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Mann, Erika

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Erika Mann

Billings Hospital
University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

May 22, 1951

Dr. Joseph Angell
Department of English
Pomona University
Claremont, California

Dear Joseph,

For one, I wish to congratulate you on the very effective, "appetizing" and alluring piece you did for the Yale Gazette. Any millionaire in his senses (but how many millionaires are in theirs?) ought to be begging right now that he be permitted to buy that collection.

Perhaps the clients are actually queuing up, and what follows does so quite unnecessarily. Just to be on the safe side, however, I'd like to make two suggestions one of which I consider to be fairly excellent, whereas the other is not, I believe, entirely unsound.

1) (Here comes No. Excellent): Mr. James J. Ryan, Hotel Pierre, 5th Avenue at 61st Street, New York City, New York, is a millionaire, queerly liberal in his leanings, extravagant in every way, and particularly interested in artists, writers and the like. Some months ago he came to visit in Pacific Palisades and submitted to my father a plan of sorts which, though utterly crazy, was extremely well meant, and would, incidentally, have cost him a fortune compared with which the price of the collection is nothing at all. He liked the house, liked the people and wrote an enchanted letter saying, how exceedingly he had enjoyed himself. In approaching him, it might be pointed out that a) he would be conquering for himself quite a place in the cultural history of this country by donating the collection to Yale, while he would be also do a favor to a man whom he seemed to respect. But no matter how he could be best won over, I am sure that he should be given a trial. In fact, I would have made this proposal long ago, had I not only now succeeded in obtaining his full name and address. He is the man--in case you don't remember--who invented, produced in one of his many factories, and first flew and drove that odd combination gadget of an airplane and an automobile. Needless to say, that issue of the Yale Gazette should,

also be brought to his attention.

2) As you probably know, the Ford Foundation not only owns literally countless millions but is obliged to spend a number of them each month. I understand that they are still in the process of creating departments, divisions, subdivisions, etc., and aren't as yet quite sure on how to manage to spend all that dough. Among the few departments or subdivisions already set up is one for Adult Education which has thus far been lavishing most of its funds upon people in charge of television programs. Which may be fine. But what could be better education for adults than our collection? If "Yale" would explain the project both passionately and reasonably enough to Mr. Clarence Faust, Ford Foundation, 1140 Wentworth Avenue, Pasadena, California, I could see no conclusive reason to anticipate failure. Moreover, Chancellor Hutchins, as well as Mortimer Adler entertain close connections with the Ford Foundation, and assuming the faintest sign of interest had been dragged out of Mr. Faust, the two friendly gentlemen would, I feel confident, throw in a number of helpful words.

Please do not send this letter, as is, to Mr. Babb whom I have never had the pleasure of meeting and for whom all this would be all wrong, stylistically. What I thought you might be good enough to do would be to transmit the contents of my communication to him in your own suitable words.

As you may have noticed, I have had to leave for Billings where they are trying to cure me from a sickness which to me seems--like Austria--hopeless but not serious. Should you be at home, your reply would still reach me here. But if this has to be forwarded to you, it might be better if you dropped me a few lines addressed to Pacific Palisades. At any rate, however, please be so kind as to let me know what you think of my suggestions, whether they have been forwarded to Mr. Babb and what is reaction has been.

With warmest regards, yours as ever,

cordially,

