

THE CHINESE CHIMES

Tide-turning Number.

Tungchow, Peiping East, China, November, 1936.

Has The Tide Turned?

This is the question that seems to stand out in our minds as we think back over the past year and try to vidualize the year that lies ahead. It still remains a question but there are many bits of evidence that seem to point to an affirmative answer.

Staff Changes With The Tide.

Last year we raised the question of whether our readers cared to continue their "subscription", and we received so many enthusiastic replies that we have decided to go to press again, though with a very much reduced mailing list. The younger members of the staff will no longer have any "official" connection with the Chimes which will go out as a joint letter of Mother and Dad. Hereafter the "unemployed" members of the staff will be referred to by the nicknames that have been given to them by their school mates, "Hatcher", (from H. R.), "Jama" (From James) and "Lebai" (from a Chinese name that sounds something like Elizabeth). "Hatcher" may be a bit out of date since he is now known as "Robbie", as was his Dad, in Dartmouth but he is still called "Hatcher" here in T'ungchow.

Hatcher's Tide Turns.

Adjustment from life in China to that of an American college is not easy for most missionary children, and Hatcher *Harold* found that out last year at Dartmouth. That experience, together with a broken bone in his foot, an operation for appendicitis, and the measles, made the year somewhat difficult for him but he managed to make a scholastic place for himself among the eight highest averages of the more than 600 students in his class. His letters this fall sound more cheerful and indicate that life is much more to his liking.

During the summer he had his first experience of holding down a job for pay and he found that it was not all "velvet". He had a job of running a dish washer in the bakery department of a large grocery store, working part of the time from 3 to 11 A.M. His contact with laboring people was a valuable part of his education and he learned some things that he could not have learned from text books or lecture halls. From his \$20. a week he was able to save a nest-egg for his expenses this year; and a trip to New York, Connecticut and Vermont, where he met several old friends was all the more enjoyed because of the hard work he had done during the first part of his vacation.

He is now definitely headed for the medical profession and has a stiff schedule in Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Psychology and German for this year. There are bound to be many more turns of the tide before he becomes a practicing physician but just at present the tide seems to be running in his favor.

Has The Tide Turned For Mother And Dad?

While Mary and I have greatly enjoyed our two years at N.C.A.S., and feel that we are fortunate to be with Jama and Lebai, we have wondered whether conditions would be such in the American Board next summer as to make it possible for us to return to mission work. Just recently we have received a letter from the Board stating that at the end of next year we will be considered as being on the same basis as are the other missionaries of this mission. This is encouraging news for us as we look to the future, although it does not necessarily mean that the tide has turned completely for the American Board. We'll have more to say about that a little later.

The Tide Turns in China.

So great is the evidence on this point that we feel justified in dispensing with the interrogative form and coming out boldly with a declarative statement. The most pathetic and discouraging feature of conditions in China during the twenty years that we have been here has been the civil strife and the lack of unity among the political Chinese leaders. Recent events indicate that there has been a decided improvement in that respect. Last month the Chinese Republic celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday and three weeks later Chiang Chieh Shih celebrated his fiftieth birthday. People all over China entered into those celebrations in a most enthusiastic manner. Fifty bombing planes were purchased by the Chinese people and presented to the Nanking government on Chiang's birthday and no one knows how many other planes China now has in her air forces.

A few years ago there was much criticism of Chiang in the North but that seems to have disappeared, inspite of all that the Japanese military leaders have done to create opposition to Chiang. He seems to have won a complete victory over the traitors who tried to force him to declare war against Japan and most important of all he has decidedly stiffened his attitude towards the Japanese militarists in their recent demands. The Japanese Ambassador has had several meetings with the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, and at least one meeting with Chiang himself, but he has not been able to get China to agree to the conditions that Japan had to offer. The newspapers stated yesterday that Japan has decided not to press the two most important points but to try to come to some agreement with China on the minor points first. Just what this sterner attitude on the part of China will mean for the future no one can say but there certainly is a more united government in China today than there has been during the past twenty years, and we believe that Japan is taking note of that very important fact.

Not only has China become united politically but much has been accomplished recently along lines of communications. The railroad from Hankow to Canton has been completed so that Peiping and Canton are connected by rail. Other shorter lines have been completed, or are being built, and thousands of miles of good motor roads have been constructed. Most of the large cities are now connected by air lines and Chiang flies from one part of the country to the

other holding important meetings with various leaders. Even here in the North the leaders have come out openly in favor of the Nanking government and some of them have attended meetings in Sian and Hangchow which Chiang has called. Yes, we are confident that the tide has turned in China.

