

I'll Take the Highlands

Doris Jamieson

OUR VOYAGE of twenty-two days across the Pacific Ocean had finally reached its completion when the *M. M. PATRICK*, which we lovingly called the "rust bucket," sailed into the beautiful Manila harbor in the Philippines. Even the partially submerged ships from World War II could not sober our gay hearts. We were impressed, however, with the modern skyline after having spent the last day and a half sailing between jungle and palm-covered islands.

The nonchalance with which everyone on the dock seemed to accept the arrival of another military transport ship full of dependents and troops was so incongruous with my pounding heart that I thought I must surely be dreaming again. The sound of my youngest child asking, "Where is Daddy? Where is Daddy?" soon brought me back to reality. With some difficulty the three children and I found ourselves bumping down the gangway to the waiting arms of my husband. To accomplish this task required superhuman efforts, because I had stuffed the overflow of clothing from our suitcases into a laundry bag, which the porters felt too proud to carry off the ship. In appearance we must have looked like refugees, but in spirits we felt like royalty.

Somehow we all managed to hug and kiss "our Daddy" and to get into the car for our drive seventy miles north of Manila to Clark Air Force Base. Jamie, Barbara, and Judy were bubbling over with stories to tell their Daddy, and one could scarcely have believed this family's routine had been interrupted for six long months.

Alex proved to be a good sight-seeing guide, and we soon learned that Dewey Boulevard had once been lined on either side with royal cocoanut palm trees. During the days of Japanese occupation they had all been removed to provide a landing strip for the planes. The old walled city in Manila, which dates back to the days of the Spanish, presented us with the first glimpse of the war's destruction in the Philippines. But the sights of Manila were typical of a thriving metropolis almost anywhere in the world, and we soon found ourselves in Quezon City. Here we observed the first example of the apathy of many of the Filipino people. This suburb of Manila boasted a fifteen-acre subdivision divided into small lots with each lot proudly sporting an "outhouse." We were told this subdivision was built to encourage the squatters to move out of the congested city streets to an area where each family could enjoy the luxury of private toilet facilities. Two and one half years later, upon our departure from the Islands, this subdivision was still unoccupied—thus the way of the Oriental mind.

After leaving another Manila suburb, the city of Rizal, named in honor of Jose Rizal, a great Filipino patriot, we noted a sudden

change in the scenery. Modern buildings were replaced by nipa huts built on stilts and nestled amidst the tropical vegetation and crowded between rice paddies. The average Filipino is extremely poor in material possessions, but he is rich in family love. Large families are considered a blessing, and one never sees a Filipino youngster being reprimanded by his parents. This constant love eliminates the need of orphanages because even nieces and nephews are accepted with joy in an already bulging nipa hut.

The lowlander builds his one-room nipa hut of native grasses, rattan, and banana leaves. A woven hammock will be found swinging between the stilts for the comfort of the man of the family during his afternoon siesta. Everyone else must sleep on the floor on a mat. A siesta is a necessity since the working day begins about 5:00 A. M., in order to avoid labor through the heat of the noon day.

One is immediately impressed with the crude manner in which these people wrest rice and cane from the soil. Every task is performed by hand or with the aid of a carabao, or water buffalo. It is back-breaking work in which even the younger children assist. The harvest is shared with all the families of the hacienda after the owner has taken his portion. Individual family ownership of land is very rare. Here again we sensed an unprecedented acceptance of misfortune without incentive to overcome the system.

While watching all the new sights of this land in open-mouthed amazement, I was frequently brought back to reality by the reckless driving of the jeepneys on the highway. Jeepneys are jeeps that were liberated at the same time as the native population and subsequently converted into grotesque-looking taxis. The drivers had mistaken ideas of grandeur and thought they could rule the streets and highways with their rudeness and careless driving. I must admit, however, that we often gave them more than their rightful share of the roadway.

Our first rest stop was at a stand in the barrio of Marivales, where we purchased mangoes. The small sum of one peso for a dozen seemed unfair to us since the Filipino mango is considered by many to be the best in the world.

On and on we drove, through strange sights and odors to the native tannery and then the city of Angeles. The tannery's odor was almost unbearable, and the filth of Angeles was unbelievable, especially since it was the second largest city on the island of Luzon. I found a well perfumed handkerchief and made use of it. On that first trip through the lowlands I would never have guessed that the day would come when I would be accustomed to the horrible odors and unusual sights.

The contrast as we drove through the gates of Clark Air Force Base was as different as winter is from summer: well regulated traffic, enforced speed limits, uncluttered streets, carefully manicured lawns, immaculately white buildings, and American odors. This was one reaction that never changed for me regardless of the number

of trips made on and off the base.

After spending one night at Clark, we motored another one hundred and twenty miles north to the Mountain Province and the city of Baguio where John Hay Air Base is located. We passed through many more of the same native-type barrios including Tarlac, which was rumored to have been the center of Communistic activity on Luzon. The elevation then began to change until it attained a height of five thousand feet above sea level in less than thirty miles.

This lush province was not reached without many hair-raising experiences on a precarious mountain road. It was not uncommon to have to wait for the Igorots to remove a slide of dirt and rocks in order to proceed on our way. Of greatest relief to us was the escape from the oppressive heat of the lowlands. As we gained altitude, the temperature dropped from the nineties to the seventies, and the vegetation changed from jungle to pine. The people even appeared to be more energetic. We soon learned that the Igorot came from a very hard working tribe, and his ability to scrap a living from the soil here was more astounding than that of the lowlander. As one watched him literally hang on the mountain side while plowing, planting, or harvesting, one wanted to get out and give a word of encouragement. It was our close association with these people during our last year in the Philippines that has made me say, with emphasis, "I'll take the highlands."

The Searchers

Pat Fitzgerald

THE "GROWN-UPS" worry about us, as the elder generations have worried about their offspring since time itself began. They worry because we are silent, because our rebellions, if we are really rebelling at all, do not take place openly, nor do they come to a head. We are too quiet. We do not roar; in fact, we hardly seem to rumble. We are different from any of the youth that has passed before us. Superficially we may seem lethargic, but look a little closer. We are really quite active, for our way of life is a search. Unlike our parents, the younger generation of the Roaring Twenties, we do not feel a need to break all conventions. There are few rules left to be broken and flaunted in the faces of our elders. Besides, they are rarely shocked by the younger generation any more. We do not really know what our goals are. We have yet to find them and to find ourselves.

The silent generation was born in the midst of a depression and the beginnings of a war that were to change the whole life of the American people. As yet, the world has not settled down. Rather than becoming stabilized, the world still rocks with the repercussions of the changes it has undergone. Fear and tension surround us everywhere. We fear complete annihilation; we fear failure; we fear fate itself. And so we intensely search for a place to belong. Sometimes