

THE CHINESE CHIMES

"RAINBOW NUMBER"

Auburndale, Mass., January, 1947

"There's not a wind that blows but bears with it some rainbow promise."

WHY THE CHIMES DID NOT RING.

To our many new "subscribers to which this issue of the Chimes will go perhaps I should explain that it has long been the custom of our family to "ring the Chimes" each year just before Christmas as evidence of our desire to add a bit of harmony among humans in this discordant old world.

To our old "subscribers" we wish to explain that the delayed appearance of this issue was not due to any lack of desire to "make a joyful noise" but the knowledge that there was to take place something very important in our circle, December 28, which with two similar events earlier in 1946, we wished to use as the theme for this composition. A second reason for the delay was that the medical authorities of the American Board would not give us a definite date for starting for China and we hoped by waiting until now that we might have good news to report on that subject. The big event took place December 28, and the doctors have now given us the green light on the road to China. The "Rainbow Number" of the Chimes is at last released for publication.

PRELUDE.

Tragedy and blessing, storm and sunshine, discouragement and hope, seem to be intimately woven in the fabric of life, and 1946 has for countless people been a tragic year with very little sunshine for rainbows. Even in our own family some dark threads have persistently appeared on the loom of time. We hoped for a home where we might have occasional family get-togethers, but for us like so many others, no home was to be found. There was a break in the clouds for three months last winter when Dr. and Mrs. D. Brewer Eddy went to Florida and gave us the use of their lovely home in Newtonville. In other furloughs we have managed to have a car but we couldn't afford one this time. Even if we had the money it is doubtful if a car would have been available. Again Dr. Eddy blessed us with the use of his car while we lived in their home. The tragedy connected with that is the untimely death of Brewer last June. He is a great loss to the American Board, and to his many friends, but the image of his cheerful smile, and his generous heart, remain as bright spots in our memory of 1946.

THE SHADOW AND THE RAINBOW.

I am indebted to Dr. Carl Kopf for this colorful topic. I heard him use it the first time he spoke to his congregation at the Mount Vernon Church on Beacon Street after his trip to the Philippines to investigate the conditions of the American Board. He told of flying in those islands

when the sun made a shadow of the plane in the shape of a cross on the clouds below. Around the shadow was a perfect rainbow. He used that as a symbol of conditions in the Philippines, and it applies to other parts of the world, as well as to our own family.

OUR 1946 TRIPLET RAINBOWS.

Although they did not reach us on the same day we have added three children to our family during the past year and that is such a delightful accomplishment that we feel almost ashamed of having mentioned any clouds. They are there only for background. Each one of our new children has brought his, or her, rainbow arch and we want to introduce each of them to those of you who have not met them personally.

RAINBOW NUMBER ONE.

The gem that dispersed the light for the first rainbow was Miss Julie Burnet of Minneapolis. She was a classmate of Elizabeth's at Wellesley where she majored in religion and served one year as president of the Christian Association, in which Elizabeth was also active. The latter introduced Julie to Harold and Dan Cupid did the rest, in spite of the long separation while Harold served in the Pacific with the U. S. Navy. When he returned, December, 1945, Julie was a student in the Yale School of Nursing but a diamond ring which Harold had picked up in South Africa on his way back from Tokyo seems to have had magic powers, for Julie accepted it and agreed to change her life from that of being a nurse to that of being a doctor's wife. The wedding took place January 12 in the home city of the bride at the Woman's Club Building where Mrs. Burnet had long been a prominent worker. The five members of the Robinson family attended the wedding and Julie, her mother, brother and three sisters were together for the first time in eight years. James was best man and I performed the ceremony. It was a grand and beautiful affair and Julie's friends and relatives made the Robinsons feel very welcome and extremely happy. If any of you dads have unmarried sons I can wish you nothing better than that you get as big a kick by adding your first daughter-in-law as came to me.

Harold was still in the navy at the time of the wedding and remained there until July. They lived at Long Beach, L. I., near the hospital where Harold worked, and Mary and I visited them once. It was good to see them in their own home, even if it was only one large room, bath and kitchen. In July they moved to Hanover, N. H. where they were fortunate in finding an apartment, and where Harold had four months training in the Mary Hitchcock Hospital before taking up duties as resident physician in the Veterans Administration Hospital at White River Junction, Vt., where the medical work is supervised by Hanover doctors. They are now living at Loveland Road (no number), Norwich, Vt., eight miles from the hospital but the nearest they could find a residence. Mary and I spent Thanksgiving and Christmas with them and for Christmas they managed to have the ground white with snow. The weather man dropped the mercury down to 12 degrees below zero just to make my Christmas in Vermont seem like old times. Their beautiful tree was a real spruce

*when they
was very
I was
know the
Elizabeth*

they had cut with their own hands in a nearby pasture and Santa
very generous to us at our first Christmas in a married son's home.

