Our household has talked about the world situation not a little of late, and it didn't take a very vivid imagination to bring the "front line" pretty close to us here in China—in view of the likely peace with Russia, and the German threat to put submarines into the Pacific. What would happen to us all if Germany gobbled up China? We'd be interned, at any rate, perhaps made prisoners of war. Interesting speculation, isn't it?

However, I mustn't day dream out loud, or you'll accuse me of being related to the people who are having the world come to an end in 1917—and they are "pu shao" in our neighborhood. Mr. Bergamini thinks they'll have to get a gait on. If their prophecies come true, I'll likely have the honor of being the last contributor to the Round Robin, for I know Josie will never get her bit in before January 1st.

Merry Christmases to all of you—Affectionately, Amy A. Metcalf

Tehchow, Sunday Feb. 24, 1918

In a state of permanent widowhood

Dear Spring Robins:

We seem to be quite unanimous in our appreciation of the R.R. this time; it gave me a nice little thrill all around my spine. You Shansi folk may have enjoyed letters more because of unusual leisure in which to enjoy them—but no such luck in this region, for I'm worse than a three-ringred-circus. Besides trying to be Drs. Tucker, Miles, Yang, and Miss Sawyer all rolled into one, and at the same time rehabilitate an ex-flooded house with two green servants "right from the country", I've been trying to get my second year exams off—and finally succeeded. Even to compositions. Mr. Stanley having inspected the latter just last night. I undertook to translate Stevenson's prayers as composition work, but found it a pretty stiff proposition and sprained my brain in several places.

How for instance, would you render this phrase? —"We give into Thy hands, our sleeping bodies, our cold hearths and open doors"? I'd be glad to see what someone else would do—for I'm still floundering. My next venture in the language is going to be Martin's "Christian Evidences" which Dr. Emma recommends very highly—and, as soon as Dr. Yang comes back, I mean to go on with my medical reading. Maybe, ultimately, I'll get enough credits to catch up with the rest of you. I seem to be the last of our crowd to finish the 2nd year—but when I look around on the later arrivals, we don't seem so slow. When we admitted new members to the station the other night, only Alice Reed and Mr. Cady had qualified, we found. It seems strange that only two have passed their 1st year exams!
If this letter of mine seems unusually prosy it's because the population of China has been 400,000,001 since 3:30 A.M., due partly to my efforts—and I'm sleepy!

The father of this new-born child is in the fourth grade of our primary school, which seems a little out-of-the-way to us foreigners. But it's not unusual here. I wonder if they err in Shansi by marrying their little boys off to girls ten or fifteen years older than they are? I know it's done at Pao-ting-fu as well as here.

The two most exciting events in our compound recently have been the breaking up of the ice—and innumerable Chinese feasts—not that they are in any way connected, save that one day on the way to a feast Dr. Emma fell through the ice into the water up to her waist—and spoiled all her good clothes. From here to the city is a continuous lake now, excepting for a foot path built on top of the old road by much labor and anxiety on the part of Mr. Bergamini. Boat service has resumed. But none of us is very keen about boating any more—which reminds me that if any of you are longing for dampness, I'll be willing to divide up. We've all given up shining our shoes—because you can't move without getting in mud. When I came home from the hospital last night the warm air and the moist earth combined to give that nice earthy smell reminiscent of spring rains at home. Yes, verily a flood has its compensations!

Josie's 300 chin of coal per day reminds me of my struggles to keep warm last winter—but we have a new furnace—a lovely new furnace, all immersed in water but about 2 inches of the top of his head! I combined bedroom with study when I had but one fire going, but now that I've opened the dining room, I mean to let that be study too—and let my bedroom fire go out. I sleep at the hospital, anyway.

My sympathy for your trials in Chinese matrimonial affairs—we had a taste of it last fall when one of our nurses had to break off his engagement. Fortunately the girl, who was, to put it mildly, "wild", was elsewhere, so we escaped the worst of the muck.

Do, somebody, tell me about the Philip Wilner Institution. It reminds me of the DeHaan's brass plate. Does Philip hail from West Newton—and is your house in memory of "AmeHa"?

Must cease off from—and write some American letters.

Love to everybody. Amy