

THE CALIFORNIA CALL  
Operations Number  
218 Catalpa Ave., San Mateo, Calif.  
December, 1954

OPERATION SURGERY.

As I recall the events in this family during the past year the memory that pops out first is that of the week in January when Mary was in Mills Hospital where she left three fourths of her tummy. Our son-in-law, John Ratcliffe, was the surgeon and he did an excellent job. She has been quite a new person since then and eats just about anything she wants, though in smaller portions than formerly. Mid-meal snacks seem to solve that problem.

Harold's wife, Julie, also had an operation a few months ago and we were glad that Mary was able to go and stay with the children. Julie was also benefited by her surgery. James's wife, Hope, followed suit and went to a hospital soon after they returned to Summit, N. J. last spring. The reports that we get of her activities indicate that she profited by the operation. They are building a new house and at the same time James is rebuilding his medical practice. A recent letter told of their activities in a new church at Short Hills which they are helping to get built - a \$400,000 edifice.

The latest member of the family to join this inner circle is son Harold. He had two discs which caused him much pain and trouble and finally brought him to the table. The operation was very successful but recovery has been rather uneven, with some annoying set-backs, if that is the proper word for a disc operation aftermath. I tell him that he is now in the same situation that we preachers occupy constantly. We all find it easier to tell others what to do than to practice what we preach. To keep quiet and let nature do her work of reconstruction is not as easy as it sounds when the doctor tells his patient to do it. The only other member of the family to be listed in this category is Harold's son, Tommy, and he is only an associate member. He broke his arm and had to wear a cast for some weeks but fortunately he didn't have to keep quiet and nature did a quick and thorough job for him.

OPERATION CHICKEN POX.

The six California grandchildren have all passed through this irritating state of development during the year. There was the usual discomfort and scratching but their mothers don't have to go through that experience again until they add to their brood. Harold's three had mumps at the same time they had chicken pox and Tommy said he had several "Chickmumps" on his back. Looks like he may be a word-coined some day.

OPERATION VACATION.

While Dr. Gaskell (he received an honorary D.D. from P.S.R. last May) attended the General Council at New Haven and took his July vacation in New England I was left in charge of church activities and enjoyed doing some preaching and stories to children. We had some guest speakers and during our vacation in the first half of August I spoke once in the new church at Belmont and twice in the Congregational church at San Carlos when the pastor was recovering from pneumonia.

Mary and I spent three days in San Francisco enjoying such experiences as a trip on a sight-seeing bus, visiting the museums and Planetarium in Golden Gate Park, seeing Cinerama and the movie The Caine Mutiny. We also enjoyed an afternoon and evening with a Dartmouth classmate, Dick Carpenter, and his wife who have recently come to live in California.

We had a few days in Guerneville renewing friendships and the Todds of Palo Alto, who were there with us, took us to Cazadero, the Congregational Summer Camp, where their daughter, Doris, was medical officers for one of the groups of campers. On our way home from Guerneville we visited the Morrills in Sonoma where Ernest is pastor of the Congregational Church. He and I were in Dartmouth together and the Morrills spent some time in India under the American Board. To have two Dartmouth ex-missionaries in California churches only eighty miles apart is an event worth of note. The Morrills and the Carpenters heard and heeded the California Call. Who's next?

OPERATION SPLIT CHURCH.

During the summer the San Mateo Congregational Church was split wide open, and by wide open we mean twenty-eight feet. The chancel was moved back that distance and new pews added to seat 150 more people so we can now seat about 550. With two services on Sunday mornings that takes care of 1100 but one Sunday recently chairs had to be used in the narthex and balcony. We built two new organ lofts during the summer and have ordered a new pipe organ which will be built during the coming months. We added 47 new members Nov. 14 which makes over 200 during 1954 and we will take in more December 12. People are already asking "Where are you going to put them?" and the only answer I have is, "The Lord only knows."

OPERATION ENTERTAINMENT.

The year has brought us much in the way of entertainment of which two memorable events were at Stanford University. Just before Christmas last year we were thrilled by the Cantata, Saint Nicholas, as rendered by Stanford students and faculty, the whole audience taking part in two hymns of which copies were handed us as we went in. Another thrilling evening was when the Harvard-Radcliff glee club did some wonderful singing in the Stanford Memorial Chapel where the Cantata was sung.

We have also enjoyed some excellent programs in the auditorium of the San Mateo High School which holds about 1600 and has been filled every time we were there. Once we saw the documentary film produced by the Institute of Asia Studies, "Gandhi, a Modern Prophet." If any of you have a chance to see it be sure to do so. In the same auditorium we heard, and enjoyed, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt who spoke on the U. N. During the question period it pleased us to hear her say that she does not agree with the people in Congress who have tried to get signatures of those who "never" want to have the Chinese Communist government in the U. N. Mrs. R. said she learned long ago not to say she "never" would do something. Conditions change and we should change our views accordingly, she said.

though I can't give her exact words.

