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An Echo from Foreign Lands

Mrs. Frank Walker is in receipt of the following interesting letter from her son, dated at Harbin, Manchuria:

Dear Home Folks: Just now I am in the far north part of our territory in the large Russian city of Harbin on the main line of the Trans-Siberian railway that crosses from Moscow to European Russia, to Vladivostok, Russia's Far East port opening on the Pacific ocean. Owing to the impossibility of reaching Eastern Siberia from the European side, the General Conference has asked us of the Far Eastern division to administer the work over here, so Pastor Evans and I have been spending a few days with the workers in these parts organizing what we call the Eastern Siberian Union Mission. It comprises all the Russian field east of Lake Baikal and the Russian population of Manchuria. This is a large city of about 80,000 Russians and other white peoples and it probably has more than that of Chinese. The whites are practically all Russians and Jews. It is a great meeting place of Orientals and Occidentals. The poor Russians of the place, and until recently it has been their city, are in a sorry plight indeed. The Chinese have charge of the city and the Russians must compete with the Chinese and Jews, a hard combination to meet. The Chinese will live on a few dollars a month and be content in his native quarters. The poor Russian can make little more than an ordinary laborer and he naturally tries to live up to his Western standards, though in most cases he makes a miserable failure of it, and his condition seems far worse than that of the Chinese Coolie. It looks strange to see the Russian and the Chinese Coolie on the street, side by side, shoveling dirt and doing other lines of menial labor. All this Eastern Russian field is in a badly torn condition. The contending armies have spread terror everywhere. Men who were millionaires a short time ago are now penniless and many of them are begging for bread. This territory here is a part of the territory Russia leased from China, or took from her, for the Trans-Siberian railway. Previous to the Japanese-Russian war she had a strip running south from here all the way down to Port Arthur, but she lost several hundred miles of the southern end of that line as a result of the war at that time and Japan assumed control. Owing to the present Russian situation, China has largely assumed control of the rest of the Russian territory in Man-

churia, so the poor Russians living here are in a sad plight, being practically a people without a country. When you cross the line into Siberia, you of course are in real Russia, but that is a country without a central government worthy the name of such. This East Siberia country is divorced from the Soviet rule of the West and it goes by the name of a republic, but different armies, under various leaders, are trying to determine who is to rule the "republic." And their methods of warfare closely resembles those of Old Mexico under the robber chiefs. And the situation here in Harbin is a very perplexing one. China practically has no government worthy the name. Her soldiers are mostly a set of bandit outlaws, capable of creating a reign of terror in any place at any time. The military governor of Manchuria is himself an old bandit chief that was given a government position so as to be better able to control him. He is one of the strong men of China, though can neither read nor write, I am told. Japan has her soldiers here and they rather serve as a safety valve. While there is much criticism of Japan, one feels much safer with her around. While she may have selfish motives, she does have a government with some authority and power back of it, and China and Russia have neither. The things taking place across the border in Siberia are something awful, according to all reports. This city is a sort of an asylum for those of the old Russian regime. They say the minister of the interior under the czar is here rolling cigarettes for a living and that the old general is a beggar on the streets. The other day a man came to the door who was evidently highly educated; was a doctor; could speak English, Russian, German and French. He came begging bread. A few nights ago a well-dressed woman of striking personality came to our meetings. I immediately saw that she was one of no usual type. Later I visited with her and learned that she was a star opera singer of the old Imperial theatre of Petrograd. Her business used to be that of entertaining the czar and others of royalty. She holds medals from Russia, Germany and Paris, and has sat at feasts with such notables as the czar, kaiser, etc. She was to go to America, she says, to sing Russian songs, but as her husband was a general under Colchak, she went with him instead to sing to the soldiers. Her husband is dead and she escaped to this place. She seems greatly interested in our work. While in the city I am stopping with a fine Russian family. He was

chief prosecuting attorney under the old regime for this eastern territory. He and his wife are both graduates of the University of Petrograd and are very cultured people. She speaks a few words of English, but he does not, though he understands it some. The Russian manner of living is quite different to ours and one must get used to it to like it. They are great folks to stay up late at night. The favorite bed time hour for these folks seems to be about twelve or one o'clock. "Tea" comes in the morning about seven or eight. About all there is on the table is tea, milk or cocoa, with bread and cheese. Breakfast is at one o'clock and dinner in the evening. Then at nine or ten at night comes supper or lunch. They are great people for cheese, milk and cream, especially thickened sour cream. They serve this sour cream in soup, on cakes and in all sorts of ways. I seem to thrive on it, but my associate, Oss, who is the bookman for this Far North country, is down with dysentery. He wanted to leave for an interior point, but must wait until he is better. It is easy to get down in these countries where sanitation is so lacking and where dust, flies and germs are so thick. Our work has been growing rapidly here among the Russians and we are getting hold of a very fine class of people. The hall is crowded nearly every night that they hold services. Under the old regime it was almost impossible to hold public services and our minister here was banished to Siberian exile when the war broke out. He was released when the 1917 Revolution struck Russia. I met him here four years ago, just after he got back to his family. He died later of typhus, but a Russian worker came out from America. He found the church torn and scattered, but he gathered the scattered remnants together and now the company

