

Long Beach, Cal., July, 1943

To the Friends of The Chinese Chimes:

So many friends have written in appreciation of the Chimes which I sent out in December, that I should like to share some parts of letters which have come from the editor since his arrival in China.

The details of the route cannot be told, but he traveled about 35,000 miles and in his journey saw four continents. If he was ever in danger he never mentioned it, and he had many interesting experiences in pleasant company. Thanksgiving dinner was eaten on a train in India.

The following paragraphs are from the first letter from China, written in Chungking, December 8.

"We finally left Calcutta on December 7, in a Douglas D3, which seemed to me about the size of the plane I took at Los Angeles. There were only fourteen passengers, but we were told that we were heavily loaded with freight. Our pilot was a peach, Roy Leonard of Pasadena, who has flown for sixteen years. He was Chang Hseuh Liang's pilot at the time of the Sian kidnaping in 1936. He has been the Gissimo's pilot and still is when he needs him. He doesn't smoke or drink and is the type of American one likes to have represent his country in China. He had a Chinese co-pilot and a Chinese radioman. Leonard came and visited with the passengers and let us ride in the cockpit where he pointed out interesting places. We flew at about 160 miles an hour and at about nine or ten thousand feet on the lowlands, but over the mountains we went up about 15,000 ft. We could see the Himalayas white with snow to the north.

"We had to spend the night on the way because of foggy weather. We landed in what seemed a desolate place, but an American auto took us three passengers to a rest house for the N.C.A.C. pilots. We were provided with excellent food, fairly comfortable beds and mosquito nets. The next day we were joined by one of China's famous men whose name you would recognize if I were to write it. When we landed the porter who took our baggage put it with this man's and it was sent off in his car. Fortunately some of his baggage was left and when the car came back for it, our baggage was returned to us.

"Last night Dr. Crossy asked me if I would help with the National Christian Council. I said I was willing to have the matter put up to our Committee ad Interim in Chengtu. Both Mr. Crossy and Bishop Chen are men of broad vision and feel that these are important days for the Church in China. They are finding that the C.I.M., Seventh Day Adventists, Salvation Army and Lutherans are cooperating much more than they have before. These difficulties seem to draw us all nearer together."

Note. The Committee decided that the work with the N.C.C. was not the most pressing, and the offer was not accepted. Since that time Mr. Rowland Cross has gone to China to become secretary for the N.C.C.

"This won't get to you before Christmas, but it probably will be the last letter I'll be mailing before then. I wish I could think of some way to send extra Christmas wishes. At least I am putting on more postage than I have ever done before. Look to see if the whole \$29.10 is there." To get the cost in U.S. currency, divide by twenty.

The next letter, dated December 24, came from Chengtu, at present the educational center of Free China.

"The trip to Chengtu was splendid. After we got over the mountains we could look down on a rich fertile plain thickly populated and intensively cultivated.

The terraced slopes and flooded paddy fields made beautiful designs all over the landscape. It took us only an hour and a quarter to make the 250 miles. Before we learned that we could go on an army plane, we found that the commercial bus takes three days, the fare is \$450. You can take very little baggage and the cost of living along the way would be up in the hundreds of dollars. We were going in with all our baggage, some of which had come all the way from Calcutta by army plane without a cent of cost. Not only that--when we landed at the Chengtu airport which is several miles outside the city, a nice new station wagon took us and our baggage right to the university campus, also without expense."

Written December 26, after a visit to Oberlin-in China.

"The Oberlin Academy is out in the country near Chin T'ang, but they have a Junior College of Agriculture and Engineering in the town. I was surprised to find they have developed such a school. They have a Kung Ch'ang (Work School) which has water power, and they are ginning, weaving and spinning cotton. They are also making a good many chemicals. In the agricultural department they have a Holstein bull, some foreign and part foreign cows, some foreign pigs, and chickens. I saw three of the Rambouillet sheep which came from Deer Lodge. They had a ram also, but somebody stole him." He wrote later that the transportation of the sheep from Shansi was quite a feat, requiring not only a shepherd, but a diplomat.

After a few days in Chengtu Rob paid a visit to Ming I School in Chin T'ang, to which when he left here he expected to devote his time. However, for various reasons it did not seem advisable for a foreigner to give full time to that school, and he was free to accept temporarily a position as acting controller of Yenching University, a splendid union institution from Peking. His duties have been varied and interesting--to supervise the Chinese accountant, sign checks, help make the budget, assist the acting president, Dr. Y. P. Mei with English correspondence, serve as secretary of the executive committee of the faculty, chairman of the committee on housing, and act as adviser to the Yenching Christian Fellowship. You might be interested in some glimpses of life on the campus there.

Feb. 4. "The university is located in the city, and the buildings are some the Methodist Mission once used for a girls' school. Students and faculty are still coming from the East. I met an athletic teacher named Kuan and another teacher who arrived a few days ago. They brought along some girl students. There are 70 or 80 girls in the university and about 200 boys.

"I am to live in the Confucian Temple with the men students and the male members of the faculty whose families are not here. I am eating my lunches with Mr. and Mrs. Lapwood, but the other two meals with members of the faculty at the temple. Our dining room is an open porch, where the hot bowl of rice feels good in the left hand while the right hand gets cold holding the chop sticks. I have tried to eat with my left hand some of the time to give a little heat to the other hand but I have not made much progress along that line."

