

Tingle, Alfred Letters to Lillian Tingle

Alfred Tingle Letters to Lillian Tingle

1909 Jan 3- April 26

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Biographical / Historical

The following biographical information has been generously provided by Alastair H. Thomas, Professor Emeritus, Leyland, UK.

John Bishop Tingle (1866-1918), Lillian Ella Tingle (1872-1951) and Alfred Tingle (1876-1955) were the children of Mary Elizabeth Bishop (1846-1891) and her husband, Alfred Tingle (1832-1877), a miller and grocer in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England. Mary's brothers were John and Joseph. Dr John Bishop (1841-86) was a pioneer with Joseph Lister of antiseptic surgery, and married Isabella Bird, the much-published travel writer. Joseph Thomas Ford Bishop (1843-1925) was a chemical industry entrepreneur and Secretary of Manchester Chemical Club.

John Bishop Tingle obtained his BSc in Manchester and his Chemistry PhD in Munich, Germany, then taught in high schools in Bristol and Aberdeen, Scotland, to secure his brother Alfred's education. In 1898 he moved to USA to lecture on Chemistry at the Lewis Institute, Chicago; from 1907 was Professor of Chemistry at McMaster University, Toronto. Lillian Tingle learned Domestic Economy in Aberdeen and taught this and German at the State Manual Training School, Ellendale, North Dakota, 1899-1905. She then moved to Portland, Oregon, to become Director of the School of Domestic Science, later called the Girls' Polytechnic School. She also wrote on Home Economics and travel topics for *The Oregonian*, as mentioned in the letters. In 1917 she moved to Eugene to found the Dept. of Household Arts in the University of Oregon, which holds three albums of carte-de-visite photographs of Tingle family members and others.

Alfred Tingle attended Aberdeen University and obtained his Chemistry PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1898. In 1904 he was appointed as a professor at the Shantung Provincial College in China and remained in China, living in Tientsin (Tianjin), until 1912 as a Chemistry consultant, working some of the time at the Imperial Chinese Pei Yang Mint. He returned to USA/Canada in 1912 when China transitioned from the Imperial Manchu Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China.

Letters in the collection span only January to April 1909. Alfred wrote regularly to Lillian but many letters did not arrive. His comments are very guarded on politics but mention mess-room gossip about impending trouble in distant Afghanistan. His advances in chemistry are referenced obliquely (and presumably published in scientific journals). Lillian had earlier visited him in China and met some of his acquaintances, on whom he comments. He had taken on the care and education of a young Chinese girl, referred to as 'the Responsibility' or 'R' or 'the youngster' and she is mentioned recurrently. She appears to have stayed in China when he left for the USA.

Additional genealogical information is available within the collection.

Scope and Contents

Eight letters from brother in Tientsin, China to his sister in Oregon, both of whom expatriated from Britain. Both were British ex-patriots. Alfred was a chemist and working for the Imperial Chinese Mint at the time of this letters. Lillian was a food columnist for the *Oregonian* newspaper. Alfred writes about current events in his area, the ousting of all of the Japanese from his region, activities in Afghanistan, work progress, some of his publications in scientific journals, and of his charge, a small girl whom he is determined to have learn English and become a teacher of such. As a last resort he would allow her to become a missionary. Alfred also comments in most of his letters how infrequently he receives letters from his sister, and how often they seem to get lost while en route to him.

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Scope and Contents

Transcripts of the Alfred Tingle letters were written by Alastair H. Thomas, Professor Emeritus, Leyland, UK.

