

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

From V. Cox, Peking]

Language School

Jan. 2, 1917

Dearest Mother:

A very Happy New Year to you! but it won't reach you until the middle of February. We have had splendid holidays. The Anglican mission people were so lovely to us. Everything was very quiet out there, and no gifts were given. We just attended all the services we could and enjoyed the family the rest of the time. It was so cold, I was glad not to go to the hills, - but enjoyed my warmer room in the hostel. Even that is warm in comparison with a Chinese house in the hills.

I have spent practically all the rest of the holidays at the piano getting ready for the concert which comes off tomorrow night. If this weather just continues, there will be some pleasure in going out, - the wind is not blowing and there is no dust. Today has been perfectly ideal. A new worker from Hankow, Miss Buchanan, arrived Saturday, - and I have spent all the day practically showing her sights. She is jolly good company and I know we shall enjoy having her here. She is one of ^{our} ~~the~~ chums, - but about forty yrs. old.

The language school is run over for this term, - about 13 new scholars have arrived. The hostel can't begin to hold as many as have applied for rooms. I'm so glad Miss J. & Miss Dexter got in before it was full. My! it's so nice to have them near by! - It is like another home to me.

One of the three packages I have been expecting from home has arrived, but you know I can't get it out of the P. O. yet. It has been closed all this week, - as well as the Banks. They open tomorrow, but also School does, and I'll not be able to get to them before Saturday, - because they only keep open 3 hours

of the day. So is life in China! I am told it is much worse during Chinese New Year, which comes in February, - and lasts three weeks. Hurray!

I rather think this one must contain the shoes Olivero sent, because the duty is only twenty cents. Another pair of blankets and a coat! Well, I'm sure I should keep warm at that rate. My Hankow family had impressed upon me the use of double blankets to sleep in, - so that is an old stunt. My hot water bottle has been a great help, but it is beginning to leak, so I don't expect much more service from it.

The winter is just two months longer any way. So I think I'll survive, if I have this far. This week has been so comfortable I have been almost warm. It is hardly believable for Peking.

Please don't send me any more money. I really am quite comfortable. As I wrote in another letter, - if you have any for me just deposit it in the Winterville Bank. Exchange is so poor, I give it away out here to have it changed into Mex. It is almost exactly even now, - dollar for dollar.

The check of two dollars came O.K.

Yes. Mail from Peking goes much more quickly, because some of the distance is travelled by rail, - from Hankow, it is all by boat. A train takes mail from here to the coast, and a boat across the Yellow Sea to Japan, and by rail from there to one of the ports, - where the big steamer takes it and carries it on.

Not all of your letters have been censored, in fact, - only a few of them. Those coming through San Francisco are not opened, - but all that pass through Canada are.

You asked about my teacher being cold, - no, my lord! He (all of them are men) wears as many as seven coats and as many pairs of trousers, - heavily padded and lined with wool.

He fairly roasts with a little fire in my room. He constantly wipes the perspiration from his brow. If I stayed in Peking long, I would dress just as they do, - it's the only sensible thing to do in this climate.

I have arctic overshoes, - please don't send another pair to haul around. I only need a woolen muffler for my neck and a chiffon veil for my face, - to keep the dust out. I have and wear all the woollens I need, so don't send any more. Living in the hostel I fare D. K. with the exception of my feet, - and even woolen hose don't relieve them. I am hoping the shoes Olivera has sent are heavy and high, - that would be the greatest comfort I could have. The artics keep me warm when I go out, but I can't wear them all the time in the house or I don't feel them when I go out. If these shoes are not heavy and high, don't bother to send another pair, - it would be spring before they arrived. I'll live through perfectly D. K. I am not having chill blains and cracked opened fingers as others have.

I know you are sorry to see Ernest back. You need some good Chinese to cook and help you around the house. They are certainly unsurpassed as servants, - so thoughtful and eager to do. You seldom have to think for your own comforts. If they just once know what the foreign custom is, - they never forget to do it.

I am to be in Peking until June, and am not yet sure where I will go from here. I will write you as soon as plans are made for the summer. I may have a short vacation first, or I may continue studying, or I may go straight to work in Hankow. It depends upon what the Bishop advises.

My Honkow family sent me a small box of caramels for New Year, - and they were certainly good. They are so lovely to me, - I know that's where I belong. I love them every one.

No, I don't want the "Gospel of St. John" I left behind. It isn't written in Mandarin, - our dialect.

I am very tired and sleepy, so I must seek my bed. School opens tomorrow, and I have to get up very early.

With much love,
Venetia.

I have several letters and gifts from my N. Y. S. S. pupils. They wrote encouraging news about the school this winter.