

passing in review

BOOKS OF
INTEREST TO
OUR READERS

Rice Bowl Conflict . . .

THE FALL OF THE PHILIPPINES —

Louis Morton. 626 pages, illustrated. Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, Washington, D. C. \$5.25

In the context of global war, the Philippines did not, in 1942, possess great strategic significance. The Japanese tide had already swept around the islands and over south-east Asia and the Indies, through the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomons to Guadalcanal, and eastward across the Pacific as far as the Gilbert Islands. Everywhere the Japanese had achieved phenomenal success, sweeping all resistance before them. Only in the Philippines had they been halted, and in this successful, though hopeless, resistance lay the real importance of the campaign. It demonstrated that the Japanese were not invincible, that they could be stopped by determined men ably led, even when the odds were heavily in their favor.



The Fall of the Philippines relates in detail how, for a few short months, the Japanese conquest of the Philippines was halted by a heterogeneous, and for the most part untrained, force of American and Filipino troops. The author covers our pre-war policy and program in the Philippines and the events which led up to the outbreak of World War II.

The attack on Clark Field by Japanese aircraft, an attack perhaps as disastrous to our initial war aims as Pearl Harbor, is covered in one of the most complete accounts of that action published to date. The

story of the Japanese landings, the futile efforts of the defenders to halt the enemy at the beaches and the eventual retreat to the temporary safety of Bataan is told in all its tragedy. The three months' defense of Bataan; the debilitating effects of the shortage of food, medicine and clothing; the disintegration of an army in the short space of six days; and the surrender on Bataan, in which disease and malnutrition played as great a part as did the actions of the enemy, are described vividly and minutely. The attack on Corregidor is portrayed against a background of the five months of constant air bombardment and artillery fire delivered on that tiny island.

No punches are pulled in this book, for documented evidence is available in nearly all cases, and is furnished the reader in the form of footnotes. Particularly good studies of terrain and weather are included with each extensively-covered action, as are numerous detailed and self-explanatory maps and sketches of these actions. The narrative itself is skillfully and powerfully written.

Reviewed by Major G. P. Averill

Biography of the Great Bear . . .

RUSSIA: A HISTORY AND AN INTERPRETATION (2 Vols.) —

Michael T. Florinsky, Ph.D. 1511 pages, indexed. New York: The MacMillan Company. \$15.00

The large amount of research, evaluation and unremitting effort that went into *Russia: A History and an Interpretation* is indicated by the author's preface which relates that the MacMillan Company originally commissioned him to write this history in 1934. Having worked on the manuscript for almost 20 years, it appears that the author indulges in a bit of understatement when he says, "Whatever its shortcomings are, they cannot be ascribed to hasty workmanship."

And few, if any, are the short-

comings of Dr. Florinsky's text. The manner in which he organizes such a vast amount of historical information is logical both from the standpoint of content and convenience to the reader. Throughout the two volumes, each major era of Russian



history, from its beginning through the formative period of the Soviet regime, is developed with a well-rounded treatment of the political, military, cultural, economic and social forces that exerted their influence on the particular phase of history he is discussing. Fortunately, the author is not content with a mere assembly and interpretation of historical facts. Being the good historian he is, Dr. Florinsky places great, and useful, emphasis on the individuals about whom each major event of Russian history revolved. The result is that the text contains short but readable and highly informative biographies of those who played key roles in the making of Russian history.

Military readers will be pleased with the author's treatment of the Napoleonic period as it related to Russia. Also, with reference to more contemporary developments, there is much of value in the author's rather extensive treatment of Russian effort and objectives in the Pacific Asia. The long standing Tsarist desire to bring China into the Rus-