? P.O. Ho Pei, Tientsin Jan 3rd/ 09

My dear Lilian

The fates have sent no letter from either John or you this fortnight, but yesterday came the Derby-shire for which I already gave thanks beforehand, which thanks are now redoubled. It is cut & glanced at -already. I have duly noted the reference to our dear bard & have grieved over the sum-mary dismissal of Allan & Clara -how much less romantic "Enry, my Enery!" is than "Allan my Al-lan!" I can see that much is unto is in this book. Since I wrote things have been broken up a bit, Leang En being recalled to be examined before, as we hope, being sent abroad. I had an Xmas party of him, Kwang, the youngster & myself. She is becoming quite satisfied to go to Peking but announc-es that she will reserve \$2 of her pocket money & if you come here she will run away, pay her train fare down here & so manage to see you. Incidentally she wasn't to take a photo of you to Peking. Her ambition has been satisfied in another direction by having become the "mother" of a doll which opens and shuts its eyes and moves its head etc! I found one could be got in Shanghai at a reasonable price. I don't think they will make much of a Christian of her in Peking. She has no religious instinct seemingly. One of my idols³³ has come in for great luck. The translator of the Mint³⁴ was in here on business lately. We are good friends beginning from both being friends of Kwang with whom he was at school in the U.S. He admired my collection & then asked me to give or sell him one. I said "Certainly" and then he explained by saying "My old woman & the children always kowtow during the 12th moon & especially at New Year and as they have nothing better they put up my tablet and kowtow to that. I don't like it but if they had one they could kowtow to that instead." He made his choice and carried it off, subject to approval. Next day I enquired whether it gave satisfaction. He said "No. My wife reac-quired hers. She was a very bad woman who was sent to the lowest hell & only got out by the help of her son who let below a chain to her from heaven. My wife says she wasn't a respectable character & she won't kowtow to her." I offered to exchange it for another, but he came back empty handed & said that after all his wife had burned incense to the lady & had asked her to dinner that day: however I sent along another guaranteed to be a person of irreproachable morals. The matter was to be re-ferred to a nearby priest. Yesterday the moral lady returned & the one of doubtful morals (we will hope reformed completely) has been taken into the family & is getting a regular supply of rations. I have not yet heard how it was worked, as I have not seen the husband since he just came back. By the by the youngster, when the book came from you yesterday promptly reproached me for not having sent you anything Chinese for a long time, so I must send you something, but at present I don't quite know what. She is also planning to send you something, but we don't yet know what it is to be. I have had no routine work to do & so have got off a little note and about 6M.S.pp. via John, cal-culated to put a limit to some wild statements by a Belgian made some years back & stored away by me for future (use?). Tomorrow I begin a campaign by which I hope to vindicate my favourite meth-od of determining iron, on which a more recent slur has been cast. Believe me, Yr affectionate brother, Alfred Tingle.

Don't address letters here AT. Imperial Chinese Pei Yang Mint, Tientsin, Jan 19th, 1909.

My dear Lilian,

The enclosed was take at the same time as the last lab, but got overlooked. We are much occupied in preparations for going to school after the New Year which is Friday next. We should like not to go, if it were possible, but I see no other really good way, specially as we have "growed" so. The original idol has been kept by the lady to whom it was sent, on the advice of a priest, who re-ported the alternative one to be an image of the North Star & goddess of no importance. Talking of disreputable characters such as this goddess reminds me that C Quincey has come up here & reports the settlement much built up, a theatre opened opposite "my" door 7 all the city ladies of the same ancient profession as this goddess transferred

to this settlement. I'm glad I don't have to keep order there now -I think it would cast too much in new riding whips. Quincey is digging out for Shanghai. Goodall gone, Li (Frenchman) going, Husband going, Whittick to be married very soon (the young-ster says the girl who is going to marry him can never have seen him). Said youngster cannot be Chi-nese. I recently bought some cheese -the first I have had in the house since you were there, I think. She asked what it was, tasted it and promptly asked for more! The like never happened with a Chi-nese before, their version being that cheese is a filthy concoction much appreciated by rats, foreign devils & a few enterprising Chinese of strong stomach who have gradually & perseveringly learnt the habit. Please excuse more. I'm very tired & have been bedevilled for 12 days past by some opium reme-dies, for the analysis of which I have to use brain matter in place of more usual reagents & apparatus. Believe me, Yr affectionate brother, Alfred Tingle.