R RAINBOW NUMBER TWO.

Dr. John Ratcliffe was the cause of the second rainbow in the family. He was a student in Harvard Medical School when James was there and knew the well-beaten path from Harvard to the Wellesley campus where Elizabeth was studying. We haven't any statistics on the subject but we suspect that the ratio of Harvard men with Wellesley wives runs rather high. John's home was originally in Beloit, Wisconsin, but his parents are now living in Oklahoma where he was stationed for a while, as Medical Officer in the U. S. Navy, after graduating from Harvard Medical and interning in the Massachusetts General Hospital. Last fall he was transferred to Norfolk, Va., and on his way there he visited Cambridge where Elizabeth was working in the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University. She shared an apartment with two friends and one day when they were away Mary and I were invited there for dinner with John and Elizabeth. It proved to be what they called a "Permission Party" and we were not only glad to give our permission to their marriage but added our blessing also. It was then that we wished most that we had our own home in which we might have the wedding. There was no church in which we felt very much at home but Mary had attended the First Congregational Church in Cambridge when she lived at Lesley College and it had a chapel about the size we needed; we were also able to secure the use of the church parlor for a reception after the ceremony. Two China friends, Lawrence and Eleanor Mead, live near the church and they offered their home for the bride and bridesmaid to dress, one of whom was a Wellesley friend and the other was Gladys Hubbard Swift for whom Elizabeth had been bridesmaid when Gladys' parents were in a concentration camp in China. We were glad that they could be at Elizabeth's wedding and they used their car to transport the bride to the church.

The wedding took place at 4 P.M., October 12, and the evening before a friend secured a lovely private dining room at the College Club in Boston for a wedding party dinner. Again I had the privilege of performing a wedding ceremony for one of my children. Harold gave the bride away and James was one of the ushers. Any mother who has married off a daughter needs not to be told that Mary was a busy woman those days. John's mother came from Oklahoma, and her mother, with John's uncle and aunt, came from Beloit. John's Harvard friends, Elizabeth's Wellesley pals and our missionary colleagues are well bunched in this area so most of the guests did not have far to travel but we wish many more of you, some living on the other side of the globe, might have been with us at that time. You'll forgive my immodesty, I feel sure, if I tell the truth and say that the bride was beautiful; I have never seen her look more attractive, nor more composed, than she looked as she marched down the aisle on Harold's arm and stood there before me at the marriage altar. She wore the same dress and veil that Julie had worn, as had other members of Julie's family in days gone by. After a short honeymoon at the A. G.

*where John
will clean
such a
mess out
of it*

Robinsons' cottage in Maine they went to Norfolk, Virginia, where
is Medical Officer with the U. S. Navy. Their address is 795½ W. Oc
View Avenue. May I offer to dads who may someday perform such
ceremony for their daughters a bit of advice: Don't wear a heavy wool su
under a thick silk gown as I did. You may be able to keep cool but
literally "sweat it out". That was the only imperfection that I kno
of in the second rainbow of the series. *mine*

RAINBOW NUMBER THREE.

The third spectacular and colorful event was brought about by the
appearance in our clouds of a new light in the person of Miss Hope Buist
of Mount Vernon, New York. The "middle man" in this case was a
woman, a classmate of Elizabeth's and Julie's at Wellesley, who lives in
the same city as Hope and introduced them. She was rewarded by being
asked to serve as one of the bridesmaids. Hope would have graduated
from Columbia University this year if James had not persuaded her
to do otherwise. He brought her here one day last fall when we were
having a family get-together and she was introduced to a friend at the
Walker Home. When this friend learned that James and Hope were en-
gaged she exclaimed, "That's something to have a prayer meeting about!"
and that's the way Mary and I feel about all three of our new children.

This latest wedding took place at 8 P.M., December 28, in the Com-
munity Church at Mount Vernon, New York. This time I also had the
ceremony but was greatly assisted by the pastor of the church, Dr. Carl
Weist. He has had much experience with such events and he, Hope and
Hope's mother did a grand job at planning and carrying out a very beautiful
service. Harold was best man and John acted as one of the six ushers.
Hope's niece was junior bridesmaid, as Hope had been for the niece's mother.

Hope's uncle and aunt gave a wedding party luncheon in their home
and after lunch 33 of us got better acquainted and found that we had much
in common as we sang folk songs, jazz and Christmas carols. One of the
seven doctors present seemed to be able to play without music any number
that anyone wanted to sing.

After the wedding there was a brief reception in the church parlor
and then some 100 guests went to the Westchester Woman's Club for
dancing, toasts and refreshments. Dr. Weist was one of the speakers and
he told us that his twelve-year-old son has begun to notice good looking
girls and when the father told his son that Hope was to marry a minister's
son the lad inquired, "Are all minister's sons as lucky as that?" I don't
know what answer was given but if they are it pays to be a minister's son.

