

RICH IN FRIENDS

I never expected to be rich. At times I would have been glad to have more money, but to be wealthy has never been an ambition, for there are other values I place above dollars. But when at the end of a two month vacation last summer, I recalled the events of that period, I realized that without trying, I was truly rich, - "Rich in Friends", and what better commodity can one possess?

FRIENDS IN THE WEST

We left San Mateo May 2, and were entertained that night in the home of friends in Monterey. After a delicious dinner, and a friendly visit before the fireplace, we were awakened the next morning by the barking of seals on the nearby shore. Even their bark had a friendly sound. Our next stop was at Claremont, where we have many friends, whose company we enjoyed for two or three days. We didn't see all our friends there, but we were impressed with the friendly atmosphere at Pilgrim Place, where our names are on the waiting list, in case we decide we should like to retire there. From Claremont we drove to Fallbrook, to spend a week end with Mary's brother and his wife.

FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY

From Riverside we took Route #66 which we followed almost to Chicago, then drove on the Illinois Turnpike to Indiana, then along the Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey Turnpikes to the home of our son James in Summit, New Jersey. We visited friends twice in Ohio, once in Toledo, where we attended Sunday service in a church whose representatives we were for some years in China. After dinner at the home of the pastor, Dr. Walker, we drove to Lakewood and had two nights with China friends, Lewis and Lois Gilbert. On our return from the East Coast, we followed the same turnpikes to Chicago. It was with real regret we felt we could not accept the invitation of Howard and Elsie Schomer to visit them at the Seminary in that city.

We did stop at Grinnell, Iowa and had a delightful week end with Elmer and Madeline Galt. We had not met Madeline, and were pleased to find her such a charming person, and were glad that she and Elmer can have each other in their comfortable home. It was pleasant to meet other friends at church there. Our next stop was at Des Moines where we had a night with Helen McEachron with whom we had lived in Peking our first year in China. She has recently taught a year in Turkey and it was good to be with her again after many years of separation. Our next stop was at Boulder, Colorado where we had a pleasant but short visit with Glenn and Reba Shaw. Glenn had taught with us in Honolulu fifty years ago, and we had spent a summer with the Shaws in Japan in 1927. Glenn has only recently retired as Cultural Attache in Japan. From Boulder we drove to Denver in time for dinner with Chuck and Carla Stevens, with whom we spent the night. I had known Chuck in West China, and he had visited us in California and Massachusetts, but we had not met Carla, and it was a pleasure to know her and their small son. We had never had much time in Colorado and we thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful mountains. On our way to Salt Lake City, we climbed to an elevation of 11,134 feet, but our little Volkswagon (V. W.) made it without a complaint, and didn't even shy at the snow beside the road.

In Salt Lake City we went to church and sat beside Mrs. Sidney Buckham whom we had known some thirty years ago in Bennington; Vermont, when Sidney was pastor of the church there. We were sorry that his duties as superintendent of Congregational Churches of the Rocky Mountain Conference took him away from home that Sunday, but we enjoyed lunch with Mrs. Buckham at the lovely Utah Hotel. That afternoon we drove to Reno, Nevada, for our last night of the trip. The next day we stopped for several hours in Walnut Creek, at the home of our son Harold, and finally reached San Mateo June 28. Our home was in excellent condition, as our friends, Grace and Harold Matthews, had lived in it while we were away. They are now living in Claremont, to be there until spring, when they will return to their home in Maine, where we have visited them. We are glad that they will not be in Maine for the winter.

FRIENDS IN THE EAST

We had a delightful week at Summit, and Mary remained at James' home while I went to New York to attend Com-

mencement at Union Theological Seminary, where I graduated 44 years ago. I met many old friends there and was happy to see how Union has grown in 44 years. I was thrilled at the Commencement Exercises in Riverside Church, which was filled. I had breakfast with China friends, Thelma and Earle Ballou, and Earle took me to his office in the new Inter-Church Center, which is nineteen stories high and cost about twenty-two million dollars. There I met other China friends, one of whom told me that a Dartmouth professor, Dr. Berthold had recently been there to discuss a plan by which Dartmouth hopes to have students go to other countries on teaching missions. They would be chosen in their sophomore year and have special training for two years in preparation for such work. Later I talked with Dr. Berthold at Dartmouth.

