

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

Union Language School

Nov. 11, 1917.

Dear Mother:

There are many things for one's physical system to become accustomed to out here. I have just been suffering from the terrific dust storms in Peking. You know it seldom rains here, and the sand from the northern deserts blows across the city in gales unless the men stay right at it all day long watering the streets, and I think I have told you how the process is carried on by tubs and large gourds. So it is practically impossible to prevent heavy dust storms every day.

Being very sensitive to anything of the kind I almost suffocate when I get in them. Two weeks ago I had a very sore nose with 2 or 3 blood blisters inside which bled just the least bit whenever any discharge came. I had a doctor in the school to examine them and he said it was just sensitiveness to the dust, - all I needed to do was to be careful, and to use a spray often. Then as they were healing my throat began to burn and ache, - the sand it seems just burns right in the tissue and makes me feel very parched inside. That's always the trouble with me, I'm never very ill, - but I have just an everlasting sensitiveness to so many things, and I always have to be careful.

My throat is some better today. Thank fortune I won't have this to contend with in Hankow. We have rather the opposite, - too much water.

No letters have come from America this week at all, - so I haven't heard from home. I declare, if I don't begin to get some from some of my friends by Christmas I won't know what to think. I haven't had a letter from any of them since I reached Hankow in September.

Last week was a very busy one with the process of listening at Chinese. Believe me, I am having that side of my nature cultivated as never before, - listening. I was very hopeful in the matter of imitating their sounds a few days also. We had such things as telling time by the clock, names of meals and instruments used to eat with, our name et cetera. When you find out that your whole name isn't a name, but just Venetia, you begin to wonder "what's in a name". The Chinese change their names at least 3 times in a life time, brothers often have different surnames (we would call them, I don't know what they call them).

All of the private teachers were changed last Monday and I got a very fresh young fellow, who makes me cross half the time I'm with him. If I just knew enough Chinese I'm afraid I would say unkind things many times, - so I guess it's best I don't. The dear old man I had at first seems to think a great deal of me, - we even walked half a block down the street Thursday and chatted together which is an unheard of thing in China. A Chinese man and a foreign lady, think of it! Miss Johnson was with me, - we were going to have a tire on our bicycle mended, and didn't know how to ask the man in the shop to do it, - so we asked him and he told us how much to pay the man etc. He was nice as could be. I just hope I will have him again before I leave. This little Mr. Hsun is a "prune".

I did a very rash thing yesterday. I had stood being without a piano as long as I could, so I went to the piano man here and rented a small one for a few months. I got it very cheaply, and it is going to be put in a small study joining my room, - so I can use it any time or all the time I am not in class. My room is quite out by itself, only joined on to the others by a porch in Chinese style, - so it will be like having a private suite of rooms. The other girls were so delighted when they saw the piano roll in, - the smile seems to

stick on too. I want them to use it, too, whenever they feel like it. Until you get way out in a country like this, - you really don't know how to appreciate music. It's my greatest pleasure and asset.

Mr. Bentley called on me very late Thursday P. M., and said that his organist at the chapel is going to France with a number of coolies very soon and he didn't know just what he was going to do without him. "But", he added, "as you are supposed to attend Chinese service at eleven each Sunday I'll not try to tempt you away from your duty". So he didn't ask me to supply for him. I wish I could.

What is Grace doing in school this winter? Is she keeping up her music as well as ever?

I am still hoping to receive "The Literary Digest" and "Musical America" from home some-time in the near future, - also I hope to hear about the check I sent you and just how far it went.

I must get ready for church this a. m.

With heaps of love,

Venetia.