

NEW EDITION



THE FIRST FILIPINO

THE AWARD-WINNING BIOGRAPHY OF JOSE RIZAL
BY LEON MA. GUERRERO



PART ONE



I

Something To Remember

Grass grows quickly over a battlefield; over the scaffold never.

W_{INSTON} C_{HURCHILL}

Had it not been for the events of 1872, Rizal would have been a Jesuit!

R_{IZAL}

[1]

Our story begins with an execution which prefigures its end.

Late in the night of the 15th February 1872, a Spanish court-martial found three secular priests, José Burgos, Mariano Gómez and Jacinto Zamora,

guilty of treason as the instigators of a mutiny in the Kabite navy-yard a month before, and sentenced them to death.

The Spanish newspaper, *La Nación*,¹ described Burgos as “a Spaniard born in the Philippines, parish priest of the Manila Cathedral, and a man of rather valuable social graces. Although to all appearances modest, he was ruled by the contrary passion, which, according to some, explains his political errors.”

Zamora, according to the same newspaper, was also a Spaniard born in the Philippines and parish priest of Marikina. “He was a troublesome character, not very friendly to Spaniards, and had given serious offence to the authorities, mainly Brigadier Orán, governor of Manila in 1867, to whom, on a trip he made to Marikina, Father Zamora denied the honors due to any provincial governor.”

Gómez, parish priest of Bacoar, was “a native of Kabite, a Chinese half-breed and very old, perhaps more than 70. He had aroused the suspicions of the Spanish authorities more than once, but in view of his age and experience in the cure of souls he had been made his archbishop's vicar in the province, having under his jurisdiction a number of Dominican and Recollect friars who had parishes in it.”

The judgment of the court-martial was read to the priests in Fort Santiago early the next morning and they were told it would be executed the following day. A French chronicler² reports that upon hearing the sentence, Burgos broke into sobs, Zamora lost his mind and never recovered it, and only Gómez listened impassively, an old man accustomed to the thought of death.

The news of the judgment appears to have spread rapidly, and thousands of Filipinos gathered in the fields of the new town called Bagumbayan where the executions would take place. The three priests were to be taken in a closed coach to an improvised death cell set up near the scaffolds, but when it was delayed the commanding officer of Fort Santiago ordered the condemned men to be taken in his own carriage. Thus it was in an elegant burnished carriage, whose magnificent horses were led by two infantry sergeants, that the three priests were taken to their death cell; it was, we were told, more of a “triumphal march” than a funeral cortege, for the

Filipinos in their thousands saluted the three priests with their handkerchiefs.

Burgos, Gómez and Zamora had been stripped of their priestly robes and were chained hand and foot. When friars and Filipino seculars offered to shrive them, the court-martial's advocate-general mocked the condemned men.

“Surely you do not want to confess to Spanish priests?”

“You are fooling yourself,” replied Gómez. “Nothing better, if we are to understand each other.”

Burgos chose a Jesuit; Zamora a Vincentian.

We were told that the death cell was visited by Filipinos from as far away as Bulakan, Pampanga, Kabite and La Laguna. When dawn broke on the 17th February there were almost forty thousand of them surrounding the four platforms where the three priests and the man whose testimony had convicted them, a former artillery man called Saldúa, would die.

Saldúa, who had claimed to handle Burgos's correspondence with the mutineers, had hopes of a reprieve to the last moment. He was the first to be called and, even as he seated himself on the iron rest projecting from the post of the *garrote* and felt its iron ring around his neck, his eyes searched desperately for the royal messenger. The executioner quickly put an end to the informer's hopes with a turn of the screw that broke his neck.

The three priests followed Saldúa; Burgos, “weeping like a child,” Zamora, with vacant eyes, and Gómez, head held high, blessing the Filipinos who knelt at his feet, heads bared and praying.

Gómez was next to die. When his confessor, a Recollect friar, exhorted him loudly to accept his fate, he replied: “Father, I know that not a leaf falls to the ground but by the will of God. Since He wills that I should die here, His holy will be done.”

Zamora went up the scaffold without a word and delivered his body to the executioner; his mind had already left it.

Burgos was the last, a refinement of cruelty that compelled him to watch the death of his companions. He seated himself on the iron rest and then sprang up crying: “But what crime have I committed? Is it possible that I should die like this? My God, is there no justice on earth?”

A dozen friars surrounded him and pressed him down again upon the seat of the *garrote*, pleading with him to die a Christian death.

He obeyed but, feeling his arms tied round the fatal post, protested once again: "But I am innocent!"

"So was Jesus Christ," said one of the friars.

At this Burgos resigned himself. The executioner knelt at his feet and asked his forgiveness.

"I forgive you, my son. Do your duty." And it was done.

We were told that the crowd, seeing the executioner fall to his knees, suddenly did the same, saying the prayers for the dying. Many Spaniards thought it was the beginning of an attack and fled panic-stricken to the Walled City.

Seventeen years later Rizal would write to Ponce: "If at his death Burgos had shown the courage of Gómez, the Filipinos of today would be other than they are. However, nobody knows how we will behave at that culminating moment, and perhaps I myself, who preach and boast so much, may show more fear and less resolution than Burgos in that crisis. Life is so pleasant, and it is so repugnant to die on the scaffold, still young and with ideas in one's head ..."³

[2]

Indeed, it was an age of ideas.

For more than sixty years before the Kabite navy-yard mutiny of 1872 (and for more than sixty years after) Spain herself had been (and would be) driven apart by a battle of ideas, the battle between traditional absolutism and liberalism, a word, incidentally, which in its modern political sense was first used in Spain.

That ancient realm had been subtly infiltrated by the subversive ideas of the French "Enlightenment" under the Bourbon Carlos III, and, when the Spanish monarchy went into political bankruptcy under his successors Carlos IV and Fernando VII, the bewildered Spaniards were left with their destiny in their own hands until Wellington finally brought formal victory to their guerrilla war of resistance. Four years earlier they had summoned

Cortes, which, in the historic Constitution of Cádiz of 1812, was declared to be the sole repository of national sovereignty and the legislative power. The nation was defined as comprising all Spaniards, and a Spaniard as being any man, not a slave, born and domiciled in the peninsula and the overseas provinces, thus including the natives of the Philippines, who were also given representation in the Cortes.

The Philippine Revolution was thus, in a sense, made in Spain. Equal political rights and guarantees for peninsular Spaniards and Spanish subjects in the Philippines, including representation in the Cortes, would be the constant objective of the Filipino reformers and agitators; it would justify the move for “assimilation” into Spain; it would sustain the pathetic hope of “reforms;” and, when finally denied, it would drive the activists to arms. The battle, then, would not be between Spain and the Philippines; that is an over-simplification. In simple justice it must be said that Spain herself was an older and a larger battlefield for the same ideas, and Spaniards had fought and would fight Spaniards much longer and with greater devotion and ferocity for these ideas than ever Filipinos would fight Spaniards.

It may be helpful to our story to follow briefly the see-saw struggle for power in Spain. In 1814 the sly time-serving Fernando VII annulled the Constitution of 1812. On New Year's Day 1820 Major Riego raised the cry for the Constitution of Cádiz and the craven Fernando changed his tune. “Let us walk openly, and I the first, along the constitutional path,” he declared. Later he was rescued from the liberal forces by “the hundred thousand sons of St. Louis”, an army of intervention sent from absolutist France, and Riego, who had gone on to preside over the Cortes, was hanged, drawn and quartered. Fernando left the throne to his daughter Isabel but his brother Carlos challenged the right of female succession and rallied the traditional forces to his support. Isabel had to rely on the liberals, who defeated Carlos.

Six other constitutions were offered to a bewildered Spanish people, and more and more generals made the decisions. A general forced Isabel's mother, the regent, to leave Spain with her lover, to whom she had borne many children. Isabel herself, declared of age when only 13, was married off to an effeminate French cousin, but was seen to be unduly fond of the son of an Italian pastrycook, Marfori, whom she made a marquis, a cabinet minister and governor of Madrid. When her trusted generals died she was

helpless before one more liberal resurgence. On the 18th September 1868, again in Cádiz, the Spanish navy, immediately supported by the army, came out for the Constitution and Isabel fled, abdicating in favor of her 12-year-old son Alfonso XII.

A new constitution was proclaimed but two generals now ruled Spain, and they bestowed the crown on Amadeo, second son of the king of Italy. Regarded as “the foreigner,” he abdicated within a year, and the first Spanish Republic was proclaimed, itself to last scarcely a year. These revolutions and civil wars lasting almost the whole of the 19th century divided the Spanish people into “liberals” and “serviles,” “progressives” and “apostolics,” absolutists and constitutionalists, the Left and the Right.

We should not assume that the great masses of the people were on the Left. Men do not always choose freedom. They often prefer security, tradition, faith. When Fernando VII left “the constitutional path” for the second time the Madrid mob cheered him: “Long live the absolutely absolute king! Long live our chains!” Carlos VII, the third traditionalist pretender, gave perhaps the best summary of his cause in his manifesto of 1869. He aspired, he said, to put on the crown of the Catholic Kings; he wanted to be king of all the Spaniards, not just of a political party, and found his political philosophy on Catholic unity, community representation and social order. He offered Spain “the liberty which she knows only by name, the liberty that is the daughter of the gospels, not the liberalism that is born of protest; the liberty that, in the last analysis, is the reign of laws when the laws are just, that is to say, in conformity with natural rights and the rights of God.”

[3]

These are sentiments which we shall have to reckon with in the course of our story. In Spain they reverberated among the religious peasants. The Church, warned by Pope Pius IX against liberalism, was soon aligned with the forces of tradition, antagonized by the abolition of the Inquisition and the sale of the estates of the religious Orders. The friars in the Philippines naturally sympathized with their brethren in Spain, scorned, derided, dispossessed, often murdered in the streets; the Jesuits, once again expelled from Spain, also lost all their properties, which were confiscated by the State. These measures were not enforced in the Philippines; indeed the

Jesuits had been allowed to return in 1859. The governments of Spain, whether liberal or reactionary, were united in their desire to preserve the remnants of their overseas empire, and the declaration of equality among all free men born in Spanish territory was interpreted to apply only to those whose skins were white.

The generals who were sent to govern the Philippines for a term of four years, had also perforce, whatever their political persuasion, to depend on the advice and assistance of the Spanish friars, the only element of stability and continuity in the colony. Governments might rise and fall in Madrid, governors might come and go in Manila, the friars remained. One of their apologists⁴ calculated that there were about two thousand towns in the archipelago. To maintain Spanish authority in each of them through military means would require perhaps a minimum of twenty soldiers, or an army with total strength of forty thousand men that would cost Spain more than twenty five million crowns a year. This, it was said, was what the friars, with their moral domination over the Filipinos, saved the Spanish State!

But not all were convinced by these elaborate arguments. In the first flush of the revolution a new governor, General Carlos Ma. de la Torre y Nava Cerrada,⁵ shocked Manila's "apostolics." A rich Andalusian from Seville, who had joined the army at an early age and, after a brilliant military career, had entered politics as a deputy to the Cortes of 1854, he flaunted his liberalism with the ardor and elegance of his native region. He was soon to be seen walking about the city unescorted, consorting with the Filipinos and half-breeds, his well-brushed beard gleaming in the tropic sun. One evening in July 1869, scarcely a month after his arrival, he was serenaded at the Palace by local liberals, Filipinos and Creoles. The handsome old general promptly invited them in, an unprecedented gesture, and they drank toasts to "Liberty." Two months later, on the proclamation of the new Constitution, the most liberal that Spain had ever had, the same partisans paraded through the city wearing red ties and waving banners and colored lanterns. Once again they were asked to the palace where they were received, in the absence of the general's invalid wife, by the ebullient María de Sanchiz, a colonel's wife and a poet. She was dressed for the occasion; a red ribbon in her hair carried the words "Long live the Sovereign People!" and an equally red band around her neck read "Long live Liberty!" at one end and "Long live General de la Torre!" at the other.

Many of those who cheered their lively and outspoken hosts were to end up in exile or on the scaffold. But there were no forebodings under the benevolent gaze of the liberal general and his gay hostess. The governor abolished censorship of the press, encouraged freedom of speech and assembly, substituted imprisonment for flogging as a punishment in the army, and settled an agrarian revolt in Kabite by pardoning the rebels and organizing them into a special police force. He also turned a kindly ear to the protests of his friends among the native seculars, Burgos, Gómez, Zamora, Vicente García, Mariano Sevilla, Agustín Mendoza, Simón Ramirez, and others. They were indignant over the redistribution of parishes which had taken place upon the return of the Jesuits in 1859; to compensate the Recollects for the parishes which they had handed back to the Jesuits, the former had been given a number of benefices held by the Filipino seculars. The latter had invoked the Trentine canons which declared that no priest might exercise the “cure” of souls without being subject to the authority of the bishop of the jurisdiction, an obligation which the friars disputed because they held themselves under the sole discipline of their Order's Rule and provincial superior.

The controversy had gone on for centuries. On the one hand the friars could cite the bull of Adrian VI, giving them authority to perform the duties of parish priests in the missionary territories of the New World independently of the local bishop. On the other hand, the seculars could appeal to a later brief from Pius VI, giving the Spanish Crown discretionary power to enforce the Trentine canon in the Indies, and the royal *cedula* actually enforcing it in the viceroyalty of Mexico to which the Philippines had been attached. The Spanish kings, in consideration of their military and political support of the conversion of the Indies, had been given almost complete authority, subject only to the Pope himself, over the church of the Indies, and the Governor-General of the Philippines was not only viceroy, that is to say, the representative of the Crown, but also viceregal patron of the Church. Perhaps General de la Torre would have done something for his friends, but he did not stay long enough in the Philippines.

In 1871, one more shift of fortunes in Madrid cut his term short and he was replaced by Lieutenant General Rafael de Izquierdo,⁶ who declared as he took office that he would “govern with the cross in one hand and a sword in the other.” In his fifties, Izquierdo was a tough veteran who had enlisted at

fourteen and had fought in six campaigns of the Spanish civil wars, in all the major battles of Spain's African and Dominican campaigns, and in the liberal revolution against Isabel. He had suppressed popular risings in Valencia, Tarragona and Lérida in the peninsula. He was not a man to be trifled with.

He suspended the opening of a new school of arts and trades, dismissed high ranking half-breeds and Filipinos in the civil military administrations, combined Spanish and native artillery regiments, reserving for Spaniards alone the vacancies for non-commissioned officers. He also abolished the exemption from tribute and forced labor then enjoyed by workers in the Kabite navy-yard and in the workshops of the artillery and corps of engineers. These workers were drafted from the marine corps.

Less than two months after the issuance of this decree, on the night of the 20th January 1872, about two hundred Filipinos, most of them from the marine battalion at the Kabite arsenal, joined by some sailors and artillerymen, rose in mutiny, seizing the arsenal and the fort and killing seven Spanish officers. But the Kabite garrison of native infantry remained loyal and with re-enforcements hurriedly marched out of Manila, the fort was taken two days later.

What might have been a purely local disturbance was now transformed into a general catastrophe with the arrest of hundreds of Filipinos, half-breeds and Creoles: secular priests, lawyers, merchants, even government counsellors who had shown liberal tendencies, among them Burgos, Gómez, Zamora, and some whom we shall meet again in the course of our story like José Ma. Basa, Antonio Ma. Regidor, Joaquín Pardo de Tavera, and a brother of Marcelo H. del Pilar.

The Manila correspondent of *La Iberia*^Z summarized the theory of the prosecution: three groups, he averred, were involved in the mutiny. The military group, in charge of seducing the soldiery, was in direct communication with a second group, the native seculars, who in turn were in sole contact with a third group, wealthy liberals and progressives led by four lawyers. Their common objective was said to be the proclamation of an independent republic in the Philippines. What the evidence of this was, we are not told. The accused were assigned army officers for counsel, and the latter were given only 24 hours to prepare the defence.

In dedicating the *Fili* to the three priests, Rizal expressed perhaps the general conviction of his countrymen. “The Government,” he wrote, “by enshrouding your trial in mystery and pardoning your co-accused, has suggested that some mistake was committed when your fate was decided; and the whole of the Philippines, in paying homage to your memory and calling you martyrs, totally rejects your guilt.” He also pointed out: “The Church, by refusing to degrade you, has put in doubt the Crime charged against you.” Indeed the authorities of the archdiocese had not given official sanction to the unfrocking of the three priests, although later a pastoral letter was issued in the name of Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez condemning them as “traitors to God, their consciences and their country”⁸

Were the three priests innocent? Even if they were guilty, why had they been singled out for execution among the civilian conspirators, while the rich progressives who constituted, according to the prosecution, the leadership of the movement, were let off with exile? And why these three in particular: Zamora, who had offended a general, Gómez, who had exercised authority and jurisdiction over Dominicans and Recollects, and Burgos, who had the benefice of the cathedral?

To many in the Philippines the executions of 1872 must have seemed, not the end of an insurrection, but a declaration of war.

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Among those who thought it prudent to leave Manila at this time and lose themselves in the relative seclusion of the provinces was a young student at the Colegio de San José by the name of Paciano Mercado, who had been a housemate of the unfortunate Burgos. Paciano was the eldest son of Francisco Mercado and Teodora Alonso, an affluent family of Kalamba in the province of La Laguna. The Mercados would have tended to sympathise with the seculars. For one reason or another, Kalamba, although properly speaking it was in friar territory, was served by Filipino parish priests.

The couple's younger son, José, had been baptized by a Batangueño, Father Rufino Collantes, who had been succeeded by another Filipino, Father Leoncio López. The latter was on the closest terms with the family, and his nephew Antonino, a schoolmaster from Morong, would in fact marry their

second daughter, Narcisa. A third Filipino priest, a townmate, Father Pedro Casañas, had stood as godfather to José's baptism, and one of his nephews, Mariano Herbosa, a farmer, would in turn marry another sister, Lucía.⁹

But the family fortunes were entirely dependent on the Dominican friars. Don Francisco leased from the Order's great estates in the lake region the lands which he cultivated with such skill, energy and success. Even ten years later Paciano would warn his brother against offending the Dominicans. "These lands," he would write, "cost us nothing and were given to us by the Order in preference to anybody else; we should show them a little gratitude for this since, having no obligation towards us, they desire the good of the family. No doubt you will tell me that I forget the work we do on the land and the rent we pay; I agree, but you will also agree with me that these Fathers were under no obligation at all to give us the Pansol lands exclusively, ignoring the persistent petitions of others ... We should avoid doing anything that might offend them in the least ..."¹⁰

In 1872, therefore, the Mercados would have concealed their natural sympathies as a matter of self-interest, if not self-preservation. Besides, they had another even more urgent and intimate reason for discretion. Paciano does not seem to have been molested by the authorities; perhaps he was too small a fish for their skillet. But an even greater disaster than his arrest would have been had actually overtaken the family. Doña Teodora herself had been arrested and thrown into the common jail. How this came about can perhaps be told best by her son José who at the time was nearly eleven years old.¹¹ "At about this time," he wrote nine years later, "an uncle of mine, Don José Alberto, returned from Europe. His wife had committed grave breaches of her obligations both as a mother and as a wife during his absence, and he found his home deserted, his children abandoned. The poor man wearied himself seeking her whereabouts; when at last he found her he wanted to divorce her, but my mother managed to persuade him to take his wife back."

Unfaithful wives, however, are apt to resent being rescued and "a few days later (she), together with a lieutenant of the Civil Guard who had been a friend of the family, accused him of trying to poison her, and named my mother as his accomplice. For this reason my mother was arrested by a fanatical mayor, a menial of the friars called Don Antonio Vivencio del Rosario."

Both the lieutenant and the mayor had been offended by what he deemed to be insufficient consideration given to his rank, while the lieutenant, who commanded the local detachment of constabulary, had sworn to pay back Don Francisco for refusing on one occasion to give him fodder for his horse.

Doña Teodora was, after all, a lady of some consequence. Yet she was roughly seized and marched off on foot some fifty kilometers to the jail in the provincial capital of Santa Cruz. “The mayor,” in turn, “who from the start had swallowed the charges whole and was lost to any impulse of nobility, treated my mother with contumely, not to say brutality, afterward forcing her to admit what they wanted her to admit, promising that she would be set free and reunited with her children if she said what they wanted her to say. What mother could have refused, what mother would not have sacrificed her very life for the sake of her children? My mother was like all mothers: deceived and terrorized (for they told her that, if she did not say what they wanted her to say, she would be convicting herself), she submitted to the will of her enemies. The affair grew more complicated until, by some providence, the mayor himself begged my mother's forgiveness. But when? When the case had already reached the Supreme Court. He begged forgiveness because he was troubled by his conscience and because his own baseness horrified him. My mother's cause was defended by Don Francisco de Marcaida and Don Manuel Marzano, the most famous lawyers in Manila. In the end she secured an acquittal and was vindicated in the eyes of her judges, her accusers, and even her enemies—but after how long? After two years and a half!” The sensitive and romantic boy was never to forget it. It would not be fanciful to say that the shock of these events influenced his whole life. His mother unjustly and cruelly imprisoned, his only brother a suspect and a fugitive! “From then on, while still a child, I lost my confidence in friendship and mistrusted my fellowmen,” he was to write almost a decade later, and in his first novel, which was to be his indictment of the regime that had inflicted these sufferings, the lieutenant and the mayor are etched in acid, while a boy's remembered anguish and humiliation still drive the mature novelist to fury in his description of Sisa, also the mother of two sons, being marched to jail under guard.

... Sisa hastened her steps in order, if possible, not to meet any of the people leaving the church. In vain, there was no way to avoid them. She greeted two acquaintances with a smile, but they looked at her quizzically. After that, to escape such vexations, she kept her eyes on the ground but, strangely enough, stumbled over the stones in the road ... She raised her eyes for a moment in order to swallow her humiliation to the dregs; she saw the people round her as if from a distance, yet she felt the coldness of their eyes, heard their whispers ... She turned quickly on her heel, like a mechanical toy about to run down. Blindly, incapable of thought, she only wanted to go away and hide herself. She saw a door; there was a sentry before it but she tried to enter; a voice, more imperious still, stopped her. Stumbling, she sought the voice, felt a shove at her back, shut her eyes, tottered forward and, her strength suddenly gone, collapsed on the ground, on her knees and then on her haunches, shaken by a tear less soundless weeping.^{[12](#)}

It is not without significance that Rizal could not bring himself, except as an adolescent in his anonymous student diary, to write openly of his mother's tragedy. He must recollect it only in fiction, as something so unbearable that it must have happened to somebody else, a creature of his imagination.

When it came to rationalizing his hatred of the regime he preferred to cite a less intimate grievance, the contemporaneous execution of Burgos, Gómez and Zamora, perhaps as vivid a memory because of his brother's peril, but not so agonising or so personal as his beloved mother's shame. Thus it was to the three priests that he dedicated his second novel, and it was their fate that he gave as the justification of his career. "Had it not been for the events of 1872, Rizal would have been a Jesuit!"^{[13](#)}

But the three priests had not been the only ones who had been shamefully imprisoned, unfairly tried and unjustly condemned.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

NOTE All references are to volumes if in Roman numerals, and to pages if in Arabic. The key to the abbreviations will be found in the Working Bibliography.

PROLOGUE

(1) Arteche, 34 et seq.

(2) Phelan, 10, 47, 94, 114.

(3) Op. cit., 35, 36.

(4) Op. cit., 49-50.

(6) Ep. Riz., IV, 82. Pastells to Rizal: “El derecho de España a la ocupación y más tarde al dominio de Filipinas fué un derecho divino y natural.”

Chapter I

(1) *La Nación*, quoted in *Las Novedades*, 2 March 1872.

(2) Edmond Plauchut in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 May 1877; Montero, 584 et seq. Filipino chroniclers generally follow Plauchut, but Montero deserves a hearing because he had access to the official records. His account, in brief, is that the condemned men, in civilian clothes, were taken to the headquarters of the corps of engineers outside the city walls, where a death-cell had been improvised. Members of their families were allowed to visit them. The night before the execution, Gómez went to confession to an Augustinian Recollect (leaving a fortune of ₱200,000 to a natural son whom he had had before taking orders); Burgos, to a Jesuit; Zamora, to a Vincentian. At the execution itself, Burgos is described as “intensamente pálido;” Zamora, as “afligidísimo;” and Gómez as “revelando en su faz sombría la ira y la desesperación.” The judgment was once more read to them, on their knees. Burgos and Zamora “lloraban amargamente,” while Gómez listened “con tranquilidad imperturbable. Ni un solo músculo de su cara se contrajo.” The order of execution, according to Montero, was Gómez, Zamora, Burgos, and Saldúa last of all. He explains the panic saying that it was the natives who fled when a horse bolted: Burgos, thinking rescue was on the way, rose to his feet and had to be held down by the executioner. Montero denies both the anecdotes concerning Gómez and Burgos. It is fair to add that Montero seems to lose his composure in refuting Plauchut (op. cit., 595 footnote et seq.).

(3) Ep. Riz., IV, 167. Rizal to Ponce and staff of *La Solidaridad*: “Si Burgos al morir hubiese mostrado el valor de Gómez otros serían los Filipinos de ahora. Sin embargo, nadie sabe cómo se ha de portar en aquel supremo instante, y tal vez yo mismo que tanto predico y fanfarroneo, manifieste más temor y menos energía que Burgos en aquel trance. La vida es tan agradable, y es tan repugnante morir ahorcado joven y con ideas en la cabeza ...”

(4) F.G. Herrero, “Frutos que pueden dar las reformas en Filipinas,” 26 et seq. A pro-friar pamphlet.

(5) *Enciclopedia Espasa*, biographical note; Montero, 499 et seq.; de la Torre. Montero is obviously prejudiced against de la Torre. “La Torre era,” he summarizes, “por su temperamento y carácter, más bien bondadoso que tirano, y nos consta que le animaba el deseo de proceder rectamente; pero los a *láteres* que le imponían su criterio, y sobre todo el funesto influjo de la entremetida señora que con el compartía el Gobierno, o mejor dicho, que por él gobernaba, con sus torpezas, consus egoísmos, con sus mezquinas pasiones, con el rumbo extraviado que desde los primeros momentos tomaron, hicieron que el mando de la Torre señale un periodo de malestar, de intranquilidad, de inconveniencias, de desaciertos lamentables, y que al veterano soldado, digno de mejor suerte, no dejara tras de sí mas que rencores y antipatías” (op. cit., 552). María del Rosario (“Mariquita”) Gil de Montes was the wife of Colonel Francisco Sanchiz, Artillery, who was named inspector-general of the Spanish forces in the Philippines by de la Torre. The couple lived with the General in the Governor's Palace of Santa Potenciana in Intramuros, giving Montero an opportunity for much snide gossip, particularly after Colonel Sanchiz fell ill and had to move to a friar estate-house in Imus.

(6) *Enciclopedia Espasa*, biographical note: Montero, 554 et seq. The latter describes Izquierdo thus: “Hombre de acción, de grande iniciativa, de extraordinaria actividad, severo y enérgico, seguramente hubiera sido mucho más fecundo el periodo de su mando en medidas útiles, a no distraer su atención en gran parte las cuestiones de orden público ... La generalidad de sus antecesores habían dejado amigos o indiferentes: Izquierdo dejó admiradores de sus dotes de mando y enemigos declarados por que medidas políticas ... Tacháronle algunos de arbitrario, y no negaremos que dejara de serlo en absoluto: raro es el que no comete allí alguna arbitrariedad” (op. cit., 619. 621).

(7) *La Iberia*, 9th April 1872.

(8) *Gaceta de Manila*, 10th March 1872; *La Politica* 12 April 1872; Montero, 587 footnote. I have heard the authorship of this pastoral letter disputed by Dr. Domingo Abella.

(9) Information from Dr. Leoncio López Rizal.

(10) Ep. Riz., I, 81.

(11) *Memorias*, 29 et seq.

(12) *Noli*, 118.

(13) Ep. Riz., II, 166. Rizal to Ponce and staff of *La Solidaridad*: “Sin 1872 no habría ahora ni Plaridel, ni Jaena, ni Sancianco ni existirían las valientes y generosas colonias filipinas en Europa; sin 1872, Rizal sería ahora Jesuita y en vez de escribir *Noli Me Tángere*, habría escrito lo contrario. A la vista de aquellas injusticias y crueldades, niño aun se despertó mi imaginación y juré dedicarme a vengar un día a tantas víctimas ...”



II

The “Principales”

“I was not brought up among the people, and perhaps I do not know what they need.”

I_{BARRA} (IN *NOLI ME TANGERE*)

One gathers from Rizal's own account of his boyhood that he was brought up in circumstances that even in the Philippines of our day would be considered privileged. On both his father's and his mother's sides his forebears had been people of substance and influence well above the average of their times.

Doña Teodora's family was perhaps the more distinguished. Rizal himself wrote his Austrian friend Blumentritt: “My mother is a woman of more than average education ... Her father [Lorenzo Alberto Alonso], who was a

deputy for the Philippines in the Cortes, was her teacher, her brother [the cuckolded José] was educated in Europe and spoke German, English, Spanish and French; he was also a knight in the Order of Isabel the Catholic.”¹ We are told that her maternal grandfather, Manuel de Quintos, had been a well-known lawyer in Manila. Both Don Lorenzo and his father Don Cipriano had been mayors of Biñang. It is noteworthy that when Sir John Bowring, Governor of Hong Kong and Her Britannic Majesty's Plenipotentiary in China, toured Luzon, he was lodged in the house of José Alberto and found there “abundant evidence that [his host] had not studied in vain the arts of domestic civilization. The furniture, the beds, the tables, the crockery were all in good taste.”²

Rizal's family on his father's side, the Mercados, had been originally merchants, as their surname, which in Spanish means market, suggested. But they had added a second surname under circumstances described by Rizal himself. “I am the only Rizal because at home my parents, my sisters, my brother and my relatives have always preferred our old surname, Mercado. Our family name was indeed Mercado but there were many Mercados in the Philippines who were not related to us, and it is said that a provincial governor, who was a friend of the family, added Rizal to our name.”³ Whoever the provincial governor was, his choice was prophetic for Rizal in Spanish means a field where wheat, cut while still green, sprouts again.

The Mercados had also gradually changed their means of livelihood, shifting to agriculture and the modest participation in local politics which was the obligation, as well as the privilege, of the propertied. Juan Mercado, Francisco's father, had been thrice mayor of Biñang. Rizal's father, however, had moved to Kalamba to cultivate lands leased from the Dominicans, to such a good effect that he became one of the town's wealthiest men, the first to build a stone house and buy another—in a town with only four or five houses of any size—keep a carriage, own a library, and send his children to school in Manila.

José himself had an *aya*, that is to say, a nanny or personal servant, although he had five elder sisters who, in less affluent circumstances, could have been expected to look after him. When he was old enough his father engaged a private tutor for him, a former classmate called León Monroy

who lodged with the family and gave the boy lessons in reading, writing, and the rudiments of Latin.⁴

Later he would study in private schools, go to the university, finish his courses abroad. It was the classic method for producing a middle class intellectual, and it does much to explain the puzzling absence of any real social consciousness in Rizal's apostolate so many years after Marx's *Manifesto* or, for that matter, Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. Don Francisco, and later Paciano when he took over the management of the family properties, might lease these from the Dominicans, run the risks of drought, pests and falling prices, and spend long hard days on horseback, planning, overseeing, driving their *braceros*. But it was after all these field-hands who had to sow and reap and mind the sluices and the primitive mills: what they had in common with these rude unlettered pea-sants was the disability of race and the lack of human rights and political liberties, and it was, naturally enough, these grievances which aroused Rizal's nationalism, a nationalism which, as we shall see farther on, was essentially rationalist, anti-racist, anti-clerical-political rather than social or economic.

It is illuminating to realize that in the *Noli* Ibarra admits wryly: "I was not brought up among the people, and perhaps I do not know what they need. I spent my childhood in the Jesuit school and grew up in Europe. My opinions were formed by books, and I know only what has been exposed; I know nothing of the things that remain hidden, that have not been written about." Ibarra brushes aside Elías's offer of support from the people. "I would never be the one to lead the mob to take by force what the Government believes inopportune. If I should ever see the mob in arms, I would take the side of the Government and fight against it because I would not recognize my country in such a mob!" Elías himself, the "voice of the oppressed," is not really a peasant; he is a landlord's bastard grandson, brought up in luxury, trained by the Jesuits to bandy philosophical reflections, and merely fallen on evil times! Even Commander Pablo, the leader of the outlaws, recalls bitterly that he knows the minds of rich men because he was once one himself.

But the Mercados and the Alonsos, for all their land and money and horses, and stone houses, were much closer to their field-hands than the absentee landlords of a later day. They were *ilustrados*, that is to say, they could read and write and figure, they took newspapers and went to court and

sometimes travelled abroad; they were of the *principalía*, that is to say, they could vote for the town mayor, they collected taxes, they had the preference, after the Spaniards, in town church and town hall, in civic and religious processions, and they could wear a European jacket or wield knife and fork properly on occasion.

Withal they were not a class wholly apart; they were members of a living community; in fact their class was not really one in the European sense for there were no impenetrable barriers to social mobility, and Basilio, the son of a penniless cocker and a mad seamstress, could become a physician, or, on the other hand, Don Rafael Ibarra die in prison and his body be flung into the lake. The Mercados themselves had risen to riches in one generation; in the same generation the Rizals would be utterly dispossessed and ruined. Their position was too new, too precarious for airs and graces. Doña Teodora herself kept a shop in town, and one of her daughters would marry a telegraph operator.

Rizal was later to describe in the *Noli* the town of San Diego, which we can reasonably take to be a prototype of Kalamba. He traces its growth to a Spaniard who “established himself in those parts, dedicating himself to agriculture ...”

Don Saturnino was taciturn, of a rather violent character, sometimes cruel, but very active and hardworking ... When he was getting on in years, he married a girl from Manila, by whom he had Don Rafael ... Don Rafael at an early age made himself loved by the peasants; agriculture, introduced and encouraged by his father, developed rapidly; new settlers came, and behind them many Chinese. The hamlet soon became a village with a native priest; then the village became a town ...

This was perhaps the role that the Mercados themselves had played in Kalamba, although, of course, they were no Spaniards, and there is no reason to believe that either Don Francisco or Paciano were violent or cruel. Paciano, however, was reported to have a temper.

John Foreman, an Englishman who lived in the Philippines at the time and in fact was often to talk about Rizal with his father, preserves for us another view of Kalamba as it was then. “There is nothing grand in the view of the

lake from the regular steamer, because to the call at Viñang [Biñang] and Kalamba we ran down the west coast with a vast plain always before us. The contrast to the beautiful Pasig was unfavorable. To the east, on the Morong side, are low mountain ranges, of which one sees only the outlines, whilst before us were high peaks in the distance. At 1:30 we cast anchor between an islet and the shore of Kalamba, and, after bidding farewell to [the captain] I got into a *prahu* [banca] which was being washed and bumped up against the steamer side. My half-caste friend followed, and we filled up with a crowd of natives, baskets and luggage. Off went the steamer to Santa Cruz, whilst we were paddled and poled to within fifty yards of the shore, where we were grounded. Then the water came rolling in the stern, until we and our portmanteaux were fished out by Filipinos, almost naked, whose shoulders we mounted, as if they were horses, to get to the beach. We were not at town. Carromatas were waiting for us, and away we drove to the convent—the half-caste and I with our servants. There I made the acquaintance of the Filipino parish priest, Father Leoncio López, who, it appeared, was related by marriage to my half-caste friend. Father Leoncio was the most intelligent Filipino priest whom I ever met. He was really a man of learning and practical knowledge, one of the exceptions of his race. How little did I then think that we were destined to become intimate friends, and that it would be my lot to comfort him on his death-bed at the house of his wealthy relation who had introduced me to him! Kalamba is a very dreary town. The town hall was merely a sugar shed; the streets are always either muddy or dusty. There are three or four large houses of well-built exterior. The market, held on Fridays, is of considerable local importance, Filipinos coming there from great distances. The market-place is, however, always dirty and disorderly. Nearly all the landed property within the jurisdiction of Kalamba, and as far as the town of Los Baños, belonged to the Dominican Corporation, whose administrators resided in the *casa hacienda* or estate house in the town. The land was rented out to Filipino planters, chiefly for rice and sugar crops. In the vicinity there are several European steam- and cattle-powered sugar-mills, and many of the inhabitants are comparatively well off.”⁵

Although Foreman makes Father López a relation by marriage of his half-caste friend, and Father López was in fact, as we have seen, related to the Rizals by the marriage of his nephew to Narcisa Rizal, it would be presumptuous to assume that Foreman's shipboard acquaintance was Don

Francisco. For one thing, he is described earlier as “a partner in one of the richest Filipino merchant houses in Manila,” which Don Francisco does not seem to have been. Yet it is tempting to draw such a conclusion. Foreman says that the acquaintanceship which was struck up on board “lasted for years.” And further on in his book he recalled: “Often have I, together with the old Filipino parish priest, Father Leoncio López, spent an hour with José's father, Tomás [*sic*] Mercado, and heard the old man descant with pride on the intellectual progress of his son at the Jesuits's school in Manila.”

In any case Foreman has left us one of the few eye-witness descriptions of the life of the privileged in Rizal's time. “A cool breeze was coming across the river as we sat smoking and chatting to kill time until the sun was sufficiently low to venture out in an open carriage [this was the provincial capital of Santa Cruz, in the house of the governor Don Francisco de Yriarte]. Between five and six we drove through the Escolta, down to the lake, and back through the principal thoroughfares. It was near sunset; the siestas were over; everybody was up and about; the children were gambolling in the roads. The little shanty stores presented a scene of activity; women and children were making their small purchases for the evening meal, and the young men were generally loafing or arranging their gambling-tables and cards for the licensed *panguingui*. Old men and old women, who had been resting all the sunny hours of the day, were taking their legs out for a trial trot. Wherever we passed, the men politely doffed their head-gear—hats or cloths—whilst the women sullenly stared without making salute or curtsy. We stopped once before a group of Filipinos who had come out of their dwellings to kiss the hand of the parish priest as he took his evening stroll. His Reverence did not seem the least bit concerned at their devotion—he was too used to it — his natural right, of course—so he went on mechanically dispensing his benedictions on the faithful as he chatted with us. ‘¡Adios, padre!’ we exclaimed—‘¡Adios señores!’ and we returned to the Government House where we dined at eight o'clock. There were several invited to dinner, the notary, the administrator and other officials came. All seemed bent on making themselves as agreeable as possible to the foreign visitors. I was to go duck-shooting; I was to hunt deer at the foot of the Monte San Cristobal; I was to visit the cascade of Botocan—but for all these pleasures in store, I was begged to wait a few

days. A few days in Santa Cruz! Not I. It is hardly a place to spend days in.”⁶

How pleasant for Mr. Foreman and Don Francisco de Yriarte! He gives us the other side of the picture too: the Filipino *principalía* at work and at play. “I had met a Lipa coffee-planter in Kalamba, and now took advantage of his invitation to call upon him on my arrival. It was seven o'clock in the evening. He seemed delighted at my visit, and wished me to stay several days. 'At least we count upon you for tomorrow; we have a great day before us. I have a new nephew; and the feast of the baptism will take place at my brother-in-laws's.' Then he went on talking about his son, the hope of the family—how he should like to send him to Hong Kong to learn English. He was only wasting money in Manila, in dress, ponies and amusements, and learning nothing but Manila semi-European manners, which were ill-suited for his becoming a coffee-planter or dealer. Later on, in a quiet corner, he poured forth his troubles to me. He was one of the 'spotted ones' by the parish priest, to whom he might, any day, fall a victim. He pointed to a high wall just outside a house which the friar had had built to shut the family off from the sight of the church door. How long his personal liberty would last was doubtful.”

The next day Foreman and his friend, Captain G., who carried the title because he had once been mayor of his town, were called away from the baptismal feast. “Eight or ten” of the ex-mayor's carabaos had been stolen, and they must ride out to his plantation to investigate.

“*Araw po,*’ [the native in charge] said to each of us in his dialect as he politely pressed his right hand on his forehead and bent the left knee to salute. Captain G. opened his inquiries cautiously, putting questions and cross-questions, followed by remonstrances, which flowed one after another, each time less patiently, until he lashed himself into fury which seemed, however, to have little effect upon the passive pertinacity of his caretaker. The man had neglected to drive the buffaloes [carabaos] home to their pen last night and they were no longer to be found. “Tumble down there!” cried Captain G. when he saw that the man recognized his fault. Then he calmly went to a corner to look for the great factor of civilization—the *bejuco*—a fine rattan cane which made more smarting than bruises. “I shall give you twenty-five and we'll see if this occurs again, and I shall add the buffalo to your debt.” Thereupon he set to with the rattan, whilst the

culprit lay on the floor, bellowing at each stroke. Captain G. looked at me. He evidently thought he must explain away the necessity of such harshness. We were almost strangers; how could he guess what I thought of it? "There is no other remedy but the lash," he observed. "The fellow already owes me forty dollars, and he will go on borro-wing without scruple. It is no use talking to these men."⁷

"These men," of course, were not slaves. The inhabitants of the Philippines were never slaves and never owned them, except perhaps for the Christians later captured and held as war chattels by the Muslims of the southern islands. The Spanish friars themselves, as we have seen, prevented the enslavement of the Filipinos by the *encomenderos* and successfully restricted their obligations to their Spanish overlords to the payment of tribute and the rendition of personal services. Nor, as in the Americas, North and South, had slaves been imported from Africa; in contrast with the Philippines, where it never existed, black slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico only during the reign of Amadeo, and in Cuba only in 1880 and only after the downfall of the government which had first proposed it in Madrid.

What the Spaniards had found in the Philippines, partly misunderstood, and then wisely adapted, was a social system founded on the family. The patriarchs, the war leaders, the pilots, the overseers of the communal lands, who would later, by and large, become the *principales* of the Spanish regime, constituted what might be called an upper class, with two classes of dependents that still survive in many parts of the Philippines: the share-croppers and the debt peons. Neither of these lower classes were slaves in the strict sense of the word, or even serfs. The share-croppers could have property of their own, they enjoyed personal freedom, and their main obligation was to work on their superior's land one day out of every four, in return for which they received a share of the harvest. The peons too, could own property, but their obligations were more onerous; they were either household servants or worked on their master's fields three days out of four. Most, if not all, had sunk to this state of servitude because of debt: they had been unable to pay judicial fines or they had borrowed money at usurious rates of interest.

But the free and dependent could intermarry, and the status of their children was carefully regulated; peons could buy back their freedom, and freemen lose theirs. The Spaniards made the heads of these small communities of

kinsmen their agents and tax collectors, and thus preserved to a great extent the traditional society under the new conquerors.⁸ The former *datus* became *cabezas de barangay* or local headmen; they were sometimes ruined when they were unable to collect the tribute assigned to their communities and were obliged to make up the difference; more often they prospered through the judicious use of their new office, influence and connections, acquiring exclusive title to lands formerly held in common, lending money as usual with the authority of the new regime to enforce the old usurious rates of interest, sending their children to school to acquire the new knowledge, thus ever widening and deepening the gap between rich and poor, the learned and the unlettered, the active and the passively resigned, the beaters and the beaten.

For all that it was the beaten who would make the Revolution against Spain, a revolution organized by a warehouseman, fought by peasants in caves and forests, condemned and eventually compromised, so it is said, by the *principales*. Even if Rizal had never been born there would have been a revolution. As Benjamin Constant has pointed out, “a country that can be saved only by this or, that special man will never be saved for long, even by him; what is more, it would not deserve to be so saved.” And even if Rizal had been born a peasant, the son of share-croppers, sent out as a child to tend the carabao herds of his master, or perhaps placed in the service of the parish friar, like Basilio and Crispín in the *Noli*, to pick up a few scraps of knowledge between washing the dishes and peeling the church bells, he would still have made his mark; his character, in a different environment, with a different experience of the world, might have made him another Bonifacio.

But perhaps it is more useful to evaluate, in anticipation, the part that the *principales*, Rizal among them, actually played in the events of 1896 and after. Men of property do not usually begin revolutions, unless it is to protect their investments. Nor do reasonable men for, as Bernard Shaw remarks with only surface irony, “the reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself; therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.” It was inevitable that the Revolution should be started by propertyless men like Bonifacio, and equally inevitable that it should be condemned at the start by reasonable men like Rizal. The *principales* would see their offices and

dignities, their lands and houses, in peril; the *ilustrados* would shrug their shoulders at the chances of a ragged mob without rifles, without field guns and horses, without a commissary, without trained officers, without foreign allies, without any of the pre-requisites prescribed in military manuals.

Like Rizal, they would be idealists in their own way, not necessarily a wiser one; they would believe in the power of knowledge or, to put it another way, the need for popular education; they would put their trust in reason; they would stand by the liberal dogmas of the inevitability of progress and the wisdom of the majority; qualifying it perhaps as the instructed and propertied majority; they would therefore prefer reforms to revolution, and “revolution from above” to “revolution from below.” We may think them right, we may think them wrong—that is the privilege of posterity. If their policy had prevailed, Rizal would have been—and we shall see that that is what he wanted to be—deputy for the Philippines in the Spanish Cortes. The great Orders in Manila would perhaps have been dissolved and expelled, their estates sold at public auction to the new middle class, as in Spain. With suffrage limited to men of property and civil servants of suitable degree the Philippines would have attained a measure of self-government under the Spanish Crown, with conservatives and liberals alternating in power at the choice of provincial *caciques*, again as in contemporaneous Spain, and an occasional *pronunciamiento* by an ambitious general anxious to impose his personal interpretation of the will of the people.

The “beaten men” had their way; they had their violent revolution, but it was not wholly uninfluenced by the *principales* and *ilustrados*. The full story is not how our concern for Rizal only lived to see the beginning of the work of Bonifacio and Aguinaldo. But it would be wrong and unwise to depreciate the contribution of Rizal and his class to the making of the Filipino nation. Rousseau, Voltaire and the *philosophes* were nobles, nobly born, and they did not march on Versailles or pull the tumbrils or knit beside the guillotine; but they, as much as the Paris mob, brought down the ancient Throne and Altar. In this fashion also the provincial magnates, the old scholars, the university students, the intellectuals in exile, Tasio no less than Cablesang Tales, Ibarra as much as Basilio, del Pilar no less than Bonifacio, Basa and López Jaena and Apolinario Mabini no less than

Emilio Jacinto, Antonio Luna and Edilberto Evangelista as much as Aguinaldo and Ricarte, would make the Philippine Revolution.

They would supply the intellectual basis, the moral justification, the technical skills; they would write the proclamation, organize elections and assemblies, design trenches and plan campaigns, and negotiate the inevitable compromises; they would be the professionals to the trusting amateurs of the proletariat and the peasantry, sometimes betrayed, sometimes merely instructed and restrained.

As we shall hereafter see, Rizal and the *ilustrados*, of whom he was to be the exemplar, the teacher, and tacitly but generally acknowledged leader, would do this above all: he, through them, would arouse a consciousness of national unity, of a common grievance and common fate. He would work through his writings, writings in Spanish, which could be read only by the *principales*, and not indeed by all of them, but which were read, overlapping the old barriers of sea and mountain and native dialect, from Vigan to Dapitan. Without this new middle class, now national by grace of school, the printing press, and newly discovered interests in common, a class to whom peasants and artisans still gave the natural deference of the unlettered to the educated, of poverty to wealth, of the simple subject to the office-holder, and to whom they still looked, rightly or wrongly, for guidance, instruction, and leadership, the Kabite insurrection of 1896 might not have had a greater significance than that of 1872. Instead, what might have been only one more peasant rebellion, what might have been a Tagalog uprising to be crushed as before with docile levies from Pampanga or the Ilokos or the Bisayas, was transformed into the revolution of a new nation. It was Rizal who would persuade the *principales*, and with them, and sometimes through them, the peasants and the artisans that they were all equally “Filipinos,” and in so doing would justify the opportunities of his privileged birth.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter II

(1) Ep. Riz., V, 335. Rizal to Blumentritt: “Mi madre no es una mujer de cultura ordinaria, conoce la literatura y habla el castellano mejor que yo. Hasta corrigió mis versos y me daba sabios consejos cuando estudiaba retórica. Ella es una matemática y ha leído muchos libros. Su padre que fué diputado a Cortes por Filipinas había sido su maestro; su hermano se educó en Europa y hablaba el alemán, el inglés, el español y el francés; era también caballero de la Orden de Isabel la Católica.” I must add that I have been unable to find Lorenzo Alberto Alonso among the deputies for the Philippines who were elected, took the oath of office or participated in the deliberations of the Spanish Cortes before Philippine representation was abolished. Doña Teodora's father was, more probably, one of the municipal or provincial electors who voted in the elections for deputies.

(2) Bowring, 41.

(3) E. Riz., V, 468.

(4) *Memorias*, 21.

(5) Foreman, 419 et seq.

(6) Op. cit., 424.

(7) Op. cit., 440.

(8) Phelan, 15 et. seq.



III

A Child of Good Family

John Foreman might have thought Kalamba a very dreary town, its marketplace “dirty and disorderly,” but the boy José was very happy there. He had been born on the 19th June 1861 “between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, a few days before the full moon.” It was a difficult delivery that endangered his mother's life.¹

He was the seventh of eleven children, the younger of two boys. Don Francisco and his wife were a prolific pair: they had Saturnina in 1850, Paciano in 1851, Narcisa in 1852, Olimpia in 1855, Lucía in 1857, María in 1859, José in 1861, Concepción in 1862, Joséfa in 1865, Trinidad in 1868 and Soledad in 1870.² Paciano was thus a full ten years older than José and more of a second father than an elder brother, especially when Don Francisco to all effects and purposes left the management of the family lands in his hands.

José had few recollections of his childhood, which suggests that it was happy. He found it delightful to listen to the birds in his father's fruit orchard, and many years later could still remember the name of every tree. In the evenings he would be taken for walks along the river or listen entranced to his *aya's* fairy stories as they sat in the moonlight on the *azotea* after saying the Rosary. Sometimes it was his mother who had a story to tell.³

“One night the whole family, except for my mother and myself, had gone to bed early; I do not know why, but the two of us were left sitting by ourselves. The candles had been put out inside the lamps with a curved tin blower, which seemed to me the finest and most wonderful plaything in the world. The room was dimly lit by a coconut oil lamp such as burns all night in Filipino homes to go out just at daybreak and awaken the sleepers with its final spluttering. My mother was teaching me how to read in a Spanish book called *The Children's Friend*. This was an old copy of a book that had grown quite rare. It had lost its cover and one of my sisters had cleverly made a new one for it, fastening a cloth-covered thick blue sheet of paper to its back. That night my mother grew impatient listening to me read so poorly. I did not understand Spanish and so could not put any expression into my reading. She took the book from me. After scolding me for drawing funny pictures on its pages, she told me to listen and started to read aloud herself. When her sight was still unimpaired, she read very well; she could also recite and even write poetry.”

“Often afterward during Christmas holidays, she would correct my classroom verses, making suggestions that were always worthwhile. Now I listened to her, full of boyish admiration. I marvelled at the melodious phrases she read so easily from the very same pages which had so quickly stumped me at every step. But I may have grown tired of listening to sounds that had no meaning for me; perhaps I lacked application; anyway, I was soon paying little attention. Instead I watched the cheerful little flame. Some moths were playing about it in circles. I happened to yawn and my mother, noticing that I had lost interest, stopped reading and said: 'Now I shall read you a very pretty story and you must listen.' On hearing the word 'story' I at once opened my eyes wide. It promised something new and wonderful. I watched my mother as she turned over the book's pages, looking for the story. I had settled down to listen, full of curiosity and

expectation. I had never dreamed that there were stories to be found in that old book, which I had read without understanding. Then my mother began to read to me the fable of the old moth and the young moth, translating it into Tagalog as she went along. My attention was caught from the very first sentence; I stared at the lamp and the moths circling about it, the story could not have been better timed.”

“The story was that, once upon a time, an old moth had warned her daughter against the flame, so beautiful, so inviting, yet fatal and deceitful for it destroyed whoever came too close. She herself, she said, had once been tempted by it; she had barely escaped with half-burnt wings. The frightened young moth promised to obey, but was soon asking herself: “Now why should my mother try to give me such a scare? Why should I close my eyes to such a pretty sight? These old people are such cowards!”

“They think every fly an elephant, any old dwarf a giant. What harm can it do me, whatever she says, if I come near the flame, so long as I am careful? What am I, a little silly? What a story I shall have for all the other girls if I, being very careful of course, take a closer look.” No sooner said than done, and the silly little moth went fluttering round the flame. At first she only felt pleasantly warm; this encouraged her and she flew closer and closer until at last, dazzled by the flame, oh that perfidious flame, fell and perished in it.”

*This dreadful fate
The disobedient rate.*

“But oddly enough,” Rizal recalled, “the light seemed to me even more beautiful, the flame more entrancing than ever. The fact is that I envied the insects that fluttered round its splendor, and was not at all frightened when some fell dead into the oil. I listened breathlessly as my mother read; the fate of the two moths fascinated me. The flame's yellow tongue caught one of the insects and after spasmodic quivering it lay still. It seemed to me a great event ... I did not notice that the story had come to an end. My thoughts were fixed on the insect's fate ... It had died a victim of its illusions ... At bottom I could not blame it. The light had been so beautiful!”

The allegory is perhaps a little too pat: the daring young dissenter enamored of the light of reason, and perishing in it; yet Rizal, in this pointed recollection, could not foresee his own fate even though he may have, with romantic hindsight, credited the child with the sensibility and premonitions of the man.

He could remember very little else of his childhood. When he was four years old he lost his little sister, Concha, born next after him and so, we may imagine, the closest to his child's heart. "For the first time I wept tears of love and grief, for until then I had only shed them out of a stubbornness which my loving and prudent mother knew so well how to correct." Indeed he seems to have been a willful child, but also imaginative and high-spirited.

When he was nine, his private tutor having died in the meantime, he was taken by Paciano to Biñang one Sunday; he would lodge in an aunt's house there and continue his studies in a private school. He was not to stay there very long; it would not be enjoyable at all. He did not like the town; it struck him as being "large and rich, but ugly and dismal." Nor was he particularly fond of his schoolmaster, Justiniano Aquino Cruz, "a tall, thin man with a long neck and a sharp nose and a body bent slightly forward," who knew by heart the Spanish and Latin grammars of the medieval Nebrija and the more modern Dominican Gainza, but who believed in transmitting this knowledge by way of his pupil's buttocks.

"I do not want to waste time recounting the beatings I received or picturing my emotions when I suffered my first canings. Some envied me, others pitied me. Tales were told against me, sometimes true, sometimes not, and always it cost me three or six lashes. I usually won the class contests; nobody could defeat me; and as a result I surpassed the majority in class standing; but, in spite of the reputation I had of being a good boy, it was a lucky day when I was not laid out on a bench and given five or six of the best."

His bitterness against these barbarous methods of instruction never left him. In the *Noli* the first thing Ibarra proposes to do for his town of San Diego when he comes home, full of good intentions, is to build a modern school-house with orchards, gardens, pleasant walks and athletic grounds, where "the primer would not be a black book bathed in children's tears but a friendly guide to marvelous secrets," a school which would be "not a

torture-chamber but a playground of the mind.” The only form of punishment he envisions for truants is a room where they would be confined within earshot of their schoolmates at play.

If Rizal hated and despised the senseless, wellnigh sadistic methods of the traditional village school, it was not because of physical cowardice. Quite the contrary. He was small for his age; in fact he would be below average in stature throughout his life; and, like many small men, he tended to compensate for his disadvantage with a self-assertiveness that bordered on aggressiveness. He always found it easy to establish his intellectual superiority; it was rather more hazardous to keep his end up physically.

But when the schoolmaster's son Pedro made fun of him for the diffident and repetitive answers he had given on his first day in class, he lost no time in calling his tormentor to account. “He must have been older than I, and he had the advantage of me in height, but when we started to wrestle, I kicked him, twisting him back—I don't know by what lucky chance—over some benches in the classroom. I let him go, leaving him considerably mortified. He wanted a return match but I refused because by this time the schoolmaster had awakened and I was afraid of being punished. I had made a name among my classmates by this feat, perhaps because of my small size, and so after class a youngster called Andrés Salandanan challenged me to an arm-wrestling match. He put up an arm; so did I; I lost and nearly cracked my head against the pavement of a house.”

He was ever to be under the compulsion of proving his physical strength and courage. Inevitably self-conscious about his height, he would afterwards note that he was almost denied admission to the Ateneo “because of my rather weak constitution and short stature.” Once in college, “in spite of the fact that I was thirteen years old going on fourteen, I was still very small, and it is well known that new schoolboys, especially the small ones, are hazed by their elders.” But when he was teased, he stood his ground quietly, and “from then on, they held me in higher regard and did not again play any malicious jokes on me.”

He went in for gymnastic exercises but was not very good at them, although many years later he would astonish a friend by bouts of weight lifting when he was half-starving in the depths of a European winter.⁴ In the Ateneo he also took up fencing and, returning to Kalamba one year almost at the end

of his course, his family “marvelled when they learned that I knew how to handle weapons; that very night proved me the best fencer of my town.”

As a boy he also showed a tendency toward touchiness. He seemed unable to take a joke at his expense. He had quarreled with the schoolmaster's son for “making fun” of him; he never forgot that his classmates in Biñang had jeered at him and given him unpleasant nicknames, and took considerable satisfaction in pointing out that “some of them later became my classmates in Manila, and there indeed we found ourselves in situations that were entirely different.” He was offended whenever his aunt asked him to take a particularly appetizing dish over to the house of one of her sons —“something I never did at home, and would never have done!” he exclaims.

Leandro, his aunt's grandson, was an absolute nuisance, “a capricious child, spoiled, a flatterer when it suited him, a scalawag in the full sense of the term. One day we had gone to the river, which was only a few steps away from the house for it ran along the garden. While we were on a stone landing (I did not dare go down into the water because it was too deep for me) this spoiled brat pushed me in so that I would have drowned—the current was already pulling me away—if he had not caught me by one of my feet. This earned him a number of blows of the slipper and a stiff tongue-lashing from my aunt.”

This was indeed, it must be granted, pushing a joke too far. The joke might have been on history.

Life in Biñang, however, had its amusing moments. Baring that sardonic eye that was to give his novels their liveliest passages, the boy José, still so dutiful and pious, could not help noting that his aunt, an old woman of seventy, had the peculiar habit of “reading the Bible in Tagalog stretched out full-length on the floor,” and that his cousin Margarita, a spinster, was “much given to confessing her sins and doing penance for them.” It was fun also to play in the streets at night with his niece Arcadia “because they would not have let us do so at home.” Arcadia was a relief; she was a 'young tomboy,' stubborn and easily angered, but she taught him games and, while treating him like a brother, very properly called him uncle.

For all that he was immensely happy when he left Biñang for good on the 17th December 1870. He was going by himself on his first real steamship

voyage; the vessel “seemed to me very beautiful and admirable when I heard my cousin, who had taken me aboard, discuss the way it worked with one of the sailors.” Off Kalamba at last “I wanted to jump immediately into the first banca that I saw but a cabin-boy took me in his arms and placed me in the captain's boat. It would be impossible to describe my joy when I saw the servant who was waiting for me with the carriage. I jumped in and there I was again, happy in my own house with the love of my family. For Christmas he was given “a well-painted and decorated rabbit hutch with real live rabbits.”

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter III

- (1) This one and the next two chapters are based on the *Memorias*, unless otherwise indicated.
- (2) Genealogical tree drawn by Rizal himself.
- (3) “Rizal's Own Story,” by Austin Craig, 51.
- (4) Viola, 57.



IV

Religion, Race and Rhetoric

I owe a lot to this Order [the Society of Jesus], almost, almost all that I am taken to be.

R_{IZAL}

Innocence and independence make a brave spirit.

T_{HOMAS} F_{ULLER}

[1]

Although the Spanish educational system in the Philippines at that time was neither so bad nor so good as it has been made out to be, there were only three secondary schools in Manila to which a boy of José's wit, means, and

connections could be sent; the San José Seminary where Paciano had studied, the Dominican College of San Juan de Letrán, and the city school run by the Jesuits, the Ateneo Municipal. Paciano's experience in San José had not been happy, and perhaps he reminded Don Francisco of the execution earlier that year of Burgos and the two other seculars, generally attributed to their enemies, the friars. In any case, Paciano was instructed to enroll his younger brother in the Jesuit school. However, the Dominicans at that time exercised certain powers of inspection and regulation over the Municipal Ateneo and José took the required entrance examinations at Letrán on the 10th June 1872. The subjects were Christian doctrine, arithmetic and reading, in all of which he was given a passing mark. He returned to Kalamba for the town fiesta, well pleased with himself.

However certain difficulties remained; for one thing, the term had already begun and, for another, the Father Minister was rather dubious about the boy's health. Paciano, throwing aside all caution, secured the help of a nephew of the ill-fated Father Burgos, Manuel Xerez Burgos, who contrived to overcome the Jesuit's objections. Later he was to recall, with rather a great deal of hindsight, that the boy "read perfectly and was very well behaved in spite of his tender years. He did not mix with other boys except to comment on the events which had just disturbed the entire archipelago."¹ In any case José was enrolled under the surnames Rizal and Mercado. Years later he explained why in a letter to Blumentritt.

*José Rizal to F. Blumentritt (undated) ... After the sad catastrophe [of 1872] [Paciano] had to leave the university because he was a liberal and because he was disliked by the friars for having lived in the same house as Burgos. I had to go to school in Manila at that time and he advised me to use our second surname, Rizal, to avoid difficulties in my studies ... My family never paid much attention [to our second surname] but now I had to use it, thus giving me the appearance of an illegitimate child!*²

The Ateneo had no reason to regret the admission of the young Rizal, at least in the scholastic field, for the unprepossessing little provincial proved to be an outstanding student. The Jesuit curriculum for the six-year course leading to the degree of bachelor of arts was considerably tougher than the present equivalent for high school and college. Besides Christian doctrine,

it included Spanish, Latin, Greek and French, world geography and history, the history of Spain and the Philippines, mathematics and the sciences (arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, mineralogy, chemistry, physics, botany and zoology), and the classic disciplines of poetry, rhetoric and philosophy. In all of these subjects José was consistently to be graded “excellent.”

