Lulu) - I already have ^{Lulu's} her answer to my letter, in which she wants me to know that it is "good news" that I am coming to see them - She gives the same address that Uncle George gave, which is 1212-38th Ave. North, Seattle - and that is where you should address me for anything you want me to receive while I am there - She says nothing about any changes - and nothing about Alaska - but that she expects to be in Seattle all summer with Uncle Cyrus -

Montreal! Father dear — yes — and after all
you worry and bother too —! Well — thank you for
all the time tables and information — and — of course
there is still time to change my mind again — But
this is how it is — I have discovered that it would take
about ~~one~~ two days longer to go back to Seattle & Vancouver,
after having been at Salem — and would accordingly, I suppose,
cost a lot more money. I can buy a ticket through to
Chicago — or Charlotte, if I want to! — through Portland, from
Seattle — with stop over of 3 days or so at Portland —
which would give me time to go down to Salem — Another
thing, Miss Sandberg is coming out to China next fall —
and if I'm to see her at all, I'll have to see her on
my way home — so I'm likely to be a day in New
York on my way home — You see the old plans are
all upset!

The reason I want to buy my ticket right through is
that I can take 300 lbs. baggage on the train if I
get my ticket stamped Trans-Pacific — In order to
do this I have to leave Seattle very shortly after
arriving — I've forgotten just how many days they
give — But I hope to have no trouble about that —
Maybe I can check my baggage right through to
Charlotte and then follow later myself — In that
case I would send trunk checks by registered
mail to you — I hope it won't take me too long! to do all

this traveling, I mean! What I should like to do would be to fly from Portland to New York. but I shall have to wait until some future incarnation for that!

I'm ~~very~~ glad to have your opinion about tea party, etc) - wish you had been able to think of ^{some} more things you'd like to have ~~my~~ bring - little things, I mean, for I shan't have lots of extra money - any more than I generally do when I arrive home from anywhere! I want to take a nice remembrance to Uncle Cyrus and Uncle Arthur, as well as to Lulu - (I have a set of place cloths & napkins for her -) but I don't know what to get - It can't be much -

I started earlier in the letter to tell you about Easter - We were very busy the weeks before ~~observing~~ - Easter dawned clear, though a bit foggy early in the morning - At 6.30 we girls had a little sunrise song service out on "Ashmore Point" - Miss Lee gave a very happy little talk on the meaning of Easter. Then at the morning service in the church we had a wonderful service - The singing was joyous and happy - and good singing, too - and lots of it - from the kindergarten children with their motion songs to the church choir at the end singing ~~the~~ ~~start~~ a simplified version of the Hallelujah Chorus from the "Messiah" - Mrs. Waters' singing Easter message was a challenge & every

one of us - and yet he had words of marvellous comfort for the heartbroken mother who was sitting there with us that day - The flowers in themselves were a message - The whole platform was massed with huge plants of white daisies and delicate pink begonia, and standing out from them as a background were gorgeous ^{dark} red amaryllis and from 12 to 15 pots of beautiful beautiful Easter lilies - the most gorgeous array I've seen - Seven of the pots were ours - a number with 10 or eleven blossoms on one stalk - The central bit on the table was a vase holding three deep black-red roses and two enormous pure white roses -

In the afternoon we started for Inverness at 1.30 - went to the Institutional Church where, playing and singing both, I went to the platform five times! Twice to sing with our girls, twice to play for our Young People's Chorus, and once to play for the Hospital nurses to sing - Before this service was over we rushed to the Y. M. C. A. and gave some of the same numbers there - Both good services, with a great variety of songs from a splendid number of groups of young people - One number was a quartet of brothers and sisters - The older brother, about 11, played the piano; a sister about 9, a little brother about 7 and tiny sister about 5 sang beautifully

the Easter song they had learned - Girls' school,
Presbyterian; choruses from the various churches and
chapels and kindergartens and grammar schools,
both Presb. and Baptist, took part at both these
services - It was a splendid check-up on what
is being done in the music line, and was a
pretty good showing, I thought -! An assembly
of young people to make your heart swell with pride.

Did I tell you? I've had a letter from our Ruth
~~Chen who is studying in Portland, Ore. and she may~~
~~be in Portland all summer. If so, I shall see her -~~
on my way through.

I mustn't stop to write now - it is
my bedtime!

Today I had the regular Christian Endeavor
meeting to lead - subject "Coöperation" - I dreaded
it beforehand but we had a good meeting - and
now it is all over -

Much love to you -

Abbe



Hui Cheng, 2nd from right.

