Internment
By
Lillian L. McCracken

and

From Manchoukuo to Manhattan
By
Rose A. Huston
Internment

By

Lillian L. McCracken
Internment
LILLIAN L. MCCracken

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

His promises, "exceeding great and precious," are sure. From the ninth of December, 1941 until the twenty-second of May this year while Rose and I were held virtually prisoners in our home in Tsitsihar, Manchuria, we were truly given that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Never once did we regret our decision to remain on the field as long as possible. We felt that God had wanted us to stay as long as doors were open to receive the message we had to give, and we were confident that if God so willed, the way would be open for our return to America if all doors were closed. And so it was.

"Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."
As funds dwindled, as rationing of vital food-stuffs was extended, as the war news became more and more ominous this peace was given. Our constant prayer was that friends and relatives in the homeland, who were undoubtedly concerned for our safety, might be delivered from all undue anxiety.

The day after Pearl Harbor, a Japanese official from the Special Affairs Department, the police which had charge of "foreigners," called at our home and asked one of us to go to the office with him. I remember asking Rose and Mrs. Li to pray as I left with the officer. Their faces showed their fear that I might be going to prison. In the office the Japanese explained politely that while there was nothing between him and us, our two countries were now at war and he wanted us to stay in our home, not to go on the street for any purpose. It would be too bad for them as well as for us if any "incident" occurred. I promised that we would do as requested and was escorted home—to the relief of everybody!

That day two guards were sent up and for a week they were with us day and night, sleeping—under our steamer rugs—in the Martins' big chairs in our living room. For the next month we were left alone after ten o'clock at night. Still later they relaxed their vigilance, spending only a few hours on duty and usually sleeping then. During the last weeks before our repatriation, a day or even two sometimes passed without a visit. Of course we never knew when one might open the door and walk in. Without exception these men, whether Japanese, Korean or Manchurian, were courteous in their treatment of us. We had many opportunities to talk with them about the way of salvation and at least two of the Manchurians and one of the Koreans showed more than a polite interest. Of the younger guards, a fine-looking, splendidly built lad of twenty, became much interested in the book of Romans and asked many questions about the meaning of certain passages. We could not talk much with the Japanese but gave them the Gospels in their own language. We also presented New Testaments to those who were with us for long periods. When we had the time we played games, chess, Chinese checkers, quoits, etc., with them and they spent hours working on jigsaw puzzles. Only one or two of them annoyed us by smoking.

Time did not drag for us during the short winter days. For a time we kept our two helpers, but as our money disappeared we did most of our work ourselves. There were always fires to tend—and did the guards like a warm room?—fuel to carry in and ashes to carry out. Fuel was
scarce and expensive and in place of the wood we have always burned we used bean vines, willow shoots, saw-dust, coal balls—homemade of mud and coal dust—grass, reeds and coal. Half of the coal was of fair quality, the other half which had to be purchased to get any of the good quality would not burn. There was cooking, of course, cleaning, washing—all the work of a household. There was tea to brew for the guards! Rose wove a number of hand bags for which there was a ready sale.

We re-read old books and magazines, studied Chinese, occasionally took care of Gilya, the little Russian girl from across the compound, when her mother went up street, helped nurse her in our home when she was threatened with pneumonia. The Russians’ wretched house leaked so that there was no dry spot for the child. Rose helped Chao Liang Ya make more than a hundred “Thousand Flower Mirrors” (kaleidoscopes) which the boy made to sell. Liang Ya is the boy with the tubercular spine for whom we have cared the last year and a half. For long months of this time he lay in a cast on the kang (brick bed) in our house and he spent five months in one of the local hospitals. When we left Tai-t’ai-fu he was so far recovered that he was able to do “little business,” selling fruits and candies, the “Flower Mirrors” and hot water on the street. He was very grateful to us and to the Heavenly Father. We put in order all of the literature—Bibles, tracts, Covenant Church History, the lending library, the Sabbath School supplies, etc. We knitted and sewed; Rose made three dresses for the children of one of the Christian women, Mrs. Chao of the tubercular glands. We helped Jeanette with her chickens.