The most recent, and from my point of view, the most enjoyable, was Robert Shaw and his Chorale, which was also in the S.M.H.S. auditorium. Shaw grew up in this vicinity and his mother still conducts church choirs here, as does his cousin, Patricia Hudson, who directs the Chancel Choir in our San Mateo Congregational church. It seems to run in the family and those of you who have heard and seen Shaw's production, which I had not before he came to San Mateo a few weeks ago, will understand what I mean when I place it at the top of the list of entertainment that I have had in 1954. His was the first of the series of Community Concerts for which we have tickets this winter. I doubt if any will surpass Robert Shaw's, from my point of view.

#### OPERATION FRIENDSHIP.

The most satisfying operation of the year has been that of deepening old friendships and making new ones. We can only mention a few illustrations: The John Nelsons with whom we taught in Honolulu forty-odd years ago now live in Saratoga, thirty miles from here. One memorable visit to their home was when Dr. Joseph Rock, whom we knew in Honolulu, and who visited us in China some twenty years ago, shared with us his wonderful photos and slides taken in west China and Tibet where he has lived twenty-seven years and has become an authority on that part of the world. If you want to know more about him look up his articles in the National Geographic years ago and also his record as a writer, explorer and botanist in Who's Who. He was on his way to Rome and Switzerland when we saw him at the Nelsons.

Another delightful visit to the Nelsons was when Walter and May Eells were there. May was a classmate of Mary's at Whitman and taught in Honolulu where I knew her. Walter was a year ahead of May and Mary at Whitman and taught there several years before he went to Stanford where he got his Ph.D. and then taught for ten years. A few years ago he was appointed as advisor in higher education to the occupation forces in Japan and he showed us some wonderful slides which he took while he and May lived there. From Japan they went to some thirty other countries in Asia, Africa and Europe where Walter gathered material for his book on "Communism in Education in Asia, Africa and the Far East." A few days after we saw the Eells at Saratoga Time magazine had Walter's picture and a very favorable review of his new book.

Besides several visits to the Todds in Palo Alto, where Julian showed some fine slides he took in Europe last spring when he and Lois were there, we have seen, and had in our home, Valley Nelson Pendleton, Alice Huggins, and Lucia Lyons. Lucia also has heard and heeded the California Call and is now living in Claremont. We know some of you are thinking of that place as a future home and we hope that you will do as Lucia did and make the trip via San Mateo.

Not all this operation in friendship has been face to face for we have greatly enjoyed the many letters from near and far and if you haven't had an earlier reply may this help to assure you that we did enjoy hearing from you and hope you will continue to write.

One letter that came in September was written by a Chinese friend in the city where we lived four years ago. He wrote that he and his family of six children are well and his business is such as to make it possible to support the family. The two Congregational churches in his city carry on their Sunday services, Sunday schools, prayer meetings and Bible classes. He wrote that they need spiritual food and asked that I send him some magazines. His letter came through a mutual friend in Hong Kong and I have written and sent magazines through the same friend.

God has indeed been good to us. May he be very real to you during the Holiday Season and the coming New Year.

Harold Robinson

#### POSTSCRIPT, M.S.R.

#### OPERATIONS GRANDMA

I can now really qualify as a baby sitter, for not only did I stay with the Robinson children while their mother was in the hospital, I took over part of the time when Harold was a patient so that Julie could spend more time with him. I also managed the Ratcliffe household a few days to give John and Elizabeth a little vacation. It's great fun being a grandma! Before Hope and James left California for New Jersey, we managed to have a family party with all eight grandchildren at the Robinson home in Lafayette.

Perhaps some of our readers have noted our new address. - 218 Catalpa Ave. - We are now happily located in a small duplex on a quiet short street next to the Congregational Church, and not too far from the Ratcliffe's new home. It's most convenient, and we save a lot of time in not having long drives. I am enjoying the church school class of high school students which Rob and I have undertaken to lead, and I find the women's groups full of interest and rich in friendship. We even find time for an occasional game of bridge with some church friends.

I have one new activity, for following the example of my daughter I have joined the League of Women Voters and have attended unit and workshop meetings in an effort to become a more intelligent citizen and voter.

A memorable event of the year was my first Whitman Alumni Reunion, when I met old friends, and felt a warm glow when President Maxey whom I had known as a freshman when I was a senior greeted me by my first name. It is fine to live near my college roommate at Palo Alto, too.

I close with my usual Christmas greeting to our friends around the world. "God Bless Us Every One."