General ML  
(U.S. to Hengyang)  

Dear Friends:  

I am going to try and write the complete story of my trip from New York to Hengyang. Some of you may have heard of parts of it as I have written along the way, but I hope you won't mind hearing them again. I wish I was a real authoress and could make you see vividly all the places and the interesting people I met along the way. If I were to tell of all of them, I would have to write a young book. Instead of which I must write a letter that will go air mail!  

On the night of March 18th, I was delivered bag and baggage to a dark and eerie pier somewhere along New York's waterfront. After careful examination by armed sentries, I was allowed to go up to the gangway where we were to wait for customs inspection. Mr. Neuhauser of our mission Board and Mrs. Fisher, whose husband is with my father in Shanghai, were allowed to accompany me this far. We found Miss Huffman, who was to be my traveling companion already there waiting for us. She is a nurse under the United Presbyterian Mission whose work is in the Sudan, Africa. We had never met until one day before sailing, but we were to be good friends before we parted company in Australia. Only two other civilian passengers joined us. One was a young Australian woman who had been studying in New York and was returning home and the other an American woman who had married an Australian air force man and was returning with him. She and Miss Huffman and myself were to be the only Americans on board ship we later discovered. After passing customs inspection and saying good-by to friends, I went on board the ship which was to be home for the next forty-six days. No modern luxury liner this! Up two flights and down a narrow corridor in which was hung several family washes I was led to my cabin which most certainly looked lived in! The cabin was originally planned for one person, but for present purposes three temporary bunks had been installed. I found two of my new family home in the process of ironing and entertaining company at the same
time. The third member was still out doing New York. I stood in the doorway and looked baffled for a few minutes as I tried to figure out just how I was going to fit in with the ironing board and half a dozen ladies in that tiny space. I was told in a variety of English accents to come on in and make myself at home and that the top bunk on the right was my own personal property from now on. Well there certainly was no room for all my baggage, but I did manage to squeeze myself and one bag in while the rest was stored out in the corridor near by. I was duly introduced and bit by bit some of the questions that were buzzing through my mind began to be answered. Why in the world were there so many women on board a ship in war time? Where in the world had they come from and where were they going? What kind of a ship was this anyway? I was prepared to be surprised at nothing, as we had been told that we might be sent on a transport or a freighter or a merchant vessel, but after all the red tape we had had to go through to get out of America I must say I was amazed to find so many women on board during war time. There were thirty-five women, three children, and many military on board.

Here is the story of the good ship "Auahine" as I pieced it together from various conversations during the next few days. She was a New Zealand ship that had served faithfully in the last war and had long since earned a rest, but tho' she was ready to be scrapped they decided to put her back in service. She was certainly no beauty now but we were assured that she was most seaworthy. At one time she was a comfortable and well fitted passenger ship, but her trappings which may have been very elaborate at one time were sadly worn and grimy in appearance now. The crew seemed to have forgotten what the word "ship-shape" meant. I suppose it was a disheartening job, like trying to fix up an old mare for a horse show after she's been turned loose to roam at will and gotten herself all caked with mud and full of burrs. And after all there's a war on you know so why bother about little things like dirty rungs and seat covers or rings around the bath tub. Be that as it may, we were lucky to be on the old ship at all for she had weathered many
dangers before pulling in to New York. It had taken her exactly three weeks and three days to do what should ordinarily be done in less than one week. Leaving Glasgow in company with a huge convoy of ships that were heading across the north Atlantic they encountered bad weather and heavy fog for several days. Owing to the fog some of the ships were separated from the main group and zig-zagged along on a course which took them close to the tip of Greenland. During part of this time they knew that they were playing a game of hide and seek with the enemy for they were told to keep their clothes on day and night and wear their life belts continuously. They learned later that the radio operators were able to hear messages sent back and forth between U-boats that were trying to track them down, but owing to the fog were unable to do so. They also learned later that the part of the convoy which they had left was less fortunate than they and had been caught in a sub-trap and that nineteen ships were lost. They spent days of bitter cold in which the pipes froze up and burst and the decks were covered with ice so that all they could do was to huddle together in a cold and dismal lounge and read or play cards or knit. No wonder that they practically went mad with joy when they were told that they were going to stop at New York and would have a chance to get off the ship and see America! I wish you could have heard them talk, rave would be a better word, about the sights they had seen there. The fruit shops and the sweets and the cosmetics! Why you would never know there was a war on here! And so they had had a thoroughly good time seeing Times Square and Fifth Ave. and seeing the shows. Only one thing worried them and that was that they had been allowed to take only ten pounds in cash with them out of England and they didn't have enough money to buy all the lovely things they were seeing.