Then there were our guests. During the first month or two of our internment the guards carefully questioned every one of those who, knowing police were there, were brave enough to visit us and those who, sometimes to their great apprehension, learned the men they had innocently assumed to be other guests were police. All answers were noted in a little black book or on a sheet of paper and doubtless carried to headquarters each evening. The age, address, business, their native place, their reason for coming to see us, were among the questions asked. The Christians usually answered fearlessly and frankly. Our hearts rejoiced to hear, “I am a Christian. I have come to see my friends.” Mrs. Wang, one of the most earnest and active Christian women, almost always found opportunity to “talk the doctrine.” As time passed the guards came to know our friends and ceased to question them.
Those who came most frequently soon learned that we were usually alone during the morning and timed their visits accordingly. However we were always asked by the guards when they returned if we had had guests, who they were, etc. So far as we could learn no one was ever molested because of their visits to us.

We did not tell the children who came to play who the men in our living room were and only one guard, an opium smoker, told us that it would be better for them not to come so frequently. We did not forbid them to come. We were glad to have the guards note their affection for us, to hear the stories we told them and to hear them sing. We were sorry for the Russian who, used to seeing Chinese in our living room, asked us if we wanted to buy some veal. His face blanched as the guard turned on him roughly and demanded where he had procured the meat. The poor fellow stammered but finally admitted that he had killed one of his own calves. That was against the law and doubtless he would have suffered punishment had not a young Russian interpreter who happened in just then scolded him severely. A young man whom he had known during his high school days and who had once spent the two months winter vacation at our house, came to Tashkhar from the town where he had been working. We had not seen him for years, but recognized him at once. He had no suspicion of the man who sat reading a Chinese novel and he at least spent a pleasant hour recalling friends and incidents of his school days. It was pathetic to see his fear when Mr. Chang put down his book at the end of the call and began to ask questions. We often wished we could warn such guests but usually it was impossible.

We did not suffer from lack of food as did so many of those in internment camps. We had some bottled tomato juice, plenty of potatoes and carrots, a little home made jelly. We were able to get a little tough beef once in a while if Mr. Hao or Jeanette or another Chinese friend could stand in line for it. We had milk and butter, expensive but good, which we purchased from the Russians, and we got eggs at eighteen and twenty cents each from one of the Christians. Several times he sent his little boy with a gift of twenty or more and once he sent us a dressed chicken. Other friends gave or sold us their ration of sugar, several sent us fruit. Dr. Liu, who knew my fondness for roasted chestnuts, gave us several packages, piping hot. Flour was scarce and of poor quality so we ate kao laang, corn, both cracked and in meal, millet and a little rice which we had purchased before the rationing began.
Chinese were not permitted to have rice in their possession. It was harder for Jeanette to eat the coarser grains than for the Manchurians. The Koreans in our compound were able to get rice most of the time but we heard not long before leaving that even the Japanese were going to have to eat other grains besides rice. Matches, sugar, flour, all the grains, bean oil, wood, coal, cotton cloth, stockings and socks, sewing thread, and salt were rationed. We kept a man busy standing in line for our share of necessities!

Sabbaths were lonely days. Jeanette and Liang Yu went off to Sabbath School and the church service which a few of the most faithful Christians continued to carry on. At eleven o'clock, the hour of the Chinese service, we held a meeting in English, singing the psalms—sometimes they seemed to have been written just for us—reading the Scripture and praying together. Then we listened to a sermon by Spurgeon or Murray, or by one of the ministers of our own church. Sometimes a guard was present, once one of our Christian young men came to worship with us.

Our hearts are sore for the dear friends we have left behind us. As we sit down to the delicious, abundant meals we enjoy in this land which God has blessed so signally, we wonder if Mrs. Li and her son, Mr. Wang and hers, the Hsu family, the Wang Hao Wen's, Mr. and Mrs. Chao and little Moses, the Chen and Philip, the Huans and their family of four—oh, all the loved ones in Manchuria—have even enough to satisfy hunger; as we sit in the warm, comfortable rooms in these modern American homes we wonder if those in North Manchuria are able to get enough fuel to cook their coarse food and to heat the k'ang. As the days grow colder we think of the bitter winter of that far northland—will our friends' old clothing be warm enough? Will the Christians be allowed to hold meetings, even in their own homes? Are some of our little Covenant group even now suffering persecution or imprisonment for their loyalty to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church? Will Mrs. Li's flock of chickens produce enough to support her? (In order to be independent both of poor Christians and of a pagan-government-supported church Jeanette bought one hundred and fifty chicks last April.) These questions trouble us. I hope they may trouble you so that you will join your prayers to ours for all the true Christians in Manchuria, Korea, Japan and China. May this dreadful war soon end and a righteous peace be established on this earth!
From Manchoukuo to Manhattan

By

Rose A. Huston
From Manchoukuo to Manhattan

ROSE A. HUTTON

And he led them on safely, so that they feared not. Psalm 78:58.