From Summit we drove to Boston, via Danbury, Connecticut where we called on another China friend, Beth Shaw. We enjoyed the winding roads of Connecticut, but it was good to get on the Massachusetts Turnpike which took us to Auburndale, where we had a very enjoyable week with friends in that area. One evening we had a delicious meal at a Chinese restaurant with four couples and two single women with whom we had worked in China. I went into Boston twice to call on my "Father Superior", Dr. Jerry Trexler, who had been flown from San Mateo to the Massachusetts General Hospital where he underwent a serious operation. Since my work in San Mateo includes calling on church members in hospitals, I was glad to be where I could call on Jerry and his wife, Aldeen. On our way to Vermont on May 31, we had lunch with my cousin Don Jones and his wife in Winchenden. We reached Vermont just in time for a severe thunderstorm, and considered stopping for the night in Chester or Ludlow, but the worst was soon over, and we went on to my native town, Warren, arriving at seven o'clock. We had supper at my sister Ruth's, and made headquarters with her for our stay in Vermont. This little town of Warren has the longest ski tow in the east, and the only enclosed gondolas in that part of the country. We went to the foot of the mountain, but could not ride in a gondola. Another new attraction (?) was an Alpine Village to be built for those who want to live next to Nature. I spoke at the Warren church one Sunday and baptized a pair of twin boys, my grandnephews. That afternoon there was a reception for us in the town hall, at which most of the eighty people present were relatives of mine. Many of the children I had not seen before. Four of my sisters live in or near Warren, and the fifth came from Massachusetts for the reception. My brother and I were with the five sisters for the first time in about thirty years, and the picture we had taken is one of my most cherished trophies of the vacation.

COLLEGE FRIENDS

On June 10 we drove to Hanover, New Hampshire for my fiftieth class reunion at Dartmouth College. Eighty-five classmates and fifty wives and widows were present. We had two busy days of meals, meetings and meditation. I shared with another Congregational minister, Dr. William Moe, a Memorial Service for those of our number who had graduated from the school of Life. It was a real honor to speak from the same place where Dr. William Jewett Tucker, a Congregational minister who was president when I went there, had spoken so effectively fifty-four years before. Catholics, Jews and Protestants were present, and I chose as my subject, Life and Time. Commencement Exercises were held on the lawn in front of the library Sunday morning, and our class marched between two lines made by the 650 seniors who were graduating. Our class had graduated 249. We had excellent weather Friday and Saturday, but Sunday was cloudy, with a threat of rain. The clouds proved a blessing, as they kept us from getting sunburned.

We drove from Hanover to Concord Sunday afternoon, and to Auburndale the next day. I visited Dr. Trexler in the hospital again, and we had a night at Walter Missionary Home. We were fortunate to be there when the Prudential Committee and staff of the American Board were having a picnic and meeting and we saw several friends whom we had missed before. The meeting was inspiring and interesting, and we felt a very fitting way to spend our last evening in New England. The next day we drove back to Summit for a couple of days before our return to California.

FRIENDS AT HOME AND FAR AWAY

It was good to have two days of rest before I started work again on July first. We had driven 8,300 miles, and had seen nearly 50 friends whom we had known in China. It was good not only to be home again, but also to realize that we are surrounded by a host of friends whom we have found in this area during the past seven years. They certainly have

not been "lean years", but years filled with pleasant experiences and enriched by the addition of our many new friends. While we have put down new roots in this community, we have also tried to keep our branches reaching out towards the ends of the world. This letter will go to friends in several countries, from whom we hope to hear soon. Since this is our Christmas Greeting to our friends, we hope that it reaches you before you have purchased all your gifts, and suggest that no gift will be more worthwhile than the gift of friendship. To all our friends near and far, we send our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Friendly 1961.

Harold W. Robinson

POSTSCRIPT, by M. S. R.

I think that Rob has pretty well covered the ground, all 8,300 miles, but I want to add my bit about family and home front. First, our readers may be interested in some notes I found in my desk.

