Union Language School
Peking, China
Oct. 21, 1917.

Dearest Mother:

I received your long looked for letter after much tribulation yesterday noon. You must put a five cent stamp on all you send me, or I simply can not afford to get them out of the Post Office after they reach here. All foreign postage is 5 cents on letters and two cents on cards. When you fail to put the 5¢ on I have to pay 12 cents to get it out of the office, - which equals about 6 cents in gold. Why, I don't understand, because it only takes 10 cents to send a letter home, - unless there is an extra tax. But I've had to spend that much getting your letters ever since I've been out here, and it has broken me just about up. In addition to the 12 cents for postage I had to give 30 cents for ricsha fares yesterday to get to the P.O., - which was outside the city wall, - half an hour's run.

A friend of mine here had notice that 5¢ letters are held for her at the same place today, - she had to pay 60 cents to get them. Her friends must think missionaries have millionaire salaries, or else have been thoughtless enough not to ask the P.O. about foreign postage. You are the only one who has sent letters that way, but Cousin Will, and he should know better. If everybody treated me thus, I'd soon have to let them stay where they arrived.

Our expenses are very steep here this winter. The Hankow mission pays tuition and $12.50 for room rent a month. I am having to give $4.50 a month for board, and $5.00 for coal and laundry. Books so far have amounted to $10.00 and

there are others to buy,- and with class organization et cetera I necessarily spend at least $6 s- ov a month. Ricsha hire is outside this, and believe me it is a most expensive item. You can't go for a 5- cent ride even two blocks,- it's terrible. Miss Johnson and I are trying to find a lady's bicycle to rent until we learn how,- and if successful we want to buy one,- but there don't seem to be any in Peking either for sale or hire. Everybody who has one tells us they had theirs imported, which is not very encouraging,- because duty is very high just now. If we could get one we would save lots on fares by using it. I don't know what we shall do about it.

Our salaries have been anywhere from $60 to $90 recently, depending upon the rate of exchange when the draft for our salaries was bought in Shanghai. My 1st month found me with $90, and I have managed to save $10 ov out of it with all travel expense etc I have been put to recently. That's doing pretty well, I think. News from the Board of Missions has just been received, saying that they are going to see that we have 2 for 1 after October, meaning,- 2 mexican dollars for 1 gold dollar. So if we are due $5-0 ov in gold,- we will get $100 ov in Mex. That will be a tremendious help. The Board is very good to us.

I am very much discouraged in getting the language,- it seems impossible when I compare my progress with other members of the class. They hear everything and can answer correctly, while I get about half of it. But it is not right to compare progress in this way, because it only makes me unhappy. I am getting something, and I realise where I am gaining ground each week; I am doing all I can do, and I should be satisfied. I was so discouraged the middle of the week I asked Mr. Pettus to let me got back with a class just starting, but he said he didn't think it necessary,- so evidently he has hopes where I have none. The trouble is,- I can't understand when the teacher speaks rapidly,- and of course

that is what I must learn to do,- also to answer just as fast. This 1st part is to start us off with a certain amount of fluency. It takes me 5 min. to grasp the meaning of one question sometimes. I'm a frightful block-head. But I've always gotten things slowly and I can't expect to grasp them in a moment at the age of 25. The constant repitition gets me there. Chinese words are always running through my mind, even during the night I wake up and find myself saying the things I have learned during the day. I'll soon be dreaming sentences, I am told. That's the method,- to so pound the same things into our ears that our brain keeps pounding on the same things even subconsciously.

Mr. Pettus is the greatest help possible, and so sympathetic and encouraging. He suggested that all of us do something to help the missions of Peking while here,- so we five people of the Church of England went out to the Anglican mission and volunteered our services. They were delighted to have us. I was given four music pupils the first thing, and others want to take. I started with them yesterday. They all speak English, or I couldn't do much. Miss Hillmore, the head of the school out there, had been looking for a music teacher all fall,- and so I was especially welcomed. The other girls are giving embroidery, English, drawing, and nursing lessons.

Tell Olivera there is much room for music in China, She'll never want for work out here,- but she will have to get something else with it. A teacher in the mission field can't confine her energies to one line of work,- she does a little of everything. I am longing for a course in Domestic science,- that seems to be my greatest deficiency outside of the language. Everybody has to keep house in one way or another, and as our market is not very extensive we have to know just what to use to be most economical.

The English legation is about 1½ miles away from us, - so miss Masters, miss Peters + I go there for services as often as possible. Mr. Bentley, the rector, is always glad to see us. He reads the lessons + prayers so beautifully, and is such a devout, humble man. You just love to go. He has been an elocutionist, so he speaks particularly slowly and distinctly.

About my furniture, etc. I have not tried to get any yet. The only little things you could send me would be toilet articles, <u>woolen</u> gloves and woolen muffler like this to wrap around my neck, and other things I have mentioned in letters previous.

There is a book at home I wish I had, - the one that your used to read us selections out of as:- The man who said he could do more work in one day than his wife could do in 3, - and you remember how they exchanged places and found out that he was mistaken. Then, don't forget some magazines. I haven't any daily reading matter.

That's O.K. what the insurance agent said, so long as you don't rub it in. Father already is hurt about it and wishes he had had more influence + companionship with us when we were younger + at home, - and nobody likes to be jostled much on a "sore point". Don't glory in your own success, it never pays. It should make us realise how little we have done, - it was not us at all, why try to claim <u>any</u> of the praise?

Being with the English out here so much has brought us so much nearer the war. We feel that we are a real part of it. We see all the war pictures in big form and also the death lists. America will soon be getting them. - I hope we will be remembered in China then.

I must get ready for Evening Service. Good-night. With love,

Venetia.

Please write once a week.