On November 15, 1940, my diary reads: "Lillian arrived from Harbin in time for breakfast. When the Harbin friends saw her they said, 'Where's Rose? Aren't you going? Didn't you get our letter saying all reservations made to Kobe?'" We had received no letter. She saw Huns: not going. Byrams: not going. Koons: all leaving, though unwillingly. Leonards: going. Stewart and Peacock not leaving. Consul did not insist. So we have decided to shift our tickets to the next sailing."

For some months we continued to shift our bookings to later dates, and finally canceled them entirely, then settled down to live and work in peace. After making one cancellation, perhaps the last one, Miss McCracken sat down at the organ in Miss Peacock's home, opened a hymn book at random, began playing the music without noticing the name of the piece, and was thrilled
to hear the notes of "God Will take Care of You." And He has done so all the Way.

In March we were told there was a possibility of repatriation in April, and that we were to go, though they had asked us which we desired, to go or to stay. So we got ready, but it was not until the middle of May that we were told definitely that we were to leave soon. We had heard rumors that we would be allowed only what baggage we could carry in our hands, but they finally told us we could take two trunks each. So we packed what we could and gave away or sold as much as we could of what was left. We were just out of money, so were given permission to sell some things.

The guards told us not to lock trunks or rope them, as they had to be examined; two experts came and went through them thoroughly, pulling out a few things, showing some amusement at some other things, thinking, no doubt, of how surprised I would be later on when they would be confiscated. This gave me an idea, so I took several things out and sold them or gave them away. Again they said not to lock trunks until we had orders.

Finally, about May 20, they said an escort was expected from Harbin the next day. We were all ready to lock our baggage and put our hats on at a moment's notice. Fortunately we had sold a great deal both of ours and of Martin's, and had bootlegged other things out to our friends, though many things had not been delivered. About ten o'clock on May 22, a group of ten or twelve officers, police, spies and special detectives, with a Russian interpreter came and called for a conference. Miss McCracken was very ill, and talked from her bed. When they learned that she might be worse before she was better, they insisted on us going on the first train, leaving a little before two o'clock, though we wanted to go on the night train so she could get a sleeper. They said it would be impossible to get a sleeper, even for a sick person, and that we must be ready to leave the house at twelve o'clock. Then came the important announcement: we must repack in five suitcases of a size that we could carry.

We didn't have five suitcases apiece, and they finally allowed us to use some wicker baskets of the old telescope type, with the understanding that we might have to be our own "baggage smashers" along the way, so we couldn't make them too heavy. Even so a typewriter counted as the fifth piece.

A hypodermic injection made it possible for Miss McCracken to get up and oversee her pack-
ing, which was made doubly hard by having a half dozen or more other overseers, her trunks being in the sitting room where the whole police and detective force stayed to see us off. Part of them came into my room to oversee my packing. They looked through the whole house to see what we had to leave, all the while hurried. I managed to pass a good many things to the friends who had come to see us off, and to separate the things we had given or sold to them, but Lillian was not so fortunate. Some Norwegian friends had come to get anything in the way of clothing we could leave with them, as they were badly in need of some things we could easily replace at home. But when she went to give them to the two or three ladies who sat there, the officers said she could not give them away, and to put them back in the trunk. One of our friendly guards allowed me to give them a few things, for which I hope he did not have to suffer later on.

A little before twelve, they told us to close up everything, and bring all we could not take, as well as any furniture, trunks and other things into the sitting room, which we did. They had consented to our leaving enough to furnish homes for Mrs. Li and Mr. Chao since we had no money to leave them. Whether all this would later be confiscated, we do not know.

Then they called another conference; the chief official made a very nice speech assuring us they were sorry it was necessary for us to go since we were so desirous for the welfare of Manchukuo and its people, and that when the war was over they would welcome us back again. Then they asked what price we wanted for the things we were leaving; we tried to make a hurried estimate but they insisted on an immediate answer. We said “Six hundred yen,” they gave us a scornful laugh and said, “We are not doing business.” We tried the Oriental custom of “talking price” but they angrily refused to make an offer. We came down to a hundred yen, and they finally said they would give two hundred, and no more. There was nothing more to be said, for it was time to go, so we took it and gave a receipt, and were hustled out into a bus brought especially for us, and were soon at the station.

