

[To Mrs. B.T. Cox, Winterville, N.C.]

From V. Cox, Peking]

Union Language School

Nov. 3, 1917.

Dear Olivera:

I have no idea where you are, so I can't address your letter properly. Mother wrote me that you were having difficulty in getting a good position, and of your disappointment in Pineville. Further than that, I know nothing, but I am sure you have definite work e'er this and enjoy it.

I am writing this to send my Christmas greetings, - also birthday if early enough, - and to enclose small gifts. As you know, I'm pretty poor, - so can't send very much. Perhaps these little hand embroidered things would be nice to adorn a woollen dress this winter. I can't vouch for them being laundered, or they would be very pretty on white. The blue ones were pasted on pink paper & I haven't been successful in getting rid of it, - but they should be quite soft when entirely rid of it.

Notice how many bats in the collection, - China is full of bats, - hence they use it on nearly everything.

The nice red rose is for a birthday gift. It is so pretty, I could not resist enclosing it, - in spite of the fact I don't know how you can use it. Last winter, I know it was the fad to use them on hats. Notice the wrong side, how neatly it is finished. I got seven such for 25 cents gold! Think of it! If you like it and want more like it, let me know and I'll send them. They can be slipped in envelopes easily.

I wish that while I am in Peking, where there are so many ^{curio} shops you would let me know some things you want most, and I'll send them in exchange for some toilet articles from America. Ivory soap is 30 cents out here, tooth-brushes \$1.25, - and so on. Don't it dreadful?

Now is the time for me to get you a Mandarin coat if you want it, but I'm afraid I can't give that to you. Five dollars from

America will buy a very nice one. There are perfectly gorgeous ones for ten, with as beautiful embroidery as the princes and princesses wear on their \$5-00⁰⁰ gowns, - not as much of course.

Mandarin squares are handsome for 70 cents gold, and I can get them for 25 cents gold. They make lovely bags or covers for books. I wish I could get one large enough to use as an outside cover to your portfolio, - but they are square you see. If you would like one for a scrap book, that would be very nice. They are lined and ready for use.

Write me immediately if you want one, and I'll get 2 - one too. I'll expect to hear from you the 1st of January.

Shopping is so fascinating in Peking. The brass ware they have is marvellously cheap, - a whole tea pot hand carved for \$100 gold. Then there is cloisonne work, which is brass covered with tiny bits of brass, - struck on by hand with glue, - and then filled in with paint in most wonderful designs. It is a marvel to watch them work away weeks and weeks on one small vase. Time has no value in China. But this is more expensive, - ^{about} the cheapest vase would cost \$170. If I can spare the money, I want to get just a bit of it to take home when I go.

Well, Olivera, the more I see of China the more I wish I had your knowledge of music. There are no big concerts or entertainments to go to, and everybody longs for music. So the least bit you have is the greatest pleasure you have out here. Even I am asked to play in concerts. Then, the Chinese are simply wild to play. They know nothing about music & the eagerness they show in learning is perfectly pathetic. I scarcely turn without hearing some person say wistfully to me, - I wish I could play. Which is a challenge for me to offer to give them lessons. I could do nothing but give music lessons while I am in Peking if I just helped those who have spoken to me about since I've been here, - but I am here to study the language. I have 4 pupils at the Anglican mission, and recently I have been helping an American child write a composition she wants to publish. There are all kinds of interesting things I get into just because I play a little, and I soon know numbers of people on this account.

There are very few places for a worker to spend all her time on music; - but I do hope you are still thinking of coming out to help us sometime in the future. None of your training could possibly be lost, in fact you would long for more. Listen to my plans for Hankow. The congregational singing is so poor I want to organise a sort of Glee Club for the young men & women, and also to have a community chorus every week at which anybody can come. For the latter, I don't expect to have any system of attendance whatever, - but in some hall, - we will gather and learn to sing hymns & songs correctly. All can come who want to, or they can stay away.

Then, of course, I am to have the Cathedral choir and the music in our school for women. But, in addition to this, - I shall teach other subjects in the school and do some evangelistic work outside.

There are numbers of places open just like mine, - and if you once got in China you would want some evangelistic work, any way. You'd miss the joy of knowing the people well in their homes without it.

My, but this awful language is the thing in the way. It is frightfully discouraging and hard. My head buzzes all the time with queer sounds and my muscles get so tired I am ready for bed when the day ends. I just sit and listen all day trying to find out what the teacher is saying, - who doesn't know a word of English. We can't take any notes and are not permitted to study or look anything up we hear. It is maddening. If you have a poor memory it's all up with you in the Language School. I am just finding out I have none.

With best Christmas love,

Sister.