

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

Ch'ung T'ê School
Anglican Mission
April 14, 1918.

Dear Mother:

I think I skipped another letter last week. Mrs. James had asked me to write a letter to be read at the Council this yr. and I spent most of last Sunday P. M. doing it. Then, I went out for dinner and had no more time for letter writing.

We have been having terrible dust storms all the past week. As I am sleeping on the porch these days, I awoke one morning with my face as dark as the ground & my eyes & ears full of dirt. I had to pull my bed indoors last night it was so bad. Parts of Gobi Desert are deposited all over the house. It's pretty bad, but still the Sun shines.

There was a terrible fire just outside the gate to the Southern wall last night, - not far from us, only we are inside the wall. Some large Chinese ware-houses with everything in them were destroyed. For once all the noises on the street stopped and everybody went toward the scene of action, nothing but dogs were left to disturb the stillness of the night. They fought the flames as best they could with small hoses from nearby water supplies, but the coals were still alive this P. M. when I went to see it & the hoses still in use. So much better this was destroyed than some of the sheds of the poor, destitute people outside the city. It seems the streets have more and more beggars every day, the flooded districts & those suffering from famine have many to come to the city every day.

I spent yesterday A. M. in helping Miss Scott cut and fit another dress for the summer. She is always so grateful for the help, - but so careless in her sewing you just hate to see the things you plan all botched up. Then some Chinese girls came in, in the P. M. and I had them to entertain until 7 P. M. I was very tired before they left. I put them to work helping me sew on an old waist I wanted to work over, and they worked very hard, trying to get it finished, but we didn't in the end.

Miss Buchanan came in just as we sat down to tea and told us she had received a wire in the A. M. to come to Wu Chang this A. M., Sunday, to resume her work. Mrs. Scott has a severe attack of meningitis

and they have expect her to pass away for several days. But they gave her the toxin and she seems to have responded to the treatment and is better.

Last week, Miss Sibson of the Men's Hospital in Wuch'ang had the same kind of attack but not so severe. The 5th day she had to go back on full time duty, - and she writes she doesn't see how she is going to go through to June. So Miss Johnson thinks she should return to help them out. She may leave the middle of this week. We are waiting to hear from the Council of advice.

I think I wrote you that Miss Dexter brought back a visitor with her from Wuch'ang, after Easter. (?) Miss Gardiner, an elderly lady who is giving her services to the mission, - not under the board & quite wealthy. She is suffering from neuritis in her left arm & is most uncomfortable day & night. She is a relative of Dr. Gardiner of the Board of Religious Education, and all the Gardiners in Maine, - and a most learned woman. She is nice to have in the house with us.

She is keen about seeing the sights so we are travelling here and there getting in all we can. We went to the northern part of the Forbidden City week ago Saturday and saw the winter palace of the Emperors that were, and the great hill that used to keep coal banked on it for Imperial consumption.

Of course I have seen the Pres. I wrote you last fall of our visit to the palace, I think, and of having tea there. (?)

We constantly see some of the great officials, but what does that mean? They haven't a government established, - none of them want to serve in the capacity they are serving & consequently little is done. There are rumors abroad of terrible breaks between the North & South through Japan's help, but I don't believe it yet.

And don't you believe all you see in the papers at home about the situation. Things never happen in China that are always going to happen. But, the government of China is in a very critical condition, - a matter the whole church should pray about, as I hope it is doing.

There is no legislature or Congress or Parliament, or anything of the kind. The military party is in power. That is what the South is fighting the North about, and it is whispered that the South thinks of separating from the North & forming her own

government if the North doesn't soon come to terms.

I have seen the Parliament buildings many times, - they are just $1\frac{1}{2}$ blocks from our home, - but nothing happens there. Guards parade back & forth there every day, but the houses are closed.

The money order for \$5⁰⁰ came O.K. I'm afraid I can't get any chimes here in China. They use only big bells which are struck with a wooden mallet. I'll see if I can find a nice one for you, and then some 'cloisonné', - because that is one of the things Peking boasts of. I'll get as much as I can with the amount. The brass is very inexpensive, - so I will get some of it too.

Drs. Stewart wrote me in her last letter that she is going to move in a house of her own on the compound of the Ladies' House this fall, - so Drs. Hart & I will be alone for the winter. With her, goes all the furniture of the sitting room, the kitchen stove et cetera, - which I am asked to supply in their stead. I see where I'll be poor as "Job's turkey" next year. My own furniture can wait as long as Miss Kent & Miss Couch have asked me to use theirs while they are away on furlough, - but the sitting room has to be furnished for guests who go back & forth so continually. I have just ordered a rug for the floor, which I hope is going to be satisfactory, but it's going to be about \$75⁰⁰ in a lump sum, - the very cheapest I can get. It has to be 11 ft. by 12, - the room is so huge. I don't know where furniture is coming from, - I mean the money. Such is the life of a missionary!

I wish we had some fresh butter. Miss Gardiner and I are trying to persuade the Mission to get a cow & let us instruct the Chinese how to care for it.

Has Jeannette secured another place for next year? Thank her for the pictures of the pond et cetera. She's been awfully sweet to me since I've been out here. I hope she can find some Chinese music for me. I must write to Olivero personally.

Must close, with love, Venetia -

P. S. - If no one else wants the overshoes I can use them - I'm
sure. At the rate we use them out here they go very fast, so the
ones I have may soon go. But don't send them if somebody else
can use them, because I still have this pr. + it is expensive
sending them back & forth.
