

Lineage, Life and Labors of Jose Rizal:
Philippine Patriot

By

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Dedication

To the Philippine Youth

The subject of Doctor Rizal's first prize-winning poem was *The Philippine Youth*, and its theme was "Growth." The study of the growth of free ideas, as illustrated in this book of his lineage, life and labors, may therefore fittingly be dedicated to the "fair hope of the fatherland."

Except in the case of some few men of great genius, those who are accustomed to absolutism cannot comprehend democracy. Therefore our nation is relying on its young men and young women; on the rising, instructed generation, for the secure establishment of popular self-government in the Philippines. This was Rizal's own idea, for he said, through the old philosopher in "*Noli me Tangere*," that he was not writing for his own generation but for a coming, instructed generation that would understand his hidden meaning.

Your public school education gives you the democratic view-point, which the genius of Rizal gave him; in the fifty-five volumes of the Blair-Robertson translation of Philippine historical material there is available today more about your country's past than the entire contents of the British Museum afforded him; and you have the guidance in the new paths that Rizal struck out, of the life of a hero who, farsightedly or providentially, as you may later decide, was the forerunner of the present regime.

But you will do as he would have done, neither accept anything because it is written, nor reject it because it does not fall in with your prejudices—study out the truth for yourselves.

Introduction

In writing a biography, the author, if he be discriminating, selects, with great care, the salient features of the life story of the one whom he deems worthy of being portrayed as a person possessed of preeminent qualities that make for a character and greatness. Indeed to write biography at all, one should have that nice sense of proportion that makes him instinctively seize upon only those points that do advance his theme. Boswell has given the world an example of biography that is often wearisome in the extreme, although he wrote about a man who occupied in his time a commanding position. Because Johnson was Johnson the world accepts Boswell, and loves to talk of the minuteness of Boswell's portrayal, yet how many read him, or if they do read him, have the patience to read him to the end?

In writing the life of the greatest of the Filipinos, Mr. Craig has displayed judgment. Saturated as he is with endless details of Rizal's life, he has had the good taste to select those incidents or those phases of Rizal's life that exhibit his greatness of soul and that show the factors that were the most potent in shaping his character and in controlling his purposes and actions.

A biography written with this chastening of wealth cannot fail to be instructive and worthy of study. If one were to point out but a single benefit that can accrue from a study of biography written as Mr. Craig has done that of Rizal, he would mention, I believe, that to the character of the student, for one cannot study seriously about men of character without being affected by that study. As leading to an understanding of the character of Rizal, Mr. Craig has described his ancestry with considerable fulness and has shown how the selective principle has worked through successive generations. But he has also realized the value of the outside influences and shows how the accidents of birth and nation affected by environment plus mental vigor and will produced Jose Rizal. With a strikingly meager setting of detail, Rizal has been portrayed from every side and the reader must leave the biography with a knowledge of the elements that entered into and made his life. As a study for the youth of the Philippines, I believe this life of Rizal will be productive of good results. Stimulation and purpose are presented (yet not didactically) throughout its pages. One object of the author, I should say, has been to show how both Philippine history and world history helped shape Rizal's character. Accordingly, he has mentioned many historical matters both of Philippine and world-wide interest. One cannot read the book without a desire to know more of these matters. Thus the book is not only a biography, it is a history as well. It must give a larger outlook to the youth of the Philippines. The only drawback that one might find in it, and it seems paradoxical to say it, is the lack of more detail, for one leaves it wishing that he knew more of the actual intimate happenings, and this, I take it, is the best effect a biography can have on the reader outside of the instructive and moral value of the biography.

JAMES A. ROBERTSON.

MANILA, P. I.

America's Forerunner

The lineage of a hero who made the history of his country during its most critical period, and whose labors constitute its hope for the future, must be more than a simple list of an ascending line. The blood which flowed in his veins must be traced generation by generation, the better to understand the man, but at the same time the causes leading to the conditions of his times must be noted, step by step, in order to give a better understanding of the environment in which he lived and labored.

The study of the growth of free ideas is now in the days of our democracy the most important feature of Philippine history; hitherto this history has consisted of little more than lists of governors, their term of office, and of the recital of such incidents as were considered to redound to the glory of Spain, or could be so twisted and misrepresented as to make them appear to do so. It rarely occurred to former historians that the lamp of experience might prove a light for the feet of future generations, and the mistakes of the past were usually ignored or passed over, thus leaving the way open for repeating the old errors. But profit, not pride, should be the object of the study of the past, and our historians of today very largely concern themselves with mistakes in policy and defects of system; fortunately for them such critical investigation under our changed conditions does not involve the discomfort and danger that attended it in the days of Doctor Rizal.

