

HER DAY

Madame Chiang Kai-shek gets up at six-thirty in the morning, puts in a harder day than Mrs. Roosevelt and seldom turns in before midnight. And her husband finds her of more help to him than 20 divisions

By Martha Gellhorn

MAY-LING SOONG CHIANG, youngest of the three famous sisters and wife of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, came into the room quickly and lightly before the servant could announce her. The salon of her Chungking home is simple and gray, and the furniture stands about in neat rigidity. There are lace doilies on the chair backs, and the polished wood of the tables gleams.

It is a solemn Victorian room. You find yourself wondering at once what her own room is like. Is it gay and soft and pretty, or is it full of filing cabinets? She is the second most powerful person in China, and an executive of great talent; she is also a beautiful woman.

As soon as she talks, as soon as she smiles, you know that everything you have heard is true. She can charm the birds off the trees, and she knows exactly what appeals to each kind of bird. She is about five feet and five inches tall in high heels. She is as beautifully constructed as the newest and brightest movie star and she has lovely legs. Her face is oval, with cream-colored skin, a round chin and a smooth throat. She uses rouge, lipstick and a faint dark eye-

shadow, and her ink-black hair waves loosely back from her forehead and is caught in a knot at the nape of her neck.

Every pose of her hands, her head or her body is pretty to see. She is so delightful to look at, and her low voice, speaking English with a charming, somewhat slurred accent, is so entrancing, that you forget you are talking to the second ruler of China.

She speaks quickly, leaning forward in her chair, smoking mentholated cigarettes, one after the other, from a thin ebony holder. She wears Chinese clothes. The remarkable Chinese have solved the fashion problem by having only one model of a dress. You can have it made in any kind of cloth, but the model is always the same. As a terrific innovation, very short sleeves came into vogue some eight years ago. Now all the women have adopted them.

Madame Chiang, these warm sunny days, wore the type-dress in flowered silk. For ornament, she wears earrings: of jet today, of diamonds yesterday when we had tea with her and the Generalissimo. She uses a faint scent, and looks as if she had nothing to do except be beautiful.

Actually, her working day begins at six-thirty in the morning and ends at midnight: "Then I go to bed," she said, "and wake up more tired than I was before."

We were all feeling pleasant and relaxed because the weather was good. Chungking, the capital on the skyscraper hills above the Yangtze, has a poisonous climate. It is cold and wet in winter, and steaming hot in summer, but now for a few days there was something almost like spring. From this house you did not see the gutted and burned buildings, the little hovels of shops and homes that have sprung up from the bombed ruins.

You did not hear the noise of hammering that is always over Chungking, which must rebuild itself as fast as it is smashed. Even the dynamite explosions, blasting new bomb shelters out of the rock foundation of the city, came here faintly.

The air-raid season, which begins with the fixed good weather of summer, had not started. She was telling us that she felt her English growing stiff and rusty; she had not been back to America since she left Wellesley.

"The overseas Chinese said I must come to America to make a lecture tour. They said it would be worth ten divisions to China, if I came. My husband told me to say that I was worth twenty divisions to be with him, here, so I did not go."

School for Wives

The day before, at tea, she translated for the Generalissimo. You could see how he relied on her, and particularly how useful she is as an intermediary for him with foreigners. He speaks no English. But he does understand one word. That word is "darling."

"You see," she said, "he can always talk to me. And no matter how bad anything is, we always cheer each other up." She laughed, and went on. "We have been married fourteen years. We get on very well, two people with such tempers. When we married, everybody said it would not last." This sounded familiar and homey, like any other woman who feels comfortably boastful after a long, happy married life.

"And he takes care of me," she went on. "Sometimes I get so overworked I cannot think. I am like a fly stuck in flypaper. Then my husband says, 'Now you go over to the south bank to the country, and stay there a few days.' He just picks me up and sends me off."

On Sunday, if they can, the Generalissimo and Madame go across the river together, to their country house. Most of the foreign embassies are on the south bank, where they are relatively free of the bombing. The Szechwan hills stretch out behind the embassies and the legations and the Standard Oil and American Petroleum Company compounds, and there is a breeze, and you can rest from the war for a day.

We told Madame that we had met her sister, Madame H. H. Kung, in Hong Kong.