The first few days out of New York were cold and bleak and gave ample opportunity for me to read and catch up on sleep and spend hours sitting talking and learning the interesting things that many of these fellow passengers had been through back in England. Some of the women were Australians who had been to England to visit or to study and had been trying to
get back home since the war broke out. Others were young girls who had
married either Australian or New Zealand soldiers and were either on their
way to join their husbands or their husbands' families. Since the old "Rua-
hine" was one of the few ships that would take women and also was said to be
the last ship which would probably take women out of England here they all
were and what stories they had to tell. Peggy was a young girl, about twenty
years old, sandy haired, blue-eyed and a really broad accent. She hadn't had
an education, but she'd been a top woman in one of the munitions factories a
and she'd cooked for the boys in Dunkirk. Here she was on her way to New
Zealand with her little eighteen month old Lindy Lou to try and find her
husband whom she had been told, through a letter from the New Zealand Ship-
ping Co., was being sent back home invalided. They had only been married a
few days before he'd been sent to the front so here was Peggy off to an en-
tirely strange country to try and find an almost strange husband and a very
much stranger mother and father-in-law. Several of the passengers had taken
an interest in her and given her clothes and were helping her take care of
Lindy, for tho' she may have known much about munitions there was much more
she could have learned about how to raise a child!

My cabinmates were an interesting group in themselves. Tho' we came
from vastly different backgrounds and the course of our lives had been e-
qually different, here we all were in a two by four cabin in which we were
constantly tripping over each other's shoes and crawling over each other to
get into our bunks and let it be said to our credit that we never had one
good fight or hair-pulling episode throughout the entire trip. Dorothy, Nan
and Lora they were right from the start and I soon became known as Edie,
every now and then being reminded that "Edie was a lady!" according to the
old classic of the night clubs. Dorothy was on her way to join her husband
whom she had left several years before to go and visit her parents in Eng-
land. She was quiet and retiring but had a way with the gentlemen neverthe-
less. Between a red-headed New Zealand air man and our dear old Chief
Engineer, commonly known as "Fuzzy", she managed to keep out of mischief. Her young fourteen-year old son bounced in and out of the cabin periodically in search of a clean shirt or something to eat. "Oh, Mum! 'Ave yuh got any SWEETS?" I soon got over being surprised to wake up from a lovely afternoon nap and find a crop of gorgeous red hair within easy reach for we frequently entertained the air force for tea. I don't think Fuzzy ever got quite inside our door. However, I had more than one occasion in which to be thankful for a top bunk where I could lie quietly out of sight and go right on sleeping or pretending to in case it seemed more convenient. On other occasions it would be, "Come on, Edie, time for tea!" Whereupon a cup of tea was thrust over the edge of my bunk and that was a signal for me to get busy and help entertain. Man was the department of information for our family. There was nothing on the ship that man didn't know about or couldn't find out about in an astoundingly short period. She was the general organizer for many a tea and other social functions, big hearted to the nth degree. She used to run a restaurant in Sydney and then married a nice wealthy man who owns a dress shop and is nearly twice her age. Of course man's age would be difficult to determine off hand as she manages to keep her hair blonde and her figure slimmish. Nora was our problem child. Not that she was bad, but she had to go and fall in love with a married English naval officer whom none of us thought was any good and who was constantly getting drunk and insulting her in a disgraceful fashion. Nora would always come back with, "But he is a gentleman when he's sober!" She was a big, attractive, good-natured English girl going out to Australia for the first time to join her husband who is serving in the army there. So you see life has its complications. All our good advice seemed to float in one ear and out the other and Nora was still in love with Bill when we landed in Melbourne. One of those to be continued in the next issue stories because I haven't heard the outcome yet.
Life on shipboard was far from dull as you can see. The time passed quickly after the weather improved and we were able to start deck sports. If things ever began to seem monotonous we were usually jarred out of it by a sudden boat drill or occasionally a bit of target practise. Travelling in convoy as we did from New York to Panama we of course had to go very slowly. Still it was nice to see other ships around and especially comforting to watch the destroyers circling around us in the distance. Seven days out of New York we were told we would see land and probably anchor in port for a night. None of us had any idea where we were, but later discovered it was somewhere along the coast of Cuba. Some of us were out on deck before breakfast that morning watching the boats in the convoy shift positions and a number of them left us to go off in another direction. While we stood there we saw several aeroplanes overhead circling around us and heard several explosions from depth charges. Suddenly someone caught sight of a periscope cutting through the water at quite a distance, yet near enough so that it was certain as to what it was. Someone else said it was probably one of ours and they were probably having a little practise maneuvering. Things seemed to go on as normal and we all went on down to breakfast. It wasn't until a week later that we learned they had sunk a U-boat that morning. We also learned later that two of the ships that left us at that time were sunk shortly after. That night we were anchored safely inside a harbor and were told there would be no blackout so everyone decided a celebration was in order. It was wonderful to see lights on shore and on neighboring ships after the strict blackout we had been observing along the way. There were a hundred or so Australian merchant marine men below decks who were being sent home after having been torpedoed on one ship or another. Several of them had been torpedoed more than once. On this night they were in true holiday mood and entertained all of us. An impromptu orchestra was organized. It included a violin, a saxophone, a wire egg beater beating on an empty cracker box and further sound effects made by clapping two small
boards together. The final result was both musical and rhythmic and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The program went on far into the night and included solos in various degrees of bass, baritone, and tenor and with a wide range of accent, long and dramatic recitations of hair raising ballads and much spontaneous wise cracking and yarning. The passengers above decks were supposed to be having a dance, but found the attraction below decks much too good to miss. Finally there came calls from below for some of the upstairs people to do their stuff, also much shouting for certain young ladies to sing. Everyone became modest and bashful at that point and started to go back to their dancing, but finally young Wing Commander ... of the N.Z.R.A.F. jumped over the rail and onto the hatch where the master of ceremonies was holding forth. Young and dignified and in spotless white flannels he delivered a masterful rendition of "I bought my wife an old milch cow... etc." Some of you will doubtless have heard it and will understand why it brought the house down! Neighboring ships began to take an interest in our fun and signalled over a request to come and join the party. There was much running around of officers and further signalling, but finally the port authorities said "No", so they had to enjoy our music at a distance as it drifted across to them. The next morning we were underway again with a smaller convoy, but still carefully guarded.

