

THE CHINESE CHIMES
Arrival number
Chengtú, China, October, 1943

A MEMORABLE JOURNEY

It is now more than a year since I hastily wrote the "Whither?" number of the Chimes in Long Beach, California, while I waited for a plane to take me to an Atlantic port where I was to sail for China. Some of you who read this have already heard of my long trip.

I still feel not free to give all the details that might be of interest, for we were asked to refrain from giving the enemy information that he would like to have. I shall not tell you the name of the boat on which I sailed, though it is well known, and much larger than any I had been on before. It was as fast as it was large, and there were more people on board in uniform than I have fingers on one hand. There were twenty of us missionaries, and we were under military discipline. We could have been court martialled if we had committed a military misdemeanor, such as getting drunk, for instance. We did not travel in a convoy, but depended on our speed and delicate instruments for detecting sound to keep away from the subs. So far as I know we did not meet any, though we changed our course often to make it difficult for them to follow us.

The Chinese have a saying that those who know don't talk, and those who talk don't know. I suppose the captain knew where we were going and where we would stop, and perhaps others, but they did not talk. We could tell by the stars that we were going more south than east, and eleven days after we set sail we landed in a beautiful harbor of a continent I had never seen before. We were not allowed to get off the boat, though some of us would have liked to get a drink of coffee there. Others would have preferred something stronger. No alcoholic drinks were sold on board, but we consumed thousands of bottles of Pepsicola and artificial lemonade.

Since we were allowed to get off the boat at the second stop, and could mail letters after they had been passed by the censor, I see no reason why I shouldn't say it was Durban. We found that to be a most interesting city, and went out into the country where we could see Zulus living in their native kraais. In the city some went to a movie and some to places where they could get something stronger than Pepsicola.

We sailed the length of Africa and for the first time in my life I saw the lands of which I had read in the Bible. Although we spent four days at the most northern point of our trip, we could not get off the ship and could not see much of that famous part of the world. We had to retrace our course for several days and finally landed in Colombo. We had been on the ship fifty days and had travelled 22,000 miles. Four days by train took us to Calcutta, and after ten days in that interesting city, two of us missionaries were able to get a plane for Chungking, arriving two months and one day after we had left America. The American army was very helpful to us there and in Calcutta, and I should like to express my appreciation of those in the army who did so much to make our journey comfortable. I was proud that America had such fine men in India and in China to represent us and to help with the task that is ahead of us. Many of the men whom we met had been in civilian life until a short time before, and they were in the army for the same reason that I was going to China that seemed to be the place where one's life would count for most. I have no doubt that the men who have gone out from America to other parts of the world are just as fine as those we met, and it gives one faith that we will not only win, but that we shall have a better world.

DESTINATION CHUNGKING

Just before I left America I read with much pleasure a book entitled "Destination Chungking" and I wish that I had brought a copy to China with me. In Chungking I met the author, Dr. Marian Manley, a Methodist missionary who grew up in China, and who wrote the story told to her by a Chinese woman who with her husband was living in England when I arrived in Chungking. As a matter of fact Chungking was only my temporary destination and I remained there only ten days while waiting for my baggage to catch up with me, and trying to get transportation to Chengtu. The army solved both of those problems for me and I arrived in Chengtu with all my baggage December 19th.

YENCHING IN CHENGTU

I had not been many days in Chengtu before I was invited by President Mei of Yenching University to become Acting Controller of that institution. It is true that fools rush in where angels dare not tread but in this case I did not rush, I was rushed, and before I knew it, I was tackling a job about which I knew altogether too little. I have learned a lot during the last nine months, and the experience has been like having a post graduate course in a university. I almost feel that I should get a degree for having learned so much, and I would suggest "L.M."-Lucky Man. It certainly has been a joy to work with the fine group of people who call themselves Yenchinians.

I have known Yenching all the twenty years of her existence. I knew her when she was in Peking before her fine campus was produced outside the city, and I have known many of her staff, Chinese and foreign during all her history. The American Board had four families and one single woman on the staff many years, and the four men were caught in Peking when the Pacific War started, and Japan closed the university. Grace Boynton, the single woman, was here in Chengtu, as though she had known that was where the university would be reborn, and she certainly was of much assistance in getting the new child to take its first breath and nourishment and learn to speak English. She is now Prof. Boynton, Chairman of the Department of Western Languages. Ruth Van Kirk, another North China American Boarder was here at Ginling College and last January she joined the Yenching staff. That means that one half the foreign staff here is American Board.