We had expected to leave twelve hours later, and our friends were bravely coming to see us off, but there was no time to notify them, so only Mrs. Jeanette Li, Mr. Hao, our man of all work, and the lady with tubercular back were at the station. Though we had been expecting for months that this day would come, yet it was with sore hearts we left the people we had come to love dearly, and especially the Church groups who we felt were
soon to meet severe testings of their faith. There was money in the treasury for only a month or two longer, but they were facing the future bravely in faith that God will keep His own in perfect peace, and will prosper His own Work.

The two guards who had come to escort us were very courteous all the way, though it takes more than courtesy to make hard straight backed third class seats comfortable when one is ill. We arrived in Harbin late that night, and were taken in small carts in the absence, or scarcity of taxia, to "The White House" which proved to be the Internment camp for forty or fifty other Americans and British. It was a great thrill, when we had finally climbed to the third story, loaded down with baggage, to see an unkempt red head stuck through a crack of a door, and we knew Bruce Hunt was out of prison. And the next one was Dr. Byram, and we knew they were safe, and we forgot our own discomfort in thankfulness to God for their deliverance. Soon they had carried in beds and mattresses, and we were welcomed by six or eight ladies who shared their room and their bedding with us.

Thus began our ten days' internment in Harbin. The group there had heard no news of us, nor we of them for over five months, and there were many tales to be heard and told.

There were about forty men and women interned here in four rooms; among these were Americans, British, Russians, Jews, one Armenian, Polish, Canadian, Dutch, a Hungarian with Porto Rican passport, and perhaps some others. All got along very amicably considering the crowded conditions, with such a variety of personalities and religions, and the fact that we were allowed only an hour a day out in the narrow courtyard for exercise. Meals were sent in twice a day from a restaurant; the food was largely Russian Borsch which is soup with a piece of beef or fish and a bit of cabbage in it. The evening meal was sometimes varied with a hardboiled egg in place of meat. With each meal each person was allowed four generous slices of dark Russian bread. Some of the men found this insufficient, and we all liked a greater variety, so we were allowed to buy milk, butter, eggs, fruit, jam and such other things as could be found in the shops, for by this time, foods were becoming very scarce in the city. With these extras we could have a light breakfast or tea in the afternoon.

The work of caring for the rooms, boiling water and milk, heating water for washing, ordering food bought outside and keeping accounts was divided among the internees; some of the men dis-liked it so much that they played cards and let the
looser do the work. After being there only ten
days we realized that we were really fortunate in
being allowed to stay in our own home, even
though it meant we were living at our own ex-
 pense instead of being guests of the Japanese
Government.

Quite a number of the internees had been im-
prisoned before being brought to the White
House; some suspected of being spies had been
cruelly tortured; others were imprisoned because
of their religious belief and testimony, but these
were not tortured. The stories of their imprison-
ment and the ways God kept them through sick-
ness and suffering, through hunger and thirst,
in the midst of disease and filth, in nakedness and
distress, are an inspiration to others to be willing
to "suffer shame for His sake." One of the thrills
was to see Mrs. Hunt and the five little children
down in the garden of the neighboring house
waving to "Daddy" up on the third floor, whom
they hadn't seen since he had gone to prison, as
little Mary said "for Jesus' sake, Amen."

On June 1, all but a few of our large family
were packed and ready to be taken to another
camp. But first we must have our baggage ex-
named, then carefully tied up and very carefully
labeled, each piece having at least three tags, after
having been decorated with our names in some
color of paint that would show clearly. That
night we were taken under guard, to the station
and put in cars especially charted for us. There
were no sleepers, but not being crowded we man-
aged to get a little rest. Next day at Mukden,
we were joined by a large party of missionaries
and business people from South Manchuria, and
together we traveled to Kobe, Japan. All along
the journey we were supplied with "bento" (boxes
of food) or with sandwiches and tea.