c/o No 8 P.O. Ho Pei Tientsin City Jan 31st/ 09

My dear Lilian

Yours of Dec 12th came recently, with its cutting enclosed. The latter are quite too funny. The Illsley's marriage is a queer go: $71-25=46$. I presume she decided it was better to be an old man's dar-ling than her mother's slave. Though it might have been better if both bride and groom had spun around three times on their heels and mutually cried No! No!! No!!! I cannot bring to mind any recol-lections of the bride & any of her sisters for that matter. They are & always have been amorphous to me. As to the McCambie marriage, what is Mr Effie McCambie's Christian name, not Jabez or Joseph I hope. I have refrained from replying re marriage with her (chile fu?). I am glad to hear that you are on the regular Oregonian staff again, but I hope you will not overdo it. I will see about the flint & steel etc. in due course. It is all a question of making up a parcel worth sending. If my stuff doesn't take on, simply withdraw it from circulation. I'm too busy, for writing, on the whole these days & in no mood for it. Anyhow I don't feel inclined to put myself out of the way about it. If the Public care for what I care to write so, & if not so, let them do the writing themselves, but not being dependent on it is not ... (end of page; letter is incomplete.) c/o No 8 P.O. Ho Pei Tientsin City.

Feb 14th/ 09

My dear Lilian

The day after I last wrote i.e. on the 1st, I took the Responsibility up to Peking & planted her at the school there. I hope the experiment is going to succeed. The impediment to my mind is the school-mistress element, with its materialistic sense that a promise is only a promise as long as is convenient, & alas the female-missionary lack of appreciation of the lines of Chinese thought. Anyhow fees are paid for a year & it is to be hope we shall be O.K. We are going to learn English (avances?), parallel with our Chinese. Finding nearly everyone away from Peking & being very uncomfortable at the hotel which was too hot & there the food was vile, I came back next day. Last week end the Peking mes-senger of Deutsche Asia Bank who hails from Edinburgh, came down & stayed with me waking me up in a very effectual manner -in fact on Sat I didn't get home till morning & barely got there then for there was a jubilation at the German Club, we had to go there hunting a man & didn't get away till after 4 am with a 3 or 4 mile walk before us, & I had to be up at 8 am to take my man to the hint, again on business. It was strenuous and I have barely recovered, not being assisted to do so by the sudden plunge into extreme solitude. There is no doubt I miss the Responsibility extremely -much more than I thought I should: However that -that is, is & I have no more news except that I saw the father of "Admiral Togo" on the street yesterday. He had been here some days but was going away last night. He says that by Sept he & all the Japs we know will have evacuated Chumanfu. I am sorry for a rather stupid letter but I have a very stupid 9 days behind me and behind that noth-ing much. I expect to be in regular harness tomorrow when a new coin sampling system of my invention comes into force. Believe me, Yr affectionate brother, Alfred Tingle.

c/o No 8 Post Office. Ho Pei, Tientsin City, Feb 28th/ 09

My dear Lilian

I have no letters of yours to reply to, which may be because you have not had time to write, but also may be because your letters have been getting stolen. Either supposition is a reasonable one, the latter in view of the fact that the one you spoke of as having a handkerchief or two enclosed has never ar-rived on my side & I have very little to tell you. I have had a light time at the laboratory, for my rou-tine work is now reduced to a system. I have been carrying on a research in a somewhat tentative way only, because want of materials & apparatus came as a pretty heavy handicap on such. The particular thing in question has been on my mind for years & a preliminary canter with it may result in the pro-duction of compounds which can be identified without analysis, or, if analysis is necessary they can be sent to John. The materials are necessarily limited to what I have in hand. Meanwhile I am acquiring Fame. In recent journals a Scotchman has presented further indirect evidence in favour of a constitu-tional formula assigned by Japp36 & Tingle (I thought it dead and buried) & a German has with due acknowledgement been employing a reaction first investigated by A Tingle. This reaction had also seemed dead these seven years past. Meanwhile I have not really enough work to keep me from being rather bored. I recently found some cardboard in which to send the photos of the Responsibility over with Mrs Hu & the others with Miss Hu. Hu, himself, is in hospital