numbers more than four times what it did a year ago. I have been conducting an institute for a company of colporters who will push out into this Eastern territory with our Russian books. They will doubtless have many hard things to meet, but they are a courageous company and will accomplish a lot of good. We must get our Russian books from our Chicago house. Later we hope to do printing somewhere in Russia, but this is no time to start it. Our Russian minister and his daughter are here from Vladivostok to attend the meeting. The poor folks have a hard time. Three years ago, when the men here died of typhus, this brother was asked to come across and endeavor to hold things of Eastern Siberia together until order is restored. He left his family, with the exception of his daughter, over in Southern Russia and started across Siberia. They were crowded into an old freight car, much as you would drive stock together. They say that the filth was something awful. They were 26 days in getting across. They haven't seen their family since, and they have lived under conditions in Vladivostok that were far from ideal. One room has served as a home for them for eating and sleeping and all. But they seem happy and are certainly devoted to their work. They hope soon to get their loved ones across.

Peking is heavily flooded and unless the rains in these parts soon cease, it will evidently be famine again for many. Poor China! If it isn't drouth it is flood. They rarely recover from one calamity until another strikes them. They are patient sufferers. Anna may spend most of the remainder of the hot season at a hill resort near here and I hope to go up with her next week and spend a week or ten days. Then I will spend most of August in Central China, about 800 miles interior from here. In September I am supposed to start for Singapore and Java, where I will probably spend a couple of months. My time at home for the remainder of this year will doubtless be very little. It has not been determined yet whether we will visit the states next year at the General Conference. If I go to that meeting she will doubtless go with me, as she will have been out here nearly six years, which is only one year short of the usual furlough period. This is foreign mail day. A fast boat leaves tomorrow, so we are all busy getting letters started homeward. Good bye for this time. Love from both to all.—Carl E. Weeks.

The fact that the richest woman in England says she made her money out of hotels tends to confirm a growing suspicion on the part of the traveling public.—La Grande Observer.

The parent telephone company is taking the cream and complaining that the Pacific States Company is not getting fat on skimmed milk.—Pendleton East Oregonian.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Graham of the Sunset Grocery are taking a two weeks' vacation at Seaside.

Club Will Meet Sept. 20th

The St. Johns Community Club, after a vacation during the mid-summer period, will convene again Tuesday evening, September 20th. It had been planned to reconvene on the first regular meeting night in next month, but owing to the fact that Labor Day comes the day before, it was decided best to defer the meeting until the second meeting night, which is September 20th. The club has made a splendid record since it was organized and has accomplished a great deal of good for the community. It was quite active in securing the park and high school for St. Johns, the establishment of the Y. W. C. A. building and other civic improvements. After the vacation period is ended the club will no doubt convene, filled with new enthusiasm and endowed with greater energy to accomplish still more for the good of this community.

A surprise party was given Mr. G. H. Sperling last Monday evening. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Imboden, and daughter Maxine, Mr. and Mrs. Doran and sons Edward and Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Willeford, Ellen Halberg, Frances Dillon, Mrs. Pankake and Miss Sperling were the hostesses of the evening. A delicious lunch was served consisting of sandwiches, fruit, jells, cake, cookies, canteloupes and coffee. All enjoyed a very pleasant evening.

Hazen G. Walker is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Walker, 114 North Edison street. He has been in the navy the past four years, and is still in the service. He has been at Guam the past year or more and is now on the transport Pensacola running from San Francisco to Manila, and other distant ports. This is his first visit home, and meeting with his parents and former schoolmates are certainly enjoyable moments.

Mrs. Kathryn Mackey of Portland is visiting friends in St. Johns.

MULTNOMAH THEATRE

Thursday and Friday, Aug. 18 and 19—**THOMAS MEIGHAN** in "CONRAD IN QUEST OF HIS YOUTH"—Paramount.

Saturday, August 20th—**MADGE KENNEDY** in "THE TRUTH"—Goldwyn.

Sunday, August 21st—**BESSIE BARRISCALE** in "THE BROKEN GATE"—Pathe. Comedy. "The Skipper Has His Fling."

Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 22 and 23—**J. WARREN KERRIGAN** in "THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS"—and Serial No. 12.

Wednesday, August 24th—**CONWAY TEARLE** in "ATONEMENT."

Thursday and Friday, Aug. 25 and 26—"DEEP WATER," from novel, "Caleb West, Master Diver," by F. Hopkinson Smith.

Saturday, August 27th—**TOM MOORE** in "THE GAY LORD QUEEN."

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