Just five days later we sailed into the port of Colon where we again anchored out over night, but early the next day we pulled up to the dock and were given shore leave for the rest of the day. This was the last chance we would have to spend American dollars and cents, so we made the most of our opportunity. Miss Huffman and I also made the most of a real honest to goodness American meal and everyone enjoyed the ice cream and sodas which could be had at corner drug stores just like back home. The next day we were up
bright and early to watch us start through the Canal. It was a beautiful
day and it was almost possible to forget there was a war on and just relax
and enjoy the day's trip like a lovely summer cruise. Some things in the
scenery and the fact that we had an escort of U.S. Marines served to remind
us that it wasn't just a pleasure cruise, but I'm sure we all enjoyed it just
as much anyway. The marines were delighted to find someone who could talk
"American", so Miss Huffman and I were kept busy telling them about things
back home. We ended by giving them a copy of "The Robe" to take back to the
barracks with them and pass around among the fellows. The trip through the
lake was beautiful. I had never imagined it would be anything like it was
with lovely scenery on either side, tropical foliage and strange birds. We
anchored for a few hours at the other end of the Canal and took on some sup-
plies of fruit and vegetables, but did not go near the docks so saw nothing
of Panama City. With a beautiful sunset before us we headed out to sea a-
gain, this time without the friendly company of fellow ships and with no es-
cort. Strict blackout continued and for a few days we had our life belts
with us continuously, but for all that I must say I was glad to be on the
Pacific at last. I began to feel as tho' China wouldn't be so far away and
also it was nice to think that all three Millicans were stationed around the
same ocean; Mother in Seattle, Dad in Shanghai and me somewhere out in the
middle! By this time we were having real summer weather and most of us were
finding that the blackout made sleeping indoors impossible so every evening
there would be a grand scramble for deck chairs. It was surprising how com-
fortable one could be stretched out on two of them with nothing but moon and
stars overhead and good company to talk you to sleep. Miss Huffman was used
to Africa so she never felt it was really hot enough to go to the trouble of
making up a bed each night, but Mary Stewart, a very lovely Australian nurse
and I kept it up for nearly two weeks. We learned each other's life history
and what we believed in and tried to solve the world's problems far into the
night. She was so thrilled to be under the Southern Cross again and I was thrilled because I could still see Orion and the Big Dipper. I must admit I was disappointed in the Southern Cross at first, but it does grow on one. It is best seen when just coming up over the horizon with its two pointer stars big and clear, then of course there's something fascinating about it just because it is the Southern Cross and you realize that you are beginning to swing around to the underneath side of the globe and that soon your friends back home will be walking upside down. At least it gives you something to think about!