but going strong. He has to lie still & eat as little as possible. He can afford to starve a while, as I think you will agree. Properly he should be on a purely milk diet, but he likes milk about as much as I do castor oil, so semi-starvation is the alternative. I have a letter from Peking of most optimistic nature dealing with the Responsibility. It is too opti-mistic to suit me. Conduct all that could be desired -which I can well believe & she wants nothing which I cannot. It isn't in nature for a schoolgirl to want nothing when asked, but it is to refuse to put her wants through the medium of a new (and therefore distrusted) head teacher. However I shall be in Peking soon -perhaps next weekend -& can perhaps see for myself. I am only waiting for Harrison to get leave. I want a talk with him. The female at the School I distrust myself. In one respect already she has gone back on her own word & agreement with me "because she thinks best" etc.& after the matter was pretty well thrashed out. More than once she has in the blandest manner sug-gested that I should (for the best of motives of course) go back on my own promises to that& the other. Being a Methodist she would be shocked to be called a Jesuit. The Point at issue is the teaching of English, & on this point I must screw her up. The general sense of the meeting is that the R's best chance is to be turned as completely as possible into a foreign devil (Quincey pattern with improve-ments so to say) in which case her earlier history becomes entirely absorbed. Also she can make more money by teaching English than Chinese. I don't for obvious reasons know how much I can do for her, but she will repay an effort -that is generally conceded. I have a pattern herein the shape of Dr. Kim -did I tell you about her? Chinese woman who speaks perfect English & would be clever & notable woman in home surroundings, I think. I am afraid this letter is very stupid, but there is nothing really to write about. I am wrong, though, for it is since my last letter that I was taken to see amateur performance of the "Sorcerer". Leading lady & gentleman were dreadful sticks, but J.W. Wells himself was admirable. The Rector was pretty good too & the chorus admirably drilled. I had never seen it on the stage before. The early part -be-fore JW Wells comes on -drags, & that badly where the leaders are fools.(Much encored on person-al grounds. The business kept me up late but "shuk me up" & did good generally. I was a Press dead-head taking Editorial Wife, Editor being ill in bed. Believe me, Yr affectionate brother, Alfred Tingle.

c/o No. 8P.O. Ho Pei, Tientsin City: March 14th/ 09

My Dear Lilian,

There has again been no letter from you, & I can only infer your continued existence as such from the arrival of the Sheffield Univ magazine which had passed through your hands. I hope you are not overdoing things because, while I should much like to have you come out here this summer I have no blessed tree for you to repose under if you do. I'm living in diminishing hope that I may yet find a kind of local Wu Li Kan where I may be able to pitch a moving tent & live more in the style that my heart loves. I'm hoping that I may hear before long what your prospects of coming are any how. Be under no mistake I have ample room only no tree & no prophet. I have had a desperate time this last two weeks getting orders for new chemical equipment put through & failing to do so, & all the rest of it, but I think there is nothing very interesting or exciting. Last night I was out of dinner at a local editors -quite small but a rather amusing company, to wit a French officer & wife, the deputy-commissioner of customs & wife & an officer of the Punjabi Regt. As bearing on the E.M.C. ques-tions I pricked up ears when the latter spoke of a bit turnup in India in a little while, but the whole idea of that is Afghan³⁷trouble, it being stated that the Ameer is about on his last legs & things will happen soon on a large scale up there. Of course that is only mess gossip with probably much wish as father to the thought. I didn't get home till morning & have a head today. On Thurs. I woke up to heavy snow, after very mild weather the day before. Snow again today. Good for the wheat. But it has put off some riding I might otherwise have got. My German neighbour, engineer in chief of the north section of the Tientsin Nanking Ry. has 4 ponies who don't have any work except when he goes on tour & then break down for lack of previous exercise he says, though I suspect it is too muchee squeeze -pidgin on the part of the mafuthat makes them crumple. I astonished him when I told him how much I had covered ground on Saul. However, I can give them some exercise, I think, when weather is a little better. Do you remember Kwang? He came here soon after me. Has now got a job on the Yangtse. His wife & family follow him shortly. It was one of his daughters who was reported to have a face like a plum pudding that had been trodden on. Poor oppressed Chinese women. My colleague at the Mint reports that his wife is going to her house to see after family affairs -took her ticket & went to her people to meet her without consult-ing him at all. He has to look after the children at home. There is, however some chance that she may bring him a (lioz?) to attend to his wants on her return. As, by the by, a sign of the times I may mention that he asserts that he is not going to get husbands for his daughters (one of whom is marriageable but at Normal School) he is going to "educate them to make their own living, & if they want to marry that is their look-out"! The Viceroy³⁸ seems to have made himself fairly solid with the new regime in Peking. He had a present lately of some of the late Emperor sold clothes, which means continued favour for the time being. All the better for me. Believe me, Yr affectionate brother, Alfred Tingle. In case you are coming here I may observe that the Nippon Yusen Kaisha have a trans-Pacific service & also many coasting services, amongst others boats from Kobe to Tientsin. If times suited you might save by taking their boat from Japan at least & coming direct, not via Shanghai. On the other hand Shanghai-Tientsin boats sail almost daily & most are better boats than these others.