In the opinion of the martyred Doctor, criticism of the right sort—even the very best things may be abused till they become intolerable evils—serves much the same useful warning purpose for governments that the symptoms of sickness do for persons. Thus government and individual alike, when advised in time of something wrong with the system, can seek out and correct the cause before serious consequences ensue. But the nation that represses honest criticism with severity, like the individual who deadens his symptoms with dangerous drugs, is likely to be lulled into a false security that may prove fatal. Patriot toward Spain and the Philippines alike, Rizal tried to impress this view upon the government of his day, with fatal results to himself, and the disastrous effects of not heeding him have since justified his position.

The very defenses of Old Manila illustrate how the Philippines have suffered from lack of such devoted, honest and courageous critics as Jose Rizal. The city wall was built some years later than the first Spanish occupation to keep out Chinese pirates after Li Ma-hong destroyed the city. The Spaniards sheltered themselves in the old Tagalog fort till reinforcements could come from the country. No one had ever dared to quote the proverb about locking the door after the horse was stolen. The need for the moat, so recently filled in, was not seen until after the bitter experience of the easy occupation of Manila by the English, but if public opinion had been allowed free expression this experience might have been avoided. And the free space about the walls was cleared of buildings only after these same buildings had helped to make the same occupation of the city easier, yet there were many in Manila who foresaw the danger but feared to foretell it.

Had the people of Spain been free to criticise the Spaniards' way of waiting to do things until it is too late, that nation, at one time the largest and richest empire in the world, would probably have been saved from its loss of territory and its present impoverished condition. And had the early Filipinos, to whom splendid professions and sweeping promises were made, dared to complain of the Peninsular policy of procrastination-the "manana" habit, as it has been called-Spain might have been spared Doctor Rizal's terrible but true indictment that she retarded Philippine progress, kept the Islands miserably ruled for 333 years and in the last days of the nineteenth century was still permitting mediaval malpractices. Rizal did not believe that his country was able to stand alone as a separate government. He therefore desired to preserve the Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines, but he desired also to bring about reforms and conditions conducive to advancement. To this end he carefully pointed out those colonial shortcomings that caused friction, kept up discontent, and prevented safe progress, and that would have been perfectly easy to correct. Directly as well as indirectly, the changes he proposed were calculated to benefit the homeland quite as much as the Philippines, but his well-meaning efforts brought him hatred and an undeserved death, thus proving once more how thankless is the task of telling unpleasant truths, no matter how necessary it may be to do so. Because Rizal spoke out boldly, while realizing what would probably be his fate, history holds him a hero and calls his death a martyrdom. He was not one of those popularity-seeking, self-styled patriots who are ever mouthing "My country, right or wrong;" his devotion was deeper and more disinterested. When he found his country wrong he willingly sacrificed himself to set her right. Such unselfish spirits are rare; in life they are often misunderstood, but when time does them justice, they come into a fame which endures.

Doctor Rizal knew that the real Spain had generous though sluggish intentions, and noble though erratic impulses, but it awoke too late; too late for Doctor Rizal and too late to save the Philippines for Spain; tardy reforms after his death were useless and the loss of her overseas possessions was the result. Doctor Rizal lost when he staked his life on his trust in the innate sense of honor of Spain, for that sense of honor became temporarily blinded by a sudden but fatal gust of passion; and it took the shock of the separation to rouse the dormant Spanish chivalry.

Still in the main Rizal's judgment was correct, and he was the victim of mistimed, rather than of misplaced, confidence, for as soon as the knowledge of the real Rizal became known to the Spanish people, belated justice began to be done his memory, and then, repentant and remorseful, as is characteristically Castilian, there was little delay and no half-heartedness. Another name may now be grouped with Columbus and Cervantes among those to whom Spain has given imprisonment in life and monuments after death-chains for the man and chaplets for his memory. In 1896, during the few days before he could be returned to Manila, Doctor Rizal occupied a dungeon in Montjuich Castle in Barcelona; while on his way to assist the Spanish soldiers in Cuba who were stricken with yellow fever, he was shipped and sent back to a prejudged trial and an unjust execution. Fifteen years later the Catalan city authorities commemorated the semi-centennial of this prisoner's birth by changing, in his honor, the name of a street in the shadow of the infamous prison of Montjuich Castle to "Calle del Doctor Rizal."

More instances of this nature are not cited since they are not essential to the proper understanding of Rizal's story, but let it be made clear once for all that whatever harshness may be found in the following pages is directed solely to those who betrayed the trust of the mother country and selfishly abused the ample and unrestrained powers with which Spain invested them.