Though this stretch of the journey was the longest continuous stretch at sea, the time passed quickly with reading and deck sports and worrying about the various affairs that were going on and what in the world would the boys be like by the time they reached home if they kept on drinking beer the way they were. I never saw so much good hard drinking in all my life. I could understand why some of them wanted to drown their sorrows after hearing them talk about what they'd been through and what they didn't have to look forward to, but I never could figure out why men that were going home to see their families and the new babies, etc., after years overseas wanted to drink themselves blotto. It made me heartsick to watch them some times. I couldn't help wondering what would ever happen to their homes and if they'd ever get over being restless and want to settle down and live decent lives again. Many's the night I'd walk the deck and try to figure it all out and pray God that there would be enough of us that would care hard enough to want to give everything we've got to keep it from happening again.

On a beautiful brisk Easter morning we sailed up along the mountainous coastline of New Zealand and into the port of Wellington. Windy Wellington they call it and it lived up to its reputation tho' I was told it was nothing in comparison to what it might have been. Enough to make huge white caps on the lovely blue swells. The whole picture was like something out of a story book! I fell in love with New Zealand then and there and before
we sailed away two days later I had promised myself a full vacation there some day. If ever a place looked peaceful, this was it. Being Easter Sunday there seemed to be a hush over the whole city, as if people were either at church or just staying home and enjoying their gardens. In fact, there was scarcely a handful of people on the pier when we pulled in. The only civilians were the mother and father of one of the merchant navy men, a young fellow who had been torpedoed and drifted around in a cold sea for days before being picked up. They found it necessary to amputate one foot above the ankle and the other leg above the knee because of gangrene. I like the looks of his family. You could tell they'd never let him down. Freckled face and red hair and having a hard time deciding whether to be glad or sorry... poor kid! He wasn't over eighteen I'm sure. What a home coming! It was good of the authorities to allow the family a pass for the pier. The rest of the men had to wait and make a mad rush for the telephone to call up their families as the exact time of our arrival had not been announced, of course. Those of us who were going on to Australia thoroughly enjoyed the day and a half we had in Wellington. The first afternoon a party of us found our way to the Biological gardens, a lovely park built on the side of a hill overlooking the bay. We rode up to the top on a cable car and then walked back through the gardens. It was like a perfect fall day at home, a crispness in the air, blue skies and lots of sun and a fragrance of leaves beginning to turn and pine needles. The next day we took a bus ride over to the other side of the bay, found a small hotel where we ate a real home-cooked meal and then hiked on out along the beach to the rocks and sat and watched the breakers roll in and the sea gulls soaring. People were out with their lunches, children were wading and digging for clams and there was the smell of sea-weed and the tang of salt that reminded me of the good old days at Peitaiho. It was hard to tear ourselves away. We wanted to stay and be a part of the pram-pushing, garden-growing populace. Their gardens are lovely and their prams are always with them. There's a special contraption on
the rear of all the busses where you can strap them on. The most amazing thing is that the bus driver always waits for you, too!

Not knowing exactly what lay ahead of us, Miss Huffman and I decided to send a cable ahead to the National Missionary Council of Australia before leaving Wellington. This was the group which the Board in New York had contacted before sending us to see if it was possible for women to get to India and Africa from Australia. We were certainly glad we had done it, for, when we arrived in Melbourne a week later we each had a letter welcoming us and telling us the possibilities of ships sailing for our respective destinations. My letter, in fact, went so far as to say that a reservation had been made for me on a ship leaving in three days! I never felt more like framing a letter. Tho' the letters were written from Sydney and it was not going to be necessary for either of us to go on to Sidney, they contained introductions to members of the Council in Melbourne and gave us instructions as to how to get in touch with them. So tho' we were indeed strangers in a strange land, God had provided for us in
U.S. to Hengyang- Part II.

