

J.M.J.

Osaka. Japan. 2.11.85.

My dear Sir William,

I am quite amused whenever I sit down to write to you; my letters are sporadic and appear now and then from such odd places that they must come to you as a series of mild surprises made interesting by the problem as to where the next will come from. I wrote to you some time ago; goodness knows where it was from, for I only remember this about it that I did not get any answer. It must have been from some place, where the postal arrangements are bad and the letter miscarried for I will do you the justice to say that you always answer letters; at long intervals it may be but still you acknowledge your debts.

I am writing to you now from Japanⁱ and I would say I am sure this letter won't miscarry, because the Japanese postal arrangements are so excellent. But tho I date it from Osaka I am far away in the mountains and have to send this and other letters to post by a faithful Ninsoku or Cooley who may or may not give them all to the P & O agent to be posted. I am as it were in the desert being led there by botany, geology and love of solitude and finally by a desire to escape from the cholera which just now is very severe in its ravages in the plains below me.

I am living in a Japanese house of wood and paper, especially paper; amongst Japanese people entirely and no other medium to express my wants and no other outlet or inlet for social intercourse than the Japanese language. Thus I am learning it rapidly without much trouble. I am very happy for I have three Xtians (Christians) near me, one of whom serves my Mass in my paper house and so far I am well provided for spiritually and temporarily.

I say that I am happy because you mightn't think so when you hear I am a prisoner here. The cholera has broken out since I came here (tho I had nothing to do with it) and now I can't leave for any other port without being put into quarantine on my arrival which you see wd be a dreary thing. So I must wait and I am content to wait, for I have everything to interest me.

I have wandered a good deal since I wrote. I think I had been to the Philippines and Cochin China and Penang. I stayed with the Jesuits at Manila where they have a fine college and scientific observatory. I... (torn) a good deal over the islands and then went to Japan. Came back to Singapore and went to Penang — excuse my going over this again — but few Europeans had ever been there before and of course I explored a new country with great satisfaction. But travelling six weeks on a river lined with jungle and no other accommodation than a canoe is not salubrious and I got just a touch of fever. What then?

On my return to Singapore I determined to go up the Yang-tse Kiang for a change and take the intermediate Chinese ports. I passed Amoⁱⁱ Swatow, Foochow and when off Formosa heard that the cholera was terrible at Shanghai and if I went there (my only way of reaching Hankow) I would be put into quarantine when I left it. So I turned off to Japan and here I am, locked in as I may say by the cholera.

Well you will say, when is this wandering to cease? I don't know but no one can say that I have not had hard work for many years in Australia and I can't see that I can be of much more use just now so I might as well travel. But the most laughable thing about it is that I am as poor as Job and yet am able to get about just as I wish and never want for anything. You know I never saved anythingⁱⁱⁱ and yet everyone thinks me rich because I travel so much and have all I want. It is quite a miracle, isn't it?

Yet tho there is nothing very supernatural about it, it is wonderful how my wants are supplied from day to day. I have only one explanation for it and that is my absolute confidence and trust in my darling Mother Mary. I suppose if I were wanted for any work she would not let me want a warning what to do. And yet I am not entirely idle. I have baptised nine pagans in all — five were dying infants so there was not much difficulty in my conversions. I am writing a little and making lots of notes but I don't count that as work.

It is time I said that I hope you and Mrs. Archer and Gracie and all are well. Give them all my love and say that I make mention of you all each day in the Holy Sacrifice. I enclose an address which is sure to reach me for some time. God bless and keep you my dear friend with whom I spent so many happy hours. I don't yet give up the idea of returning to Australia and seeing you again.

Ever yrs affectly

Father Julian

ⁱ Three years later Julian would use his notes from Japan to write: "A Volcano in Japan" for the Melbourne *Argus*, 12th January, 1889. The occasion which prompted this was an eruption of Bandai San in Northern Japan.

ⁱⁱ The letter is torn, but the place is most likely Amoy.

ⁱⁱⁱ One call on Julian's resources was his brother, Terry. In his letters to Terry and his wife, Sarah, Julian mentions sending money or apologises for not having any to send, e.g., Townsville, 29/9/81; Brisbane, 24/6/83 and Government House, Singapore, 5/10/83. From Kobe, Japan, 24/9/85, where news reached him that Terry was ill he wrote, "But my own dear Terry, whether you are in any serious danger or not, it will comfort you to know that should anything happen to you I will do all I can to help Sarah and try to be a father to her and your children. You know I have never saved anything and avoided doing so and my means are only those of a poor missionary priest, but our dear Lord who has enabled me to help you in the past years will not abandon me in my efforts to do something for those you may leave behind."