



Holiday
Greetings

THE CALIFORNIA CALL
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430 Ellsworth Court, San Mateo, California

BETWEEN GOOD AND BETTER

James Russell Lowell has said, "Once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide, In the strife of truth with falsehood, For the good or evil side". We are finding that the decision is not always between good and evil, it may be between good or better, or between two goods. Such is true of the situation in which we now find ourselves: Shall we spend our Golden Years in delightful Pilgrim Place, where some 275 retired missionaries and other religious workers live, not in retirement but as active members in an unusually interesting community (where our names have been on a waiting list for twenty years) or shall we remain in this area where we have so many good friends and where we are near to seven of our ten grandchildren? To make a decision for one of two such wonderful opportunities is not easy.

A VISIT TO PILGRIM PLACE

It was with this question in mind that we made a trip to Claremont, California, last August. As we had formerly made several visits to this lovely spot, and knew that summers are sometimes uncomfortably hot, we decided to spend two weeks there during the hottest time of the year. It was hot though we were told that it had been pleasantly cool until we arrived! With air conditioned houses and electric fans, we didn't find the heat oppressive if most of the time was spent indoors. We were fortunate in having the use of the home of a friend for ten days while she was with a daughter in Santa Barbara. We were able to dress as we liked and to eat as we wished, either at her home or in town. We had many meals with friends in their homes or in the Pilgrim's common dining room. It was pleasant to invite friends out for meals at Claremont Inn or some interesting place near by.

We came away from Claremont with a feeling of deep satisfaction but with our questions unanswered. We are convinced that there is no other retirement home where we would rather be than Pilgrim Place. Of the people living there, we had known some forty in China, and another thirty or so in other places. We should not be among strangers.

In order to be accepted at Pilgrim Place, one must be in reasonably good health, and not above the age limit, and though we have two years to go, our friends caution us, "Don't wait too long". We know that we cannot expect good health to last forever. We should expect to transfer our memberships in the Arthritis Club.

THE APPEAL OF SAN MATEO IS ALSO GREAT

So far as weather is concerned, we don't expect to find improvement anywhere. There is enough variety to prevent monotony and the extremes of heat and cold are never excessive though we did see snow on the ground one morning last winter -- the first time in thirty-two years.

Nor are we dissatisfied with the people in this area. Many have been most generous with their friendship and they range from the very young to some who have seen more summers than we. There is no reason for leaving San Mateo so far as friends are concerned; the nine years spent here have been extremely happy ones.

Then there are our children and grandchildren who are tied to our hearts with cords of love. Not only do we enjoy being with them, we are delighted to hear about their activities. Perhaps our oldest granddaughter Katie Robinson, has the most interesting story for she flew alone both ways to Mexico City where for some weeks she attended a Catholic school with her cousin, Sue, who was here last year from some time in school with Katie. She doesn't speak Spanish quite like a Mexican girl, but she has made a good beginning and is continuing her study of that language in high school. We have enjoyed seeing her colored movies, and hearing her comments on them. The rest of the Walnut Creek Robinsons and the San Mateo Ratcliffes, with two girl friends had a wonderful camping trip in the High Sierras, really roughing it, part of the time in snow, but everyone seemed to like it, especially since it was the first time the two families could go together. Only the Ratcliffes and Mary's brother went to Seattle for the Fair, the former by car so they could visit friends enroute, the latter by ship, which served as hotel in Seattle. All agreed that the Science Building was most worthwhile.

We do not have the joy of seeing the New Jersey family often, but they find it convenient to telephone rather frequently and we like to hear their voices. They spent part of their vacation with Hope's brother in Michigan, and later had much fun at the Atlantic seashore with the other grandparents. We trust that before too long, they will come to California for a summer vacation and that we shall have a real family reunion.

STILL A WORKING MAN

Our Senior Minister, Dr. Trexler, had to resign because of health last May, and so far, we have not been able to find the right man to take his place. Neither have we found anyone to replace the Rev. Ed. Howard, who left a year ago last July to have his own church. That means that our Minister of Religious Education, Les Allen and I have been carrying on with outside help for the preaching on Sundays. The Pulpit Committee is hard at work, but there seems to be a scarcity of the type of minister we want, though we have confidence that he will be found. We have many excellent lay men and women and they have responded splendidly to the needs of the church. About one hundred of them called on six to seven hundred families for the every member canvas for 1963, meeting with good response. Last Sunday evening, there were over two hundred adults and children at a Family Night potluck supper, to hear the Rev. Amadeo Zarza from the Philippines.

As the end of 1962 draws near, we are glad that we have been here this year. There has been much to keep us busy, and on the whole, we have enjoyed good health, but a few little upsets remind us "Time and Tide wait for no man". Although we have not been able to come to a decision as to where we shall be in the future, we are not greatly troubled about that. We feel that the deciding is not altogether in our hands. Experiences of the past keep reminding us that "God is working His purpose out, as year succeeds to year", and "So long Thy power has blest us, sure it still Will lead us on". As the shepherds of old remained with their flocks until they saw a Star in the East, we too wait for the Kindly Light to show us where to go.

Confidently yours,

Harold W. Robinson

MUSINGS BY MARY

Except for the two weeks in Southern California, the year has been rather quiet. We did have a month's vacation, but part of it had flown away before it began, and Rob spent the last few days at a ministers' retreat at White Memorial. On our way home from Claremont, we had an interesting side trip -- a tour of Hearst Castle at San Simeon. In order to secure reservations for an afternoon tour, we had to spend the night at an expensive motel, but the luxury was worth the price. And our tour was perfect, no clouds or fog to obscure the view, which was marvelous. The Castle was all we expected, even more, though I had recently read Swanberg's Citizen Hearst, and knew something of the luxurious furnishings, the priceless hangings and paintings. No description can do justice to the place. It must be seen.

In April, we said farewell to our faithful little VW, who, I am sure would wish our friends a Happy Christmas. I think the little fellow was a bit scornful of the graceful white Lady Rambler who replaced him though he realized that she would be more comfortable for Mary and Robbie and their friends.

As I sit here musing, I try to balance advantages -- there and here. There, a quiet, interesting life in delightful surroundings among friends, old and new; proximity to three colleges where one can attend stimulating concerts, even take college courses; the services of a retired American Board doctor, a rest home where nursing care is excellent and reasonable; advantages of living near California's second metropolis, Los Angeles.

Why not THERE? Then I dial a Hillsborough telephone number and in response to my Hello, receive the answer, "Hi, Gram", or early Christmas morning, an eager young voice calls, "Merry Christmas, Gram. Aren't you coming soon for breakfast?" What a pull for HERE. (Comments from readers invited).

Yes, I know that as grandchildren grow up, grandparents mean less to them. And certainly we never want to be a burden to our families even though there is a doctor in each of them, as we might be if HERE.

Thought at present our problem is unsolved, from HERE we wish our many friends there and here, near and far, a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful Year!