7-9-1919

Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1919-07-09, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

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Dearest Dada:

It is raining, and for the past month it has been doing nothing but rain! The weather alone is enough to make one think of Freshman year! Since I received your last letter telling me of the summer incident, I have been thinking an awful lot on the subject, more than I have ever thought of in the years past. I wish I knew how to go about telling you what I feel - words do seem inadequate, especially since the distance between us makes it impossible to add qualifications to every statement - Compreny?

I think, though, you may just consider that incident as a beastly unpleasant one, but which does not have any significance except that it has awakened in you the knowledge of brutal passion as distinguished from the Academic view of passion which we in our college days knew absolutely nothing about. I fancy most of us fancied sexual desires as something apart from ourselves, a subject on which we could and did make downright statements and upon which in a theoretic and speculative way had pondered. But except from that angle, we had not seen it nor seen it manifested in life. And I think the shock was a bit too sudden and startling for you. In a way, I feel that my experience with moths is in an infinitesimal way something akin to the shock you received - Shanghai is very damp, & every year in May, June, & July, we have what is called the "Yellow Plum" season, - meaning that it rains every day, & during the rain the sun still sends its
bright gleaming rays downward. Mother had warned me of the necessity of putting away my furs & winter clothes before this season should set in, as the moths would get at them. I laughed, for I felt that while moths might get at Mother's things, they could not and would not touch mine. How shocked, actually grieved and surprised [page break]
I was when one day last summer, I found a lot of gray-brown fuzzy worms on all my clothes in the closet! I do not know why I should have imagined, thought or presumed that Providence should provide a special dispensation for me of all people in the world. Anyway, that I was not an exception to moth habits certainly dazed me. I shall never forget my horror and the feeling that I was forsaken & betrayed by higher powers!

I think the best way for you to become normal in your attitude towards men would be to ignore the question of sex entirely: Of course, that is difficult, for almost without exception when a man becomes interested in a girl, he becomes sentimental. And do not shrink from threshing out the question with yourself. Love is partly sexual in its composition: and there is nothing disquieting about it if you consider it in conjunction with the other elements which make up love in the real sense. For instance physical love is like certain parts of Bach's or Beethoven's works which if considered by themselves are discords but which if combined with the parts the authors meant to have them considered, they become harmonious and beautiful. In all probability, the man who looked at you so disgustingly was only attracted to you by your physical attractions, and a man who is that sort is certainly a beast, a brute and an animal. I do not wonder that you resented it! But, Dada, not all men are like that. There are some, mighty few, I admit, who are frankly beast,
and to them love means the satisfaction of appetite: but there are other men with whom, the physical love, is only an element in real love. And I think too that the best thing for you to do would be not to view love from the sexual side; but just be normal, and when you really fall in love with a man worthy of you, everything will come clearly and naturally to your mind. This sounds like spurious advice, I admit: but it is really quite sane, and in time, you will admit it.

Do not begin to think that you are disgusted with love, for you aren't. You are only disgusted with a certain element in, an attitude quite natural to all pre-minded girls, who are what you are. But for example, I like camping out, while every time I camp, I despise the beastly mosquitoes: yet the mosquitoes are so small an evil when compared with the pleasure I derive from camping that I do not take them at all into account when I express enthusiasm for camping.

All this is inadequate, I know; but I am such a duffer at expressing my thoughts.

Love,
Daughter

Am enclosing a five dollar check, for which please subscribe two years St. Nicholas Magazine for Master Tse An Soong 30 Seymour Road Shanghai China
30 July 1919

9 July, 1919

Dear [Name]:

It is raining, so for the past month I have been doing nothing but rain. The weather alone is enough to make me think of freshmen year! Since receiving your last letter keeping me one of the summer incident, I have been thinking a great deal on the subject, more especially since I have never thought of it in the years past. I wish I knew how to go about this.

I'm sure you were aware of what I feel, though I may just consider that incident as a hastily unpleasant one, but which does not have any different except that it has awakened me to the knowledge of mental passion as distinct from the academic view of passion. None of us in our college days knew anything about it. I fancy we all fancied
and sexual desires as something apart from ourselves, a subject on which we cared and did make down in bit statements and often from which we had pondered. But except by that angle, we had not seen it nor seen it manifested in life. And I think that shock was a bit too sudden and startling for you. In a way, I feel that my experience with mother is in an unfertilized way something of the shock you received. Shanghai is very close to the shock you received. In May, June, or July, the damp, every year in May, June, or July, we have what is called the "Yellow Fever," meaning that it rains every day, meaning that it rains every day, and during the rain the few little clouds in the bright shining water rays down wards. Mother had warned me of the necessity of putting away my frocks and winter clothes before this season, as the moths would come and eat them, and I laughed, for I feel that they would not touch mine.
I was when one day last summer, I found a lot of gray-brown fuzzy worms on all my clothes in the closet. I do not know why I believed these images—thought or presented that Providence, stones provide a special dispensation for one of all people in the world. Anyway, that I was not an exception to most habits certainly dazed me. I shall never forget my horror and feeling that I was forgotten and betrayed by Higher Powers!

I think the best way for you to become normal in your attitude towards new world is to ignore the question of sex entirely. Of course, that is difficult, for even without exception when a man becomes interested in a girl, he becomes less interested in a first, to think of entertaining and do not think of these things at all. 

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The best thing for you to do would be to wait to love from the usual side, but just to normal, and when you really fall in love with a man worthy of you, everything will come clearly and naturally to your mind. This sounds like supercilious advice, I admit, but it is really quite sane, and in time, you will admit it.

Do not begin to think that you are disgusted with love, for you are not. You are only disgusted with a certain element in our attitude. It is quite natural to all pure-minded girls who are what you are. But for example, I like camping out, while every time I camp, I despair the heatly mosquitoes get. The mosquitoes are so small and keen when compared with the pleasure I derive from camping that I do not take them at all into account when I express enthusiasm for camping. As this is inadequate, I know, but I am such a sufferer at expressing my affection.

Love,

[Signature]

[Signature]
Dear being a fine dollar check, for which please subscribe two years St Nicholas Magazine for

Master The Air Young
30 Seymour Road
Shanghai

Chuia