James is resident physician at the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania and they reside at 243 S. 8th St., near the hospital.

THE KEYSTONE TO THE FAMILY RAINBOW ARCH.

Reading over this description of such colorful events I realize that
I have not done justice to them. Would that I were an artist so I might
paint a more brilliant picture. At least you can see that the family arch
is now completed, and aren't we fortunate that the last stone to be added.

the keystone, has for its name "Hope". What more appropriate name could there be for these cloudy and difficult days? Were I to paint a picture of the archway the caption underneath would be, "Now abideth Julie, John and Hope, — these three, and the latest of these is Hope".

BETWEEN THE RAINBOWS.

The preceding paragraphs may give the impression that Mary and I have been spending most of the past year in getting ready for, going through, and recovering from weddings for our children; such is not the case. There have been many other important and interesting events in our lives. We have had headquarters at the Walker Missionary Home where there has been a steady stream of interesting people going to and coming from all parts of the globe. Last fall many of them met at the Home for a three-day conference which we attended. There was a large delegation of new recruits with many active missionaries, and several retired ones, as well as members of the American Board secretarial staff. This is an annual affair but it seemed to us that it was an unusually fine conference last fall.

Last summer we attended three young people's conferences in Vermont. We were pleased to find such a wholesome and promising lot of young people getting such good training from competent leaders and I felt that the Congregational churches in the Green Mountain State have made much progress along that line since the day when I was a lad of high school age there. No doubt other states have made progress also but the only other conference I attended was in Maine. It was in Aroostook County where my old-time friend, Wilbur Bull, developed a Larger Parish Project which is still going strong.

Another very enjoyable event for me was the 35th reunion of my class at Dartmouth. Mary went with me and about 50 of us men, and most of our wives, had a grand week-end on the beautiful Dartmouth campus. I preached at the College Church on Sunday and one of the listeners was Dr. Ambrose W. Vernon whose preaching when I was in college made me feel that if I could do that I would rather do it than anything else, and it was partly Dr. Vernon's influence which caused me to change from engineering as a life work to the ministry.

During the year I made several trips to my native home town, Warren, Vermont, where most of my many relatives still live. Mary has accompanied me on some of those trips and our latest was in September when the Robinson clan had a picnic and baseball game in the scenic Granville Gulf, near my birthplace. On the way back some of us visited a beaver dam about four feet high and forty feet long. The autumn foliage was in it's glory and I was reminded again of the familiar couplet, "My heart leaps up when I behold the rainbow in the sky." In such surroundings as we had in Vermont at that time I feel like changing the last phrase to "in the wood".

We have also had some interesting visits to churches which claim us as their representatives in China. Highland Church in Lowell, Massachusetts, is one; The First Congregational Church of Akron, Ohio, is one,

as is the Cadman Memorial Church in Brooklyn, New York. Rev. Arthur Rouner is the new pastor in the Cadman Church and we rejoice with the church that they have such a fine pastor with a splendid family. It makes a real rainbow for a church which has had many clouds in recent years.

Another accomplishment, I hope, is the addition of some new stories which I have picked up here and there. The one that best fits this composition was told by a fellow preacher who was chaplain on a naval ship during the war. The censor showed him a letter which had been written to his wife by one of the men on the ship. In substance it was this: "Dear Marion: I am writing this on the starboard on a beautiful summer evening. The sea is as calm as a millpond and a clear full moon in the east makes a path of gold from the horizon to the ship. Such sights make me think of you, and I long to be near you, but when I go over on the other side of the ship there is that _____ ocean." Isn't it so on the sea of life, and the sea of matrimony? The moon doesn't always shine; the water is not perpetually peaceful; and there are times when we can't be near the ones we love. Sometimes we wonder why we are here, and where we are going — if anywhere. On such occasions should we not remind ourselves that the ship on which we sail has weathered many a storm, the Captain knows where we are going, and how to get there. He is also very approachable and we might have a pleasanter voyage if we went up more often and had a chat with Him. We might see more rainbows if we spent more time on the bridge.

WEATHER FORECAST.

Whether we look at the "atmospheric conditions" of America or China we don't see much prospect of clear weather in the very near future.

In America we see our six children as representatives of millions of others who are now experiencing, or will soon be experiencing, "The Best Years of Our Lives". We see young doctors who want to get established in their practice but who need more training after years of service in the armed forces with little chance to practice medicine and much chance to forget medicine. Some of them, like John, feel that they are marking time in the services yet and have no idea when they will be back in civilian life. Some of them are looking for cars, places to live and see their patients and all they see is clouds. But there are rainbows. In spite of no cars, no homes, no offices, no freedom, there are also (so far as we have observed) no complaints. They are the rainbows.

