1-7-1919

Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1919-01-07, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

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Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1919-01-07, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

Transcription
30 Seymour Road
Shanghai
7 January, 1919.

A.
Dear Dada,

This is the first letter I have written you since this year began, and as I have lost account of the exact number to which this might be assigned, I am just calling this letter big A and you might suggest how I am to designate the letters after I have run thru the alphabet.

Your letter telling all about the sponsoring of Delong came yesterday and I was duly impressed with Mr. Workman's tactful management of Ma. I can picture her howling out "But she does not use powder". By the way I am anxious to know what Mr. Workman's real name is for he sounds as tho he might have a sequel. You see I am still convinced that you are not so deucedly strong minded as you like us to think you are. Oh, yes I too wish to tell you that a judicious use of powder is by no means injurious. Of course there is no sense looking like a white washed tenement; at the same time it is awful to see a shiny nose, especially when one is blest with as white a skin as yours. Talking about skin etc. reminds me that the last two weeks have been rather woeful as I have lost an awful amount of hair. Mother is making me put a sort of Chinese oil on my scalp the last few days so that in a couple more months I shall have a lot of new hairs. In the meanwhile tho I am having to stay home unless I wear a hat when I go out.

I am starting a course for Girls' Club leaders. That is, I am taking the course and I have a Girls' Club. I have just finished working on the Returned Students' Bible Conference and it was quite a success. I am thankful I have finished for it would seem that the more education one has had the more negligent one becomes in matters requiring an answer. I wrote so many letters that I do believe I saw the Post man running after me in a nightmare. The idea of the Conference was to show the Women Students who have studied abroad their responsibility in being back of every impetus towards progress and reform. And further to clarify their ideas regarding their obligations towards their churches, which are certainly in a bad state. For instance my own pastor is not a bit what he should as far as being a leader of the flock should be. He preaches the rottenest sermons and is most unsan- timoniously lazy. But as our family is the oldest in that church and Mother is considered the backbone, I am going to try to reform him by giving him some

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everyone else does too.

One of the reasons that I have not written of late is that I have 
not had much to say. Many little trivial things have happened but nothing of 
real moment. By the way my Radcliffe cousin you remember her don't you, has 
marrried in America. She has not received her diploma and I suppose that she 
will not get it now that she has married. It all came as a great surprise to 
us, even to her Mother who thought that she would get her dip and come home 
this summer. We do not know much about the man she married except that his 
name is Kuo and he is a student. As we have never even heard of him we are 
all of course anxious to know what he is like.

One of the coolies fell from a ladder and hurt his back, and 
since then we have had all kinds of rather funny experiences getting another 
one to fill his place. We found that one of those choice ones we tried was a 
regular thief who was dismissed from one of our friends' place. We dismissed 
him immediately after we were told of his special light fingered habits. So 
far we have missed nothing. Then this afternoon one of the other coolies and 
Mother's maid had a regular fight. I was upstairs trying to do some writing. 
Mother had gone off to Woosung when suddenly I heard the most awful sound I 
ever heard and found the maid at my door with her forhead all bruised and 
big clots of blood. I was almost scared to death myself. I made that coolie 
who struck her wash off her bruise carefully. He refused to do it at first [page break] 
and it was not until I had threatened to send him to prison that he obeyed. 
The amah just cursed him all the time he was washing off her forhead. I then 
made him bathe it with listerine and finally bind it with a little vaseline. 
It was an awful sight and I shivered but it was funny to see her cursing him 
with all her might and main while I made him minister to her so tenderly. He 
is meek as a lamb now but of course I shall dismiss him as soon as I get 
some one to take his place.

Both of them wanted to tell me how it happened but I have told them 
that the first one who dared to open his or her mouth to the other or mention 
another word about this disgraceful matter will be punished. They have been 
looking daggers at each other all afternoon but neither has dared to say a 
word. I made both of them come upstairs where I can keep an eye on them for I 
do not want the other servants to talk about this. I myself was so angry at 
the way that they behaved that I gave them a piece of my mind in the servants 
quarters and I supposed I was rather fierce for the rest of the servants have 
been working like bees all afternoon without my telling them as I usually have 
to. The cook has all the kitchen things so bright that I think maybe it would 
be a good thing if I lose my temper a little oftener.

With much love and happy new year. 
Daughter.
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