He was by no means unique. Such scholastic standards had not been unknown in the Ateneo, nor would they be in the future. In fact he made a rather uncertain start, winning a prize within the first three months, but then going into a prolonged sulk because he “resented some remarks by my professor.” It was his old trouble; wretchedly sensitive, he “decided to apply myself to my studies no longer, a decision which I followed to my misfortune for at the end of the year I was awarded only an *accesit* in all my subjects, with the grade of excellent but without receiving a single prize.” An *accesit* meant that he was among the leaders but not top of his class; however, it was enough to send him running to his mother, who was still in prison. “How I enjoyed surprising her! Afterward we embraced each other and both of us wept; we had not seen each other for more than a year.” He did much better the next year and won a medal. “Once again I visited my mother alone and, like another Joseph, predicted, interpreting one of her dreams, that she would be released within three months, a prophecy which by some coincidence came true ... She came to embrace me as soon as she was released.”

We are usually given the impression that Rizal as a student was a grind, an abnormally precocious bookworm, immune to all the whims and caprices of the ordinary youngster, and it is just as well to realize that he was neither a boy genius nor an unendurable freak. He was lodged in the beginning with a spinster who owed his family money and presumably worked off her debt by taking him in as a boarder. The following year, having found the twenty-five minutes' walk to school tiresome, he moved to another boarding-house, run by a widow, Doña Pepay, in the Walled City itself, although he had once found the Old Spanish quarter “much too dismal.” That year he seems to have done better. “I was able to win prizes in all the semesters and I would have won a medal if some mistakes in Spanish, which unfortunately I spoke badly, had not enabled a young European to have the advantage of me.” He might have kept up his record or even improved it in his third year for he

moved once again, this time at a boarding-house where the landlord was “very strict with me, which was all to the good because I had to keep regular hours.” But after two months and a half a room was vacated at the widow's whose four grandsons seem to have been great distractions, and José relapsed “into the same life I had led before,” with the result that he received only one first prize, a medal in Latin.

Rizal himself suggested the diversion that had the effect on his studies in a description he wrote of a Manila boarding house for students.

It is large and spacious, with two stories above the ground floor, all the windows fashionably grilled. It is like a school early in the morning, and like pandemonium from ten o'clock onwards. During the recreation hours of the boarders, laughter, shouts, and all manner of hustle and bustle fill the house from the entrance courtyard to the main floor. Lightly clad youngsters play *sipa* or perform gymnastics on improvised trapezes. Up and down the staircase eight or nine others fight a mock battle with walking sticks, pikes, hooks, and lassos. But neither besiegers nor besieged suffer much damage; the blows seem always to rebound on the back of the Chinese peddler, selling his hodge-podge of indigestible pies at the foot of the stairs.

He is surrounded by a crowd of boys, tugging at his pigtail (by now all undone and every which way), snatching a pie, haggling over its price, and playing him a thousand tricks. The Chinese screams, swearing in everyone of the language he has picked up, including his own; he blubbers, giggles, grins when scowling 'does not work, and the other way around.' “Ah, thassa no good, you bad conscience, velly bad Christian, you devil, balbalian, lascal!” Two more blows glancing off from the battle on the stairs —no matter, he turns a smiling face, the walking-sticks have only hit his back, and he goes about his business undismayed, contenting himself with shouting! “No mo' johking, ha? No johking!” But, when the blows fall on his tray with all its pies, then he lets loose all imaginable oaths and curses, and swears he will never be back. The boys double their pranks to try his temper, but when they see he is running out of maledictions, and are stuffed full of sweetmeat pies and salted watermelon seeds,

they pay him scrupulously, and the Chinese goes off happy after all, laughing and winking, and takes the light blows which the students give him to speed him off as if they were acts of endearment. "Oh me, oh my!"

Upstairs concerts of piano and violin, guitar and accordion, alternate with the clash of walking-sticks in fencing lessons. At a long wide table the students from Ateneo are at their notebooks, composing essays and solving problems, while others write to their sweethearts on pink notepaper, fretted with lace work and pretty drawings. One is composing a play in verse, beside him another is practicing the scales on the flute—alas, the verse seem fated to be greeted with whistles.

Over there, the older students, university men in silk hose and embroidered slippers, find their amusement in bullying the youngsters, tweaking their ears, already scarlet with so much abuse. Two or three others hold a shrieking weeping youngster who is defending with kicks the drawstrings of his underpants: the purpose of the exercise is to reduce him to the state in which he was born: squalling and stark naked.

In one of the rooms, around a night table, four others are playing cards amid great shouts and laughter, to the manifest annoyance of a fifth who is conning his textbook as he stalks up and down a long corridor. At last, approaching the gamesters, he cries out: "How depraved you are! At cards already, so early in the morning! Well, now, what do we have here? Play the three of spades, man!"

In the dining-room a young man, who has just received from home a tin of sardines, a bottle of wine, and other provisions, is engaged in a heroic effort to get his friends to share the buffet, against their equally heroic resistance. Others, for their part, are bathing themselves on the open terrace, and, playing firemen, bombard one another with bucketsful of water from the household well, to the great amusement of onlookers.

If Doña Pepay's boarding house was anything like this, and we may judge from its popularity that it was, it is not strange that the Mercados decided to

make José a boarder at the Ateneo for the following term. “It was about time,” he himself was to admit. He was dissatisfied with his showing the previous year “although I know there were many who would have danced with joy” if they had received much less than his medal in Latin. But “I was almost thirteen years old, and I had yet to gain a reputation for brilliance among my classmates.”

Living under full Jesuit discipline was rather a different matter, and the results were soon reflected in his studies. The new term started on the 16th June 1875. “My schoolmates,” he noted, “received me well. The wardrobe-keeper assigned me to a room situated in a corner of the dormitory, facing the sea and the breakwater. My room was about two yards square. I had an iron cot, on which my bedclothes were placed, a small table with a basin which a servant was supposed to keep filled with water, a chair, and a clothes-rack. I was forgetting to mention that the small table had a drawer containing soap, a comb, a hairbrush, a toothbrush, toothpowder, etc. I kept the little money I had, about eight pesos, under my pillow.” These notes in his journal are commonplace enough, but they suggest the man José was to become: methodical, observant, careful, frugal.

It was a long way from Doña Pepay's and the university gamblers in their embroidered slippers, the peddler's Chinese pies, the mock sieges on the stairs and the flowered pink notepaper. “As a rule we did not go to our rooms except twice a day, once at midday to wash ourselves, and then at night to sleep. On holidays we dressed up in the afternoon and went for a walk. The rest of the time we spent in the study hall, at play, in class, in the dining-room and in the chapel ... Except for a few, all my companions were good, simple, pious, fair and friendly. There were no bullies among us for pre-eminence was won through intelligence.”

He seems to have been popular with his schoolmates. Some of the letters to him during this period which have been preserved suggest that he had made a special place for himself in the trust and affection of his companions. One of them sends him a poem on his birthday, with the injunction: “Don't show these verses to anyone, not even to your closest friend!”³ He had his own favorites. When he heard some twenty years later that Anacleto del Rosario had died, he wrote Blumentritt from Dapitan, recalling their schooldays together.

*José Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 9 May 1895 — ... My old schoolmate and dear friend, Don Anacleto del Rosario y Sales, our country's illustrious chemist, has died, according to the papers. We have barely had anything to do with each other for some years past because he, a fervent Catholic, took me for halfway a heretic and an atheist. For all that, I always loved him from the bottom of my heart. I understood his intolerance and could explain it to myself; he was all heart, and what he loved, he loved truly. We were childhood friends, schoolmates; we won our first literary successes and our first prizes side by side. We won the first prizes in the same contests; we supported each other in our discussions with others; his side was mine and mine was his ... In the affections of my heart, Don Anacleto was the exemplar of my friendships at school, just as you now embody my present friendships in the field of free inquiry.*⁴

As he himself suggests, José had more than the average share of scholastic honors. Although he was frequently ill he was awarded five medals the first year he was a boarder at the Ateneo. It gave him “huge satisfaction” because, he explained modestly, “I thus could make some sort of return to my father for his worries.” The next year he did just as well. “I won five more medals, due to the indulgence of my superiors and my own not inconsiderable luck.”

Too soon it was the end of the course. “The day before the awarding of prizes I was tormented by the saddest and most depressing thoughts I had ever had. Whenever I thought that I must now leave that peaceful retreat in which the eyes of my intelligence had been opened to a degree, and my heart had begun to learn nobler feelings, I fell into a profound despondency. On the last night, going to the dormitory, and remembering that that would be my last night in my quiet room because, so they told me, the world was waiting, I had a cruel foreboding which unfortunately came true. The dismal light of the moon, shining on the lighthouse and the sea, offered to my eyes a vast silent scene; it seemed to me that on the morrow another life awaited me. I could not get to sleep until one o'clock that night. It dawned and I dressed, prayed fervently in the chapel, and commended my life to the Virgin that she might protect me when I set foot in that world which inspired me with such dread. The prizes were awarded; I was given the

degree of bachelor of arts; and I think that any young man fifteen years old, popular among his companions and his teachers, with five medals and the diploma of bachelor—the goal of every student in the secondary course—should have felt satisfied with himself. Alas, it was not so. I was depressed, indifferent, brooding; two or three tears slid down my cheeks, tears paid in token of farewell to the times gone by, to a contentment that would not return, to a tranquility of spirit that was slipping out of my grasp, leaving me bereft.”

[2]

The influence of the Jesuits on Rizal cannot be underestimated. As he himself pointed out, “I had entered school still a boy, with little knowledge of Spanish, with an intelligence only partly developed, and almost without any refinement in my feelings.” He had been subjected thereafter to one of the world's most thorough and gripping systems of indoctrination, the Jesuit *ratio studiorum*, under tight and constant discipline, with every incentive of competition and reward. Few students of the Jesuits ever outgrow their affection, trust and instinctive deference to these superb teachers; the few, like Voltaire, become their most effective antagonists.

Yet there is no secret formula for Jesuit education. In fact the Jesuits were not founded as a teaching Order at all. But early on in the struggle against Protestantism for the soul of Europe, the Jesuits had realized the fundamental importance of gaining control of the minds of men from infancy; the precepts learned in childhood become imbedded in the subconscious to resist the doubts and denials of maturity, providing an automatic, almost instinctive backing to the carefully argued apologetics of Catholic doctrine. Nor were these precepts to be hammered in willy-nilly; they were to be part of a well-balanced education calculated to satisfy the eager young mind and sharpen all its responses. The *ratio studiorum*, three centuries old when Rizal entered the Ateneo, has been described as “a compilation of general principles and detailed instructions for teachers, rather a spirit and a method than a mechanical formula or a blind pedagogical technique” The “spirit” which it infused was the spirit of the classical humanities, the arts of human culture; the “method” in brief, combined memory and understanding, the daily lesson being explained in a

“prelection” and recited the next day ... Latin and Greek were taught not so much for any practical value they might have as because their precise grammatical rules, with all the variations in conjugations and declensions, were believed to train the mind to think logically, a discipline similar to mathematics. But above all, Jesuit education pursued one aim: “*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*,” it was all “for the greater glory of God.” The ultimate purpose of the Jesuit teacher was to make steadfast lifelong Catholics. The philosophy of man as the creature of a personal God was the climax of the collegiate course; classes began and ended with prayers, and the whole of school life was centered, not on the gymnasium, the theater or the laboratory, but on the chapel. The highest level of what we now call extra-curricular activities was to be found in the religious confraternities, the *Congregación Mariana* or Sodality of Our Lady, and the *Apostolado de la Oración*, the Apostleship of Prayer, whose membership was reserved for those students who displayed the highest qualities of scholarship and leadership.⁵

The young José was a pious child even before entering the Ateneo. From an early age his mother had “taught me to read and say haltingly the humble prayers that I raised fervently to God.” Doña Teodora, like most native women in the Philippines, was indeed most devout. When her second son was born, she had made a vow of pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin of Antipolo for safe delivery, and José had kept it for her. The family would pray the Rosary every night. When he was sent to Biñang, José heard Mass every day, usually at four o'clock in the morning and, so he records, “went often to the chapel of Our Lady of Peace.” His student journal is loud with invocations to the Deity. “How fervently I went into the chapel of the Jesuits to hear Mass, what fervent prayers I raised to God!” he exclaims, remembering his very first day at the Ateneo. “In my loneliness I knew no one else to invoke.” On the eve of his graduation, as we have seen, he “prayed fervently in the chapel and commended my life to the Virgin.” He was a leader in the Sodality and the Apostleship of Prayer. A letter he received shortly after his graduation from an old professor, Father Jacinto Febres, gives a taste of the Jesuits' solicitude for the spiritual health of their students. José had written to Father Jacinto (surely the eponym of the “P. Jacinto” who was supposed to be writing his student journal?), and the latter had replied from Rome, where he had been sent for his health, to his “beloved José” on his birthday.

*Fr. J. Febres, S.J., to José Rizal, 19 March 1877 — ... In your letter you recall a souvenir I gave you, which shows the Divine Gardener planting a flower and you say that the flower is planted in your heart. That flower is the gift of virtue. If you have a clear conscience, be vigilant to keep it so because it will soon wither; to keep it blooming, refresh it with the holy waters of frequent Confession and Communion. Try to be good, bomb-proof good, so that when you get to know evil, when you should meet it, it may not take hold of your heart; and instead you will go running to the feet of your Father Confessor, revealing the temptation to him, and he like a good father, like a good gardener, will know how to cultivate that flower. So shall it grow and bear the fruit which you will gather in heaven.*⁶

Another letter is also of some interest because it was written to José the following year by Father José Vilaclara, another of his professors, who would play such a significant part at the end of his life.

*Fr. J. Vilaclara, S.J., to José Rizal 16 July 1878 — ... Carry on as you are doing now, with your time religiously apportioned, and may you gain the best result in virtue and in the sciences. I congratulate you with all my heart ... In the name of God do not neglect your attendance at the meetings of the Sodality and your reception of the Sacraments which are the most effective means against perdition and the best precaution against the thousand traps that will be laid for you by the enemy of souls. If you only knew how many times I have remembered you and how often you have been the subject of conversation among us Fathers in the Mission. Farewell, be very good and pray for me so that one not too distant day we may see each other and be happy together in Heaven.*⁷

[3]

Two other traits must be remarked in the young Rizal for the importance they would have in his later life. His sensitiveness and self-assertiveness, which have already been observed, now took on a strong racial tinge.

Probably for the first time in his life he came into direct contact and competition with boys who were not natives, *indios*, like himself. Blumentritt recalled in his short biography of Rizal:

Rizal used to say that as a boy he felt deeply the little regard with which he was treated by the Spanish simply because he was an *indio*. From that time on he strove to find out what moral right the Spanish, or for that matter any white people, had to despise a man who thought like them, learned the same things and had the same capabilities, simply because he had a brown skin and wiry hair ...

Rizal asked himself: Are these views just? He put his question to himself while still a schoolboy, when he used to examine closely not only his white classmates but himself. He soon noticed that, in school at least, there was no difference in the standard of intellect between whites and *indios*; there were lazy and diligent, unruly and well behaved, less talented and more highly gifted boys as much among the white as among the colored.

These racial comparisons suddenly spurred him on in his studies; a kind of race jealousy had taken hold of him. He rejoiced whenever he succeeded in solving some difficult problem which his white classmates had been unable to tackle. This he regarded not so much as a personal success as a triumph for his own people.

Thus it was at school that he first gained the conviction that, other things being equal, whites and *indios* had the same capacity for mental work and made the same progress. From which he concluded that whites and *indios* had the same mental ability.⁸

There may have been a touch of hindsight and rationalization in these recollections of his school days when Rizal passed them on to Blumentritt—certainly they are not to be found in his student journal except for the passing excuse that he had lost the medal one year to a “young European only because of some mistakes in Spanish.” But “race jealousy” does suggest an explanation for the “sudden” improvement in his scholastic record; it was racial pride as much as the monastic discipline and seclusion of boarding-school life which had driven him to win five medals a year.

One educational device at the Ateneo was calculated to stimulate to the outmost his competitive instincts. At that time each class was divided into two teams or “empires,” named in imitation of the classic wars as the “Roman” for boarders and the “Carthaginian” for day-scholars or out-boarders. Each “empire” in turn had its ranks and dignities. The best scholar in each team was the “emperor,” and the next best were the “tribune,” the “decurion,” the “centurion,” and the “standard bearer.” The two “empires” competed with each other as teams, while the individuals within each team also strove to rise in rank by means of challenges. One student would challenge another to answer questions in the day's lesson. His opponent lost place in the line if he committed three mistakes; so also might one “empire” defeat the other. Each had banners: red for the “Romans,” blue for the “Carthaginians.” At the start of the term, both banners were raised at an equal height on the right side of the classroom. Upon the first defeat, the banner of the losing “empire” was moved to the left. Upon the second, it was returned to the right but placed below the other flag; upon the third it was dipped and moved back to the left; upon the fourth, the flag was reversed and returned to the right; upon the fifth, the reversed flag was moved to the left; upon the sixth— final catastrophe! —the banner was changed with the figure of a donkey.

José, as a newcomer, started at the tail-end of the “Carthaginian” team; in a month he was “emperor” and was given a holy picture for a prize. Then, as we have seen, he went into a sulk although, since his final grades consistently remained “excellent,” he cannot have inflicted on his “empire” the humiliation of being represented by a donkey. His journal does not follow his fortunes in this classroom war but we may fancy, in the light of his observations to Blumentritt, that he took a special pleasure in challenging his Spanish classmates. Nor was he content with proving mere equality.

There became apparent in Rizal, as he himself realized, a kind of self-presumption. He began to believe that the Tagalogs were mentally superior to the Spaniards (the only whites with whom he had so far come into contact) and Rizal liked to relate how he arrived at this paradoxical conclusion.

He told himself that in school only Spanish was used, that is to say, the whites thought in their mother-tongue while the *indios*

had to struggle with a foreign language in order to obtain instruction; hence, the *indios* were mentally superior to the Spaniards if they succeeded not only in keeping pace with the whites but even in managing occasionally to surpass them.

This race consciousness, which he took as a challenge, elicited from him a response that was to colour the whole of his life. The channel which this response would take can also be traced to these early days at the Ateneo. He fell headlong in love with literature. In some ways it was an inherited weakness. We are told that one of his maternal aunts was a famous poet in Vigan; his own mother, as we have seen, was not only a mathematician, but “could recite and even write poetry,” and often corrected his classroom verses. One of his first was dedicated to her on her birthday anniversary^{*} It is not without charm.

^{*}“This poem is attributed to Rizal by J.C. de Veyra. However, Leoncio López-Rizal attributes it to his own elder brother Antonio.

*¿Por qué exhalan a porfía
Del cáliz dulces olores
Las embalsamadas flores
En este festivo día?*

*¿Y por qué en la selva amena
Se oye dulce melodía
Que asemeja a la armonía
De la arpada filomena?*

*¿Por qué en la mullida grama
Las aves al son del viento
Exhalan meloso acento
Y saltan de rama en rama?*

*¿Y la fuente cristalina,
Formando dulce murmullo
Del céfiro al suave arrullo,
Entre las flores camina?*

*¿Por qué veo en el Oriente
Más bella y encantadora
Asomar la rubia aurora
Entre arreboles su frente?*

*Es que hoy celebran tu día,
Oh mi madre cariñosa,
Con su perfume la rosa
Y el ave con su armonía.*

*Y la fuente rumorosa
En este día felice
Con su murmullo te dice
Que vivas siempre gozosa.*

*Y de esa fuente al rumor,
Oye la primera nota
Que ahora de mi laúd brota
Al impulso de mi amor.⁽⁹⁾*

The other verses that followed this “love's first note” are clearly, classroom exercises, written on assignment, didactic, formal, prescribed themes set to a testing variety of rhymes and meters, the gymnastic training that any poet along traditional lines must undergo. But the professorial blue pencil has not wholly stifled the spontaneity and wit of the following short poem addressed “To the Child Jesus.”

*¿Cómo, Dios-niño, has venido
A la tierra en pobre cuna?
¿Ya te escarnece Fortuna,
Cuando apenas has nacido?
¡Ay, triste! Del Cielo Rey
Y llega cual vil humano!
¿No quieres ser soberano,
Sino Pastor de tu grey?¹⁰*

“A Message of Remembrance to My Home Town” is more self-conscious, artificial, almost hackneyed.

*Cuando recuerdo los días
Que vieron mi edad primera
Junto a la verde ribera
De un lago murmurador;
Cuando recuerdo el susurro
De Favonio que mi frente
Recreaba dulcemente
Con delicioso frescor;*

*Cuando miro el blanco lirio
Henchir con ímpetu el viento
Y tempestuoso elemento
Manso en la arena dormir;
Cuando aspiro de las flores
Grata esencia embriagadora
Que se exhala cuando aurora
Nos comienza a sonreír.*

*Recuerdo, recuerdo triste
Tu faz, infancia preciosa
Que una madre cariñosa
¡Ay! consiguió embellecer;
Recuerdo un pueblo sencillo
Mi contento, dicha y cuna
Junto a la fresca laguna
Asiento de mi querer.^{[11](#)}*

J.C. de Veyra has collected and edited the text of all the other poems of Rizal. Most of them, written in the Ateneo, are exercises not only in poetry or versification but also in religion and Spanish patriotism, one of the principles of the *ratio studiorum* being a thorough compenetration of all the subjects of the curriculum. There are verses for Magellan, for Urbiztondo (“the Terror of Jolo”), for Columbus, for the Catholic Kings taking Granada, and a verse translation of a Jesuit's Italian play on a Roman martyr. The prose translation had been furnished to Rizal by his professor.^{[12](#)} “I beg your patience, reader,” says the young José in a disarming preface, “I am only a child, and the work of a child is childish, as a rule ... Forgive my

boldness if at the age of fourteen I have ventured to write and intrude in the illustrious and fastidious theater of the poets, orators, historians and rhetoricians.” With that one can forgive the young José anything, even his jingo jingles on Elcano. The title was “And he was a Spaniard, this Elcano, the first to circumnavigate the world!”

“It will be said,” writes de Veyra, who is most qualified to judge Rizal as a poet, “that these are all student compositions; that is true; the dexterity of the writer can scarcely be noticed, but the eaglet begins to show its claws in certain strokes of wit, and in [“Education Gives Glory to Our Native Land”] one may observe a tendency towards wider fields than those which are strictly scholastic.” Whatever one may think of Rizal as a college poet, his prowess would seem to have involved him in an incident with the parish priest of his home town, the same Father Leoncio López who, as we have already seen from Foreman's memoirs, was drawn to his family by more than family ties. On his death Rizal was to write:

*J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 23 August 1891 — ... (Father López) was tall, held himself up straight and had a distinguished appearance. He was cultured but shy and affectionate; his best friend was my father, and I his friend among the young people. Formerly we were not on friendly terms because when I wrote a poem at the age of fourteen [a poem written for his brother-in-law's birthday, according to Leoncio López Rizal] he said that the poem could not possibly be mine, and that I had probably copied it out of some book. This offended me and I talked back rather violently. My mother, who was present, was displeased with me. Half a year later Father Leoncio happened to hear from the Jesuits that I was again writing poetry, and the old man (who was then seventy) took the trouble of making the trip to Manila and calling on me at the Ateneo Municipal to make his apologies. This gesture of his made me his best friend, and ever since then we became the best of friends in town.*¹³

Literature—and in the Ateneo collegiate course this meant poetry and rhetoric studied and practiced on the model of the Greek and Latin classics—was by far José's favorite subject, and its professor his favorite teacher. His name was Father Francisco de Paula Sánchez and Rizal described him

in his student journal as “a model of rectitude, solicitude and devotion to his pupils' progress,” although many years later he was to modify this opinion and to write to Blumentritt:

José Rizal to Blumentritt, 26 May 1890 — ... Father Sánchez is a penetrating observer, although rather pessimistic, always looking at the bad side of things. When we were in school we used to call him a 'dark spirit' and the students nicknamed him *Paniki*, which is a kind of bat ...¹⁴

Father “Bat's” zeal was such, however, that José “who could scarcely speak middling Spanish” at the beginning, and had in fact to take special lessons in that language at the neighboring convent school of Santa Isabel, “was able after a short time to write fair compositions.” Even when he had gone to philosophy and the sciences, in the crowning year of the course, José could not put aside his literary inclinations. “In spite of the fact that Father Vilaclara had told me to stop communing with the Muses and to say a last farewell to them, which brought tears to my eyes, I continued in my spare time to speak and cultivate the beautiful language of Olympus under the direction of Father Sánchez. So sweet is the society of the Muses that, once having tasted it, I cannot conceive how a young heart can ever forsake it. What matters, I asked myself, the poverty which is said to be their constant companion? Is there anything more enchanting than poetry, or anything more depressing than the prosaic positivism of gold-hardened hearts? So dreamed I then,” and even in his science classes, saw in the conchology specimens “a Venus in every shell.”

Evaluating “the two years [his last in the Ateneo collegiate course] which I consider the happiest in my life, if happiness can be said to consist in the absence of disagreeable cares,” José found that the study of poetry and rhetoric “had elevated my feelings;” also that “patriotic sentiments as well as an exquisite sensibility had developed greatly in me.” We are bound to interpret those “patriotic sentiments” in the light of his successful experiments in racial capacities. “A Spaniard was Elcano,” and he was not, but the young poet had discovered that he was not less of a man for all that.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter IV

(1) Retana, 19, quoting an article by Xerez Burgos entitled *Rizal de niño*, in *Republica Filipina*, 30 December 1898.

(2) Ep. Riz., V, 468.

(3) Ep. Riz., I, 3. The schoolmate was R. Aguado.

(4) Ep. Riz., V, 678.

(5) A Sodality (an alternative name for a confraternity) is an association of Catholics set up under ecclesiastical direction for the exercise of some work of piety or charity and for the advancement of public worship. A Sodality is particularly associated with the Virgin Mary. The Apostleship of Prayer is an association founded in France in 1844 under Jesuit direction, whose object is the promotion of prayer for the intentions of the members in union with God in Heaven. The practices of the association are the daily offering to God of one's good works, spiritual and material, the daily recitation of a decade of the Rosary, and Holy Communion on prescribed days.

(6) Ep. Riz., I, 2.

(7) Ep. Riz., I, 6.

(8) Translation from Blumentritt's article, photostats of which were given to me by Dr. Hajk, Czech Ambassador in London.

(9) Poesías, 2.

(10) Poesías, 5.

(11) Poesías, 4.

(12) Poesías, 73. De Veyra states that "San Eustaquio, Mártir" was first published in 1916 in the Jesuit publication, *Cultura Social*, the manuscript having been lost subsequently, possibly in the Ateneo fire in 1932. *Cultura Social* prefaced its publication with the note that Father Francisco P. Sánchez, who had been Rizal's professor of

rhetoric, “translated the drama's original Italian into Spanish prose, which he turned over to the novice poet, so that the latter might spend the holidays following the rhetoric course of 1876, in putting it into verse.”

(13) Ep. Riz., V, 601. Rizal added that “you will see his portrait in my new book *El Filibusterismo*; I give him the name of Father Florentino.”

(14) Ep. Riz., V, 562.



V

University Life

“Poor boy,” murmured Father Fernández, feeling his eyes moisten. “I envy the Jesuits who educated you.” [The Dominican] was absolutely wrong; the Jesuits were disowning Isagani, and when they learned that afternoon that he had been arrested, they said that he was compromising them.

“That young man is headed for disaster, and will do us harm. We want it clearly understood that he did not pick up his ideas here.” The Jesuits were not wrong; such ideas come only from God through Nature.

“My mother said that I knew enough already, and that I should not go back to Manila,” José noted in his journal. “Did my mother perhaps have a foreboding of what was to happen to me? Does a mother's heart really have a second sight?” He himself thought that her “foreboding” concerned nothing more—although it was serious and painful enough to him at the time—than an unfortunate infatuation, which will be dealt with farther on. But his mother's “second sight” was clearer and more penetrating than he could have imagined at the time. What she foresaw when her José was still a schoolboy with no idea of the fatal mission he was to undertake for his people, was nothing less than that “they would cut off his head.”

José Rizal to Blumentritt, 8 November 1888— ... I still remember and will never forget that when I was sixteen my mother told my father: “Don't send him to Manila any longer; he knows enough; if he gets to know any more, they will cut off his head.” My father did not reply, but my brother took me to Manila despite my mother's tears.¹

But Don Francisco had no intention of cutting short his younger son's scholastic career, particularly since Paciano had had to leave the university himself. José was sent back to Manila even though he was “still uncertain as to what profession to follow ... This question was to bedevil him for years. At first he had been attracted to the priesthood (“Rizal would have been a Jesuit!”) but this is a natural propensity in young boys and girls in religious schools. The Jesuits themselves seem to have suggested that he take up farming. But his real choice was between literature and the law and medicine. As late as 1883, when he was already in Madrid, Paciano can be found arguing with him on the subject.

Paciano Rizal to José Rizal, 1883 —

... I do not think that the study of law will suit you, but rather the arts; in this I am of the same view as our parish priest, and really a lawyer here is landlord, teacher, farmer, contractor, that is to say, everything but a lawyer; on the other hand, those who do practice law collect their fees for defending one side or the other, whether it is right or wrong, something which would run against

the grain of your conscience, while there are few who practice medicine and the arts, they make progress here and they live peacefully, the one thing we should look for in this world.²

Perhaps Paciano was wrong in discouraging him from the law. Rizal, a born polemicist, with a talent for self-expression and a keen sense of justice, would have made a splendid lawyer. In any case José marked time by enrolling both in the Ateneo for a course in land surveying and in the Dominican University of Santo Tomás in the course of philosophy and letters, apparently because his father wanted him to study metaphysics. “But so little taste did I have for it,” he was to recall, “that I did not even buy the textbook in common use.” This did not prevent him from being graded “excellent” in cosmology, theodicy and the history of philosophy. He also engaged successfully in the final test of the course, a public defence in Latin of “the most intricate and complicated propositions” in metaphysics, although he professed himself dissatisfied with his performance. “I acquitted myself very indifferently, since I had not prepared myself as well as I should have.” In the Ateneo he won two medals, one in topography and another in agriculture. He was later to qualify as a surveyor and expert assessor with the grade of “excellent.”³

In the next term he made up his mind to study medicine because his mother's sight was failing. He was far below his usual standard; in the pre-medical and medical courses which he took in the University he was given in sixteen subjects three passing grades, eight “goods,” three “very goods,” and only two “excellents.”⁴

There may have been various reasons for this. Perhaps medicine was not his real vocation; in a letter to a friend he sounded somewhat less than reconciled to his chosen career. “I am among corpses and human bones transformed into an inhuman quack, and I used to be so squeamish!”⁵ Yet for all that he was to prove a most skillful ophthalmologist, a proof perhaps more of his versatility than of his true bent.

For another thing he seems to have been unhappy with the Dominicans. Like many former students of the Jesuits he missed the discipline tempered with understanding and personal encouragement that had drawn out his native talents at the Ateneo. His “race jealousy” appears to have been outraged by professors who played favorites and treated their Filipino

pupils with contempt, addressing them “like good friars” in the familiar *tu* and even in pidgin Spanish. There is much that is autobiographical in the descriptions of student life in *El Filibusterismo*. One deals with a class in physics at the Dominican University (Rizal took this subject there in the 1878-1879 term).

Plácido Penitente had been known as a scholar of great application in his hometown of Tanawan, a Latinist and a logician, yet now he wanted to quit his studies in pure discouragement. The day of the physics class Plácido is delayed by a chatterbox, misses the roll call, but decides to attend anyway so that he may catch the professor's eye. He sees one classmate humiliated by the sardonic friar-professor, Father Millón, and is trying to help another one by playing “ghost” and prompting him on the sly when he is caught out.

Father Millón looked him over for a moment as if savoring a new dish. It would be pleasant to humiliate and put to ridicule this young gallant, always so neatly dressed, with his head held high and the calm look in his eyes. It would be an act of charity really, so the charitable professor took it upon himself in all good conscience, repeating his question slowly.

“The book says that metallic mirrors are made of brass or of alloys of different metals. True or false?”

“If the book says so, Father ...”

“Is tin a metal?”

“It would seem so, Father, according to the book ...”

“It is, it is. And the word alloy indicates that it is mixed with mercury, which is another metal. Therefore, a glass mirror is a metallic mirror; therefore, the terms on which the classification is based are interchangeable; therefore, the classification itself is erroneous; therefore ... Well, how do you explain that, Mr. Ghost?”

The professor savored every “therefore” with relish, winking as if to say: “Your goose is cooked!”

“The thing is ... That is to say ...” Plácido stammered.

“That is to say, you have not understood the lesson, you miserable ghost, who tries to save another when he himself is lost!”

The class did not resent this; on the contrary, many found the rhyme amusing and laughed. Plácido bit his lips.

“What is your name?” asked the professor.

Plácido gave it curtly.

“Aha! Plácido Penitente! Well, you seem more impertinent than penitent to me, but I shall give you something to be penitent about.”

Self-satisfied with this play on words, the professor now called on him to recite the lesson for the day. The young man was in such a state of mind that he made three mistakes, at which the professor nodding his head, slowly opened the class roll and with all deliberation went through it, muttering the names in order.

“Palencia ... Palomo ... Panganiban ... Pedraza ... Pelado ... Peláez ... Penitente, aha ... Plácido Penitente! With fifteen absences!”

Plácido snapped to:

“Fifteen absences, Father?”

“Fifteen voluntary absences,” the professor went on. “So you need only one more for suspension.”

“Fifteen absences, fifteen absences?” the bewildered Plácido repeated. “I have only been absent four times and, including today, five, if at all.”

“Thassolaih, sah, thassolaih,” the professor answered, peering at the young man over his gold-rimmed glasses. You admit you have been absent five times, and God only knows how many more times than that. Now, since I call the roll only rarely, every time I catch anyone absent I give him five marks. Now, then, what are five times five? I bet you have forgotten your multiplication table. Five times five?”

“Twenty-five.”

“Thassolaih, thassolaih. So you are even short ten marks, because I have caught you out only three times. If I had caught you every time, ouch! Now then, three times five?”

“Fifteen.”

“Fifteen, allah same, fish and game,” concluded the professor, closing the roll.

“One more and out you go, goobay! Out op dee door! Ah, and now, a zero in recitation.”

He opened the roll again, looked for the young man's name and placed the zero against it.

“Well, well! Well, now, a zero, I said! And your very first time to recite too!”

“But Father,” Plácido exclaimed, restraining himself, “if Your Reverence gives me a zero in recitation, surely you should erase my bad marks for absent today!”

His Reverence did not reply. Having first put down the zero, he studied it, shaking his head—the zero must be drawn artistically—, then he closed the roll and asked with heavy irony:

“Oh sah, whassamaleh?”

“It is impossible to understand, Father, how one can be absent and yet recite the day's lesson. Your Reverence would say, to be and not to be ...”

“Oh, help! Ouch! A peelosoper already, but maybe not yet! So it is impossible to understand, ha? *Sed patet experientia et contra experientiam negantem, fusilibus est arguendum*, unnahstan? Facts is facts and anybody argue against facts, more better shoot him! And can't you imagine, dear philosopher, that one can be absent from class and not know the lesson too? Does absence necessarily imply knowledge? What do you say, my apprentice philosopher?”

This last gibe broke the camel's back. Plácido, who was reputed to be a logician among his friends, lost his temper, hurled away his textbook, rose and faced the professor.

“That's enough, Father, enough! Your Reverence can give me all the bad marks he wants but has no right to insult me. Your reverence can keep his class; I am not taking any more.”

And without further ado he walked out.

Rizal had been graded “*aprovechado*,” that is to say, “proficient” in physics in his pre-medical course in Santo Tomás so that it is reasonable to conclude that Plácido Penitente's experiences were not wholly his; he may have witnessed them, he did not endure them.

[2]

To be wholly fair it must be remarked that Rizal's mediocre showing at the University may have been due to other causes, one of them, surely, the exciting distractions of youth. Boys who are brought up among sisters are not usually noted for their virility but Jose, either by way of compensation or because he had been kept so long in boarding-school away from feminine company, displayed an early interest in it.

His first infatuation—and clearly it cannot have been more than that—was with a saucy little Batangueña by the name of Segunda Katigbak. He tells this story best himself. “I had nothing to do in Manila. A schoolmate of mine, who had left school three months before [this was July 1877, more or less] and who lived at the time on the same street as I did, was the only friend on whom I could count then ... My friend M. [Mariano Katigbak] went every Sunday as well as on other days to the house where I was staying; and afterwards we went calling together at the house in Trozo of a grandmother of mine who was a friend of his father. The days passed quietly and uneventfully for me until on one of our Sunday visits to Trozo we came upon a young girl, perhaps about fourteen years old, virginal, attractive, engaging, who received my companion with such familiarity that I gathered she was his sister. I had already heard about her and that she was going to be married to a relative of hers whose name I did not then recall. Indeed we found there a tall man, neatly dressed, who seemed to be her fiance. She was rather short, with eyes that were eloquent and ardent at times, and languid at others, rosy-cheeked, with an enchanting and provocative smile that revealed very beautiful teeth, and the air of a sylph;

her entire self diffused a mysterious charm. She was not the most beautiful woman I had ever seen but I have not met another more alluring and beguiling.”

This is the very language of adolescence and infatuation, and the courtship, or more properly flirtation, that followed was in the same spirit, almost inconceivable a hundred years later: demure, mannerly, bright-eyed, remote, continually seeking opportunities that were no sooner found than shyly lost. The Filipina girls in Rizal's time were married young because their parents wanted to be relieved as soon as possible of the vexing responsibility of protecting the virginity, nay, the inaccessibility, of their daughters, which was the cult of their future bridegrooms, jealous, possessive, sensitive to the slightest offence against their honor. The girls themselves were probably glad enough to marry whomever their parents chose for them, in simple duty and as an escape, an emancipation, from the rigid conventions of the chaperoned virgin. In another less inhibited generation a century afterwards girls would marry just as early for exactly the opposite reasons!

José never found himself alone with the fascinating Segunda. They would see each other on their Sunday visits to the Trozo house, but always in company. He made a sketch of her portrait, and it turned out badly.

He played chess and chequers with the tall spruce fiancée, and lost. “From time to time she looked at me, and I blushed.” The conversation turned to novels and other literary matters “and then I was able to join with advantage.”

A fresh opportunity for meeting arose when Olimpia, José's sister, was enrolled in the Colegio de la Concordia, the same convent school on the outskirts of the city where Segunda was a boarder. The two girls became fast friends and on visiting days, when their two brothers called on them, they often made a sedate but “animated group,” although Mariano Katigbak was more interested in speaking to a third girl whom he was to marry.

Segunda, “gay, talkative and witty,” seems to have taken much of the initiative.

“Do you have a sweetheart?”

“No,” replied José, fishing outrageously. “I have never dreamed of having one. I know only too well that nobody would pay attention to me, least of all the pretty ones. “

“What? You deceive yourself. Do you want me to find you one?”

He counter-attacked by boldly teasing her about her engagement. But she parried his question with a smile: “My parents want me to go home but I do not want to; I should like to stay in school five years more.”

When the convent clock struck seven and it was time to go she asked him again if there was anything she could do for him.

“Señorita,” he answered, “I have never been in the habit of asking women to do things for me. I expect them to ask me to do things for them.”

Nevertheless she made some paper flowers, a favorite accomplishment of the times, and on his next visit she appeared with two white roses in her hand, “one of which she offered to her brother, and the other one to me, placing it in my hatband with her own hands.” In return he presented her with a pencil portrait copied from a photograph she had given him.

The following Thursday, another visiting day, she and Olimpia had two red roses ready which they gave to their respective brothers. José insisted that his sister was incapable of making the flowers and finally, with a pretty blush Segunda admitted she had made them herself.

He would keep the rose as long as he lived, he pledged and added: “Do you know it is very painful for me to lose you now that I have got to know you?”

“But I am not getting married!” she protested, the tears springing to her eyes.

But she was. José told himself: “Perhaps she really loves me, perhaps her love for her future husband is nothing more than a girlish infatuation ... I am not rich or handsome, I am neither sophisticated nor attractive, and if she loves me her love should be true because it does not rest on vain and shifting foundations.” But he could never bring himself round to confessing his affection; there were a few inconclusive meetings, snatches of conversation, glances, short walks; there was talk in their narrow circle of their mutual attraction, which scandalised the prim José, who in fact never got any farther than asking her if she would find it disagreeable to “belong to another town,” to which she answered no. He could not have asked her to do more; she had tried to be witty with him, she had tried by turns to be distant, solicitous, bantering, grave; he would not be drawn, such an

exasperating young man! Their last conversation was typical. He knew she would be going home, probably to be married to another man. She told him she would be leaving on a Saturday, but he had already planned to leave the Friday before and it seemed to him “most improper” to change his mind. We can scarcely blame the long suffering Segunda when “she grew thoughtful and raised her eyes to heaven!”

She would have to pass by Kalamba on her way home and he waited for her, riding out to the highway on his favorite white horse. “Suddenly I heard a noise; I raised my head and saw carriages and horses enveloped in a cloud of dust. My heart beat violently and I must have turned pale. I walked back a short distance to the place where I had tied my horse. There I waited. “Segunda, her sister, and some schoolmates were in the second carriage. “She greeted me, smiling and waving her handkerchief. All I did was to take off my hat. I said nothing. This has happened to me at the most trying moments of my life. My tongue, so glib at other times, falls silent when my heart overflows with feeling. The carriage passed by swift as a shadow ... I mounted my horse as the third carriage was coming. My friend was in it; he stopped and invited me to go along to his town. I was about to follow for I was well mounted. But at the critical moments of my life I have always acted against my heart's desire, obeying contradictory purposes and powerful doubts. I spurred my horse and went another way without having chosen it.”

[3]

“Ended, my confident young love! Ended at an early hour, my first love!” he mourned in his journal. But after all Segunda was not the only girl he knew. There were “Leonoras, Doloreses, Ursulas, Felipas, Vicentas, Margaritas.” Waiting for classes to start at the University, one could see them alight from their carriages at the Dominican church of Santo Domingo and perhaps catch a glimpse of a shapely foot. Or one could follow them at a proper distance in the various fairs, or, once formally introduced, call on them at their houses to play cards and exchange little penciled notes, or later at night flirt across the grilled windows of the ground floor. On Sunday evenings there was the Malecón by the way where one could, under the relentless eye of mother or aunt, share the occasional seat of the carriage

with one's sweetheart, her scent in one's nostrils, the feel of her silken dress, as if by chance, against one's hand, her profile deliciously near in the moonlight! It is all nostalgically recalled in *El Filibusterismo*.

At this time José seems to have become involved with two girls named Leonor—Leonor Rivera and Leonor (nicknamed Orang) Valenzuela. He was still as cautious as ever; each thought she was favored over the other. Even when he was already in Madrid poor Orang still had her hopes which José was not above encouraging through his friend Chenggoy (José) Cecilio. Hearing that another friend had asked for her hand, Chenggoy had hurried to Orang's house to know if it was true (so he reported in a letter to Rizal in Madrid); “she hotly denied it, and I told her that if any piece of news could sadden you in that distant land it would be that you had no longer any reason for hope here.” They played cards and the resourceful Chenggoy staked the sincerity of Rizal's affections on the turn of a card and won.⁶ In another letter: “If you had been here, you would have seen this family attend the fiesta in all the finery possible in Manila, and you would surely have exclaimed: 'Orang, you slay me!’”⁷ In a third Chenggoy begs Rizal to tell him a technique he had once explained of how to win a girl who knows one is already engaged to another.⁸

But to judge from the letters which have been preserved, and from Rizal's own reaction when he heard that she had married another, it was Leonor Rivera, a near cousin, whom he preferred. Her photographs show a slender girl, almost thin, with a high forehead, great black eyes and a small pursed mouth, stiff, straitlaced, but candid. They wrote to each other secretly in a rudimentary code, she signing herself with the name Taimis, Leonor, in their code.

Leonor Rivera to José Rizal, 2 January 1881 —

... Your letters have remained unanswered, not because I had grown tired of writing to you, for I wrote two replies, but because nobody visited me in school when I wrote them, so I tore them up. I am not sure the letter was yours because it was signed with another name; maybe you did so in order that if I scorned your letter, not your name but another's would bear the shame; if that is what you think, you are wrong; you do not know the joy I feel

when I receive one of your dear letters; but you did well to use another name just in case, as you said, it fell into other hands.⁹

Her letters, written in an immature scrawl give the true flavor of the romance of those times. The first was addressed to “Mr. José Rizal – Dear friend.” This one, after almost a year, is addressed to “Esteemed José.”

Leonor Rivera to José Rizal, 28 December 1881—

I shall be glad if this finds you well and happy.

I was most puzzled when I saw that you had a letter for Papa but not for me; when they first told me, I would not believe it because I did not expect someone like you to do such a thing; but afterwards I was convinced that you are like a newly opened rose, so pink and perfumed at first, but afterwards withering. Before, although I did not write to you, you wrote to me, but not any longer; it seems you have followed my example when I went to Antipolo, and you are wrong to do so because then I was not in my own house and besides you know very well that one cannot hide anything from those people. I could write to Papa, of course, but I did not, even though Mama kept after me to do so, only so that you would have no reason to complain. You cannot have these excuses because you are in your own house and nobody interferes with you. Really I must tell you that I am very angry because of what you have done and because of something else which I shall tell you when you come.¹⁰

No doubt José was kept busy with other things. There was not only Orang, to whom he wrote with equal secrecy, this time in invisible ink. There was his sister Saturnina asking him to buy her a drum on the Escolta. There was his brother Paciano asking him to check a forecast of floods and to deliver to the Jesuits for their museum a white iguana. There was his sister Soledad who wanted to be taken out of convent school because the nuns beat her and said all she did was eat, eat, eat. Paciano asked José to look into the matter tactfully, and if he found his sister's complaints justified, to take her home on the excuse that someone in the family was ill.¹¹

There were also his schoolmates whom Saturnina called the “clowns and acrobats.” José had organized a “company” of friends who called

themselves the “Companions of Jehu,” the Jewish patriot-general. Whether Jehu was honored because he drove his chariot at a furious pace or because he had revolted against foreign influences, does not appear. In any case the “companions” had youth's airy disregard for pedantic consistency; one who signed himself Morgan addressed Rizal as the First Consul; at other times, fancying themselves Dumas's “Three Musketeers,” an Aramis and an Athos begged the company of their commander de Treville, Rizal himself, or arranged a secret rendezvous of *chouans*, the royalist partisans of the French Revolution, all, it was added cryptically, to be equipped with cartridge pouches.¹²

There were parties and gang fights and flirtations. In *El Filibusterismo*, which pictures life in Manila as the *Noli* does life in the provinces, Rizal describes the students of his times: “some were dressed in the European fashion, they walked briskly, loaded with books and notebooks, worried, going over their lessons and their compositions—these were the students of the Ateneo. Those from Letrán could be distinguished from the others because they were almost all dressed in the native fashion, were more numerous, and carried fewer books. The university men dressed more neatly and carefully; they ambled along and carried not books but walking sticks.” A student leader, Makaraig, had two lavishly furnished rooms to himself in his boarding house, a servant, and a coachman to care for his trap and horses. An elegant and extremely rich gallant with exquisite manners, he was at the same time clever, brave and fond of his books. By way of contrast the medical student Basilio was so poor that he had first gone to school in a pair of wooden shoes and, getting a tip from his protector when one of the fighting cocks under his care won a heavy bet, invested it in a felt hat.

Rich and poor, Spaniards and Filipino, shared the same interests and diversions: uproarious dinners, outrageous jokes, fine enthusiasms for whatever cause struck their fancy. They cut classes, harangued and borrowed money from one another, courted the same girls, wrote the same poems, followed avidly the vagaries of musical comedy stars, and fought set battles with subalterns and cadets. Basilio, in *El Filibusterismo*, makes his name in one of these encounters.

One of the professors was very popular, liked by all; he was taken for a wise man, a great poet, and one of advanced ideas. One day, accompanying his students on a walk, he had a tiff with some cadets; there followed a skirmish and then a formal challenge. The professor, who perhaps had recollections of an exciting youth, called for a crusade and promised good grades for all of his students who should take part in the battle of the following Sunday. The week passed in high spirits; there were minor encounters where walking-sticks were matched with sabers, and in one of them Basilio distinguished himself. He was carried triumphantly on the shoulders of the students and presented to the professor, and thus became known to him and even his favorite.

José, as we have seen, had always fancied himself as a swordsman. He had boasted of being the best in Kalamba, and in a letter of the period he writes a friend: “My hand is shaking because I have just had a fencing bout; you know I want to be a swordsman.”¹³ Possibly he had his share of challenges and battles with the blustery cadets and the young men from Letrán, traditional enemies of the Jesuits' prim and proper scholars. But there was one fight he did not win and never forgot.

He was spending the summer holidays in Kalamba after his first year in medical school when, going along a street one dark night, he failed to doff his hat to a constabulary lieutenant, who promptly cut him with a native whip across the back, threw him in jail despite his wound, and threatened him with deportation. Even then Rizal was not one to take this lightly; he complained to the Governor General himself but “they did not give me justice.” His wound took two weeks to heal.¹⁴

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter V

(1) Ep. Riz., V, 334.

(2) Ep. Riz., I, 82.

(3) *Memorias*, 53. See also “José Rizal as land surveyor and assessor,” by A. B. Valeriano, published in the *Manila Daily Chronicle*, which states that the title of surveyor and expert assessor was finally issued to Rizal on the 25th November 1881, and quotes a certification dated the 28th October 1881 to the effect that Rizal “qualified before the board of examiners on the 21st March 1881 with the rating of excellent.”

(4) Sp. Doc., 95 et seq.

(5) Ep. Riz., I, 10. The friend was Enrique Lete.

(6) Ep. Riz., I, 36.

(7) Ep. Riz., I, 93. The idiomatic Spanish expression used by José M. Cecilio is: “¡Ay! Orang, ¿por qué me matas?”

(8) Ep. Riz., I, 72.

(9) Ep. Riz., I, 16.

(10) Ep. Riz., I, 17.

(11) Ep. Riz., I, 15.

(12) Ep. Riz., I, 15, 16, 17.

(13) Ep. Riz., I, 10.

(14) Ep. Riz., V, 97. Rizal to Blumentritt “Cuando tenía diecisiete años me agredieron y encarcelaron a pesar de estar herido, y me amenazaron con el destierro, solamente porque en una noche oscura no me quité el sombrero al pasar yo delante de un teniente de la Guardia Civil. Acudí en queja al Capitán General, pero no me hicieron justicia; mi herida tardó, dos semanas en sanar.”



VI

A Hidden Purpose

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair. We had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

DICKENS (A TALE OF TWO CITIES)

The Middle Ages were coming to an end in the Philippines in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is not to be wondered at therefore that Rizal and his contemporaries should remind us of the men of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment; stumbling out of the candlelit vaults of the Age of Faith, they blinked with amazed delight at the discovery of man and the world and the vanities that in the moment of possession were not all vanities. The rush of fresh new ideas made possible by the Spanish Civil Wars and the opening of the Suez Canal carried them away; they were ravenous for knowledge and experience. Like Italian humanists they wanted to do everything: write, paint, sing, carve, fence, and they succeeded with surprising ease; like the French Encyclopedists, they wanted to understand and explain everything, and unwittingly perhaps they asked questions that could be answered only by a revolution. In fact they were already experiencing two revolutions in one: the revolution of the senses against the chaste other-worldliness of monasticism, and the revolution of human reason against the comforting certitudes of the catechism; soon they would be inevitably experiencing a third, the revolution of race and nation against inequality and subjection.

Rizal and his contemporaries were vividly aware of the change. It is not pure hindsight on our part; he himself described it in the *Noli* in a conversation between Tasio, the old scholar, and Don Filipino, the vice-mayor of San Diego.

“... Our country today is not what it was twenty years ago ...”

“Do you really believe that?” asked Don Filipino.

“Don't you feel it to be true?” countered the old man, propping himself up in bed. “That is because you did not know the old days; you have not studied the effects of the new immigration from Spain, of the coming of new books, and of the exodus of our youth to Europe ever since the opening of the Suez Canal. Observe and compare. It is true that the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomás still exists with its most learned faculties, and that there are still a number of intellects busy making distinctions and carrying the subtleties of scholastic philosophy to their ultimate conclusions. But where will you now find the youth of our own day, engrossed in metaphysics under a

prehistoric system of instruction, who, racking their brains to formulate sophistries in obscure provincial corners, died without ever really understanding the attributes of being or solving the problems of essence and existence, concepts so rarefied that they made us forget what was truly essential: our own existence and our own identity? Look at our youth nowadays. Full of enthusiasm at the sight of broader horizons, they study history, mathematics, geography, literature, physics, languages, all of them subjects which we regarded with as much horror as if they had been heresies. The most advanced intellectual of my time declared these subjects inferior to the categories of Aristotle and to the laws of the syllogism. But man has at last realized that he is a man; he has given up analyzing his God, scrutinizing the immaterial and what he never saw with his own eyes, and laying down laws for his cerebral fancies. Man at least understands that his heritage is the vast world whose dominion is now within his reach; weary of a fruitless and presumptuous task, he now lowers his head and looks around him ...”

In the Philippines it was the age of the amateur, talented, versatile, reckless, tireless in the pursuit of artistic and scientific achievement. We have seen how the young Rizal would not be parted from his “beloved Muses.” He was just as eager in the cultivation of the other arts. “Juancho, an old painter” had beguiled him with his drawings as a boy in Biñang, and he had become himself one of his class's favorite painters. In Manila he had continued to study painting in the School of Fine Arts under Don Agustín Saez. This seems to have been above the run of provincial academies, as may be gathered from a letter Rizal received from Felix Resurrección Hidalgo, who was later to share European honors with another contemporary, Juan Luna, and was then studying in Madrid.

F. Resurrección to J. Rizal, 15 October 1879.

...All our professors are good, but you can be absolutely sure that what Don Agustín can teach you there is exactly what is taught here ... I do not want to speak to you about the Museum because I lack the time. All I can tell you is that it contains the most valuable collection of paintings in Europe, 3,000 of them. One

leaves the building with head aching and despair in one's heart, convinced that one knows very little and is not even a molecule compared with those giants ...¹

Ah, to be a giant among the giants, instead of a giant among dwarfs!

As a boy José had also shown a bent for sculpture, fashioning many a curious doll from mud or clay or candle drippings. He was never to achieve fame in the plastic arts; but those works of his which have survived show a not unimpressive talent. His Jesuit teachers had a great deal of respect for his skill; they kept the images he carved of the Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, not suspecting perhaps how useful to their purposes the latter would be one day; they were pleased by the busts he made of his favorite professors; and even after his graduation they sought his artistic help.

Fr. José Vilaclara, S.J., to José Rizal, 16 July 1878— ...

We [the Jesuit missionaries in Dipolog] had agreed to invite you to spend the holidays with us and you could have drawn for us some designs for altars which could have been executed later ...

Could you not sketch for me, even if only in pencil and hurriedly, the designs of the best altars in the city?²

The indefatigable José even started taking singing lessons. “For the last month and a half,” he wrote to a friend in November 1878, “I have been studying how to read music and how to play the piano and sing. If you could only hear me, you would think you were in Spain from all the braying!”³ But he definitely had no ear for music, as he must soon have discovered for while he wooed the gay Segunda and his shy cousin Leonor with flattering portraits, it does not appear that he ever tried to win them with a serenade.

[2]

It was typical of Rizal's Manila that he first caught the public eye as a poet, and that his poems quickly made him suspect. It is a society difficult to imagine a hundred years later when the best known university students are

athletes and even they provide only one of the many public entertainments in an age of mass communications and mass-produced diversions. The young Rizal did not have to make himself heard above the roar of a championship basketball game; his generation and its elders did not sit spellbound before superhuman phantoms on a screen, the quite unsuspected culmination of the arts and sciences they adored. To understand how young José, not yet twenty, a medical student from the provinces, obviously talented but neither conspicuously rich nor well connected, came to be known outside the circle of his immediate family, friends and teachers, and known enough to be disliked and distrusted by the powerful, we must reconstruct the small, closed, gray society of Manila in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Foreman found Manila “dull, with narrow streets, bearing a heavy monastic appearance. It had no popular cafes, no opera house or theater, indeed absolutely no place of recreation. Only the numerous religious processions relieved the monotony of city life ... There was a bull-ring in the suburb of Paco, where Foreman saw the *espada* hanging on to the tail of his antagonist. But most people found their entertainment in the cockpits which were open on Sundays, Thursdays and holidays, while the rest sought more cultivated amusement in the five strictly censored dailies and an occasional performance by the resident company of Spanish comedy or touring Italian opera troupe or foreign circus.”⁴

Sir John Bowring, however, did not find life in Manila “intolerably monotonous;” but perhaps, as he himself admits, he was “privileged,” being called for every afternoon at five or six o'clock by the Governor-General and taken for carriage rides around the country escorted by cavalry lancers.⁵

Jagor found “few opportunities for amusement.” The city, he claimed, “contained no readable books. Never once did the least excitement enliven its feeble newspapers, for the items of intelligence, forwarded fortnightly from Hong Kong, were sifted by priestly censors who left little but the chronicles of the Spanish and French courts to feed the barren columns of the local sheets.” He analyzes a typical issue of the four-page *El Comercio* and finds in it an essay on the population of Spain, a reprinted article on the increase of charity and Catholic instruction in France, an installment of a series on art and its origins (“series of truisms,” he sniffs), official announcements, “a few ancient anecdotes,” announcements of religious

festivals, including a forthcoming procession, the first half of a sermon preached three years before, and an installment of an old novel.⁶

For all that, perhaps because of the very lack of the overwhelming competition offered by modern inventions and techniques, the cultivation of literature and the arts was taken seriously. The cultured European might have found Manila dull, pretentious, hopelessly backward; for the excited young Filipinos of Rizal's somewhat emancipated generation, Jagor's "truisms" were veritable epigrams. In a city where there was nothing to do but go for a drive along the bay after the siesta, carry a taper at a religious procession and listen to a sermon, whistle at the same familiar actresses, or ponder on the latest intelligence from the cockpit, some well-turned verses were agreeable enough, and a man of any pretensions to culture was grateful to the author.

To stimulate the production of these literary diversions the *Liceo Artístico Literario de Manila*, an association of art lovers in the city, held regular contests. In 1879 it opened one for works in verse and prose, with a special prize restricted to Filipinos and half-breeds. It is difficult and perhaps pointless at this time to wonder whether this restriction was a gesture of racial prejudice, as many seem to think, or whether it was in fact a well-meant measure to encourage the literary activities of those whose mother-language was not Spanish and who might therefore be unfairly handicapped in direct competition with the Spaniards. In any case, the young José proved these precautions unnecessary—or necessary, as the case may be—by submitting a poem addressed "To the Youth of the Philippines", identifying himself as a "native," with the device: "Oh timid flower, grow!" Much has been made of this poem as the first open avowal of Rizal's nationalism, and it is given here in full.

*¡Alza tu tersa frente
Juventud filipina, en este día!
Luce resplandeciente
Tu rica gallardía,
Bella esperanza de la Patria mía.*

*Vuela genio grandioso
Y les infunde noble pensamiento,
Que lance vigoroso*

*Más rápido que el viento
Su mente virgen al glorioso asiento.*

*Baja con la luz grata
De las artes y ciencias a la arena,
Juventud, y desata
La pesada cadena
Que tu genio poético encadena.*

*Ve que en la ardiente zona
Do moraron las sombras, el hispano
Esplendente corona
Con pía y sabia mano,
Ofrece al hijo de este suelo indiano.*

*Tú que buscando subes
En alas de tu rica fantasía,
Del Olimpo en las nubes
Tiernísima poesía
Más sabrosa que néctar y ambrosía,*

*Tú, de celeste acento
Melodioso rival de filomena,
Que en variado concento
En la noche serena
Disipas del mortal la amarga pena.*

*Tú, que la peña dura
Animas al impulso de tu mente
Y la memoria pura
Del genio refulgente;
Eternizas con mano prepotente.*

*Y tú, que el vario encanto
De Febo amado del divino Apeles,
Y de natura el manto,
Con mágicos pinceles
Trasladar al sencillo lienzo sueles.*

*Corred, que sacra llama
Del genio el lauro coronar espera
Esparciendo la Fama
Con trompa pregonera
El nombre del mortal por la ancha esfera.*

*¡Día, día felice
Filipinas gentil, para tu suelo!
Al Potente bendice
Que con amante anhelo
La ventura te envía y el consuelo.*²

The jury, composed wholly of Spaniards, gave the poem the special prize, a silver quill. There is nothing extraordinary about it at first glance. Rizal is calling upon his fellows to seek fame through the arts: the poet “who rises on fleet wings of fantasy to search the brink of heaven for that tender poesy more nourishing than the food and drink of the gods;” the singer, “angel-voiced, melodious rival of the nightingale, who in quiet nights dispels with happy concert the anguish of mortality;” the sculptor, “at whose mind’s command the hardest marble wakes to life;” and the painter, “whose enchanted brushes transfer to the simple canvas all the wayward play of sunlight on the robes on Nature.” Rizal was all of these, as we have seen, poet, painter, sculptor and he was at least taking singing lessons! The poem can be read as a stirring, even laudable, but politically innocuous appeal, an artistic manifesto, the proclamation of a belated Renaissance in “tropic regions where untutored darkness once held sway.” “The heavy fetters that bind your genius down” are merely the chains of ignorance, timidity (“Oh timid flower, grow!”), and lack of enterprise, and they cannot be blamed upon the Spanish sovereign whose “wise and kindly hand” indeed now proffers “a splendid crown” to the worthy native.

