

HWK

THE CHINESE CHIMES.
Upside-down Number.
Tientsin, China.
August, 1950.

Selection of a Name.

We have had a hard time finding a suitable name for this issue of the Chimes. Nothing seemed suitable for the situation in which we live. So for a while we (editorially speaking) thought of calling it the "Nameless Number", but that seemed too negative for this period. Then one day we got an idea from the radio. An Englishman named Jebb used in the Security Council the expression "Upside down language" and we felt that he had rung the bell. We haven't taken time to write and ask if he has copyrighted the expression and are very grateful to him for coming to our help with such a gem in an hour of need. With apologies to him we have christened this issue "Upside-down Number."

We considered having the first page printed with the name and heading rightside up and the rest written from the bottom towards the top. Readers would then have two choices; they could either stand on their heads and read the sheet right side up, or they could stand on their feet, or sit on their chairs, and hold the sheet upside down. Either method of reading would help them to understand something of the predicament in which we find ourselves and in some respects the whole world seems to find itself. We are living in a country officially known as a "Peoples Democracy" and where America is hailed as the arch imperialist country; we have been liberated but every time we want to leave the city we have first to get permission from the "Peace Preservation Headquarters", and we are constantly being told that laborers in our fair land are slaves of capitalists; we live where people sign "Peace Proposals" by the millions, while the "War Mongers" are Truman, Acheson and their ilk. If that isn't topsy-turvyism we don't know what is.

How About Yourselves?

One reason for selecting this title, "Upside-down Number" is that we had been thinking that "we" were the upside-down ones and it gave us a dizziness in the head. When we came to see that perhaps it is the world that is wrong side up some of our dizziness disappeared. Any of you had that experience? If not go out in the yard, whirl yourself around as fast as possible, then stop and look at the world. Or get on a train that is standing still and have another train pass along the track just beside your train. Probably there are other methods of finding out if you are right side up, but we hope that you know without having to try any experiment.

Too "Darn" Close.

In an article which we recently read in the Atlantic Monthly, written by a M.I.T. professor, who probably gets several times as much salary as we do we found the tale of a sign printed in small letters on the rear end of a car. It read "If you can read this you are too "darn" close." The upside-down part of this is that the college professor evidently didn't know how to spell "darn". (We have looked it up in our dictionary and know this is correct). Of course it may have been a typographical error, - and don't we know how easy it is to make them, but when the last two letters are the same mistake it's hard for us to believe that it is the typewriter's fault!

But why mention this here? Here's the answer. We seem to feel less dizzy when we remind ourselves that one reason for our dizziness is that we live "Too Darn Close" to this upside down world. For instance - a few days ago a policeman came to our house to find out what he could about us and our state of mind. One of his questions was "What do you and your wife do to fill up your time?" That was a tough assignment; we have often wondered what we do do these days. We are not permitted to go into the country to visit the few churches which have any signs of life. The wife can't teach English in the mission school as she formerly enjoyed doing. A trained Chinese accountant keeps the station accounts in a much better form than the husband could do, spends much less time doing it and makes fewer mistakes. The government has recently sent us literature to study, and comrades to study and explain it to us, which tells us that in the future all relief and welfare work will be united, and that means it will be under the control of the government.

Fortunately the policeman is a very friendly person and evidently is carrying out orders from above so he was not too particular about our answer to that question. His next question was easier to answer, "What newspapers do you read?" Since we subscribe

local Chinese paper, and to an English paper printed in Shanghai we seemed to satisfy him on this point. The Shanghai paper, surprisingly enough, prints news both from north Korea and from McArthur's headquarters in Tokyo so when the examiner asked what we think about the Korean situation we could honestly reply that since the north Korean reports declare that they were attacked by the government at the south and the latter reports that the people from the north are the aggressors, it is very puzzling to know what to think. "What do you think about peace?" was another question, and the easiest one to answer. We told him that Christianity has always stood for peace. Jesus taught that God is our heavenly Father and all men are therefore brothers. As members of one family we ought to live together in peace. If people persecute you and say all manner of evil against you, you should love them, and feed them, and pray for them. Christians ought even to forgive their enemies. Although we didn't say so to him perhaps it is because the world is upside down that policemen come to your own home so you can preach to them.

WHAT TO DO?

That is the question that faces us, and faces many others in this topsy-turvy world. Should we stay where we are as long as we can, or should we leave while still there is a chance to go? During the past months we have seen many missionaries passing through Tientsin from other parts of China on their way out. First there were the British missionaries from Manchuria who left some months ago because they felt that their presence made it harder for their Chinese colleagues. Then there were groups from Shanghai who could not get boats from that great port so they had to come here. Some of them had spent months in getting permission to leave and in finding a way by which they could leave. Yesterday (Aug. 6) there were about twice as many people at the Union Church Service as usual because so many are waiting here to get boats. Several Tientsin missionaries have gone already, as have quite a few from Peking, and others are planning to leave soon. Of our own American Board Mission the Robbins Strongs, now with the YMCA, spent about ten days with us some weeks ago on their way to Korea. The YMCA had decided that all foreign secretaries should leave and we wondered how long they would be permitted to remain in Seoul. We were greatly relieved recently when we learned that they did manage to get out of Korea, though they had only three hours to prepare for leaving and could take only four suitcases. The David Stowed are here now waiting for a boat and Helen Disney and Clara Hausske are booked to leave August 20. The Ernest Shaws were trying to get a booking when we were in Peking a few weeks ago.

From other missions the Hal Leipers and Jim Crothers of the Presbyterian Mission are leaving soon after which Presbyterians will have no ordained missionary in North China. The Aeschlimans are here waiting for a boat and he is the last or the ordained man in that mission from Peking. Ed Dixon is the only ordained man they have left in North China. He is in Tientsin but his wife and three children left some weeks ago. The English Methodists have all gone from North China, the Church of the Brethren, with the exception of John Dietrich of Peking, have all left this part of the country. The Anglicans are in the process of leaving and the London Mission has only two single women in Peking, the Lapwoods in Yenching, the Browns and Davies in Tientsin and Miss Wood in Tsinan. Recent word from Fukien reported that most, or all of the American Boarders had either left or were planning to go and the Methodists there were doing the same. Another word from Szechuen indicated that the Church of the Brethren and the Methodists they were planning to go.

GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE (?)

Is it any wonder that the Robinsons are asking themselves what they should do? Nearly two years ago they decided that they did not want to get caught behind an iron curtain but they believed that it would be possible to leave later so they remained to see what the possibility for work was under the new regime. After some months in T'ung-hsien it seemed to them that it was time for them to leave and go home. When they talked with the Council Secretary he asked if they would be willing to go Tientsin so the Stowes might go to Yenching. They agreed to do so and during the past year they have felt that it was worthwhile being here. Now the situation has changed. Mary is no longer able to teach English in the mission and her husband believes that he sees the doors of opportunity for work gradually closing. If we read the writing on the wall correctly it says "You must go" but so far we have not been able to decipher any date.

We have talked with our colleagues, Chinese and foreign, in Tientsin and Peking