In China: Many of you have, probably read "Thunder Out of China" and you may have noticed that on the jacket there is a map of China over which is hanging a dark cloud. On the whole the book seems to me like a fair description of China as she now is. The authors have lived there for a time, but not thirty years as we have, and without realizing it they have been "land lubber" residents. Had they been more air-minded and traveled above the clouds, as well as among the masses, they too might have seen a rainbow or two. General Marshall's recent statement about China seems to us like a truer picture, in spite of all the dark clouds which he saw there.

Mary and I expect to leave New England about the end of January and go to California where we hope to get a boat for China some time in March. We will go to Peiping and expect to live in T'unghsien where we lived from 1934 to 1937. We expect to live in the clouds as letters from friends who are now there do not give much hope for clear weather in North China for some time. Although our household goods have disappeared there are empty houses in which we can live and gradually we hope to collect equipment for a home. Since our children do not complain, why should we? As we push off for China we shall think of Richard Hovey's salutation:

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
In the teeth of all *winds blowing*. (Winds blowing.)
Here's luck!

"There's not a *wind* that *blows* but bears with it some *rainbow promise*."

H. W. ROBINSON

POSTSCRIPT, BY M.S.R.

Usually I have added a postscript to give family news, which seems to have been pretty well covered; but I cannot send out the Chimes without some sort of greeting.

As you know, I have not been in China since the summer of 1940, — at first a stern State Department refused a passport, later cautious doctors refused to approve my going. These years in the United States have been full of interest and have given me much, but I think that except for family life my contacts with students, — as faculty member in summer camps, director of the intermediate department in a church school, and house mother in a college for girls, have meant most to me. I quite agree with a statement by Dr. Stanley Jones, "the high school students (in America) are the finest group of young people we've ever had — eager, responsive, and wanting something to live by and live for." Quite recently I met two high school lads who are ardent members of a youth organization to promote world government. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and I hope they will have some literature for me to take to Chinese students.

As we return to China I have no illusions that we shall always enjoy happy weather, and I confess that for the first time I go with mixed feelings. For the first time no child accompanies us, and we leave six instead of three. We have no home waiting for us. We know that the houses in our Tchow mission station have been occupied in turn by Japanese soldiers, Chinese nationalist troops and a Communist army, but only last week did we learn that those houses and our hospital are being torn down.

You can imagine what has happened to our household equipment! Here we have complained about high prices, but we know nothing of real inflation. It has been estimated that the cost of living in China, based on the value of the American dollar, not Chinese currency, is five times what it was in pre-war times. Of course mission boards cannot raise missionary salaries 500%, nor would missionaries want such an increase, for the discrepancy between their standard and that of the Chinese colleagues is too great already. If you read the newspapers, or listen to radio programs, you are aware that political conditions in China are chaotic and no one can know the outcome. As I write there is a possibility that the Communists are at the gates of T'unghsien where we expect to live.

Why, then do I want to go back? Ah, there is the rainbow. As the youth in America are our hope, youth in China are the hope of that troubled land. They too, are eager and responsive, and want something to live by. They have lived and suffered through a most difficult period, and deserve the best we can give them, not only for themselves, but that they may become world citizens. I want to spend my last term of missionary service in doing everything I can for boys and girls of China. We need your interest, your prayers and your cooperation.

Here is one way you may wish to help. We hope to have some time in Long Beach, California visiting with friends there, and strengthening the bonds between the Bay Shore Church and us, who are to represent that church in China. Members have been collecting clothing and other gifts for us to take to needy Chinese, and if you would like to send contributions, the ladies of the church will store them and help us pack. Send parcels marked "For the Robinsons" to the Bay Shore Church, 5100 The Toledo, Long Beach, California.

For women and girls coats, sweaters, pieces of cloth, sewing materials, yarns and underwear would be acceptable; Chinese boys and men like foreign style clothing of all kinds. For school children clothing, handkerchiefs, pencils, crayons, colored pictures, soap (in limited quantity), towels, etc. are useful.

If you wish to add to our equipment, send all sorts of sewing materials, darning cotton, flour or sugar bags, hard candy, prepared cocoa and coffee (all in tin containers), prepared puddings, gelatin, dehydrated soups, dried fruits and cheese. Cracks may be stuffed with Kleenex. A friend has written that food is adequate, but not nourishing. If we receive more supplies than we can use we shall share. We do not know when we shall be leaving California, but we hope by the first of March, and things should be sent as soon as possible after the receipt of the Chinese Chimes

If you wish to write us, and you may be sure that we shall appreciate all letters, address us at The American Board Mission, T'unghsien, Peiping, China. Air mail is now 25¢ for 1/2oz. and ordinary mail 5¢.