

Singapore, Malaya.
March 30/51

Dearest folks,

Again I feel that it is time to let you know how the Lord has prospered us on the way thus far. It is true that we are not yet in Borneo, but we have already seen the coast-line of Borneo as we passed it on the way yesterday. Now we are nearing the equator, and is it ever getting hot too.

As we begin to see the climate eating into our nice little gold clock and many of the nice things are becoming mildewed, we realize more and more that we are already experiencing that which we shall see multiplied in the months to come. As the perspiration is running down our backs and the pressing heat is almost unbearable, the devil is also busy reminiscencing the comforts of home. But, praise the Lord, He is going before. This morning the Lord became precious to us again as we thought of Him going before. He is actually standing in Borneo to welcome us, and He is the WAY that leads to our field of service.

Now let me tell you of some of the experiences on the way. First we shall stop over in Japan. We spent two days in Yokohama and one day in Tokyo. We went to Tokyo on a train that runs to this city every 20 minutes or so. Tokyo is the second largest city in the world, and yet it is dirty and full of sin and disease. We saw the palace of the emperor and also the buildings in which McArthur has his headquarters. Of course there were many G.I.'s and American people there. However, we did not see one missionary during our whole stay in Japan.

Yokohama was an interesting little place. It is a place filled with little shops and houses. There were no department stores. I don't see how people can live in so little a space and have a shop in so small a room. Everything is very cheap in Japan. The souvenirs, toys, shoes, clothes, jewelry, and other things are very reasonable. We were also amused by the little children in the streets. They all seem to be very happy, and yet they have nothing. They are cold, and they have little stoves the size of a gallon pail in which they burn charcoal. This is the only heat they have for the whole house or store. Many of the children beg, shine shoes, sell newspapers, or help their parents in the stores. All the little children and also adults were very much attracted to little Gracie Merritt who is also with us on the way to Borneo. She is only seven years old, and all the Japanese thought that she was so cute. Of course, they do not see many white boys and girls. Kobe was another place in Japan where we spent about two days. This was also an interesting little town. Most of these Japanese towns and cities are very clean. They continually sweep and moisten the streets to keep them clean and damp. This keeps the dust away. The bombing has left many ruins in Japan. In fact, Japan will never be the same again.

Our next port of call was Hong Kong, China. This was different again. This is a British port, of course. These Chinese people are very pretty. As soon as we anchored in the harbor we were surrounded by scores of little 'bum boats' coming up alongside the ship to display the goods they wanted to sell to the passengers and crew on the ship. They would yell out their wares from their boats in the water. One thing we learned. Never pay the Chinese or Japanese what they ask. Always 'Jew' them down in their price. We found that this worked, and they expect this of their customers. The Chinese shops are very junky and some of them surely do smell too. However, the Chinese are masters at beautiful craft, and they can do some beautiful embroidery work.

In all these Chinese boats and ships the women do the rowing and the work around the boat, and the men sit and do the business and take in the money. Pretty good, eh? All the women do the work. In the streets we saw the children with little 2-week-old babies on their backs, begging for money. Others were blind, and they also were begging for something from these who they thought were wealthy Americans -- they did not know that we did not have much to give the poor. How sorry we felt for the little children. Every once in a while we would give the poorest of them a chocolate bar or something which no one could take from them. We could hardly stand to see them all begging.

From there we went to the PHILIPPINE Islands. Our first port of call there was Manila. We were there over Thursday and Friday. During this time the people were celebrating their easter season. Only they took it more earnestly than we would take it. The men would beat and slash themselves till the blood oozed forth from the wounds. This they did to partake of the sufferings of Christ. Others would bear large and ugly crosses to the Church. Still others were nailed or bound to the cross. It really was terrible. At the steps of the Church there were large pools of blood where the wounded men had arrived. They have a zeal, but this without knowledge. Oh, how they need the Lord whom they tried to imitate. The people in Manila are both very rich and very poor. We were entertained in the home of one of the wealthy families of Manila, and what a Mansion they had. Right next door to them was a little mud hut in which the children all ran around without any clothes. On one street there were pretty shops and on the next street there were nothing but stinky dumps. What a contrast.

Iloilo was the next port of call in the Philippine Islands. This was a more primitive port. We visited the poorer section of the town to take pictures. All the people lived in grass and bamboo huts. The children all ran around naked, and the adults did not wear much more. What a pathetic sight it was. They could live in the dirtiest little hole and yet they would run around with snow white clothes. I do not see how they could keep their clothes that clean. They washed them by beating them on the rocks. Their sanitation system is certainly very poor. Towards evening many people of the town gathered around the ship to watch it. I took out my accordion and played for them. After I had played the first number they all clapped and yelled in their language for more. I kept on playing for them till the chief mate of our ship came and told me that I had better stop because all the natives who were unloading the ship had stopped working to listen to the music. They liked to listen to the music and they were willing to forfeit their work on the ship to hear it. I hope that this accordion will have as much attraction in Borneo. I trust that it will not be damaged too much by the climate. Cebu was another port in the Philippines where we called. This was much like the other port only much more primitive. The sewage was running down the main street, and children would sit and play in it. They seemed to have no toilets, and you can imagine what a smell it was in that town. We could hardly stand it for the night. Now we are nearing Singapore. Tomorrow morning we shall be there. Then we hope that we shall be able to leave for Borneo soon. Pray with us to this end.