

Manuel Quezon, Filipino and Patriot

THE GOOD FIGHT. By Manuel Luis Quezon. 335 pp. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. \$4.

By FOSTER HAILEY

THE most controversial figure of United States-Philippines relations during the last forty-eight years (since we freed the Filipinos from Spain and then settled down ourselves for a long stay) was a slightly built, tubercular little man who had fought in the hills with Aguinaldo, Mascardo and other Filipino leaders who had believed their people would be granted their independence as soon as the Spaniards were driven-out and were bitterly resentful that they were not. After guerrilla warfare had subsided he fought just as fiercely to gain by persuasion what had not been won by force of arms.

Even today, almost two years after his death, Manuel Luis Quezon is as bitterly condemned in some circles as he is praised in others. Anyone reading this unpretentious autobiography—which he dictated during the last months of his life—must be convinced, I believe, that whatever else he may have been, Quezon was a great Filipino patriot, which may be something entirely different from being loyal to the United States. His adherence to his own people and to their welfare, his great desire for them to be free of outside rule, no matter how benevolent, was, of course, what made him a controversial figure in the United States. He was not one in the Philippines, except among those who had profited from United States control.

Perhaps if more Americans had been with him when he returned to his native village of Baler, on Luzon, when he was Governor of Tayabas Province (as was Gen. J. G. Harbord, then Constabulary District Commander), they might not have been so quick to call him traitor, opportunist and demagogue—as he has been called. In writing of the scenes of that

day, General Harbord said:

What I saw that day is the explanation to me of the wonderful hold he has over the hearts of his people, which has enabled him to lead them as a unit against the invader who followed Pearl Harbor.

"The Good Fight" is a historically important book. In it are many details of those days immediately after the Japanese attack (when the attitude of the Filipinos was being clarified and solidified), that have not been told as authoritatively or completely by anyone else. No other person could tell them, for President Quezon—gasping for air in the hospital tunnel of Corregidor—was the central figure. Only he knew what was in his heart. He had the wild hope, for a time, that if he could get the United States to grant immediate independence, then perhaps he could negotiate with the Japanese for their withdrawal—and spare his people the terrible consequences that did come to them later because of their resistance. President Roosevelt's answer to that suggestion must be one of the most compassionate and, at the same time, most persuasive messages ever sent by an American President.

ALTHOUGH Quezon's book is written in a generally philosophical tone (as might have been expected from a man whose life was irrevocably behind him when he dictated it) he does make some frank evaluations of prominent Americans he has known, especially some of our Presidents.

Item: Harding—"One day as I was sitting in his office conversing with him, Attorney General Daugherty entered the room and President Harding said: 'I want the boss of Ohio to shake hands with the boss of the Philippines.'"

Item: "President Coolidge left no impression on me one way or another. He would let me talk and then he would say something in such a low voice that I never

understood what he said. So when I left the White House I knew no more of the Presidential mind than before I entered."

Item: Hoover—"After talking to him, I received the impression that his mind dealt with facts and figures and that his heart took no part in the business."

President Theodore Roosevelt Quezon liked personally but he was, of course, opposed to T. R.'s dreams of United States imperialism, which included the Philippines. President Taft, also, he liked and admired. President Franklin D. Roosevelt he believed was one of the great men of all time. It was the second Roosevelt that provided the spur that granted independence to his people where President Wilson had failed. The latter he also admired, but never particularly liked because of his aloofness.

QUEZON also clears President-elect Manuel Roxas, who will become the first President of the Philippine Republic on July 4—an honor that Quezon would have had from the Filipinos unanimously had he lived—of the charge of collaboration that was used against him in the election. Roxas, Quezon says, stayed with the Filipinos as he himself wanted to do; stayed on his orders to do what he could to mitigate the severity of Japanese occupation.

Three chapters of the book—which are plainly designated—were not written by Quezon. They were prepared by Col. Manuel Nieto, his military aide and closest confidant, and Francis Burton Harrison, former Governor General and later his adviser. They are written, however, as is the rest of the book, in the first person. They were prepared from notes left by Quezon, from records of conversations that were kept on his orders, and from the recollections of the two men. They undoubtedly are as authentic a projection of Quezon's thoughts as any he dictated himself.



Washington, 1942: the Late Manuel Quezon Greets Henry Wallace, While Sergio Osmena, Later President of the Philippines, Looks On.