The Spanish jury obviously read it so; they were deaf to the political implications that Rizal’s Spanish, and perhaps best biographer, Retana, claims with considerable justice to have been the first to catch. Palma has agreed in guarded terms with this second reading which hinges on a single phrase, the appeal to the youth of the Philippines as “*bella speranza de la patria mia*,” which he reads as “*patria Filipina*.”

Now *patria* is defined by the Royal Spanish Academy as either “nation,” in the modern sense, or “native land,” in the sense of birthplace. It is only in the first sense that Rizal's phrase would have had any strikingly new significance in those times if applied by a native to the Philippines. The second sense of “birthplace” could have been used with perfect innocence. As Retana himself admits, the concepts of a *patria chica* and a *patria grande* are in common use among the Spanish. The first expresses one's local loyalties, to the village, the province, the region of one's birth. Thus a Filipino today might, with propriety think of himself also as a Manilan, a Boholano, or an Ilokano, without being disloyal to the Philippines as a whole, which is his *patria grande*, the whole nation. Retana's sensitiveness to these terms is easy enough to understand. The regional attachment and loyalties of Basques, Cataláns, Aragonese and others had blazed up in the Spanish Civil Wars of the nineteenth century, as they would once again in the twentieth, demanding medieval autonomy, if not outright independence, for their *patrias chicas*; and in the Spanish American Empire *patria* as birthplace had quickly ousted *patria* as the Spanish Crown to which all loyal subjects owed equal allegiance.

In what sense then had Rizal used *patria*? The point is not unimportant because it might mark the start, with unusual precision, of Rizal's nationalism, or indeed of Filipino nationalism itself, if one could search all the verse and prose written by Filipinos in his time and establish that it was he who first called the Philippines his “nation.” That can hardly be done. In fact it is difficult enough to remember that the very names “Filipino” and “Philippines” were not then used in the sense that we use them now. “The Philip-pines” were but one of the provinces of Spain, sometimes with and more often without representation in the Cortes, but nonetheless an integral part of Spain, one of “the Spanish realms.” Spaniards from Spain were usually called *peninsulares*, but those who had established permanent residence in the Philippines or who had been born there of Spanish parents — what elsewhere were called Creoles—were Filipinos. What we now know as Filipinos were known simply as *indios*, or *indígenas*, that is to say, natives, and, if of mixed Spanish-native or Chinese-native blood, *mestizos* or half-breeds.

For all that, peninsulars, Creoles, natives and half-breeds mixed in the Philippines with much greater freedom than in the British and Dutch

colonies, even of our own day; the Spaniards, like the Portuguese and the French, frequently intermarried with their native subjects. “It would be difficult,” observed Jagor with disapproval, “to find a colony in which the natives, taken all in all, feel more comfortable than in the Philippines. They have adopted the religion, the manners and the customs of their rulers; and though legally not on an equal footing with the latter, they are by no means separated from them by the high barriers with which, except in Java, the churlish reserve of the English has surrounded the natives of the other colonies.”⁸ Sir John Bowring adds: “Generally speaking, I found a kind and generous urbanity prevailing—friendly intercourse where that intercourse had been sought—the lines of demarcation and separation between ranks and classes less marked and impassable than in most Oriental countries. I have seen at the same table Spaniard, mestizo and Indian—priest, civilian and soldier. No doubt a common religion forms a common bond; but to him who has observed the alienations and repulsions in caste in many parts of the Eastern world ... the blending and free intercourse of man with man in the Philippines is a contrast well worth admiring.”⁹

This is all very well coming from foreign observers, but it is open to doubt that the natives whole-heartedly shared Jagor's and Sir John's expressions of approval. Racial resentment can be just as subtle and concealed as racial condescensions, and no native of Rizal's Philippines can have been left in much doubt as to his second-class status. Still, where real choice was known or even suspected, the social system of the Spanish colonies, re-enforced by a common religion and the common “customs of the country”—the “*cosas*,” the “*costumbres del país*”—, was accepted with a readiness that we would now find hard to credit. In that historical context we should find it just as reasonable to believe that Rizal meant Spain when he said *patria* as that he meant the Philippines, and, if he meant the Philippines, we should find it just as likely that he used *patria* in the sense of birthplace as that he used it in the sense of nation. Many years later, on trial, it is true, for his life, Rizal would defend his nationalism with the familiar distinction between the *patria grande* and the *patria chica*.

As a child I was educated among Spaniards; I was nourished on the great exemplars of the history of Spain, of Greece and of Rome; afterwards in Spain my professors were all great thinkers, great patriots. Books, newspapers, [historical] examples, reason,

all made me desire the good of my native land, just as the Catalán seeks the good of Catalonia, and the Basque, the Galician and Andalusíán, that of Vizcaya, Galicia and Andalucia. I was so far from thinking that I was doing wrong that I have never wanted to accept the protection of another nation; twice I was offered German nationality, once the English, and I have never accepted.^{[10](#)}

The play on words, Spain and Spaniards, native land and nation, was perhaps dictated by the exigencies of the trial, but there remains the distinction which the sophisticated polemicist could honestly share with the naive young poet. There is perhaps a stronger argument to be drawn for Rizal's burgeoning nationalism from another of his writings at this time, a verse play in one act written at the request of the Jesuits and staged at the traditional annual celebration at the Ateneo of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Entitled "Along the Pasig," it tells a simple charming story. A group of boys make ready to greet the Virgin of Antipolo from the banks of the Pasig as she is taken down the river to Manila in great pomp. One of them, Leonido, on his way to join them, is challenged by a sinister stranger, Satan himself, dressed as a priest of the ancient native cult. "I am he," the priest announces, "who in a fairer age ruled with grandeur and power, venerated and feared, the absolute god of the natives."

LEONIDO – You lie! The god of my ancestors already sleeps in shameful oblivion. His obscene altars, where victims by the thousands were offered to the chant of ill-omened devotions, now he shattered. We have only words of contempt for the forgotten rites of his broken power ...

SATAN – Impious child, do you not see that mine is the air you breathe, the sun, the flowers, the billowy river? At my call, strong with the power of creation, these islands rose from the waters, islands lighted by the dawn and which once were fair. As long as, faithful to my holy cult, the people lifted up their prayers before my altars, I saved them a thousand times from death, hunger, fear... This rich land then enjoyed such a happy age that in its delights it rivalled heaven. But now, disconsolate and afflicted, it groans under the rule of alien people, and slowly dies at the

impious hand of Spain. Withal, I shall liberate it, if it bends the knee to my cult, which shines with splendor still ...

LEONIDO – If you are so powerful, if the destiny of mortals is in your hands, why have the Christians proved to be your undoing? And if, as you say, the wild sea is your humble hireling and obeys your voice of command, why were not the frail Spanish caravels, which now deride you, swamped and buried underneath the waves?

SATAN - ... Ah, the future, shall bring the disasters I reserve for your race, which follows this profane religion: tragic calamities, pestilence, wars and cruel invasions by various nations in coming ages not far distant. Your people will water with their blood and tears the thirsty sands of their native land. The bird, wounded by melting metal, no longer shall raise its song to the pleasant meadow, nor, in that time of affliction, shall your ancient forests, your rivers, your valleys and your springs be respected by the hateful men who shall come to destroy your peace and prosperity

... [11](#)

Again, this play can be given a number of interpretations. It can be read as an uncanny prophecy of fifty years of revolution, invasion after invasion, defeat, subjugation and civil tumult. Or it can be read, with much greater justification than the ambiguous appeal to the “*bella esperanza de la patria mía*,” as a left-handed rebuke to the “alien people” under whose rule the Filipinos “groan, disconsolate and afflicted.” The hand of Spain is here no longer “wise and kindly” but “impious,” and there is a foretaste of Rizal's annotations to Morga's history in the idyllic picture of the pre-Spanish Philippines. Or it can be read, as it was in all likelihood written, as a purely religious allegory, with a choir of angels putting Satan and his devils to rout in the end, as the boys, led by the rescued Leonido, pay homage to the Virgin:

Hail to thee, Queen of the sea,
Rose without stain,
Star without wane,
Rainbow of peace, hail to Thee!

In truth, we must not read too much into the effusions of our young poet or seek in his casual rhymes a premature ripening of his “race jealousy” and still embryonic nationalism. The next year, 1880, he in fact won first prize at a contest in the Liceo, open to all without distinction, with “*El Consejo de los Dioses*,” an allegory in praise of Cervantes that could not be more Spanish. Rizal's device is of some interest: “I enter the future remembering the past.”

[3]

Perhaps these literary triumphs, combined with his disappointments in the University, tempted the young Rizal to try his fortune abroad. In any case a number of his contemporaries had already taken ship for Europe and he could not have considered them his superiors in intellect, determination and adventurousness. Paciano, it seems, understood what his brother had in mind.

The role that Paciano played in José's life deserves more attention than it has received. Writing to his confidante Blumentritt six years later, Rizal called his elder brother “the noblest of the Filipinos” and, quoting his friend Taviel de Andrade, “the only man in the Philippines.” He added: “When I think of him, I find him, although a native, more generous and noble than all [the present] Spaniards put together.”¹² Paciano was one of de la Torre's generation of young liberals and progressives. He had lived in the same house with Burgos. Perhaps he had been one of those who had marched in the parade to celebrate the Spanish Constitution of 1869, wearing a red tie and waving a colored lantern, and at the reception in the Palace had cheered the red ribbons of María de Sánchiz, with their slogans: “Long live the Sovereign People” and “Long live Liberty.” Paciano would have wanted to go abroad himself for he was more than a hard-handed hard-riding country squire; he had had just as much schooling as his younger brother and his letters, written in a fine flowing elegant hand, show that he could make and understand a classical reference as well as the author of *El Consejo de los Dioses*.

But he was getting on in years; what is more decisive, he seems to have taken over the management of the family lands from Don Francisco. If anyone was to go abroad it had to be the younger son. It would have to be

kept from their parents. Doña Teodora had wept and protested enough even against José's continuing his studies at the University in Manila; what would she not say, what would she not do, to stop him from going beyond reach of her groping hands now that she could scarcely see? Don Francisco had wanted José to study metaphysics; perhaps he thought it safe enough, remembering his contemporaries who were well content to "rack their brains formulating sophistries in obscure provincial corners;" but what chilling dangers would he not see in this "enlightenment" which had already driven his older son out of university?

The cautious Paciano also thought that the less people knew about the trip, the better. There was no visible reason why the authorities should have prevented José from going abroad. The Liceo's Spanish jury had not heard in his prize-winning poem the separatist overtones that Retana's more suspicious ear would later profess to catch; indeed, in the prize-winning allegory on Cervantes, "superb handiwork of the All-Powerful, pride of the realms of Spain," they had perceived only "great originality," "an eminently correct style, an admirable wealth of detail, a refinement of thought and fancy, and lastly a flavor so Greek that the reader imagines himself tasting some delightful passage from Homer. Until, to their discomfiture, they were told the identity of the author, they must have thought that only a Spaniard born and bred in Spanish literature could have placed Cervantes on a par with Homer and with Virgil, and addressed him: "You shall eclipse the glories of antiquity! Your name, written in letters of gold in the temple of immortality, shall be the despair of other geniuses. Mighty giant, you shall be invincible." Nor had the Jesuits, as good Spaniards as anybody else, found anything irksome or suspicious in "Along the Pasig;" after all, that boulder Satan, with all his nonsense about "alien people" and "the impious hand of Spain," had been sent about his business by a firm and unruffled angel. What could be more correct, more loyal than that?

Yet the society in which the young writer had made his modest name was such that even the most irreproachable of sentiments, the most justifiable of actions, could arouse dislike and distrust among those whose business it was to dislike talent in a native and to distrust self-respect and a spirit of independence. A native who could outwrite Spaniards in their own language, outface friars in their own classrooms, and demand justice and

retribution from the Governor-General against a Spanish officer! One had to keep an eye on him.

Paciano decided that everything must be done with discretion and dissimulation. In enrolling José in the Ateneo, he had advised his younger brother to use the surname “Rizal” because he himself had made “Mercado” suspicious through his connections with Burgos; now it must be the other way around; José’s passport would be solicited under the surname “Mercado” because the younger brother’s exploits had made “Rizal” in turn a name to be distrusted. To keep the trip a secret among the smallest number of people José would remain in Kalamba until the very last moment and all arrangements would be made for him by a handful of friends and relatives in Manila. An air of mystery surrounded, and continues to surround, José’s voyage and its purpose. Extant letters from Paciano and Rizal’s friends only add to the perplexity.

Paciano Rizal to José Rizal, 26 May 1882 —

...When the telegram advising us of your departure was received in Kalamba, our parents were naturally grief-stricken, especially the old man who would not speak a word and took to his bed, crying to himself at night, all advice from the family, the parish priest and others nor doing any good at all. He made me go down to Manila to find to his satisfaction how you had managed to make the trip. When I returned I told them that some friends of yours in Manila had shouldered the expenses, hoping to re-assure them. For all that, I could see that he was still depressed and, seeing this and fearing, for another thing, that his continued brooding might make him ill, I told him everything, but only to him, pleading with him to keep it to himself, which he promised. Only since then have I seen him somewhat cheerful and back to his usual self. That is what happened in the family.

As far as our friends, our acquaintances, and strangers are concerned, both in our town and in the neighboring ones, [your departure] was the topic of conversation for many days; there were conjectures and guesses, but nobody has hit on the truth. Yesterday I was among those who wear skirts [the friars]; some approved of your going, others did not. But since we have taken

this approach (because it is the better one, in my opinion) we should keep to it ...

Here it is said that you will finish your medical course in Barcelona, not in Madrid; to my way of thinking, the main purpose of your going is not to improve yourself in that profession but in other more useful things or, what comes to the same thing, that to which you have the greater inclination. That is why I believe you should follow it in Madrid, the center of all the provinces, for, while it is true that in Barcelona there is more activity, more business and more careful attention to education, you have not gone there to take part in that activity and even less to do business and, as far as a good education is concerned, if it should not be available in Madrid, the application of the student can supply it. It should be more convenient for you to be there together with our countrymen who can show you around until you can get the hang of things ...¹³

“I told him everything.” “Nobody has hit on the truth.” “The main purpose of your going is not to improve yourself in that profession but in other more useful things ... that to which you have the greater inclination.” This is all very cryptic: Again:

Vicente Gella to José Rizal, 30 June 1882 —

...If the absence of a son from the bosom of his cherished family brings sadness, no less does that of a friend who, beloved by all of us who have had the honor of being called his friends and companions, is missing from our midst in search of the good which we all desire; even if it were not for that, this separation had been more deeply felt because of the distance between us. May God help you for the good you are doing your countrymen ... An uncle of mine, who arrived at this capital a short time ago spoke of you and your plans, and since he is an old man who lives in the provincial capital and knows about documents and has the same thoughts as we have, he undertook to let me know whatever happens in the province that may be useful to you ...¹⁴

Puzzle within puzzle. “The good which we all desire.” “The good you are doing your countrymen.” “You and your plans.” And old man who “has the same thoughts as we have.” “Whatever happens in the province that may be useful to you.” What thoughts? What plans? What good? What truth?

It would seem far-fetched to ascribe to the young Rizal any well-defined purpose at this time, connected with a nationalism that was still only latent in his “race jealousy,” or even with a desire for reforms incredible in a sentimental poet without political learning or experience. It was something less than that; yet it was something more than the mere completion of the medical course in surroundings more encouraging than the classroom of Father Millón.

[4]

Paciano woke him up early on the 1st May 1882, a Monday, and gave him the money he had been able to raise for the trip, ₱356 in all. By the time he was packed and ready for breakfast (he could swallow only a cup of coffee) his parents were up. Neither of them seem to have had any inkling of their son's real destination even though, when he kissed their hands in farewell, he was “near to tears.” They may have thought it rather early, by a month or more, for him to be going back to the University but, after all, they may have reflected, he was young, bored with their provincial town and eager to be back among the gallants and beauties of the capital. The pious and apprehensive Doña Teodora, who had been so full of misgivings even about his studies in Manila, would have been horrified if she had known that her younger son was going off halfway round the globe, to face Holy Mary knew what temptations and dangers; unhappy mother, now deprived even of the melancholy consolation of lighting a votive lamp for her son's safe voyage and quick return!

He went round to Neneng's house; his eldest sister, who was privy to his plans, had promised him a diamond ring with which to meet an emergency; but she was still in bed and he did not awaken her, for which she was to reproach him later.

Saturnina Hidalgo to José Rizal, 26 September 1882 —

...I do not know why every time I pick up your letters, I cannot keep the tears from my eyes, specially the first letter you wrote after you had left where you said that you had passed by the house on Monday morning, on your way off, and I was sleeping and so could not see you any more. Mother also tells me you took very little money with you so that I am always worrying how you are. That is why I want to send you the diamond ring; tell me to whom it would be best to send it so that it may get to you safely
...¹⁵

The ring was sent later, after all, and it did come in handy, so there was nothing lost except a final leave-taking and Saturnina's husband took a cheerful view of that. "What a splendid idea you had, not saying goodbye to us," he wrote. "That way we were spared the vast sorrow of a farewell!"¹⁶ Having thus spared his brother-in-law's feelings, albeit unwittingly, Rizal went on to Lucia's house. Herbosa was up and talked vaguely of keeping him company on the journey but it came to nothing.¹⁷ The conscientious Paciano would not have taken kindly to his brother-in-law's playing truant from the fields for a day, particularly when he had denied himself a few more hours with his only brother.

Dawn was breaking when Rizal drove out of Kalamba to Biñang, where he changed carromatas. The new driver was an old acquaintance, and a chatterbox to boot, but his gossip did not lift Rizal's spirits during the long ten hours to the outskirts of Manila. Fortunately there was no difficulty in arranging passage on the *Salvadora*, a Spanish vessel bound for Singapore, or about his passport which had been issued, as Paciano had planned, in the name of Jose Mercado.

He himself did not make much of a secret of his trip. He went to the Ateneo to take his leave of the Jesuits, who after all were Spaniards, and gave those shrewd mentors of his youth so little reason to suspect any hidden purpose in their favorite pupil that they gave him letters of recommendation to their brethren in Barcelona. Nor indeed was he dissembling. "I owe much to this Religion [using the word in the sense, approved by the Royal Spanish Academy, of a religious Order or institute, and meaning thereby the Society of Jesus] almost, almost all that I am (or taken to be)," he exclaimed in his contemporary journal after the visit.

So far was Rizal from concealing his destination that at the Ateneo he spoke of his trip to a perfect stranger, a Spaniard, who also gave him letters of recommendation, and said goodbye to another Spanish friend, his painting master Saez. He visited other friends, Don Pedro Paterno, who asked him to take family photographs and some tins of tea to his brothers in Spain, and the Valenzuela girls, whom he found all dressed up to call on him. There were no elaborate farewell parties although they were quite fond of him; Orang's mother gave him a glass jar of biscuits and a box of chocolates to "remember them by." He and his friends had the biscuits for breakfast the next day. The other Leonor was not in Manila. Her father was most helpful but obviously she was not in the secret. How odious, how unbearable, that her rival Orang was! A friend was to write to him: "I was with your Aunt Betang in the kitchen when she remembered you and burst into tears. My sister Leonor too, from the day she arrived from Pangasinan until now, is very sad at parting from a cousin who is so good."¹⁸ And from his gossip Chenggoy:

José M. Cecilio to José Rizal, 16 September 1882 —

...Poor girl, what tears has she not shed from the first days when she arrived from her hometown and did not find you in the house but instead five thousand leagues from Manila! Your sister Maria can tell you about it, because she was in tears before her. One day she told me that she was not in the mood for anything, not even for her intimate friends, and that she wanted to dye all her clothes. I replied that she should not despair because the years pass by quickly ... and that one of your greatest sorrows, if not the only one, when you left was that you had to be separated from her. We have to console her some way!¹⁹

Three months later she was still losing weight and could not sleep. In February she was a little better and could not bear to hear of Rizal "because she believes that you have abandoned her completely, not writing to her a single line." To make matters worse, it was rumoured in her hometown of Lingayen that she was betrothed to him.²⁰

Perhaps he would have been kinder if she had been in Manila when he left. As it was, he found it hard to say goodbye to the friends who saw him off. It was his first trip abroad, and he was not sure he was doing the right thing.

Was the “*pretendida ilustración*,” the “enlightenment” he was after, to be merely “an idle thought,” “an illusion?” He waved goodbye until his friends were out of sight, then feverishly sketched the receding shores of Manila. He was far from feeling like a good Spaniard on his way at last to the “motherland.” All the contrary; he felt he was leaving his true country behind. “I leave you, my country, my people; you vanish and are lost to sight ...” There can be no argument about the meaning of that.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter VI

- (1) Ep. Riz., I, 12. The letter was addressed jointly to another friend.
- (2) Ep. Riz., I, 7.
- (3) Ep. Riz., I, 10. Again, the friend is Lete.
- (4) Foreman, 598, 402 et seq.
- (5) Bowring, 14 et seq.
- (6) Jagor, 26 et seq.
- (7) *Poesías*, 31.
- (8) Jagor, 36.
- (9) Bowring, 18.
- (10) “Datos para mi Defensa,” by Jose Rizal, National Library (a transcript was furnished to me in London through the courtesy of Dr. Luís Montilla).
- (11) *Poesías*, 40.
- (12) Ep. Riz., V, 264. Rizal noted that Taviel de Andrade recognized in *Paciano* “*el joven filósofo Tasio*.”
- (13) Ep. Riz., I, 19.
- (14) Ep. Riz., I, 22.
- (15) Ep. Riz., I, 51.
- (16) Ep. Riz., I, 52.
- (17) *Diarios*, 19.
- (18) Ep. Riz., I, 23.
- (19) Ep. Riz., I, 49.
- (20) Ep. Riz., I, 83.



VII

A Voyage to a New World

El que lee mucho y anda mucho, ve mucho y sabe mucho.

(Who reads much and travels much, sees a lot and knows a lot.)

CERVANTES (DON QUIJOTE)

[1]

At first he was lonely. He was the only Filipino among the ship's thirty-seven passengers; the rest, except for a tall thin Englishman who mumbled but otherwise spoke Spanish quite well, were Spaniards returning to the Peninsula with their families. They had a horde of screaming scampering children who made more noise than “a battalion of charging cavalry.” Also,

he was a bad sailor. But he soon made friends. He played chess and was delighted when he won. He made sketches of fellow-passengers, who duly admired them.

Tonight Messrs. Barco, Morlán, Pardo, Buil, and others were talking. A lot was said about the government in the Philippines. Criticism flowed as never before. I discovered that everyone in my poor country lives in hopes of sucking the blood of the Filipino, friars as well as administrators. There may be exceptions, they claim, but few and far between. This is the source of great evils and of enmities among those who quarrel over the booty.

“I have been very frank,” said Morlán, “I have shown myself that to all of them. I am not speaking of private morals, of course, but only in general.”

“The thing is,” Pardo replied, “that for the last three days you have not had a good word to say about anyone.” [Pardo, who was the incumbent mayor of Barotac Viejo] often defends what the others condemn. At least he knows how to be grateful. The rest, who made their fortunes [in the Philippines], who freely and of their own will remained there for years and years [Mr. Barco for eighteen], and who are now retiring with more thousands of pesos than goodwill, work themselves up into a rage. I cannot understand how they could have been so insensitive as to endure such trials as they say they suffered. The truth is that they were making money, and I think they would be capable of anything for this. The women are much worse than the men. Compared with them, the men who speak badly of the country are practically reciting lyrics in praise of it. If one is to believe them, Spain is a Paradise where the biggest idiot is a genius ... while there is not a useful atom in the entire Philippines; it seems that God lost there all His wisdom and providence. They have the same attitude even toward other countries.

It was an enlightening experience for the young Rizal, who was meticulously jotting down these impressions in his journal,¹ somewhat unnerving perhaps, for he would have had few opportunities in the past to

listen to this type of Spaniard thinking out loud in his presence. The enforced companionship on board ship tended, as it invariably does, to break down social and racial distinctions, and the apoplectic colonials, nursing their petty grudges and frustrations for all their comfortable savings, can scarcely have remarked the quiet native sitting on the edge of their self-satisfied circle, so shy, so well-behaved in his flannel suit (his only one, cut and sewn by his sister María) so serious and attentive and deferential, yet withal storing the impressions which would emerge as Linares, Espadaña, Ben-Zayb and Father Camorra.

But we must not imagine this young Rizal as any more, at that time, than the guarded, somewhat naïve, homesick, touchy young man that he really was. He listened and he learned and he would remember. But in those dizzy exhilarating days he had many other things on his mind. He was falling in love with the world he was discovering, a world wider and more varied than he had ever imagined, so full of fascinating surprises, strange tongues and faces, mysterious customs.

From the deck of the *Salvadora* even his own country had seemed unfamiliar and, steaming out of the bay, he had asked the names of some mountains on the Batangas coast. Nobody could tell him.

He was a romantic, a born traveller with the indispensable gift of curiosity. Off Singapore he saw a long chain of mountainous islands covered with jungle and had no difficulty in believing that they were inhabited by cannibals; the only sign of life in sight was a Chinese junk under full sail, “perhaps,” he noted, “piratical.”

In Singapore itself he was relentless; he saw churches, factories, Chinese temples and gardens, colleges, the palace of a Siamese prince with a little iron elephant on a pedestal at the entrance, a hanging bridge, markets and the Botanical Gardens, which disappointed him. He was looking for a zoo and approached a Malay. Failing to make himself understood, he sketched a cow and asked if there was one about.

“*Tadar*,” the Malay answered, or so Rizal thought he heard. The word was really *tiada*, a contraction of *tida-ada*, meaning that there was none.

He had the usual experiences: the driver of his carriage tried to cheat him; he was besieged by beggars and peddlers but purchased only a comb and a cane. He had difficulty in making himself understood; his only stroke of

luck was finding himself seated in his hotel's dining-room next to a drunken Englishman who spoke French.

But he always had an eye for the girls. He asked why there were no Indian or Malayan women to be seen in the streets and was told they stayed home; but he did see a Chinese with bound feet and a number of enchanting English girls. One of them reminded him of Dora, David Copperfield's child-wife.

“How sorry I was I did not know English!”

When he changed ship to the *D'jennah*, a French vessel of the *Messageries Maritimes*, he noted that among his fellow-passengers were a number of pretty Dutch girls “nearing the age of puberty.” Only a week before he had mourned the girls he had left behind: “Leonoras, Doloreses, Ursulas, Felipas, Vicentas, Margaritas and others—your hearts will be busy with other loves, and soon you will forget the traveller.” Alas, the traveller himself had his share of forgetfulness!

He was still seasick and rather reserved but “I am increasing my contacts with the foreigners.” He shared his cabin with a German, an Englishman and a Dutchman, to whom he spoke impartially in his rudimentary French. With some Siamese aboard he spoke pidgin English supplemented with gestures and no doubt sketches. He had not yet acquired any of these languages but he was trying to read Sir Walter Scott's “Charles the Bold” in a French translation.

They crossed the Bay of Bengal to Galle on the southernmost tip of Ceylon, then round it to Colombo, and across the Indian Ocean to Cape Guardafui on the horn of Africa, across the Gulf of Aden to that city, and up the Red Sea to Suez and the Canal.

He seems to have got on well with the Dutchmen, improbable as it might sound; three of them went ashore with him at Galle where he saw a Buddha, lying on its side, with emeralds for eyes. On the way he had also seen a beautiful Singhalese “with great eyes and a lovely face, standing on a high hill by the road.” She reminded him of a character in another novel he had read. “She was under an elegant palm tree, watching us go by. What exquisite love affairs and terrible conspiracies must go under the swaying top of those palm trees!” Really, he was an incorrigible romantic.

In Colombo he went ashore with four Spaniards for the usual sightseeing round; he was not yet sick of churches, statues, parks and barracks. He saw his first tigerskin in some officers' quarters and in the museum, stuffed sharks, sawfishes, swordfishes, giant turtles, the skeletons of two elephants, bronze and golden Buddhas, and two live peacocks sporting in the rain.

He also went shopping, another tourist past-time which has survived the years and changing customs and currency regulations.

The *D'jennah* had changed its course to avoid the full force of a storm and his first view of Africa was Cape Guardafui, a bare hot rock. "Hail, inhospitable land! Yet most famous at the cost of the blood of your sons! Till now your name has sounded in my ear of terror and horrible slaughter. How many conquerors have invaded your shores!"

He stood by the rail, watching the fish playing in the moonlight. There was dancing somewhere to the sound of the ship's piano. His thoughts turned homeward and later he wrote out a prayer in his journal: "O Creative Spirit, Being without beginning, who see and sustain all things in Your powerful hand, I salute and bless You! On the other side of the sea, give life and peace to my family. Reserve for me all suffering!"

[2]

Such pious sentiments are scattered throughout his journal. Yet, in view of the crucial role that the Church was to play in his life and death, we may remark two curious attitudes in this hitherto devout sodalist whom the Jesuits had trained in orthodoxy.

The first is an inattentiveness, if not outright indifference, to saints, patron saints or otherwise, so untypical of his countrymen at that time. Nowhere does he invoke, say, St. Roch, St. Christopher or the Archangel Raphael, patrons of all travellers, or again, St. Joseph, his own saint or Our Lady of Peace and Happy Voyage. His prayers sound almost deist rather than devout, perhaps the first indications of a trend of thought that was to distinguish his religious beliefs in coming years.

The second, perhaps parallel, attitude is one of growing curiosity in other religions. At the beginning of the trip he cannot be a more uncompromising Catholic. On the day of departure he rises at five in the morning to hear

Mass at the Dominican church of Santo Domingo. “Perhaps,” he exclaims, “it will be the last I hear in my own country! Ah, what memories of my childhood and adolescence!” On the fifth day out he is downcast because “today is Sunday and we have no Mass. There is no chaplain aboard.” But when he lands in Singapore the same day he returns deliberately to a Protestant church he had seen during his tour of the city. “I went to the Protestant church and found here a font of holy water, and a child carried by a lady, and a number of Englishmen. There was a minister. I also saw many ladies seated. I too sat down and read a little from the Bible ... There was no image. Afterward I left and went for a walk.”

Too much can be made of this or of, say, his giving a donation in the Buddhist temple of Galle, but any Catholic will see in these episodes something unusual, unorthodox, “almost, almost,” as Rizal himself might say, sinful, since Catholics are forbidden under pain of sin to participate in the rites of other religions, and a Jesuit boy like Rizal would have been the first to know it. Perhaps it was his relentless curiosity, released at last from the public and physical restraints of an Established Church, and free to sniff and nibble at forbidden fruit, a taste difficult to forget.

[3]

Aden was as bare as Guardafui. The sand burned so brightly that he had to put on smoked glasses. A caravan of camels and donkeys, laden with water, straw and baggage, reminded him of the Three Kings from the East. But he was rather put out when they were served lemonade on a dirty table, in glasses that had been used by others, with chunks of ice split in the naked hand with a rusty nail. The day the ship entered the Suez Canal, the 3rd June, he recalled the 1863 earthquake which had caused such “incredible retrogression” in the Philippines: “sages, talents, riches all swallowed up.” He was thinking of Father Pedro Peláez, Burgos's great master; 1872 was never far from his mind. Perhaps it was this that led him to exchange political comments with the Egyptian quarantine physician, who had brought news of an attempted *coup d'état* in the country. In fact it was more, much more than that. The ruined Khedive Ismail, the autonomous ruler of Egypt who had opened the Suez Canal, had been summarily deposed three years before by his suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey, under pressure from the

British and the French. His son and successor, the Khedive Tewfik, had governed since under dual British-French control. Now a peasant-born officer, Ahmed Arabi Pasha, had come forward as the titular head of a nationalist movement to liberate the Egyptians from their Turkish and European masters. Only the month before, the threat of a serious rising had brought the combined Allied fleet to Alexandria; in just about a week the British Admiral would bombard the forts of the city after a massacre perpetrated by the mob; by September Arabi and his nationalists would be flying before the British, and virtual British rule established in Egypt until our own days.

Rizal's political comments could not have been very percipient, and the amiable physician to whom they were volunteered naturally received them with marked indulgence, constantly repeating: '*Bravo, c'est bien, bravo!*' Indeed it is worth observing that the young tourist aboard the *D'jennah* had as yet scarcely developed the penetrating political insight which was later to endow such an essay as "The Philippines Within A Century" with the aura of prophecy. We might say with considerable justification that his nationalism was still parochial, unrelated to the general problem of imperialism and colonialism among all the millions of Asians and Africans whose customs and habitations he had so eagerly described in the ports he had visited. They were all, had he but realised it then, as much the victims as his own countrymen of the system he hated.

But the romantic poet of "Along the Pasig," the tireless tourist on his first voyage, could not fairly be expected to feel more than the humanitarian sentiments natural to a young man of sensibility when he saw the poverty of Asia and Africa and assiduously noted it down in his journal: the Malay boys in Singapore Bay, diving from their dugouts for the coppers thrown by the passengers into the filthy water; the Singhalese at Galle swarming on deck to do the laundry; the boatmen in Colombo fighting desperately with fist and oar for the rope that would give them the right to sell coffee to the passengers; in Aden "the miserable hut, made of four poor timbers and roofed with a mat, which sheltered an unfortunate family," the family, after all, of a fellow human being, "the king of Creation, who lives where even the plants refuse to live because he is compelled by a terrible necessity," a short distance away from a pretty little garden at the water cisterns where it was "forbidden to pick the flowers;" the little boys who fanned them for a

few coppers by the Red Sea; and in the Suez Canal, nearing Port Said on the edge of the Mediterranean, the “wretched young man, running alongside the ship, catching the chunks of bread which the passengers flung to him.” Rizal's entry in his journal does him credit, “To see him run on the sands, crouching, picking up the pieces of bread, now and again throwing himself into the canal to snatch a biscuit from the water, was enough to sadden the merriest.”

[4]

For all that, the camaraderie of shipmates on a long voyage melted down even his native reserve and the formidable racial complex which had so afflicted him in college and university. Oddly enough, he got along best with the Spaniards and the Dutchmen. We can understand how a common language and common recollections brought him close to those who, after all, were theoretically his fellow subjects under the Spanish Crown, but his growing fondness for the Dutch, while not entirely free from his interest in the blonde pubescent *jongedames*, already suggested what was to become his lifelong affection and admiration for the hearty yet serious, not to say solemn, Teuton.

In Port Said he heard the *Marseilles* for the first time (how incredibly typical of the Philippines of his time that he had never been allowed to hear there the mother-song of revolutions). He found it “really full of enthusiasm, grave, threatening, sad.” He also heard a woman's orchestra, saw veiled women and, to the sound of drums, school children dressed in the Oriental fashion leaving their classes on the backs of burros and mules.

But Europe was not far away, and Europe was the world he was to discover and know and live in and, in a way, die for. He was bewildered by the bustle of Naples. Still, he noted in his journal, he toured the city and returned aboard “without having been cheated by either guide or coachman.”

He was saddened by the departure of some Dutch fellow-passengers. *Marseilles* was worse; it was the end of the voyage and they must all say their goodbyes. “It was only to be expected. I had been reared in the midst of my family and my friends. I have grown up in the warmth of their love and affection. Now, suddenly, I find myself alone, in a magnificent hotel, it

is true, but also a silent one. I thought of going back to my own country where, at least, one is with one's family and friends." Wandering about the long carpeted corridors he came upon two of his Dutch friends, a girl of twelve and her sister, nine. The elder "told me that they were leaving the next day for The Hague and that they were staying with their grandmother, but that they preferred Batavia, where they were born. I replied: "I too love my native country and, beautiful as Europe is, I want to return to the Philippines."

He was even more depressed by the fact that nobody seemed to have heard of the Philippines.

José Rizal to his family, 3 June 1882 — I went for a walk along those wide clean streets, paved as in Manila, teeming with people. I attracted the attention of all who saw me; they called me Chinese, Japanese, American, etc., anything but Filipino! Our poor country—nobody has ever heard of you!²

Still Europe was beautiful. He was enchanted by France; the houses were "tall and lovely;" he was enthralled by the newspaper peddlers and the flower girls. Once again, having caught up with his Spanish friends, particularly the retiring governor of Antique, Mr. Salazar, and his wife, Rizal went the tourist rounds. He was captivated by the picture gallery, the first he had ever seen, and went from hall to hall long after his companions had tired of it. They had gay lunches and dinners together before taking the train to Spain. In the end, frugal though he had been, methodically noting down every little expenditure, he found himself with only fifteen pesos left.

Spain was a shock after France. The customs officials had been "very polite" in Marseilles; at the Spanish frontier the guard treated them with great rudeness. "Barcelona gave me a very disagreeable impression. I had grown accustomed to the graceful and impressive buildings of the other cities I had seen, to courteous and refined manners, having stayed only in beautiful first-class hotels. Now I was entering this city passing precisely on its worst side to arrive at an inn on a narrow street, an inn with a gloomy entrance where one felt only indifference."

It had been marvellous, an exhilarating voyage, for all that, troubled only, now and again, by curious dreams. Only a week out at sea, at Singapore, to be exact, he had dreamed that Paciano had died suddenly. Another time, he dreamed that he had inexplicably returned to Kalamba from Galle to visit his parents, confident that he could still catch the mailboat at Colombo, something which he abruptly realised was impossible. These were dreams that may be said to have expressed the doubts and remorse that were bedeviling him for keeping his trip a secret from his parents. But a third dream was more ominous.

I have had a nightmare [he noted in his journal on the 14th May). I fancied that my sister Neneng was with me on this trip. We reached some port and disembarked but, since there were no boats to take us, we had to wade ashore although we had been told there were many crocodiles and sharks about. When we touched land, the sandy soil, cultivated in some parts, was full of vipers, snakes and serpents. Many boa constrictors were hanging along the way to the house where we were bound, some of them dead, but others, although tied up, alive and menacing. We were walking along, my sister and I, she ahead and I following, showing each other the way. Sometimes we stumbled over dead snakes; the live ones tried to catch us but failed. But at the end of this row of snakes the path narrowed and one snake remained, tied down, it was true, but angry and threatening; it was in our way, with only the barest room to spare.

My sister was fortunate enough to get through, but in spite of every precaution the snake caught me by my shirt and drew me toward itself. My strength failing, I sought something to which to cling, but found nothing. I felt I was being drawn closer and closer to the snake and that its tail was about to coil around me.

In the midst of my futile struggles, when death in the grip of loathsome coils was before my eyes, Pedro, the town carpenter, arrived and cut the snake from me. Saved from this danger we reached the house; I do not remember now whose it was.

Did this dream, like the others, merely reflect his subconscious fears and apprehensions in a strange land far from home? Or, as in his mother's dream

in prison, which he had so accurately interpreted, did it project an uncanny vision of the future? Ten years later, in 1892, Rizal would return to the Philippines with another sister, to find himself indeed the prey of enemies who would hold him fast in their coils and never let him go until his death. One more dream is recorded in the journal, in an addition made after the voyage, on New Year's Day 1883.

Two nights ago, that is to say, in the night of the 30th December [1882], I had a horrible nightmare which almost killed me, I dreamed that I was playing on the stage the part of a dying actor; I was rapidly losing all my strength. Then my sight was dimmed and impenetrable darkness, the darkness of the void, engulfed me. It was a death agony. I wanted to shout for help, feeling I was about to die. I awoke breathless and exhausted.

A common enough dream, but it was on a 30th of December that he was to be shot to death.

All this is in the future, but Rizal of 1896 is not altogether hidden in the Rizal of 1882. Outwardly we see a nostalgic young man not yet twenty-one, a medical student uncertain of his vocation, almost penniless in a new world. He is in Spain “alone, unknown,” on the “first stage of my voyage to the unknown. What was I to do and what was to become of me?” Yet though his purposes were obscure, his future far from clear, we have already seen him impelled by a strange feeling of separateness, a sense, perhaps only half understood, of high and tragic mission; haunted from childhood by a vague sadness and discontent; driven as a schoolboy by a fierce determination to assert his superiority, nay, uniqueness, and by a wholly precocious consciousness of race; a dutiful and loving son who yet abandons and disobeys his parents to go about his country's business; attractive to women and attracted by them yet compelled “against my heart's desires, in obedience to contradictory purposes and powerful doubts,” to remain guarded, inwardly uncommitted, reserving himself for he knew not what; his back and his memory scarred by the insolence of office and the injustices and crimes of alien authority; a poet who would be a painter, a painter who would be a sculptor, a sculptor who would be everything, singer, swordsman, scientist, accepting as his due a natural leadership in a cause heartfelt but as yet undefined.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter VII

- (1) The whole of this chapter is derived from *Diarios*, 19-57.
- (2) 100 Letters, 36.



PART TWO



VIII

A Student's Teachings

Our youth should not apply themselves to love or to the mechanical or speculative sciences; that is for the youth of the nations that are happy; we, for our part, must all sacrifice something for politics even against our desires.

RIZAL (IN A LETTER TO BLUMENTRITT)

[1]

He wanted to make a name for himself, and in the doing of it found himself making a Nation. It would be rash to see in the young student of twenty-one finding his way about the great world of Spain and Europe a man with a

definite mission, a crusader with sails set for a known Jerusalem. Columbus did not know where he was going, or Magellan what he was doing. One sought Cathay and found America; the other sought a passage to India and began a voyage round the world. So also do men seek fame and fortune, and find immortality.

What has rendered the beginnings of Rizal's public life so ambiguous is the hindsight of later generations, one hundred years after his birth, we think he knew, as we think we know everything that has happened since his death, and see a deliberate design where there were only fate and genius.

True, Rizal's "race jealousy" made him a nationalist almost from boyhood, a patriot from his first public poem, but he was a nationalist and patriot as a writer, and writers are often unaware of the consequences of what they write. What they feel as a private vision, a personal revelation, an intimate emotion, often becomes transformed, to their surprise and sometimes to their dismay and doom, into a public truth.

It is not entirely groundless to surmise that "the main purpose" to which Paciano referred, the "more useful things" to which he had "the greater inclination," was to make his name abroad with his writings, just as Juan Luna and Resurrección Hidalgo were doing as painters, a not entirely unreasonable ambition in one who had defeated in competition every other writer in Spanish in Manila. That his writings would necessarily express his nationalism and his patriotism was inevitable, as also that this would attract the suspicion and hostility of the regime. Then, as happens to most controversial or dedicated writers, who have anything to say and believe in it, action and reaction would follow; he would defend himself the more he was attacked, and become the more convinced of the validity of his opinions the greater the dangers that arose. The poet would then become absorbed in the patriot, the novelist and the nationalist. What had started out as a work of art would end as a political program.

Thus, in June 1882, shortly after his arrival in Spain, Rizal wrote an article entitled "*El amor patrio*," which can be rendered as "Love of Country" or "Patriotism," for the *Diariong Tagalog*, a short-lived Manila newspaper. Retana and Palma see in this essay the same implications they perceive in "*A la juventud filipina*;" whether we agree with them or not, it is remarkable in itself for the way, like so many future writings of Rizal, it forecasts his own career.

He starts by dedicating his first writings “on foreign soil” to his country, “where slumbers all of a past, and all of a future can be glimpsed.” Then he exclaims: “The love of country can never be expunged once it has entered the heart because it bears a divine mark that makes it eternal and imperishable.” Considering the sacrifices that a lover of his country makes willingly, he goes on with more than an echo of what would be his last poem: “Some have sacrificed their youth; others have given the splendor of their genius; all have died leaving their country an immense fortune: liberty and glory. And what does she do for them? She weeps for them and proudly shows them to the world, to posterity and to her sons to serve them as exemplars.” And he concludes by addressing his “native country” directly.

From Christ, who all love, came to the world for the good of humanity and died for it in the name of the laws of his country, to the most obscure victims of modern revolution, how many have suffered and died in your name, a name usurped by others! How many victims of rancor, of ambition, of ignorance, have died blessing you and wishing you all happiness!

Beautiful and great is the country when her sons, at the call of battle, make ready to defend the ancient land of their ancestors; fierce and proud, when from her high throne she sees the stranger flee in panic before the invincible phalanx of her sons; but when, divided in opposing camps, they destroy one another, when anger and rancor devastate the fields, the towns and the cities, then she, in shame, tears her garments and, throwing away her scepter, puts on mourning for her dead. Whatever, then, be our situation, let us love her always and let us desire nothing but her good ...

You who have lost your hearts' ideals ... you who wish to love but find no one worthy, look to your country, love *her*! Love her, yes, but no longer as she was loved in other times, with the practice of ferocious virtues, denied and condemned by true morality and the natural law, not by the display of fanaticism, destruction and cruelty, no; a brighter dawn is on the horizon, softer and more peaceful, the messenger of life and peace, the true dawn, in brief, of Christianity, the harbinger of happy and tranquil days. It will be our duty to follow the arid but peaceful and productive paths of Science which lead to Progress, and thence to

the union desired and called for by Jesus Christ in His night of sorrow.¹

Not, without justification, Retana is moved to exclaim: Rizal “predicts what he plans to do, and even what will happen to him!”² The article was well received in Manila. Basilio Teodoro, the publisher, quoted the editor and other literary eminences in Manila to the effect that neither in the Philippines nor in Spain, with the exception of the works of the magnificent parliamentary orator and writer, Emilio Castelar, could its equal be found. It must have flattered Rizal's hope of making a literary career in Spain. “All of us,” wrote Teodoro, “predict imperishable laurels for you, for your own glory and that of the Spanish frontier that saw you born.” That is the alternative interpretation to Retana's; Rizal was writing as a writer and the essay, in his own words, was only the “first fruit” of his literary labors in foreign lands, which, “like the ancient Hebrews,” he was dedicating to his native country. Teodoro asked him to contribute a review of European events and seven or eight literary essays every fortnight. Unfortunately, the cholera epidemic and a typhoon which washed away Teodoro's sugar warehouses soon put an end to the *Diariong Tagalog*.³

Rizal does not seem to have written very much after “*El amor patrio*,” except for a travel article and a few stray paragraphs which the death of the *Diariong Tagalog* left hanging in the air. There were three reasons for his infertility. One, which we shall consider later on, was the opposition of his mother. Another, we may surmise, is the difficulty with which a new writer, however recognized and acclaimed in his own home, can break into print in a great modern capital. The third was that, after all, the ostensible purpose of his stay in Spain, at the expense of his family, was to finish a career.

His indecision about his vocation no less than his prodigious energy and talent now drove him into studies sufficient to daunt two or three young men of his age. Leaving Barcelona for Madrid, he enrolled at the University Central for the course leading to a licentiate in medicine and also took up the course in philosophy and letters. Not content with that, he took lessons in painting and sculpture at the Academia de San Fernando, more lessons in French, English and German at the Madrid Ateneo, and still more lessons in fencing at the schools of Sanz and Carbonell.⁴ In January 1883 he could

inform his family that “I am now studying Italian and have made a bet that I shall be able to speak it in two months.”⁵

By September of the same year he was mulling over the idea of “taking the examination in Roman Law so as to qualify for the law course, which here takes seven years, or to give it up and take the examinations only in literature and history so as to enter the course in philosophy and letters, a degree not known there, which after three years would qualify me as a professor.”⁶ By November he notified his family that he expected to get his degree in medicine in June 1884 and that, if they wanted him to go on to the doctorate, “all you have to do is to advise me; it would be a matter of a year more and some hundreds of duros for fees.”⁷ Actually, when he was already on his way home in April 1887, he would still be writing his family that to get the doctor's certificate he would have to return to Madrid from Berlin, and he would see whether or not he had any money left for the round-trip; in any case he would pay the fees for the diploma and submit his doctoral thesis by mail; perhaps this could be done without his ha-ving to make a personal appearance.⁸

He was successful in the medical examinations in June 1884, although his ratings were not so high as he expected. He explained that he had reviewed the course on the basis of modern German theory and, to his distress, had found on the board of medical examiners a member who was stubbornly old-fashioned. It had been a month of strain and stress: from the 5th to the 26th June he had taken not only the medical examinations but also those in Greek, Latin and world history. He had won the first prize in Greek, and a grade of “excellent” in history which he felt he did not deserve. The examiner had heard him make a speech, about which we shall hear more, and had been so carried away that he had toasted the Filipinos as “the glory of the universities,” and had insisted that Rizal take the examination the following day. Rizal demurred that he was not prepared and would rather take it in September; the enthusiastic professor would not be put off and added jokingly that in September he would fail Rizal. He was asked about Charlemagne and “came out safely.” “I hope,” he added, “you will not accuse me of wasting my time.”⁹ He would continue his studies one more year.

He was not wholly self-satisfied. Even a year later he did not think much of what he had accomplished; the educational system in both Manila and

Madrid seemed so inadequate. He wrote Paciano that there were four lawyers in Madrid who had been graduated from the Royal and Pontifical University with very good grades, and one of them had enjoyed a great reputation during his long practice in Manila; yet in Madrid they were “like country bumpkins in a ballroom.” The Spaniards themselves could compare with the French, the German and the English.

Among our countrymen I am taken as studious and sufficiently able but, when I compare myself with many young men whom I have known in foreign lands, I confess frankly that I find myself on a much lower level and I conclude that to reach their standards I would need many years of study, much luck and much more application; yet those young men were younger than I am.

I do not speak of the young men in this country, among whom I know many who are really worthy; it is not that they lack ability, no; they have much talent, much determination. But the defects of the educational systems have the result that they work harder to less advantage, as happened to us there.

The life they lead: coffee-houses and billiards; the example given by the old and those in high positions: laziness and idle talk; the little incentive that the Government gives the studious; —it is the same there, with the only difference that we would be glad enough if our rulers would only leave our students in peace and not bother with them at all;—the realization that one rises to power by talk and intrigue or because one belongs to this or that political party—all these contribute to the disappointment of so many happy expectations, of so many young men who doubtless would make good in another environment,

What I regret most is that many of our countrymen, poisoned by this environment, join political parties against their convictions, or seek fame at the cost of money and self-respect, not on their own merits but with banquets and exhibitionism; they do not know that such fame is a burning scrap of paper, leaving only ashes that afterwards stain and spoil.^{[10](#)}

It is now time to look at these countrymen of Rizal in Madrid.

They were not a few. There was Don Pedro Alejandro Paterno, who chased the “burning scrap of paper” in Rizal's sardonic yet sincere simile. There was Graciano López Jaena, turned socialist and republican—did Rizal imply that these were not the eloquent Ilonggo's convictions? There was Gregorio Sancianco who had published in 1881 a compendious treatise on “Philippine Progress,” a collection of economic, administrative and political studies. There were the artists, Juan Luna, high seas pilot turned painter of vast historical canvasses, soon to return in triumph after six years in Rome; Melecio Figueroa, engraver; Félix Resurrección Hidalgo, Miguel Zaragoza, and Esteban Villanueva, painters all. Soon also there would be Marcelo Hilario del Pilar, hard-headed, mordant, sagacious, hounded into exile, ferociously lonely for his wife and daughters, Rizal's greatest ally and rival. There were retired colonials, officers and officials, living on half-pay and nostalgia; wastrels inebriated with the unexpected liberties and opportunities of life abroad, out of sight of censorious parents and neighbours; earnest students, studious propagandists, “merchants, travellers, employees, army men, students, artists, lawyers, physicians, commission agents, politicians, cooks, servants, coachmen, women, children and old men”—the description is Rizal's own in a letter to his family.¹¹ Some were known to Rizal; they were former schoolmates like Lete and the Llorentes. Others were mere acquaintances with whom Rizal did not care to improve acquaintance. A few would become his intimates. The rest were flotsam and jetsam in the tides of colonialism and scarcely come into the story.

López Jaena was one of the three whom posterity would recognize, together with Rizal and del Pilar, as composing the triumvirate of propaganda movement. He was five years older than Rizal, six years younger than del Pilar; he had arrived in Madrid first, Rizal had followed after two years, del Pilar would come last. He was everything Rizal was not, and disapproved of a medical student who abandoned his studies, a spend-thrift, careless of conventions and the company he kept, fickle, impulsive, slovenly, intemperate in his habits, a Bohemian to shock the prim Rizal; yet Rizal would love him for López Jaena was the kind of a man whose follies one forgives for their generosity and innocence. His moustache accentuated the Chinese cast of his features, high cheek-boned, with inquiring challenging eyes and a humorous mouth; of medium height, we are told rather thin, with

a heavy Bisayan accent and a slight stutter, but he was a superb orator and a trenchant journalist who ran out pen in hand and roaring whenever anyone dared to criticize the natives of the Philippines in any of their habits, customs, forms or manifestations.

By way of contrast Paterno and his two brothers, Antonio and Maximino, came from one of the best Manila Filipino families. Pedro had already published a book of poems, "*Sampaguitas*," and would soon follow it with a novel, "*Ninay*." Posterity has been rather harsh with him because he was an incorrigible snob. He claimed to belong to the ancient Tagalog nobility and styled himself *maginoo*; later he would aspire to become duke and grandee of Spain; he would negotiate peace with the Spaniards and peace with the North Americans, and seek the leadership of the generation under the new American regime. Now in 1884 Paterno had his eyes on nothing more than the leadership of expatriates from the Philippines, or rather of those who even considered themselves expatriates. He was not an unkind or an untalented man as the future would show; he would make a shrewd, courageous and resourceful negotiator, a diplomatist whose only policy was peace. Unfortunately, in Madrid, he was out of touch with his countrymen. He was much too fond of publicity which he sought with "banquets and exhibitionism." Retana, who was a contemporary of them all, reprints one of the articles which his hospitality inspired. It describes a "museum" of curiosities which Paterno said he had accumulated during a three-year tour of Europe, Oceania, America and Asia, and which he had invited the Madrid press to view: a variety of coconuts, Chinese fans, silks, porcelain, shells, armor, ivory trinkets. He showed Rizal the cutting of the article and invited him to the house. Rizal does not seem to have been impressed or to have liked his host at all. In the Madrid journal which he started on the 1st of January 1884 he has several caustic entries in code: "Pedro is hunting votes to make him president [of the expatriates' club] ... Paterno has exploited [another expatriate] in the most unworthy fashion, promising to pay his debts in order to make him work [for his candidature?] and then paying nothing."¹²

Nothing was to come of nothing. When Rizal had first arrived in Madrid he had found in existence a small *Círculo Hispano-Filipino*, whose moving spirit was Juan Atayde, a Spaniard from Manila, of mature age, in fact a retired major of infantry. The club published a review; Rizal contributed to

it his travel article originally written for the *Diariong Tagalog*. López Jaena had also written for it. But there had been inevitable disagreements on policy between the retired colonials and the expatriate students, between age and youth, between prudence and idealism. A last desperate effort was made to keep the club alive with a splendid ball and Rizal was asked to contribute a few verses. He complied but with certain reservations; the following fragment will suggest his irony.

*Piden que pulse la lira
ha tiempo callada y rota:
¡si ya no arranco una nota
ni mi musa ya me inspira!
Balbuce fría y delira
si la tortura mi mente;
cuando ríe, solo miente,
como miente su lamento:
y es que en mi triste aislamiento
mi alma ni goza ni siente.*

*Hubo un tiempo... ¡y es verdad
Pero ya aquel tiempo huyó,
en que vate me llamó
la indulgencia o la amistad.
Ahora, de aquella edad
el recuerdo apenas resta,
como quedan de una fiesta
los misteriosos sonidos
que retienen los oídos
del bullicio de la orquesta.*¹³

Soon there was nothing left of the circle than “the mysterious echoes” of an orchestra long departed. On the 29th January 1883 Rizal wrote to his family: “Our society has died. I proposed its dissolution myself although I was one of its staunchest supporters.”¹⁴ A year later they were still trying to reorganize it. But, as Rizal noted in code, “the majority talk a lot but when it comes to putting up money they back out.” We should not take too censorious a view of these comings and goings, committees and mee-tings,

office-hunting and reluctance to pay dues. After all, one does not expect young men in their twenties to be ascetics; the students in Rizal's Madrid were neither better nor worse than those of other times; it was all very Spanish. Rizal himself, although he was living as frugally as he could on the pension that, meager as it was, might be further reduced because of bad times in Kalamba, found time to stay up until three in the morning for a New Year's Eve dinner, to go to the theater, to have his photograph taken in a Spanish cape, to go to a masked ball (two masques teased him and he never found out who they were), to observe at a dance "a beautiful girl with blue eyes and a pleasant smile."¹⁵

He had not entirely forgotten Leonor Rivera; nor has she, him. She was reported to have lost much weight. She seems to have written to him regularly; he described one of her letters as "affectionate and with a most agreeable ending."¹⁶ He was terribly upset when he dreamed that he had returned home and found that "Leonor had been unfaithful, unfaithful to such a degree that there was no mending it".¹⁷ Yet with blithe disregard, typically masculine, of what might be his own obligations, and not in dreams alone, he seems to have thoroughly enjoyed a long flirtation with Consuelo Ortiga, the daughter of Pablo Ortiga y Rey, who had been mayor of Manila in de la Torre's time, and was now a counsellor at the Colonial Office and a ready host to all young libe-rals. "Consuelo was kind to me," he notes in his journal. He sends her gifts: native cloths, music sheets from Paris, the first flower of a houseplant. Consuelo's diary⁽¹⁸⁾ follows the progress of the affair in more detail.

Rizal says that he never goes out except to go to medical school and to come here at night ... Rizal too is in love; he hasn't proposed outright but almost, almost ... I am divided between Rizal and Lete. The former attracts me because of his conversation and because he seems such a serious young man ... Rizal told me he was leaving for Paris to forget, to heal himself of a disease acquired a year ago; that he had seen others fooled by the amiability with which they had been treated and was afraid the same thing would happen to him; that he had once fallen in love and it had seemed to him that he was going to be accepted, but that suddenly he had been disappointed [dear Segunda!]. Now

it was different because the girl concerned belonged to a much higher class. I aspire, he said, “too high.”

She had, in fact, made her choice in favor of Lete. In February 1884 he still could not understand it and asked her how she looked upon him.

“As a friend,” she replied. “Do you want more?”

“Really, that should be enough,” he said with a certain irony.

“Poor Rizal!” exclaims Consuelo in her diary. He for his part relieved his feelings by writing her verses, of which the concluding stanzas give the flavor.

*Un imposible, una ambición, locura,
Sueños del alma, una pasión tal vez...
Bebed el néctar que en la vida sirven;
Dejad tranquilo reposar la hiel.
De nuevo siento las espesas sombras
Cubrir el alma con su denso tul;
Capullo, si no más, no flor hermosa,
Pues le faltan la atmósfera y la luz.
Tenedlos allí, pobres versos míos,
Hijos malditos que lactó el pesar;
Saben muy bien a quien deben su vida,
Y ellos a vos os lo dirán quizás¹⁹*

He had been asking his gossip from Chenggoy whom the latter would choose between the two Leonors back home. He seems to have made up his own mind sometime between June and August 1885, long after Consuelo but perhaps not entirely unmindful of her. There is a letter from Chenggoy which reveals his decision and the year he took it.

José M. Cecilio to J. Rizal 30 September 1885 — ... I congratulate you on your good choice of the woman who will be your faithful partner. She is not in the Concordia College but in Dagupan, Pangasinan, at the side of her parents ... It is said that Orang is marrying one J.J....²⁰

In the meantime the expatriates in Madrid had been swept into a brief but enthusiastic fraternal embrace by some startling news. Juan Luna had won the first gold medal (out of three) in the 1884 Madrid Exposition and Resurrección Hidalgo a silver medal (out of fifteen awarded). Luna, born in Badok, Ilokos Norte, was four years older than Rizal; the third child of seven, the second son of five, he too had studied at the Ateneo, moved on to the Naval School in Manila with his elder brother Manuel and, after serving as a student officer in Asian waters for a year, had been granted a license as a high-seas pilot at the age of seventeen. But his heart had been with the arts and he had studied for four years under Lorenzo Ma. Guerrero, who, recognizing his great talent, had suggested to his parents that he be sent for further studies in Spain. Enrolled at the Academia de San Fernando in 1877 at the age of twenty-one Luna had won the only prize awarded at the end of his first year's course and had then decided to follow his master Alejo Vera to Rome. Left alone there for three years he had so distinguished himself that the Manila city council approved a subsidy for him of P1,000 a year for four years. He had worked for eight months on a gigantic canvas depicting fallen gladiators, the *Spoliarium*, and had shipped it to Madrid for the 1884 Exposition.

There was a streak of violence in the Lunas that betrayed itself in the *Spoliarium* and would in the end be fatal for the painter Juan and his younger brother Antonio; Juan would kill his wife and mother-in-law in an access of jealous rage, and Antonio, a generalissimo of the Republic, would be cut down by sentries whom he had kicked and insulted; all this was in future, concealed and scarcely suspected, as the twenty-seven year old Ilokano, still a bachelor, went sailing to Madrid in triumph, a Filipino whose genius had been recognized in a field wider, much wider than that in which Rizal had shown his pre-eminence in Spanish prose and poetry. Besides, there were no politics in painting.

Luna was scheduled to arrive in Madrid on the 23rd; Maximo Paterno quickly organized a dinner in his honor two days later, and a special gift from the expatriates: a silver palette with wreath, reminiscent of the young Manila poet's silver quill. Rizal was never mean with his praise; besides, his "racial jealousy" still as alive as ever, he was delighted with the fresh proof of racial equality that the triumphs of his two compatriots had furnished; he

agreed happily to give the opening toast at the dinner although he was taking his examinations in Greek on that day. He prepared a speech that would be a challenge and a manifesto; his appeal to the youth of his native land had been answered in more generous measure than even he could have expected (Luna's were *mágicos pinceles* indeed, and fame heralded his name *con trompa pregonera por la ancha esfera*), and he could do no less than pay the victor tribute. Rizal was a painter himself, yet there never seems to have been even a touch of jealousy in his relation with Luna (he would often serve as his model); perhaps Rizal was too generous to acknowledge even the possibility of rivalry between them, and Juan Luna, too self-confident to even envision it.

Rizal, he tells us, had spent all his money on examination fees, he had even pawned Saturnina's diamond ring; he had had nothing to eat that day, though he had won the first prize in Greek. The Paternos had arranged for the dinner to be held at the English Restaurant in Madrid; the guest list (sixty) suggested the quality of their connections rather than the participation of those Filipinos whose presence Rizal had noted in Madrid: the merchants and clerks, the cooks, servants and coachmen. López was there but the evening's honors went to Rizal.