We now have 380 students at Yenching and more than half of them, as well as many of the faculty have come from the north. Some of them, like Abraham of old, knew not whither they were going when they set out, but they believed that a promised land would be found, and they arrived in Chengtu. They traveled more than 2,000 miles through war and bandit ridden country, enduring hardship and facing danger. It is doubtful if in the whole history of education there has been such a chapter as these refugee universities have written. May there never be another chapter like it. The men students and some of the faculty men without families lived at the Confucian Temple at Chengtu and for several months that was my home. When the place became badly crowded and rats and flies insisted in rooming with me, I was glad to find a new home at the Anglican Mission.

Since last May I have been living in the home of Bishop and Mrs. Maxwell. I am very comfortable here and greatly enjoy my fellowship with the Maxwells and their friends. While they were away for a vacation in the mountains I carried on with the housekeeping.

ANOTHER ARRIVAL

While they were away my old friend Rowland Cross arrived from America and joined me here, remaining until after the Maxwells had returned. They have asked him to come here and stay when he returns from the north where he now is. Rowland has been assigned to the National Christian Council for one year and will do considerable travelling as he tries to get the churches interested in "The Church and Reconstruction". One Sunday when he and I attended the Anglican Church there were

two Chinese bishops in the congregation, both of them fine men, educated in England. We knelt with them at the altar and received the elements from the hand of Bishop Maxwell and a Chinese priest. It was one of the most meaningful communion services that I ever attended. In spite of our differences in race, nationality and church training, we were "one" at that altar. Some of you have heard me say that to me Christ is that which makes mankind one, and makes mankind one with God. In that sense Christ was very real and present in that service.

ARRIVAL IN SIAN

Some months ago Jim Hunter arrived in Sian to see what could be done about starting some American Board work in the Northwest. A group of graduates of our American Board Academy in Tungchow wanted a school started so that students could come from occupied China and continue their education. It was finally arranged that a Union School would be opened for the seven schools we had in North China. The school is now in session. Students and teachers have arrived from occupied China, money has arrived from America and Chinese sources, and we are waiting for some Americans to arrive. Albert Haussko is one of them, and he is coming to relieve me at Yenching. I expect that I will then go on to Sian. From there I want to go on to North China. When I get there I shall feel that I have really arrived.

In a letter from Elizabeth which came yesterday she quoted Stevenson, "It's better to travel happily than to arrive". Far be it from me to quibble with R.L.S. on that point. I believe he was enough of a traveler to admit there are times when it is mighty good to arrive, even though it means more traveling in the future. I thoroughly believe that there should be no finality in arriving. It is an eternal process and procedure.

AN UNDESIGNATED PORT

My ticket on the boat read, "To an Undesignated Port", so I did not know where I would be put ashore, nor what route I would take to get there. I assumed that the captain knew where we were going, and it was not necessary for me to know.

That boat was in some respects like the Christian Church today. I believe that the church is at present on the move. At least the group of people who will be used by God to make real his intention in history are no longer tied to the dock. We don't know where we are going but it isn't necessary for us to know. We can rest assured that the Captain knows and that he is trustworthy. If we are willing to sail with him under his orders we most surely shall arrive. And we will find work to do. God works in history and he expects man to work with him. Every effort that we make to awaken Christians to that fact, and every non-Christian that we can get to accept that belief and attitude, will count for much in the days ahead. We had no lights on our boat that could be seen from without, and we may have to sail in the dark with the church. Perhaps the darkest part of the trip is still ahead, but a more glorious day is most certainly coming up from below the horizon.

There are evidences here in West China, as there are evidences in America, England and other places, that many people are praying and working for the coming of that day. But let us not mistake it when it arrives. The Jews hoped and prayed for a saviour for hundreds of years and then when he arrived they were not ready or willing to follow him to the new day that had arrived. If one group is not willing to follow God in his developing work. he will raise up a new group, as he did at the birth of Christianity, and as he did at the time of Luther. If we are willing to sit on the docks and watch the ship sail without us, there will be others to make the journey.

I don't know whether this will reach you before Christmas, but I am writing it earlier than I have ever written a Christmas message before, and I have you