Meng Cheng, extreme right.

(P'ing King's younger daughter)

264.

Swatow, China.

May 4, 1930

Dear Ones -

Two months from today, D.V. I shall be in Hongkong, just about ready to go home to America - I have thrown a few things into two trunks, to be packed later, and I have started to pack ~~four~~ ^{two} big boxes up attic - things to leave here. I wasn't particularly well packed up when I went home before, but I hope to do better this time. The other time, Emily was here and some of my things I wanted her to use while I was gone - It is different this time - and Mabelle doesn't want to use any of my things; in fact she says quite plainly she prefers to have me pack them away so that she will not have the responsibility of them. So my

green dishes, which were left out
to be used the other time, will
be packed in a big box - sometime
this week, maybe. - Sue Kim will
do that packing for me -

I kept house in April - and
Mabelle will take it from now on
so that I can get all my things
put away without having to rush
so much at the last minute -
Knowing my tendency to procrastinate
you can imagine that this ought
to help me a little - Things are so
very uncertain out here now that I
shall want to have my things in
some semblance of order this time!

Emily is here with me now - came
down on the next to the last train
last night and it is so good to
have her here - There won't be
very many more times now -

We have been having thief scares - and a good many houses have been disturbed and a good many things taken - but all sneak thieving. Our school has had the biggest losses - thirty washbasins one night - a set of feast fowls valued at \$40 (belonging to one of the teachers) another night - a suitcase with clothes and money (from the girls' dormitory - From the hospital, all the clothes, money, and jewelry belonging to one of the nurses - a clothesline off one porch, and a suit of clothes drawn out from one of the boys' rooms - etc. - and lots of scares -

We were up four nights last week - One night we surprised three policeman out in front of our house - and they gave such queer answers that it

almost made me doubt whether
they were real policemen, though
they were dressed as such and
carried guns —

I must get this off on
to-morrow's mail — and it is
late now —

One thing more — I'm worried
about the little suit I had sent
for the baby girl, from the
blind school in Hongkong — If you,
or Gladys, have received such a
bill, pay no attention to it of
course — I am paying for it
here but I'm afraid a bill has
been sent, since I haven't
yet received it —

Love Abbie

(265)

Swatow, China

May 11, 1930

Dear Mother -

Today I'm getting my letter to you begun in the morning, instead of waiting until nine or ten o'clock at night - There isn't a great deal of time before church, but I'll get started anyway.

Today is Mother's Day - I'm wondering whether it is as rainy where you are as it is where I am - I imagine not, for we are in the grips of a rainy-season downpour - We can already get water from our upstairs faucets, from the new cistern - and it looks as though we might

get that great big cistern full -

I was rather planning to stay at home from church this morning and get some rest - for I have to go to the Young People's at 1.30 and there is a hard week ahead - nurses' graduation, and since Dorothy Campbell has gone to America the nurses, most of whom are old pupils of mine; ask me to play their accompaniments - They are quite popular singers and so it is a steady job! For Graduation Song they are singing Gounod's "Praise Ye the Father".

But - yesterday Mabelle asked

me if I was planning to go
to church and if I was would
I play the song the nurses are
to sing today - H So - me
for it - and it's a-raining
cats and dogs -

Mabelle has to play for the
3 P.M. service this month and she
doesn't plan to go to church at
all in the morning if she can
help it - It is too much for her
but I'm "young and strong and wiry"
and good for lots of hard work
yet!

This week we have our
second so-called "monthly test"

of the term. I got my questions
all ready yesterday and I hope
that it will not be too much of
a job to get them corrected this
time - The last ones had Chinese
in them that I had to go over
with my teacher, and they dragged
out most everlastingly -

This isn't much of a letter - but
I hope next year I shall not have
to write a letter to the dearest mother
in the world - but shall be right
there where I can talk instead
of write -

Lots of love to Father, too -

Abbie

Chaochowfu - May 25, 1930

Dear Quas,

It is about time that I ought to be writing you another letter, I should say! Last week was just so full that I didn't get it in - I'm sorry -

Week before last Mabelle was sick all week with malaria - Went to school Monday morning but by noon the headache which she had been fighting several days got worse and fever accompanied it. She was pretty sick for three days, and very weak after that. She started in on Monday again and has been getting so much better ever since.