And what may seem the exaltation of the Anglo-Saxons at the expense of the Latins in these pages is intended only to point out the superiority of their ordered system of government, with its checks and balances, its individual rights and individual duties, under which men are "free to live by no man's leave, underneath the Law." No human being can be safely trusted with unlimited power, and no man, no matter what his nationality, could have withstood the temptations offered by the chaotic conditions in the Philippines in past times any better than did the Spaniards. There is nothing written in this book that should convey the opinion that in similar circumstances men of any nationality would not have acted as the Spaniards did. The easiest recognized characteristic of absolutism, and all the abuses and corruption it brings in its train, is fear of criticism, and Spain drew her own indictment in the Philippines when she executed Rizal.

When any nation sets out to enroll all its scholarly critics among the martyrs in the cause of Liberty, it makes an open confession of guilt to all the world. For a quarter of a century Spain had been ruling in the Philippines by terrorizing its subjects there, and Rizal's execution, with utter disregard of the most elementary rules of judicial procedure, was the culmination that drove the Filipinos to desperation and arrested the attention of the whole civilized world. It was evident that Rizal's fate might have been that of any of his countrymen, and the thinking world saw that events had taken such a course in the Philippines that it had become justifiable for the Filipinos to attempt to dissolve the political bands which had connected them with Spain for over three centuries.

Such action by the Filipinos would not have been warranted by a solitary instance of unjust execution under stress of political excitement that did not indicate the existence of a settled policy. Such instances are rather to be classed among the mistakes to which governments as well as individuals are liable. Yet even such a mistake may be avoided by certain precautions which experience has suggested, and the nation that disregards these precautions is justly open to criticism.

Our present Philippine government guarantees to its citizens as fundamental rights, that no person shall be held to answer for a capital crime unless on an indictment, nor may he be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. The accused must have a speedy, public and impartial trial, be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, be confronted with the witnesses against him, have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and have the assistance of counsel for his defense. Not one of these safeguards protected Doctor Rizal except that he had an "open trial," if that name may be given to a courtroom filled with his enemies openly clamoring for his death without rebuke from the court. Even the presumption of innocence till guilt was established was denied him.

These precautions have been considered necessary for every criminal trial, but the framers of the American Constitution, fearful lest popular prejudice some day might cause injustice to those advocating unpopular ideals, prohibited the irremediable penalty of death upon a charge of treason except where the testimony of two reliable witnesses established some overt act, inference not being admissible as evidence.

Such protection was not given the subjects of Spain, but still, with all the laxity of the Spanish law, and even if all the charges had been true, which they were far from being, no case was made out against Doctor Rizal at his trial. According to the laws then in effect, he was unfairly convicted and he should be considered innocent; for this reason his life will be studied to see what kind of hero he was, and no attempt need be made to plead good character and honest intentions in extenuation of illegal acts. Rizal was ever the advocate of law, and it will be found, too, that he was always consistently law-abiding.

Though they are in the Orient, the Filipinos are not of it. Rizal once said, upon hearing of plans for a Philippine exhibit at a European World's Fair, that the people of Europe would have a chance to see themselves as they were in the Middle Ages. With allowances for the changes due to climate and for the character of the country, this statement can hardly be called exaggerated. The Filipinos in the last half of the nineteenth century were not Orientals but mediaval Europeans-to the credit of the early Castilians but to the discredit of the later Spaniards.

The Filipinos of the remoter Christian barrios, whom Rizal had in mind particularly, were in customs, beliefs and advancement substantially what the descendants of Legaspi's followers might have been had these been shipwrecked on the sparsely inhabited islands of the Archipelago and had their settlement remained shut off from the rest of the world.

Except where foreign influence had accidentally crept in at the ports, it could truthfully be said that scarcely perceptible advance had been made in three hundred years. Succeeding Spaniards by their misrule not only added little to the glorious achievement of their ancestors, but seemed to have prevented the natural progress which the land would have made.

In one form or another, this contention was the basis of Rizal's campaign. By careful search, it is true, isolated instances of improvement could be found, but the showing at its very best was so pitifully poor that the system stood discredited. And it was the system to which Rizal was opposed.

The Spaniards who engaged in public argument with Rizal were continually discovering, too late to avoid tumbling into them, logical pitfalls which had been carefully prepared to trap them. Rizal argued much as he played chess, and was ever ready to sacrifice a pawn to be enabled to say "check." Many an unwary opponent realized after he had published what he had considered a clever answer that the same reasoning which scored a point against Rizal incontrovertibly established the Kalamang's major premise.

Superficial antagonists, to the detriment of their own reputations, have made much of what they chose to consider Rizal's historical errors. But history is not merely chronology, and his representation of its trend, disregarding details, was a masterly tracing of current evils to their remote causes. He may have erred in some of his minor statements; this will happen to anyone who writes much, but attempts to discredit Rizal on the score of historical inaccuracy really reflect upon the captious critics, just as a draftsman would expose himself to ridicule were he to complain of some famous historical painting that it had not been drawn to exact scale. Rizal's writings were intended to bring out in relief the evils of the Spanish system of the government of the Filipino people, just as a map of the world may put the inhabited portions of the earth in greater prominence than those portions that are not inhabited. Neither is exact in its representation, but each serves its purpose the better because it magnifies the important and minimizes the unimportant.