c/o No 8P.O. Ho Pei, Tientsin City. April 7th/ 09

My dear Lilian

This is not my regular writing day, but it as happens that I have not much else to do for which I have any inclination. I shall keep the letter open till Tuesday, however on the off chance of there being something to add. Yours of Mar2nd came some time ago. As to China -forests & lumber -I am sending you "Science" with a condensation of a more or less recent Presidential message (Please return the Science when done with.) I have made marginal notes, mostly in the form of numbers which refer to comments under the same numbers regularly jotted down & enclosed with this. I also have added a few remarks of my own on subjects beyond the message's scope. I don't know if this is any use. As to the real state of the country you may say "Veni Vidi"³⁹ & can perhaps give more information by word of mouth that I can in writing. You have seen typical N. China. So what I have written in the notes I may add that if the climate here is changing now, it can have little connection with the clearing of the forests which must have been as complete as now more than 6000 years ago.⁴⁰ Teddy⁴¹ is a great energetic man, but liable to talk rot. Read for yourself & see if it not a written caricature.

I suppose Meyers report referred to is published, but don't know, if any particularized information is wanted, let me know what it is & I will get it if there is still time. The doubt you raise about Effie McCambies "status" (horrible word) is certainly a grave one. I looked at her last letter to me, thanking me for congratulations & she there speaks of his meeting her in Bombay (I think) & that they would go off together. You throw a horrid doubt too over the possible meaning of the reference to not marrying one's cook. Does she possibly mean that one should (Good Heavens!) as Carlyle would say. And things are decidedly peculiar in the East too. I happen to know a man in Peking -a very notable man too, does all the German loans. His wife is, on some scruple of conscience that I don't understand about, not legally his wife though all the children are legitimatised according to German law! No wonder the bridegroom elect was afraid of you! 'Tis horrid, surely, of the highly virtuous E. McC. to do such a thing. Sounds like getting wedding presents by false pretenses too. On that score 10/64² each lets us out cheap I think. Many thanks (in advance) for the Pagan Papers which I have often meant to get for myself, but never have. I don't know why. Letter with handkerchiefs may be considered definitely "lost." Always register any bulky important letters as P.O. here (Tientsin) is very unreliable. Several letters to me, all fat, have been lost. All except one had the senders name and address on the outside, but they neither came to me nor went back. I am much amused by Miss Cornwall's remarks about the Responsibility⁴³. Gently encourage her, if you have time & inclination, to go a little into ways & means. If & when I can manage it I should like her to go to America & (more or less) the sooner the better. I say more or less because I consider the experimental stage not to be finally over. She had a rather bad start & I was assured on many levels that I must fail. I want to see definitely that I have succeeded -that is in point of character. Then she must know a little English to start with & there remains the financial question. The school at present may succeed in pouring knowledge into her, but won't get much further. She cannot be moulded by machinery, but only by hand & that a hand that she is attached to or prepared to be attached to. You may as well tell Miss Cornwall that I should not approve of my daughter going buggy riding with young Chinese with whom I am not personally acquainted. Not much fear, anyhow, as your local lot will all be Cantonese, I presume, as would the young lady in white satin. I have had another young woman much on my mind of late. I only discovered about a week ago (by the C in C's direct confession) that the elder girl's feet were bound. In the new house I don't see as much of them as in Chumanfu. I remonstrated, gently but firmly. We had only come out of hospital for the day & were back that evening. Next day I saw the child & saw that my words had had an effect. I thereupon sent for her mother & jumped down her silly throat, boots & breeches & all. I have won & the feet are now unbound, but I had to risk a good deal as my one standing ground was that I simply would not allow it in my house, it being forbidden by the Emperor, which I admitted that of course in the country districts of China no Emperor counted for a tuppenny damn. Of course, the plea is Cannot help it -no small feet, no husband. I want the child to join my Responsibility in Peking next term. I had another ride yesterday. I found a village with food houses in it -whether any to let I cannot say. It is to get society that I propose moving into a village. The Chinese town here is like London for knowing ones neighbours & except for the German whose horse I rode, I have no foreigners at all near. For them I shall be no more our of the way than at present. Meantime I have dug up some bricks & sown what I hope is good seed & may have some English flowers this summer if I stay in this house. I wish I lived in Peking, which is in China. There is just a faint chance that I may ultimately get a job there. I have been quietly cultivating it for six months or more. Believe me, Yr affectionate brother, Alfred Tingle^{Ap. 11th} Nothing to add to this. I think things are very quiet just now.⁴⁴ Yrs AT.