Last Sunday I was pretty well tired out by the time I got home from church and a long committee meeting, then back to young peoples and a long committee again. When Velva came in to see Mabelle in the afternoon, she found me stretched out resting. When I told her what I had been doing she said "Oh these missionaries make me sick! Don't you ever read

your Bible! Don't you know that one of the commandments is Six days shalt thou labor, etc."? This week has been a busy one, with exams to correct and so on - Emily has hoped I could come up again before I went and I have not been able to be - and moreover, I thought that since her birthday came on Saturday, it would be nice to get up there if possible. So I got Velva to come along with me - I wrote and asked Mrs. Baker whether she thought it would be all right - and not only was she glad to have us - but she asked Waneta Hobart to come too - Kenneth Hobart is already here with the evangelistic team, holding a series of meetings in connection with the five year program - ~~meeting~~ - So we had a nice party last night, with fried chicken, Kentucky style, and a birthday cake with candles!

This morning we came in to church and I saw a number of old friends - One was an old pupil who is almost ready to graduate from the Kim Swan (Golden Mount) high school here in Chaochow - She begged to take us to see her school so we

(Emily and I) went this morning after church - I had been there once before but not while school was being carried on - It is surely is lovely - and she was tickled to pieces to have us go with her for a bit. He had told Mrs. Baker and Velva to go ahead with dinner, so they did - and we got in before they had finished - Just now they are up at the afternoon meetings and Velva and I are downstairs (in the chapel, inside the city) resting - We have to leave to get our train in about a half hour more -

I left my young people for once, instead of rushing back this morning to get there in time - But Miss Tse can play this time, and I'm not likely to have to go away again before I leave Kekchiuk - Let's see, after today I shall have 5 more Sundays. That means 5 weeks more to get everything. Everything is not ready

now, I can tell you! I do hope I can make
more headway this week than last. I was
afraid one time I was going to be down with
malaria - I had a little fever - and felt
punk - But I went to bed for an afternoon
and was pretty perky by evening - I must
get things done a bit before hand, though,
for while I don't intend to be sick or anything,
it would be a mess if I should be sick
and my things nowhere near ready!

This week will be full - Enid goes on
Tuesday, and we are giving her a farewell
party Monday night at our house - Then
on Friday we are having a party for the
nurses and on Saturday one for our
graduates -

And - Sunday morning I have to
sing a solo in church! -

Well - It is nearly time to leave for
the train, and I guess this is enough
for now, anyway!

Love

Abbie

267

Swatow, China

June 1, 1930

Dear Mother -

This has been a happy day for me - You know that I am having for my Chinese writer and helper this term the girl who several years ago wanted to be baptized, was asked to wait, and then lost interest - and has never wanted to take the step since.

Her name is Un Liang - When she came to me at the beginning of this term I talked with her

again about becoming an out-
and-out Christian, as I have
almost every time I've seen her -
which has been about once a
year -

But this time, as before, she
said "My heart doesn't feel impelled."
So I let it drop for a while -

Then a week ago last Friday
morning I brought the subject up
again and I found she was
almost ready - and knew that
she ought to do it - She dreaded
to go before the church the next day,
however - and would rather

wait until she "prepared her
mind" more surely. But I
found that there was not to
be another baptism probably
for three months and so she
said she would think about it.
We talked for nearly two hours,
but she wouldn't say definitely
that she would decide.

I left for Chaochow for
that afternoon so I didn't
know until the next ^{Monday} afternoon
that she really had decided.
Today she was baptized, and
although she has kept saying,
"But I don't know whether

it is any good or not - for
I don't feel any different - still
it was a very happy face that
greeted me when I went
back to the woman's rooms
where they were changing their
clothes after the baptism. I told
her yesterday that she might
not feel any differently right
now - perhaps God was waiting
& give her a greater happiness
the day she should lead
some one else to be a Christian!

She has a hard row to hoe -
her husband is an atheist - not

a shadow compared to the strong character that she is - and he knows that Un-hiang's confessing Christ in Baptism is likely to make trouble between her and his father, who is a most determined Buddhist and believer in ancestral worship -

Un-hiang said with tears in her eyes the other day "I want with all my heart to make my family a united one - and lead them all to be Christians - but I wish I knew how to do it in the way that would make the least trouble - without

Having a great big fuss - Then later, "With me - I don't know how this is all coming out - I know it is a great big risk - but I'm taking the risk" -

Well I can't tell all about her now - but I'm so happy! Lun Sim, who used to be our house boy, has waited a good many years - but he was finally baptized today - And we are all hoping more of the Houseboys will come - Twenty-two were baptized today; one of them a Senior High School boy - I have my eye on one or two more - but I don't know

Whether they will decide in
the next few weeks or not -
There is one boy in particular
who is on my heart constantly,
and yet he has not decided -
And he is going to graduate
the 28th of this month from our
Senior High -

Here I am writing all about
these other things so hard that
I'm forgetting to say Thank you
for my lovely birthday stockings -
Not much, you don't get 'em
back! I shall wear 'em so
much on the way home that
maybe there won't be much

left of them when I get home! They
are just the right color and also
just what I need - Thank you so much!