The three days in Melbourne went very quickly. The first day we were introduced to the people in the offices of the Foreign Mission Board of the Australian Presbyterian Church. They were all most cordial as well as being a little surprised to find two American females popping up all of a sudden out of the blue with the information that they were on their way to China and Africa respectively. It so happened that the next day they were having a tea for their own foreign missionaries and we were invited to come and meet them. Many of them were from Korea and knew some of our American missionaries who have worked there. It made the world seem very small to find that we had mutual friends. One of the high spots of the event was meeting the Moderator. I hope my mouth didn't drop open...I thought I was seeing someone out of a play, for he was dressed in a black suit with white lace collar and cuffs, trousers that were close fitting from the knee down and on his shoes were a lovely set of silver buckles! He was a charming person and the Moderator's garb really was most becoming to him. Before I left I was given letters of introduction to representatives of the Presbyterian Church in India which they thought would be of help to me if I should happen to have a long stay there.

The second day was spent in getting passports fixed and making last minute arrangements about customs and tickets as well as in roaming through the very lovely department stores and shops of Melbourne. We couldn't buy many things as neither Miss Huffman nor I had coupons, but still it was fun to see the displays and compare them with things back home. That afternoon we met Mary Stewart who took us to Melbourne's famous tea shop, "The Wattle", and fed us delicious scones and even more delicious whipped-cream cake! They said it would probably be the last week for the latter as whipped-cream was being rationed, so we doubly enjoyed our generous helpings - mine was passion-fruit flavored - my mouth still waters when I think about it! That evening I went home with Mary to meet her sister and mother. After a delicious meal we sat in front of a lovely open fire-place and reminisced
about the good old "Ruahine" and wondered what had become of all the folks that we had gotten to know on that long-to-be-remembered trip and what the future held for all of us. The following morning Mr. Marsh of the National Missionary Council called for Miss Huffman and myself and took us for a long drive through the City of Milboirne and all its beautiful suburbs pointing out places of interest to us along the way. We both felt that we wouldn't have minded having to have a long wait between ships as long as we were in such a lovely place and among such friendly people. As a matter of fact Miss Huffman was there for about two weeks and a letter has come from her since I arrived in China telling of the good time she had. I can't say I was sorry, however, to be on my way again the next day tho' I must admit I had a queer feeling starting off all alone and not knowing just what kind of a ship I'd be sailing on nor who my new companions would be. Before leaving the hotel that morning I had read a few verses in Hebrews and it seemed to me that II:1 was especially for me that day—"Now faith means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see". To me it meant that I could go ahead into the unknown unafraid, confident that God's plan would be fulfilled and that He would be my constant companion along the way. I shared it with Miss Huffman and she felt it was significant for her too, as she looked forward to her still uncertain plans for reaching Africa. We both were assured that God would open the way for us a step at a time.

