Mrs. B. L. Ancell

December 31, 1945.

To the members of the class of 1896 of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania,

Hello Girls!

This is "long Distance" from California! How I wish that it could be a "Close up" with you all! A pocket book that will not produce the fare, and a battered up old heart that could not cross the mountains that lie between us, together with the remembrance of what the weather can be like in Philadelphia in January, make a combination that just spells "NO." And that is the substance of the message I have just sent to the Board of Corporators in response to their Gracious Invitation to be present on January 10th, which I received today.

You may be sure that I will be there with you in spirit! How many things we would all have to say! I imagine we would all have to talk at once in order to get in the things we could all want to share. This afternoon, after a rather wakeful night, I slept for an hour and a half, and I did some dreaming! Of course I had been thinking of the letter I was going to write you all, as soon as I had had my afternoon rest. I dreamed that I was somewhere there a Doctor was going to give another friend and myself a quiz on Anatomy. The other lady had not arrived, so the examining professor said: "Come over here to the table and I will ask you some questions on Anatomy." I took my place and said: "Oh Doctor, I do not remember anything about Anatomy now! Of course when I was in China and had a Hospital and had to perform leg and breast amputations and do abdominal operations..." I do know something" and then in my dream I began to tell him something about Dr. Roberts, which I had in waking moments planned to mention to you. Do you remember girls how Dr. Roberts would come into the lecture room (if I remember correctly), he had the one o'clock hour which was always a hard one), close the door, turn around, point his finger at some member of the class and say: "How many mean inflammation?" And do you remember how Dr. Broomall would get up by the blackboard and quiz us until she knew all that we did and didn't know! How much we owe the dear woman for her careful teaching! But oh! girls, I had my innings with her when I came home from China on my first furlough after being there for seven years. I was in New York, staying at the Margaret Louise Home of the Y.W.C.A. of which my sister was the Superintendent, and Dr. Broomall was a guest there at the same time. She was not very well and was resting in bed. I went to her room to visit her, sat on the edge of her bed (my most unethical thing for a doctor to do) and had a heart to heart talk with her. It was no longer a case of professor and student, but just two doctors talking on equal terms, and little I had many cases to tell her about which even she in her wide experience could not match! Dr. Broomall had traveled in China and could understand some of the difficulties I had been up against. That wonderful hour with her, showing as she did her intense interest in all that I had encountered, made up for many an hour of crying knees she had given me.

And while I am reminiscing do you remember the reason Dr. Leffman gave us for the fact that Ivory Soap Floats? and how Dr. Hunt took pity on some of us who were a bit slow in getting through with our Histology examination? And do you remember the name Dr. Marshall gave our class? "Madison" or "The Mongrels" Like Potters, we all had our "Reasons," and do you remember that Saturday night before Commencement when we united, almost breathless for the long train trip to New York? When we got to "Junior," opened the little window in the office and began to call our names, we walked up and received the envelope which was to bring to us success or failure! I remember how I felt now how I made for a corner where no one could see me read the notice!

And do you remember the happy times of fellowship we had then we gathered in Brixton Hall for times of prayer and fellowship in the things of the
Soiré? Those were good old days and it behoves us not to forget them. They have had much to do with what we have made of our lives since. A thousand memories crowd in on me as I think of years in College, and would that time permitted the mention of all our Professors and Mrs. B. L. Ancell the part they played in training us for the years that were ahead of us. I cannot refrain from mentioning Dr. Stevens and the help he rendered by putting things so simply and clearly.

Some of our Professors have passed on to their reward, and also more than half of our class mates. In memory of them we pause a moment in silence.

For those of us who remain, let me urge that we continue to hold to the fact that our task is not finished so long as our hearts beat! Even if our days of active service are over, we can still live right, think right, endure as good servants, and pray for those who do not know how to pray for themselves. Surely there is no greater need in the world today than the need for Intercessors, who know the power of Prayer to help this dark world through the tragic crisis it faces today.

Girls am I right in thinking that I wrote the Class Prophecy? I seem to remember that I did. Alas I have no proof! So many things that I would value today have been lost in the various evacuations I have had to make in China, then driven from my home by warring factions in China, the Chinese Communists and the Japanese. Among them, my wedding dress, many books and papers, and my Medical College Diploma! Speaking of my wedding dress, leads me to say that over in China I met and married a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, from Virginia, a real Pioneer missionary, for he opened five new stations for the Episcopal Church in China, and established two fine schools for boys. One day there came to us through the mail a little booklet, anonymously written and sent, giving a short sketch of the life and work of nineteen Missionaries of the Episcopal Church in the Yangtsze Valley. The names of my husband and myself were among the number. I do not remember anything the paragraph about us said, but I do remember the caption at the head, just two words! TEAM WORK! That tells the story of twenty-three years of happy life and work together! He lies buried in the Foreign Cemetery in Shanghai.

Dr. Fay has asked me to send in time for the fiftieth reunion of our class, a few facts about my medical career, and if I can possibly do so, I will. This is just a more intimate chat with those who were my class mates, and I will send it on without waiting for the other. May those of you who are able to be in Philadelphia on January tenth, have a happy time of renewing the associations of the past, and let me hear about it please.

With affectionate greetings to you all and the best of good wishes for what remains to each one of life,

Always Faithfully Yours,

Tujunga, California