"She is an angel," Madame said. "She has the most heart of us all. I tell her she has too much heart for her own good. She always acts on impulse. And people say terrible things about her." Now you could see the temper, you could see it in the bright eyes and the suddenly hard chin. You could see that this woman would fight when what she loved, or what she believed in, was

(Continued on page 53)

Madame Chiang Kai-shek, China's No. 2 ruler, with Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn in front of Madame Chiang's bomb shelter in Chungking

Captives' Return

By Peter B. Kyne

ILLUSTRATED BY MARIO COOPER

One defender of Britain surrenders—but not to the enemy

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT ANDREW CLAVERING was, for the fifth time since the German invasion of Holland, coming down to earth. So he had a couple of minutes to consider his future, to wonder whether he was dropping on the tail of the retreating British army or the head of the pursuing German army. There was a blue sunset haze over the land below, and movements there had an indistinct quality.

Suddenly he knew he was bound for a German prison camp. A battery of guns beyond a village just below him was throwing dozens of little high-explosive shells at him! He thought: Better keep as far away from the village as possible. He manipulated the shrouds of his chute, and the light breeze wafted him westward . . . he dropped into a river and sank, almost without a ripple, in a deep, slowly swirling pool.

Before he could unsnap the harness he felt himself being towed ashore; when his body grounded in the shallows he sat up while the chute was pulled off him and heard a woman say, in a lovely voice with an undeniable English accent, "Are you wounded?"

He did not reply. There was something queer about this. He must have time to figure it out. Surely he hadn't fought himself out of France to fall on English soil—dogfights did not last that long. The voice reached him again: "Give me your hands."

He did and she drew him erect. He stared at her as if she were something decidedly not of this world, for she was hatless and it had been a long time since she had had a hair-do. She wore a torn, soiled dress and she was barefooted. Perhaps he had been killed and she was one of the Valkyrie sent to bring him to Valhalla.

He said, "Well, I'll be darned!"

"A Colonial," the girl exclaimed. She unsnapped the parachute harness and shoved it back into the river. "It's evidence when they come looking for you," she explained. "There's a small German force still up in that village. They finished a fight there only an hour ago."

"How did you know I was British?"

"Well, your plane beat you down and crashed in that village and I saw the marking on the wings. Then a battery started shooting and I could see dirty little white puffs all around you. Made me think of a Michelangelo cherub on clouds."

"Well, this is my finish."

"Oh, so all the fight is out of you, eh?"

"Do you expect me to fight the whole German army? A sensible man knows when to quit."

"I have heard of Britons so stupid they didn't know they were whipped and so they fought on—and won! Wait here—in the water. Do not step out on the sand."

SHE ran up the river bank to a growth of willows along the bank and returned carrying a little boy about six years old, a blanket roll, and a French officer's musette bag. The child was asleep, wrapped in a dirty cotton quilt. "Take him, please," she said, "and walk upriver in the shallows so you'll not leave a trail."

"Who are you and what are you doing here?"

"I'm a refugee."

He slogged up the stream about two hundred yards to a stone dam. Beside it was a flour mill and a mill-race. The girl led him up stone steps to the mill. She pointed to the barrel of a heavy machine gun thrust out a window on the second floor and said, "Shambles." She led him across the lower floor through a door into the back yard where perhaps a hundred bags of wheat were piled in half a parallelogram. "Pop into the angle and hide," she ordered him.

A moment later she heard him exclaim, "There's a dead British soldier here. Not a nice sight for this child when he awakens."

"Never mind the soldier. He's fresh. We were hiding in that triangle when he came up the river stalking that machine gun I showed you upstairs. He had hand grenades but a German across the river wounded him and he crawled in here and died."

"Who mopped up the machine gun?"

"I did. He begged me to—when he discovered I was English. Showed me how to pull the pins and toss with an underhand movement . . . it was a dirty trick, really. They were all gathered in the rear of the gun, banging away, and I crept upstairs, hid below the three top stairs and let them have four."

"That makes you a *franc-tireur*. Get caught at that sort of thing and you'll face the firing squad."

"Simmer down," she warned. She pulled down a sack of wheat, sat on it and (Continued on page 55)

He placed his arms around her. "My battery will be billeted in this village tonight," he said