In "*La juventud filipina*" and "*El amor patrio*" he had been ambiguous; but now the heady atmosphere of Madrid had had two years to do its work. Blumentritt was to recall what is not inappropriate to record now.

His sojourn in Spain opened up to him a new world. His intellectual horizons began to expand. New ideas pressed upon him. He came from a country where bigotry came naturally, where the Spanish friar, the Spanish bureaucrat and the Spanish officer ruled with unlimited power over body and soul.

In Madrid he found exactly the opposite. Free-thinkers and atheists spoke freely and slightly about his religion and about his Church; he found the authority of the State at a low ebb; he saw not only the liberals fighting the clericals but, to his astonishment, the republicans and Carlists working openly for the realization of their political ideals. A feeling of bitterness seized him as he perceived the difference between the unchecked

freedom of the Mother Country and the theocratic absolutism in his nativeland.²¹

It was in the light of this discovery of free thought and speech in Spain that he let himself go in a speech in which for the first time he drew a distinction, definite for all its assumption of unity, between Spain and the Philippines; Spaniards and Filipinos were “*dos pueblos*,” he began, “two peoples that sea and space separate in vain, two peoples, which the seeds of disunion, blindly sown by men and their tyranny, do not take root.”

The patriarchal age is coming to an end in the Philippines; the illustrious deeds of the sons [of the country] are no longer accomplished within its boundaries; the Oriental chrysalis is breaking out of its sheath; brilliant colors and rosy streaks herald the dawn of a long day for those regions, and that race, plunged in lethargy during the night of its history while the sun illuminated other continents, awakes anew, shaken by the electric convulsion produced by contact with Western peoples, and demands light, life, the civilization that was once its heritage from time, thus confirming the eternal laws of constant evolution, periodic change and progress. You know this well and you glory in it; the diamonds that shine in the crown of the Philippines owe their beauty to you; she gave the uncut stones, Europe their polished facets. And all of us behold with pride, you the finished work, and we the flame, the spirit, and the raw material we have furnished. [Cheers.]

It was stirring rhetoric that has the power to move three quarters of a century later, heard by more sophisticated, perhaps even cynical ears; we may judge from that the stunning impact it had, perhaps not so much in Madrid, inured to the regional separatism and pride of Basques, Cataláns and Cubans, but in pusillanimous and intolerant Manila.

Luna's *Spoliarium* with its bloody carcasses of slave gladiators being dragged away from the arena where they had entertained their Roman oppressors with their lives, Hidalgo's *Christian Virgins Exposed to the Mob*, stripped to satisfy the lewd contempt of their Roman persecutors with their honor—these two canvases, Rizal continued with breathtaking boldness,

embodied “the essence of our social, moral and political life: humanity in severe ordeal, humanity unredeemed, reason and idealism in open struggle with prejudice, fanaticism and injustice ...”

Just as a mother reaches her child to speak so as to understand his joys, his needs, his sorrows, so also Spain, as a mother, teaches her language to the Philippines, despite the opposition of those who are so short-sighted and small-minded that, making sure of the present, they cannot foresee the future and will not weigh the consequences, soured nurses, corrupt and corrupting, who habitually choke every legitimate sentiment and, perverting the hearts of the people, sow in them the seeds of discord whose fruit, a very wolf's bane, a very death, will be gathered by future generations ...

Spain is wherever she makes her influence felt by doing good; even if her banner were to go, her memory would remain, eternal, imperishable. What can a red and yellow rag do, or guns and cannon, where love and affection do not spring, where there is no meeting of the minds; no agreement on principles, no harmony, of opinion? [Prolonged applause].

We have come here ... to give tangible form to the mutual embrace between two races who love and want each other, united morally, socially and politically for four centuries, so as to constitute in the future a single nation in spirit, duties, aspirations, privileges. [Applause]

I ask you then to drink a toast to our painters, Luna and Hidalgo, exclusive and legitimate glories of two peoples! A toast for those who have helped them on the arduous paths of art! A toast for the youth of the Philippines, sacred hope of my country that they may follow such excellent examples, and may Mother Spain, solicitous and ever mindful of the good of her provinces, soon put in effect the reforms that she long planned; the furrow has been plowed and the soil is not barren. A toast, finally, for the happiness of those fathers and mothers who, deprived of the affection of their sons, follow their courses with moist eyes and beating hearts from that distant land, across the seas and space,

sacrificing on the altar of the common good the sweet comforts which are so few in the twilight of life, solitary and prized winter flowers blooming on the brink of the grave. [Prolonged applause and cheers for the speaker.]²²

[4]

We see him standing there, perhaps a little flushed and giddy—all that champagne and all that glory on an empty stomach—the glass in his hand bubbling with hopes and dreams, generosity and high resolutions. He is to drain that glass to the bitter dregs.

Rizal's speech, his first open challenge to the regime, was carried by the Madrid press the next day and eventually reached the Philippines; he himself had, in fact, proudly sent cuttings to his friends in Manila, curiously unaware of the consequences.²³ His mother and family, closer home, were more apprehensive. On the 5th November 1884 Paciano wrote his brother that their mother has been ill.

Paciano Rizal to J. Rizal, 5 November 1884 —

...At first, I thought it was only an indigestion, and I gave her a laxative hoping it would cure her; that did not happen, however, and she stayed always in bed, weak, unable to eat or sleep, so that she had lost a lot of weight after a week. I was growing very anxious about her health when I observed her sighing now and again, and then I gathered that it was a spiritual rather than a physical trouble that ailed her; I asked [Saturnina] to take her to her own house to amuse her with gaming and, this having been done, she recovered.

You were the cause of this sickness and I shall tell you why. At the time there was a great deal of talk and comment about the speech you gave at the banquet for the Filipino painters; some said you could never return, others said that it would be better for you to stay there, still others said that you had made enemies, and there were those who said that you had also lost friends but, in brief, all were agreed that it would not be good for you to come

back. These gratuitous suppositions caused our mother great sorrow and made her ill ...²⁴

There is a touching letter from Doña Teodora herself, writing in Tagalog from Manila a month later. Her eyesight was by now so bad that Leonor Rivera, in whose house she was staying, made a fair copy for Rizal to read.

Teodora Alonso to J. Rizal, 11 December 1884 —

...You really do not know how sad it makes me feel whenever I hear about you from others in conversation; that is why I ask you again and again not to meddle in things that bring grief to my heart...

Now, what I truly want from you, my son, is first of all, not to fail in your duties as a real Christian for this is sweeter to me than your acquiring great knowledge; sometimes knowledge is what leads us to ruin. Perhaps this will be my last letter to you, so remember it well for that is what I desire most.

Your mother who wants to take you in her arms soon, and wants you to be a good Christian.

Teodora Alonso de R.²⁵

It seems that Don Francisco too had similar advice to give, to judge from a fragment which survives of Rizal's reply to his mother.

J. Rizal to Teodora Alonso, 1885 — ... I am doing everything possible to please you. For more than a year now and, following Father's advice, I have tried as far as possible to withdraw myself and not to call attention to my person. I have been told to stop writing; well, I have put aside my pen, the only tool I had and one which I was beginning to handle not without skill, and if sometimes I have picked it up again it was because I was compelled to do so by very powerful reasons, and even then I did not use my own name for love of that obscurity which I need.

If in spite of this I still have enemies, well, let them be. It is so difficult to live without sorrow, but misfortunes do not mean dishonor; misfortunes are welcome when they are the result of

avoiding abasement and degradation. As long as we keep the esteem of those who know us, as long as our conscience is the friendly guide of our thoughts, what does the rest matter?

We have been born into a society whose political life is so out of joint that we can have no other prospect than to submit or to perish; our conscience must decide which is to be preferred. Let us then put our trust in God and in the sincerity of our purposes. If desiring and having desired the good brings misfortune as a reward, what are we to do?

The best legacy that parents can leave to their children is an upright judgment, generosity in the exercise of our rights, and perseverance in adversity. And a son pays the greatest honor to his parents with his honesty and good name; let the son never make his father tremble with indignation or with shame, and God will provide the rest ...

With regard to what you tell me about my duties as a Christian, I can tell you gladly that I have not for one moment stopped believing in the fundamental principles of our religion; my childhood beliefs have yielded to the convictions of youth which in time will take root in me; essential (beliefs) which do not resist examination and time should pass into the memory and leave the heart; I should not try to live on illusions and lies.

What I believe now, I believe by reasoning, because my conscience can accept only what is compatible with reason. I can bow my head before a fact even though it be inexplicable to me, so long as it is a fact, but never before an absurdity or a mere probability.

For me religion is the holiest of things, the purest, the most intangible, which escapes all human adulterations, and I think I would be recreant to my duty as a rational being if I were to prostitute my reason and admit what is absurd. I do not believe that God would punish me if I were to try to approach Him using reason and understanding, His own most precious gifts; I believe that to do Him homage, I can do no better than to present myself before Him making use of His best gifts, just as in appearing

before my parents I should wear the best clothes they have given me. If someday I were to get a little of that divine spark called science, I would not hesitate to use it for God and, if I should err or go astray in my reasoning, God will not punish me ...[26](#)

Here is a new Rizal indeed! Well might the pious Doña Teodora weep and sigh on her bed, and painfully trace her simple counsels of faith and obedience! Three years in the dazzling cities of the Enlightenment, three short years in the heady air of free thought and free inquiry, had sufficed to turn the socialist singer of Elcano's glory into a nationalist and a rationalist.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter VIII

(1) *Soli*, 31st October 1890, which reprinted the original published in the *Diariong Tagalog* of the 20th August 1882. It is only fair to point out that I have relied on the text in Retana, 80 et seq.

(2) Retana, 61.

(3) Ep. Riz. I, 39, 77.

(4) Palma, 44. I have the following note from the archives of the Academia de San Fernando, courtesy of Mr. Pedro Ortiz Armengol: Dr. José Rizal Alonso, natural de Calamba, La Laguna (Filipinas)

Dirección: Baño, 15, pral. Cédula personal No. 219, 162

No. 48 de la Matrícula de Ingreso en el curso de 1883-1884

No. 3 del acta de los aprobados el 4 de Octubre de 1883

No. 13 de la letra “R” del Registro de Matricula de primer año

No figura en acta de Perspectiva

No figura en acta de Paisaje

No figura en acta de Dibujo del Antiguo y Ropaje

No figura en acta de Dibujo y Modelado del Antiguo y Ropaje

To all appearances Rizal was not a very assiduous student at the Arts Academy.

(5) 100 Letters, 75.

(6) 100 Letters, 168.

(7) 100 Letters, 181.

(8) 100 Letters, 320.

- (9) 100 Letters, 186.
- (10) 100 Letters, 220.
- (11) 100 Letters, 169.
- (12) *Diarios*, 74 et seq.
- (13) *Poesías*, 50
- (14) 100 Letters, 74,
- (15) *Diarios*, 73 et seq. On the 25th February (p. 83): “Apenas si me he divertido en el salón viendo pasar las máscaras. Había a mi lado una joven hermosa, ojos azules, una sonrisa agradable.”
- (16) *Diarios*, 75.
- (17) *Diarios*, 78.
- (18) Palma, 55 et seq., apparently quoting from a manuscript in the National Museum.
- (19) *Poesías*, 52.
- (20) Ep. Riz., I, 152.
- (21) Cf. Note 8, Chapter Four.
- (22) Retana, 93 et seq., quoting contemporaneous sources. Retana is really invaluable.
- (23) Ep. Riz., I, 136.
- (24) Ep. Riz., I, 128.
- (25) Ep. Riz., I, 130
- (26) 100 Letters, 225.



IX

A Novelist's Diagnosis

I have put all my genius into my life; I have only put my talent into my works.

OSCAR WILDE

All great truths begin as blasphemies.

BERNARD SHAW

I have laughed about our misfortunes because nobody wanted to weep with me.

RIZAL (IN A LETTER TO HIDALGO)

He would write a *Spoliarium*! Since early that year 1884 he had been toying with the idea of a book. When the re-organization of the *Círculo Hispano-Filipino* was being discussed in January he had proposed as one of its activities the publication of a book to which the members would contribute chapters on various aspects of life in the Philippines. Certainly it would be more permanent and perhaps more influential than scattered essays in a review of negligible circulation.

“My proposal on the book,” he noted on the 2nd January 1884, “was unanimously approved. But afterwards difficulties and objections were raised which seemed to me rather odd, and a number of gentlemen stood up and refused to discuss the matter any further. In view of this I decided not to press it any longer, feeling that it was impossible to count on general support. Only afterwards, in agreement with Messrs. Lete and Figueroa, it was decided to go ahead. Letters for this purpose will be written to Luna, Resurrección and Regidor.” A day after he noted some progress: “Graciano [López Jaena] will write about the Filipino woman; [Evaristo] Aguirre, the same; Maximino [Paterno] about Letamendi,”¹

Rizal's purpose will be easily grasped by any Filipino even of our day who has lived for any time abroad. In his time, no less than in ours, the Filipinos as a nation were unknown in Europe. In Madrid, then as now, street urchins ran after them shouting “Chink! Chink!” And indeed, half in self-mockery, half in defiance, the Filipinos in Madrid referred to one another as “slit-eyed Chinese.” In Paris they were mistaken for Japanese; there Rizal and his friends called themselves the *indios bravos*, transforming the traditional Spanish gibe into a badge of honor, for Rousseau with his myth of “the noble savage” and James Fenimore Cooper with his *Leatherstocking Tales* had captured the imagination and the awe of Europeans for the plumed warriors of the prairies. For all that, the *indios bravos* knew they were not naked savages brandishing tomahawks or Chinese peddling sweetmeat pies; they wanted to be known for what they were or thought they were, Oriental Europeans, as the phrase would go some generations later, specimens from the “showcase of the West” in Asia. Fortunately the anthology, if we may call it that, was never written. Instead, the next year, Pedro Paterno published his “*Ninay*,” a novel sub-titled “*Costumbres Filipinas*,” (Philippine Customs), thus partly fulfilling the original purpose of Rizal's plan. He himself, as we have seen, had “put aside his pen” in deference to

the wishes of his parents. But the idea of writing a novel himself must have grown on him. It would be no poem to be forgotten after a year, no essay in a review of scant circulation, no speech that passed in the night, but a long and serious work on which he might labor, exercising his mind and hand, without troubling his mother's sleep. He would call it "*Noli me tângere*;" the Latin echo of the *Spoliarium* is not without significance. He seems to have told no one in his family about his grand design; it is not mentioned in his correspondence until the book is well-nigh completed. But the other expatriates knew what he was doing; later, when Pastells was blaming the *Noli* on the influence of German Protestants, he would call his compatriots to witness that he had written half of the novel in Madrid; a fourth part in Paris, and only the remainder in Germany.

What was his purpose? "With the sincerity and impartiality of which a man is capable in looking over his past," he told Pastells, "I have turned my eyes to the fresh years of my youth and I have asked myself if at anytime resentment moved the pen that wrote *Noli me tângere*, and my memory has answered no ... I was still very young, I was quicker to forgive than I am now and, however deep the wounds, they were healed in the end, thanks to the mildness of my character. There were, then, no 'festering wounds' or 'thorns that dug deeper and deeper,' what there was, was a clear-sighted look at the realities in my native country, the vivid memory of what was happening, and sufficient accuracy in determining the cause of the disease, so that I not only pictured the past but also guessed the future, for even now I see what I called a 'novel' come true so exactly that I can say that I am present at the enactment of my own work and taking part in it."²

"To picture the past" and the "realities of my native country"— what Hugo had done for *Les Misérables*, what Zola, Daudet and Dickens had done for the wretched of France and England, he would do for his countrymen. Luna and Hidalgo had won recognition for themselves and for the abilities of their race with their paintings; he would do it with a novel. He would do more, his novel would be a second "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a book he knew and had read, and would lay bare before his countrymen, and perhaps others, the virtual slavery in which they were held.

He did not foresee two flaws in the argument. First of all, painting, like music, speaks a universal language and can move easily across frontiers; a novel in Spanish, not the most popular or appreciated language in Europe,

would scarcely be read in the great centers of the world or, on the other hand, be even understood in his own country. Secondly, and more fraught with danger for him, each man may see a painting on his own way, but what is written down clearly cannot be misunderstood. Rizal himself had seen in the *Spoliarium*, in “the tumult of the crowd, the shouts of slaves, the metallic clatter of dead men's armor, the sobs of orphans, the murmured prayers,” nothing less than “humanity in severe ordeal, humanity unredeemed;” he had seen in “the melancholy, the beauty, the weakness” of Hidalgo's *Christian Virgins* “the victims of brute force,” and nothing less than the triumph of “prejudice, fanaticism, and injustice.” But others might just as well have seen only the play of color, the balance of the composition; a Spanish friar might well have seen with self-justification, in the *Spoliarium* the savage excesses of Roman paganism, and in the *Christian Virgins* the holy martyrdom of the Church at the hands of her enemies. But his novel would not be ambiguous, and he would be repaid with banishment and death, not with Luna's silver palette and Hidalgo's silver medal.

[2]

In the meantime there were his studies. Oddly enough it would appear that, contrary to the general assumption, he never got his doctorate in medicine, although he took and passed the courses in the history of medicine, surgical analysis and normal histology in 1884 to 1885. However he never submitted his doctoral thesis. He was never really “Doctor” Rizal, as he would be known to posterity. In the long correspondence with the authorities of the University, which he started from Geneva in June 1887, he requests only the issuance of his licentiate degree; this was applied and paid for in his name by Julio Llorente, who for some reason or other asked that it be sent to the Government in Manila, where it was promptly lost, so that after a typical bureaucratic jumble Rizal had to be content with a certified copy which he received from the Spanish Consul General in Hong Kong in May 1892, eight years after his graduation.³

This may be taken as an indication both of Rizal's true vocation (it was not medicine) and of his indifference to the practice of his profession (which he did not actively undertake until the ruin of his family compelled him to

support them and himself in Hong Kong). As a physician he had really only two patients at heart: his country and his mother.

For his mother he now determined to specialize in ophthalmology. Having stayed in Madrid long enough to take a licentiate in philosophy and letters on his birthday anniversary, the 19th June 1885 (“excellent” with honors in Spanish literature and Arabic, “excellent” in Hebrew and Greek, “good” in Spanish history), he went to Paris to study under the famous Dr. Louis de Wecker. It was an excellent choice, for de Wecker was one of the most famous ophthalmologists of his day and has kept his reputation to our time. Among his colleagues at the clinic were an Italian, a Greek, an Australian, three South Americans, two Spaniards, a German, a Pole and four Frenchmen. Rizal had a quality about him that commanded respect and affection; many years later he would still be remembered as “a refined, friendly and industrious man who was held in high esteem by Dr. de Wecker and his colleagues in the clinic.” Still, it is unlikely that any of his fellow-trainees at the clinic was ever shot as a patriot.

It appears that he lived with Juan Luna in the huge studio where the latter worked on his vast canvases; Rizal, Luna and Hidalgo were also frequent guests of the Pardo de Tavera family. Luna was courting the daughter Paz, and Rizal gave her for Christmas a pair of Greek vases on one of which he had painted Filipinos at a cockfight, and on the other the same figures at work. On another occasion he drew in her book of souvenirs the fable of the monkey and the tortoise, which he would later write out for a learned review in London.

In five months, “living among Filipinos,” he had learned French; in six months, he hoped, he would be speaking German; for by the middle of January 1886 he could claim that he had mastered the technique of eye operations, what with fifty to a hundred patients being treated, and ten major operations performed, everyday at Dr. de Wecker's clinic, and he next planned to perfect the technique of diagnosis in Germany. It would be cheaper to live there at any rate.⁴

By February he was writing to his sister María from Heidelberg, giving her instructions on how to decorate the Kalamba homestead in the German style with still-life paintings, decorated plates, hanging plants and bird-cages.⁵ There has been some confusion about his purpose in going to the famous old university town; actually, he was not studying law, as has been

suggested, but continuing his ophthalmological studies under “another renowned oculist named Otto Becker. He is not so famous nor so great a surgeon as Dr. de Wecker of Paris,” Rizal informed his family, “but in Germany he enjoys a great reputation and has written many works.” He spent the day on his eye studies, he said, and the other half learning German. Twice a week he went to a beer hall with his German friends.⁶

Here he began his great love affair with Germany and the Germans, which back in Kalamba would give him the nickname of “the German doctor” and set the regime buzzing with suspicions that he was an agent of Bismarck. “Germany is a country of much order and obedience ... The German student is affectionate, respectful, modest, and not boastful ... [The women] are tall, stout, not very blonde but blonde enough. They are very amiable and sincere ...”⁷ To his eighteen-year-old sister Trinidad he wrote a letter full of praises for the German women whom he found serious, studious and industrious. “They do not care very much about clothes and jewelry, and go everywhere walking as briskly as the men, carrying their books or baskets, paying no attention to anybody else, and intent only on their duties ... They are very fond of housework and learn to cook as assiduously as they might learn music or painting. If our sister María had been educated in Germany she would have been remarkable, because the Germans are active and half-masculine. They are not afraid of men, and care more for the substance of things than for appearances.” There is no mistaking Rizal's purpose; he makes his point clearly. “It is a pity that there in our country the principal adornment of all the women should almost always be luxurious clothes and not education; in the provinces [the Filipina] still preserves one virtue which makes up for her lack of education, and that is industriousness and a delicacy of feeling which I have not found in as great a degree in any woman in Europe; if these qualities, with which Nature there endows her, were ennobled with intellectual ones, as happens in Europe, the Filipino family would have nothing to envy the European.”⁸

Home was never far from his thoughts. When spring came to the university town, “so beautiful that it makes one want to burst out singing,”⁹ with the sky turning blue over marvellous ancient castle and the trees bursting into bloom, whiter than snow, along the banks of the Neckar, with the young men with the sabre-scarred faces under their red, green, white, blue and yellow caps, and the girls out in their pretty colored frocks in the narrow

cobbled alleys and in the fragrant woods, he wrote a nostalgic poem “to the flowers of Heidelberg.”

*¡Id a mi patria, id, extranjeras flores,
sembradas del viajero en el camino,
y bajo su azul cielo,
que guarda mis amores,
contad del peregrino
la fe que alienta por su patrio suelo!
Id y decid ... decid que cuando el alba
vuestro cáliz abrió por vez primera
cabe el Néckar helado,
le visteis silencioso a vuestro lado
pensando en su constante primavera.
Decid que cuando el alba
que roba vuestro aroma,
cantos de amor jugando os susurraba,
él también murmuraba
cantos de amor en su natal idioma;
que cuando el sol la cumbre
del Koenigstuhl en la mañana dora,
y con su tibia lumbré
anima el valle, el bosque y la espesura
¡saluda a ese sol, aun en su aurora,
al que en su patria en el cenit fulgura!
¡Y contad aquel día
cuando os cogía al borde del sendero,
entre las ruinas del feudal castillo,
orilla al Néckar o a la selva umbría!
¡Contad lo que os decía,
cuando, con gran cuidado,
entre las páginas de un libro usado
vuestras flexibles hojas oprimía!
Llevad, llevad, ¡oh flores!,
amor a mis amores,
paz a mi país y a su fecunda tierra,
fe a sus hombres, virtud a sus mujeres;*

*salud a dulces seres
que el paternal, sagrado hogar encierra ...¹⁰
Cuando toquéis la playa,
el beso que os imprimo,
depositadlo en alas de la brisa,
porque con ella vaya,
y bese cuanto adoro, amo y estimo.
Mas ¡ay! llegaréis, flores,
conservaréis quizás vuestros colores;
pero lejos del patrio, heroico suelo,
a quien debéis la vida,
perderéis los olores,
que aroma es alma y no abandona el cielo
cuya luz viera en su nacer, ni olvida.*

At about the time this poem was written, perhaps when he was actually composing it as he strolled down the “philosopher's walk,” in the forest of Oden near Heidelberg, he chanced across a German Protestant pastor, bearded and grave like an Old Testament patriarch, also out for a breath of spring air with his family. They exchanged greetings and quickly became friends; the Germans were attracted “by the exotic young Oriental;” Rizal for his part would write to them later that he would never forget how good they had been to him, “a foreigner without friends and letters of recommendation;” “in spite of my dark skin you have understood me. People with this skin seem to some to be less worthwhile and to have less sense ...”]

On the 22nd April 1886, the date of his Heidelberg poem, he wrote to his new acquaintance, Pastor Karl Ullmer, who turned out to be the vicar of the village of Wilhelmsfeld, that he had decided to spend a few weeks in the country—“Would you be so kind as to let me stay at your house?” The old vicar was delighted, and so was his young son Fritz for whom the new lodger drew cartoons. They would go for walks in the long summer twilights, talking about their religious convictions. There are few places on earth as lovely as the German Rhineland and its forests and castled rivers in the summer; the cool silent green depth were such a contrast to the austere

and scorched plains of Castille, and no less a contrasts the hot faith of the Spaniard to the warm benevolence of the Rhinelander. Often the Catholic parish priest of a neighboring village on the banks of the Rhine, Father Heinrich Bardorf, would join them for a friendly exchange of views over glasses of beer at the village inn. The two men of the cloth were intimate friends despite their religious differences, and Rizal was deeply impressed by this “example of Christian brotherhood.” He developed “a profound respect for any idea conceived in sincerity and practiced with conviction.”¹²

The Germans had learned religious tolerance in the sanguinary “wars of religion;” unlike the Spaniards, held united in the Catholic faith by the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims and by the rigid discipline of the Inquisition, they had fought one another in streets, churches and battlefields; prince against emperor, people against prince, prince against people, until all passion was drowned in blood. The atmosphere of tolerance in Germany, a new nation scarcely sixteen years old, had an effect on Rizal contrary to what the Spaniards afterwards suspected. He was finishing and re-writing his novel and he later told Pastells, “I tempered its outbursts, softened many phrases, and cut down many things to their just proportions as, seeing them from afar, I gradually acquired a broader vision, and as my imagination cooled down in the midst of the calm characteristics of that people ... But I do not deny that the environment in which I lived may have influenced me, above all in remembering my native country in the midst of that people, free, hard-working, studious, well governed, full of confidence in its future, and master of its destinies.”¹³

[3]

The *Noli* had two predecessors as a Filipino novel: Burgos's *La Loba Negra* and Paterno's *Ninay*. Burgos had a profound influence on Rizal, and several echoes of the *Loba* in thought and language have been pointed out in Rizal's novels.¹⁴ But the priest's melodramatic tale of a mysterious widow riding through the night in quest of vengeance is much too fantastic, and much too removed from the “realities” of life in the Philippines, to bear any comparison with the *Noli*. *Ninay* is more interesting parallel because it was more or less contemporaneous with the *Noli*; it is the novel that Rizal might

have written “had it not been for the events of 1872;” the difference is one of passion and of courage.

Revenge is the theme common to the plots of the three novels. In *Ninay* the love of Loleng, an Antipolo girl, and Berto, is frustrated by Don Juan Silveyro, the landlord of Loleng's parents, who wants the girl for himself. Loleng and Berto run away but she dies in a cave, exhausted by her vicissitudes. By her grave Berto makes friends with a rich young man, Carlos Mabagsic. Carlos is in love with Antonina Milo, the *Ninay* of the title, herself an heiress. She catches the eye of Federico, Don Juan's son, who takes advantage of a minor local uprising to denounce Ninay's father, Don Evaristo, and Carlos to the authorities and accomplices in the revolt. To save her father Ninay writes a letter compromising herself with Federico, but the latter is killed by Berto and is unable to keep his promise to save Ninay's father, who is executed. Berto also warns Carlos of his impending arrest, and the latter escapes on a ship that is lost in a storm. Believing Carlos and her father dead, Ninay goes into a convent. But Carlos has really survived and saves the life of Tik, the queen of a savage tribe on an oceanic island. She falls in love with him but he is faithful to Ninay, and when Tik is slain in battle she leaves him her treasure. He manages to return to Manila and is on his way to see Ninay when he is struck by cholera and dies in her chaste but reproachful embrace.

The parallel between the two plots is obvious. Berto is Elías in the *Noli*; Carlos, Ibarra; Ninay, María Clara; Don Evaristo, Capitán Tiago; the ruin of Carlos, like that of Ibarra, is encompassed by a false denunciation of complicity in a rebellion; like María Clara, Ninay sacrifices her lover for her father and goes into a convent, believing her lover dead. The bare plot of the *Noli* is indeed reminiscent of *Ninay*.

Crisóstomo Ibarra, the son of a wealthy landlord, Rafael Ibarra, is betrothed from early youth to María Clara, the only daughter of Santiago (Capitán Tiago) de los Santos. Crisóstomo is sent abroad to study; in his absence his father, who has Spanish blood himself, runs afoul of the authorities by accidentally killing a Spanish tax collector. He dies in jail and, as a free thinker who had stopped going to Confession, is denied Christian burial by Father Dámaso, the parish priest of their lakeside home-town of San Diego. When Ibarra returns and learns of his father's fate, he is at first overcome with rage but, dedicated to the uplift of his people through education, he

puts aside his plans for revenge in order to secure official approval for the establishment of a town school. But Father Salví, who has replaced Father Dámaso as parish priest, is himself in-love with María Clara. At the laying of the school's corner-stone Ibarra is almost killed in an obviously contrived accident and is saved only by the intervention of Elías, a mysterious boatman whom he had rescued from death during an outing on the lake. Father Dámaso too is vehemently and openly opposed to the marriage between Ibarra and María Clara. At a public dinner after the school opening ceremony he insults the memory of Ibarra's father; Ibarra loses his head and is about to kill him when María Clara stops his hand. Ibarra, automatically excommunicated for laying violent hands on a priest, is forbidden to see María Clara again. Father Dámaso arranges for her marriage instead to a Spanish relative of his, Linares. Worse is still to happen; Father Salví's head sacristán recruits the desperate and oppressed in San Diego for a rising in the name and allegedly with the money of Ibarra; the rising is denounced by the parish priest to the constabulary and is suppressed; the young liberals of the town, with Ibarra at their head, are seized and charged with rebellion. There is no proof against Ibarra until María Clara is persuaded to surrender to Father Salví and the authorities some letters of dubious loyalty which Ibarra had written to her from abroad. Ibarra is found guilty but he is liberated from jail by Elías. He confronts María Clara with her treachery and she confesses that she was forced to exchange his letters for some of Father Dámaso, which Father Salví had found in the parish house. The letters would have proved that her real father was the friar. Ibarra, having forgiven María Clara, flees with Elías up the river to the lake but they are sighted by a constabulary patrol; one of them is killed; who survives, remains a mystery, but a dying man buries Ibarra's treasure at the foot of his grandfather's grave. María Clara, believing Ibarra dead, refuses to go on with her marriage to Linares; she had planned to run away afterwards to join her lover. Father Dámaso pleads with her; he had not realised how much she loved Ibarra, he had only opposed their marriage and persecuted Ibarra's family because, as her real father he could not bear the thought of her becoming the wife of a native, without privileges, without rights. When she threatens to kill herself, he consents at last to her entering a nunnery of Poor Clares; here the chaplain is Father Salví, who is waiting for the promotion which is due him for frustrating the rising in San Diego. The

story ends with a glimpse of a young nun on the roof of the convent bewailing her wrongs amid the thunder and lightning of a storm.

But that, of course, is not the *Noli*.

If that were all, it would rank with *Ninay*, or worse with *Maria Nun* and other slanders on the “mysteries” of convents. Rizal would hotly resent all criticism of his novels but afterwards, in the depths of disillusionment in Hong Kong, he would admit to Blumentritt that they were not wholly works of art. The theme of personal revenge, typical of the Dumas stories that Rizal loved, particularly *The Count of Monte Cristo*, is unworthy of a great patriotic novel. Ibarra, and afterward Simoun in the *Fili*, conspire against a corrupt and tyrannical regime for purely personal reasons, from frustrated love, from a rage for vengeance. Indeed, not Ibarra alone but Elías, Commander Pablo of the outlaws, the tortured Tárсило, only survivor of the rising, all have wearily identical motives from wearily identical pasts: with the exception of Tárсило, they were once rich, they were ruined by friar or official, they seek revenge. One is almost inclined to doubt the sincerity of Rizal's denial to Pastells that resentment moved the pen that wrote the *Noli*; resentment, anger, rancor, hatred are the mainsprings of the novel's action.

María Clara is plainly a ninny, a romantic adolescent prone to fainting fits and melodramatic gestures, a shy virgin seemingly impervious to the temptations of the flesh, fonder of the language of love than of its real challenge. She does not have the courage of Loleng to overcome the obstacles to her heart's desires by simply running away with her lover; she does not even have the human frailty of *Ninay*, who is carried away by passion and is saved from seduction only because Carlos is conscience-stricken, and who, a coiffed nun, holds her dying lover in her arms and cries out: “Why do you leave me again?”

And what shall we say of Ibarra, so guileless as to be almost naive, cautious when he should be bold, rash when he should be prudent, who gets the worst of both worlds largely through his own fault! When he is secure in his wealth and position, he despises the outcasts in the mountains as felons and defends the regime against all the accusations voiced by Elías; when he is himself a fugitive from justice, he cries out that he will lead them in rebellion, no matter what the innocent may suffer. He would save his people but lets a chit of a girl, not even his mistress, rule his life.

Elías himself, the favorite of the intellectuals of a later day, is an amorphous, an ambiguous figure; one never quite understands why he pays so much deference to Ibarra; it is not simple gratitude, for the two are even when he saves him from the falling cornerstone at the school foundation, yet, when he discovers that Ibarra is the hated family that was the author of the misfortunes of his own, he runs away and comes back only to save Ibarra's treasures; he endures the *principales's* contemptuous dismissal of the grievances of the oppressed, and rescues him from prison. What is his motive? Perhaps he believes that the redemption of his country depends on the *ilustrados*, but he is as well educated as any of them and can match syllogisms and ethical principles with Ibarra. He is also stronger, more astute, less exposed and committed. He has given no hostages to fortune, yet it is he who in the end hangs back from armed action and gives up his life— for what?

The curious, the significant thing about the *Noli* is that nobody ever really remembers its plot except in the vaguest terms. Palma, for instance, in summarizing the story, does not even mention the real reason for Father Dámaso's hatred of Ibarra or the way his conviction was secured. He has the impression; which Retana shares, that Elías's "education has been very scanty" when in reality Rizal has Elías brought up in the midst of wealth and educated in his own school, the Ateneo. His famous dialogues with Ibarra are not conceivable in the mouth of an unlettered peasant.

Perhaps the trouble is that the plot is theatrical, but those were theatrical times, and there would be nothing more theatrical than Rizal's own death or the revolutionary conspiracy that he inspired. The main characters are romantic stereotypes; Ibarra and Elías in particular are mere mouthpieces of Rizal's contradictory thoughts and purposes, they are Rizal debating with himself. But the "minor" characters, who are really more important in revealing the "realities" of the country, are unforgettable; Palma is unjust to Rizal when he dismisses them as "mere caricatures," on the contrary they are full-length portraits that fascinate both painter and viewer. We have only to compare the amount of space and detail that Rizal devotes, for instance, to Capitán Tiago and to Doña Victorina or even to Doña Consolacion, Father Dámaso and Sisa, with the vague and hackneyed descriptions of Ibarra, María Clara and Elías to realize who were closest to Rizal's mind and heart.

What marvelous fun they are and how accurately observed and drawn! The Spanish friars could possibly have forgiven Rizal, his Ibarra and his María Clara, his Elías, or even his scholar Tasio, for all his theories on the origins of the doctrine of Purgatory; but they could never have forgiven him the sardonic portraits of Father Sibyla, the elegant Dominican quibbler, Father Dámaso, the blustering gluttonous peasant Franciscan with a daughter doubly illegitimate, sacrilegious and adulterous, or Father Salví, the scheming and frustrated lecher, a cassocked “Peeping Tom.”

Rizal was only slightly kinder to his countrymen. It is not only a tribute to his skill as a writer but also a proof that Filipino society has not changed much since his day that we recognize in ourselves and our contemporaries: the self-made and self-seeking Capitán Tiago, always careful to be on the winning side, brow-beaten yet vain, a cuckolded lecher, loyal without convictions, religious without a conscience, an egotist without an ego; or Doña Victorina and Doña Consolación, haunted by class and color complexes, typical wives of politicians and army officers who might be satires of modern “togetherness;” or any number of other brilliantly observed characters: the vice-mayor who cannot bear to think of resigning, the mayor who will not think of acting like a mayor, the college graduate spouting his barbarous Latin, the peasants dreaming of sons who will eat with knives and forks, the lieutenant eager to slaughter dissidents to win promotion, even perhaps the pious spinsters wondering if it will be lewd to mix male Our Fathers and female Hail Marys.

Rizal's contemporaries thought they recognise many of these, characters; it would be unkind to repeat their conjectures. Dr. Máximo Viola, who was with Rizal when the latter made his final draft and corrected the proofs of the novel, recalls that Rizal told him that “many of the characters were his relatives and friends.”¹⁵ Rizal himself told Blumentritt that “the Filipinos would find in [the novel] the history of the last ten years.”¹⁶ Whether based on fact or purely fiction, these creations are enough to make the *Noli* the first real Filipino novel.

Nothing matches them in Burgos's *Loba* or Paterno's *Ninay*. Indeed the latter is more of an illustrated travelogue; more than half the text is composed of erudite footnotes on “Philippine customs” as they come up in turn in the contrived adventures of cardboard puppets. The resemblance between the *Noli* and *Ninay* is wholly superficial; the fundamental

difference, as has already been remarked, is one of passion and courage. So careful is Paterno lest he offend that he makes Don Juan, the vicious landlord, a Portuguese! One might think, reading his novel that there was not a single friar in the Philippines.

Rizal, it must be granted, goes to the opposite extreme. He blames everything on the friars. The political message of the *Noli* is writ out large and over and over again. No progress, no justice, no reforms are possible in the Philippines because the Spanish friar is their enemy, and an enemy who cannot be defeated on his home-ground. When the poor schoolmaster of San Diego tries to teach his pupils something of their country and their history with modern methods of education, the friar laughs him to scorn and orders him to stick to the rod and the catechism. The friar, through his puppet the mayor, overrules all the efforts of the town council to celebrate the town fiesta with dignity, and lavishes the contributions of the citizens on the usual rituals, sermons, processions, stage shows, fireworks, brass bands, banquets and tolerated gambling. The Governor General applauds Ibarra's plan to donate a modern school to San Diego but he himself, the representative of the Crown, is helpless before the power of the religious Orders and advises Ibarra to return with him to Spain. The friar beats one of Sisa's children to death and drives her mad, but he can be neither accused nor punished. And it is the friar who makes Ibarra's progressive schemes look like subversion, his school-house suspect as a "fortress" for rebellion, and crushes the young intellectuals and liberals of San Diego with a fake insurrection. Rizal is relentless: there is no villain in the *Noli* but he is a friar, no friar who is not a villain. Even the Spanish commander of the town garrison, Doña Consolación's unfortunate husband, is given the redeeming feature of pitying and rescuing Sisa; the villainy of the friars is unrelieved.

Rizal has one last touch: he turns the knife in the wound by revealing in the end that Father Dámaso and Father Salví have hated and persecuted Ibarra, not out of conviction, not out of an honest if mistaken opposition to his liberal ideas and plans for progress through education, which would not have been out of keeping with the legitimate political beliefs of Carlists, "absolutists" and "apostolics," but out of the basest sexual motives, one because he is María Clara's sacrilegious father, and the other because he sacrilegiously desires her. Thus he denies the friars even the dignity of their convictions.

How shall we explain this obsession, for so it must be called? After all, whatever misfortunes Rizal and his family had suffered before he wrote the *Noli*, could not be blamed on the friars. No friar had caused the imprisonment of Doña Teodora; the friar had not molested Paciano after the events of 1872; a Constabulary lieutenant, not a friar, had assaulted the young Rizal in Kalamba; indeed, the friars, as Paciano himself had told him, had shown extraordinary favor to the Rizals in leasing to them the lands in Pansol coveted by so many others.

Three explanations may be suggested. One, which will be considered farther on, is that while Rizal was abroad trouble had arisen between the Dominicans and the tenants of their vast estates in the lake region. A second is that Rizal had been profoundly influenced by Spanish anti-clericalism. A third, not unrelated to the preceding, is that an analysis of the political situation in the Philippines had led him to the conclusion; that the friars, in 1886 no less than in 1872, where the real enemies of reforms and progress in the Philippines and that they must at all costs, even at the cost of fairness and charity, be stripped of their sacerdotal immunities and mystical powers and exposed to ridicule and hatred. The very fact that Rizal and his family had not, at least not yet, suffered at their hands would only prove the sincerity of his motives, the impartiality of his analysis. No personal resentment had moved his pen, as he would assure Pastells, but only a “clear-sighted look” at the past and the present realities. Thus he had written the book's dedicatory note to his country:

Desirous of your welfare, which is also ours, and seeking the best cure for your ills, I shall do with you what was done in ages past with the sick, who were exposed on the steps of the temple so that the worshippers, having invoked the god, should each propose a remedy.

To this end, I shall endeavour to show your condition, faithfully and ruthlessly. I shall lift a corner of the veil which shrouds, the disease, sacrificing to the truth everything, even self-love for, as your son, your defects and weaknesses are also mine.

Rizal was not really writing a love story; if he had been, there need not have been a single friar in the *Noli*, Father Dámaso might just as well have worn a uniform as a Franciscan habit, and Father Salví, the elegant suit of Don Juan, the Portuguese cacique. But the friars who make the *Noli's* apparent plot so contrived and render the suspension of disbelief so difficult were essential to dramatize Rizal's diagnosis.

How correct was Rizal's analysis of the political situation in the Philippines of his day? It is noteworthy that Catholic research on the subject, almost seventy years after the *Noli*, finds that the Spanish friar as parish priest was, all in one, tax collector, school inspector, superintendent of public works by forced labor, a police authority, an intelligence officer, "president of all local boards, conducting discussions from agriculture to education." It comes to the conclusion that "this situation gave rise to the idea that the Father was the real authority in the towns" and that "the masses felt ecclesiastical tutelage more than any other form of authority."

As a result, they came to associate the clergy with the very authoritarianism that they wanted to cast off ... When the clergy protested against attempts of democratic-minded Ministers to divest it of its traditional functions, the people turned anti-clerical and, blamed their stunted political growth and the cramped authority of their leaders largely on the non-yielding clergy ... With respect to political reforms demanded by the Propaganda, the friar was often heard to say that Filipinos were not ready to take upon themselves the responsibilities implied ... Friars believed that those reforms would only spell trouble. If the Filipinos were given concessions, they would ask for more; they would never be satisfied. And thus, as the religious opposed the fulfillment of their desires, Filipino propagandists became anti-clerical; and when sanctions came from the State against them, friars were the first to be blamed.

In any case a detailed *post-mortem* on the Spanish regime in the Philippines is scarcely possible in our story, and it would perhaps be sufficient to refer to one contemporaneous analysis, López Jaena's serious and thorough study of "Philippine institutions."¹⁸ Discussing the powers, attributes and duties of municipal mayors, he observes:

... Hanging over the head of the authority in Philippine towns, like the sword of Damocles, is the reverend parish priest, under whose foot he is placed, and the mayor does not exercise any of the collection of functions in his charge without the intervention of [the parish priest].

And again:

... The mayors, local headsmen and other officials of the Philippine municipality, far from playing the role of local authorities, are made the slaves of the local ecclesiastical authority, that is to say, the parish priest, and next, of the corresponding civil, military, administrative and judicial authorities of the province.

On the election of municipal mayors:

One or two days before the election, the *principalía* and the outgoing mayor have a meeting to agree on the designation of candidates on election day ... Invited or not, the parish priest is never absent at this general assembly ... and there, after a mispronounced harangue in the local dialect ... he presents his candidate, and like it or not, he imposes him on the *principalía* with the supremacy that he takes for law, so that they may vote for him on the set date.

Always, or almost always, the friar's candidate is accepted inasmuch as [the parish priest's] intervention is necessary in order that all [official] business, whether civil, administrative or judicial, may have legal effects and, if he and the mayor were not in agreement, he would endeavor to prejudice the *principalía* and the incumbent mayor.

From all this it may be deduced: that the candidate favored by the reverend parish priest is almost always elected; the fictitious nature of elections made on the basis of suffrage limited to the *principalía* and the local headsmen; and that the election always is in favor of uneducated persons, and even in the majority of

cases in favor of persons unable to read and write, contravening the letter and spirit of the law.

After quoting Governor General Simón de Anda's charge that only the priest rules in the Philippines, and that no mayor would dare execute an order from the highest official quarters without permission of the parish priest, López goes on to explain that the provincial lay authorities also try to influence the elections, although in more diplomatic fashion by conveying their wishes to the *principalía*. In any case the result is that the municipal officials are "in general ignorant and uneducated persons who do not have the least notion of their respective duties but are only automatic machines, the blind instruments of the friar, the provincial governor and of the peninsulars in authority, for their own private ends." Those citizens who are best fitted for these positions, if they are ever elected, seek only to elude them by buying medical certificates of incapacity or securing recommendations for exemption from their friends in high circles.

It is easy to understand their repugnance [for office]; if injustice is bad and infamous, it is worse to subject to it. With the scant securities and guarantees given to persons in Philippine institutions, who among the educated classes would willingly expose himself to the network of abuses, vexations and hidden persecutions which can be glimpsed in the total authority of the peninsulars in office and the weight of the preponderant influence of the religious Orders?

In these circumstances relief and reform could be sought only outside the Philippines, in the metropolis Spain, under the protection of the Spanish Constitution and in the field of the Spanish Parliament. This was the basic strategy of the so-called Propaganda Movement, accepted only with certain reservations by Rizal, as is clearly indicated in the *Noli*. When Elías tries to dissuade Commander Pablo, the leader of the outlaws, from launching a campaign of raids and reprisals on the towns, he speaks of his friendship with Ibarra: "It is said that he has friends in Madrid; I do not know whether that is true or not, but I can assure you that he is a friend of the Governor General. Why not arouse his interest in the cause of the oppressed and make him the spokesman of the grievances of the peoples?"¹⁹ The outlaw leader

agrees reluctantly, and Elías hears to Ibarra “wishes of many unfortunates;” “radical reforms in the armed forces, in the clergy, in the administration of justice ... more respect for human dignity, greater security for the individual, less strengths in the constabulary, less privileges for an organization which so easily abuses them.” But Ibarra turns him down: “I could get the friends I have in Madrid to make speeches, by paying them; I myself could speak to the Governor General; but my friends would accomplish nothing, the Governor General has not enough power to introduce such innovations, and I myself would never take a step in the direction because I know very well that, while these institutions have their defects, they are necessary now, they are what is called a necessary evil.”²⁰

But if friends in Madrid and speeches in the Cortes could avail nothing, what solution did Rizal propose? The famous dialogue between Ibarra and Elías, Rizal arguing with himself, leaves the issue in doubt. At first it is Ibarra who minimizes the need for reforms and, even granting that some are desirable, considers them impracticable. “It is necessary to wait ... If I were to ask for these reforms they would laugh in my face.” He refuses to envision the use of force and would seek his country's good “through education, through progress.” He adds for good measure that “wrongs are not righted by other wrongs, and for our misfortunes all of us have a share of the blame.” Elías, on the other hand, sees the awakening of a people. “New aspirations work on our minds, and these aspirations, now scattered, will one day unite under the guidance of God. God has not failed other peoples; He will not fail ours, their cause is the cause of freedom.”²¹

This suggests that Elías will not draw back from the logical consequences of a popular union for freedom but, at the end of the novel, it is Ibarra who announces that “I shall call to all the oppressed ... that is not a crime; it is never a crime to fight for one's own country ... God, as you once said, will not forsake us ... He has given His helping hand to all peoples who fought for their independence.” And now it is Elías who tries to dissuade him. “You are going to start a war, for you have money and brains, and will easily find many helping hands; unfortunately many are discontented. But in this fight which you propose to start, the defenceless and the innocent will suffer most ... Our country does not think of independence from the Motherland; she asks nothing more than a small measure of liberty, of justice and of love. The discontented, the criminal and the desperate will

follow you. But the people will stand apart. I would not follow you myself; I would never resort to these extreme measures while I could see some hope in men.”²²

The *Noli* thus presents a problem without offering a clear solution, perhaps purposely, for either Rizal was not clear in his own mind as to the correct one, or was prudent enough not to openly favor independence and revolution. But he had written down these terrible words in language for all to read, and he would thenceforth have to live with them.

The *Noli* is the turning point in Rizal's life. From here on he is the prisoner of its logic. He is to be carried from conclusion to conclusion, from consequence to consequence, in a fatal spiral of action and re-action. He has made his choice of enemies. He has espoused his cause. He can never turn back again.

[5]

“I wrote the *Noli Me Tángere*,” Rizal told del Pilar, “to arouse the feelings of my countrymen.” “I wanted to write something for my country,” he had written Blumentritt earlier. And to Ponce: “You know that the work was written for the Filipinos, and it is necessary that it should be read by the Filipinos.”²³

Withal the modern writer is bound to wonder why Rizal had to publish the *Noli* at his own expense. Did he never submit it to a publisher in Europe? Or to a newspaper editor? Dickens, Dumas, Sue, Hugo, had made enormous fortunes with their popular romances in serial form. It appears that Rizal never seriously considered it. Perhaps his excessive sensitivity prevented him from running the risk of a humiliating rejection; after all, he was an unknown writer, and a writer in Spanish. It is significant that, although he could already handle conversational French, he continued to take lessons in that language in Berlin under no less a teacher than the tutor of the imperial family. He explained to Viola that “his purpose was to write from then on in that language [French] in case his *Noli Me Tángere* proved to be a failure, and in case his countrymen did not react to the objectives of that book.”²⁴ As late as 1890 Blumentritt was to write to him that he awaited “with eagerness the book which you are to write in French; I can foresee that it

will make an enormous sensation.”²⁵ Indeed the *Noli* in French would have had a much better chance of publication and success.

But it was in Spanish; Spanish publishers could hardly be expected to denigrate their own regime; and, if the *Noli* had been written “for the Filipinos,” to be read by them, its author would have to pay the cost in more ways than one.

Like most authors, Rizal was not a very practical man where his books were concerned. Later he would write Ponce: “Try to send copies of the *Noli Me Tángere* to the Philippines by all the means at your command. I think the book will do good there. Even if the copies are not paid for!”²⁶ And he would complain to Basa, who was distributing his works from Hong Kong, that he had not made a single centavo out of the *Noli*; “all the contrary”²⁷

From the first Rizal was haunted by the fear that his novel would never find its way into print, that it would remain unread. He had little enough money for his own needs, let alone the costs of the *Noli*'s publication. But even before he had completed the final draft he was out in search of a cheap printer. Passing through Barcelona in the autumn of 1885 he seems to have commissioned Viola to explore all possibilities for we find the latter writing to him that one printer had estimated that publication would take at least one year, while another had given an unacceptable quotation.²⁸ Another friend, Evaristo Aguirre in Madrid, told Rizal at about the same time how sorry he was that, due to the excessive cost of publishing the novel, “we are deprived of its immediate publication.”²⁹

Characteristically, Rizal would not hear of asking his friends for help. He did not want to “compromise” them.³⁰ He wrote to his family and it appears that Paciano sent him ₱300. But Rizal had not estimated the costs correctly. Writing to Paciano from Leipzig he said:

J. Rizal to Paciano Rizal, 12 October 1886 —

With regard to my book, I was mistaken in my estimate. I thought that 1,500 copies would cost me ₱200; now that I have talked with the printers and they have figured out the cost, they are asking me almost ₱500, so I have given up the idea of publishing the book. However, another printer would charge me about ₱400 for 1,000 copies, each copy to have some pages of 38 lines each, like the

attached sample. This amount seems rather large to me; and yet printing in Leipzig is the cheapest in Europe; they ask only ₱12 a sheet, while in Madrid it costs ₱20 or ₱25. I do not dare ask you for this amounts I find it rather too much for a book which may cause more sorrow than happiness. So I shall depend on chance, on the lottery—perhaps I may win a prize. As to other conditions, I would pay in three installments, once at the start of the work, then half-way through, and finally upon completion. The printing would take about five months. It is very painful to me to give up the publication of this book on which I have been working day and night for many months, and on which I placed such great hopes. With it I wanted to make a name for myself, for I supposed that it would not pass unnoticed but, on the contrary, would be the subject of much discussion. If I cannot get it published, if luck does not favor me, I shall leave Germany ...³¹

Apparently, when Paciano received this letter, he gathered that his brother had given up the idea once and for all and did not send him his allowances for January and February, believing that Rizal would apply the ₱300 to this purpose.³² He underestimated an author's devotion to his work. Still in search of a printer, Rizal moved on to Berlin where Viola found him ill and almost at the end of his resources but still seemingly inexhaustible in his activities.

“Since early in December 1886 he had been complaining to Blumentritt of chest pains; from this and other symptoms he had begun to fear that he had tuberculosis; in fact, he recalled, the physician at the Ateneo had diagnosed the beginnings of tuberculosis in him when he was a child.³³ Now he told Viola, a physician like Rizal, that he had evening attacks of fever preceded by shivering, and suffered a certain amount of coughing, weariness when walking, a slight pallor, etc. Viola examined his lungs and concluded that it was nothing serious and the whole root of the trouble was Rizal's vegetarian regime. He did not go so far as to call it malnutrition; he described it as “physiological misery,” complicated by the physical strain Rizal had undergone when to prove his equality with the best weight-lifter in the gymnasium he was, attending in Berlin, he had attempted after only a week's training but successfully, to lift a considerable weight. Not taking any chances with Rizal's health, he also advised consulting a specialist; the

latter confirmed the absence of tuberculosis as well as the treatment Rizal had prescribed for himself, as arsenic compound, coupled with good food and moderation in exercise.³⁴ The arsenic “excited” him; and toward the end of January 1887 he still found it uncomfortable to work late into the night; his temperature rose and he “sweated horribly all night.”³⁵

None of this could do more than give him a slight pause. He worked in the eye clinic of Dr. Schultzer, attended lectures on anatomy, and studied English through German and Italian through English, as well as perfecting his French. On the side he taught Viola German and lectured to him on comparative religion on the basis of a Bible in Hebrew.³⁶ In Leipzig he had translated into Tagalog Schiller's tragedy, “William Tell,” for Paciano, and five of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy stories for his nephews and nieces (they were “The Fir Tree,” “Thumbelina,” “The Ugly Duckling,” “The Angel” and “The Little Match-Girl.”)³⁷ Now in Berlin he translated a monography of Blumentritt on the ethnography of Mindanao, started another translation of Waitz's works on anthropology and ethnography, answered Blumentritt's queries on Philippine linguistics, and attended conferences of the Geographical Society and the Anthropological Society, both of which eminent scientific organisations quickly elected him a member.³⁸

Fever or not, he was also an indefatigable walker. Equipped with a pedometer, a compass and a Berlin Baedeker, he explored the Prussian capital, systematically covering every block of interest until, according to Viola, the map on which they recorded their walks began to look like a cobweb.³⁹ Rizal, of course, was looking not only for museums, libraries and historical monuments, but above all for a cheap printing press. He eventually found one, owned by a society that give work to destitute women, whose quotations appeared reasonable, but he still lacked funds.

Viola insisted on lending him the money—₱300 for 2,000 copies; Rizal at first demurred; Regidor, Luna, his own brother Paciano knew about his novel and at a word from him would put any sum at his disposal for its publication. This was an exaggeration, to say the least, as we know, his only hope was Paciano, and there was no word from him. Finally Rizal gave in and the novel went to press. The proofs were delivered daily, and one day the messenger, according to Viola, took it upon himself to warn the author that if he ever returned to the Philippines he would lose his head. Rizal was

too enthralled by seeing his work to print to do more than smile. In fact, he took this unexpected warning so little to heart that when the proofs had all been corrected, he rushed to a photographer's studio to have his picture taken "in spite," says Viola, "of his sickly appearance." It was the fashion in those days for authors to be pictured on the front covers of their books (modern book jackets have, in such cases, relegated the author's photograph to the back cover) and there was nothing immodest about it, but Rizal had second thoughts, hesitated and designed another cover.⁴⁰

It was perhaps over-elaborate: the title cuts diagonally across the front, covering a handwritten dedication, apparently to his parents, from which the following phrases can be made out: "In writing ... thinking ... always ... it was you who implanted in me ... the first ideas ... this manuscript ... proof of love." In the upper corner of the cover is the silhouette of a girl's head (the unfortunate María Clara?), at the bottom, two hairy calves protrude from a habit, the feet encased in sandals (Father Dámaso, if one is to judge from the opening scene of the *Noli*). Scattered about are other symbols: a constabulary helmet, a whip, a length of chain, thorny bamboo branches, flowers and a graveyard cross. It is all very romantic and, in its own way, appropriate.

The printing apparently took considerably less time than the original estimate of five months for Viola did not arrive in Berlin until December, and by the 21st March 1887 Rizal was already sending Blumentritt a copy of "my first book." Viola was repaid perhaps sooner than he expected. On the 8th December 1886 Paciano had written his brother: "If we manage to sell our sugar I shall send you the amount you lack for the printing. There is a great deal of poverty in this town; a third of the people eat only once a day." Three months later he had better news.

Paciano Rizal to J. Rizal, 6 March 1887 —

With this letter goes another addressed to Mr. Luna in Paris with a draft for ₱1,000; I am not sending this to you directly for fear that it may go astray since you yourself say in your last letter that you are thinking of moving to Switzerland. I would have wanted to send you more but it is not possible because last year's sugar is still unsold. However, I believe that, though this sum is adequate, it should suffice to cover your traveling expenses, doctorate fees,

and essential ophthalmological instruments. If there is anything left over, use it to print your book; leave for better times any other things you may want to buy, just as I refrain for now from ordering the bicycle and the German shotgun which you described in your letter ...⁴¹

Rizal acknowledged receipt of Paciano's letter and, through Juan Luna, the draft for ₱1,000 on the 27th April 1887. He repaid, the ₱300 advanced to the printers; earlier he had given “My dear friend Máximo Viola, the first to read and appreciate my book,” an autographed copy of the *Noli* and the corrected galleyproofs, rolled round the pen he had used to write it.⁴²

He was not satisfied with Viola's “appreciation;” as he wrote Blumentritt “he may be a good doctor but he is not a writer, and everything I do looks good to him.”⁴³ So he sent copies to all his friends in Europe and waited for their reactions. “I am only waiting for copies of my book to get to Madrid in order to see what the verdict on it is,” he wrote to Paciano.⁴⁴ He was to be deeply disappointed. Sometime in May or June 1887, when he had already left Berlin, he was informed that the Ministry of Finance was still withholding permission for the entry of a packing-case of copies of *Noli*; the original requirement had been for, a “bibliographical note on the book cover,” now the authorities were requiring the submission of one or two copies.⁴⁵ A year later Rizal was complaining bitterly in London that his novel had not even reached Madrid, “thanks to the neglect and odd behavior” of the Filipinos there. He had been informed that “nobody made the slightest move, to get my book to Madrid, even though they were already at the frontier, with transportation costs paid and the entry permit granted. It so happened that I left for the Philippines, and until my return [to Europe], until this very month of June [1888], the wretched copies had still to be imported. To this moment, I do not know whether or not they have reached Madrid.”⁴⁶

We do not know how many copies of the *Noli* had thus been held up at the Spanish frontier, or how the rest of the print order of 2,000 were distributed. Some copies had got through to Madrid by ordinary mail. As early as May or June, Evaristo Aguirre had received four copies, selling all of them, one to “Maguinoo P.A. Paterno.” In June, Ponce in Barcelona had sold all the copies he had in hand and had received orders for more. In Manila, as late

as December 1887, the bulk of the *Noli* shipment was still being held up at customs for lack of a permit from the censor, and two of Rizal's friends wrote him saying that there were no copies to be had in the city. A third friend suggested that perhaps the best way would be to ship the books to Manuel Rodríguez Arias, one of the biggest booksellers in Manila, who knew his way round customs and would not have to wait on the censor's pleasure. In the end the novels seem to have been placed on sale at the bazaar Gran Bretaña, owned by José Ramos, a Masonic leader. By August 1888 Rizal could instruct Ponce to "send to Manila all the copies you cart by all available means: they are selling well there." Ponce replied that he was doing so, and even then was only filling orders already made.

But by December 1889, that is to say, more than two and a half years after publication, Ponce still had on hand one hundred copies of the relatively modest print order of 2,000, and Rizal suggested that perhaps they could be sold in Hamburg.⁴⁷

Indeed the whole business was most unprofessional, most impractical. There was apparently no fixed price for the book; Ponce in Barcelona, Basa in Hong Kong, Ramos in Manila, and other agents had varying commissions; Rizal does not seem to have kept a record of the distribution and sales of the novel, of which to all intents he was publisher as well as author. We have seen that he never made any money out of it.

He had written the *Noli* "for the Filipinos." How many of them read it in his lifetime? Allowing for complimentary and unsold copies, foreign sales, confiscations and sabotage (Rizal suspected that the friars were buying copies in order to burn them),⁴⁸ perhaps at the most, a thousand. An early project for a second edition with illustrations by Juan Luna was abandoned.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the *Noli* was written in Spanish and could not reach the masses of the people; only the *ilustrados*, and of these only the progressives and the liberals, would have cared or dared to read it.

Indeed, one of the most extraordinary things about the *Noli* is that withal it changed the history of a nation.

Each generation will have its own verdict on the *Noli*; what is more to our purpose here is the reaction of Rizal's contemporaries. Like all writers he was eager for praise, sensitive to indifference, offended by criticism. Compliments were to be expected from his friends and Rizal duly received them, including a letter from Regidor in London who signed himself "The Proscribed" and evidently saw himself in Ibarra!⁵⁰ But an advance notice in the Madrid organ of the Filipino colony, which seemed to Rizal to be perfunctory to the point of insult, had, as we shall see, far-reaching consequences.

