

Tung Chow, China  
July 22, 1878

My dear Mrs. Wilkes,

Your kind letter of May 13<sup>th</sup> reached me by last mail. I am pleased to make your acquaintance though it be only by letter.

In Feb., soon after the Chinese New Year, I opened a boarding school for girls, beginning with five pupils. The number increased until there were fourteen. They have studied diligently & made rapid progress. The school closed a few days since for the summer vacation of three weeks. Four of the girls whose homes are some distance in the country remain during the vacation. Their food costs about a dollar a week for the four. So you see it is not very expensive keeping them. Lois, who is supported by the Carterville Bapt. Sunday School is now at home, but will return when I open school again. She is a nice little girl & has studied diligently. She lives on the opposite side of the street from me, & I dare say I shall see her frequently during vacation. The last day of school, she notified me modestly that she was ready to be examined on the catechism. The result of the examination was the bestowal of a large colored engraving as a prize & she left the room with a happy heart. I teach them thoroughly every day, & when any one pushes ahead of the class & stands an examination, she has a picture as a prize & is promoted to a higher class. In this way, they are stimulated to study harder than they otherwise would. On the whole, I have never had pupils that gave me more satisfaction by diligent study than these Chinese girls. I hope to increase the number to twenty, which is about as many as my school quarters will accommodate. Among them there are three large-footed girls. The oldest of the three, now about seventeen, is to be married in the winter. Her betrothed is very much annoyed about her large feet. He wrote me a letter last winter saying that her feet must be bound or she must go home. I said in reply that her feet should not be bound, nor should she go home. I thought I was acting on the authority of the young man's father, who had said that he left it to the girl to unbind her feet if she wished, & she had unbound them. Last week the father was here & he says he gave permission to have the feet unbound because he thought so large a girl would have more sense than to unbind her feet! I was very much disgusted with his duplicity & weaknesses; I knew his wife & son had talked him over to their side of the case, so I took very positive ground. Without giving him time to argue the case, or more than hint his wishes, I said shortly, "If the girl's feet are bound, you take her away tomorrow," & then I gave him a talk in no measured terms about the wickedness of the practice. I told him I should fight it all my life, that it was utterly inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus. He backed down completely, said I would not have it to fight always, that the practice would go out & c. & c. I don't think he was convinced, but I carried my point. I was determined that no such suffering should be inflicted [on] a girl under my roof & that I would not be a witness of such suffering. I suppose they will bind her feet when she marries, but that I can't help. In general, on the matter of foot-binding, I throw my influence on the side of large feet, but always say that parents must decide the question themselves. But it would be a refinement of cruelty to bind the foot of a grown girl, & I could not permit it. I thought too, all along, that I was acting on the authority of the young man's father who had placed the girl with me. I suspect they'll make her have a hard time about it yet, only there's this comfort that as she will have all the work to do after [she is] married, I don't see that they can bind them very tight. Now, as it is a Christian family the girl is marrying into, you see how discouraging the whole thing is.

The famine out west continues. Thousands have died of starvation. One hundred thousand are receiving aid from foreigners. Money has come in large sums from England. Our wheat crop here was good, but the millet, the most important crop, has been attacked by worms & is ruined. Other crops would be good, if only we could have rain.

Love to all the ladies.

Affy.

L. Moon.