

July 20, 1937

[1932]

Dear Maw -

Symptoms of going native: I can no longer exist without a fan - it is a more important accessory than hat, necktie, gloves, cane or sock, and much more useful; one keeps an assortment for different occasions: palm for sport wear, small black with silver lettering for dress, very large plain Indian red for ricksha riding, hand painted gold fish on white for ordinary morning wear, and a specially choice shrimp design done in the fewest possible strokes by the famous and venerable Mr. Chee, for cocktail parties - and I almost forgot, a very simple woven straw fan for use while at work. This is a mere beginning - I have many more ideas for my collection. I have in mind an extremely costly one (50¢) for after-the-theatre parties (only there have been no theatre parties). Also I am taking up the study of the language. I have learned that Hsien yu Hsiang - the name of my street, means Fresh Fish Alley, which may account for the odors. - and one always says yes when they mean no, and vice versa.

My garden (all in pots) is growing - the crowning glory being a pink lotus, and rightly it deserves to be a sacred flower. It is placed in the center ~~of~~ <sup>against</sup> the East wall, where, were I

" Moslem would be my prayer wife.

Last week end was spent in the Western Hills with Capt. & Mrs. Mayer, two charming Philadelphia girls K. Butcher and M. Bettison, (daughter Colonel Bettison) and a Legation Secretary. The house built by Mrs. M's missionary parents is hideous but, perched on the peak of a hill, it commands a splendid view on all sides: to the West range after range of mountains, to the North the river and farms and villages to the East, the plain towards Peking, to the South, the Summer Palace and temple-spotted hills. The fare was missionary too; sawe krant and custard puddings. Why such barbaric taste should be imported into civilized China (where the native food is only too too good) is more than I save.

Later. Today I received two presents: First, two very large melons from Mr. Pai Te Sun, from whom I had previously purchased a number of scrolls, all ridiculously cheap. The prize of the collection is a Ming Buddha in luscious soft colors, about 6 feet by 3 feet which cost less than \$1.25 gold. It hangs over my mantel at the end of the long room and is set off on either side by tall blue glass vases filled with rose colored lotus flowers. The second present was a round Chinese teak wood table, about four feet in diameter, with a marble top, and ~~can be~~ separated in two to be placed against the wall. This is a swell addition to my already handsome



drawing room. It comes from the Mayers which means that I will probably have to submit to spending another weekend with them at their American bungalow in the Hills - as I have been invited so long ahead that I cannot think of any excuses. It is all pleasant enough but I find the city so very intriguing that I hate to waste the time playing at camping in the U.S.A.

I am planning to do some etchings of enormous Chinese wrestlers (they are not quite as big as Japanese wrestlers). I picked them up at the "Coney Island" of this city, and because of their failure to keep appointments, I have so far gotten no farther than preliminary drawings. Did I tell you that after much running about, permission was given me to use presses (and printers who have to be trained) at the government Bureau of Printing and Engraving. So that will be a lot of fun - and the next editions may appear on bank note paper!!

The longer I stay here, the more resemblances to Marrakech are to be discovered. The heavy rains which are absorbed by all Chinese walls and gave me lumbago, also turned the streets into a thick-running chocolate-like substance, quite like Morocco mud.

Yesterday I went out to the open spaces of the Chinese city, within the walls, but still quite rural. Men were sitting on mats in the shade of trees drinking tea and playing cards, then we came upon a

walled park like the Alameda, and finally a mosque with domes & minarets, capped with brightly shining brass crescents!

Later,

Yours of June 2 just come. I am surprised that you are back again so soon in Woodbury, thinking that you would remain much longer in Virginia. I wish you could have a Peking umbrella to sit under!

About my car. Natalie Scott wrote some while ago that Bill Spralling had offered \$400<sup>00</sup> for it which is, or was, better than nothing, and I think it should be sold rather than be allowed to rot and rust. As U. says the tires were pretty well gone, and perhaps no better offer would be forthcoming.

Much love

Edna

P.S. The enclosed is a sample of Peking stitch.