

BOOK CHATS

By the Editor



WITHOUT SEEING THE DAWN (a novel) by Stevan Javellana.

Little, Brown and Company. 1947.

Price \$2.75.

At last we have competent Philippine writing in an extended scale.

The Philippine novel in English has had a stunted growth. Zoilo Galang's adolescent sentimentality in *A Child of Sorrow* and *Nadja* made an indifferent beginning. Ocampo's *The Brown Maiden*, though published in America, is also in the adolescent tradition. In 1931, Maximo Kalaw gave his mite with *The Filipino Rebel*, an indifferent love story thrown out of focus by obtrusive and unassimilated political science. Then, in 1940, came N. V. M. Gonzales's *Winds of April*, which is composed of much lyrical, albeit somewhat episodic, novel writing. Laya's *His Native Soil* came in with its realistic social exposition and satire in 1941. And now, 1947, a first-rate Philippine novel published in the United States, the latest and perhaps outstanding novel so far written in English in the Philippines.

There is color and excitement in this book—perhaps a little more color and excitement than are necessary for painting the truth. There is episodic writing, too, as though much has been deleted by editors from a much longer manuscript. But the abrupt transitions and the gaps are not enough to mar our appreciation of the narrative flow.

Whether or not this novel has enough humanity to outlast the topical interest of the anti-Japanese underground, we are not sure. We are not sure if the

occasional strain of melodrama, now overlooked because of the reader's emotional receptivity to everything anti-Japanese, would not later come out to cast doubts on the veracity of the book. Only time will tell.

In the meantime, here is exciting reading (for adults only). The young, who can not stand stench and the turbulence of passion, might wait until they have grown up before they peep into the book.

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13 PLAYS by Wilfrido Maria Guerrero.

University Publishing Co. 1947.

Price P15.00.

It is not often that Philippine plays come out in book form. The first one, we remember, is *Philippine Plays*, edited by Sol Gwekoh. Then in 1940, Jean Garrot Edades' *Short Plays* was published by Progressive Schoolbooks. About this time, Mrs. Dean S. Fansler put out also a collection of Oriental dramas, containing plays by Severino Montano and Gabriel Bernardo. *Philippine Prose and Poetry* also contains plays, the best for classroom use that teacher committees can find in local periodicals. Aside from these few anthologies, we have not seen any book devoted to this thankless field of Philippine publishing.

Then, in April 1947, the long-awaited collection of plays by Wilfrido Maria Guerrero came out. All sorts of word, kind and not so kind, have been said about Guerrero. Many have praised his courageous pioneering spirit, his brave effort to fight illegitimacy on the Philippine stage and to establish a theatrical tradition. This collection

contains some of the best plays which he has written and himself produced with the help of college amateurs — plays that have found actual performance and reaped satisfying applause.

Here are those gay satires on the foibles of youth—"Movie Artists," "Women Are Extraordinary," "Wanted: A Chaperon," etc. But we feel that Guerrero is never at his best in comedy. There is something forced in his gaiety. Witness "Wow, These American," "Movie Artists," etc. Guerrero is essentially serious. His best plays are easily

the serious ones—"Half an Hour in a Convent," "Frustrations," "The Forsaken House," "Condemned," "Forever." These are truly worthy plays, and we do not know of any Filipino playwright writing in English today who can match them in emotional power and smoothness of technique.

(Incidentally, the book contains an appendix which reminds theatrical groups that playwrights are people who need not be hurt by deserved royalties.)

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BY:

Juan Raya

The PPSTA *Practice Tests* were sold out in one week after publication. It was a very successful first venture of the PPSTA in publishing for service. And, we understand, the tests in principles of teaching in the Junior Teacher and in the Teacher Examinations did not, could not possibly, stray very far from the practice test items. Didn't we tell you?

We have received many kind words regarding the PPSTA *Practice Tests*. Some teachers, principals, and superintendents have even volunteered to contribute something in the next edition to be published next year. People have been impressed by the low cost of the publication. All these the organization appreciates, for the publication of the *Practice Tests* has been an act of sacrifice in order to serve teachers in the field. The PPSTA lost money on it, but the PPSTA is a service organization and does not go into publishing to make

money — it ventures out only to serve "this cause of ours." Next year we shall put out an even better book.

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There is a plan to print in the *PE* summarized forms of courses of study. What do you think of this one? Let us know so we can start it soon.

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This issue of the *PE* contains many teaching aids. In former issues, we were concerned with problems of organization. Also, civil service review. So much so that an advertiser laughingly commented that the magazine seems to say nothing but "Join, join, and join the PPSTA."

We continue to urge teachers to join the PPSTA, for indeed our main problem continues to be that of organization. On the other hand, there are other needs to be served and among them

the practical and immediate task of in-service training for teachers. Hence, the teaching aids that start with this issue. Other departments of the *PE* have been remodelled so as to serve in-service training best.

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We received a letter from A. V. H. Hartendorp, former editor of the pre-war *Philippine Magazine*. Among other things, he writes: "Let me congratulate you on the second issue of your own publication. It fills a definite need. I think that Isabelo Pinson's 'Such Now is the Barrio of Imurung' is especially good." Isabelo Pinson, by the way, is a barrio teacher in the Division of Isabela. He never expected to be published in the *Philippine Educator*, much less to be so highly commended. Mr. Pinson's triumph goes to show that good writing does not come from literary skill alone but also from sincerity and depth of personal experience.

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We do urge more contributions from barrio teachers. This magazine is not intended to serve the big shots of the Bureau of Education alone. We wish to receive letters from the field, for we feel that our usefulness is in direct proportion to our intimacy with the problems that meet us. Often we read in the *Philippines Free Press*, the *Manila Times* and other publications the activities of teacher organizations. Sometimes pictures are published. Limited space in the *PE* does not allow the publication of every item regarding teacher organizations, and we do not have facilities for the publication of many pictures but we do hope that our magazines will more and more serve all of US.

We have sent copies of the *PE* to provincial associations. To be sure these are received, we sent them by registered mail. Somehow we have not yet heard from them either in acknowl-

edgement of receipt or in payment of the consignments. Very sad. If your division association does not receive any more consignment of materials, it is perhaps because we believe your association is not yet organized well enough to receive this particular kind of service to teachers.

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We have received letters commending and indorsing the PPSTA movement. To most correspondents, it is inconceivable that any public school teacher should ever wish to be left out of the movement merely by his unwillingness to contribute the nominal amount of P1.00 for one year. Yet we have entire schools and entire divisions left out because of unexplained silence and an utter lack of contact with the headquarters of the PPSTA. Some teachers in these divisions have never even heard of the *PE* and the PPSTA *Practice Tests*, and those who heard of these publications immediately started reproaching their immediate superiors for having failed to inform them of these. Perhaps provincial chapters in these divisions have not been organized? Perhaps school head remain indifferent to the movement? Perhaps they are unconvinced of its importance in the promotion of teachers' welfare? We can only wonder.

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We have received letters from widely-scattered sources inquiring about the possible candidacy for senator of Director Esteban Abada. Although we have read speculations about this matter in the papers, we have not received definite confirmation of it, and the *PE* has no official opinion regarding the matter. The *PE*, however, is an organ of the PPSTA, and whatever the PPSTA thinks serve the welfare of public school teachers as a group will receive the unqualified support of the *PE*.