Has the Tide Turned for Foreign Missions?

We have already mentioned the fact that the tide may not have turned for the American Board, we also wonder whether it has turned for foreign missions in general. If it has turned, can we expect it to return to the high-water mark of 1929? Personally we doubt if it can be expected, and we hope that we will not be considered traitors to the cause to which we are giving our lives for expressing such a thought. The very forming of the Congregational Council for Social Action seems to us to indicate that Christian people are more and more going to be concerned with the unchristian relationships that exist between classes of people in their own countries and that probably will mean less concern with the condition of people in other lands. Nor do we feel that such a development will necessarily be a catastrophe to foreign missions. The problem of human relationships is more and more becoming a pressing one, even in China, and if the problem can be solved in the countries which are usually considered to be more advanced it will help to solve it in the so-called backward countries. We have remarked in other places that the religion of Jesus seems to us to be primarily a religion of right relationships, and while it includes international and inter-racial relationships they are not the only relationships that have to be changed before the Kingdom of Heaven can become a reality on earth.

Postscript by the Erstwhile Busy Manager.

Lest the editor be too modest to tell of his own tide, I should like to add a bit concerning current family affairs. It is quite a job being "papa" to 59 boys and girls of ages from ten to eighteen, in grades seven to twelve, and six nationalities, besides being counselor, friend and advisor for a faculty of five resident teachers, and a Chinese nurse as well as a school doctor and three part-time teachers, not including three music instructors. Then there are the school carpenter and engineer who need considerable supervision and occasional help, also various school servants and last but not least Chiu Shih Fu who provides food, service and laundry for the whole school. It takes patience to spend an hour with the laundryman and Chuh Shih Fu convincing them that they must do the laundry of the Chinese teacher, just the same as for any other teacher, but that goes with the principal's job. In spite of predictions last year that there would be only 40 students this fall, the school has passed the enrollment of last year and more pupils are expected next semester. There is a fine spirit of cooperation in the school and we expect a good year.

We do not wish for "split personalities" but we sometimes feel that we should like to be in two places at once. The pull back to mission work is very strong and we are glad to be drawn into that tide again. On the other hand there are

certain things which we would like to accomplish before we leave the school and if this year is our last we shall leave with mingled feelings, and I am sure that next year in a lonely mission station we shall occasionally long for some of the noise and confusion which come of living in a dormitory of seventeen grader and freshmen boys.

The summer vacation was spent happily in Peitaiho where we lived in the very attractive home of the Tientsin Robinsons. I mothered the children of both families while Mrs. A. G. was in America and the two fathers commuted between Tientsin, Tungchow and Peitaiho. To strangers it was sometimes difficult to explain just which Mrs. Robinson I was. The days were not spent entirely in play as there were worthwhile activities for everyone. Lepai was able to keep up her piano practice, she belonged to a cooking class and a sewing class; Jama studied Chinese, took part in two plays, counted tickets at the movies, gave swimming lessons to small boys and took over some tutoring which I had to give up when I returned early to Tungchow. He and I are thinking of starting a tutoring bureau next summer. The editor was busy as superintendent of the Peitaiho Sunday School and revealed hidden talents when he played the part of a bartender in "The Bishop Misbehaves", in which I also had a small part.

Since here in school we live in three dormitories we see little of each other as a family but we do meet at meals and in classrooms. Lepai keeps busy with eighth grade subjects and music.—choir, piano lessons and orchestra; Jama as a grave senior finds plenty of study, but he has time for athletics, music, and extra work as Business Manager of the school annual. He is trying to decide whether to join Hatcher at Dartmouth next year, or to spend a year at Yenching before he goes to America.

A SECRET. (The Editor's note)

The first paragraph in the "Postscript" above needs a word of explanation; Whatever success is achieved in my present position is possible because I have a Busy Manager.

H. W. R.

The Returning Tide of Christmas.

You may feel like asking: "What has all this to do with Christmas?" and our reply is that it has much to do with Christmas. To those of you who have had no unfavorable tides the connection may be hard to see, but to those who have had such tides and for whom the tides have already turned we join with grateful hymns of praise; to those whose tides have not yet turned we send this out as a bit of evidence that although time and tide may not wait for man, if man can only do the waiting TIDES DO TURN. In a world that is so full of a spirit far removed from that of "peace on earth, goodwill to men" is this not a thought upon which we may well meditate?

So may we all enjoy a very Happy Christmas and enter into the New Year with a stronger faith that the spirit of Christ will ultimately triumph in this old world of ours.

Affectionately yours,

Mary and Harold Robinson