9-21-1918

Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1918-09-21, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

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30 Seymour Road
Shanghai, China
21 Sept. 1918

Dearest Dada:

Two of your letters, 46 & 47th came along with Reno’s. If you remember, as far back as last winter, I told you that I was deteriorating mentally, remember?
Yes, my dear, I know the signs! And so you too have found that out? I felt and feel that I am going to pieces, so to speak, - through lack of mental exercise.
I have tried writing; but Gods! I have not succeeded in turning out anything worth a penny. You, Ted, and Reno are all so busy busy physically, and how I envy you! As you know, I am supposed to have an active mind, and yet since I have returned home, I am surrounded with every deadening force possible, deadening actively speaking.
You can feel that with every wagon load of hay you are bringing in, you are doing something definite and tangible for Uncle Sam, do you not? With me! What about the various committees I belong to? They are nihil! They are superficial and the members meet more to observe each other’s clothes than to discuss means of improvement. The futility of it all!
You will probably suggest that I should try to re-form them! What a joke!

You short resume of the Oxford book by a Rhodes scholar is most interesting. Is it not queer that I have been working on an article about “Criticisms [page break] on the American College Woman?” But now since already there has been criticisms by an able man on the subject, I shall not try to finish my article, for that would merely be doing something over less ably. The contrast of good writing and poor attempting to write would be too pitiablie. It is amusing to note tho that your summary has exactly the same ideas as incorporated in the article I am working on, the same arguments only less well expressed of course. Will you please tell me the
name of the book? I should like to read it.
And if possible buy it for me?

What are your plans for the winter? I
suppose mine will be just going to the same committees
over and over again. You know, I am a living example
of the evils of not having a vitally important work
to do. The result, - the inability to look at life
with a sane and proportional eye. Catch the idea?
The worst is that I cannot convince my mother
and brother that I am not needed at home!
But I am going to tell you a secret - I am going
to get connected with some active social work,
active in the sense of hard, real, live, amount-
to-something, worthwhile work, some work that
will make me damnably uncomfortable physically,
work that would make me too tired to care
what kind of bed I shall be sleeping on! And [page break]
a work that is not going to have any frills
or limelight attached. In other words, a
sort of work that does not appeal to the
cotton wool type. [Compreny.]
Well, while Mother is asleep, I am off.

With love
Daughter.

P.S. I've committed myself. I have just made an
appointment by phone with one of the Sec. of
the Y.W.C.A. to find me a hard job
without pay. Am awfully relieved!
M.
30 Seymour Road
Shanghai, China
21 Sept. 1918

Dear Dada,

Two of your letters, 46 + 47, came along with Ren's. If you remember, as far back as last winter, I
told you that I was deteriorating mentally, remember?
yes, my dear, I knew the signs! And so you told
yourself that you were going to have your own way, of course, I'm speaking, I mean, well, I have not succeeded in
turning out anything worth a penny. Yes, yes, and here we are as busy, busy physically, and how I envy you! As
you know, I am supposed to have an active mind, and
yet since I have returned home, I am surrounded with
an almost suffocating force, deadening actually, speaking,
you are under every wagon load of hay you are
driving in, you are doing something definite and
fruitful. I don't know what that is. What
table I am on. I am busy here, and the members need
rest! They are superintended and the men have need
more to observe each other's clothes than to discuss
means of improvement! The future is not clear!
You will probably suggest that I should try to re-
form them! What a joke!

Your short resume of the Oxford book by a Rhodes
scholar is most interesting. It is not clear that
I have been working on an article about "Criticism"
on the American College women?" But more pines of ready thought has been criticisms by an able man on the subject, I shall not try to finish my article, for that would merely be doing something worse. The contrast of good writing and poor attempting any. The contrast of two people. It is amusing to write about this too pitiable. I am anxious to note this that your summary has exactly the same ideas as incorporated in the article. I saw the same arguments only less well expressed. One, of course. Will you please tell me the name of the book? I would like to read it.

And if possible, buy it for me?

And what are your plans for the winter? Suppose yours into the same committee over and over again. You know, I am living example of the evils I now having a really important work to do - the result, the inability to look at life with a same and proportionate eye. Catch the idea? In respect to your mother. The point in that I can not convince any another and brother still. I am very needed at home. But I am going to tell you a secret - I am going to get connected with some active social work, to get connected with some active social work, to get connected with some active social work, to get connected with some active social work, to get connected with some active social work, to get connected with some active social work.
a work that is not going to have any fields or live light attached. In other words, a sort of work that does not appeal to the cotton wool type Company.

Yours, while mother is asleep, Jan 28

 Liebe, Lovesy, Daughter.

O.P. This committed myself. I have just made an appointment by phone with one of the Rec. of the G. W. C. A to find me a hard job without pay. Am anxiously relieved!

M.