Still, in Rizal's own opinion in afteryears, the *Noli's* fame was really made by the rage which it aroused among the rulers of the Philippines. He had expected it. In sending Blumentritt one of the first copies he had written that the novel was "the first impartial and bold account of the life of the Tagalogs. The Filipinos will find in it the history of the last ten years ... The regime and the friars will probably attack my book and meet my arguments, but I put my trust in the God of Truth and those who have seen our sufferings at close range."⁵¹

The attacks were not long in coming. One of the earliest and most ominous was an anonymous letter signed by "A Friar." It started by exclaiming: "How ungrateful you are!" It ended: "if you, or for that matter all your countrymen, think you have a grievance, then challenge us and we shall pick up the gauntlet, for we are not cowards like you, which is not to say that a hidden hand will not put an end to your life!"⁵²

The brunt of the attack, however, took two main directions: the religious and the political. There does not seem to have been, at the beginning, an official condemnation of *Noli*. On the 30th August 1887, when Rizal had already returned to the Philippines, a special committee of the faculties of the University of Santo Tomás, at the request of the Archbishop, the Dominican Pedro Payo, examined the novel and found it "heretical, impious and scandalous in its religious aspect, and unpatriotic, subversive of public order and harmful to the Spanish Government and its administration of these islands, in its political aspect." Payo transmitted the findings to Governor General Emilio Terrero, who referred the matter to the permanent Board of Censorship, composed of priests and laymen. This time judgment was rendered by Friar Salvador Font who, on the 29th December 1887, recommended that "the importation, reproduction and circulation of

this pernicious book” be absolutely prohibited. Rizal left the Philippines two months later, and no further official action seems to have been taken until all his works were proscribed at the time of his rustication in 1892, although a letter from him to Blumentritt in 1888 suggests a concealed persecution. Quoting a report in the *Hong Kong Telegraph* he informed Blumentritt that on the night of the 17th July the Manila city police had searched the house of a medical student named Laureano Viado and, finding some copies of the *Noli*, had handcuffed him and his landlord and held them in jail without trial. The *Gran Bretaña* and Ramos's house had also been searched but no more copies of the novel had been found.⁵³

Terrero might be inclined to shrug his shoulders; not so the friars. Their principal spokesman were not, as might have been expected, the Franciscan brethren of Father Dámaso and Father Salví, inhibited perhaps by their direct involvement or by their professed humility and unworldliness, but two Augustinians, Font, the parish priest of Tondo, and José Rodríguez, prior of the monastery at Guadalupe. Font, against the advice of his lay counsellors, had his condemnation of the *Noli* printed and circulated. For his part, Rodríguez, described by a Spaniard who knew him as “touched with archaic mysticism, an excellent man whose only failing was a certain mental atrophy, an intellectual backwardness of several centuries,”⁵⁴ published a series of pamphlets with the common title of “Issues of the Greatest Importance.” They were eight in all: (1) “Why shouldn't I read them;” (2) “Beware of them! Why?;” (3) “And what do you think of the plague?;” (4) “Why do the wicked triumph?;” (5) “Do you think there really is no Purgatory?;” (6) “Is there or isn't there a Hell?;” (7) “What do you think of these libels?;” and (7) “Confession or Damnation.” Far from thinking Rodríguez “archaic” the contemporary reader must, on the contrary, grant him a modern touch at least in the choice of his titles. He had it too in his methods of circulation: the pamphlets were sold at only one centavo a copy; interested parish priests could buy them wholesale at five pesos a thousand or at 75 centavos a hundred; and to top it all indulgences were granted to all who read them.

Marcelo del Pilar, who was just as skillful a propagandist, promptly replied to Rodríguez in pamphlets of his own, outwitting his antagonist by writing them in Tagalog, printing them with covers that imitated the friar's, and thus making it easier to distribute them to the faithful at the end of the Sunday

Mass. Characteristically, Rizal replied, presumably from London in 1889, with an erudite pamphlet in Spanish entitled “The Vision of Father Rodríguez.” His rhetoric was, as usual, impressive we may be permitted to doubt that he was as effective as del Pilar. In any case he found unexpected and most welcome religious ally. “An illustrious countryman [of ours], known in Manila as a profound theologian and a great philosopher,” Ponce informed him, had defended the *Noli* against the attacks of Rodríguez; he had been dissuaded by his friends from sending his reply openly to the prior because he might otherwise risk the fate of Burgos. But his letter would be published anonymously. The Filipino secular Ponce revealed in a letter dated the 1st November 1889, was Father Vicente García, canon penitentiary of the Cathedral in Manila; Rizal did not know him personally, which was all the more comforting, but García, he told Blumentritt a week later, was an old priest who had translated into Tagalog Kempis's “Imitation of Christ,” and who had the Archbishop's deepest respect; indeed he must have had it since as canon penitentiary he would have been delegated to absolve sins whose absolution was reserved for the diocesan authority.

Because ecclesiastical condemnation of the *Noli* is maintained to this date in a number of Philippine dioceses, the reply of the canon penitentiary to the Augustinian prior should be of some interest. Here is, not a free-thinker against an orthodox believer, but one tonsured cleric against another. The argument is summarized by Ponce in his letter to Rizal.

M. Ponce to J. Rizal, 6 October 1888 —

... After stating that he has read and re-read the *Noli* without finding any basis for the Statements of Father Rodríguez, he gives his judgment in the following observations:

“Dr. Rizal (he says) through veiled allusions harshly censures the great abuses committed by individuals belonging to certain establishments, but prescinding from these establishments completely, and without including in his censure their inherent good arising from their original inspiration.”

“The evil abuses infects, like leprosy, the members of an establishment; not so the criticism which is made of them in order that they may mend their ways. Unfortunately passion and self-

interest usually identify men with things, and the members of religious Orders with Religion itself, making them one ...”

On the delicious satirical passage in which devout spinsters show off the number of indulgences they have accumulated, García had asked: “Does the description, in the lively and vigorous color of criticism, of this foolish boasting, this vain and ridiculous ostentation, amount to a denial of the existence of Purgatory, the efficacy of indulgences, and the infinite value of the Sacrifice of the Mass?” On Rizal's belief in Purgatory he had cited Tasio the scholar saying: “Among ourselves we can say that the idea of Purgatory is good, uplifting and reasonable ... The evil lies in the way the concept is abused.” And citing the same character of the *Noli* when he says: “I really don't know what God will do with me. When I am dying I shall place myself in His hands without fear, to do with me as He will,” the canon penitentiary had asked: “Would this make one an atheist who denies the existence of God —are these the words of an impious man who would induce others to atheism?” In spite of all efforts, García had concluded, the prohibition of Rizal's novel had never been officially decreed; and this was only to be expected with a liberal regime in Spain; and, if the *Noli* were really objectionable from a religious point of view, why had not “our prudent and zealous Prelate” prohibited its reading under canonical sanctions?⁵⁵

García's argument, as we now know, was premature. But Rizal was deeply grateful to one whom he considered the first of his defenders. In the political field he was his own best champion. He could not very well reply to the speeches made in the Spanish Senate which described the *Noli* as “anti-Catholic, Protestant, socialist, Proudhonian,” but an article published in *La España Moderna* in Madrid, in January 1890, gave him an opportunity to explain himself. The article was by His Excellency Vicente Barrantes, a member of the Royal Spanish Academy and of the Royal Academy of History, who was taken as an authority on the Philippines, and with whom Rizal had already clashed previously in a polemic on the Tagalog theater. Barrantes had served as civil governor and director of administration in the Philippines and, according to Rizal himself, was the original of the high official in the *Noli* who throws the richest men in Tondo in jail for purposes of extortion and who, in the Epilogue, refuses to rescue the desperate María Clara.⁵⁶

In brief Barrantes had done what generations of critics would do in the future; he had attributed to Rizal himself the sentiments expressed by a number of the characters in the *Noli*, and had thus sought to prove that the author was a “storehouse of contradictions” and that he had actually insulted his own countrymen. Rizal replied in detail; his characters had lives and convictions of their own; he himself was not Ibarra for he was “not rich, nor a mestizo, nor an orphan.” We need not concern ourselves now with the bulk of his reply. But its final passage is perhaps the best summary of Rizal's purposes in writing the *Noli* and will serve to bring this overlong chapter to a close.

For all its faults [the *Noli*] has served my purposes. If it is not the shiny nickel-plate, perfectly shaped bullet which an Academician can fire and only a rough pebble picked up from a brook, still it has struck the head of that two-faced Goliath that in the Philippines is called friar-rule and maladministration. It is only fair that they should now raise an outcry; I do not deny them that right. The wound is there and it is fatal; what do I care now about the weapon? Unable to deny the truth of the contents, let them now snatch at the style, the outward appearances; a dog bites the stone that wounds him.

For the rest of it, if I have detractors, on the other hand I do not lack admirers; one compensates for the other. It would be foolish to ask the powerful whom I have offended to reward one who has told them the bitter truth; I consider myself lucky to be still alive. Only demigods require men to kiss the hand with which they have been slapped.

What I would have really hated to hear would have been the applause and congratulations, instead of the boos and curses, of my enemies, for this would have been a proof that my attack had backfired. Since I wrote, not for myself, nor to aspire to be a porter at the Academy, but to expose abuses and unmask hypocrisies, what do I care for the rest now that have achieved my purpose?

Furthermore, my book has not yet been judged and cannot be judged [rightly] because its effects are still being felt. When the

men whom it pillories and the abuses which it fights have disappeared from my country's political life, when a generation arises which does not itself participate in the present crimes and immoralities, when Spain puts an end to these struggles by means of open and liberal reforms, in brief, when we shall have gone, and with us our self-love, our vanities and petty passions, then Spaniards and Filipinos shall be able to judge [the *Noli*] freely and impartially, without fanaticism or spite.^{[57](#)}

Perhaps the time is not yet.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter IX

(1) Diaries, 74. Letamendi appears to have been a professor in the Madrid University,

(2) Ep. Riz;, IV, 63, Rizal, on the preceding page, makes a curious observation or admission which might well explain his original decision to leave the Philippines: “Acerca de la génesis de mis obras y escritos, V.R. me sugiere una idea que yo no sospechaba, al aludir a *ciertos resentimientos* y a mi *dignidad vulnerada*. No niego la posibilidad de que tal haya podido acontecer respecto a mis últimos escritos, pero respecto a los primeros ... Con la sinceridad y la imparcialidad de que es susceptible un hombre al examinar su pasado, he vuelto mis ojos a los frescos años de mi juventud y me he preguntado si pudo alguna vez el resentimiento mover la pluma con que escribía el *Noli me tângere*, y mi memoria me ha contestado con la negativa. Si en *varias ocasiones* me han tratado con *marcada injusticia*; si mis obras se pasaron en silencio con *marcado desdén*; si contra toda razón, se han desoído mis quejas, yo era muy joven aún, perdonaba más pronto de lo que hago ahora, y por profundas que fueron las heridas, se cicatrizaron al fin gracias a la buena pasta con que me ha dotado la naturaleza. No hubo pues 'heridas enconadas;' no hubo 'espinas que se hayan ido profundizando'...” The italics are mine. I quote this passage because the references to “certain resentments,” to “wounded dignity,” to his being treated with “marked injustice” on “various occasions” (which might also refer to his incident with the constabulary lieutenant), but above all Rizal's complaint that his literary “*works had been passed over in silence with marked disdain*” suggest that one of the reasons he left the Philippines was to make his literary name abroad after he had failed to secure widespread recognition, at least among the Spaniards in Manila, when after his victories in the poetry contest of the Liceo (“A la juventud filipina”) and in the Cervantes contest (“*El Consejo de los Dioses*”), it turned out that he was a lowly native. I did not think there was enough solid support for this interesting theory, and have therefore relegated it to these Notes.

(3) Sp. Doc., 155 et seq. The Spanish system makes a distinction between the *licenciado*, who has finished the ordinary medical course which qualifies him to practice this profession, and the *doctor*, who must, of course, present and defend a thesis, as in other faculties or disciplines. In the Philippines, all those who finish the medical course are M.D.s, but those who finish the ordinary law course are only L.L.B.s and must go through additional courses and examinations before acquiring the master's degree and then the doctorate.

(4) 100 Letters, 245 et seq. See also an article by Paz Policarpio-Méndez in *The Manila Times*, 30 December 1959.

(5) 100 Letters, 265.

(6) 100 Letters, 282 et seq.

(7) 100 Letters, 274 et seq.

(8) Ep. Riz., I, 171 et seq.

(9) 100 Letters, 295.

(10) *Poesías*, 54.

(11) See articles by Mrs. Méndez, above 24 to 26 March 1960.

(12) Ep. Riz., IV, 64.

(13) Ep. Riz., IV, 63, et seq.

(14) Mainly, I could say, the idea of revenge outside the law for wrongs committed by malefactors of high position and great power. There is an interesting survey of the works of Burgos by Luis Ma. Araneta, *Philippine Studies*, VII, 2 April 1959.

(15) *Viola*, 59.

(16) Ep. Riz., V, 97.

(17) "The Development of Filipino Anti-Clericalism during the Spanish Regime," by Julia Iturralde, quoted in Cavanna, 157 et seq. It seems a great pity that, so far as I know, this work has never been published, as it deserves, between separate covers.

- (18) López Jaena, 78 et seq.
- (19) *Noli*, 287.
- (20) *Noli*, 307.
- (21) *Noli*, 320.
- (22) *Noli*, 388.
- (23) Ep. Pil., I, 16; Ep. Riz., V, 106; Ep. Riz., II, 49.
- (24) Viola, 58.
- (25) Ep. Riz., III, 73.
- (26) Ep. Riz., II, 21.
- (27) Ep. Riz., III, 205.
- (28) Ep. Riz., I, 202.
- (29) Ep. Riz., I, 204.
- (30) Ep. Riz., I, 222. In a political sense, it is clear from the letter.
- (31) 100 Letters, 303.
- (32) Ep. Riz., I, 232.
- (33) Ep. Riz., V, 40.
- (34) Viola, 56.
- (35) Ep. Riz., V, 53, 67.
- (36) Viola, 57, 59.
- (37) published as “Andersen, Limang Salita na Ysinalin sa Tagalog ni José Rizal” (Bureau of Public Libraries, Manila, 1954).
- (38) Ep. Riz., V. 32, 34, 48, 61, 68, 73.
- (39) Viola, 65.
- (40) Viola, 62.

- [\(41\)](#) Ep. Riz., I, 232.
- [\(42\)](#) Viola, 63.
- [\(43\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 106.
- [\(44\)](#) 100 Letters, 320.
- [\(45\)](#) Ep. Riz., I, 267.
- [\(46\)](#) Ep. Riz., II, 13, 20.
- [\(47\)](#) Ep. Riz., I, 266, 319, 320; II, 15, 46, 47, 254, 259.
- [\(48\)](#) Ep. Riz., II, 110.
- [\(49\)](#) Ep. Riz., III, 214.
- [\(50\)](#) Ep. Riz., II, 1.
- [\(51\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 97.
- [\(52\)](#) Ep. Riz., II, 6.
- [\(53\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 298.
- [\(54\)](#) Retana, 161.
- [\(55\)](#) Ep. Riz., II, 51, 55, 67; III, 136; V, 335.
- [\(56\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 115.
- [\(57\)](#) Ep. Riz., II, 303. Barrantes's article was published in *La España Moderna* (Sección Hispano Ultramarina), XIII, for January 1890.



X

An Advocate's Trials

What do you think? Will my brothers and relatives bless their Rizal, whose name has brought upon them so many misfortunes?

RIZAL (IN A LETTER TO BLUMENTRITT)

That man does nothing constructive, and instead tears down what others have raised up little by little. It is not his purpose to do so, but his impulsive politics can end only in disaster. If my misfortune were to bring good to many, I would not regret it but if, on the contrary, it would bring unhappiness to the majority, it would not be worthwhile.

DEL PILAR ON RIZAL (IN A LETTER TO HIS WIFE)

A man seldom takes his own advice. The physician cannot heal himself; the attorney cannot be trusted to handle his own case; worst of all, the writer often fails to take his own writing seriously; they are too much the product of his own mind. Now we see Rizal guilelessly proposing to return to the Philippines, for all the world as if he had not just finished proving to his own satisfaction that no progress, not even common justice, could be had there under a regime dominated by the Spanish friars, and as if he had not done everything to turn them into the bitterest of enemies!

Everyone was opposed to his return. A friend, writing to him of a visit to his family in Kalamba, said that they had spoken of the expediency of his returning to the Philippines. "I advised them that they should not allow it, even though it should involve some sacrifices, for the encyclopedic knowledge acquired by you in Europe would cause you to be looked upon with prejudice and expose you to very many contretemps." If it became absolutely necessary for him to return then he should first take out foreign citizenship: German, British or American.¹

This was long before the *Noli*. The prospect of the publication of his novel made his return even more undesirable. Paciano, taking the precaution of writing in Tagalog, said he was expressing the common opinion of "both friends and those who are not friends."

Paciano Rizal to J. Rizal, 8 December 1886 —

In your last letter you said you wanted to come home as soon as your book was published; I have sent you some money through Silvestre [Ubaldo] which perhaps will not be sufficient for what you need. I wanted to send you more but I could not do so because times are hard.

While I may be in agreement with the publication of the book, that does not mean that I also favour your return, at least for the time being. Remember that before you left I wanted you to go to France, you wanted to go to Spain; I did not oppose your wishes. I let you have your own way when you left; now let me have my way about your return.

It is true that our parents are growing old, but to my mind love resides in the heart and not in the eyes or elsewhere. I am aware that your situation there has been difficult from the beginning because your allowances were insufficient and late, but you should take it as only sharing our hardships ...²

Six months later, when he had in fact already left Berlin on his farewell tour of Europe, he was being advised by his old gossip Chenggoy in the same terms. His family and all those who loved him were agreed on it: “do not come; we would lose all the benefits of your brilliant career!”³

But it appears that Rizal had thought it his duty to return as early as 1884 because business was bad in Kalamba. He offered to do so again and again; he was disillusioned with studying in Madrid; in any case he had finished the medical course; also he wanted to show that he “feared nothing from no one” that there was “no reason for fear.” He was not yet proscribed, and he believed that the regime had learnt its lesson and would not punish the innocent. Paciano was more cynical and objected because “nobody can assure us that your return will not cause our aged parents some trouble in the future;” even if he left Europe, he should stay in Hong Kong and perhaps Don Francisco and Doña Teodora could visit him there. Rizal persisted. “It is my serious and ardent wish to go home,” he wrote his family in June 1886. “It seems to me that I am causing you too many expenses and I want to help the family in all I can. I am tired of Europe.”⁴

He was too homesick to think of the consequences. Two months later in Heidelberg he confided to his journal: “In two days I shall perhaps leave this cheerful city and go anew to distant lands in search of I know not what. Always roving and wandering alone, leaving friendships when they had scarcely been made, parting, nevermore to meet again, from so many people I cherished, going from city to city, from country to country, without loves or fortune, trusting only to luck ... Ah, now I sigh for my distant country, now I remember home and now my thoughts turn to rest. I have already wondered through so many countries; I have observed so many customs; I have met so many people, that I have almost lost any idea of the ideal, I have not seen more than the surface appearances of good and evil. I have loved but I have smothered my heart's desires, I have overruled them.

If life goes on like this, my heart will end by dying.” It was all the fault, he told Blumentritt, of the Malay wanderlust in his blood!⁵

Toward the end of April 1887 he was ready to go. Spring had come to Berlin at last; the leaves were sprouting in the warmer air. “I am going home to my country,” he exulted in a letter to Blumentritt. “My father has forgiven me and I have his permission to return. This day (his letter arrived today) is a glorious day for me! Rejoice with me! Yet, in spite of everything, I feel a sweet sadness on having to leave Europe, so beautiful, free, cultured and civilized. But I shall be more useful in my country than here; here nobody needs me.” And on the very eve of his departure he wrote Blumentritt: “Your advice to stay in Madrid and write from there shows the best will in the world but I neither can nor should follow it. I cannot stand the life in Madrid. There we are all voices 'crying in the wilderness.' My relatives want to see me and I want to see them too. Nowhere is life so pleasing to me as in my own country, in the midst of my family. I am not yet 'Europeanized,' to use the expression of the Filipinos in Madrid. I always want to go back to the land of my ancestors. 'A goat,' they tell me, 'always acts like a goat?'”⁶

[2]

Withal he did not want to feel in the Philippines like “an exile from his scientific homeland,” Germany, and hoped to maintain relations with the German savants. Rizal's fondness for Germany and the Germans has already been remarked. This may seem odd, almost reprehensible, to those who have lived through the German wars of the 20th century. But in the 19th century the new German Empire and the Germans were in many ways typical of the best qualities of their age: sober, earnest, industrious, progressive, prosperous. They were the best of Victorians and indeed, while Victoria might be Queen of England, she was German by blood and even more German under the overwhelming guidance of her beloved Prince Consort. Rizal himself was deeply Victorian and German: serious to the point of grimness, a scholar so scrupulous as to be almost a pedant; only his Malay blood and Spanish background saved him from the ponderous self-importance and solemn propriety of the complete Teuton.

His chosen link with Germany and Europe was Ferdinand Blumentritt, who was a subject of the ancient and mellow Austro-Hungarian Empire rather than Bismarck's aggressive new German Empire. Born in Prague on the 10th September 1853, the son of a clerk at the government pensions office, he had taken a degree in geography and history at the University of Prague and then, at the age of twenty-three, had become an assistant master in the secondary school at Leitmeritz (now Litomerice), going over to the higher school as a master after a year. His former pupils would afterward recall him as a short lively man who made classwork amusing with anecdotes, dramatizations and drawings. "We loved him very much," one of his girl-students said, "and waited at the windows of the school to watch him crossing the town square."⁷

He was thirty-three, eight years older than Rizal, when they became acquainted by correspondence. Somehow Rizal had heard in Heidelberg that a professor Blumentritt was studying Tagalog and had already published some works on the language. The lonely Rizal, so fiercely proud of his race, was touched by this foreigner's interest in his native culture and promptly sent him "a valuable book" on arithmetic written in Tagalog and Spanish by a provincemate, Rufino Baltazar Hernández of Sta. Cruz in La Laguna. Blumentritt reciprocated just as promptly with a gift of two books. Rizal replied from Leipzig, placing himself at his new acquaintance's orders as far as Tagalog was concerned; he took the opportunity of cautioning the Austrian scholar against the grammars written by the Spanish friars. "The majority of the friars never studied [*Tagalog*] grammar and speak only with unlettered Tagalogs; consequently these authors know about as much Tagalog as I knew German after six months in Germany, and I do not dare write poetry or preach sermons in German." A week later he was acknowledging receipt of a copy of Blumentritt's latest book; which it was, is not clear from the letter.⁸

Indeed Blumentritt was already an authority on the Philippines. He was to publish in all more than 250 essays and articles on the Philippines, dealing mainly with ethnography. His first, published in 1879, concerned the Chinese in the Philippines; this was followed by other articles on, among others, the inhabitants of the Sulu archipelago (a translation from a Spanish original), gold deposits in the Philippines, early relations between Japan and the Philippines, an ethnographical study, a vocabulary of expressions and

phrases peculiar to Spanish as spoken in the Philippines, Spanish in Philippine schools, the Jesuit missions on the east coast of Mindanaw, the Baluga Negritos in Pampanga, the Bagobos, the Mandayas, the Ilongots, the Mangyans of Mindoro, the headhunters of Northern Luzon, the Abra natives, Zambales wedding customs, the Ilokanos and their customs and habits, the *mestizos*, numerous travel articles—the range is wholly impressive.⁹

How was it that the Philippines had captured the interest of this Austrian scholar? Rizal later attempted an explanation.

We have heard a very good friend of his say that, since his great-grandmother was a Latin American, the voyages of Columbus were his favorite reading as a boy; from Columbus's he went on, so to speak, to Magellan's, where the Philippine Islands struck his imagination vividly. Others believe that the study of Spanish history led [to his interest in the Philippines].

Whatever the reason, suffice it for us to know that he lovingly and conscientiously interests himself in a country to which he speaks the bitter truth but from which, on the other hand, he does not conceal those facts which are pleasant, a quality that is so rare that it should be much appreciated.

This love of his for a distant people in the Far East led him to visit the Chinese and the Japanese in the Vienna Exposition everyday and to speak with them the whole time, trying to imagine what his Filipinos were like. If the transmigration of souls were a proven theory, we would have said that he is inhabited by the soul of one of the ancient Filipinos, deliberately forgotten by history but whose memory is carefully preserved by the people ...

Blumentritt is the first historian of the Philippines in this century who is not content with merely copying; it is true that he has never seen the country, and in fact has never left his own, but he has read whatever have been written about [the Philippines], and has studied and analyzed it, subjecting it to the most severe and impartial criticism, so that by dint of study and understanding he has been able, so to speak, to evoke before him the living

image of the country which, in his own expectation, he will never see for himself.

His library is wholly composed of works on the Philippines; treatises and memoirs cover his desk; his portfolios are crammed full of newspaper cuttings; rolled-up maps are in every corner of his study, and even his children mouth strange names—one of them, a girl, has a Spanish name, Dolores.

He corresponds actively with peninsular Spaniards and Filipinos who are seriously interested in the country. His numerous treatises carry a great deal of weight with all because they are not written in a partisan spirit or for political ends. Austria will never be an enemy of Spain, she has no colonial ambitions and has no thought of exploiting the rich booty of the Archipelago.

Although [Blumentritt] is a good Catholic and an obedient son of the Roman Church, he does not, for all that, confuse dogma with fanaticism, or man with God, nor does he take for legitimate divine truth whatever appears with the trademark of the factory [where it is produced]. He is animated neither by optimism nor by pessimism; he does not exalt some to humble others; on the contrary, he always sees the good of the Philippines in the Spanish connection, and the glory of Spain in ample and wise liberal reforms.¹⁰

Blumentritt himself gives us a glimpse of the reasons for the fascination exerted on him by the Filipinos in a letter to Rizal.

F. Blumentritt to J. Rizal, 3 April 1890 —

...As I go deeper in my ethnological studies of the Philippine Islands, I find more and more similarities and surprising analogies between the Germans and the Tagalogs, and between the (ancient) Teutonic tribes and the (pagan) Igorots. Only the outward appearances are different; the ways of life are surprisingly the same, in virtues as well as in vices.

The “savage” mountain tribes recall the Teutons of Roman times, and the Tagalogs and other natives, the Germans of the present day, except that the latter lack the heartfelt courtesy and hospitality of the Tagalogs.

At present I am reading the book on folklore of Isabelo de los Reyes and Mariano Ponce, and I am taken aback on finding in the Philippines so many superstitions which are purely German and Slavic (and which could not have been brought in by the Spaniards, who do not know them).

I may be wrong, but think that in spirit the Filipinos more closely resemble the eastern and Northern Teutons (Germans, Danes, Swedes and Norwegians) and also the western and Northern Slavs (Czechs, Poles and Russians) in all that concerns the soul and the spirit, than they do all the Latins and Southern Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Bulgars). The Latins are more superficial; it is more important to them to keep their gloves clean rather than their hearts. That is why it does not surprise me that the Spaniards are unable to understand the Filipinos ...^{[11](#)}

It is not difficult to understand why Blumentritt was to become Rizal's dearest confidante and most trusted counselor, the "brother" to whom he would write the last of his farewell notes on the eve of his execution. Common interests, a shared love, one inborn and the other acquired, for the Philippines and the Filipinos, and that mysterious affinity of temperaments and affections that gives birth to true friendship brought them together, even when one was in Leipzig and the other in Leitmeritz, like Rizal said, "two blind and deaf men who converse without seeing or hearing each other."^{[12](#)} They were delighted to discover all sorts of unexpected things about each other, as eager as new lovers to please and worry and exchange advice and experience.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 22 August 1886 —

... I want to read your new book right away and make haste to finish this letter ...

When you speak of universities and professors, you fill me with vehement desires; I want to do whatever you advise. I should like to know Dr. Kern in Leyden; I should like to go to Vienna and buy a whole library ...

I agree with your method of learning languages. Tomorrow I shall look for the works of Waitz-Gerland and Wallace in the municipal

library; if I find I am in a position to translate them, I shall do so and send you my translation so that you can look it over and correct it ...¹³

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 2 October 1886 —

... I think I shall spend fourteen days in Leitmeritz next spring. I am glad to see from the map that it is near the mountains; I am also looking forward to studying life in Bohemia.

I anticipate my thanks for your invitation and would like to reciprocate your kind hospitality in the Philippines some day ... I did not know you were married; otherwise I would long before this have sent my respectful compliments to your distinguished wife ...¹⁴

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 14 November 1886 —

On the 30th last month I had the honor of visiting Dr. A. B. Meyer of the Anthropological and Ethnographic Museum in Dresden. He is very kind ... I have your letter of introduction to thank for his courtesy ... I am now in Berlin, where I plan to spend the winter ...¹⁵

F. Blumentritt to J. Rizal, 14 November 1886 —

... I am sure you will like Berlin; it is a city that offers an infinity of things both to the pleasure-loving and to the studious man ... In the Royal (not the University) Library may be found a great number of old books on the Philippines which the German poet A. von Chamisso (born French) bought in Manila and took to Germany 60 years ago ... Have you visited Virchow and Jagor?

I shall send you my photograph, with my next letter; I would have sent it now had I not been frustrated by the dilatoriness of my photographer. I am so sorry I shall be unable to visit the Philippine Exposition in Madrid ...¹⁶

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 22 November 1886 —

... I knew about the books Chamisso brought back from the Philippines. I have read his poems and his account of his travels and his adventure with some friar, "the only uncouth man he met in the Philippines." I agree with the poet, and you, esteemed Professor, will soon have the same opinion ... I cannot call on

Messrs. Jagor and Virchow because I am not acquainted with them and, having nothing to say to them or give them, I would not like to bother them ...

Pay no attention to the Philippine Exposition in Madrid. According to the newspapers and my own information, it will not be a Philippine Exposition but an Exposition of Igorots ...¹⁷

And so it went. It is charming and, in its own way, fascinating correspondence; it gives an insight, seldom used, into Rizal's character, earnest, assiduous and full of scholarly enthusiasm, curiosity and adventurousness, ever ready to cry his hand and test his mind; beyond that, the letters they exchanged also illustrate something that is very rare, the evolution of a purely intellectual friendship, the process of mutual teaching and correction, based on recognized differences in age, race, culture and experience. Clearly, Blumentritt, the Austrian schoolmaster, is Rizal's mentor; he has a greater command of the authorities, a better knowledge of the world; but the young Malay can also teach the erudite Czech what cannot be found in maps and ethnographical treatises: political realities, the feeling of a people. Blumentritt was reputed to be an apologist of Spanish, even monastic rule; not only was he a devout Catholic, as befitted one born in the apostolic Hapsburg Empire, he was also a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Isabel the Catholic and one of the (literally) handful of honorary members of the Royal Association of Friends of the Philippines. Rizal was to change all that.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 22 August 1886 —

... Sir, you know our country only from the books written by friars and Spaniards who copied from one another. If you had grown up, as I did, in one of our villages, and seen the sufferings of our peasants, you could have a very different idea of Catholicism in the Philippines, I have had the opportunity of comparing religions in Europe: here I have found Christianity full of grandeur, divine, and Catholicism attractive, poetic, Christianity itself made poetical and beautiful, more beautiful than insipid Protestantism. But our peasants do not know the difference.¹⁸

Well, Rizal would teach the peasants and Blumentritt the difference before he was finished. Meantime they compared their maps of Mindanaw; Rizal translated Blumentritt's ethnographical study of the same island in three days, and added a brief essay of the language of the Tirurays; they exchanged pictures at last. Rizal placed Blumentritt's photograph in his "album of Filipinos," among his relatives and friends, and not having a photograph to send back to his friend, sent instead a sketch of himself in crayon. It has been preserved; Rizal draws himself in full face, the slightly wavy hair is parted far to the right, he has a faintly perceptible moustache above the full affectionate mouth, but the eyes are the most striking feature of all: large, jet black, slightly slanted downwards, dreamy, yet penetrating. It is a frank "ethnographical" self-portrait as he had promised. "When I made the sketch," he explained to Blumentritt; "I was very depressed because I was entirely, alone and sick and was nostalgic for my home."¹⁹

Later he felt better with the arrival of Viola and a Spanish acquaintance, the son of the former Minister of the Colonies, Segismundo Moret. He finally got round to calling Jagor, who invited him to the Geographical Society and introduced him to all the professors and savants, including the famous Virchow himself. At the Society's monthly dinner he was seated to Virchow's right, and the venerable sage condescended to joke with him, saying he wanted to study Rizal "ethnographically." Rizal replied he was ready for anything "for the love of science." It was all very pleasant and they sat up past midnight drinking beer. Later he was elected a member of the Society, as well as of the Anthropological Society, and attended lectures on pre-historic Japanese tombs, Mecca pilgrimages and other subjects. He himself was asked to give a lecture on the Tagalogs. But nothing could distract him for long from his scholarly dialogue at long distance with the schoolmaster at Leitmeritz. They argued about the translation of "headhunter," "race," and "tribe;" Blumentritt sent him copies of the *Globus*, the learned periodical in which most of his studies were published and Rizal found them "very interesting" and wanted to translate them. From the record of Blumentritt's writings at this time it would appear that he had sent Rizal his treatises on the natives of Abra, Zambal wedding customs, the Mangyans of Mindoro, and the Ilongots. In return Rizal sent Blumentritt two articles in *El Liberal*, one by by López Jaena and another by himself. Blumentritt asked him about the word "*catalona*" or "*catalonan*" meaning priests or priestesses of the ancient Tagalog religion, and Rizal made an

impressive show of erudition, It is doubtful that his analysis of “*katalonan*” and “*Bathala*,” supposed to be the Tagalog word for God, can be rivaled to this day. “Pay no attention to what P.A. Paterno says in his book about “*Bathala*,” he added rather unkindly, “P.A. Paterno is a ...” And he expressed his feelings about the *Maginoo* with a series of cryptic squiggles.^{[20](#)}

They both had been ill that winter; Rizal, as we have seen, with his fevers, fits of coughing and feeling of weariness; Blumentritt with rheumatic pains. “I am still as pale as a corpse and I feel very weak,” wrote the schoolmaster from Leitmeritz. “I am a ruin, half-blind and with weak nerves; above all, I am very susceptible to colds. I am waiting most eagerly for summer.” The coming of spring cheered them both. “We shall see each other soon and talk of everything ... I still don't know whether we shall leave here the beginning of May or later; we want to admire Berlin in the spring,” Rizal replied, speaking for himself and Viola. On the 4th May he advised Blumentritt that they would be arriving in Leitmeritz on the 13th and would stay at the Hotel Krebs; Blumentritt was not to wait for them at the railway station, they would call on him half an hour after arrival.^{[21](#)}

But Blumentritt would not yield in courtesy; Rizal and Viola found him waiting at the station; they were taken to their hotel, and then bundled off to the schoolmaster's own house where Frau Blumentritt (he had married his landlord's daughter Rosa Muller) had laid out a lavish meal for them. A friendship by correspondence does not always improve upon personal acquaintance; happily enough, Rizal and Blumentritt got on remarkably well. Viola was to recall that every morning the school master would call for them at their hotel after breakfast and take them to visit museums and see the sights of the town; every night they would have dinner at the Blumentritts, and then their host would walk them back to their hotel. When Blumentritt could not get away from his duties, his place was taken by a friend, Dr. Robert Klutschak. It would appear that Rizal and Viola could only stay four days; they arrived on the 13th May and, according to the local newspapers, left on the 17th for Prague.^{[22](#)}

They seem to have made a great stir in the town. The *Leitmeritz Zeitung* for the 18th May carried a long story on them:

Malay Visitors in Leitmeritz

Two gentlemen from the Philippines, Dr. José Rizal and Máximo Viola arrived here recently on a visit to Dr. Blumentritt. They are both members of the Tagalog branch of the Malay race, and are surely the first of their people to set foot on the soil of Leitmeritz. Under the trusty guidance of Professor Blumentritt and Mr. Robert Klutschak they saw all the sights in our town and, after they had been introduced to the Mayor, Mr. Gerbhardt, entered their names in the town's memorial book. On Saturday evening they attended a meeting of the Leitmeritz Mountaineer Society and the chairman Mr. J. Krombholz welcomed the guests from distant lands; Mr. Rizal, who is not only a well-known poet but also an artist, replied with a speech that was both witty and thoughtful, and which was greeted by the assembly with applause ...²³

Newspapers as far away as the capital Prague picked up the story. Rizal and Viola were described as “both highly talented and charming gentlemen.” Their signatures in the town's “memorial book” or visitors book have been preserved: Rizal identified himself as “from the Philippines (Kalamba)” and Viola as from Bulakan.²⁴ Villa has recalled that Rizal's speech at the meeting of the Mountaineer Society was so well phrased that his audience could not believe that he had been learning German only eleven months; Blumentritt embraced him and proclaimed that it was difficult enough for Germans to improvise speeches in their native tongue. On the night of the 15th Blumentritt offered his guests a farewell outdoor dinner in a forest glade on an island on the Elbe. The professor confided to Viola his opinion that Rizal was the greatest son of the Philippines, and that he was like a rare comet that appeared only once or twice in centuries. The following night, the eve of their departure, Rizal and Viola reciprocated with another dinner at their hotel; the next morning, Blumentritt and his wife and their three children, Dolores, Friedrich and Conrad, together with Professor Klutschak, saw them off at the station. Rizal had left a memento: a pencil sketch of Blumentritt which he had dashed off one day after lunch.²⁵

They were all of them moved to tears. Two days later, writing from Brunn after passing through Prague, Rizal said he had no tears left to shed.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 19 May 1887 —

... My eyes seem to have dried up; I can no longer shed tears, perhaps I have exhausted all of them weeping for my country for not one drop moistened my eyes. But it is difficult to describe what I felt in my heart when I read your two letters. Was it joy or sadness? I cannot say; for a long while I sat [in the restaurant] without even seeing the soup before me until it got completely cold; I had lost my appetite. I could not take a bite; my heart was full, and I asked myself what I had done to deserve the friendship and sympathies of such generous souls.

Is this magnificent farewell from Europe perhaps a portent of a terrible reception in the Philippines? For in my life happiness has always been followed by misfortune, and the lovelier the former was the more terrible the latter. But come what may ... I shall tell myself: "You are not alone, Rizal, there in a corner of Bohemia there are good, noble and friendly souls who appreciate you; think of them, feel that they are with you, that they can see you; they will rejoice in your joys and weep with you in your sorrows."²⁶

Rizal had indeed said good-bye to Europe at Leitmeritz. Henceforth Europe to him would be Blumentritt, and Blumentritt Europe.

[3]

Blumentritt's letters of recommendation to fellow scholars kept him company all the way. Rizal had left a diamond stick-pin behind his hotel; it was promptly found and Blumentritt sent it on to him in Vienna, an incident which, according to Viola, led Rizal to make a characteristic comparison between German and Spanish honesty. Professor Nordmann, who took them around the Vienna Museum, introduced them at his club and gave them theater tickets, reminded Rizal of his own father, who was also "courteous, kind and fond of young people;" in Munich they "drank a lot of beer and had a lively time;" in Geneva he kept remembering Germany and the German savants; "I always speak to Viola about German loyalty and honesty ..." He also sent Blumentritt a proper photograph at last. After some hesitation he went on to Rome while Viola returned to Spain. As might have been expected, Rizal was overwhelmed. Even the Popes grew in

stature before his eyes, surrounded by their ancient palaces and magnificent temples. He sent Blumentritt a flower he had picked in the ruins of the palace of Emperor Septimius Severus, and spent hours in the Forum where he was overtaken by nightfall. "I tread on the dust of heroes ... I am tired like a dog and will sleep like a god." From Marseilles he said "good-bye to Europe and the pilgrim's life of freedom!"²⁷

His impressions of the voyage home are markedly different from those he recorded of his voyage of discovery, outward bound. He is no longer so feverishly entranced by new names, new places, new sights and sounds and smells. Now he is more interested in people, and he looks at them with different eyes, the slightly cynical eye of an enemy of European colonialism, the nostalgic moistened eye of a lover of European culture. He is touched because an Italian priest has treated him like an old friend, like "my Father Confessor," aboard the train to Marseilles; he swears he will never forget an American couple who shared meals with him on the express to Monaco. The man, a banker, was "nondescript" but his wife had blue eyes and "a smile as chaste as a Christian virgin's." One thing he had not lost was his eye for the girls.

"We shall hardly see each other again," he said when they parted.

"Who knows?" the Christian virgin replied. "I should certainly hope so."

"I am in the hands of fate." "Really? I believe it," she said, and waved to him as the train pulled out.

"Well, what is there about me?" he wrote Blumentritt with a touch of vanity.

"I am neither rich nor handsome and, as Goethe says, I can go home unescorted."

When he wanted to have a last look at Europe at Marseilles, he discovered that someone had stolen his binoculars; "this," he told Blumentritt wryly, "rather watered down my sadness since I and the stewards spent nearly an hour looking for them. Behold how a pecuniary loss can push aside a sentimental grief! I am sure that if Mary Stuart's best dress had been burnt when she sailed from France, she would have, at that moment, forgotten all the beauties of France!"

On the other hand, for all his love of Germany he was impatient with a young German jingoist on board who proclaimed the supremacy of Germany and all things German; and he deplored the bad breeding of European children brought up in Asian colonies. “Children in the colonies,” he noted, “are very naughty because early on they grow accustomed to brutality and have many servants whom they can insult, etc. The same thing is true of the children of Spaniards [in the Philippines]. When I compare them with Dora [Blumentritt's daughter] I say to myself: The colonies of Sumatra and Saigon must be far away indeed from Leitmeritz! I would rather be a bachelor all my life than have such children!”²⁸

[4]

He had been abroad for more than five years, and it had not been an easy time on his scant allowance of ₧50 a month. Complaints and reproaches about it had been the recurrent theme of his correspondence: the letters of credit had arrived late or not at all; they were losing too much money on the rates of exchange with the Spanish peseta, and the French franc or the English pound were to be preferred; he had had to borrow money—a torture to one so sensitive and conscientious. It was not his fault. He did not drink much wine; “I prefer water, and I drink beer in restaurants only so as not to attract attention.” He did not smoke. At one period he wrote his sister María in December that he had not taken a bath since the middle of August; “it is really expensive to take a bath here.” Another time he wrote: “Since I came to Europe I had nothing to eat the whole day on two occasions because I did not have a penny ... I have endured the cold and the rain and have not even taken the streetcar, although my feet were swollen and it was difficult for me to walk, because I had no money for the fare.”²⁹ Indeed people in Kalamba had absolutely no idea what Spain was like.

J. Rizal to his family, 17 December 1884 —

... Here in Europe one has to be clothed all day, from the time one gets up in the morning until one goes back to bed and, since the climate makes it necessary, we have to wear heavy clothes and double what we would wear [there] and have to have suits made for every season of the year. Here nobody does anything for

nothing or for the pleasure of doing a service; everything must be paid for. From where comes the story of a gentleman on horseback who came across a Galician so tired that he could not walk another step. The gentleman asked the Galician if he would like to ride behind him on his horse. The Galician did so and after a few moments asked the kind gentleman: “Sir, how much have I earned already?”³⁰

He had tried to supplement his allowance but had not been successful in making extra money. When it was rumored that a new war would break out again between France and Germany, he had considered taking to the field as a war correspondent or even joining the French medical corps (“but,” Paciano warned, “you must identify yourself as a Filipino and not as a Japanese; there is no reason for us to be ashamed of our nationality”). The following year, 1885, when there was a cholera epidemic in Spain, he wrote his parents that he was thinking of offering his medical services in towns where there were no doctors; “I hear that they pay ₱12 a day, but without food and lodging; if this is true, I could earn ₱250, enough to support me for five months, which will be no little savings.” The Spanish authorities, however, were not paying all that much; they were only offering ₱5 a day, and nobody was sure when even that fee would be paid, and so he gave it up.³¹

J. Rizal to his family, August or September 1885 —

... In Madrid as in most parts of Spain there are certain prejudices to which one must adjust one's self, however independent-minded he may be. To earn a living here, in my present situation, and without giving rise to criticism, I would have to get a clerical job through political influence, for manual labor is usually regarded here as degrading. Frankly speaking, I do not have the nerve to grovel in the office of some Minister to beg with my flattery for a salary that would shame both you and me. Here politics is everything ... Moreover, for every job within sight there are some fourteen or fifteen applicants or laid off employees waiting at the door of the offices of Ministers, who must try to avoid them ...³²

How uncomfortably familiar it all sounds now!

There was a defensive note in Rizal's complaints because he knew things had not been going well in Kalamba, and he always felt a little guilty about journeying through Europe at such a time. The price of sugar had gone down and, Paciano had written in November 1884, they had lost ₱3,000 on their capital and were in debt for ₱4,000 more because of new machinery; since June they had often been without a centavo in the house. Rizal's reply was pessimistic: things would go from bad to worse. He had heard from his friend Ortiga that the Spanish Government was trying to mollify the Cubans by negotiating the free entry of Cuban sugar into the American market; the English would in that case demand similar privileges for the sugar of their West Indian colonies; reciprocal concessions might be demanded and granted with ruinous results for Philippine sugar which, burdened with heavy freight charges due to distance, and having to pay onerous duties, would be priced out of its traditional markets in New York, London and Spain. Don Pablo was working to reduce Spanish duties on Philippine sugar by half but had little hope of success. Fortunately the proposed treaty of commerce between the United States and Spain had to be withdrawn by President Cleveland from the Senate, where it faced repudiation. Paciano was inclined to worry more about the competition offered by the European beet sugar industry; he asked his brother to verify reports that the beet growers were going out of the market because of low profits. For the rest he was inclined to be philosophical; Cuban sugar had been paying four-fifth more duty than Philippine sugar in Spain, and it was only fair that this should be remedied; besides, the additional duty would not make or break anyone. The trouble was, as it would always be, that Philippine sugar was good but, he grumbled, "the better the crop, the greater our losses."³³

These economic distresses in Kalamba would affect more than Rizal's allowances, as we shall see hereafter.

[5]

"I had a good trip," he reported to Blumentritt in September 1887. "I found my family in good health. There was great rejoicing when we saw one another again, tears of happiness were shed. I had to answer ten thousand questions at the same time; there were laughs, reproaches, etc. etc. Oh, my beautiful country!" He had not come back "fair and stout and looking like a

Spaniard,” as his sister Josefa had wished five years before, but he was at least a physician, and also a novelist too famous for his own good.³⁴

He had landed in Manila on the night of the 5th August 1887 aboard the *Haiphong*, which he had boarded in Saigon. At first seemed to attract little attention and he himself was a model of discretion. He called twice on Isabelo de los Reyes, whose sociological studies had excited the admiration of Blumentritt, but did not find him at home. He did not even try to see another of Blumentritt's favorite Philippine authors, the erudite Pardo de Tavera (“He works for the government and I should not like to dirty his white gloves with these hands stained with writing novels. These things happen in my country but at heart we still remain very good friends, at least so far as I am concerned.”) He felt that people were avoiding him. He visited the Jesuits at the Ateneo; Blumentritt had sent a book to Father Ricart. The latter was in Mindanaw, but the Rector, Father Ramón, received him together with an old professor, Father Faura. Later the Jesuits were to recall that they tried to win back Rizal to the old faith. When they failed Faura told Rizal rather melodramatically never to darken their doorstep again. “I fear,” he is said to have added, “that you will end up on the gallows.” At the threshold of his old school Rizal was shown an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which he had carved as a student. The sentimental Brother Porter who did so was anticipating history. Rizal smiled and said gaily: “Other times, Brother, those were other times that have gone by. I no longer believe in such things!” That, at least, was the Jesuit version written long after the event. Rizal had a different recollection. In a letter to Blumentritt in 1890 he said that in Manila he had a long conversation with Faura and the Jesuit had told him that what was wrong with the *Noli* was that Rizal “had written the truth,” and he had added: “You have not written a novel; your book is not a novel at all; you have described the sad conditions of our times.” In fact Rizal thought that the Jesuits were just being Jesuitical; they were making public protestations against him which they did not really feel. And another of his old teachers, Sánchez, had even defended Rizal and the *Noli* openly.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 2 February 1890 —

... In secret he told me that I would have done better to write an idealistic book, in which I could have given an ideal picture of ideal priests, and in this manner made my point by contrast.

I answered him that I had written not for thinking readers but for the unthinking public; that there are so many books in which ideal priests are described and which are only used by bad priests as wolves disguise themselves with sheepskins. I told him that I wanted to awaken my countrymen from their profound lethargy, and whoever wants to awaken does not do so with soft and light sounds but with explosions, blows, etc.

“Don't you fear the consequences of your boldness?” Father Sánchez asked.

“Father,” I replied, “you are a missionary. When you go on your mission, do you not fear the consequences of carrying it out?”

“Oh, that is a completely different thing!” he countered.

“Not at all,” I answered. “Your mission is to baptize pagans; mine is to dignify men.”

My main point of discussion with the Jesuits, and their main complaint against me, is that I picture them [in the *Noli*] running behind the chariot of progress ...[35](#)

He did not stay long in Manila and hurried off to his family in Kalamba. There were many other, less friendly, warnings, anonymous and otherwise. “Every day I receive threats,” he wrote Blumentritt. “My father does not allow me to go out alone or eat in another house. The old man fears and trembles for me. They take me for a German spy, an agent of Bismarck, a Protestant, a mason, a wizard, a soul halfway to damnation, etc. So I prefer to stay at home. The constabulary firmly believes all this and spreads the word around that I am plotting. The corporal (born in Madrid) thinks I have a foreign passport and that I roam about nights. I am in the hands of God and my destiny. Let come what may!” Soon he was given a personal escort, a constabulary lieutenant named José Taviel de Andrade. “He belongs to a noble family,” Rizal told Blumentritt. “He speaks English and French and can draw, but he has no use at all for the constabulary. It is said that once he told one of his superior officers: 'You said I would belong to a respectable organization, and now I see I have to live with bandits.'” It would not be the last time that the accomplished Malay, more European in his own way than most Spaniards in the Philippines, would charm and win his guardians over

while allowing them to think that they were having it their own way. “I was a constabulary officer by accident,” Taviel de Andrade later wrote Retana, “and I did not have the character suited for my police duties. I found it easier, and it certainly gave me better results, to put him under obligation to me through the friendship which was already starting between us. Rizal was a well-bred man with fine manners, a very gentleman. His favorite pastimes were hunting, fencing, painting and country outings; although we never grew intimate, an open friendship grew up between us that I must confess, was most pleasing to me in that wilderness.” Once they climbed Mount Makiling; the word soon spread that they had raised the German flag at the summit and proclaimed German sovereignty over the Philippines!³⁶

It was all so absurd! So like a fantasy! One wonders whether Rizal was angrier with the uncouth Spaniards in the constabulary than with his own countrymen who, if we are to believe an anonymous newsletter in a contemporary issue of *La Epoca*, saw a new prophet in “the German doctor.” The simple peasants, who expected to see him with the whiskers of an Emperor Wilhelm or a Bismarck, and were disappointed with his slight moustache, believed, according to *La Epoca's* correspondent, that Rizal could whistle up a German naval squadron, that he would give them the rich estates round Kalamba, that he would set up there a great State, a model Republic. *La Epoca's* reports were not wholly without foundation. How else are we to explain why the peasants should follow him on his continental-style outings at dawn to admire scenic views from a mountain top? He himself might believe that he was only leading a party of mountaineers *a la Leitmeritz*; the simple men, women and children gathered round him, one must surmise, in the expectation of a second Sermon on the Mount.³⁷

Like many another expatriate before and after him, he was no longer used to his native clime; he found it “too hot for me” and developed prickly heat rash. Nevertheless he was as active as ever. He practiced his profession, specializing in eye-diseases; most of his patients, he noted, suffered from anemia. He gave lessons in gymnastics to wean his townmates away from the cockpit and the gaming tables. But to write to Blumentritt he was always ready to give both patients and gymnasts a holiday. The schoolmaster from Leitmeritz was already part of the family. “You cannot imagine the joy your letters bring me; as soon as one of them arrives, the

whole family gather to hear, first, how it sounds in German, and then in translation. Then there are many questions but usually they are the same ones: 'How old is the Professor? His wife? His children? What do they look like? Do the children already know German, although it is so difficult?' Not long ago I received two letters from you, and yesterday two postcards, which were all read out twice. My family kept after me to answer you as soon as possible. 'The Professor,' said the old man, 'writes you twice in every post and you sometimes don't write to him for a month. What will he think of you?'" Blumentritt's photograph, sent in exchange for Rizal's was also the subject of much comment. Rizal's father thought the schoolmaster "very serious" in aspect; his nephews and nieces "ask me if your beard does not frighten me; you strike them as a big terrible man from whom one must hide ... You are very popular here. All speak of you. Your name has already been transplanted philologically into *Bumentir*, *Blumentrit*, *Blumentirit*, etc. Come then!"³⁸

The lonely and the friendless may be permitted to envy Rizal his two families on both ends of the earth. It was not all joy. Sending Blumentritt a native cigarette-lighter, six cigarettes, some native flowers and an ancient Tagalog coin in September, Rizal had some sad news.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 26 September 1887 —

... I cannot write at length because we have suffered a great misfortune. One of my sisters [Olimpia Ubaldo], perhaps the best and most unassuming, mother of two, has just died. She had a bad childbirth and lost so much blood that she died in less than thirteen hours. For this reason I cannot leave my family this year. The poor orphans know nothing of their loss and still expect to see their mother. They say: "Mother will come back tomorrow; God will make her well again." Yesterday we visited her grave. The children called out to their mother: "Let us go home now, come as soon as you're, well!" I believe that if a soul capable of hearing and thinking survives after death, their mother must have heard the innocent voice of her children. I console myself saying that it is the will of God, and what He does is for the best ...³⁹

But even death had become a political question in the Philippines.

Rizal was luckier than he had a right to expect. In their calculated altercation with the conservatives, the liberals were back in power in Spain, and the tentative reforms initiated in the 70s by de la Torre, and interrupted by the apostolic reaction in the following decade and a half, especially under the priest-ridden Moriones and the senile Jovellar, again began to reach the Philippines from Spain. In 1884 the tobacco monopoly, which had made the colony financially independent at the cost of a system compounded of forced labor, confiscation and corruption, was finally abolished. The year before, a uniform system of personal taxation applicable to Spaniards and Filipinos alike had been substituted for the traditional tribute with its racial and class distinctions, and forced labor reduced from forty to fifteen days a year with the privilege of exemption for the higher tax-payers, again without racial distinction, so that, to the scandal and outrage of the racists, a Spaniard might be compelled by the state to wield pick and shovel if he did not pay a sufficiently high rate of personal tax, while a Filipino with enough money to afford it could buy the services of a substitute. In 1885 justices of the peace were appointed to take over the administration of municipal justice from the mayors, and in the following year an identical separation of powers was enforced between provincial governors and judges of first instance. In 1887 the Spanish Penal Code was extended to the Philippines; in 1889, the Spanish Code of Commerce, the law on administrative litigation and, which drove the absolutists to fury, the Civil Code of Spain except for the provisions on a civil registry and civil marriage, the first of which was deemed impracticable in the Philippines because of the shortage of qualified personnel and suitable facilities, and the second because of the stern opposition of the Church.⁴⁰

But there was more than theological or administrative prejudice against this extension of Spanish laws to a Spanish colony; it was in fact a declaration of equality. Indeed, at first sight, it is puzzling, even disappointing, to find no reference to this tremendous change in the correspondence of Rizal and other nationalists outside of a brief interchange between Rizal and Blumentritt on the ambiguous provision of the Penal Code making race what is called in law an alternative circumstance, that is to say, one to be considered as aggravating or as mitigating a crime depending on the facts of the case.⁴¹ One is forced to the conclusion that the extension and

application to the Philippines and its people of the Spanish laws was theoretical; the equality was only on paper. Otherwise the indifference of Rizal, del Pilar and others could be explained only by incomprehension or perversity for surely the enforcement of equal laws was demonstrably superior as a means of protection and redress than even the expulsion of the friars or a largely ineffectual representation in the Cortes.

Also, there were more promising, more stimulating developments in the Philippines, more exciting because they involved personalities rather than principles. In 1887, when Rizal returned to the Philippines, the Governor General was Lieutenant-General Emilio Terrero y Perinat, then in his early sixties, who had been General Officer Commanding in New Castille and chief of the King's military household, with a brilliant military career. Terrero has been described by his enemies with picturesque malice: he was described by the Jesuits as “soft, malleable, easy-going;” by Retana as a man who “began to govern wearing a [Carlist] beret and left wearing a Phrygian [revolutionary] cap; he lacked a personality of his own; kind and conciliatory after his own fashion, his greatest weakness was the excessive malleability of his character which made him easily led by those who, knowing him well, succeeded in dominating him; he was first ... a disguised Carlist then colorless and changeable, ... and finally an arbitrary democrat.” Actually Terrero was not so “soft” and “easy-going” as all that. Far from being “malleable,” he seems to have been dangerously brittle and, four years after leaving the Philippines, committed suicide after a nervous breakdown by jumping from his balcony. “At the start of my administration, they called me Sancho the Fearless; then they called me Sancho Abarca; God grant that I do not end as Sancho Panza.” Sancho the Fearless, it may be noted, was Sancho IV, one of the greatest Kings of Castille; Sancho II Garcés Abarca, King of Pamplona and Aragón, was so unfortunate in his wars with the Moors that he ended up by sending his daughter to the Caliph of Cordoba for a wife and became grandfather to the heir of the Muslim throne.⁴²

Fearless or unfortunate or merely realistic, Terrero had gradually abandoned his absolutist and apostolic Carlist convictions and given his passive approval to the liberal and anti-clerical policies of his two principal subordinates, José Centeno García, civil governor of the province of Manila, and Benigno Quiroga López Ballesteros, director general of civil

administration. Both Centeno and Quiroga were Masons. Centeno, a mining engineer and author of several geological works, had lived in the Philippines twenty years, an advantage that was so unusual among Spanish administrators as to be almost incredible. He was said to be a life-long republican and head of the Spanish Masons in the Philippines. Quiroga, a much younger and energetic man, was trained as a forester but had served in the Cortes as a liberal and would go on to hold the portfolio of the Interior in one of the 20th century Spanish governments. Great influence on Terrero was also attributed to his private secretary, José Sáinz de Barranda, born in the Philippines of Spanish parents and a forester like Quiroga. He had, according to Retana, little aptitude for politics but was inclined toward a “reasonable tolerance.”⁴³

Terrero had been in office for more than two years and was thus nearing the end of his term when Rizal returned in August 1887. The power and prestige of the friars were at their lowest ebb, the lowest they would ever reach before the Revolution. The new civil governors in the provinces, the new justices of the peace in the towns, were often locked in dispute with the friars who, as parish priests, had long held undisputed sway over local government. Quiroga and Centeno, and behind them Terrero, lent the new officials the weight of the lay power whenever a suitable occasion arose.

Two particular incidents at this time roused emotions to their highest pitch. When the parish of Binondo was preparing to celebrate its annual fiesta, the guild of Filipinos demanded the place of honor at the festivities; the friar parish priest, Father Hevíá Campomanes, preferred to assign it to the guild of Chinese who were, after all, according to him, paying most of the expenses. Terrero, taking Centeno's advice, sustained the Filipinos and sent Hevíá into rustication. The affair did not end there; it reached the Spanish Court and eventually Terrero's decision was nullified by his successor and Hevíá given a bishop's miter. But a blow had been given to the power of the friar.⁴⁴

Even heavier was the blow given by Quiroga when he issued an executive order that, for sanitary reasons, the corpses of persons who had died of infectious disease should not be kept exposed in the churches. Even death now became, as has been noted, a political issue. Deprived of the revenues from elaborate exequies, the friars again protested; again they would be upheld by Terrero's successor; but once again the damage had been done.⁴⁵

There would seem to be little doubt that, if the administration of the Philippines had been in other hands when the author of the *Noli* landed in Manila in 1887, he would have been punished rather sooner than he actually was. As it was, Payo and Font might rage and rant, the Board of Censorship might recommend the absolute prohibition of the novel, anonymous threats might be made, but no administrative action was taken.

“My book has raised a lot of dust,” Rizal wrote Blumentritt in September that year. “Everyone asks me about it. They want to anathematize me, and the General [Terrero] sent for me to obtain a copy.” Here is the incident as Rizal tells it.

“You have written a novel which has caused a lot of comment,” Terrero said to Rizal. “They tell me it has subversive ideas. I should like to read it.”

“General,” Rizal replied, “I propose to send copies to Your Excellency and to the Archbishop as soon as I receive them from Europe. I had only one copy with me and I gave it to a friend. If Your Excellency will allow me, I shall look for another copy.”

“I not only allow it,” said Terrero, “I command it.”

Rizal went to the Jesuits to beg for the copy they had; they would not let him have it. He finally found one the worse for wear and returned to Malacañang to give it to Terrero, who showed slightly more friendliness. Did Rizal fancy himself Ibarra incarnate and expect to be praised and protected by the Governor General as “the only man I have met in the Philippines?” It seems that later on Terrero did advise Rizal, as Ibarra had been advised, to leave the Philippines for his own good. At this time, however, Terrero had not yet read the *Noli* and instead asked Rizal ominously whether or not he proposed to return to Kalamba.⁴⁶

Kalamba was indeed to be the venue of Rizal's advocacy.

[7]

It was noted in an earlier chapter that the Rizals leased the lands on which their fortunes rested from the Dominicans; so indeed did most of their fellow townsmen. For some time before Rizal's return, however, there had been hints of trouble between the tenants and the estate.