c/o No 5 P.O. Ho Pei, Tientsin City. April 26th/ 09

My dear Lilian

Just after I last wrote you came the Pagan Papers⁴⁵. I have still 2 or three to read I think. They are excellent. I found the avuncular portion by instinct. Of course my position in the matter is a delicate one. I have an uncle & also among⁴⁶ to say nothing of being a guardian. As to what should be done to my own there cannot be two opinions, & I am trying to give as little offense as possible in my more active capacity. I was pretty busy 11th-18th inst, one little thing & another, but on 17th went to an awfully poor show (mostly Japs) with another man. On 19th I went to Peking after finishing up, the 20th being a holiday,

but just before starting received your of Mar 21st & its enclosure about Wn & the han-fool with which I convulsed one or two people in Peking. I stayed there in the German Bank. Also saw the youngster who is well but pretty homesick - does not seem to make friends. Female in charge says she wants to be a Christian. I shall enquire into this at length during the holiday, for while I give a 'free hand' I will have no leg-pulling & I won't countenance her being raked into missionary educational methods. Present school is best that can be done & I don't say official (native) schools are worse. But the missionaries are trying to do too much on an utterly inadequate basis. On the train I met an ex-student of mine from New York. I had had him in private tuition extra, but never got a thing into him as he admits. He avowed (with shame, I'm glad to say) that he had been teaching chemistry amongst other things at a mission college, one of the best in Sufante (?) too! I should have come home on Wed. (21st) but missed the train, so got home on Thurs noon only to find (1) that I was not needed, the Mint having closed protem & (2) that my guts were working twistedly. Result I went to bed & disciplined the unruly members with magnesium sulphate, lead & opium & milk. If present symptoms continue I shall tomorrow get up & go onto full diet having learned there to be toads. Last night Eggeling, the German Bank man, came down, leaving again today. He reported he & Careles the other man at the Bank had both had a little trouble also. Their well pump was out of order & it seems as though the fish pond had been resorted to to help out the water supply. As to your letter, I hope you are not overdoing things. Ease up on letters to me if you can do nothing else. I presume you not understand that Japan is quite out of the question for me this year at least. At present I have to hold on here with teeth & claws, while swinging my tail towards Peking in hopes of twisting it round something there. I have added to my family today. Yesterday arrived the mother of the Responsibility, who had come in the train of some tai-tai, taking the chance to see the R. I wanted her any how (1) because I can get her a better job here than she had in Chunanfu & she being here the R can come home for her holidays without the disapproval of the Methodist element. I have not pointed out to the latter that inf act & in Chinese eyes the mother now counts for nothing except in just so far as she may still have persuasive powers. It is useless to try to meet everybody's ideas. It was pointed out by a Chinese (who has seen the old lady) that if I sent for her & had her under my roof, being unmarried, a scandal could be created. Now she is 45 gone & has had a very hard life which shows in her face - you know these country-women faces. Appropriately dressed she might pass if not for my grandmother at least for my grandmother-in-law! As she has come without being sent for Providence evidently intends me to face the scandal out. Believe me, Yr affectionate brother, Alfred Tingle.