Musings of the Friendship Tour Conductor, V. W. Robinson

"By keeping eyes and ears open on our travels, I learned quite a lot. I was always interested in remarks about me and my little cousins. At the first motel I heard the manager ask Robbie where he was going, and on hearing that we were headed for the east coast, he said in no uncertain terms that he wouldn't travel the freeways in that little car, for he would expect a big truck to knock it off the road. Believe me, after that I managed to keep out of the way of big trucks, though I will admit that I didn't like being sandwiched between them. A man somewhere in the middle west made up for that unkindness when he told Robbie that he liked his little V. W. much better than his big car, and had sold it only because he had to carry large equipment. I learned something about my passengers too: Mary can't read a map, and Robbie hates to ask directions at the first filling station, so that sometimes we managed to get completely lost before we finally had to inquire where we were. Mary isn't really a back seat driver, but she doesn't like to exceed the speed limit, and after I frequently had heard her say, 'Speed 30 miles, you are going 40' I was surprised to hear her ask why we were going so slowly, and I chuckled at Robbie's reply that a cop was just behind us! I really didn't like travel in the rain, as we frequently seemed to do on arriving at our destination, and I will admit that I sometimes got pretty tired - at Reno I really konked out and had to have a battery recharge. Was I ever glad when I was allowed to rest in my own garage! But I had fun and would be happy to repeat the tour."

CONTINUATION OF THE INTERRUPTED POSTSCRIPT

When we were at Walnut Creek, we were glad to find the Robinsons well along in the repairs after the fire in their new home in May. We arrived in San Mateo about nine that night, and I am sure that I was as glad to be home as little V. W. was. Our first telephone call was to the Ratcliffes to assure them of our safe arrival, and the first house call on the firend who fell and broke her hip the day we left San Mateo. She has just begun to walk without crutches or cane. Safety at home or in a Volkswagon? The Ratcliffes have just moved to a spacious home at 2185 Parkside Avenue in Hillsborough, where the four children are making happy adjustments to new schools. Here Grandma just has to boast a little about the grandchildren! In Summit we attended the "Graduation Exercises" of Carol Robinson from the sixth grade and listened with pride to her talk on China. Although Lynn was promoted she had no public celebration. However, Grandma read with interest some of her written work, especially a booklet on the artist Van Gogh, and we admired her framed water color which hung on the wall in the dining room. Small sister Jan, just learning to walk and talk, was adored by all, and the grandparents were delighted to be accepted by her. I am constantly amazed these days at the achievements of our grandchildren. We should not say, "When I was your age, I did not do that", but rather, "When I was your age, I didn't know that!" When we were at the Robinsons in Walnut Creek, Katie was getting ready for a week at summer music school, where she would be the youngest girl. Both she and Jenny play in a school orchestra, and Jen is planning for music school next summer. Besides, they make good grades in school. Last summer the three children went to regular summer school, until Tom broke an arm, not to make up work, but just because they wanted to go. Yesterday (Thanksgiving) Jenny was wearing a lovely pink sweater which she had knit; and just before dinner she rushed off to catch a big snake. Tom is interested in electronics, and building. The Ratcliffe children too are interested in music, and three of them are practicing for recitals. Bruce sings in the boys' choir at our church,

and is beginning lessons on the violin. Three of them faithfully bring home work from school. One evening Stephen's mother said to him, "Ask Grandma to help you with that, she used to teach English". But Grandma couldn't do it either. David is enjoying real kindergarten, and loves to "show and tell". Patty is class reporter for her third grade, and recently she received a letter from the Hillsborough Superintendent of Schools, congratulating her on her fine work in keeping her class informed about the SS HOPE and the wonderful service her father is giving as a surgeon on it.

As most of you probably know, this is a medical service ship equipped with a hospital staffed by first class doctors and nurses, operating as a vital part of President Eisenhower's "people to people" movement. The doctors give their services and the cost of the project comes from the contributions by individuals, organizations and foundations. The HOPE arrived in Indonesia in October, where John joined it to serve for three months. Later it will go to other parts of the world. Patients are brought to the ship, for treatment and surgery, and native doctors and nurses observe and listen to lectures, as in a Medical School. The name HOPE comes from the slogan, "Health Opportunity for People Everywhere". We are proud to have a son-in-law surgeon work in such a project, and also are proud to have a daughter and her four children who are cooperating by carrying on at home without a Daddy. }

Although we may seem no nearer to world peace than at this time last year, there are signs of better understanding between peoples. Such missions as that of the HOPE are one of the means of achieving that peace of earth, good will to men for which all of us pray. And once again, I trust that you will join me in Tiny Tim's Christmas wish,

"God Bless Us Every One."