For one thing, Paciano told his brother as early as 1883, the estate was collecting the rentals without issuing the usual receipts. Whether as a result of this puzzling measure or not, two years later all the tenants, were found to be in arrears in their payments. “The Friar Administrator,” Paciano wrote his brother, “without taking the time to inquire into the possible reasons for this insolvency, whether it was due to a sheer refusal to pay or to mere inability, to a bad harvest or to low prices or to the gradual increase in rentals, declared all the estate lands vacant and at the same time invited the inhabitants of the other towns to take over all available lots as a punishment for this lack of punctuality” in the payments. Nothing came of it in the end except that four or five tenants, unluckier than the others, were evicted. By the next year 1886, Paciano was complaining that the rentals on the Pansol lands leased from the Dominicans had been raised so much, and sugar prices were so low, that he was thinking of giving them back to the estate and clearing land of his own. Rizal was worried enough to ask Herbosa for details about the rentals and his brother-in-law sent him a long litany of complaints about charges for irrigation systems that did not irrigate, yearly increases of rentals, haggling about this or that fee, and receipts that did not state the amount received.⁴⁷

The matter of the receipts had reached the ears of the government in Manila by the time Rizal returned. Suspecting that the Dominicans were evading payment in full of the taxes due on their estates, the government decided to check on their returns by asking the tenants how much they were actually paying. Rizal himself would explain what followed, and the nature of his advocacy, in an article, “*La verdad para todos*,” (Truth for everyone), published two years later in *La Solidaridad*.

The answer [to the government's inquiry], if it was to be truthful, would injure the friars's interests. The friars wanted it answered in accordance with their wishes and what suited them, and not in accordance with the facts; but considering that this would be contrary to the truth and to the duty of a good citizen, the writer drafted the reply on the basis of detailed information, translated it into Tagalog, and read it to all [the tenants], including the very emissaries of the friars so that they might report its contents to their masters.

No one protested and all voluntarily signed, even the very partisans of the friars who could not deny the facts, although the author reminded them that with their signatures they would call upon themselves the reprisals of the powerful.

What happened? The document was submitted, it went through all the legal channels and ... it was pigeonholed! The friars sought revenge and the townspeople submitted another document seeking the intervention of the government since the government itself had started the dispute; but the government remained silent; it said neither yes nor no; there was no investigation and the charges were not looked into; the government was afraid of fighting for the truth and forsook the unfortunate townspeople.

Yet the petition spoke only of agriculture, of urbanization! It did not impugn the immaculate purity of the friars, it did not expose corruption, because this writer has never wanted to stain his pen with the filth in which certain habits are soaked. It dealt with nothing more than the question of crops, lands, roads, schools, houses, etc.

This document was signed by all the *principales*, it was signed by this writer with his full name, it was signed by women, property-owners, Chinese, servants, laborers; it was signed by the whole town. It was read to the whole world, to foes and friends, to the authorities, to the peninsular Spaniards, because we had the courage of our convictions and because we believed in the sincerity of the government and in its devotion to the welfare of the country.

Nothing, nothing was done! And from it all nothing remains but the revenge inflicted on the unfortunate townspeople, victims of their loyalty to the government and of their good faith ...⁴⁸

The Catholic historian of anti-clericalism under the Spanish regime may be trusted to give an impartial summary of the case put for the people of Kalamba by Rizal.

In a memorial submitted to the government on the 8th January 1888 they stated their case as follows: the tenant lost to the

advantage of the [Dominican] estate ...

After paying the land rent he still had to pay for each bamboo tree (whether he used it or not) and for each worker's shed built on the lot. Sometimes, if he had two harvests, he had to pay twice. If one lot was barren and he wished to return it, he was threatened with dispossession of all his lots.

Then, too, the rental kept mounting. In a few years it could soar from ₱45 to ₱900. Fields planted to three or four cavans of rice seed [were paid for] as if they were planted to nine and one-half [or] fourteen cavans. Everytime the hacienda official or servant measured the lot where the houses and granaries stood, and every time the tenant made improvements on his lot, such as putting up a stone wall instead of a bamboo fence, the assessment [was] increased.

In hard times, when locusts or floods came or when the price of sugar went down, the tenant found it almost impossible to meet the rates. And the administrator seldom reduced the rent; at times he even raised it. If the tenant paid, the rent would surely [be increased] the next year. If he did not pay, the land was taken away from him and given to another even if he was the one who [had] cleared and leveled it, tied up all his capital in it, and made it productive ...

At the same time, the people believed that the estate, included lands [to] which the [Dominicans] had no just claim. [They asked that] rent collection, for these lands should cease and previously collected sums should be reimbursed. In September 1887 some tenants, including Rizal's relatives, stopped paying rent because they wanted the Dominicans to authenticate their title to the estate. The following year they were sued by the administrator [of the Dominican estate].⁴⁹

What was the truth of the matter? Any contemporary lawyer will appreciate the weight of the Dominican position. Payment of rentals in previous years could be said to have put the Kalamba tenants in estoppel; by paying they had admitted the ownership of those to whom payment had been made; furthermore, whoever had owned the rich lands around the lake in pre-

Spanish times, and they may in fact have been unsettled, the Dominicans and the other religious Orders claimed to have the actual legal documents vesting ownership in them.

Yet that was scarcely the whole truth. The Filipino cultivators of the land could not be expected to understand such legal niceties; all they knew was that actual possession and cultivation of the lands had been handed down in their families from generation to generation. If one went farther back, it would be found that the preconquest natives had never had the concept of individual ownership of land; land was held by the communal *barangay* and all its members shared in its use. After the conquest, under Spanish law, many *barangay* chiefs converted such communal holdings into their own private properties, and often sold them or otherwise disposed of them without the understanding or consent of the former members of the *barangay*. Furthermore, all land that was not thus individually or communally claimed by the Filipinos with sufficient proof of ownership, was put in the royal or public domain and was open for occupation by newcomers Spanish or Filipino, religious Order or lay settler, whoever was the cleverer, the stronger, the more influential. To this day the conflict persists in many great estates between ownership based on legal titles and documents and ownership based on actual traditional occupation and cultivation; that the situation was even more confused in Rizal's day can be easily imagined when the process of acquiring title and even the exact boundaries of the property could be placed in doubt.⁵⁰

Rizal, the “German doctor,” the “friend of Bismarck,” soon and inevitably, became the center of the struggle between the townspeople of Kalamba and the Dominicans. The disastrous fall in the price of sugar added economic reasons to the political and the legal, and, undoubtedly with the encouragement of Rizal, the Kalamba sub-lessees and tenants sustained their denial of their landlords title by refusing to pay the customary rentals.

La Epoca's anonymous correspondent summarized the friar's counter-attack. At first, from September 1887 to September 1888, that is to say, during much of Rizal's stay in the Philippines, the Dominicans, it is said, used “affection, lenity and paternal appeals” to secure the submission of the Kalambeños; then, their patience exhausted, they resorted to the courts. Their first victims, chosen deliberately as the leading family: in the town and as the family of the rebel leader, were the Rizals. An action for eviction

was filed against them in the justice of the peace court of Kalamba; it was lost—according to the Dominicans because Paciano Rizal himself dictated the judgment to the court. The Dominicans appealed successfully to the court of first instance at the provincial capital of Santa Cruz. The Rizals in turn appealed to the Supreme Court but the appeal was dismissed. The case was carried to Spain, again unsuccessfully. These legal battles took four years; when they began Rizal had already left the Philippines, when they ended he was on the point of returning for the second time. But it may be convenient to anticipate the events and give the ending of the story now.

The Dominicans made no secret of their tactics; *La Epoca* later described the entire campaign. “Judgment having been obtained, it was enforced by compelling [the Rizal's] to vacate their house and putting their furniture out in the street (for they resisted the enforcement of the decision) in the presence of the townspeople; but the house itself was respected, that is to say, the judgment of eviction was enforced only partially (because the Dominican Fathers wanted it so) in that the lot was not cleared [by the destruction of the buildings on it] as would ordinarily have been done; the owners were satisfied with the eviction of tenants who persisted in not paying. By this slow process other evictions have been taking place in other lots, with the purpose of not carrying things to extremes but rather making the tenants realize that they were not being harried and punished but only expected to come round. The eviction of the Rizals was followed by two others, later by three or four others, still later by twelves, going by degrees and increasing the number of defendants in succession so that the townspeople might realize that their tricks would not work ...”⁵¹

Rizal's father took this disaster well. He and Doña Teodora were, Hidalgo wrote Rizal, in good health; Don Francisco did not look his age; he was “always cheerful, but firm and energetic” and, when his lawyer had advised him to make overtures to the administrator of the estate after the eviction, he had replied that he would never sink so low and had gone to live in his daughter Narcisa's house. Possibly Narcisa's husband, López, together with his brothers-in-law, Paciano and Olimpia's widower Ubaldo, made an even greater show of recalcitrance; the same letter to Rizal from Hidalgo says that the three had been rusticated in Kalapan, the capital of Mindoro; “they say it is very lonely there, surrounded by forests and sea; to me it sounds

very poetic, but they are not in the mood for inspiration ...” Before very long, Hidalgo himself was banished to Tagbilaran, the capital of Bohol.⁵²

[8]

A radical change in the political situation in the Philippines greatly facilitated the Dominican counter attack. Lieutenant-General Valeriano Weyler had been sent to relieve Terrero at the end of his term. Born of German parents in Palma de Mallorca, Weyler was a natural soldier who had fought in all the usual campaigns, rising to become the youngest Spanish general of his time. After serving as General Officer Commanding in the Canaries, where he won his title of Marquess of Tenerife, and later as a senator, he was sent to the Philippines in 1888 with a reputation won in Cuba for hardness and vigor. Later he would be called “The Butcher of Cuba,” somewhat unjustly because the Americans were to copy his methods of fighting guerrillas without thereby gaining his ill fame; but in the Philippines he was known at first only for an independence of mind and a stern will that were contrasted with Terrero's “malleability.” He was also a hard worker for a Spanish official, spending eight to ten hours a day in his office, personally minuting all papers, and requiring his subordinates to do the same with frequent surprise visits to all government offices.

But he was a firm believer in the iron fist and in the indispensability of the friars. He was not so much a clerical as a military man, with a disciplinarian's instinctive hatred of unorthodoxy and a strategist's cold appraisal of the strength of allies and enemies. Shortly before the end of his term he was to write: “We have dominated Luzon and the Bisayas with our moral influence, maintained mainly by the parish priest who, because of the dominion he exercises over his parishioners, knows what they think, advises them, directs them, makes them Spaniards, lending powerful assistance to the authorities ... To take away the influence of the parish priests is to take it away from Spain, surely without considering that we are in the hands of an army of natives whose language we do not speak, and who do not understand the language of their leaders and officers ... The preponderance of the religious in the Philippines should be maintained ... Religion can and should be a means of government in Luzon and the Bisayas ... His Majesty's Government should be constantly reminded that

those who ask [for a diminution of the power of the friars] are subversive agitators who seek the independence of the country, to which the religious who have the cure of souls in the Philippines are a powerful obstacle.”⁵³

The stern Marquess, with his heavy-jowled brooding Teutonic face, soon made it clear that he was no Terrero to be bamboozled by Masons and liberals like Centeno and Quiroga. Centeno was the first to fall. On the 1st March 1888, shortly after Rizal had left the Philippines, and before Weyler had arrived, a great demonstration took place in Manila. A commission of *principales*, some in carromatas, others on foot, preceded by municipal police, set out from the townhouse of Santa Cruz on the outskirts of the Walled City, crossed the Bridge of Spain and were received by Centeno as civil governor of the Province of Manila. They placed in his hands a petition addressed to the Queen Regent and carrying some eight hundred signatures. It asked for the expulsion of the friars including Archbishop Payo himself, and ended with the ritual cries of “Long live the Queen! Long live the Army! Down with the friars!” The demonstration had been organized by Doroteo Cortés, a leading Mason, and there is no evidence that Rizal had anything to do with it. “I do not think it was good to set the Queen and the nation against the friars,” he was to write Blumentritt. “It would have been better if my countrymen had only given the real reasons [for the petition] since these would have been sufficient to prove the charge.” But the thing was done and Rizal drew the correct conclusion: “It is the best proof that the Filipinos do not love the friars and that they no longer fear anything when they fight against their oppressors. After the first demonstration and the arrests and investigations, and after having seen the judges make common cause with the friars [the Protestants] will ally themselves with the men of property, the businessmen, the industrialists, the lawyers and all the other inhabitants of the archipelago ...” The friars were drawing the same conclusion, and made the March demonstration the excuse to demand strong measures against subversion. Centeno was dismissed from office. Quiroga saved himself for a time by taking no active part in the anti-friar campaign but, when Weyler took over, he found his decree on burials rescinded and was soon forced to resign after a face-saving offer of transfer to economic affairs. Payo, in turn, had his feelings assuaged with the conferment of the Grand Cross of Carlos III and the Grand Naval Cross, the latter presumably for organising a public subscription to buy a new cruiser for the Spanish navy. However, this

former missionary in China, who had proved himself an efficient and conscientious administrator of the archdiocese, died, it was said, of a broken heart the following year.⁵⁴

[9]

What was Rizal to make of Weyler as a specimen of his beloved German nation? The point does not seem to have occurred to him. The Marquess had in fact the defects of his virtues, which were thoroughly Teutonic. Under his aegis the Rizal family was not left at peace even in the grave; even death indeed was a matter for politics. On the 23rd May 1889 Lucía's husband, Mariano Herbosa, had died of cholera in Kalamba. The assistant parish priest, Domingo Añonuevo, immediately sent a telegram to Manila: "Mariano Herbosa, brother-in-law of Rizal, has died. From the time he was married to the hour of his death he never went to Confession."

The reply was prompt but, it must be admitted, not unreasonable: "Telegram received. If what is stated therein is true, we forbid Christian burial." Herbosa's corpse was then denied burial in consecrated ground and buried instead "in a hillock outside the town." Rizal, writing a month later in *La Solidaridad*, was at his best in arguing that it was nonetheless "A Profanation," as he entitled his article.

Nobody has a right to complain because a corpse is buried in this or that place, in land belonging to the church or in another piece of land belonging to the estate of the Dominican friars; a corpse rots in any grave, no piece of earth is more honorable than another, God did not create consecrated earth alone, and the earth of hills and mountains was not kneaded by the devil ... The fact itself, therefore, is neither bad nor prejudicial, and all the friends and relatives of the deceased have so understood it.

Who should take offence, however, are religion, justice and the government, whose duty is to govern and not to allow abuses or stupid and extravagant reprisals.

The Catholic religion should consider itself offended because it has served as the plaything and the tool of vile passions. It should

consider itself humiliated to count among its members one so false and lying as the priest who sent the telegram saying that Don Mariano Herbosa had not gone to Confession from the day of his marriage, which is wholly false, the lie of an ignoramus and a scoundrel.

Firstly, he could not have known whether or not [Herbosa] had gone to Confession during twelve years for he was not following his every step; nor was he the only priest to whom the whole world should have gone to Confession; and even if he had been, it would not be possible to list the names of all those who confessed. We know, for a start, that the deceased went to Confession to priests in neighbouring towns like Kabuyaw and Los Baños and even to the Jesuit Fathers in Manila, as he did in 1877, a common enough habit in the Philippines when parish priests and their parishioners know each other too well.

That he should not have gone to Confession at the hour of his death is not strange for he died in less than twenty hours after he was stricken by cholera ... Furthermore, when many others die without Confession, are they buried in other [than consecrated ground]?

And what was the point of describing him in the telegram as “a brother-in-law of Rizal” except to promote a vengeful, mean and infamous purpose? What did the Holy Church have to do with family relationship? What was the purpose of this insinuation in dealing with a matter so holy as all those which have to do with religion?

Justice is offended because of the obscene insult to the memory of one who was a good son, a good husband, a good father, a good Catholic and a good Christian, one who opened his home to the sick and destitute poor to whom these very priests had denied their help, one who fed and cared for poor mothers afflicted with disgusting yet not shameful illnesses, only for the love of humankind and in Christian charity. His persecutors never even dreamed of doing the Christian works of charity that the deceased did of his own free will...

If we were to deny Christian burial to all those whom we believe have never gone to Confession since they were married, we would see the grass grow on roads to the cemetery. Let every honest man in Spain and the Philippines ask himself if they have been better Catholics than Don Mariano Herbosa, and if, like him, they have heard Mass on all the days of obligation.

An adulterer [the reference is to the tragedy of Mayerling, where the Crown Prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was found dead beside the corpse of a young girl] murders his mistress and then, kills himself, and yet, because he is of royal blood, they bury him in consecrated ground and raise a chapel on the scene of the adultery, the murder and the suicide; a young man, a classmate of the writer of these lines, kills himself, and they bury him in the Paco Cemetery in Manila; but a good man dies, a respectable man, heir of so many benefactors of the Church, nephew of priests, brought up by priests, the protector of the poor and the forsaken and, because he is the brother-in-law of Rizal, they dump him in a field ...⁵⁵

Was it any wonder that Rizal felt he was witnessing the re-enactment of the *Noli*?

In the meantime the evictions continued in geometric progression. Paciano, back from “poetic” Kalapan, wrote his brother in May 1890 that Hidalgo was back in Tagbilaran for the second time and that the friars “do not forgive either widows or orphans as long as they belong to our family.” He said that the majority of the Kalambeños had anticipated Rizal's opinion that the rentals should not be paid to the estate to force legal proceedings on the title, but for a different reason: they just had no money to pay. More and more actions for eviction had thus been filed; Paciano himself had twice served as a witness for his townmates in spite of threats that the elder Rizals would suffer and of sinister suggestions that he had been supplying bandits with arms. Perhaps Paciano came near the truth of the entire case when he placed before his brother a formula for compromise: the tenants, he said, were not making a complete denial of the Dominicans's ownership, but disputed only the boundaries of the estate. Why not, therefore, make a proper survey, free those lands that were not included in the original sales

and cessions on which the Dominican titles were based, and reimburse rentals paid without cause? Or better still, a more enduring solution would be for the government to take over the entire estate, indemnifying the Dominicans. In this manner the prestige of the religious would not be compromised and they could concentrate on their real mission while the people could work in peace. In any case “the friars would still be as rich and the people as poor as ever.”⁵⁶ Alas, Paciano was a decade and a revolution ahead of his time!

Rizal in Europe did his best to help but the advocate of Kalamba knew he was not a lawyer. We find him sending Hidalgo's power of attorney to del Pilar in Madrid with instructions to retain a Spanish lawyer, Pedro de Govantes, to work for the revocation of his brother-in-law's rustication, and later a criminal complaint for abuse of authority; del Pilar himself was a lawyer but had not been admitted to the bar in Madrid. Later he received other powers from Ubaldo and López, with one more to come from Paciano himself. But Govantes could not take the case; he was returning to Manila. Rizal himself wrote to Ministers in Madrid and secured an order requiring an official report from Manila, but it was never sent. Finally he decided to go to Madrid himself; it was all in vain.⁵⁷

Two letters to Rizal and del Pilar from the spokesmen of the defendants in Kalamba have been preserved, both dated January 1891. Felipe Buencamino, a well-known Filipino lawyer who had earlier on drafted a pro-friar manifesto in reply to the demonstration of the 1st March 1888, had now in an access of conscience agreed to defend the Kalambeños against eviction; indeed, since his manifesto, “nobody had spoken a word to him” and now he wanted to make amends, working through the night on his briefs and pleadings. But the odds were mounting. The new justices of the peace had been bribed, and, *La Epoca* would make clear, the pattern of evictions spread menacingly: from the Rizals to four others, to twelve more and, according to the letters, an additional thirty would follow before the courts, “the Dominicans say that, once this action is finished, all of us will be stripped of our lands and reduced to the extremities of poverty; they argue that even if five hundred are evicted, three thousand five hundred would still remain, and in truth there are already four hundred out of work among the tenants of the lessees who have been evicted.”⁵⁸

The climax was to come in October and November 1891, when Rizal had come all the way round the world again to Hong Kong. Outraged by the stubborn defiance of the dispossessed tenants, who outnumbered the local garrison and had previously resisted the local authorities either by refusing to vacate their houses or by leaving them only to return or by setting up new ones on other parts of the estate, the Marquess sent a detachment of fifty soldiers from the Spanish artillery regiment under the command of a constabulary colonel, Francisco Olivé García, to enforce the court orders of eviction to the letter. A number of houses were burned and lots forcibly cleared, but it is difficult to see how any government worth its salt could have acted otherwise; democratic Philippine governments of our own time have been known to act in a similar fashion.⁵⁹

Less defensible was the order compelling twenty-five Kalambeños to change their residence. Among those exiled to other parts of the country were Don Francisco himself, Paciano for the second time, Saturnina Hidalgo, Narcisa López, and Herbosa's widow Lucía. The rumor was that they would be sent to Jolo. "I am drafting a letter of petition to the Queen Regent," Hidalgo wrote Rizal in Hong Kong. "Mother will sign it. I shall expose what Weyler has done to us and will ask for justice ... If we are not heard, we shall write to Queen Victoria of England to ask for protection in the name of humanity!" The disaster was complete. From Hong Kong Rizal wrote an anguished letter to his family; he had heard that Doña Teodora and his two younger sisters, Josefa and Trinidad, had been summoned before the authorities. "I am following your sorrowful Calvary step by step. Do not be afraid, I am doing all I can. Patience, a little patience. Courage!"⁶⁰

But deep in his heart he must have despaired. As an advocate of the rights of his townmates and his family, he had succeeded only in encompassing their ruin. Less patience, more courage, would be the only answer.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter X

- (1) Ep. Riz., I, 178. The friend was Felipe Zamora.
- (2) Ep. Riz., I, 215.
- (3) Ep. Riz., I, 287.
- (4) Ep. Riz., I, 132 et seq.; 100 Letters, 196, 201, 210, 298. II-195 has an interesting analysis of the sugar market; II-201 and II-210 have first-hand accounts of the contemporaneous student riots in Madrid in which Rizal does not seem to have taken an active part.
- (5) *Memorias*, 103; Ep. Riz., V, 82. Rizal to Blumentritt: “Todavía no sé a dónde ire; ¡bulle en mi sangre y me impele la *wanderungslust* de los malayos, y lo llevo siempre! ¡Humor y oportunidad para esto!”
- (6) Ep. Riz., V, 120, 171.
- (7) Translation from statements furnished to me by the former Czech Ambassador in London. See Note No. 8 Chapter IV.
- (8) Ep. Riz., V, 2, 6.
- (9) Again, a translation from documents furnished to me by the former Czech Ambassador in London. See Note 7 above.
- (10) “*Elogio de Blumentritt*” by Rizal himself in Ep. Riz., V, v.
- (11) Ep. Riz., III, 5.
- (12) Ep. Riz., V, 28.
- (13) Ep. Riz., V, 13.
- (14) Ep. Riz., V, 18.
- (15) Ep. Riz., V, 22.
- (16) Ep. Riz., I, 209.
- (17) Ep. Riz., V, 27.

- (18) Ep. Riz., V, 14.
- (19) Ep. Riz., V, 32, 40, 42, 96.
- (20) Ep. Riz., V, 53, 61, 75, 82, 89, 107.
- (21) Ep. Riz., I, 228; V, 53, 120, 125.
- (22) Viola, 67 et seq.
- (23) *Leitmeritz Zeitung*, No. 39, 18th May 1887, courtesy of the former Czech Ambassador in London.
- (24) Photostat, courtesy of above.
- (25) Viola, 69.
- (26) Ep. Riz., V, 134.
- (27) Ep. Riz., V, 134, 142, 148, 156, 166, 176; Viola, 70.
- (28) Ep. Riz., V, 183, 194.
- (29) 100 Letters, 58, 236.
- (30) 100 Letters, 212.
- (31) 100 Letters, 232, 237; Ep. Riz., I, 107.
- (32) 100 Letters, 236.
- (33) Ep. Riz., I, 128, 133, 145; 100 Letters, 195, 211.
- (34) Ep. Riz., I, 61; V, 201. Josefa Rizal to her brother: “Ninanasá namin ikaw ay pumuti at tumaba at mukhang Kastila.”
- (35) Ep. Riz., V, 202, 216, 527, 536. Rizal to Blumentritt in 1890: “Dicen que el P. Faura dijo a Pardo de Tavera cuando éste la comunicó que yo estaba ligeramente enfermo: '*No puede ser de otro modo; un hombre como éste tiene que morir!*' Sí, tengo que morir, el P. Faura también. Pero no está bien que un jesuita como él P. Faura diga semejantes tonterías. Pues, cuando yo estuve en Manila y había tenido una conversación de una hora y media con él, se expresó de un modo distinto y dijo que lo malo en mi libro era que había escrito en él la

verdad, la verdad amarga; dijome: 'Vd. no ha escrito una novela, el libro no tiene nada de novela; Vd. ha descrito las tristes condiciones de nuestro tiempo.' Y ahora él cree que su Diós me castigará con la muerte porque yo escribí la verdad!" He had second thoughts. Rizal to Blumentritt two weeks later: "En lo referente al P. Faura, creo que él no tuvo malas intenciones cuando aseguró al Dr. Pardo que yo tenía que morir. A mi manera de pensar, era una astucia jesuítica; los jesuitas tienen que aparentar en público sentir cosas que quizás no sientan. Conmigo el P. Faura se condujo de un modo diferente. Pero el público debe de creer que no está de acuerdo conmigo, absolutamente, de ninguna manera. Sin embargo, mi profesor de Retórica, el P. Sanchez, se atrevió a defenderme en público y a elogiar mi libro, pero en secreto me dijo que hubiera hecho mejor escribiendo un libro ideal, en el que podría describir un cuadro ideal de sacerdotes ideales ..."

(36) Ep. Riz., V, 202, 216; Retana, 144, quoting a letter to him from Taviel de Andrade which seems definitive.

(37) Ep. Riz., V, 233; Retana, 141, quoting an anonymous letter which he suspects to have been written by a Dominican, and published in *La Epoca*, 27th December 1891.

(38) Ep. Riz., V, 202, 208, 215, 217, 224.

(39) Ep. Riz., V, 208.

(40) Weyler, 75 et seq.: Zaide, 121 et seq.

(41) In Rizal's own case it was considered an aggravating circumstance because of his education.

(42) Weyler, 18; Arch. Fil., IV, 295; Dicc. Hist. Esp., biographical note.

(43) Dicc. Hist. Esp., and Enciclopedia Espasa, biographical notes; Arch. Fil., IV, 295; Retana, 137.

(44) Weyler, 20.

(45) Weyler, 25.

(46) Ep. Riz., V, 201.

(47) Ep. Riz., I, 91, 146, 173, 196.

(48) Retana, 142, quoting an article published in *La Solidaridad*, 31st May 1889.

(49) Iturralde (see Note No. 17 to Chapter Nine) quoted in Cavanna, 148.

(50) Phelan, 117.

(51) Weyler, 118.

(52) Ep. Riz., I, 272; II, 56.

(53) Dicc. Hist. Esp., biographical note; Weyler, 106.

(54) Weyler, 21 et seq.; Ep. Riz., V, 273.

(55) *La Solidaridad*, 30th June 1889.

(56) Ep. Riz., III, 34; 100 Letters, 375.

(57) Ep. Riz., II, 95, 206, 250, 271, 282, 289; 100 Letters, 366; Bp. Pil., I, 227.

(58) Ep. Pil., I, 230, 232.

(59) Weyler, 111.

(60) Ep. Riz., III, 261, 263.



XI

The Nostalgic Historian

The Spaniards did us a lot of good. But we too gave them a lot: the most precious things they required: blood, lands, lives and that freedom which is the first and best gift of humankind.

RIZAL

Happy the people whose annals are blank in history-books!

CARLYLE

“Everyone wants me to leave the Philippines,” Rizal wrote Blumentritt in December 1887. “The friars don't want even to hear my name; the government officials want me as far as possible; and the Filipinos fear for me and for themselves; so I shall return to Europe!” He had made about ₱ 900 in the practice of his profession; he hoped he would not again be a burden to his family. The Kalamba evictions, the arrests and deportations, were still to come; it was a time for patience more than anything else. It had not been a happy homecoming after all; Rizal had felt unwanted from the first, now he felt that friends as well as foes positively wanted him to go away. “They made me leave my country. I left my house half sick ... Without the help of my friend Taviel de Andrade, what would have become of me! Without the sympathies of our governor, the director of civil administration and the civil governor, I would now be in some dungeon. All the provincials and the archbishop went daily to the general to complain about me ... My countrymen offered me money to leave the country; they asked me to do so not only in my interest but also in their own for I have many friends and acquaintances who might be deported with me to Balabac or the Marianas. So it was that half-ill I said goodbye to my family in all haste and am now returning to Europe by way of Japan and the United States.”¹

He left Manila in February 1888 for Hong Kong, torn by conflicting emotions—nostalgia and a bitter sense of being unwanted, hatred and distrust of the regime and a lingering attachment, if not to Spain, at least to individual Spaniards. Two letters of advice to his younger sisters, Trinidad and Soledad, suggest the state of his feelings. “Always keep in mind,” he tells the latter, “that the world is large, and fate changeable and treacherous. We are like all human beings, rich and poor, all alike and all subject to every misfortune. That is why it is good always to do good and follow our conscience ...” He counseled Trinidad to study and not to give too much importance to kissing the hands of priests and nuns. “If this advice is to your liking, follow it,” he ended wryly. “If not, do what you like.” He thought more tenderly of the dead Olympia and had a miniature of her painted on ivory from a photograph.²

He was depressed by the colony of Filipinos in Hong Kong, the broken survivors of those exiled to the Marianas in 1872; “poor, kind, timid people ... They will not return to Manila, they are afraid of ghosts.” But he still

considered himself a good Spanish subject. He made the acquaintance of “a number of important Spaniards,” one of them Barranda, who had been Terrero's secretary, and went with him and others to visit Macao. In his letters to his family he gave the Spanish Legation as his forwarding address in London. Then, leaving Hong Kong for Japan, he accepted the invitation of the Spanish charge d'affaires there to live at the Legation. “He and his secretary,” he informed his family, “received me most effusively and up to now have treated me in a way that leaves nothing to be desired.” Later he explained to Ponce: “After giving various excuses I accepted [the invitation to stay at the Legation] without reserve, if at bottom there was a wish to watch me, I for my part had nothing to hide,” in fact he got on with the Spanish diplomatists very well, touring the country with them and staying a month. He even chatted with them about the Philippines and Blumentritt; the charge d'affaires himself offered to send Rizal's gifts to his family by diplomatic pouch: porcelain tea and coffee sets specially made to order, for Paciano two wooden doors which might be made into furniture—a screen perhaps?— and ten combs to be distributed among his sisters, “I hope,” admonished Rizal, “that my brother will become a friend of his for he will be very useful the day [Paciano] should wish to export goods to Japan ... I have become a friend of these gentlemen. They, however, have made a depressing forecast; they told me that in the Philippines I would be turned willy nilly into an agitator.”³

He liked and admired the Japanese as he had liked and admired the Germans; there were few thieves among them, the houses were left unlocked, the walls were made of paper, yet one could leave money on the table unguarded. They were cheerful, courteous, clean and hard-working. They were said to be godless, yet what a difference there was between them and the religious and superstitious Chinese! The one thing he could not stand was the sight of human beings pulling *kuruma*, trotting like horses for hire.⁴

Characteristically he picked up a little Japanese; after all, it was a little odd trying to look like a Japanese without knowing the language; he was afraid they might think him a Europeanized renegade who was disowning his own people. It was spring, the classic time for parties to go about the countryside viewing the cherry-blossoms and composing poems in praise of their brief poignant beauty. It was also the spring of modern Japan; the Tokugawa

shogun had peacefully restored power to the Emperor Meiji *Tenno*; the feudal *daimyo* had voluntarily placed their fiefs in the hands of a new modern national government; and, after a gallant rebellion, the hundreds of thousands of *samurai*, feudal warriors who how found themselves without masters, without status, without rice pensions, and even without their double swords, were tamed and drafted into the imperial forces. In a year the new constitution would be proclaimed and all the Japanese were in a ferment of discovery, experiment and social change. It seems that Rizal at this time struck up a friendship with a “daughter of one of the newly ruined and disestablished *samurai*.” She had apparently been reduced to working for a foreign embassy. The name of Rizal's Madame Butterfly was Sei-ko; he called her, in the Japanese fashion which is formal even in intimacy, O-Sei san, Miss Sei. Always a sentimentalist he recorded in his diary when he finally tore himself away from her arms:

O-Sei-san, *sayonara*, goodbye! I have spent a lovely golden month; I do not know if I will have another one like it in all my life. Love, money, friendship, esteem, privileges—these have not been wanting.

To think that I am leaving this life for the unknown, the uncertain. There I was offered an easy way to live, and be loved and esteemed [he had, in fact, been offered a position in the Spanish Legation at ₱100 a month].

To you I shall dedicate the final chapter of these memoirs of my youth. No woman like you has ever loved me. No woman has made such sacrifices as you have. Like the flower of the *chodji* that falls from the stem whole and fresh, without bruising its petals or withering — thus you fell. You have not lost your purity nor have the delicate petals of your innocence faded—*sayonara*, goodbye!

You shall never know that I still think of you, and that your image lives on in my memory; but I shall always remember you: your name lives in my sighs and your image accompanies and sweetens my thoughts. When shall I return to spend another divine afternoon like that in the temple of Meguro? When will the sweet hours I spent with you come back? Where will I find them sweeter, more tranquil, more delightful? You had the color of the camellia, its freshness, its elegance ... Ah, last descendant of a noble family, faithful to an unfortunate revenge, you are like ... everything is at an end! *Sayonara*, goodbye!⁵

All over the world the enormous energies and ambitions of the coming twentieth century were rising to the surface. If Japan was in the rising tide of the Imperial Restoration, the United States of America across the Pacific had just completed the gigantic task of reconstruction after the war between the states and, having reached what seemed to be its last frontier, was staring eagerly across the seas to its “manifest destiny” in Hawaii, Samoa, Alaska, Japan, Korea and the vast markets of China. At home the Americans were plunged in agrarian discontent, inflation, political corruption, the financial brigandage of trusts and robber barons, and withal a seemingly irresistible and predestined surge towards undreamt of power and prosperity. Rizal landed in San Francisco at the beginning of a bitter presidential election campaign which would end with the incumbent Democrat Cleveland losing to the Republican Harrison on electoral votes although he had a plurality of the popular vote.

But Rizal traversed the continent too rapidly to feel the spirit of the great democracy or even to grasp the vastness of its future. His journal is disappointing in the extreme: it is studded with insignificant observations, the thoughtless jottings of a man in a hurry. Besides, Rizal was fundamentally a civilized European and a sensitive Asian, and America, raw, grasping, restless with growing pains, could offer neither leisure nor inspiration for the scholar, while the Americans, jealous of any cheap competition that might threaten (their rising living standards only excited his contempt and dislike.) “They put us in quarantine because our ship carried eight hundred Chinese; elections were then being held in San Francisco and the government, seeking votes, was making a great show of adopting rigorous measures against the Chinese to capture the sympathies of the people. They notified us of the quarantine verbally, without telling us how long it was going to last [it lasted about thirteen days, and even longer for the Chinese and Japanese] yet on the same day they unloaded 700 bolts of silk without fumigating them.” Race prejudice and, on top of it, the valuing of money over human life were enough to turn Rizal against America. “America is undoubtedly a great country,” he concluded, “but it still has many defects. There is no true civil liberty. In some states a Negro cannot marry a white woman or a Negress a white man. The hatred of the Chinese leads to other Asian aliens like the Japanese being confused with them and their being looked down upon too. Customs officials are

excessively severe. However, as they well say, they offer a country to the poor man who is willing to work.”⁶

One gathers that he was not sorry to leave “the land of opportunity.” He enjoyed himself aboard the *City of Rome*, then the second largest ship making the transatlantic crossing, by showing off his prowess with the yo-yo. He landed at Liverpool on the 24th May 1888 and went on to London, where he eventually settled down at No. 37 Chalcot Crescent, part of what the English call a terrace or row of adjoining houses in a quiet street off Regent's Park, as a lodger with the Beckett family.

J. Rizal to his family, 12 June 1888 —

... I am not in a bad place. I have two rooms, a bedroom, small and cozy, and another room where I can study, write and receive visitors. The family is made up of man and wife, four daughters and two sons; the daughters are called Gertude (Tottie), Blanche (Sissie), Flory and Grace. The first two are young ladies and have their sweethearts. Tottie sings rather well; Sissie accompanies her on the piano. (The names are pronounced Toti, Sisi). One of the two sons is employed; the other sings in a church choir. Board and lodging cost me at least ₱45. Everything is more expensive in England than in other parts of Europe.

Sundays here are very boring; everything is closed up; no shops, no theaters and no music except church music. There is scarcely a rattletrap in the streets. I spend Sunday afternoons in the house of a German doctor who has a collection of books on the Philippines and who is very kind. There I take tea with the family. This gentleman is called Dr. Rost ...”⁶

He owed Dr. Rost to Blumentritt. “Wherever I go,” he wrote the schoolmaster of Leitmeritz, “I always find proofs of your sincere friendship. I say this because I have just received an invitation from Dr. Rost ... I owe my first tea-party to you. Dr. and Mrs. Rost received me very kindly. We spoke a lot about languages and also of friendship. I also found a good Philippine library in the house of the Rosts.”⁸

We must now look at two characters that, however briefly and lightly they touch Rizal's life, illumine once again his capacity for arousing and giving

affection. There is, first of all, “Tottie” Beckett, “Tottie” and “Sissie”—they are “cozy” English nicknames; “Tottie,” derived from “tiny tot” and usually given to an undersized child; “Sissie,” a corruption of “sister” usually applied to the second child of the family if a girl. Coming after the chubby cheerful Orang, who would not have him as a second choice, Consuelo, who would not have him after all, and Sei-ko, who had loved him as no woman had ever done before, the English Gertude is surely proof after much proof that Rizal was not so desperately in love with Leonor Rivera as sentimental posterity fancied him to be.

To judge from her surviving photographs “Tottie” was no great English beauty; to judge from her nickname she was even shorter than Rizal. She had a cheerful honest face, blue eyes and brown hair. And she had two great attractions: propinquity and what seems to have been a happy family. Rizal was always a great family man; reserved by nature, made increasingly sensitive and suspicious by circumstances, he found it difficult to relax with strangers; loneliness was one of the most arduous trials of his exile, and it explains in part his voluminous correspondence. London is not a city for the lonely; it is itself inhabited by the lonely: its houses all primly shut with curtains drawn, its great green parks purposely designed to recreate the seclusion of the countryside, its narrow winding streets full of unsmiling and averted faces. The Victorian cult of self-control, reserve and respectability, its stern disapproval of frivolity, public display and undue familiarity, must have made the grey sunless capital of the magnificent empire even more depressing for the scholar trudging his way daily to and from the British Museum.

How delightful it must have been to discover the friendliness behind those shuttered windows and expressionless faces! Rizal quickly became one of the Beckett family; he would take the girls out to the theater or that magnet of English nostalgia, the countryside. Mr. Beckett was apparently a church organist and he cannot have been very well off with such a large family; Rizal, the prize lodger was a great comfort. It was Gertrude, the eldest daughter, who naturally took care of him, bringing him his breakfast on a tray in the mornings, making his high English tea ready for him when he got back in the evenings from the British Museum, helping him prepare the clay and even modeling for the statuettes he moulded and carved in his leisure time. We cannot say for certain how close they became. A number

of her letters to him after he had left London were preserved but kept from publication by patriotic piety, later they were destroyed. But those who saw them suggest that Rizal and “Tottie” Beckett were rather more than friends. In his biography of Rizal, Carlos Quirino reproduces one of the few published letters from her.

“You are a funny little thing,” she writes with the true English note of banter concealing emotion, “now suppose if I had come with you, we should have had a dear little room and not apt [to be] fidgeting about so. [Did] you worry when you never received the first letter I wrote you? I had it returned the other day; wasn't it funny, after such a long time, because I wrote it directly after you went so you would have received it the next morning. Oh, I was so miserable then; I couldn't help writing to you, nobody knew anything about it though ...” Nor will anybody now know very much about it.

“I am leaving the Becketts soon, perhaps even London,” Rizal told Regidor. Gertrude was falling in love with him, and he was growing much too fond of her. “I cannot deceive her. I cannot marry her because I have other ties, but I am not going to commit the indignity of placing passion over the pure and virginal love she might offer me.”⁹

He had another “home” on Sundays. Many years after London, when he heard that Dr. Rost had died, he would exclaim that the old librarian had been “like a father” to him, and the Rost house on Primrose Hill, in the same district as Chalcot Crescent, “a real home.”

Reinhold Rost was sixty-six when Rizal met him. Not unexpectedly he was a German, the son of a Lutheran minister, who had earned his doctorate at the University of Jena. He had gone to England to teach German in the cathedral town of Canterbury's King's School, and after four years had been appointed Oriental lecturer at a college in the same town founded to educate young missionaries. He was to hold this post for nearly half a century until his death. In the meantime Dr. Rost attracted attention in high academic circles and, although a foreigner, was elected secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society and afterward appointed to the coveted position of librarian at the India Office.

“He found the library a scattered mass of priceless but unexamined and unarranged manuscripts, and left it, to a large extent, an organized and

catalogued collection, second only to that of the British Museum,” notes the British Dictionary of National Biography. He was the *beau ideal* of the scholarly librarian who, even if his own productive power may be crippled by daily routine, may have the consolation of feeling that he wrote his books through the pens of others ... Above all things the India Office Library became, under him, as the Asiatic Society was before, the natural and regular resort of all students of the East, old and young, who might be visiting London, and they could not “come away without feeling that they had profited somewhat by his profound knowledge, ready counsel, and genial sympathy.” For such a gentle and generous scholar to be kind to Rizal was therefore not unusual; for him to single out Rizal as “a pearl of a man” was high tribute indeed. Even more than Rizal, Dr. Rost was a born linguist, which explains why at their very first meeting they “spoke a lot about languages.” Indeed there was scarcely a language spoken in the eastern hemisphere with which Rost was not, at least to some extent, familiar.” He gave lectures in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Arabic and Urdu; he gave lessons in the dialects of Africa, China and Polynesia; he was familiar with some twenty or thirty languages in all and once “re-instructed” a Burman in Burmese.¹⁰

We have no record of Rizal's Sunday afternoons with the Rosts. All the earnest amiable conversation has gone with the tea leaves and the crumpets and the buttered toast, the vigilant evangelical hush of a London Sunday before the English found their motorcars and lost their faith. But Rost must have inspired two articles by Rizal in *Trubner's Record*, “a Journal Devoted to the Literature of the East,” that Rost made during his editorship of one of the leading Orientalist publications of the world. One is a collection of “Specimens of Tagal Folklore,” fourteen proverbs, eight “puzzles” or conundrums, and two verses, from which we select a sample each with the English translation as originally published:

Walang mahirap gisingin na paris nang nagtutulogtulugan,

The most difficult to rouse from sleep is the man who pretends to be asleep.

Dala ako niya, dala ko siya.

He carries me, I carry him. —The shoes.

*Kahoy na liko at buktot
Hutukin hanggang malambot,
Kapag tumaas at tumayog
Mahirap na ang paghutok.*

Put straight the curved and crooked tree while it is tender;
afterwards when it is grown and high you can no longer bend it.

The other is a comparison between “Two Eastern Fables,” one Japanese and the other Philippine. It is ingenious without being fanciful, thoughtful without being pretentious. The Tagalog fable is the familiar one of the tortoise and the monkey who find an uprooted banana tree floating in a river and agree to divide it, the greedy monkey deciding to take for himself the more attractive upper half with its large green leaves. They plant their halves and in time they meet again, the monkey's tree has withered away, the tortoise's half, with the roots, has on the contrary flourished and yielded delicious fruit. The tortoise cannot climb the tree to gather the bananas, and the monkey offers to do it. He promptly gobbles up all the fruit, with “not even a bit of skin” for the tortoise. The latter punishes the thief by sticking pointed snail shells in the tree trunk which cue the monkey when he finally climbs down. The enraged monkey decides to kill the tortoise and offers it a choice of being pounded to bits in a mortar or thrown into the water.

“The mortar, the mortar,” the tortoise answers. “I am so afraid of getting drowned.”

“Oho,” laughs the monkey, “indeed! Then you shall drown!” And into the water he throws the tortoise, which happily swims away.

The Japanese version, Rizal notes, has a crab instead of a tortoise; the monkey exchanges a persimmon seed for the crab's rice-cake; the crab plants the seed while the monkey eats the cake; “at once” a tree filled with fruit springs from the seed, but the crab cannot climb it and the monkey eats all the ripe fruit and pelts the crab with the unripe ones, hurting it badly. Thus far the two fables are basically alike and suggest a common origin, although, as Rizal notes perceptively, the Tagalog version is more natural and unsophisticated and can therefore be said to be nearer the original story, if it is not itself the original.

The Japanese variation, however, has a quite different conclusion. The crabs declare war on the monkeys but are defeated. They then retreat to their hole and call a council of war, enlisting the aid of an egg, a bee, a mortar and a mortar pounder. They pretend to sue for peace and lure the monkey-king into their stronghold. There he is set upon treacherously; the egg, hidden in the brazier, bursts and scalds his arm; when he tries to cool it off in a pickle-tub, the bee stings him in the face; as he makes for the open air, he is tripped with seaweed, knocked senseless by the mortar, and finally torn to pieces by the crabs. Rizal, with an unhappy choice of words, sees in this performance “more civilization and, so to speak, more diplomatic usage.” To a generation that has witnessed Pearl Harbor and the Japanese suicide pilots of the Pacific war the diplomacy of treachery and the civilization of suicide and murder may seem dubious.

That, however, is not Rizal's main theme, which is really historical. The sophisticated variations in the Japanese version do, as he points out, indicate a change of climate, a development of social structure: there is an element of magic in the sudden growth of the persimmon tree; there is an indication of colder climes in the use of the brazier; there is a higher degree of culture in the presence of rice-cake; revenge is sought not by the primitive individual but by an organized community declaring and waging war. The similarity of the two fables suggests the possible origin of the Japanese in the Malay archipelagoes of the south. In any case “the differences between both versions show that one is not a copy of the other, and that they must have existed in both countries long before the Europeans came to that part of the world. The fact that this tale is known everywhere in the Philippines, in every island, province, village and dialect, proves that it must be the inheritance of an extinct civilization, common to all the races which ever lived in that region.”¹¹

[2]

Indeed it was Rizal's main purpose in London to establish the existence of this “inheritance of civilization” in the Philippines before the coming of the Spaniards. At first the sensation caused by the *Noli* had set him thinking of a sequel to the story of Ibarra and he had actually begun to draft it. We find him, for instance, writing Ponce, shortly after arriving in London, to keep

the proceeds of the sales of the *Noli* in Madrid for the time being; “I shall ask you for them when the younger brother is ready to go out into the streets with the resources of the elder.” Ponce replies that he has already received orders for the “second part” of the *Noli*. A week later Rizal is telling Ponce that he has had to tear up the draft of the opening chapters because he has changed his concept entirely; the sequel cannot be expected until June or August of the following year. Juan Luna, in the meantime, inquires about it from Paris. But already Rizal is engaged in some mysterious work in the British Museum “*ad majorem Phil. gloriam*,” “for the greater glory of the Philippines.”¹²

Some more pressing task had induced Rizal to put aside the *Noli's* sequel for the time being. The first hint of it may be found in a letter he had written to Blumentritt from Berlin even before returning to the Philippines.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 13 April 1887 —

... Is it not sad, I told my countryman [Viola], that we should have to learn about ourselves from abroad? We have accurate information about our country thanks to the German scholars and, when all is destroyed in our country and we should like to verify the historical truth of certain events, we shall have to come to Germany to investigate them in German museums and books! It is sad to come to this conclusion but it is a fact ...

... The Philippines would be grateful to you if you were to write a complete history of our country from an impartial viewpoint. I believe you are the only one who could do it. I have the courage for it, but I do not know enough; I have not read as many books about my country and the Spanish libraries are closed to me; furthermore, I need my time for other things and whatever I said would always be suspected of having been inspired by partisanship; but you would be read as an impartial judge; you have no selfish interest.

As you have well said, Austria has no colonies and does not cover our country; you would not need to amend historical truth for the sake either of the Filipinos or of the Spaniards, and could contemplate our past in cold blood like an alien observer. You profess the Catholic religion but do not have a bit of fanaticism;

you need not even see the Philippines with your own eyes for the historian has his eyes on the past.

I believe you are the best man for the job. We for our part will do all we can to help you, giving you the information we have at hand. But do not expect thanks or honor: wreaths of flowers and laurels are made by free peoples ...[13](#)

Why, having thus disqualified himself for the task of writing Philippine history because he “does not know enough,” “has not read as many books,” “has no time,” and would be suspected of partisanship, did Rizal now take his courage in his hands and attempt to do it himself? It would seem that he considered it a political necessity; the charges of ingratitude provoked by the *Noli* made it imperative to prove, not with rhetoric and satire but with historical facts, that the people of the Philippines had not really been naked savages rescued only by Spanish soldiers and friars from utter barbarism. As late as August 1888, however, Rizal was still hoping to persuade Blumentritt in an eloquent letter that, in fact, could be taken as an epitome of his coming historical work.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 7 August 1888 —

... The Spaniards do not take the trouble of going to the root of things; they are content with repeating what they have heard, and the more paradoxical the better. Here is an example: “All of those who live here well know what the native is worth and what he is: a wretch, patient and resigned, *who lives happily ... as long as he is left alone.*”

You must agree with me, dear friend, that the Spaniard who wrote this absurdity is a king of fools, and that the phrase I have underlined is nonsense. He proves with his own words that the Spaniards are the cause of the misfortunes of the Filipinos and have worsened their situation through colonization, because the Filipinos were living happily ... as long as the Spaniards left them alone.

I think this gentleman must be a friend of mine, not because of his sallies but because of his sincerity. Why indeed don't the Spaniards forget us completely so that we can live happily? They

would be inhuman otherwise. The gentleman also says that the Spaniards do not know how to change human nature for the better. Does he think perhaps that the Filipinos are like those works of art that are admirable ... as long as foots do not spoil them with their touch?

... You must write our history, and you ought to remain impartial; cut short all your correspondence if you do not want to spoil the beauty and tranquility of your life; it is not your duty to fight pitched battles for us.

For myself, it is a different matter, nature, if I am not wrong, gave me a tender and sensitive heart; I am inclined to friendship and I should like to make friends with all, and in spite of this I have to hide my feelings, I have to scold and even hate, and I pay for every friend I make with a hundred enemies!

If I were a free European, I should now be married and have a family, and could live at the side of my parents; I would dedicate myself to science and, in the company of my friends, in peace and tranquility, enjoy this beautiful world. If you only knew how I envy the meanest clerk in London!¹⁴

But Blumentritt, to all appearances, would not be moved. The schoolmaster's gentle heart had been aroused by the attacks on his beloved friend and he was deep in the controversy over the *Noli*. Ten days later we find Rizal toying with a stopgap. He is planning to edit a new printing of Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, first published in 1609, for the benefit particularly of readers in the Philippines. Regidor "wants to put up the capital. What do you think?" Rizal asks Blumentritt. "With the Morga I should like to publish also your treatise on the Mindanaw tribes as well as some unpublished documents I have found in the British Museum. I hope you will help me in this enterprise. I need your advice and, with your knowledge of things Philippines, you can put me on the right track so that I shall not work in vain. I do this only for my country for the work will bring me neither honors nor wealth."¹⁵

A week later the project is taking more definite shape in his mind. "I want to annotate the Morga and check Stanley's translation ... Mr. Regidor and I have agreed that, after he has recovered his investment, we shall share the

profits, half and half. Do you want to share my half?" By the 18th September, that is to say, about a week later, he has almost finished laboriously copying out by hand the *Morga* in the British Museum. He proposes to annotate it immediately; he has already read Pigafetta and Chirino but still has to find Navarrete and Rada as well as the Dutch admiral van Noort's travel log. "I am assiduously reading all the old sources or the history of the Philippines; I do not propose to leave London until I have read all the books and manuscripts which have anything to do with the Philippines. I want to make myself into the Filipino Blumentritt." He is still "extremely busy" in December. By January 1889 he can write del Pilar that "my manuscripts are finished and only a bit is lacking for publication. I have had to make preliminary studies to acquaint myself with all the past of the Philippines." But he is already worrying whether the work will ever be published or not. "If the present generation is afraid to read my works," he writes Basa, "I shall keep it for the coming generation but I continue and shall always continue working." Five months later the real reason for the delay is out. From Paris Rizal tells del Pilar that he has broken completely with Regidor; "he never got round to publishing my manuscript ... Now I shall publish it by myself." Del Pilar in Barcelona hopes that Regidor's "incomprehensible conduct did not arise from something which I should not like to see or even suspect, although it cannot be ignored: racial antagonism." After all, Regidor, although an exile of the Burgos generation, had Spanish blood. How sensitive and suspicious all these exiles were! It is not until September 1889, four months later, that Rizal in Paris can write Ponce that he is "very busy finishing the *Morga*," obviously meaning its publication at his own expense. By the 12th of October, Blumentritt has received the proofs of "your magnificent edition of the *Morga*, a work whose erudite notes will bring glory to your name." A month later Rizal is returning to Blumentritt the manuscript and the galley proofs of his friend's preface to the new edition; he has taken advantage of Blumentritt's generosity to make some changes. By the 1st December the book is in the press. By the end of the month Ponce has received his copies.¹⁶

Four months for research and writing, one whole year to get the manuscript printed! Rizal's *Morga* was printed in Paris; the printer's note gives the date as 1890, Blumentritt's preface is dated the 9th November 1889. It was not a very successful venture in any sense. Ponce might write from Barcelona that "the book cannot help but change the ideas that are prevalent about our

country; it is a heavy blow against our enemies.” But he did not think he could sell more than ten copies, Rizal, oddly enough, sent him only nine. The big Manila bookseller Rodríguez Arias agreed to distribute the book in the Philippines, but he promptly warned Rizal that the customs authorities were on the alert to intercept any copies. By July 1890 Rizal was urging Antonio Luna to send him whatever had been raised through the Morga; he was short of funds. Basa had sent 170 copies to Manila from Hong Kong but had not yet received payment for them. Whatever their value, it was all Rizal ever made out of the Morga, together with ₱200 from Rodríguez Arias. Blumentritt urged him to advertise. And in another letter; “You are very impractical ... I answered that Dr. Rizal had left without leaving a forwarding address.”¹⁷ It is foolish to pretend that Rizal did not need the money. He may have been writing for his country, for posterity, for truth; he also had to live.

[3]

The tragedy of Rizal's Morga was that, for his purposes, it was a waste of time. As nationalist polemics it could not compare with the *Noli* and the *Fili* or even with the trenchant essays which Rizal was contributing to *La Solidaridad* in between his historical researches and reflections; the Morga was too scholarly for partisans, too partisan for scholars. Isabelo de los Reyes took issue publicly with Rizal, and Juan Luna, while deploring his fellow Ilokano's conduct, could not but concede that Rizal's annotations were “perhaps exaggerated by your excessive patriotism;” “dear boy,” said Luna, “I do not know why I meddle in these things but I tell you all this ... because the Spaniards in Manila are having a holiday at our expense.”¹⁸

Rizal, as can be expected, replied to De los Reyes's criticisms, but he never felt for the Morga, it would seem plain, the fierce paternal protective love he had for his first-born. The Morga scarcely figures in his correspondence; perhaps he was still inhibited by doubts about his qualifications as a historian, perhaps he had the instinct of the polemicist to avoid a losing battlefield. The Morga was never attacked as bitterly as the *Noli* and the *Fili*, it was largely ignored.

The purpose of Rizal's new edition of the Morga was made clear in an introductory note “to the Filipinos.”

In the *Noli me tángere* I started to sketch the present state of our country; the effects which this attempt had made me understand that, before continuing to unroll before your eyes the succeeding scenes, it was necessary first to make our past known so as to better judge the present and assess our movement in three centuries.

Born and reared in ignorance of our past like almost all of you, with neither the capacity nor the authority to speak on what we never witnessed or studied, I considered it necessary to invoke the testimony of an illustrious Spaniard who ruled the destinies of the Philippines at the beginning of their new era and witnessed the last moments of our ancient nation.

It is, then, the ghost of the civilization of our ancestors that the author will now call up before you; I transmit his words to you faithfully, without changing or mutilating them, only adapting them whenever possible to modern orthography and clarifying the rather defective punctuation of the original in order to make it easier to read.

The office, nationality and virtues of Morga, together with the information and testimony of his contemporaries, almost all of them Spaniards, commend this work to your attention and consideration.

If the book succeeds in awakening in you a consciousness of our past, now erased from memory, and in correcting what has been distorted and falsified, then I shall not have worked in vain, and on this basis, small though it may be, we can all set out to study the future.¹⁹

But why Morga's *Sucesos* out of the many accounts, by Spanish and other chroniclers, from the Italian Pigafetta, Magellan's companion, to the friars and Jesuits of a latter day? Blumentritt, on whose advice the choice was surely made, gave the opinion of the scientific world.

“The work of Morga,” he noted, “always enjoyed the fame of being the best account of the conquest of the Philippines; Spaniards and foreigners alike were agreed on this assessment.” But the work, first published in 1609, was

now “so rare that the few libraries that have a copy guard it with the same care as they would an Inca treasure.” The needs of the scientific investigator had been largely satisfied with an annotated English translation by Lord Stanley. A new edition did not seem urgent. But Rizal, more conscious of his duties to history and a great Spanish historian than the Spaniards themselves, had thought it needful to publish a new edition, “dedicated to scholars and patriots,” and both were grateful to him.

In his magnificent preface, Blumentritt then went on to discuss European attitudes towards colored peoples in general, and Spanish attitudes towards the Filipinos, in an analysis so perceptive that it must help our understanding of Rizal's story and the society in which it took place. At first, he said, the Europeans considered the colored peoples as children of limited intelligence; some Spaniards derived from this the right to exploit them. The French idealists led by Rousseau believed, on the other hand, that the colored peoples, the romantic “red men,” should be treated with paternal protection and indulgence, even of their vices. Both were wrong. In the next period the Europeans denounced the cruelties practiced on the colored peoples by other Europeans; the English denounced the Spaniards; the Germans, the Portuguese; the Dutch, the French; but were silent on their own excesses. Now in the modern era of democracy a new European generation was learning to look upon the colored peoples in the light of human equality; the colored man was no longer a child or a mystery but just as much a man as any other.

Thus, Blumentritt pointed out, Rizal's comments on the abuses of the European conquerors were nothing new to the historian; what made them unique was that they gave the point of view of the descendants of the victims of colonialism. Furthermore, the Philippines were themselves a unique colony, whose people had a European religion, a culture derived from the European, and a European language for a common link. These people now sought “the assimilation of their country to the Motherland.” But the necessary reforms were being opposed principally by the Spanish friars and the Spanish bureaucrats in the Philippines. The latter were fighting to maintain their preferential rights to office, privilege and power. The friars, thought Blumentritt, would be less intransigent and would accept a compromise; for, whether or not the Philippines remained Spanish, they themselves would always be Augustinians, Dominicans or Franciscans,

members of international religious Orders, who could either remain in the Philippines or go wherever their superiors in Rome should send them. They had, in fact, been driven to the wall by the Filipino radicals who demanded their expulsion and thus gave them only a choice of instant surrender and abdication, or of a tenacious obstructionism of all reforms which would at least delay their expulsion even at the cost of the integrity of the Spanish empire.

On a wider field, Blumentritt believed, there were three kinds of Spanish delusions about the Philippines. The first delusion was the sheer racial arrogance of the ignorant and bigoted mass of Spaniards, who still considered the Filipinos an inferior race because of their flat noses and brown skins; for this the only remedy was education. The second delusion was the belief of liberal Ministers that the Filipinos were not yet ready for parliamentary representation and other reforms; yet such were conditions in the Philippines that any further delay would lead to armed revolution. The third delusion was that the denial of equal rights could be compensated by the strict dispensation of justice from superior Spanish hands; this was the mere “codification of the abuse of power.”

Blumentritt ended his preface with the hope that Spaniards of all kinds would learn Philippine realities from Rizal's new edition of the Morga. “If then they still do not listen to the Filipinos, then the Philippines will be lost to them through their own fault. They claim to be noble, and do not know how to be just; they claim to be a superior nation and yet do not understand how to pursue a prudent policy; they fear separatist ideas, and yet compel the Filipinos to seek their safety in revolution.”²⁰

Perhaps both Blumentritt and Rizal expected too much from Morga. The chronicle consists of eight chapters, the first seven of which record the events during the terms of office of the first eleven Spanish governors, from Legazpi to Pedro de Acuña, with a final chapter on the customs and usages of the people of the Philippines. Morga himself was an earlier luckless Winston Churchill, who was one of the principal actors in his own history. The good doctor (in canon and civil law) was appointed at the age of thirty-four justice of the *Audiencia* in the Philippines and concurrently lieutenant-governor, arriving in the western isles in June 1595. An austere, conscientious and upright ruler Morga was unhappy with the governors under whom he served; first, Luís Dasmariñas, a beardless youngster

dominated by the Dominicans; then, Francisco Tello, who had aspired to be a viceroy in Spanish America and tried to forget his frustrations in a series of scandalous seductions. Indeed Manila in Morga's time was a haven of adventurers, fortune hunters and quarrelsome friars, all with eyes fixed on the fabulous kingdoms of continental Asia. The governor was at odds with the prelates and the justices, the justices with the governor, the clerics with the justices, and the justices with one another. Morga had other personal reasons for distress; his wife, notes Retana, was as fertile as a rabbit, the cost of living was high, he was on the verge of ruin. So desperate was he for a transfer that when Admiral van Noort appeared before Manila in 1600, Morga, to catch the king's eye, managed to get himself appointed to organize and command a small squadron to give battle to the Dutch invader. It was a disaster; the doctor was no soldier; while another Spanish ship was fighting and taking her Dutch antagonist, Morga, having successfully boarded van Noort's *Mauritius* with forces superior by four to one, was bluffed out of his prize, had his ship sunk under him, and had to swim ashore while the Dutchman got away. Morga was accused of cowardice and it is generally believed that he wrote his *Sucesos* in order to make sure that history would record his version of the shameful affair.”²¹

But Morga as a historian had one great virtue in Rizal's eyes: he was not a friar, like most of the other Spanish chroniclers, and could thus tell his story with a minimum of religious prejudice and propaganda. Withal Rizal's notes called for a gentle reproof from Blumentritt himself. “My deep appreciation of your notes does not prevent me from confessing that I have observed that more than once you share the mistake of many modern historians who censure the events of past ages in the light of contemporary ideas. This is not right. The historian should not expect from the men of the sixteenth century the broad horizon of ideas that agitate the nineteenth century. I am also not in agreement with your giving vent in some cases to your feelings about Catholicism; I think that the source of many happenings which were lamentable for religion, for Spain and for the good name of the European race, should be sought not in religion itself but in the harsh behavior and the abuses of many priests.”