"Since I began this letter I have had a four day outing with about 90 Christian college and middle school students, including nine from Yenching. We had a retreat at the Methodist middle school about 35 miles north of Chengtu. I wonder where a finer group of students have met before in such a meeting. Five colleges and universities and five middle schools were represented, and I am sure the Yenching delegation added much to the group, and helped raise the whole intellectual and spiritual level.----I was particularly impressed with two Yenching students, a brother and a sister. The brother came to West China some time ago, and when he learned that Yenching was to open, he went back to his home in Tientsin to get his sister. It took them more than a month to make the journey to West China. Pao Chen, the boy, is in the department of economics and hopes to get a job to earn some money

to help his sister who wants to study medicine. Their family have means, but it is almost impossible to get funds from Tientsin to Chengtu. That creates a problem for Yenching, for there are many students here who have no means of support except as the university loans them funds, and assists them to get self-help jobs. With living expenses rising all the time this mounts to a large figure. The university does get some funds from the United China Relief, and the Student Relief Committee gets some from the same source, but even so there is not enough to go around. But when such fine young people are willing to go through hardships it is good they can have a chance to prepare themselves for the tremendous tasks that will rest on their shoulders in a few years. What a need there will be in the future for well trained Christian men in the economic life of China. And the need will be just as great for Christian women doctors. Pao Chen and his sister are fine samples of the type of people that China will need and that America can help prepare for the responsibilities that will soon rest on the present youth of this great land.

"Two girls from the north arrived at Cheloo the other day. They have been on the way six months and actually walked 2,000 li, over 600 miles. One is a Bridgman girl who has finished her pre-medical work. There were also two Yenching boys who arrived here a few days ago. They were on a truck which went over a bank when two young people were killed and twelve others injured. These two escaped injury, but lost all their baggage."

In May Rob moved from the Confucian Temple, which had become very crowded, to the home of an Anglican missionary, and is having foreign food three times a day. That is more expensive, but much safer, especially during the summer months.

In letters which came today, July 8, he tells of a new union high school to be opened by the American Board in the Northwest at Sian, where the need for such a school is much greater than at Chin T'ang. Mr. Chen Ch'ang Yu, formerly principal of Lu Ho Senior Middle School at Tungehow has been secured as principal, and our board is sending three missionaries from here to work there. When the school opens, Rob will leave Yenching to go to Sian, and Albert Hausske will take his place as controller.

My last quotation is a letter to be sent to friends who have contributed money for relief.

Yenching University, Chengtu, China  
May 21, 1943

Dear Friends:

It takes a long time for letters to get to America and some time for them to get here, though I have had one that came in exactly three weeks from Boston. Also it seems that money sent to the American Board gets held up sometimes. They usually plan to write about once a month and if money gets there just after a letter has gone to China, it may be nearly another month before notice is sent to me. Finally, I don't always get things done when they should be done, and all these circumstances mean that some of you sent money months ago and haven't had any word or recognition from me. I apologize and hasten to assure you that every dollar that has come in is most heartily appreciated and will be put to good use, though I have been somewhat puzzled as to how it can best be used. I am not giving each gift to some specific person, but putting them all together. So far the gifts have been exchanged at the rate of twenty Chinese dollars to one U.S. dollar, but since the cost of living has gone up something like 80 times what it was five years ago, and the rate of exchange has gone up only five or six times, an American dollar doesn't go as far as it did a few years ago. I have spent a small part of your gifts in buying food for a sick student, for a contribution to some fire victims of the Yenching faculty, for a student loan fund and similar projects, but most of it is being used to help students who are working on self-help jobs. Many of our stu-

dents come from North China and are unable to get money from home. The government makes loans for their food and the university does the same for their fees but many have no money for laundry, soap, barber, and other incidental expenses. We try to give them as many jobs as possible, but there are not enough, and I have created some. We are running some social service classes in the Methodist church across the street and in an orphanage, and Yenching students are the teachers. I pay them \$3 (15¢) an hour and thus they get some money, and the boys and girls get a little education and recreation. This seems a better way to use your money than to give it to the students without requiring them to do anything in return.

If we open a school in Sian this fall as we hope to do, there will be much need for helping students there, I am sure."

Very gratefully yours,  
H. W. ROBINSON

Now for a bit of news of the rest of the family. James and Elizabeth were with me for Christmas vacation, as we hoped. In April Harold arrived in the uniform of a navy lieutenant, j.g., with medical corps insignia, to have three months as interne at the Naval Hospital here. The time will be completed July 26, and he is to report at San Francisco to await transportation to the destroyer on which he will take up his duties as ship's doctor. It has been pretty fine to have a doctor son here with me, especially as my father has failed a great deal, and it has helped to have some one share the responsibility. In May "Dr. Robinson" decided he needed a car, and arranged for James to buy one in Boston. He found passengers to share the driving and the expense, and drove out in good time, with no trouble. He was here almost four weeks, and is now back at Harvard Medical in special navy uniform for medical students, to complete his course under the navy regulations and pay.

Elizabeth with a Wellesley classmate who is also the daughter of a China missionary is spending her vacation in New York City. She is working at a Federal Reserve Bank, and the two girls have a small apartment, where they can be independent and have the advantages of a summer in New York.

We five Robinsons look forward to the time when the Duration is over, and we may have some time together as a united family. In the meantime we hope we are making some contribution to peace and a better world. We appreciate your friendship, and shall hope to hear from you occasionally. If you wish to send me messages for the China member of the family, I shall be glad to forward them.

Sincerely,

*Mary S. Robinson*