Any qualms or fears I may have had about the next lap of the journey were certainly wasted energy. No well-planned pleasure trip could have been more pleasant. First and foremost I found four ladies, one New Zealander, one Scot, and two Australians, all missionaries returning to their work in S. India. We struck up an acquaintance even before the ship had left port—an acquaintance that developed into real friendship, for we soon agreed to meet every day for a short time of worship in one of our cabins and before the trip was over others of the passengers had joined us in this brief time of Bible reading and prayer. It meant a lot to all of us and I feel sure that tho' we may
never see each other again, we will always be interested in one another and will remember each other in prayer. Many times we talked of the wonderful way in which God planned for His family and what a very real thing it was to be members of His family for we certainly felt that we were drawn together by very strong bonds tho' only a short time before we had never heard of each other. During the few days we had together in West Australia I went along with these new friends and was included in the cordial welcome they were given by members of their church at Perth and was entertained in the homes of some of their friends. One evening we were all asked to speak at a church meeting. Miss Hampton, the Scotchwoman, is a nurse in leper work in India and she had some wonderful things to tell. Thanks to a friendly Chief Steward on the ship, they had gotten permission to bring along the colored slides of their work which made the meeting an especially interesting one. We started out from Fremantle on May 19th realizing that the next stretch of the voyage might be a dangerous one as we knew that the sister ship to ours had been captured by a Japanese raider not many months before. However, none of us knew until a week or two later that we had actually been chased into Fremantle by a sub. All along the way, of course, strict blackout was maintained and the ship was constantly altering her course according to regulations of the Navy. The ship itself was smaller than the first ship I travelled on, but beautifully clean and very comfortable. In contrast to my quarters on the "Manhine", this time I had a lovely large stateroom all to myself and we were waited on in excellent fashion by a crew of Indian stewards and cabin-boys. The weather was splendid and we had beautiful moonlight nights during part of the trip. We all enjoyed playing quoits and deck-tennis and deck-golf to the full. There were a few other passengers besides the missionary "gang". Some were military, others on business. Altogether a very quiet group. We were all duly initiated into King Neptune's realm when we "crossed the line". We felt it was really unusual for the ship's crew and captain to think of having this special entertainment for us and presenting us each with a most official
looking document stating that we had been made members of the Neptune realm—and that this should be done during war time. It was a very WET occasion for the hose played a large part in the initiation, but all were good sports and had a great deal of fun out of the whole affair. That night we had toasts and speeches and one really had a difficult time believing that there was anything dangerous or unusual about the trip.

We sailed into the harbor at Colombo on June 1st. Here we were reminded that there was a war on by the presence of large numbers of troops and also ships of one sort and another. There were still some ships in the harbor which hadn't been rains since damaged in a bombing some months ago. Colombo was our first taste of the Orient—not only taste, but smell, I should say, for one immediately became aware of various pungent odors that were typically far eastern! I could believe now that China was not too far off. The streets of Colombo are interesting for the traveller who has never visited the east. A great mixture of peoples and animals and things. The native Singalese, Indian women in their colorful saris, Chinese, soldiers and sailors of several nations all meet and mingle there. Street cars and automobiles, busses and bullock carts, street vendors, side-walk shops with a wide variety of goods from shoe-laces to gorgeous sari materials and huge carved elephants, all these things meet the eye. The shop keepers meet you on the sidewalk and invite you in to see their goods which they assure you are just what you are seeking and are most reasonable! They explain all this to you in a spattering of English and pidgin-English—and if you happen to be a missionary they will assure you that all missionaries always buy in their particular shop and you go off wondering what there is about you that betrays your profession—quite uncanny! After five days in this interesting city I said good-by to my four travelling companions, who were to go across by train to India, and started on the last lap of my ocean travel. Six days later we sailed up the river to Calcutta arriving in the midst of a torrential downpour which everyone announced was typical "monsoon weather". The rain was so heavy it formed a
curtain shutting off the rest of the world entirely, even ships at anchor only a short distance away were hidden and the tying-up process had to be stopped before it was completed to wait for the rain to let up.

As far as I was concerned, Calcutta was a completely strange city in a very strange land, but I did have the name of one person, a Mr. McClelland of the Y.M.C.A. I had written ahead to him from Colombo, sending him an air-mail warning that a semi-helpless woman would be arriving in a short time and that any suggestions he might have to make regarding hotels, etc., would be duly appreciated. I was half hoping to find a letter again when the agents came on, but being Sunday afternoon by the time we docked and things moving slowly as they do in the east, when no word came I decided to set foot on Indian soil and have a look for myself. The first Y.I located was the wrong one, but eventually I tracked my victim down and found that he was just in the process of licking the envelope of a letter in reply to mine. It seemed that I had been given the wrong address and therefore my letter had been delayed in reaching him. However, I was delighted to learn that he had made arrangements for me to stay at Lee Memorial Home, a place run by American Baptist missionaries where transients frequently stayed while in Calcutta. I was still more delighted to learn that Mr. and Mrs. Birkel of our Runan mission had just flown over the "hump" the day before and were staying at the same place. So, in the course of a few hours, Calcutta was no longer the formidable problem I had thought it might be and I was already in touch with friends, practically family— as the Birkels had just come from Hengyang and had news of all the folks there and told me that they were all expecting me and wondering where in the world I was. I really didn't have much time to "see India" while I was in Calcutta. The next few days were busy with shopping, seeing about plane passage, getting straightened out with the customs, censors, and all the other red tape involved in getting oneself and one's baggage across from India to China. Limitation on baggage was great and I found it necessary to leave some of my heavier baggage behind, but really was fortunate in getting as much across
as I did. The thing I was most anxious about was a trunkful of drugs for our Hunan hospitals. Through the cooperation of the Chinese manager of the C.N.A.C., I was allowed to take that trunk and a good deal more excess baggage along with me on the same plane. In order to do this, I waited over a few days and took one of the transport planes instead of the regular passenger plane.