Indeed Rizal could scarcely help being what he had known from the start; he would have to be as a historian of his own people he could not “contemplate the past in cold blood,” he would always be “suspected of

having been inspired by partisanship.” He could not, like Blumentritt, “be read as an impartial judge” with “no selfish interest.” His notes fall naturally into two categories: the simply anti-clerical, and the historical and sociological. The latter are sometimes labored, often nostalgic, but essentially serious and largely valid. They are dedicated to three main propositions: that the people of the Philippines had a culture of their own before the coming of the Spaniards, that the Filipinos were decimated, demoralized, exploited and ruined by Spanish colonization, and that the present state of the Philippines was not in all ways and necessarily superior to their past.

The very first note is a good example of the anti-clerical. Commenting on a reference of Morga to “the purity of the Christian religion” preserved in the Spanish domains and among their subjects, Rizal writes:

It seems that the Author here really meant the Catholic religion whose purity was sought to be preserved with blood and fire, although in other states, like Flanders, neither purity nor dominion nor subjects could be preserved.

Or commenting on the loss of the Manila galleon *San Antonio*:

Religious historians, who in their chronicles always see the hand of God in every misfortune, accident or event that happens to their enemies, interpreting it in their own fashion, never comment on these repeated losses of ships loaded with wealth, most of which the *encomenderos* extracted from the Filipinos, using force, imposing their will or else falsifying the balances and measures then in use.

Or again, commenting on the native custom of swearing by the crocodile and on the fact that, according to Morga, false testimony would sometimes be actually punished by the perjurer being eaten by a crocodile:

Friars too have been eaten by crocodiles and the Filipinos accompanying them have been saved; in such cases, however, the historians give a flattering account of the event, different from that given when a Filipino is the victim.^{[22](#)}

This is scarcely the cool detached tone of the classic scholar. Rizal is no less cutting in his comments on Spanish reactions to the culture of the pre-conquest Filipinos. When Morga notes that they liked their meat and fish when it was beginning to spoil and smell, Rizal comments:

This is one more obsession of the Spaniards who, like any other people, are nauseated, when it comes to food, by that to which they are not accustomed or do not know. The Englishman, for example, is horrified when he sees a Spaniard eating snails; the latter is repelled by roast beef and cannot understand how anyone can eat Tartar steak (raw meat); the Chinese, who eats shark, cannot stand Roquefort cheese, etc., etc. The fish that Morga mentions does *not* taste better when it is beginning to spoil, all the contrary; it is *bagoong*, and whoever has tasted or eaten it knows that it is not and should not be spoiled.

On the sexual freedom of the ancient Filipinos, Rizal explains:

This was due to the fact that they saw nothing wrong in the act for the reproduction of the species. The ancients, like many other peoples, did not see in it more than a natural instinct which needed satisfaction; the very religion of Moses prohibited only adultery; only Christianity made the act a mortal sin ... But there is a middle way between prostitution and unnatural celibacy, gloomy and sterile, and that is to obey the natural law without distorting it or frustrating its ends ...

On the little importance that the ancient Filipinos put on virginity in their brides, Rizal was at his most sardonic:

This was a direct consequence of their way of thinking on the subject. If dancing were considered a sin and were permitted only between husband and wife, parents would not hire dancing masters for their daughters, and men would fight to dance with the young lady who knew least how to move her feet or who weighed heaviest in a waltz ...²³

But these excerpts do not really do justice to Rizal's erudition. At every important point he re-enforced and elaborated Morga's original picture of an idyllic society of honest freemen organized on the basis of kinship. It is only fair to say that modern scholarship has to a great extent confirmed Rizal's thesis that, for instance, real slavery was never practiced among the pre-conquest Filipinos of the Philippines. At most, he said, there were peons whose individual freedom was forfeited as a result of usurious debts, but this class was so numerous at the time of the Spanish invasion that the native chieftains were easily deprived of their independence: "the people, accustomed to the yoke, would not defend them from the invader nor would they fight for freedoms they never enjoyed; for them it was only a change of masters ..."²⁴

The was as far as Rizal would go. It had not been, he thought, a change for the better. Before the coming of the Spaniards the Filipinos were shipbuilders and cannon-founders, they exported silk to Japan and cotton to China, they made jars that the Chinese and Japanese considered priceless, they mined gold; all this disappeared under the Spaniards. Worse still, the Filipinos were decimated in the futile Spanish expeditions to continental Asia, for Filipinos made up the bulk of soldiers, the sailors, the galley-slaves, the auxiliaries of the Spanish king-makers, fortune-hunters and missionaries. Thousands had perished helping the Spaniards in the conquest of the archipelago, thousands more had been enslaved or killed because, deprived of their traditional means of defence, they were an easy prey for the unconquered Muslims of the southern islands.²⁵

After three centuries under Spain the Filipinos had lost the art of building seagoing ships, the Pampangos, to take one example, had been decimated, and once thriving Mindoro was so ruined that the government in Madrid was thinking of turning it into a penal colony. In Panay the Spaniards had found fifty thousand families; in a few years, the island was reduced to about fourteen thousand and gold mining was abandoned because of the greedy exactions of the colonizers. The ancient Filipinos, Morga attested, "wrote very well" in their own language and alphabet: under Spain, Rizal noted, most of them had become illiterate and education was discouraged.²⁶

While working on these notes Rizal had clarified his thoughts in friendly discussion with Blumentritt who, as he would later suggest in his preface, could not go along with his favorite in all his ideas about Spanish

colonialism. More than any one of the notes themselves, two letters of Rizal to Blumentritt at this time define his fundamental attitude.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 14 November 1888 —

Nobody should enter a neighbour's house and subordinate his neighbour's welfare to his own interests; that would be an outrage, it would be the rule of force. If a colonizing nation cannot make its colonies happy, it should abandon or emancipate them. Nobody has a right to make others unhappy!

We did not invite the Spaniards; they came and said to our ancestors: "We came to be your friends; we shall help one another accept, our king and pay him a small tribute, and we shall defend you against your enemies."

In those days there was no talk of taking our lands. The friars spoke of heaven and promised us all possible things. To some of the Filipinos they did not speak of tribute but only of friendship and commerce. And now you want us to put aside the welfare of the Philippines for a high-sounding name! No, my friend, that cannot be the way you really think!^{[27](#)}

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 22 November 1888 —

I agree with you that the Spaniards did us a lot of good. But we too gave them a lot: the most precious things they required: blood, lands, lives and that freedom which is the first and best gift of humankind.

... I believe like you that if the Philippines had not become Spanish, they would have been absorbed perhaps by Islam. Whether this would have been better or worse, I do not know. The Spanish regime deported my brother-in-law *merely because he was my brother-in-law*, according to Weyler himself; the Spanish regime stripped my four brothers-in-law and my brother of their lands although they had paid "tribute" ... Perhaps the Muslims would have been worse, but perhaps they avenge themselves on their real enemy and not on his relatives.^{[28](#)}

Who sneers at the editor of *Morga*? If Rizal was partisan it was because both sides of the question had to be argued before a fair balance could be

struck, and the Filipinos had never before been heard on their behalf. If some of his comments are arguable, let it be remembered that the archives at Sevilla, Simancas and Madrid were “closed” to him, or so he believed, and he had to glean his facts from the prejudiced chronicles of racists and religious fanatics; let it be remembered also that many of his inspired conjectures have been upheld by modern scholarship. After all, he never attempted a history of his own and, conscious of his limitations, only wrote on the margins of the memoirs of a Spanish eyewitness.

The true measure of his achievement is that, three-quarters of a century after his edition of *Morga*, no Filipino, with all archives open, has yet written a history of the Filipinos for the Filipinos, or, for that matter an impartial and complete history of the Philippines.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XI

- (1) Ep. Riz., V, 232.
- (2) 100 Letters, 332, 335.
- (3) Ep. Riz., II, 33; V, 244: 100 Letters, 348.
- (4) Ep. Riz., V, 239.
- (5) Quoted in Quirino, 135.
- (6) Ep. Riz., II, 34.
- (7) 100 Letters, 358.
- (8) Ep. Riz., V, 255.
- (9) Quoted in Quirino, 153 et seq.
- (10) Dictionary of National Biography, London, XLIX; The Athenaeum, 15th February 1896.
- (11) *Trubner's Record*, London, 3rd series, I, No. 3, for July 1889.
- (12) Ep. Riz., II, 13, 15, 20, 28, 46, 254.
- (13) Ep. Riz., V, 114, 116.
- (14) Ep. Riz., V, 284.
- (15) Ep. Riz., V, 289.
- (16) Ep. Riz., II, 88, 96, 110, 175, 176, 219, 230, 241, 252; V, 293, 300, 311.
- (17) Ep. Riz., II, 264, 270, 280, 306, 309, 316; III, 75, 88, 205.
- (18) Ep. Riz., III, 122.
- (19) Morga, ed. Rizal, v-vi.
- (20) Op. Cit., v-xxi.

- ([21](#)) Morga, ed. Retana, 21 et seq.
- ([22](#)) Morga, ed. Rizal, xxxi, 231, 272.
- ([23](#)) Op. cit., 264, 308, 309.
- ([24](#)) Op. cit., 299.
- ([25](#)) Op. cit., 23, 191, 193, 278, 281.
- ([26](#)) Op. cit., 267, 284, 285, 289, 290.
- ([27](#)) Ep. Riz., V, 351.
- ([28](#)) Ep. Riz., V, 358.



XII

The Prophetic Journalist

There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceas'd,
The which observed, a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things.

SHAKESPEARE (HENRY IV)

Drain not its dregs the urn of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past.

SHELLEY (HELLAS)

[1]

One thing Rizal had learned from editing *Morga* was that there was an enormous mass of historical material on the Philippines and the Filipinos,

forgotten, unpublished, unorganized, scattered in a hundred archives, museums, libraries, convents, private collections, and articles and cellars all the way from Acapulco to Sevilla, Simancas, Madrid, Paris, London, Berlin, and only God knew where else. One man, least of all untrained penniless young politician and novelist like himself, could never hope to find, index, coordinate and digest it all.

But he had learned another thing from working on *Morga*; the generous assistance and guidance of Blumentritt and Rost, and before them the friendliness of Virchow, Nordmann, Jagor and the German scholars, suggested a solution to the problem through the scientific community of the civilized world. Scholars were known to be as jealous as mistresses about their discoveries but, once published, these were shared with colleagues and competitors; the very publicity which was the pre-requisite for fame and the reward of effort was guarantee against selfishness, secrecy or partiality. Partiality especially, since no scholar would risk his reputation with the kind of bare-faced propaganda that passed for history in the Philippines.

No sooner had Rizal finished the manuscript of the *Morga* than he went to work on his new idea. He had great news, he wrote Blumentritt.¹ “We have organized an International Association of Philippinologists,” the “we” apparently referring to Rizal, Rost and Regidor. Blumentritt, Austrian, would be president (“don't say no”), Edmund Plauchut, French, vice-president. Rose, Anglo-German, and Regidor, Spanish-Filipino, advisers, and Rizal himself, Malay-Tagalog, secretary. The 1889 International Exposition in Paris would be a splendid venue for a conference. “We should like to invite all scholars who are interested in Philippine affairs ... If you have any suggestions please let us have them so we can pass them on to the others. As soon as we receive your approval we shall have the rules printed.” The proposed rules gave the purpose of the Association as “the study of the Philippines from the scientific and historical viewpoints.” It would hold international conferences, organize public competitions, and work for the establishment of a Philippine library and museum. The tentative agenda for the first conference in Paris is not without interest even in our times. It divides Philippine history under Spain into two periods separated by the year 1808, the year of “the incorporation of the Philippines into the Spanish nation,” presumably upon the proclamation of the first Spanish Constitution, signed in Bayonne by Napoleon's brother Joseph,

King of Spain, and drafted by the Emperor himself, which first gave the Spanish “realms” in Asia and America equal rights with metropolitan Spain and representation in the Cortes. Rizal would have had something to teach modern historians of the Philippines!

Blumentritt accepted the presidency; “do not fear that we will compromise you,” wrote Rizal, thanking him “in the name of my country.” He thought they should have a German colleague “because much has been written in Germany about the Philippines.” Should they invite Meyer or Jagor to join the executive committee? Why not both? Czepelack should be an honorary member. Blumentritt suggested that the agenda should include an item on “independent tribes and regions” in the Philippines; needless to say, Rizal accepted it enthusiastically. It seemed Czepelack had been instrumental in persuading Blumentritt to accept the presidency, and Rizal sent him his thanks; with regard to the Germans, if they elected two of them to the executive committee, they would have to elect two of every other nationality, and the members in London had agreed on Meyer rather than Jagor. Meyer accepted though Blumentritt and Rizal asked him to suggest a Dutch member, with whom the Association's executive committee would be complete. Meyer submitted the name of a Dr. Neumann, but the latter was too busy to accept. Dr. Riedel was proposed as a substitute, and Rizal placed the matter in Meyer's hands; he was off to Paris to make the necessary arrangements; it was already March and the conference was planned for August. The proposed Association had also excited the interest of the Filipino expatriates and Rizal, in a circular letter from Paris, assured them that anyone who wanted to could be a member as long as he “worked and studied the history or languages, or usages and customs or politics, etc. of the Philippines.”²

Alas, it was all for nothing! The French were limiting the number of international conferences to be held in Paris during the Exposition, and the new half-formed Association of Philippinologists was certainly not at the head of the queue. “We shall have to postpone the conference,” Rizal told Blumentritt. Even a private gathering seemed difficult: Meyer would be in Paris in May, Rost in August. But Blumentritt must come in any case, at least to see the Exposition. “We can stay in the same hotel; it is clean and pretty, in the center of Paris, near the great boulevards. We two can have our own Conference here, a Conference of friends. We must wait for a

better occasion, when the Association shall have become more important.”³ The occasion never came. The Association remained what perhaps it had always been, an Association of friends, two of them, Blumentritt and Rizal.

[2]

In the meantime another association was taking shape in Spain that would be at once more lively and more unsettling for Rizal. We shall have occasion to follow its troubled course in the next chapter. What concerns us now is that, after a distressing intrigue for the editorship, the new association began the publication on the 15th February 1889 of a fortnightly organ of Philippine opinion, *La Solidaridad*.

Rizal's avid researches in the great circular Reading Room of the British Museum had not cramped his pen. He had been active in defence of the *Noli*, principally with his satirical pamphlet “*La Visión de Fr. Rodríguez*,” “The Dream of Father Rodríguez,” the answer to Barrantes, and “*Por Teléfono*,” “A Telephone Conversation.” Now, assured of an outlet and no longer inhibited by the fears of his father and mother, he turned out a series of sharp searching articles for the *Soli*. He also found time to write a long “Letter to the Young Women of Malolos” at the urging of del Pilar.⁴

Some twenty of these young women, daughters of *principales*, had sought to open a school where they might learn Spanish; the project had been opposed by the friar of the parish and, on his representations, disapproved by Weyler. The young women had not been daunted and kept up their agitation until they had won the necessary permission. It was the sort of thing to set fire to the sympathies and antipathies of Rizal, “When I wrote the *Noli Me Tángere*,” he began, “I asked myself if the young women of our people had, as a rule, the quality of courage. Search as I might in memory, recalling those whom I had known from childhood, there were few who appeared to me to come up to my ideal. True, there were more than enough with agreeable manners, charming ways and modest bearing but, mixed with all this, due to an excess of goodness, modesty or perhaps ignorance, were a deference and a submission to the words or whims of the so-called ‘father of souls’ (as if the soul had any other father than God Himself); they were like drooping plants, sown and grown in darkness, whose flowers were without perfume and whose fruits were juiceless. But

now that the news of what has happened in your town of Malolos has reached us here, I have realised my mistake and I have rejoiced greatly.”

The first part of the letter consists largely of a rejection of spiritual authority, particularly that of the friars, and a defence of private judgment; Rizal had said it all more wittily in the *Noli*, and would argue it more cogently in his subsequent correspondence with the Jesuit Pastells. He was perhaps more to the point in describing the qualities, duties and responsibilities of the Filipina. Like mother, like son.

What children will that woman have whose goodness of character consist in mumbling prayers and knows only how to recite in chorus *awits*, novenas and false miracles, whose amusement is gambling or the repeated confession of the same sins? What sons will she have but acolytes of the parish priest, and cockfighters? The present servitude of our countrymen was the work of their mothers, of the boundless naivete of their loving hearts, of the anxiety to win dignities and honors for their sons. Maturity is the fruit of infancy, and children are brought up on the lap of their mothers. The mother that can only teach how to bend the knee and kiss the hand should not expect other than the spirit of slaves in her sons.

And like wife, like husband. With the uncomprehending scorn of a bachelor who has given no hostages to fortune, he wondered why young men, when they fell in love, “threw away learning, honor, wealth as if a girl could inspire only misfortune. The bravest man, when he marries turns coward; the born coward becomes shameless, as if he had only been waiting for marriage to display his cowardice.”

Why does not the maiden require from the man she is to love a noble and an honored name, a manly heart to be the refuge other weakness, and a lofty spirit incapable of accepting to be the father of slaves? Let her put aside all fear, act nobly, and refuse to surrender her youth to the weak and fainthearted. When she is married, she must help her husband, give him courage, share danger equally with him, cause him no trouble but rather sweeten his sorrows the resolute heart cannot bear, and that there is no inheritance more bitter than that of infamy and slavery.

Rizal, we must concede, had a tendency to preach. The *Noli* was in some ways a morality play. His comments on the *Morga* had more than a tinge of superciliousness. No doubt his more frivolous countrymen in Madrid and Paris thought his allocutions tiresome. Now in the *Soli* he found himself in his true element. It was not a newspaper in a modern sense; it was a vehicle, not of news, but of opinion of, in fact, propaganda. Rizal and its other contributors had no inhibitions about impartiality; they did not report, they argued; they quoted only to refute; it may not have been journalism in the modern American sense but it was superbly effective.

In his own subsequent description of himself, Rizal acted the part of Deputy for the Philippines, a deputy in the opposition, of course, with the *Soli*, the nearest thing the Philippines of the time had to a free press, serving as his rostrum. Wherever he might be, in London, Paris, Brussels, his ear was cocked vigilantly for any criticism of the Philippines or the Filipinos, any sneer, any innuendo, and as soon as he heard it he was on his feet, crying to be recognized, to reply, to point out errors and contradictions, to unmask motives, to expose malice and corruption.

Let a newspaper criticise the native *principales* of the Philippines, and he rushed to their defence: "We agree that there is a great deal of immorality in the Philippines, a great deal of confusion, intrigue and misgovernment. But let us not blame the people for it ... The misfortunes of a people without liberty should not be blamed on the other people but on their rulers,"⁵ Let Barrantes sneer at the Tagalog theater, and he was up in arms with a mock defence of the Academician, exposing the gross ignorance of one who could solemnly say that Urdaneta had helped to found the Spanish city of Manila or refer to the "Malays of Colombo and Ceylon."⁶ Let one Belloc express the opinion that the introduction of reforms in the Philippines would overthrow "our peaceful and paternal rule," and he sprang to his feet to ask: "On what can 'this peaceful and paternal rule' be based for it to fall like a house of cards merely because the government should introduce reforms? Has the Spanish government, then, done nothing in three centuries to make sure of the love of the Filipinos, and have the friars done nothing to make the Philippines love Spain, that everything should come tumbling down with the introduction of reforms? If what Mr. Belloc says were true, it

would have to be admitted that all the ballyhooed and pretended power of the friars in the Philippines is nothing but shadow, fog, a phantom, that vanishes with a little light, unless the friars were to confess that that domination was established by themselves for themselves, and for their own purposes.”⁷

He was no respecter of persons. When the Marquess of Tenerife warned the townspeople of Kalamba against being deluded by “the vain promises of ungrateful sons,” he took Weyler himself to task. “We promised the people that the government would pay heed to their complaints, and to have faith; nothing we promised was fulfilled ... These were 'the promises of ungrateful sons.' We challenge all the Excellencies in the world to say we ever promised anything else. Provinces of the Philippines, now His Excellency himself tells you not to believe in such promises ... And with regards to the Mother Country, we likewise admit the description of 'ungrateful sons' but only as long as telling her the truth, for the purpose of securing the correction of the abuses of her other sons, forestalling the future, and preventing her from assuming responsibility for the many abuses and crimes which others commit in her name, can be described as ingratitude. We believed we had cared well and spoken loyally; we believed that our Mother Country was a nation that loved the truth, and not a tyrant that abhorred it ... Now, then, if in turn the Reverend Dominican Fathers in whose university we studied medicine for a year, take us for ingrates, we will be so bold as to reply to them face to face that if, in exchange for the education they give us, they require from us that we forswear the truth and the voice of our conscience, that we stifle the cries of that something God has put within our breasts and that we call the sense of justice, in order to sacrifice to the interests of their opulent Order the interests of our native country, our fellowmen, and our brothers, then we curse and repudiate their education, and let them never expect from us the least measure of gratitude.”⁸

[4]

Among his contribution to the *Soli* two series of articles were outstanding, one on “The Indolence of the Filipinos,” looked to the past; the other, on “The Philippines within a Century,” looked to the future. It was journalism

in that it was topical; everything that went wrong in the Philippines, Rizal noted, being blamed on the “indolence” of the Filipinos, while the desirability of reforms in the colony and its future were a lively political issue. But it was journalism at its best: thoughtful, erudite, stimulating without being sensational, original, and with a claim to enduring value. The articles, it is plain from reading them, were written to meet a deadline; they are often repetitive, disorganized; but their analysis of the past and future of the Philippines has the insight of true genius.

Of course there was indolence in the Philippines, Rizal conceded from the scare; it was natural and more healthy to work less in a hot climate than in a cold one, and in compensation Nature had made the earth more fertile. Yet indolence in the Philippines was “a chronic malady, not a hereditary one.” The natives of the islands had once been noted for their “activity and honesty,” witness the Chinese who traded with them before the coming of the Spaniards. Indeed the indolence of the Filipinos was the effect, and not the cause of the country's troubles.

“A fatal combination of circumstances” had led to a collapse of the will to work. Rizal classified these causes into two kinds: those attributable to the colonizing power, and those which were the Filipinos' own fault. The first included the wars and internal disorders that followed the Spanish conquest; the Filipinos had been decimated and brutalized in the wars with the Dutch, the Portuguese and the Chinese, enslaved or massacred by Muslim raiders from the south against whom they could not defend themselves because they had been disarmed. Why work when all the fruits of their labour might go up in flames in one night? Why clear a field when they might be impressed the next day to row a Spanish galley or build a Spanish galleon? “Why should it be strange that the inhabitants of the Philippines become disheartened?” asked Rizal. “In the midst of so many calamities, they did not know whether or not they would see the seed they were sowing sprout, whether their fields would be their graves and their harvest feed their executioners!” There was no incentive for work.

Nor had the Spanish colonial authorities bothered to supply such an incentive. For fear of conspiracies and rebellions the Filipinos had been isolated from their natural markets in neighboring countries; only the galleon trade between China and Mexico, with Manila as the connecting link, had been fostered and this was an artificial monopoly which benefited

only a handful of Spaniards and Chinese. Again for fear of uprisings the Filipinos had been concentrated in towns and prevented from going out freely to their fields; it is impressive indeed how, without access to archives, and documents, Rizal anticipated the finding of Schurz and Phelan.⁹ They were kept disarmed and, when the Muslim raiders disappeared from the inland seas, the humble farmers found themselves at the mercy of bandits and outlaws. No wonder they turned to gambling for a livelihood; at least this was under government protection! "Why work? The priest says that the rich man will not enter Heaven, and on earth the rich man is liable to all kinds of trouble: to be appointed a local headsman [and be responsible for the collection of taxes], to be deported if an uprising occurs, to be forced banker to the town's military commander!" The Filipinos, Rizal said, had a significant proverb: "A pig is cooked in its own lard."

Modern Filipinos may savor the following passage:

The great difficulty that every enterprise encountered in dealing with the administration contributed not a little to kill all commercial and industrial movement. All the Filipinos, as well as all those who have tried to do business in the Philippines, know how many documents, how many comings and goings, how many stamped papers, how much patience is needed to secure from the government a permit for any commercial enterprise. One must count on the good will of this official, on the influence of that one, on a heavy bribe to a third in order that the application should not be pigeonholed, a valuable present to a fourth so that he will pass it on to his superior! One must pray to God to put this superior in a good humor and give him time to notice and look over the application: to another, enough brains to recognize its merits; to a third, sufficient obtuseness not to scent a subversive purpose; and to all, the energy not to spend all their time taking baths, hunting, or gambling with the reverend friars in their convents or country-houses. Above all, one needs a lot of patience, a lot of wit in getting along, a lot of money, a lot of politics, much flattery, great influence, many presents and complete resignation!

But it was not all the fault of the colonial administration. True, the native had been brutalized by superstition and the lack of education, but he was himself partly to blame for his condition because of his lack of spirit and a national consciousness. “In order that he may make progress it is necessary that a revolutionary spirit, so to speak, should boil in his veins since progress necessarily requires change; it implies the overthrow of the sanctified past by the present, the victory of new ideas over the old accepted ones ... The lack of a national consciousness gives rise to another evil, which is the absence of all opposition to measures prejudicial to the people and the absence of any initiative in whatever may rebound to their good. A man in the Philippines is only an individual; he is not a member of a nation.”¹⁰

No better justification of Filipino nationalism, political and economic, has yet been written.

[5]

From the past and present of the Philippines Rizal turned to consider their future in “The Philippines within a Century.” A century, Rizal explained, because there was nothing fixed in nature, and less in the life of a people, so that it was necessary to postulate a practically unlimited period of time within which events might develop. Within these elastic limits, what could be foreseen? Would the Philippines remain a Spanish colony, become a Spanish colony, become a Spanish province, gain independence, fall into other hands?

To all appearances Spain's military position in the Philippines was much stronger than it was when an isolated handful of soldiers with long and hazardous lines of communication were trying to hold the unpacified islands against the Chinese, Dutch, Portuguese, British and unconquered Muslims. But the sense of equality and opportunity which had sustained the loyalty of the Filipinos in the past had been destroyed over the centuries; to the abuses of the regime had been added the denigration of the entire race. Grievances were accumulating and if, far from meeting them with reforms, a policy of reaction and rigorous repression was followed then those classes “that suffer and think” might be driven “to put to the hazard the miseries of an uncertain life, full of privations and bitterness, in the hope of some

improvement. What would be lost in such a fight? Next to nothing ... All the petty insurrections in the Philippines have been the work of a few fanatics and discontented soldiers who, to attain their ends, had to fool and swindle or abuse their authority. It was for this reason that they all failed. No insurrection had a popular character or met the aspirations of a whole race, none fought for human rights or justice, consequently they left no unforgettable memories among the people who, on the contrary, seeing themselves deceived, bound up their wounds and cheered the overthrow of those who had disturbed the peace. But what if the movement should rise from the people themselves and take up their grievances as its cause?"

Statecraft, Rizal considered, had various means at its disposal to forestall such an eventuality: it could keep the people in ignorance, it could keep them in poverty, it could exterminate them. The first had obviously failed in the Philippines; an elaborate system of thought control had not prevented the emergence of writers, artists, jurists, scientists, free-thinkers. The second was dangerous because it was double-edged; those who had nothing to lose were readier to go adventuring for a change and to risk their lives. The third was impossible: the inhabitants of the Philippines were not American Indians. Nor could they any longer be set one against the other; the improvement of communications had brought them closer together, and the loss of privileges was beginning to unite them in a common abasement and misfortune.

In short, progress in the Philippines was inevitable; it could not be stopped. The country would not remain a Spanish colony without greater rights; "for new men, a new social order." The Philippines would "continue under Spanish rule with more rights, and more liberties," or they would "declare themselves independent after steeping themselves and the Mother Country in blood." What reforms were needed? To begin with, freedom of the press and representation in the Cortes. Freedom of the press because otherwise the government would never learn the true state of the country; representation in the Cortes because the grievances of the people were better aired in open debate than expressed with bullets. "History does not record in its annals any lasting domination of one people over another when they were of a different race, of diverse usages and customs, and of contrary or divergent ideals." If the people of the Philippines were not assimilated into the Spanish nation, if the two peoples did not become an homogeneous

mass, then the Philippines would be fated without fail to declare themselves independent someday, probably as a federal republic.

Spain would be unable to prevent it. To exterminate the six million Filipino Malays, she would have to sacrifice a quarter of her own population, endanger her other possessions, and perhaps even her own independence in Europe—for what? What good would the Philippines be without Filipinos? “The Spaniard is patriotic and brave, and when the occasion requires he sacrifices everything for the good of his country; he has the fearlessness and obstinacy of his native bull. The Filipino does not love his country less; he may be quieter, more peaceful and hard to excite but, once aroused, does not stop, taking every struggle as one to the death; he has all the patience and all the tenacity and ferocity of his native carabao. Climate has the same effects on animals with two legs as on those with four.”

Once independent, the Filipinos could rest assured that England, Germany, France and most of all Holland would not try to take what Spain had failed to keep. Africa would absorb the ambitions of Europe; in any case, England had enough colonies in Asia, Germany wanted no complications in the distant Pacific, France had Indo-China and Holland had Indonesia. China would be happy enough to escape dismemberment, Japan was menaced by Russia and had her eyes on Korea. “Perhaps the great American Republic, whose interests lie in the Pacific and which has no share in the spoils of Africa, may some day think of overseas possessions. It is not impossible for a bad example is catching, covetousness and ambition are the vices of the powerful ... but the European powers could not give her a free hand for they well know that appetite grows with the first morsels; North America would be too awkward a rival if someday she took up the practice. Anyway it would be against her traditions.”¹¹

It is the only flaw in the prophecy, and it is a mistake made in good faith, out of idealism. It would not be Rizal's fault that America would find her traditions inconvenient.

[6]

“The Filipinas,” Rizal had written the young women of Malolos, “no longer want to stay with heads cast down and on bended knees; they look to the

future; the mother no longer exists who would contribute to her daughter's blindness and would rear her in moral neglect and decay. Blind submission to any order, any injustice, is no longer the height of wisdom ...”

The tone is outwardly exultant, but was there a trace of bitterness in the scorn of “blind submission?” He would have wanted to see one Filipina, above all others, loved “not only because of her beauty and sweetness of character but also because of her strength of mind and loftiness of purpose;” there was one Filipina, above all others, whom he would have hated to see “hood-winked, helpless, and pusillanimous.” He had chosen her for his future wife. Yet during his brief stay in the Philippines he had not seen Leonor Rivera once, and the cause was nothing less than “submission,” his, one must add, as well as hers.

Chiding his youngest sister Soledad for causing scandal by her secret rendezvous with a suitor, he reminded her, three years later, of his own discretion and regard for their parents' feelings.

J. Rizal to Soledad Rizal, 6 June 1890 —

... You know very well, all of you know, that I should and could have gone to Pangasinan, that I was formally engaged, and that this was one of my greatest desires for many years. Well, then, in spite of the fact that I had kept alive this desire for a very long time and still do so, the opposition to it of our father was enough to make me sacrifice all my feelings; I wanted to go to Bakolor, he was opposed to it, and I gave way, I obeyed. And yet my disobedience would not have meant the slightest dishonor.

Leonor did what I did. Even though she wanted to go to Manila and could have done so with her father to fetch her nephews, his mere displeasure was enough to discourage her, and frankly, even if she had insisted on going, and I had learned about it, I am sure I would not have gone to see her.^{[12](#)}

What had happened? Simply that Leonor's parents had changed their minds about having such a notorious agitator for a son-in-law, and Don Francisco was not going to see his son play the part of an unwanted suitor. Did Rizal perhaps remember Father Dámaso's explanation to María Clara of his opposition to Ibarra's suit? “If you had been his wife, you would have wept

afterwards to see your husband's condition, exposed to all manner of persecution without means of defence ... I sought for you a husband who could make you the happy mother of children who would command, not obey, who would have the power to inflict punishment, not the obligation of enduring it.”

In any case we have his word for it; he had not seen Leonor, and had gone rebounding on to Miss Sei-ko in the temple of Meguro and to bustling little “Tottie” Beckett, whose mother would not make a fuss about her, a subject of the world's greatest Queen who would be sure to send a gunboat at the first sign of any nonsense from foreigners. No wonder he envied “the meanest clerk in London!” But a love affair with his landlord's daughter was too tawdry, and marriage quite out of the question. Fleeing Tottie he moved to Paris—“they say here that you are running away from a fire for fear of getting burnt,” Ventura wrote to him, “you are quite right; better be safe”¹³ —unable to forget her, he returned to London for the Christmas holidays on the excuse of checking the proofs of the *Morga* against the original in the Museum. Then he was off again, this time once and for all. He sent her a pair of brooches; it was a mistake, it encouraged her to write.

Gertrude Beckett to J. Rizal (undated) —

I can't imagine why you don't answer my letter, it has been nearly three weeks since I wrote to you. I suppose you are making me wait because I did not acknowledge the brooches until about a week after I received them; I am sorry I could not write before, I assure you I was miserable until I had done so.

All I can think is that you are ill or that you have had to go to Spain in a hurry again and are detained there. There is not a day past [that] I have [not] looked for a letter from you and have been so disappointed at not having one.

I do hope you are not offended with me, dearest. I won't tell you anything until I hear from you, which I hope won't be long. If it is, I shall know that you are offended and are never going to write to me any more. Oh dear, I hope you are not cross with me. I can't think what I have done, darling; I am so miserable. With fondest love from your ever loving ...¹⁴

Alas, poor Tottie, he would not write again. The International Exposition had attracted many Filipinos to Paris and Rizal did not lack company, yet he wanted more; he urged Ponce, del Pilar, López Jaena, Galicano Apacible, to join them and offered breakfast to five friends for a week: “chocolate or tea, and biscuits, although,” his thrifty soul could not resist adding, “it isn't really necessary.” He was outraged by the inevitable rise in prices, but it was fun in Paris; the Filipinos organized themselves into an impromptu club which they called *Kidlat* (lightning) because they had thought of it in a flash, and in a flash it would be gone.¹⁵

It was at this time that Rizal met the Bousteads. Edouard Boustead was a Frenchman who had made his fortune in Singapore, married a girl from Manila by whom he had two daughters, and returned to France to enjoy his townhouse in Paris and a villa in Biarritz. There is some doubt as to which of the two daughters, Nellie or Adelina, captured Rizal's fancy. What seems undisputed is that Antonio Luna fell violently in love with Nellie, the prettier of the two, and an accomplished fencer who could cross foils with either of them. The inevitable misunderstandings followed: the hot-headed Luna, as jealous and violent as his brother would prove to be in such matters, must have had a miserable time watching Rizal and Nellie laughing on the fencing-strip, sharing a picnic lunch on the grass in the Bois de Boulogne, wandering through the mirrored magnificence of Versailles, or shivering sedately on the great steel scaffold of that new monster, the Tour d' Eiffel. True, Rizal was supposed to be Adelina's partner, but did he really have those guarded teasing eyes of his on Nellie, or was it Nellie who had her eyes on him? When Luna finally had to leave Paris to return to his studies in Madrid, Rizal wrote to re-assure him. Luna's answer sums up his view of the affair.

Antonio Luna to J. Rizal, 9 October 1889 —

... You thought I acted coldly towards you; I thought you did towards me. All the result of our not understanding each other and speaking out. That is what I told our friends during the trip back to Madrid. We were both wrong.

We had no reason to be cold when I had asked you several times if you were courting Nellie, and you told me you were not and even encouraged me to woo her, saying that you yourself had

engagements to fulfill, etc. etc. Consequently I was sure about you, that you were my friend and the rest did not matter. That is all, and so, dear boy, I think we should go on as we were always and as, in fact, I thought we were.¹⁶

But it was not so simple as that. More than a month later there was Antonio again all agog about “the bomb which had exploded in the midst of the families concerned,” apparently Boustead's and his brother's. “You will understand that there is nothing seriously wrong about it; to love is not a crime, and if we were at fault it was because we concealed our loves.” We? Luna and Nellie? Or Luna and Rizal with regard to the Boustead girls? Apparently the latter. Luna advised Rizal that he had written Madame Boustead, apologizing and saying that he loved her daughter, “always asking a thousand pardons and blaming the two of us as the only and real culprits. What do you think? ... I think in all conscience that we have behaved courageously, shielding our girl friends in every way, although the trouble is that these poor girls have suffered so much for us who are to blame for it all.”¹⁷

Unless Rizal was an odious hypocrite and Luna a silly fool, the only interpretation of these letters is that it was Luna who had been courting Nellie with Rizal's consent and encouragement. What was “the bomb?” Not so much an illicit assignation, in view of the rigid religious convictions that at least one of the sisters would later display, as, possibly, an otherwise perfectly innocent rendezvous which had become known. Rizal may have been an enigmatic fourth member of the quartet and Adelina a tiresome chaperon for Nellie; they must have made an intriguing party wherever they met. The ingenuous Luna, for one, was disarmingly open; he had written to Rizal because he was about to fight a duel. “Farewell,” he ended his letter. “If any mishap should occur, tell Nellie (I ask it as a friend) how much I have loved her.” It was one of those things. As it turned out, neither Rizal nor Luna did marry Nellie, or Adelina for that matter, and late the next month Luna asked Rizal rather pathetically: “Also, about Nellie, I should like you to tell me something. The request comes from a friend and a countryman. Does she still love me? I have heard nothing from her since the 16th November. I wrote her a letter some twenty days ago. Write to me frankly; it is really not of first importance, but I should like to know

whether or not I am making myself ridiculous believing naively in an affection which no longer exists. Really, it would be too absurd!”¹⁸

Rizal, discreet as usual, left Paris for Brussels. This reminded del Pilar that Rizal had left London for a reason “Don't tell me,” he wrote Rizal, “that you have another such reason for leaving Paris!” He would not be teased. Life was cheaper in the Belgian capital, as cheap as in Barcelona, and the city was prettier.¹⁹ But life was not less complicated. Acknowledging receipt of a clay figurine from Rizal, Valentín Ventura sniggered: “Tell me frankly if the model can be found in Brussels; the truth is that if she can, it would be worthwhile to make a trip to that city if only to admire her and make oneself known.”²⁰ The mysterious model may in fact have been one of the two Jacoby sisters, Marie and Suzanne, in whose house he had taken rooms. Historical gossip points to Suzanne for an undated letter from her has survived.

Suzanne Jacoby to J. Rizal (undated) —

Where are you now? Do you think of me once in a while? Reading your letter, cold and indifferent as it is, I am reminded of our tender conversations. Here in your letter I have something which makes up for your absence. How pleased I would be to follow you, to travel with you, who are always present in my thoughts!

You wish me all kinds of luck, but forget that in the absence of a loved one a tender heart cannot be happy.

A thousand things serve to distract your mind, my friend, but in my case I am sad, lonely, always alone with my thoughts—nothing, absolutely nothing, relieves my sorrow. Are you coming back? That is what I want and desire most ardently—you cannot refuse me.

I do not despair and I limit myself to complaining against time, which goes so fast when we are to be parted, but goes so slowly when we are to be together again.

I feel very unhappy thinking that perhaps I may never see you again.

Farewell! You know that with one word you can make me very happy ...²¹

It is nonsense of course, to pretend that such a letter is meaningless. "Tender conversations" ... "the absence of a loved one" ... "Are you coming back? You cannot refuse me." It is Tottie Beckett all over again; one realizes wryly that Rizal was a desirable lodger. But he had learned his lesson in London and did not linger too long in Brussels. The Jacobys had an unexplained niece living with them, also called Suzanne, nicknamed "Little Suzanne" to distinguish her from "Aunt Suzanne." A charming but not wholly artless letter from her has been preserved; it describes the arrival of a Filipino at the house, late at night, when the two Suzannes were already abed. Marie Jacoby, however, was still up and let him into the kitchen; the two Suzannes heard the name of Rizal mentioned behind the closed door; at first they thought they recognised his voice, and little Suzanne had a time stopping her Aunt Suzanne from bursting in, night-clothes and all; then they heard Aunt Marie ask if Rizal had put on weight, and the visitor replied that he had put on weight "like a matchstick" but that he planned to come back to Brussels. "I was so happy I could not get back to sleep," wrote little Suzanne, no doubt with Aunt Suzanne reading over her shoulder. "Do not take too long in writing to us; I am wearing out my boots running to the mailbox to see if there is any news from you ... There will never be another house where you will be loved as much as in Brussels, so, you naughty man, hurry back." And then a touch of jealous curiosity unlikely in the niece: "Tell us something about your lodgings and about the people there."²²

The letter is dated October 1890; Rizal had gone to Madrid to see after his family's appeal of the Kalamba case to the Spanish Supreme Court. Two months later he received a letter from Leonor Rivera, the first he had had in two years; she was marrying an Englishman, Henry Kipping. Neither this letter nor the bulk of the correspondence between the two lovers has survived; both were hopeless romantics, who would instinctively as in fact they did, reduce to ashes the tangible evidence of a love that would thenceforth burn only in the unbreakable privacy of memory. Rizal, we are told, took it very badly; the only one he could bear to share the news with at first was Apacible, his cousin and childhood friend, and then he could not hold back his tears. The story that Leonor told in her letter must now sound

like a bad Victorian novel: the solicitous mother, in “the boundless naivete of her loving heart,” trying to discourage her daughter from making an undesirable match, dropping well-meant hints about the man's infidelity, intercepting his letters, surreptitiously leaving hers unposted, until mutual jealousies and resentments and grievances were cleared up at last by a chance encounter with the postman, but, alas, too late.²³ One cannot blame Leonor's mother too much; she had the best of intentions, which often turn out to be the worst; she only wanted her daughter's happiness and would see her die unhappy. These are the cliches of romantic fiction.

And so the thin melancholy figure of Leonor Rivera, having played her poor little part, leaves the scene, still faithful in her infidelity, still pathetically defiant in her “blind submission,” a teasing shade as ingenuous as her lover's code that leaves us guessing whether the cipher conceals a precious secret that might have altered history or merely a sentimental nothing.

It is more difficult to understand and explain Rizal's feelings. “When my sweetheart left me, I realized she was right, that I deserved it, but for all that my heart bled; recently I received a letter from her telling me that she would get married soon—she was always much sought after by Filipinos and Spaniards,” he confided, with a hint of rueful pride, to Blumentritt. A month later he was more explicit: “My sweetheart, who was faithful to me for more than eleven years, is going to marry an Englishman, an engineer on the railway [project]; well, so the first sledge-hammer blow in the railway [construction] falls on me; all the same, I prefer this development to our former situation. When I received the news I thought I would go mad, but that is over now and I must smile since I should not weep. Oh, do not be surprised that a Filipina should have preferred the name of Kipping [the engineer's] to that of Rizal; no, do not be amazed; an Englishman is a free man and I am not.”²⁴

That is all very well but, really, what did Rizal expect? The popular myth is that Rizal could never love a woman, he had given his whole heart to his country. In any case no woman was worthy of the hero: he had a higher fate. This was Blumentritt's interpretation from the very start.

F. Blumentritt to J. Rizal, 15 February 1891 —

... Your last letter filled us with sadness. After all the misfortunes which have afflicted you, you have now been deserted by your loved one. My wife cannot understand how a woman whom a Rizal has honored with his love could leave him; she is angry with this child. I too feel it deeply, but only for you, because I know how your heart is aching; but you are one of those heroes who overcome the pain of wounds caused by woman because they pursue higher ends. You have a stout heart and a nobler woman looks upon you with love: your native country. The Philippines is like ode of those enchanted princesses in the German fairy tales who is kept in captivity by a foul dragon until she is rescued by a valiant knight.²⁵

F. Blumentritt to J. Rizal, 26 April 1891 —

I am sorry with all my heart that you have lost your sweetheart. But if she could bear to give up Rizal, then she was not spiritually worthy of him; she is like a child that throws away a diamond to pick up a pebble. In other words, she was not the woman for Rizal. *La donna e mobile*, she was the fickle woman of whom the Italians sing.²⁶

Yet history has been less than kind to poor Leonor. Faithful for eleven years, with not a glimpse of her lover on his only homecoming! Rizal was very much the lordly Victorian male to expect her to wait patiently and faithfully at home until his own good time while he roamed the world of Consuelos, Gertrudes, Suzannes and Japanese cherry-blossoms, writing novels and preaching ideas that brought tumbling down about their ears all that safe comfortable world of steady incomes, assured prospects and humdrum pleasures that women dream of Leonor had never thrown away a diamond; she had barely touched it, a precious, cold, slippery thing, much too highly priced for a little provincial.

Rizal does not come out too well from the unfortunate affair. Not even the appealing theory that he was “married to his country” can wholly satisfy. There is, after all, nothing incompatible in love of country and love of woman. It cannot even be said that Rizal could not, did not dare, marry and give hostages to fortune and his enemies while he was on crusade for his country's liberties. He himself, sighing that “it seems I shall never marry,”

told Blumentritt in October 1891 that “nevertheless it is not good that man should live alone. God foresaw that.”²⁷ And almost the first thing he did after Leonor's letter of farewell was to propose to one of the Boustead sisters!

As early as February 1891, two months after he had the news about Leonor's marriage and five months before it actually took place, del Pilar was teasing him about changing the “o” in the *Noli* to an “e.” “Be careful it does not turn out that way, or may it, after all, end up, like that!”²⁸ At about the same time another expatriate Tomás Aréjola was writing to him:

Tomás Aréjola to J. Rizal, 9 February 1891 —

... In your letter you speak repeatedly about [Adelina?] Boustead who might just as well be Mrs. as Miss. Since last year I have heard a number of times here about this young lady who, according to your letter, is also a Filipina. They told me she is to be recommended because of the excellent upbringing, her most attractive moral and physical qualities and, in addition, because she is a Filipina ... You yourself told me that you are now free of your engagement in the Philippines. On the other hand, as long as things do not change there, it is not prudent for you to live in our country; if you did, they would never leave you at peace in your home, so that, if you should get married, you would only find bitterness and disappointment instead of happiness. What remedy remains? What solution is possible? See if Miss Boustead suits you, court her, marry her, we are at hand to applaud such a good thing.²⁹

By this time, however, it was definitely Nellie who “suited” Rizal. He had Luna's consent.

A. Luna to J. Rizal, 11 April 1891 —

... Frankly, I believe there is nothing more between her and me than one of those friendships inspired by our being compatriots. It seems to me there is nothing more. Word of honor. I was her sweetheart, we exchanged letters, I loved her because I knew how worthy she was, but extraneous circumstances caused all that happiness, once dreamt of, to vanish. She is good, she is endowed

by nature with the qualities desirable in a young girl, and I think she would make you, of any other worthy of her, happy.³⁰

But Rizal was unfortunate even on the rebound. To start with, Madame Boustead was no more willing than Mrs. Rivera to entrust her daughter's happiness to a man who must have appeared to her to be an unpaid journalist, a physician without a clientele, a persecuted agitator whose activities had stripped his family of their lands.

For his part, Rizal was sensitive about his lack of resources and was afraid that the Bousteads would think he was after their money. He was reassured about this but got precious little else in a letter from Nellie Boustead; it was not in her character, she protested, to “give proofs of an affection stronger than simple friendship” and in any case she “could not do so without the consent of my parents.” Rizal took the hint and wrote to Papa and Mama Boustead; when the latter asked their daughter what she felt, she answered that she “could not tell them before knowing if you [Rizal] had decided to embrace Christianity as I understand it and as it should be understood by those who can do no good without His help and His grace.” She loved him, in her own fashion; that much is a fair deduction from her letters. She “had no illusions” that she was “attractive” and had told her mother so when the latter had cast doubts on the sincerity of Rizal's affections; she did not care if he was poor, if only he would be converted he would be as much “a child of God” as she was and as much an “heir” as she was an heiress—of the Kingdom of Heaven. She reminded him how reluctant she had been to listen when he “or anybody else” [Antonio Luna?] had first paid court to her, yet she had unbent so far as to allow themselves to treat each other with the familiar *tu*: indeed “my feelings are at variance with that surface indifference which the rest do not understand, but which, I believe, you have understood. Did I not promise to be faithful to you? Could such a promise come only from the lips? From me, whom you find so little demonstrative and so short of words!” But she could go no farther unless he complied with her “condition.” Let him think it over calmly and in seclusion and without haste ... If only you were more disposed to hear the voice of Him who asks you for your heart and your services, it would be much better for two reasons. For you and for me. Do you give in?”³²

No, he did not give in. In fact Rizal emerges from this episode with much more credit than from the engagement to Leonor. He would do much for Nellie Boustead. He would wait until he had enough money to support a family before getting married. He would even, so we learn from one of the letters, become a citizen of another country so as to be able to return to the Philippines in relative safety. But he would not believe, or pretend to believe, in Christianity as his beloved understood it.

He had met his match, and she hers. Neither would give in and the romance was crushed between these two inflexible wills. Nellie Boustead's farewell was stubbornly Christian: "May the Lord look with favor on you wherever you may go and shower you with blessings that you may learn to appreciate! My thoughts as well as my prayers go with you!"

An even more cruel rebuff awaited Rizal.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XII

- (1) Ep. Riz., V, 381, 389. The last gives the proposed rules of the association.
- (2) Ep. Riz., V, 396, 404, 406; II, 119, 142, 159.
- (3) Ep. Riz., V, 429.
- (4) The “Letter to the Young Women of Malolos” in Tagalog, can be found in Ep. Riz., II, 122. See also Ep. Riz., II, 94, 102, 174.
- (5) *La Solidaridad*, 31st May 1889.
- (6) Ep. Riz., II, 188.
- (7) *La Solidaridad*, 31st July 1889.
- (8) *La Solidaridad*, 15th January 1890.
- (9) “The Manila Galleon” by William Lytle Schurz, first published in 1939, re-issued New York 1959. Phelan is cited in the Working Bibliography.
- (10) *La Solidaridad*, 15th July to 15th September 1890.
- (11) *La Solidaridad*, 30th September 1889 to 1st February 1890.
- (12) Ep. Riz., III, 57.
- (13) Ep. Riz., II, 141.
- (14) Quoted in Quirino, 166.
- (15) Ep. Riz., II, 170, 176.
- (16) Ep. Riz., II, 228.
- (17) Ep. Riz., II, 239.
- (18) Ep. Riz., II, 262.
- (19) Ep. Riz., II, 289, 294.
- (20) Ep. Riz., III, 29.

(21) Quoted in Quirino, 192.

(22) Ep. Riz., III, 105.

(23) Quirino, 196 et seq.; Palma, 177 et seq. Unfortunately the official edition of Palma does not give his sources. One presumes they were private reminiscences.

(24) Ep. Riz., V, 584, 589.

(25) Ep. Riz., III, 162.

(26) Ep. Riz., III, 187.

(27) Ep. Riz., V, 615.

(28) Ep. Riz., III, 147.

(29) Ep. Riz., III, 160. Kalaw suggests it is Adelina.

(30) Ep. Riz., III, 180. This letter of Antonio Luna, Nellie's first suitor, would seem to establish that Kalaw was wrong, and that it was Nellie whom Rizal was now courting, apparently with success since Luna writes: "Te felicito como se felicita a un amigo."

(31) Palma, 180 et seq., quotes from four of Nellie's letters apparently preserved at that time in the National Library, and now to be presumed lost. Nellie's mother is quoted by her as saying: "Ella ha querido demostrarme las dificultades que podrian presentarse; que Vd. No se halla todavia establecido de modo que le permita mantener una familia, etc. etc."

(32) Op. cit., 180 et seq.

(33) Op. cit., 181. Nellie to Rizal: "Veo que Vd., está decidido a marcharse porque tiene la idea de que puede defenderse contra los ataques de sus enemigos haciéndose súbdito de otro país que no sea España, pero continuando siendo Filipino, como yo lo soy siempre, aunque por el momento sea súbdita inglesa."



XIII

A Politician Without Ambition

All exiles, cut off as they are from the possibility of action, lose their sense of proportion, a state of affairs which often produces bad politicians, but now and again a great poet.

ANDRE MAUROIS

A friend should bear his friend's infirmities.
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

SHAKESPEARE (JULIUS CAESAR)

“Who is Plaridel?” Rizal asked Ponce in July 1888. “If you write to Plaridel, tell him that I rejoice with the country and all good countrymen to see us all united into one compact whole so that we can help one another ... Let this be our only password: For the good of our native land! The day that all think as he and we think, that day we shall have fulfilled our arduous mission, which is the formation of a Filipino Nation.” Later: “Plaridel's pamphlet has made me very happy; I can say in the language of Jacob: 'now I can die content.' I am sure that the work of my dreams will be completed. Why don't we have a hundred Plaridels?” Later still to Plaridel himself: “My most ardent desire is that, without our falling out or quarrelling among ourselves, six or seven Filipinos should grow to overshadow me so completely that no one would even remember me.”¹ Plaridel, Mariano Ponce, José Ma. Panganiban, Dominador Gómez, and, of course, López, the Lunas, the Paternos, Lete—more than six or seven were now in Europe and, although not one of them would ever really overshadow Rizal, and no one would ever make him forgotten, one or two or three at least would jostle him in his scholarly eminence and he would not like it as much as he so generously and sincerely hoped.

The best of them, his only real rival, was Marcelo Hilario del Pilar, who used the anagram of his surname for a pseudonym. Del Pilar is perhaps nearest of all his generation to the modern Filipino. Modern in his concept of political activity, modern in his belief in organisation, modern in his skillful and efficient use of mass propaganda methods, he was the prototype of the modern politician, lawyer, newspaperman and civic leader. He was born on the 30th August 1850 in Bulakan of the Tagalog province of the same name. The real surname of the family was Hilario; del Pilar was added only in obedience to the famous decree of Clavería which added Rizal to the name of the Mercados. It is probable that noble blood ran in del Pilar's veins; his mother was a Gatmaytan, and the prefix, Gat indicated her descent from the ancient Tagalog aristocracy. He came into early conflict with the friars. He was fourth-year law student at the Dominican University when he quarreled with the parish priest of San Miguel, Manila, over some baptismal fees. He seems to have been so deeply affected by this incident that he interrupted his studies for eight years, during which he worked as a government clerk. When he was finally admitted to the bar he was already thirty years old and married to his cousin, Marciana (Chanay) Hilario del Pilar.

Before leaving the Philippines he had made Malolos, Bulakan, where he had established himself, a stronghold of resistance against the friars. With the aid, significantly enough, of the Filipino coadjutor, del Pilar and his followers made life unendurable for one Spanish parish priest after another; he matched the friars' traditional strategy of setting off the people and the government against each other, with the simple expedient of setting the liberal government of Terrero against the friars. His politics were summed up in the title of one of his pamphlets: “*¡Viva España! ¡Viva el Rey! ¡Viva el Ejército! ¡Fuera los Frailes!*” That is to say, “Long live Spain! Long live the King! Long live the Army! Throw out the friars!” His father had been three times mayor of Bulakan and del Pilar was used to the ways of provincial politics. He maneuvered to have one of his relatives, Manuel Crisóstomo, named mayor of Malolos and, when the latter was relieved on suspicion of subversive activities, to have another relative, Vicente Gatmaytan, appointed in his place. With the benevolent neutrality of the Spanish provincial governor, del Pilar harried the friar parish priests over the tax rolls, which depended on the parish register, and over Quiroga's controversial edict on public exequies for victims of contagious diseases. It was he also who prepared eloquent denunciations and memorials to the Governor General and the Queen Regent herself. But the relief of Terrero and the assumption of office of the Marquess of Tenerife deprived del Pilar of his strongest allies; a confidential investigation of the Malolos situation was ordered, and on the 28th October 1888 del Pilar had hurriedly taken ship for Spain as the decree for his banishment from his native province was about to be signed.²

The colony of expatriates in Europe, which del Pilar now joined, had for some time been plunged into a lamentable series of intrigues from which Rizal himself had not stood entirely aloof. The expatriates had never got along together. A fastidious dilettante like Paterno could not very well go arm in arm with a disreputable rabble-rouser like López Jaena, this was easy enough to understand; but there were more fundamental causes for disagreement. In the beginning, as we have seen, the lines had been drawn between the retired old colonials who wanted to reminisce quietly in company, and the newly arrived students, impatient with the past and indeed determined to change it. Even among the latter, discounting the spendthrifts, the gamblers and the womanizers, a division had quickly arisen between those who sought reforms through humble petitions and the

patient creation of a new Spanish attitude of understanding and goodwill, and those who preferred to take the offensive openly, boldly, with intellectual controversy and even physical challenge against those who denigrated the race. Those expatriates with Spanish blood, like Regidor and Eduardo de Lete, were naturally more inclined to an accommodation with the Spaniards; the full-blooded Filipinos were, in turn, naturally suspicious and resentful of their moderation and tended to regard it as a betrayal; Rizal might write cheerfully to Blumentritt that all of them regarded themselves only as Filipinos; he was being optimistic. Indeed in his absence from Spain the conflict of policy, with its ugly undertones or racialism, came openly to a head with the publication of a Philippine review "*España en Filipinas*," "Spain in the Philippines"—which now proved to be even more truthful a picture of *Filipinas en España*. Fortunately we have both sides of the controversy; at least at the start, Rizal, being away, was necessarily neutral and, being pre-eminent, was the chosen confidante of both sides, who sought his sympathy and support.

G. López Jaena to J. Rizal, 6 March 1887 —

... Here "the Chinks" have founded a weekly called "Spain in the Philippines" whose editorship has been entrusted to Lete; undoubtedly when you hear this, you will exclaim: Lete, editor of a newspaper! But yes, friend Rizal, Lete is editor, he who said he wanted nothing to do with the Filipino colony, not even with its patriotic activities, now edits a newspaper, the mouthpiece of the colony.

The policy of the newspaper is to be polite and very moderate; to judge by the articles to be published in the first number, which I have been curious enough to read, there will be something about everything but, on colonial policy, only a very small dose. So the newspaper's policy will be very inhibited and I told myself that apparently Quioquiap is right when he says: "Spaniards on their feet, Filipinos on their knees."

... I have nothing to do with this newspaper, and neither has Ceferino de León, but "the Chinks" do not want my radical and revolutionary ways ...³

Evaristo Aguirre, a Spanish Filipino from Kabite, sent Rizal a copy of the first number, as well as the other side of the story in a letter written at almost the same time. “The old-timers, in view of the moderate tendencies of the review,” had agreed to help defray its expenses; all would go well if they could only stay united, but already the usual quarrels had broken out. Rizal might wonder that Lopez was not on the staff; “well, on learning the consensus that the newspaper should not show tendencies of open and violent opposition to existing institutions, but should rather undertake a serene and peaceful but tenacious and continuous campaign, Graciano himself admitted that he could not edit such a review since he is too well known and looked upon with suspicion; even more he also admitted that the policy adopted for the newspaper was expedient if it was to survive and circulate without misgivings.” Yet, according to Aguirre, López had stubbornly refused to cooperate; still worse, he had “declared war to the death” on the newspaper and had said that he “wanted to kill it and would kill it.” With his intrigues he had already alienated Roxas and de León from the staff; it had gone so far that Julio Llorente, the business manager, had challenged de León to a duel. Aguirre always wrote interminable letters, but the following extract throws new light on a deplorable situation.

Evaristo Aguirre to J. Rizal, 10 March 1887 —

... So they have written to you that the colony has been divided into “genuine” and “aristocrats,” that we no longer consider ourselves Filipinos but classify one another as natives, half-breeds or Spaniards! I expected that! ... The letter which you received is only one more trick to show the disunion which is blamed on others ...