Mabelle had a very clever party
last Monday night. It was a
combination birthday party for me
and farewell party for me - for
Marguerite and for Enid -
Everything, even the butter, potatoes
and cake, were fixed up in the
form of sailboats, and there
were all sorts of cute boats
for favors, to hold nuts, mint
candies, etc - Poems to suit
the occasion - A lovely time.
Enid left the next day -
Must quit now - Love you -
Alice

Swatow, China

June 8, 1930

268

Dear Ones,

Sunday night again -
and only three more of them to
go - Today has been a busy one -
I left the house this morning at 7.45,
and went with 18 of our Young
People over to sing at the Swatow
Christian Institute - We sang "Glorious
Things of Thee are spoken", & Austria.
It sounded pretty ^(well!) good - I thought -
Then Dr. Ling spoke on Filial Love
of the right kind - it was good.
Back just in time for dinner and
then off to the Young People's Meeting.
I just had to rest a bit after I got

back, and then I didn't get up from my rest as soon as I ought to have. Consequently your letter isn't written yet-! Oh yes, and after supper tonight I went over to the hospital to visit a couple of the boys there - and found one of them had gone back home already!

My rooms here have been in such a mess - increasingly so for weeks now - Friday and yesterday morning I made them look still ~~worse~~ - getting things out to pack. Then we had a party for the Junior High graduates yesterday afternoon - so I couldn't pack them! After they went I got off my "glad rags" and worked until

quite late last night - Now my study
and the guest room look fairly
presentable but my bedroom still
has things strewn all over it - I
hope to get my camphorwood box packed
early this week, and get that out of
my room. Then there will be more
room for steamer trunk, suitcases, etc.

Every once in a while I get
panicky wondering whether I am
possibly going to get all ready
and still keep on teaching right
up until the last minute! But
I have really made a lot of progress
in the last week so now I'm beginning
to hope - When review time comes
next week, however, I think I shall
get excused for one or two mornings,

though - and here is hoping my
exams can be fairly early!

If I didn't have papers to
correct I should be happier, I
think! I'm too much in a flurry
to settle down these days to papers, or
letters, even -

This isn't much of a letter, but
it carries lots of love from me -
to you -

Yours
Athe

Swatow China
June 15/1930

269

Dear Ques,

Just a word tonight, for busy days are ahead and I must get in some rest. The Young People's Society had a very nice farewell party for me Friday night at the Capens - and last night up at school the three hundred and more students, and the teachers, had a big party for me and gave me some beautiful, and some very interesting presents - I'm not going to tell you anything about them - for I am bringing them all home and you will see them. But I had to make a speech last night - and I went through agonies to get it ready - I finally managed to leave out a lot I had planned to say but I did succeed in saying just the way I wanted to, the exact thing I wanted most to say - that is, that my most earnest wish for every one ^{in school} is for him ^{to} become a Christian before he leaves school - I was listened to most attentively and applauded well - and this, in a school that three years ago looked as though the anti-Christian element would split it right in two - We have had some progress! (Mum is the word about the next paragraph, ^{until} ~~now~~ ^{more} for sure.) But I'm a long time getting to the most important news of all - Yesterday Velva came over and told me that she and Marguerite have decided Emily must go home right away. Her breast is not

showing the complete recovery that it ought and
while there is no malignant trouble apparent
right now, they don't dare take the risk of keeping
her out here - So I rather think that means she
will come home with me if she can get on
the steamer, and if she can't get on any steamer
it may mean a little delay for me - if we can
get passage together on a steamer not more than
two weeks later - I don't want to delay! But
it would be a shame not to come together if she
must be sent home now - I'm relieved in
a way, for I have been afraid for some
time that she wasn't getting on as well as she
ought - And of course it will be great to
travel together - whether we'll separate at
Seattle or whether she will stay at hotel and
go with me as far as Portland, waiting while
I go to Salem, I don't know - But it will
work out somehow - I can't believe her trouble is
very serious - and I do hope specialists at
home will be able to fix her up right away -

We sent letters to her early this morning - I
don't know whether I can get an answer from
her before Tuesday or not - It is all very
exciting!

Must quit for now -

Love you! Abbe