June 21st was the great day, long waited for. The day when I was to fly across the "hump" and be back in the land of my birth after being away for twelve years. I rode in a taxi down the deserted streets of Calcutta at 3:30 A.M. in the bright moonlight, trying to convince myself that it wasn't all a dream. Mr. Birkel, friend that he was, got up in the wee small hours to go with me down to the hotel where the C.N.A.C. office is and plane passengers are weighed in and go through customs. It was my "big" day in more than one sense of the word— I weighed a mere 104 lbs. when I got on the scales with all I could get on and all I could carry. The sun was up by the time everyone was weighed in and thoroughly inspected and we were allowed to climb on the bus to go to the air-field. I never expect to go through such extremes of heights and temperatures for some time to come as we experienced that day. I wore a light weight suit so that in the hot places I could take off the jacket, but even a silk blouse was too much for comfort there and the perspiration simply streamed off of us. Then, within a matter of minutes, we were up entirely out of sight of land and putting on our heavy coats as well as suit jackets and still some were shivering. At the highest part and for a period of about thirty minutes, I was very content just to sit as quietly as possible and hold my head between my hands and think hard about six other things to keep from succumbing to the altitude as some of my fellow-passengers were doing. On the whole, the trip was not uncomfortable, tho' disappointing because it was a cloudy day and we didn't see any of the beautiful snow peaks that others speak of and could only see occasional glimpses of the mountains below as the clouds separated now and then. It wasn't hard to recognize China tho' after
we began dropping down a little closer to mother earth on the other side. A pretty picture it was too. A bird's eye view of villages, canals, rice fields, pagodas, hills of red clay with patches of green making lovely patterns. It was about 2:00 P.M. when we finally landed on the Kunming air-field, and there I was back on Chinese soil again!

Within a few hours I was established at the China Inland Mission home where I found Dr. and Mrs. Beach, formerly of our mission in Thailand. I soon learned that there were two possible routes by which I could get from Kunming to Hengyang. One was to travel overland by truck for about a week to reach the railhead at Kweiyang, and the other was to get permission, if possible, from the U.S.A.A.F. to travel by transport. The first meant a trip of approximately two weeks while the latter could be done in about three hours. I don't need to tell you how happy I was when I learned that I could fly and not only that, but could take all my baggage with me. So it was that on July 2nd at a short time after noon, I was deposited bag and baggage at the hostel in Hengyang and soon was talking with Dr. George Tootell on the telephone. My arrival at that particular time was a bit of a surprise, as my telegram had been mis-interpreted and they were expecting me to be arriving by the overland route. Before long a welcoming party had come down to meet me and escort me back to the mission; Dr. Tootell, Mrs. Terry, two members of the British Red Cross, Miss Chen, one of our Chinese nurses, and Mrs. Chang I-fang, the wife of the general secretary of the Hunan Y.M.C.A. They had come down river in rowboats, but going back we travelled in style in a motor boat loaned by the hostel for the occasion and caused quite a stir when we landed at the boat landing with the stars and stripes flying and then made our way through the curious crowd and up the street to the mission. That night before climbing into bed, I got out my Year Book of Prayer and figured up from the calendar on the back of it that I had left New York exactly 107 days before. That particular issue of the Year Book will always be a special prize as far as I'm concerned, because on it I was able to complete a record of my trip with all information and dates—in my own hieroglyphics of course—and bring it in with me through
censors and all.

I will always look back on this trip as a time not only of wonderful new experiences, seeing new places and meeting new people, but as a time of learning to know what it means to step out into the unknown with God, trusting absolutely in Him. Looking back on it I cannot help marveling at the ease with which each step of the way was opened for me and not only that the way was made easy, but that all along the way there were friends, people of God's own family. It was a wonderful experience and I do thank God for every bit of it. As I look forward to the future I know that His promise will always be true: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye."

Best wishes to all of you,