

PHILIPPINE BOOKSHELF

SOUTH FROM CORREGIDOR. By Lt. Comdr. John Morrill, U.S.N., and Pete Martin. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1943. 252 pp. \$2.50.

Lieutenant Commander Morrill, U.S.N., saw the last days of Corregidor: from his precarious grandstand seat on a battered and beached rug, he saw a boat, leaving Corregidor, "packed with Filipino civilians, and carrying large white flags in the stern and bow"; later another boat "left the dock at Corregidor and went in the direction of Fort Drum. It also carried white flags and its passengers were white instead of brown." The only reason he was not one of these passengers was that he had been ordered to scuttle the mine sweeper "Quail" and when he had accomplished his mission and wanted to go back to Caballo Island he saw that the white flag had already been run up on that fortress.

The story of his escape in a 36-foot boat from Manila Bay to Australia is one of the most thrilling that has come out of the Philippines. In it the authors, like others who had eluded the Japanese, pay tribute to the loyalty of the Filipinos and their open and active help, without which escape would not have been possible. The book is full of intimate incidents that, sometimes pathetically, always poignantly, reveal how deep was the Filipino's faith in America and how staunchly he stood by his comrade in arms. There was the Filipino messboy who took the Commander's hand in his own and wiped his face with it and then shoved a roll of one hundred pesos into the hand before the surprised officer could take it back. "You will need it more," he told the protesting American. Wherever they stopped, in well-hidden coves and unfrequented villages, the Filipinos loaded them with bananas, chickens, rice, gave them a place to sleep, oil for their boat, and advice about how to avoid the Jap patrols.

"It is mighty good of you to take stranded people into your home like this," the author once told a Filipino host who with his wife and daughters had turned over their home to the Americans. His host's remarks, which would have appeared most natural to another Filipino, set off a train of thought in the American. "The old gentleman said with implicit faith, 'If we were shipwrecked on the California coast, your people would look out for us and take care of us.'"

At times, the party did not know how far to trust their lives to the village folks, because although they had seen Filipino soldiers die side by side with American soldiers, they also knew "that the Jap heel when placed on a conquered neck is a grinding affair with hobnails and spikes in it. We also knew that if any native or group of natives dared help us they would be signing their own death warrants right then and there if the Japs ever found out about it."

But their doubts about how deeply and strongly a Filipino sticks to his friends were dispelled by such incidents as that which took place in an unnamed province, which

before the war had a strong revolutionist group. "After the Sakdalistas had seen the Japs kick and beat their own people and abuse their women, all except a very few had done a political flip-flop and become anti-Japanese."

"How about the few who are still pro-Japanese?" Lt. Comdr. Morrill asked his informant, who answered simply, "They are all dead. We kill them."

Here is a glimpse of what happened in Manila when the Japanese moved in:

"Outside Manila there is food, inside Manila no. But the worst is not the food. I have been in my friends' house and Japanese officers will come to the door and you must bow. Everybody must bow. Men, women, old ladies, children. If you do not they put you in jail. What they do to you in jail I do not know . . . For your American people, it is worse. They tie your women and children together and drive them through the streets . . . Japanese bring many geisha girls from Japan. The American ladies must be servants to geisha girls."
—A. B. M.

I SERVED ON BATAAN. By Lt. Juanita Redmond, Army Nurse Corps. Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1943. 167 pp. \$1.75.

Juanita Redmond, a First Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps, tells a gripping story of the wounded, and the dead, and the living, cooped up in makeshift hospitals, often targets of indiscriminate Japanese bombing, during the last days of Bataan, through the surrender of Corregidor.

It is a simple story of brave men who would not die, told by an army nurse who had seen enough of agony and death, misery and loneliness, but told bravely and with hope. The pictures cut deep into the heart; of Filipino and American soldiers dying side by side, praying together, hoping, and holding out to the end, forever strong in faith, often ruthlessly unafraid.

There was the youngster from Texas whose arm had been amputated, worrying about his girl back home—they were going to be married, would she marry him now? . . . Little Segundo, with bullet wounds in the leg and arm, jubilantly happy for having killed fourteen Japs . . . Eighteen-year-old Freeman, with both legs amputated above the knee, always cheerful and courageous . . . Blind Eugenio—"both his eyes had had to be removed because of a severe head wound"—"picking his way slowly through the wards, a gentle questioning look on his face, not wanting anything, but just seeing his way about"; or after a bombing, picking himself out of the debris, saying, "I'm all right, mum . . . Please, mum, where am I now?"

And back home in America, all the tragedy of Bataan and Corregidor returns to these nurses in the questions of mothers and fathers, sweethearts and sisters of the boys who were in Bataan, questions like: Did you know my son? Here is a picture of him, remember?

Oh, yes, they remembered . . . and all they could say was, "He died like a good soldier." This could be said of all of them who died; and those who lived, surely, we have not forgotten them. This book tells their story. —B.N.S.

Opinions expressed in this department are those of the reviewers and not necessarily of the Philippine government.