

1943

REV. AND MRS. HAROLD WESLEY ROBINSON

Harold Robinson was one of seven children in a good Vermont home. He was born in the village of Warren, and attended Country school. He is descended from a long line of New Englanders and his parents were both devout Christians with small means, but of sturdy character.

Harold had no idea of going into the ministry, or even of having a college education, but the wise Principal of the High School from which he was graduated became interested in his future, and advanced money to help him secure a higher education. So in 1906 he entered Dartmouth College and specialized in mathematics as he was planning to take up Civil Engineering.

As is so often the case with missionaries, the decision to go into such service comes as a result of contacts with inspiring leaders with a vision of the world's needs. When Harold heard Dr. Samuel Zwemer, famous missionary to the Mohammedans, he decided that his life work should be connected with the ministry and immediately he took advantage of all opportunities for training. He attended Student Conferences at Northfield, Massachusetts, organized Volunteer Bands, and in his Senior year helped in the churches of neighboring towns.

After Harold's graduation from Dartmouth College in 1910, he accepted an invitation to teach in Mills School, Honolulu. There he came in contact with Oriental people. He taught Sunday School in Chinese and Korean churches, and had a Bible Class at the YMCA besides taking an active part in Christian Endeavor at Central Union Church in Honolulu. He came in contact with leaders from China and through them became deeply interested in that great field.

The three years of experience in Hawaii convinced him that upon his return to the United States he should take up theological training in preparation for life work in China.

Consequently, in the Fall of 1913 Harold Robinson entered Union Theological Seminary, where he specialized in Religious Education, and took courses at Teachers' College, getting his B.D. in 1916. While in New York he was active in the Broadway Tabernacle Church, then under the distinguished ministry of Dr. Charles E. Jefferson. He was also active in the East Side YMCA and in Boys' Club work.

When he was in Hawaii, he made many friends, among them Miss Mary Stambaugh of Spokane, Washington, a graduate of Whitman College, Walla Walla, who also was teaching in Mills School.

In 1916 Miss Stambaugh and Mr. Robinson were married and that same year received their appointment as missionaries of the American Board to the North China Mission and sailed for their field that Autumn.

The head of Mills School wrote enthusiastically to the Board in reply to a questionnaire sent out regarding his qualifications for missionary service...."Rob', as we call him, is one of the finest, grandest young men God ever made. He is every inch a man. He doesn't need credentials to get him an appointment under the American Board."

Dr. Stephen Penrose, former President of Whitman College, wrote regarding Mary Stambaugh, at that time Mr. Robinson's fiancée"She is a prize and I shall congratulate the American Board upon having her in its service."

From 1917 until 1932 Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were stationed in Paotingfu, where they were engaged in teaching in the schools and in rural church work. From 1933 until 1940 they were in Tunghsien and Tehsien, where they carried on important evangelistic and educational work in large rural districts. Mrs. Robinson was particularly concerned with work among women.

Years of fine, constructive service in North China where the Robinsons' contacts were with Chinese church workers as well as with students, have gone by. The faith of those who knew them in their younger days has been fully justified. Now the North China Mission is occupied by Japan and remaining missionaries are in an internment camp. The Robinsons came home on furlough in 1940 and Mr. Robinson returned to China in 1942. At present he is comptroller of Yenching University, Peiping, relocated in Chengtu, West China in unoccupied territory. Mrs. Robinson is living in Long Beach, California. (See Mrs. Robinson's letter of July, 1943).

What of the Future?

Four American Board missionaries are now enroute to West China. They are Mr. Albert Hausske, Miss Mary McClure, Miss Alice Reed, and Miss Margaret Dow. The destination of the women is Sian, about 400 miles from Chengtu, the great interdenominational centre where many schools from occupied China are relocated. At Sian, the city where Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was held captive in 1936, an American Board School is now being carried on under the name of Lu Ho High School. The Principal is Mr. Ch'eng, formerly head of the well-known Jefferson Academy in Tunghsien. It is expected that Mr. Robinson will be located in Sian as soon as Mr. Hausske relieves him of his present work.

The Robinson Children

Harold Stambaugh	-- age 25	--- Graduate of Harvard Medical School and a doctor in the Navy.
James Wesley	-- age 23	--- Medical student at Harvard finishing his course under the Navy program.
Elizabeth Adda	-- age 20	--- Junior at Wellesley College.