On arriving at Kobe we were lined up and
counted, the very aged and the sick, and the small
children put into taxis or trucks with the heavy
baggage, while the able bodied ones were marched
up the hill to the Immigration Institute where we
were housed and fed as guests of the Government
for two weeks. Here the family numbered about
150, the enemy aliens from Korea having been
brought there also. Considering the great secre-
ty of food, they treated us very well, though
many found the food insufficient. Here also we
could buy a few things from the market or shops
near by. After two weeks we packed again, but
before we packed this time we saw people memo-
rizing figures, names and addresses, and impor-
tant papers, for we still had to have a final exami-
nation of baggage, and no one knew what might
be confiscated.
Lined up once more and counted, some by truck with the baggage and the rest on foot with hands full of small baggage, we were marched down the street to the "Athletic Club" where our baggage was thoroughly gone through once again. This time they lightened our burdens considerably, taking out anything handwritten, notebooks, letters, documents, even some Bibles with notes written in margins, besides photographs, and in some cases books in English or Chinese. There, too, we had to declare any money we had, leaving any American money with the Swiss Consul to be returned—perhaps—after the war; arrangements were made to exchange U.S. currency for the Yen we had, after arrival in the U.S.A. Each person was allowed to bring out only Yen 1,000.

Finally we were lined up and counted again, then marched off to the railway station, and were off for Tokyo, where we arrived in the morning, after a very tiresome night. We were taken to a grand hotel and treated to a good meal, served in first class American style. After a little speeches-making, we took a train for Yokohama, and were soon aboard the s.s. Asama Maru. We sailed out of the harbor on June 17, and there we sat until the 25th without any official explanation for the delay. Of rumors there were plenty. About 1:30 the morning of the 25th, some rushed out on deck to see what all the commotion was about, and

were summarily ordered to their cabins. The anchors were up and at last we were off.

The passengers were at once assigned to their cabins. The Consular body from Tokyo had arranged it all, and without respect of persons. Passengers were assigned to the better cabins according to age, state of health, and such, and the able bodied men, even those in Consular service, were in third and fourth class cabins, and ate in third class dining rooms, and we heard little or no complaining.

Our first stop was at Hong Kong where we stopped out in the harbor and took on some 250 people from Stanley Camp. They had many tales to tell of the siege of Hong Kong, of sufferings and privations of many kinds through the months spent there. Clothing and other things were gladly shared with those who had lost everything, and it was good to see them put on flesh when they began eating plenty of wholesome food, though even with the barely ample diet on the Asama, some suffered with "poor man's goats" for a while.

At Saigon we took on another large group from Thailand and Indo China, then a few days later we came to the harbor of Singapore. There we took on water, but no passengers, nor did we see the city. The Italian ship Conte Verde met us
there, bringing the refugees from Shanghai, and from there on we traveled together to Lourenço Marques.

As we sailed into Lourenço Marques, we saw the Griegholmen already at the pier, we heard the cheers and the Victory signals from warships in the harbor, and soon we were back-to-back or aft-to-aft with the Griegholmen and were shooting across to the Americans (?) who had sailed from New York. Next day we exchanged ships, or rather the ships exchanged passengers, and at noon, as we saw the stalwart Swedish men carrying great trays of good bread and fresh butter and cold meat, and salads and all the trimmings out to long tables on deck where we were to have a picnic lunch, while the ship was cleaned, a mighty cheer arose, and we ate in a spirit of thankfulness that only those who have been hungry can understand. And with it was a feeling of pity for the hundreds who were going back to such privation as few in America have ever known.

The assignment to cabins was not so happy as on the other boat. It was late bedtime when we first got in line. Things went well for a time, then men came back complaining that they had been billeted with a cabin full of ladies and vice versa. Many slept on the deck or in lounges that night. Next night some changes were made, and others slept on the floor, and the third night, many still were not settled. And not for days afterwards were all settled. And all because the experts sent to manage the affair had had a little party ashore and were not in shape to attend to business when we arrived.

After two or three delightful days sightseeing in that beautiful city, we again set sail, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, rocked about a bit in the "roaring Forties," and finally came to beautiful Rio. Thirty-six hours were all too short to see all its beauty, but all were glad to set sail once again, this time to land in our Home Country.

As we sailed into the sunset one evening, we spied something out on the horizon. We steamed up to it—the wreck of a ship, with a fire still burning. As a group of us stood on the after bridge watching it fade away in the distance, one said, "It makes me feel as if I had been to a funeral." A young Swedish lad said, "We are sure lucky to be on a saved ship. We're lucky to be on a saved ship." He had been torpedoed twice he said, so he knew.

And we all felt the same way as we came in to New York Harbor, and as we passed the statue of Liberty, and remembered the poem Ambassador Grew quoted the evening before:
Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own, my native land."
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As home his footsteps hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?

It is good to be back in America; it is good to think of the liberty which is ours, and to think of the high price with which it was bought.