In his disunited and abased countrymen, Rizal's writings aroused, as he intended they should, the spirit of nationality, of a Fatherland which was not Spain, and put their feet on the road to progress. What matters it, then, if his historical references are not always exhaustive, and if to make himself intelligible in the Philippines he had to write in a style possibly not always sanctioned by the Spanish Academy? Spain herself had denied to the Filipinos a system of education that might have made a creditable Castilian the common language of the Archipelago. A display of erudition alone does not make an historian, nor is purity, propriety and precision in choosing words all there is to literature.

Rizal charged Spain unceasingly with unprogressiveness in the Philippines, just as he labored and planned unwearingly to bring the Filipinos abreast of modern European civilization. But in his appeals to the Spanish conscience and in his endeavors to educate his countrymen he showed himself as practical as he was in his arguments, ever ready to concede nonessentials in name and means if by doing so progress could be made.

Because of his unceasing efforts for a wiser, better governed and more prosperous Philippines, and because of his frank admission that he hoped thus in time there might come a freer Philippines, Rizal was called traitor to Spain and ingrate. Now honest, open criticism is not treason, and the sincerest gratitude to those who first brought Christian civilization to the Philippines should not shut the eyes to the wrongs which Filipinos suffered from their successors. But until the latest moment of Spanish rule, the apologists of Spain seemed to think that they ought to be able to turn away the wrath evoked by the cruelty and incompetence that ran riot during centuries, by dwelling upon the benefits of the early days of the Spanish dominion.

Wearisome was the eternal harping on gratitude which at one time was the only safe tone for pulpit, press and public speech; it irritating because it ignored questions of current policy, and it was discouraging to the Filipinos who were reminded by it of the hopeless future for their country to which time had brought no progress. But with all the faults and unworthiness of the later rulers, and the inane attempts of their parasites to distract attention from these failings, there remains undimmed the luster of Spain's early fame. The Christianizing which accompanied her flag upon the mainland and islands of the

New World is its imperishable glory, and the transformation of the Filipino people from Orientals into mediaval Europeans through the colonizing genius of the early Castilians, remains a marvel unmatched in colonial history and merits the lasting gratitude of the Filipino.

Doctor Rizal satirized the degenerate descendants and scored the unworthy successors, but his writings may be searched in vain for wholesale charges against the Spanish nation such as Spanish scribblers were forever directing against all Filipinos, past, present and future, with an alleged fault of a single one as a pretext. It will be found that he invariably recognized that the faithful first administrators and the devoted pioneer missionaries had a valid claim upon the continuing gratitude of the people of Tupa's and Lakandola's land.

Rizal's insight discerned, and experience has demonstrated, that Legaspi, Urdaneta and those who were like them, laid broad and firm foundations for a modern social and political organization which could be safely and speedily established by reforms from above. The early Christianizing civiliziers deserve no part of the blame for the fact that Philippine ports were not earlier opened to progress, but much credit is due them that there is succeeding here an orderly democracy such as now would be impossible in any neighboring country.

The Philippine patriot would be the first to recognize the justice of the selection of portraits which appear with that of Rizal upon the present Philippine postage stamps, where they serve as daily reminders of how free government came here.

The constancy and courage of a Portuguese sailor put these Islands into touch with the New World with which their future progress was to be identified. The tact and honesty of a civil official from Mexico made possible the almost bloodless conquest which brought the Filipinos under the then helpful rule of Spain. The bequest of a far-sighted early philanthropist was the beginning of the water system of Manila, which was a recognition of the importance of efforts toward improving the public health and remains a reminder of how, even in the darkest days of miseries and misgovernment, there have not been wanting Spaniards whose ideal of Spanish patriotism was to devote heart, brain and wealth to the welfare of the Filipinos. These were the heroes of the period of preparation.

The life of the one whose story is told in these pages was devoted and finally sacrificed to dignify their common country in the eyes of his countrymen, and to unite them in a common patriotism; he inculcated that self-respect which, by leading to self-restraint and self-control, makes self-government possible; and sought to inspire in all a love of ordered freedom, so that, whether under the flag of Spain or any other, or by themselves, neither tyrants (caciques) nor slaves (those led by caciques) would be possible among them.

And the change itself came through an American President who believed, and practiced the belief, that nations owed obligations to other nations just as men had duties toward their fellow-men. He established here Liberty through Law, and provided for progress in general education, which should be a safeguard to good government as well, for an

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