All of us, I think, are convinced that we do not or should not have any other name but that of Filipinos ... Just as you deplore the fact that all the kinds of blood that might divide us do not run together in your veins so that you might serve as a common link. So also I deplore, and I have always said so, the fact that my blood might be a motive not to count me among the “genuine” Filipinos ... I shall tell you more: I am happier when I see a colored countryman of ours and feel more sympathetic towards him than otherwise, because he immediately reminds me of our common origin.⁴

Rizal, preparing to return to the Philippines from Germany, was most upset and wrote a letter counseling unity. Aguirre replied that there was no one in the colony to take over its political leadership; “we await our man; he will emerge, if that is the will of destiny, with such prestige that all will follow him without discussion.”⁵ It may be fairly deduced from this expression of hope that Rizal was not yet the generally recognized leader of the expatriates. Far from it, even before he had left Europe, he began to feel himself actually discriminated against and sabotaged, “*España en Filipinas*” had carried only a short perfunctory notice of the Noli’s publication. He complained from Geneva; Lete hastened to explain but apparently Rizal never got his reply. A year later Lete was still trying to mollify him. “The newspaper was coming out the very day a copy of your novel was received or acquired; going over the last details of the issue and with pen still in hand, I read the dedication; I had no time to do more than look through the book but I did not want to ignore it completely; I wanted to say something in advance about it even if only to give notice of its publication. But what could I say about it? The only thing I had gathered from the first page was that it dealt with a social cancer. I promised to review it in the paper soon as I had read it and was able to arrive at a complete and impartial judgment. Was this disdain? Was this to give judgment, as you say, that the book was bad, and was the promise to deal with it again a mere gesture? ... Did you want a superficial review in the usual manner even when the book had not yet been read?”⁶

Antonio Luna, who had also been offended by what he considered the review’s excessive enthusiasm for paintings other than his brother’s, was giving Rizal another version of the episode at about the same time. “How can Lete explain that he did not review the *Noli Me Tángere*? I know what happened. Lete and one other whom you do not know personally were the first to find faults in your book. Lete assigned its review to Llorente two months later and, after he had promised to do it himself, he was cowardly enough to claim that Llorente would handle the review because in that way the puff for the novel would be greater, thus suggesting that he wanted to do you a favor by not reviewing your great book himself. You have said yourself that your enemies are not only the Spaniards but some who are not Spaniards.”⁷

When these letters were written "*España en Filipinas*" had in fact ceased to exist for lack of funds but the quarrels and intrigues it had aroused continued to fester. Rizal, now in London, was being put up by Antonio Luna and other "genuine" Filipinos as Lete's rival to the editorship if and when the weekly was revived. It would be tedious to follow in detail the complicated arguments and maneuvers that took place. "It is the common desire not only among ourselves but also among our friends in Manila that you should be the editor of the newspaper," wrote Ponce from Barcelona. Replying from London Rizal said that he had already committed himself to editing another paper; with regard to "*España en Filipinas*," "I shall always be at the service of my country and I shall do what my countrymen think I can do; however, I think you would be much better as editor if the paper is published in Barcelona, or someone from Madrid if in Madrid." Antonio Luna was also exercising pressure on Rizal. He suggested Rizal for editor, and in his default Llorente, who had himself broken with his editor Lete because of another painters' controversy, this time between Figueroa and Enriquez. "I write to you [from Madrid] to beg you to come and take this in hand; there is so much confusion here and so many divisions that I believe you are needed if we are to accomplish anything serious ... Rizal or Llorente: that is what we want. If not Rizal, Llorente and nobody else." A week later Luna reported a preliminary canvass of opinion in Madrid: twenty-five were for Rizal, five (including Lete and Aguirre) were of an unknown opinion, five others never attended meetings. But in Barcelona the expatriates were unanimous for Rizal, which would give him in all some fifty to sixty votes. "What do you propose to do? Will you remain unconvinced? I don't think so; I hope not ... The unanimity you seek has been found, as I shall explain. Everyone thinks that you do not seek of absolute unanimity, because that would be absurd. Therefore, from the figures you have seen, you have a unanimous vote in your favor, that is to say, a moral unanimity from all without distinction, which is worth more." But Lete was not going to take his dismissal lying down. After all, he had never resigned as editor of "*España en Filipinas*," if it was revived he would still be editor. In fact, as editor, he had sent out circulars giving the financial requirements of publication to those who were interested in contributing funds. "I see," wrote Aguirre to Rizal with some bitterness, "that it is planned to put Lete into visible eclipse here and, above all, there [in the Philippines] where a response has been made to the appeal he made

in the circulars which he was allowed to sign as editor by those who did not yet think, or bravely show themselves to be thinking, what they now think ... What does it matter in our little world? Who wants to be editor? And whoever it is, he had better put his head in a bucket because he will learn plenty about the ways of our countrymen.”⁸

Rizal knew enough about that to be put off. Certain things had happened, he wrote Antonio Luna, and he wanted to be excused. “I am very sorry to upset your plans but it is better for me to withdraw now while it is still time to do so than to give you afterwards a substitute you may not like. I want to tell you that my deep friendship for Julio [Llorente] and certain things that have happened between me and Lete prevent me from voting for the former against the latter; it might be said it was doing it to get even.” And to Ponce: “I am sorry I cannot accept the editorship because it is impossible for me to go there [to Spain]. I am willing to accept anyone as editor; only, if it is Lete, I shall have to refrain from contributing, for this former friend has refused in other times to publish my articles.”⁹ Rizal did not find it easy to forget.

Many decades later the casual reader of all this feverish correspondence may be forgiven a twinge of sympathy for those unfortunate expatriates whose white complexions and high noses made them suspect to the “genuine” Filipinos of Rizal's time. The “aristocrats,” the “blue-bloods,” they were called with sensitive sneers by those who uneasily referred to themselves as *Manobos* and *indios bravos*; in Rizal himself “race jealousy” was never far below the surface. The white liberal has not yet found the way to get himself accepted as an equal by those whose cause he has espoused; racial discrimination in reverse has yet to be exercised. Aguirre wrote a biting letter to Rizal. He had assumed that the latter was sincere in saying that he was not available for the editorship; yet here he was now complaining that Aguirre had taken sides against him. “What was lacking in you was a little more candor ... What you did not tell me was that, although you had refused the editorship beforehand, you were nonetheless ready, as you say now, to accept it if the colony were to insist on choosing you.” Lete himself wrote, announcing that he had left the fight; he had placed his resignation in Ponce's hands. He was in the depths of disillusionment. “In spite of everything,” Rizal replied, still visibly nursing his grievance about the *Noli*, “I have not changed towards you; if someday or other you get

something published, you will find the same sincere congratulations from me because I do not seek revenge and because I want to do my duty as a friend, as a colleague and as a fellow countryman. It was because I am not vengeful that I did not want either to support Llorente's candidature against yours or to put mine forward the moment I understood that it would hurt you.”¹⁰

As it turned out, the editorship, though not of “*España en Filipinas*,” went to neither Lete nor Llorente nor Rizal but to López Jaena, and afterwards to the formidable Plaridel.

Valentín Ventura had the last word on the matter. Counseling Rizal against accepting the editorship and going to Spain unless it was absolutely necessary to keep the expatriates united, he suggested that, to his mind, a newspaper would in any case be useless “first, because we Filipinos who are in Europe are almost all of us agreed on what is to be done, and it is no use counting on the Filipinos [back home] because the authorities will prohibit the entry of the newspaper into the Philippines; and secondly, because I think that what has already been done in the Philippines and outside the Philippines is enough to lead them to give us more rights than we at present enjoy, if they really want to do it; to still insist would be even, I think, base.”¹⁰

[2]

Parallel to the conflict over the editorship of “*España en Filipinas*” was one on the organisation of the expatriates. Toward the middle of 1888 a plan had been put forward to start a new Philippine-Spanish Association to be headed by Miguel Morayta, Grand Master of Spanish Masonry as president, and Lete as secretary. Morayta would later be blamed by many Spaniards for the loss of the Philippines; upon the outbreak of the Revolution he would have to flee to France for his life and afterwards, elected to the Cortes from Valencia as a republican, he would almost be unseated for the same reason. But now many of the expatriates would have nothing to do with him, some because he was an excommunicated Mason, others simply because he was a Spaniard. Aguirre, for his part, told Rizal that the Association would accomplish nothing; “I know that its worst enemy is the Colonial Office itself. And you know what kind of a reaction this league

and the name of its president the excommunicated Morayta, will have in the Philippines.” Valentín Ventura, for another, thought that none of them should accept any position in the Association “first, because those who ask us to join it already have a record so that in accepting a position we shall be assuming joint responsibility for their past ... secondly, because many of the persons who compose it are *Kastilas* [Spaniards], beginning with the president, Mr. Morayta, who, although honest and worthy and one who has given proofs of loving [*our*] country, is no less of a *Kastila* for all that and as such his policy must be to keep the Philippines for Spain for as long as possible.” For this reason or that, because of religious or racial prejudice, the Association remained in embryo for six months: Llorente turned down the position of treasurer, Rizal that of executive committee member. In November 1888 a new committee was finally formed, with Morayta as president, Luna as treasurer and Dominador Gómez as secretary, among others. “I accepted the post as a patriotic duty,” explained Luna, “and in gratitude to Morayta, who would have been left by us and our lack of responsibility in the most horrible embarrassment.”¹²

Morayta's embarrassment was only briefly postponed. On the 31st December 1888 the expatriates in Barcelona held their traditional New Year's Eve reunion and took advantage of the occasion to organize a rival association with the name, ironic in the circumstances, of *La Solidaridad*, with Galicano Apacible as president, Graciano López, vice-president, Manuel Sta. María, secretary, Mariano Ponce, treasurer, José Ma. Panganiban, auditor, all, it seemed, “genuine” Filipinos. Rizal had sent a message from London: “Friends and countrymen, without parodying the sublime words of Christ I should like to say to you, because that is what feel and think, that wherever two Filipinos are gathered together in the name of our native land and for her good, there also I should like to be in union with them ...” Plaridel, fleeing from his native Bulakan arrived just a few days too late to join the celebration.⁽¹³⁾ Rizal, who was named honorary president, may or may not have liked Ponce's report: del Pilar “is here, full of great enthusiasm. He is working hard and will soon publish pamphlets in Tagalog and Spanish. Perhaps he is the man we have been waiting for to put an end to the disagreement and rivalries in the Madrid colony. I may go with him to Madrid after the winter. He is set on taking me along to the capital.” Rizal was beginning to have misgivings. In a letter to Basa in Hong Kong, which was not wholly fair, he wrote of del Pilar and another

new arrival: “They would be of greater service to the country if they were in the Philippines; there is nothing like staying there to be of real service, that is where education is needed, where the work must be done. It is all right for young men to come here to study but those who already are educated should return and live there. Marcelo del Pilar has already had an education and did not have to come to Europe.” Surely a curious comment from one who was just as far away from Kalamba!¹⁴

In the meantime the Madrid association was languishing. “I see you do not think much of it,” wrote Luna to Rizal “I don't have great faith in it myself because it ... is not finding support among those to whom, in the last analysis, the welfare or the misfortunes of the Philippines do not matter a whit. I myself am doubtful that it will be the Spaniards who will offer us the rights and liberties they enjoy. That is for them; for us, the duties. Even more, our own countrymen seem to be panic-stricken about lending their names to the Association.”¹⁵

Indeed the Barcelona group seemed to be more active, they were soon publishing a newspaper of their own with the same name as their society. Rizal sent his congratulations: “You can count on me for everything, I want to be where you are!” Del Pilar in turn reported: “At last our little paper is out, democratic in its policy, but much more democratic in the organization of its staff. You should see how Graciano the editor writes, corrects proofs, makes up the paper, distributes the copies and even carries them to the post-office, how Naning [Ponce] the business manager goes out for stories, writes, corrects proofs, addresses the copies, attends to the correspondence and also distributes the copies. I am the only good-for-nothing ...” Rizal overcame whatever misgivings he might have had and poured out advice and encouragement. He found the *Soli* too small; it should have more pages; perhaps it should carry advertising. When there was extra money available, the staff should start a reference library of books on the Philippines. Furthermore they should concentrate on the works of Filipino authors and quote them: Peláez, Burgos, López, García, Pilapil, not forgetting Blumentritt who must be described as a Catholic and a friend of Spain. “Let Plaridel imitate himself and not some silly Spaniards.” And to López Jaena, now a reformed character as far as Rizal was concerned:

J. Rizal to G. López Jaena, March 1889 —

... On with the newspaper! Behave as you have been behaving so far, understanding and generous towards all, and I promise you that all will back you up. Try to see that the newspaper makes no mistakes, and be careful that the title of editor does not go to your head and make you treat your friends with disdain ...

Be thrifty; who knows if, should the newspaper survive, it will be the making of you. Treat it, therefore, like your first-born child and your only hope ...

Here [in Paris] everyone is of the opinion that the newspaper gets better with every issue. Be careful not to allow exaggerations or lies, and do not imitate others who avail themselves of dishonest means and base and ignoble language to attain their ends. Try to make the newspaper just, honest, truthful, so that our opinions may always merit respect. We must teach our enemies that we are worth more than they are, morally and humanly speaking.^{[16](#)}

[3]

The psychology of the expatriate has been well explored. His is essentially a divided personality: he wants to feel accepted and at home where he is at heart a stranger, and, if a political exile, condemns conditions, in his native land where, in spite of everything, he wants to return. He cannot be happy where he is, he cannot be where he would be happy. It was inevitable that the Filipino expatriates in Europe should become the first nationalists, and that they should never be more disunited and quarrelsome than when they needed to be united. They were frustrated, angry men who could give vent to their feelings only against one another. The enforced intimacy in which they all lived sharpened all the irritations of human society; it is notorious that room-mates usually end up by not speaking to each other, and many a love affair has been ruined by marriage. Habits, mannerisms, the little quirks of character that would normally go unnoticed or be taken as amusing, even charming eccentricities, become intolerable nuisances when they must be put up with day in and day out. If the Filipino expatriates in Europe had lived apart, they would perhaps have gotten on better together, living in and out of each other's pockets, sharing rooms and meals and

amusements, forced to watch one another's foibles at close quarters, they were bound to get on one another's nerves.

It is not without significance that Rizal broke with Regidor when he was in London, and was on the best of terms with Ponce, del Pilar and Antonio Luna as long as he was not in Spain. On the other hand, it was not long before the staff of the *Soli* were at odds with one another; “Graciano,” complained Ponce, “is losing his enthusiasm; we find it difficult to get him to write, and del Pilar has to do most of it.” When the *Soli* moved to Madrid, Rizal urged Ponce to move too: “You had better go to Madrid; they need you there. The newspaper does not get on well without you.” And later, when López had left the staff: “Marcelo cannot handle it by himself.”¹⁷ The contrast is even more marked in the case of Antonio Luna. Luna, as we have seen, had enthusiastically sponsored Rizal's candidature for the editorship of “*España en Filipinas*,” Rizal in turn had urged all the expatriates to help Luna in his proposed duel with a Spanish propagandist using the pseudonym *Mir Deas*.¹⁸ But Rizal would not be long in Madrid before he himself would be on the verge of fighting a duel with Antonio Luna!

No doubt about it, the expatriates were a sensitive, peppery and pugnacious lot who had no hesitation about carrying their newspaper controversies to the dueling ground. Luna's hot temper had, as in the case of Lete, been aroused in defense of his brother Juan. Antonio had written a volume on his impressions of Madrid under a pseudonym; it had not gone down well with his Spanish readers, and a reply had been written which unfortunately attributed the volume to Juan Luna, who, as the recipient of scholarships from the Barcelona authorities, was described as an ingrate. Antonio decided to assume the responsibility of exacting satisfaction; he was, after all, the real author, and besides Juan had a family. Taking the express train from Madrid to Barcelona, Luna, as he later described it in a letter to Rizal, sought out *Mir Deas* in a café, “asked him who he was (I did not know him), called him a vile despicable coward, spat in his face, and threw him my card.” The Spaniard did not challenge; instead he denounced the expatriates to the police for a violation of the printing law!¹⁹

Rizal was no more successful in either keeping his temper or getting his Spanish antagonists to fight. Retana, who was afterwards to revise his opinions and write Rizal's biography, was then “counteracting” the

campaign of the expatriates with articles in *La Epoca*. In one of them on the Kalamba troubles he had written: "No sooner does Mr. José Rizal arrive in Kalamba from Europe than the tenants refuse to pay the rents, most particularly the relatives and friends of Rizal." Retana has left us a wry account of what followed: "Within twenty-four hours after the publication of these lines Rizal's seconds called on me. The call surprised me, or rather the challenge that was made on the basis of the words which I have quoted, for in the last analysis, they were not exactly new; another Madrid newspaper, *El Popular*, had expressed the same thoughts shortly before this. One of Rizal's seconds thought it as well to be rather frank and told me: 'Mr. Rizal does not mind being attacked personally; he is a fighting man and knows what he can expect; what he cannot stand is having his relatives mixed up in these questions.'" The matter was eventually settled more or less amicably leaving the nonplussed Retana with the conviction that "Rizal's devotion to his family verged on the sublime."²⁰

Baiting Spaniards was perhaps part of the game; as Antonio Luna had explained his challenge to *Mir Deas*: "In this way I believe I can show that we Filipinos have more dignity, courage and honor than this cringing and insulting coward who has crossed our path. I think I have satisfied our outraged honor. Now, what can they say?"²¹ But duels between the expatriates themselves were a different matter. We have seen Llorente challenge de León. Now we see Rizal and Luna at the point of killing each other. It was not Rizal's fault. He had scarcely arrived in Madrid to push his family's appeal to the Spanish Supreme Court in the Kalamba case when, towards the end of August 1890, at a gathering of the expatriates in Madrid, Antonio Luna, the worse for wine, saw fit to disparage Nellie Boustead. Rizal promptly challenged Luna, and they would have fought a duel if Luna, when he had sobered up, had not withdrawn his remarks. His brother Juan hastened to make sure that the affair would not go farther. "I suppose," he wrote Rizal, "that this episode will not be the cause of any resentment between the Filipinos and Antonio; by withdrawing what he said, and by asking to be tied up if he gets drunk again, he shows that he is sorry for the trouble he caused ..."²²

One disagreement, however, would not be so easily composed, and it would have far more serious consequences. It was to be no less than a political duel for the leadership of the expatriates. It is difficult to believe that the

conflict between Rizal and del Pilar arose merely from the petty misunderstandings to which it is generally attributed. Rizal and del Pilar were, after all, mature men of experience, sober, serious, dedicated. Yet the accepted account of their quarrel, which is almost entirely based on a letter of del Pilar to his brother-in-law, makes it appear almost childish, "It is a tradition in the colony," wrote del Pilar, "to have a fraternal dinner on the night of the 31st of December. In the morning of that day the question of serving champagne was brought up in our lodgings, all the more since the boys had taken a great deal of trouble preparing speeches. A thousand ways were discussed to make champagne available that night, and at lunch time there was a great deal of chaffing about it among ourselves, but I kept my mouth shut, and without saying a word was planning to pay for the champagne myself; I wanted to give them a surprise. No sooner said than done; after luncheon I went to Bayo's house to get hold of some money for the night's champagne. From Bayo's house I went, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, to the house of Da. Justa Jugo [a Filipina] where we had been invited for tea on the birthday anniversary of a son of hers. While I was there Rizal arrived and called me aside to tell me: 'Before coming here I passed by your house and I saw a resolution being prepared asking you to pay for the coffee tonight,' 'Agreed,' I answered. Imagine, how could I not agree when I had been ready to pay for something more expensive!

"Came the night and the young people, in high spirits as usual, signed a paper which they would not let me read: when we were sitting down to dinner, a resolution, very wittily drafted by Lete, and signed by twenty-five guests (we were all in all thirty-one, I believe), was read out, asking me to pay for the coffee, Cunanan for the cigars, and Rizal and Dominador Gómez (who had not yet arrived) for the champagne."

"I expressed my agreement and so did Cunanan. But Rizal had the good or bad taste to protest and argue. I tried to head off his protest by suggesting that the champagne be paid for by Modesto Reyes and Mariano Abella, who agreed to do so, in addition to those already named; but perhaps because Rizal did not hear me, we being far apart, I at the head of the table and he at the extreme left, with the authors of the resolution at the extreme right, my suggestion for re-enforcements was not taken up and, on Rizal's initiative, he began at the left end of the table to collect one peseta per person to pay for the champagne. In the midst of hubbub someone approached me and

whispered: 'Mr. Editor, the resolution is withdrawn but we are grateful for your kindness with regard to the coffee; we expected nothing less from your generosity.'

"I understood the bitterness that Rizal's protest had aroused. The latter, who was oblivious to it, continued gay and witty while I worried about a quarrel breaking out. The collection of one peseta was paid from left end to the center of the table, but from there to the right end nobody wanted to contribute."

"Witticisms, very ingenious and wounding, began to be directed against Rizal from the right end, but I took advantage of the fact that Rizal did not seem to realize the point of the jokes and stood up to approach those at the right end and asked them confidentially not to spoil such a brotherly gathering. They all listened to me and there were no more jokes for the rest of the dinner."

"Came the time for the toasts. Dr. Rosario started them off and he was so eloquent in the periodic sentence in which he bewailed the lack of diligence of some in their studies that he drew tremendous applause, but at the end of the clapping Rizal was heard saying: 'We should be sorry for it, not applaud it.' This caused some sour looks but it passed."

Del Pilar went home after the banquet, went out to fulfill an engagement the next morning, and then returned home for lunch and a siesta. "I was awakened at five in the afternoon and told that the colony was supposed to meet in my study to name a leader, and in fact members of the colony were already arriving. Half-asleep, I was puzzled by this sudden proposal and my first reaction was to say that I did not see the need for such an organization. I remained in bed and, turning it over in my mind, the suspicion occurred to me that it was all a trap laid for Rizal to make him see that his leadership was not so unchallenged as many thought. This idea made me get out of bed, ready to maneuver against such a plan which was being proposed as a means of uniting the colony (which was already united). I tried to find support but everyone told me it was the best way of uniting ourselves and, on the other hand, I did not dare voice my suspicion because it seemed to have no visible foundation.

"At this point Rizal arrived, surrounded by the very people who had proposed the plan with the support of Rizal himself, and, giving me no time

to move about, the meeting was opened. The plan was proposed by Lete, who announced that he had the support of Rizal. Some took the floor to ask for clarifications; I, when asked for my opinion by the proponents, opposed the plan. 'Every institution, every organization,' I said, 'has a reason for being only when it fills a felt need. What need does this new organization meet? For political purposes within the limits of the law we have the Spanish-Philippine Association; for the purposes of propaganda we have another circle at our disposal with valuable connections.'

"In short, all were against me and I was defeated as the only opponent of the plan. Naning [*Ponce*] shared my opinion but he did not think it advisable to insist and kept his mouth shut."

"A committee was named to draft the regulations, Llorente, Rizal and I being chosen. The committee met immediately and named Rizal to make the draft."

"Once the regulations had been drafted, I had intended to express my conformity with them even without reading them, because to my mind it was enough that Rizal had drafted them to take it for granted that they had been well drafted, and so I told Llorente, but the latter insisted that I read them all the same. I was casually looking them over when I was struck by a regulation providing that the leader of the colony would have control of its policies and that *La Solidaridad* would be under him."

"I called Rizal's attention to the fact that this provision was out of place since *La Solidaridad* is dependent on another organization. He answered me. 'Don't say anything more about it; after all, you will be elected leader for I and my housemates will vote for you; so that does not matter.' I put up other arguments and was able to amend the regulation in committee, wording it in the following terms; that the leader would have control of the colony's policies and in that sense *La Solidaridad* would be his official organ."

"Assembled in general meeting to discuss the regulations, a question was asked when we came to the said provision whether 'official organ' meant subordination. It was for me to answer and I replied that what it meant was that the leader of the colony had in *La Solidaridad* a vehicle for the publication of his decisions and opinions, and that the newspaper, without being subordinate to him, was ready to print his authentic decisions. Rizal,

without addressing himself to me, then asked: 'And if *La Solidaridad* publishes something which is not in the interests of the colony, will the colony assume responsibility for what *La Solidaridad* says?'"

"I passed over the question and said: 'Gentlemen, *La Solidaridad* is ready to render all kinds of services to the colony and to those who are not members of the colony whenever it is for the good of the Philippines: what it cannot do is to give up its independence; and it cannot do so because it belongs to another very respectable organization [*the Masonic Propaganda Center in Manila*] whose instructions are conclusive and incompatible with any subordination to any other organization not previously named. You can, therefore, vote even unanimously for the subordination of the newspaper: if the newspaper does not subordinate itself, your votes would be futile. "This explanation was accepted and Rizal announced that he would ask that organisation for the authorization that was lacking to link the newspaper with the colony."

"When the discussion of the regulations was finished, we went on to the election of the leader, but the majority provided for [*two-thirds*] was not secured. Rizal and I were the candidates. The balloting was repeated three times with the same result, and Rizal and I parted with the greatest cordiality, so much so that he told me that, since, the balloting would be resumed the next day, it would be advisable for us to join in voting for a third person so as to avoid the formation of factions, to which I agreed."

"The balloting again took place in the afternoon of the following day; I had to go out and could not be present, so I authorized Naning to vote and make any agreements for me. On my return home I found the following news: that at the first balloting a majority had once again been lacking; that, in view of this, Naning conferred secretly with Rizal, proposing a coalition third candidate recommended by the two opposing parties; that Rizal, without accepting or rejecting the proposal, replied that he was going abroad to work by himself because there was no unity possible where there were two Filipinos that the balloting took place a second time, and again failed to produce a decision; that, in view of this, Rizal counted the votes in his favor in everybody's presence and said: 'Well, I see that I have nineteen friends in the colony; goodbye, gentlemen, I am going to pack my bags, see you later,' and seizing his hat, went off. Since Naning had instructions from me to prevent my election, he conferred with those whom he knew were

voting for me and asked them for the sake of harmony to make the sacrifice of changing their votes to favor Rizal. Dominador Gómez, once this agreement had been made, took the floor and announced that his party desired harmony in the colony and were ready to sacrifice their votes in favor of Rizal's candidature. The balloting was then repeated and Rizal was elected."

One of the two positions of adviser provided for by the regulations was then put to the ballot, and Lete was chosen. In the election of the other adviser neither Naning nor Apacible was able to secure a majority and the meeting was adjourned to the following day. The Rizalists decided to support the candidature of Naning (Apacible is a Rizalist), but Naning persuaded the Pilarists not to vote for him and to agree to vote for Dr. Rosario. The next day it was my turn to preside over the balloting, which was again close-fought, with no majority secured for Rosario. Moreover, Rizal himself said he would not accept the leadership if Rosario was elected. The Rizalists approached me to work for the return of Naning's candidature, and I replied that they had seen me make all kinds of concessions for the sake of conciliation, but that things had reached such a pass that it was necessary for them in turn to find some other compromise. At this point Rosario approached me and said: "Mr. Editor, let us carry our concessions to the extreme; we have already given up the leadership; let us give in again now so as to make it clear that we are not the cause of disharmony. I suspended the meeting in order to negotiate, and it was agreed to propose a compromise third person: Mr. Modesto Reyes. The balloting was held and he was elected."

"A day was set for the assumption of offices and the ceremony took place under my chairmanship. The results of the balloting having been announced, I went on to ask Rizal if he accepted the post and was ready to take the oath of office. He asked for the floor. He gave a long recriminatory speech, hit at Lete, and added that Mr. Del Pilar should have withdrawn his candidature immediately, with all the more reason since he himself (that is to say, I myself had considered his victory inopportune (I really had said this): that in Manila the news of his [Rizal's] defeat would have been badly received, since he was recognized there as the leader, and it would be very irregular if he were not also the leader in Madrid; that his leadership in Manila was established by a letter which the Center [*of Propaganda in*

Manila] had addressed to him, comparing him with Ruiz Zorilla [a progressive anti-clerical Spanish, political leader who organized a series of revolts against the regime]; and that in any case his leadership there was unquestioned since any movement of opinion that was taking place now was all his doing. (I had to try hard to keep a straight face on the rostrum.)”

Lete defended himself; Gómez, Aréjola and del Pilar made other speeches; Rizal and the advisers finally took their oaths of office. “Weeks afterwards,” del Pilar concluded, “Rizal took his proposed trip abroad and I was elected to the position left vacant. I thought of not accepting it but, fearing that this would be misinterpreted, I accepted.”²³

We do not have Rizal's version except for a brief reference in a letter to Basa in Hong Kong to “the conspiracy which they tried to contrive against me using our friend del Pilar who unwittingly lent himself to it; I won, however. But this has left me very disgusted.”²⁴

Were it not for the men involved and the time in which it took place this episode of Philippine history might well be dismissed as a minor farce, a puzzling aberration. Did del Pilar really mean to suggest that the opposition to Rizal was based on his characteristically thrifty refusal to pay for the New Year's Eve champagne or his equally typical reproof for students who were wasting their time? The New Year's Eve dinner had not broken up until past midnight, yet by the afternoon of the same day the expatriates had all been gathered in del Pilar's lodgings, in his study in fact. Who had issued the invitations, organized the meeting, thought up the plan of electing a leader and mustered support for it, at such short notice? Had there been in fact a “conspiracy,” as Rizal believed, to humiliate him?

It is significant that Rizal arrived at the meeting together with Lete, and that the latter claimed Rizal's support for his proposal; it is equally significant that when the elections were held Lete alone stood for office apparently unopposed and supported by the Rizalists and the Pilarists. Given Rizal's political naivete, his zeal for unity at all costs, his belief in his own pre-eminence, he may easily have been led to think that the election of an undisputed leader would be the solution to the problems of the expatriates and that he would be chosen unanimously, without considering the animosities and resentments he may have aroused by his censoriousness and parsimony and not only of the night before. It may have been the belated realization of his political mistake which led him to turn from

supporting Lete to attacking him in his parting speech. There certainly seems to be more reason for suspecting the resentful ex-editor of "*España en Filipinas*" than the shrewd but stubbornly independent editor of the *Soli*. It had been Rizal, after all, whom Lete's enemies had set up against him with devastating effect. That Lete was aware of those suspicions is shown by a letter of explanation he wrote to Rizal shortly after the election. "That I did not vote for you is true. Why did I do it? I have said it more than once: because in my judgment your character is not the most suitable to adapt itself to the ways of the colony in its various aspects, and which is even more logical— because you had made clear your determination to go away"²⁵

At the same time it cannot be denied that del Pilar, for all his supposed misgivings about "a trap laid for Rizal," did nothing to save his friend from humiliation; did not, as Rizal would point out, withdraw his candidature and instead allowed one inconclusive balloting to follow another one day after another, rubbing salt in the wounds already inflicted on Rizal's ego; did not even accept the support of the Rizalists for his chief lieutenant Ponce. There is finally a note of barely suppressed gloating in his account of the whole affair, an open sneer at Rizal's pretensions of undisputed leadership in Manila as well as in Madrid.

The one thing certain is that del Pilar was much the better politician of the two wary of committing himself, quick yet discreet in seizing opportunity, skilled in dissembling and in the subtle art of feeding the fire while appearing to dampen it, and surely much more experienced in handling human beings, the raw material of politics. There is a delicate condescension in his letter to his brother-in-law when, after Rizal's public mortification, he urged:

M. H. del Pilar to Deodato Arellano, 31 March 1891 —

...I am of the opinion that we should avoid at all costs a verdict unfavorable to our Rizal; I want to preserve untarnished so great a reputation as he enjoys there. You will remember that when he was insisting on returning there I asked all of you especially to be on the look-out for anything that might diminish his stature; I did it precisely because I already foresaw in him the conduct that I have now witnessed. The trouble is that my man was brought up

in libraries, and in libraries the environment of reality is not taken into account before acting.²⁶

Even more, Rizal did not have the temperament that makes for success in politics; he was too sensitive to slights inflicted on himself, not sensitive enough to the feelings of others; he was ambitious beyond the reach of his influence; yet not ambitious enough to keep the leadership for which he had paid with humiliation. He wanted his leadership to be recognized and accepted as only due to his merits and his readiness to serve; the mere hint of opposition was enough to anger and disconcert him, yet Antonio Luna had already reminded him that “absolute unanimity” was an absurdity not to be expected. He did expect it; he expected opposition, enmity, distrust from the Spaniards; when it came from his own countrymen, from his fellow-expatriates, it was like a betrayal.

What are we to make then of his repeated protestations in the past, not least to del Pilar himself, that he wanted to be overshadowed? Forgotten?

J. Rizal to M. H. del Pilar 4 April 1890 —

...It would please me if you were always to sign your name [in the *Soli*] for I want to be overshadowed gradually; what I want is for you to take my place, you and nobody else ... If we obtain a seat in the Cortes I shall withdraw and dedicate myself to teaching, I could not accept a seat [*in the Cortes*] although two of my ancestors on my mother's side were Congressmen (José Florentino and Lorenzo Alberto). I am no longer interested in those things. My desire is, therefore, that you should prepare yourself in case we should obtain it.²⁷

The answer is clear. He wanted the leadership, if only to give it away. He would be overshadowed, but “gradually.” He wanted del Pilar to “take his place,” not to dispute it with him. The relations between them were never quite the same again. “Don't ask me to contribute articles to the *Soli* for the time being,” he wrote Ponce in February 1891 from the Boustead villa in Biarritz. He would undertake to answer attacks only if del Pilar, Luna and others should not be able to do so; “I think all of you can handle everything there. For myself I shall gradually go into a corner ...”²⁸

But news of the rivalry had reached Manila. The Masonic propaganda center, which was subsidizing the *Soli*, hesitated to intervene; Juan Zulueta, named to arbitrate between Rizal and del Pilar on the issue of subordinating the newspaper to the elected leader of the expatriates in Madrid, wrote Rizal a careful letter which in effect sustained del Pilar's claim of independence. It did not help to assuage Rizal's feelings; he wrote back informing Zulueta and the brethren that there was no longer any issue at stake for he had resigned the leadership.²⁹

In the meantime he and del Pilar exchanged cautious letters of reconciliation.

M. H. del Pilar to J. Rizal, 7 August 1891 —

... They tell me from Manila that we should make up, but since, as I understand it, there is no resentment between us, I do not know how to begin. Many times I have taken up my pen to write to you about this, but as many times I have had to give up, saddened and even disheartened by the idea of disagreeing with my best friend, without eating or drinking with him, as the phrase goes. In brief, if you have any resentment, put it aside, and if you consider that I am at fault, and the fault is forgivable, forgive me.³⁰

J. Rizal to M. H. del Pilar, 12 August 1891 —

I was extremely surprised by your letter referring to resentments, disagreements, reconciliations, etc. I believe it is useless to discuss something that does not exist and, if it ever existed, should vanish with the past ...

If I stopped writing for the *Soli* it was for a number of reasons: (1) I need time to work on my book [the *Fili*], (2) I wanted other Filipinos to work too, (3) in my opinion unity in action is worth a lot for the party and, since you are on top and I have my own ideas, it is better to leave you to direct policy as you see it and for me not to meddle ...³¹

J. Rizal to M. H. del Pilar, 7 October 1891 —

... You ask me to write again for *La Solidaridad*; I am grateful to you for the invitation, but frankly I will confess to you that I do not have the least desire to do so, and you will have guessed the

reason. I wrote for the fortnightly for more than one year while I thought it was a Filipino mouthpiece ... I believed in a national enterprise ... Now you tell me that the *Soli* is a private enterprise and you will understand that I cannot work under these conditions for a private concern: I do not know for whom am working, nor how I am working for it, nor how it is taking my services ...

Besides, not only ideas but whole articles have been printed in the *Soli* which are against my opinions and convictions and cannot make the fortnightly inconsistent. I prefer to enclose myself in solitude and retirement rather than disturb the peace and harmony of the staff ...

Perhaps you will find me over-sensitive; I confess that I am; but, when one has only had good will, love and abnegation for one's friends, and in return is met with recriminations and attacks, believe me that one should change one's conduct and amend one's course of action. The scratches given by friends hurt more than wounds inflicted by the enemy.

I have made up my mind how I shall act, and that is to leave the Filipinos in Madrid to direct policy, they know and understand it so well. What can I do with my impatience and my pretensions to despotism? I understand the desire of every Filipino to do what he wants ... [32](#)

It is a pity that Plaridel's replies to these letters have not been preserved. In any case Rizal finally lost patience with this politic sparring and came out openly to charge del Pilar with having sought to "overthrow" him.

J. Rizal to M. H. del Pilar, 13 October 1891 —

... I am not offended because, pushed by others, you should have wanted to overthrow me. It is natural for each one to seek his own glory ... Before I felt hurt because of the way you lent yourself to my overthrow but now, grown calmer, I smile and consider that the opposition you set up against me was for my own good because, if I had been unanimously elected, I would have stayed, and in what difficulties I would have found myself afterwards!

... What a pity that the work on which the two of us were engaged has been split! I understand that at heart you have me in esteem, and I do too, always, perhaps even more than you think, because in me all feelings, all affections, hatreds and resentments are lasting, if not everlasting! I have that defect; I forgive but I find it difficult to forget, and just as I do not forget that you were my best defender and my best champion, so also I remember that you were the first battering-ram with which they sought to overthrow me. What a pity that we could not have gone on side by side; what a pity that, since I was to a certain extent the political head, you should have wanted to down me to rise and become the leader! But that is natural in the human condition.³³

He could not resist one last rueful gibe. “A glass of champagne has dissolved the idol made of clay. If it was really clay, what does it matter if it is gone?”

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XIII

- (1) Ep. Riz., II, 31, 35, 49, 96.
- (2) This is based on a biographical article I wrote for the *Philippines Free Press*, 13 December 1952.
- (3) Ep. Riz., I, 233.
- (4) Ep. Riz., I, 234.
- (5) Ep. Riz., I, 262.
- (6) Ep. Riz., II, 83.
- (7) Ep. Riz., II, 60, 78.
- (8) Ep. Riz., II, 54, 56, 60, 62, 71, 78.
- (9) Ep. Riz., II, 73, 75.
- (10) Ep. Riz., II, 77, 80, 90.
- (11) Ep. Riz., II, 86.
- (12) Ep. Riz., II, 70, 72, 100. On the effect of all this on Morayta's subsequent political career in Spain, see Almagro, 640 et seq.
- (13) Ep. Riz., II, 94, 96.
- (14) Ep. Riz., II, 103, 110, 112.
- (15) Ep. Riz., II, 108.
- (16) Ep. Riz., II, 116, 119, 121, 149, 154. The letter to López Jaena is on 151.
- (17) Ep. Riz., II, 207, 252, 304.
- (18) Ep. Riz., II, 251.
- (19) Ep. Riz., II, 239, 249.

(20) Retana, 194.

(21) Ep. Riz., II, 249.

(22) Ep. Riz., II, 97. One is not quite sure what the quarrel was about.

(23) Ep. Riz., I, 239 et seq.

(24) Ep. Riz., III, 143.

(25) Ep. Riz., III, 145.

(26) Ep. Pil., I, 246.

(27) Ep. Riz., III, 7.

(28) Ep. Riz., III, 161.

(29) Ep. Riz., III, 178, 210. Zulueta appealed to Rizal's patriotism to arrive at a "conciliatory" solution. Rizal to Zulueta in part: "He sabido por otros conductos que allí en ese centro se ha criticado mi actitud y alguien ha dicho que yo desuní a la Colonia. Si esto es cierto, lo lamento de todas veras, pero tenuncio a explicarme y sincerarme, Mi conciencia me dice que puedo estar tranquilo sobre el particular. ¿Que era lo unido antes de mi intervencion? ¿Quien era el poder de la Colonia que he querido derribar? Durante todo el tiempo de las elecciones he querido siempre retirar mi candidatura y no he parado hasta retirarme y, sin embargo, yo tenía los votos de la mayoria. Es esto desunir?" etc. etc.

(30) Ep. Riz., III, 206.

(31) Ep. Riz., III, 208.

(32) Ep. Riz., III, 242.

(33) Ep. Riz., Ill, 247.



XIV

The Reluctant Revolutionary

The word *filibustero* is very little known in the Philippines. The masses do not know it yet. I learned it for the first time in 1872 when the tragic executions took place. I still remember the panic that this word caused. Our father forbade us to say it ... the Manila newspapers and the Spaniards use this word to describe those whom they want to render suspect of revolutionary activities. The educated Filipinos fear its scope. It does not have the meaning of “pirate;” it means rather *a dangerous patriot who will soon be on the gallows, or else a conceited fellow.*

RIZAL (IN A LETTER TO BLUMENTRITT)

He went away into his “corner,” to nurse the “scratches” of his friends, and meditate on “the human condition.” Now that he was free of the distractions of politics and the requirements of the *Soli* he could finish his second novel. He had been working on it on and off ever since the publication of the *Noli*, haunted by the fear that he would never finish it. Writing to del Pilar before their quarrel, he had confided “certain sad presentiments” which were assailing him; he had believed from childhood that he would never reach thirty years of age (his letter was dated the 11th June 1890, when he was only a few days from being twenty-nine) and for the past two months he had been dreaming almost every night of dead relatives and friends. “That is why I want to finish the second part of the *Noli* at all costs.”¹ Leonor Rivera's infidelity and his humiliation in Madrid must have driven him to work even harder; scarcely a month after packing his bags and resigning the leadership of the expatriates, on the 29th March 1891, he would inform Blumentritt from Biarritz, in a tone that was melancholy and resigned, that “I have finished my book. Oh, I have not expressed in it any idea of revenge against my enemies, but only for the good of those who suffer, for the rights of Tagalog humankind, brown and homely though it be!”²

“I see from your letter that you are very sad,” Blumentritt replied, rather puzzled. They had been out of touch. “I have no details about the book you have finished writing. Is it a novel like the *Noli Me Tángere* or is it some scientific work?”³ By the 30th of May he appears to have completed the final revision and could write from Brussels to Basa in Hong Kong: “My book is now all ready to go to press; the first twenty chapters have been corrected and can be printed, and am recopying the rest. If I receive any money you will surely have it in July. I am writing it with more ardor than the *Noli* and, although it is not so cheerful, at least it is more profound and perfect. “But it was the story of the *Noli* all over again: who was going to pay the printers? “In case I do not receive the money, can you arrange for them to send me the bills of exchange for the printing of the book? If not, I am leaving here and joining you.” Two weeks later: “I am now negotiating with a publishing house; since I do not know whether [the novel] will be printed here [in Belgium] or in Spain, I cannot send it to you as yet; in case it is not published here, I shall send it to you by the next mailboat. There are only three chapters left to revise. It is longer than the *Noli*, first part. It will

be finished before the 16th of this month ... If my *Noli* [second part] is not published, I shall board a train the very day after I receive your letter with my return ticket; if my book is published, I shall have to wait for it to come off the press.”⁴

His money had long given out; he had left Paris for Brussels because life was cheaper there; and Brussels, the two Suzannes and all, for Ghent because he had heard that the printers charged less than in the capital. He shared a small room with José Alejandrino, an engineering student who would become a general of the Revolution; Alejandrino might be as admiring as Viola but did not have Viola's wallet. Alas there was now no Paciano on whom to pin his hopes; Paciano was banished, the family ruined and dispossessed. Need drove Rizal's innate thrift to the most austere extremes; he and Alejandrino breakfasted on such a meager ration of biscuits that the young student had eaten his month's share in half the time. Scraping together all the francs he could save, and taking his courage in his hands, Rizal began the printing of what he had entitled *El Filibusterismo* early in July 1891.

“I preferred to publish it any which way before leaving Europe because it seemed to me a pity not to do so,” he wrote Basa. “Since I have not received a single centavo for the past three months, I have pawned all that I have in order to get this book published, and I shall keep on with the printing as long as I can; when I have nothing left to pawn, I shall stop and return to join you, I am tired of trusting our countrymen, it seems they have all joined forces in order to make life miserable for me; they have been stopping my return with promise of a subsidy but after sending it one month they have not given me another thought. Recently, at the beginning of April, I received another letter from [the Propaganda Center in Manila] enclosing a hundred pesos corresponding to the subsidies for January and February, and promising to send me my monthly allowance regularly; here it is July and I still have not received another centavo! Some wealthy persons had been promising and offering me money for the publication of my book; now that I accept their offers they do not send me even one penny. I have already pawned all my jewels, I live in a small room, I eat in the cheapest of restaurants, in order to save money and get the book published; soon I shall have to stop the printing if no money arrives ... Ah, I tell you that, if it were not for you, if it were not because I believe that there are still some truly

good Filipinos, I would feel like sending our countrymen and all the rest to the devil! What do they take me for? At the very moment when one needs tranquility of spirit and an unhampered imagination, they come with tricks and meanness! I don't know; if the funds I expect do not arrive, I may throw books and everything out the window, and take ship, perhaps by the next mailboat or sometime this month, to live and work for myself ... Sometimes I feel like burning my manuscript ... Keep my book absolutely secret; the friars might smell it out ... and make ready for it.”⁵

By fits and starts the *Fili* came slowly off the press; it was a long and difficult birth. On the 6th of August Rizal reported to Basa that it had advanced as far as page 112. “But since no money comes and I owe everyone and I am myself in pawn, I shall have to suspend publication and leave the book half-way. It is a pity because it seems to me that the second part is more important than the first, and if I do not finish it here it will never be finished.” Twenty days later he was more optimistic: “I write in haste to tell you that my book goes forward; you shall have it in a month and me with it. I am planning ways to get it into Manila.” By the 18th of September he wrote he could be expected in Hong Kong by November with eight hundred copies of the *Fili*.⁶

A Viola had come to the rescue, after all, in the person of Valentín Ventura! Rizal showed his gratitude by sending him the manuscript of the *Fili*.⁷ He had been compelled by lack of funds to cut the novel drastically. Only one chapter had been dropped in the *Noli*; the *Fili*, far from being longer than the *Noli*, as he had announced, was in fact much shorter as published, with only thirty-eight chapters as against the *Noli*'s sixty-four.

There were congratulations from Trinidad Pardo de Tavera; Juan Luna hailed him as the creator of the Filipino novel; Ventura said diffidently that he was reading the *Fili* all over again to enable him to say something other than it was “perfect, good, correct, energetic, deeply felt, poetic;” twelve expatriates in Barcelona sent him a round-robin letter comparing him with Dumas *pere* and Moses; and López Jaena found the *Fili* “superior to the *Noli Me Tángere*” in style, language, ideas. “But,” observed the shrewd Ilongo, “you have, in it, left the problem without a solution ...” Deep in his wounded heart Rizal wanted and waited for the verdict of another man. Sending a copy to del Pilar, he said ambiguously: “You can entrust the review to whomever thinks worst of it, or not have it reviewed at all. It is all

up to you ... it would even be expedient for my work to be attacked by the *Soli* so that the latter might appear to be opposed to subversive ideas ... The *Soli* can give it publicity or not when I leave, but better not, because I don't care, it is no use." Plaridel did not find it embarrassing to give his frank opinion and Rizal replied: "I thank you for what you tell me about my book and I deeply appreciate your verdict that my *Filibusterismo* is inferior to the *Noli*. Frankly, without irony or double-talk, I too am of your opinion. For me the *Fili* is inferior to the *Noli* as a novel, and that is why I read with a grain of salt the opinion of those who tell me that the *Fili* is superior to the *Noli*. Blumentritt, everyone in Paris and Barcelona, tell me it is superior because they want to be kind to me; I attribute it all to their kindness; you are the first to tell me the truth and to coincide with my way of thinking. This flatters me because it proves that I can still judge myself."⁸ Was there no irony in his dismissal of what "everyone in Paris and Barcelona" thought? He himself had found the *Fili* "more profound and perfect" than the *Noli*.

[2]

The *Fili* takes up where the *Noli* left off. It is Ibarra who has survived. Having amassed a fortune abroad, he returns to the Philippines with the new Spanish Governor General whom he has under his sinister influence. He is known as Simoun the jeweler, disguised behind dark glasses and a goatee, a man of uncertain nationality but with a definite purpose: the subversion of the regime. This he proposes to do by using his enormous wealth and influence to encourage corruption in the government and foment such economic distress as will drive the people to take up arms. To his chagrin the biggest obstacle to his plans are the young native intellectuals, who are dedicated to a program of reforms leading to the assimilation of the Filipinos into the Spanish nation. Typical of these reforms is the establishment of an academy of the Spanish language under lay control.

Simoun-Ibarra has another purpose: to take María Clara away from the nunnery, and to avenge the ruin of his life. He makes two efforts; both fail. In the first he plans to seize Manila with the help of disaffected Filipino regiments and a band of outlaws. On the very eve of the uprising he is told that María Clara has died; in a frenzy of grief he abandons his allies and is

almost killed by them. In the second he turns to anarchist techniques. All the rulers of Manila, from the Governor General to the provincials of the Orders and the men of greatest property and influence, are expected to attend the nuptial feast of Paulita Gómez, the richest heiress of the city; he plans to send as his wedding gift an elaborate lamp which is really a bomb. The lamp will hang over the main table of the feast, and the house itself, Capitán Tiago's old mansion, has been mined. At the decisive moment the lamplight will flicker; when the wick is raised, the bomb will explode. Simoun-Ibarra takes one of the young intellectuals into his confidence; the latter, on the night of the feast, meets Isagani, Paulita's rejected suitor, waiting in the street for one last look at his beloved. Isagani is warned to get away but, when he learns the details of the plot, he rushes into the house instead and, seizing the fatal lamp; jumps, with it into the river. Simoun-Ibarra, now a grievously wounded fugitive from justice, takes refuge in the solitary mountain retreat of Father Florentino, a virtuous Filipino priest, and dies there before the authorities can arrest him. The priest takes the dead man's treasure chest and hurls it into the sea, "where it will not do evil, thwart justice or incite greed."

The *Fili* also rounds up the lives of other characters in the *Noli*. Basilio, the surviving son of Sisa is sent through school by Capitán Tiago and becomes a physician but is unable to save his benefactor who was encouraged in opium smoking by a friar, dies leaving his wealth to the Church, Espadaña runs away from Doña Victorina, who pursues him all over the archipelago but never does catch up with him. Father Salví becomes ecclesiastical governor of the archdiocese. Father Sybila is glimpsed again, as elegant and sybilline as ever. Rizal tries to redress the balance which was so weighed against the friars in the *Noli*. A Dominican, Father Fernández, earnestly tries to understand the Filipino intellectuals and defends the work of the Church and the religious Orders. The noblest character in the novel is a good priest, the native secular Father Florentino. But the indictment is only softened. It is not a sinister and sanctimonious lecher like Salví but a jolly muscular serenader, Father Camorra, who rapes Basilio's sweetheart Juli and drives her to suicide; the crime is scarcely more palatable for all that. Cablesang Tales, the farmer hounded into banditry, has more understandable motivations than Elías; the student intellectuals are more human and believable than Ibarra; but there is no character to match Doña Victorina, Tasio the scholar or the "Muse of the Constabulary." Paulita is only a more

calculating María Clara; Isagani, a less generous Ibarra; Peláez, as ingratiating and craven as Linares. Even Don Custodio, the “liberal hoarder of reforms,” does not come as alive as Capitán Tiago.

One must concede that the *Fili*, as a novel, is inferior to the *Noli* —perhaps because it was so drastically shortened. Many of the incidents and characters are taken from the society of the times. The young intellectuals' project for an academy of the Spanish language, which causes such a stir in official circles and eventually leads to the arrest of its principal proponents, is obviously based on the identical proposal of the young women of Malolos. Even the quarrel for precedence among the guilds in Binondo finds a place in the story. The first attempt at rebellion planned by Simuon-Ibarra depends on its success partly on the suburbs rising in protest against a decree for the demolition of nipa huts, a clear parallel with the destruction of the houses of the dispossessed Kalamba tenants. The oblique references to the personages of the regime are only thinly disguised: the Governor General is described as a man determined to put his highest official adviser in his place, automatically reversing his recommendations: a reference to the relations between Weyler and Quiroga. The influence of the well-connected “countess” is emphasized, as well as her greed for bribes. Sometimes Rizal does not even bother to mask the factual basis of his story; as in the case of Cablesang Tales.

Tales and his family have made a forest clearing (his wife and his elder daughter dying of fever in the process) only to find, on the eve of their first harvest that a religious Order, which owns lands in the neighboring town, is claiming ownership of the fields. Tales does not want “to match his clay pot against the iron pan of the friars” and agrees to pay an annual rental. “Make believe,” his old father advises him, “that you dropped the money in the river and a crocodile swallowed it.” After two good harvests, the friars double the rental. “Patience,” his father tells Tales, “make believe the crocodile has grown.” Still Tales prospers and is named headman and tax collector, becoming Cablesang Tales. Soon he is making up from his own funds the taxes he fails to collect. “Patience,” his father repeats. “Make believe the crocodile's family has joined the party.” The rentals are now raised to ten times the original amount and, when Tales protests, he is bluntly told that, if he cannot pay his lands, for which his wife and daughter paid with their lives, will be given to another. At last he rebels, refuses to

pay and is taken to court. He spends all his savings on lawyers' fees and court charges and in the meantime patrols his fields armed with a shotgun. He loses the suit and appeals. His son is drafted into the constabulary and Tales refuses to pay for a substitute. A decree is issued against the carrying of arms and his gun and bolo are taken away from him. The inevitable happens; he is kidnapped by outlaws and to pay his ransom his favorite daughter has to go into domestic service. When Simoun-Ibarra visits the town and offers any price or any of his jewels in exchange for a reliquary that once belonged to María Clara, Tales takes the jeweller's gun instead, leaving the reliquary in its place. The next day the friar-administrator of the estate and the tenant who had taken Tales's fields, as well as the tenant's wife are found murdered.

Do not be alarmed, peaceful citizens of Kalamba! None of you is called Tales, none of you committed the crime! You are called Luis Habaña, Matías Belarmino, Nicasio Eigasani, Cayetano de Jesús, Mateo Elejorde, Leandro López, Antonio López, Silvestre Ubaldo, Manuel Hidalgo, Paciano Mercado—you are the whole town of Kalamba! You have cleared your fields, you have spent on them the labours of a lifetime, savings, sleepless nights, privations, and you have been stripped of all, driven out of your homes, deprived by order even of the hospitality of others. They were not content with doing violence to justice; they broke the most sacred traditions of our country: You have served Spain and the King and, when you asked for justice in their names, you were exiled without trial and torn from the arms of your wives and the kisses of your children. Any one of you has suffered more than Cablesang Tales and yet none of you, not one has taken the law in his own hands. There was neither pity nor human feeling for you, and like Mariano Herbosa you have been persecuted even beyond the grave. Weep or laugh in the solitary islands where you wander, idle and uncertain of the future. Spain, generous Spain, watches over you, and sooner or later you shall have justice!

Rizal's apostrophe does more than reveal the source of his material and the emotions under whose influence he wrote his story; it suggests the whole point of his novel: what is a man to do when he is denied justice, take the

law into his own hands or wait for Spain to give him his rights? He had already posed the question in the dialogues between Ibarra and Elías in the *Noli*; the *Fili* repeated it in broader terms. In the *Noli* Rizal had, as we have seen, concentrated his fire on the friars; the Governor General had good intentions but was powerless to put them into effect against the power of the religious Orders whom he detested. In the *Fili*, Rizal indicted the entire regime including its native defenders and supporters. Now the Governor General himself, that is to say, the representative of the Crown and the lay constitutional authority, was shown as no better than the friars with whom he consorted. The highest official adviser, a left-handed tribute to Quiroga, was pictured as resigning in disgust with an official policy that betrayed the true Spain. Even a reputed liberal like the counselor Don Custodio was likely to spend his time searching for compromise formulas that were in effect a surrender to obscurantism. The native intellectuals were not much better. Either, like the eminent lawyer Señor Pasta, they preferred to live peaceful and prosperous lives in discreet silence and subjection or, like the university students, they were deluded by hopes of an impossible “assimilation” into the Spanish nation. The *Noli*'s inconclusive debate between Ibarra and Elías carried on in the *Fili* between Simoun-Ibarra and Basilio, the medical student who is dreaming of marriage and a career. But the debate is on a different level and has a different purpose, Simoun tells Basilio:

I have encouraged crime and cruelty to accustom the people to the thought of death. I fostered insecurity to drive them to seek the most desperate solutions. I crippled business so that the country, impoverished and ruined, would no longer have anything to fear. I whetted appetites for the public funds.

When this did not prove enough to make the people rise, I wounded them in their most sensitive spot. I made the vulture insult and pollute the very corpse on which it lived.

But when I was about to achieve the spontaneous combustion of all this corruption, this loathsome accumulation of garbage, and when frenzied greed, taken unawares, was rushing about to seize whatever was at hand, like an old woman surprised by fire, you showed up with your slogans of pro-Hispanism, with your calls

for confidence in the Government and faith in what will never come!

You pool your efforts thinking to unite your country with rosy garlands, and in reality you forge iron chains. You ask parity of rights, the Spanish way of life, and you do not realize that what you are asking is death, the destruction of your national identity, the disappearance of your homeland, the ratification of tyranny.

What is to become of you? A people without a soul, a nation without freedom; everything in you will be borrowed, even your very defects. You ask for Hispanization and do not blush for shame when it is denied you ...

It is folly to try to influence the thinking of those who rule us; they have their own plans and their eyes are closed to anything else. You will not only lose your time but also fool the people with vain hopes and help to bend their neck to the tyrant yoke.

What you should do is to take advantage of the prejudices of our rulers.

So they refuse to integrate you into the Spanish nation. So much the better! Take the lead in forming your own individuality, try to lay the foundations of a Filipino nation.

They give you no hopes. All the better! Hope only in yourselves and your own efforts.

They deny you representation in the Spanish parliament. Good for you! Even if you were able to elect representatives to their parliament, what could you do there but be drowned among so many voices, yet sanction by your presence the abuses and wrongs which might be afterwards committed?

The less rights they recognize in you, the greater right you will have later to shake off their yoke and return evil for evil.

If they refuse to teach you their language, then cultivate your own, make it more widely known, keep alive our native culture for our people and, instead of aspiring to be a mere province, aspire to be a nation, develop an independent, not a colonial mentality, so that in neither rights nor customs nor language the

Spaniard may ever feel at home here, or ever be looked upon by your people as a fellow-citizen, but rather, always, as an invader, a foreigner, and sooner or later you shall be free.

This is no longer a discussion. Rizal is no longer debating with himself. Ibarra and Elias both had something of Rizal, were two lobes of his brain, two ventricles of his heart. There is very little of Rizal in Basilio, except perhaps that young Rizal who had also once dreamed of settling down with Leonor Rivera as a country doctor. But that Rizal was gone, betrayed for an Englishman, killed in Kalamba. What remained was the embittered Simoun and Rizal is close to identifying himself with the apostle of revolution.

He is impatient with the attitudes presented by Basilio, whose arguments in the dialogue are put in a few words and brushed aside almost contemptuously. When Basilio pleads that his "only ambition is to alleviate the physical ills of my fellow citizens," Simoun retorts: "What are physical compared with moral ills? What is the death of one man beside the death of a whole community? One day you may become a great doctor, if they leave you alone; but much greater will be the doctor who can bring new life to this anaemic people. What are you doing for the country that made you what you are, that gives you life and knowledge? Don't you realize that a life which is not dedicated to a great idea is useless? It is a pebble lost in the field when it should form part of some building." Basilio argues that each man can serve in his own chosen field and that he has chosen the field of science. Science can redeem man from racial and other forms of persecution and create a new world where patriotism will be recognized as mere fanaticism. Such a world, Simoun replies, can be made only after the elimination of "tyrants and slaves among nations." "Patriotism will always be a virtue in oppressed peoples." What, for instance, he asks Basilio, has he done for his mother and brother, victims themselves of oppression? "Is it enough to come here every year and weep over a grave like a girl?" There is nothing he can do, Basilio replies. Even if he were to get revenge, it would not bring them back to life. What was to

be gained? “You would prevent others from suffering what you have suffered,” Simoun retorts. “You would save other sons from being murdered, other mothers from being driven mad. Resignation is not always a virtue; it is a crime when it encourages oppression. There are no tyrants where there are no slaves.” Basilio insists that all he wants is an opportunity to “live my own life.” “Your ambition,” Simoun parodies him mockingly, “is a cozy little home, a woman of your own, and a handful of rice. Behold the model Filipino!”

Rizal was right in his appraisal of his own novel; whether or not others saw his point or refused to see it, the *Fili* was more profound politically than the *Noli* because it did suggest a way out of the impasse in which the intellectuals were finding themselves, asking for reforms that would never be granted. “These reforms were “vain hopes” that only “fool the people.” Was “integration” or “assimilation” refused? “Try to lay the foundations of a Filipino nation.” Was representation in the Cortes denied? The greater the right then, to shake off the yoke. “Instead of aspiring to be a mere province, aspire to be a nation; develop an independent, not a colonial mentality.” “Resignation is not always a virtue; it is a crime when it encourages oppression. There are no tyrants where there are no slaves.” The people must be accustomed to the thought of death; they must be driven to seek the most desperate solutions.”

But Simoun is held back, as Rizal himself later would be, by hesitations and doubts about the rightness of “the most desperate solutions.” A few days before the first *coup de force* he broods over the city which he hopes will soon rise in flames to be cleansed of its garbage and asks himself if he is not perhaps part of that filth. “A thousand bloody phantoms rose in answer to the cryptic question, wailing apparitions of murdered men, raped women, fathers torn from their families, the lowest passions stimulated and encouraged, virtue scorned.” And after the failure of the second attempt at rebellion, on his deathbed Simoun hears from Father Florentino the final condemnation of his philosophy. Why has God forsaken him? Is not God justice, and is not freedom also God's cause, since there can be no justice without freedom? Why has God's help been denied him? “Because,” the priest admonishes him, “you chose a means that He could not approve.” Simoun had sought the freedom of the people by fomenting crime.

Corruption, hatred, and the end, did not justify such means. Indeed such means were bound to be self-defeating. The vices of a regime may prove fatal to it but they are equally fatal to the society in which they are bred. "An immoral government is matched by a demoralized people; an administration without a conscience, by rapacious and servile townsmen and bandits and robbers in the mountains! The slave is the image of his master; the country, of its government."

Father Florentino then closes the novel with what we must take to be Rizal's own thoughts on the issue, at least at the time the *Fili* was written. "Assimilation" has been rejected as a vain hope. "Separatism," or in plainer words independence, has been advocated almost openly. Rizal in the *Fili* is no longer the loyal reformer; he is the "subversive" separatist, making so little effort at concealment that he arrogantly announces his purpose in the very title of his novel, which means "subversion," in its dedication to Burgos, Gómez and Zamora, "victims of the evil which I am trying to fight" but also officially condemned as instigators of rebellion, and in the novel's very title page with its challenging quotation from Blumentritt:

One easily gets the feeling that an agitator has bewitched the sympathizers of the friars and the reactionaries into favouring and promoting without knowing his real purposes, a policy which can have only one aim: to spread subversive ideas throughout the entire country, and to convince each and every Filipino that there is no solution except independence from the Mother Country.

No solution except independence! But how is it to be achieved? At this point Rizal hesitates and draws back. The last chapters of the *Fili* are heavily corrected, and it may not have been due only to Rizal's desperate need to cut down his work to match Ventura's money. The thought of revolution in real life may have called up too many "bloody apparitions;" it also suggested the many unexpected events, the twists and turns of circumstance, the sudden whims of individuals, on which the success of a revolution may hinge. There is a certain uneasiness inherent in the failure of Simoun's two attempts: the first, because of his own personal demoralisation upon the unforeseen death of María Clara; the second, because of the totally incalculable intervention of Isagani in removing the bomb to save the unfaithful Paulita. Nor are these accidents purely

novelistic; Rizal surely remembered the two greatest uprisings within his generation's memory: Novales's *coup*, which failed because his own brother in command of Manila's citadel, had refused to surrender it and beat off the rebels' attack; and the 1872 mutiny, which failed, so it was said, because the conspirators in Kabite had risen prematurely, confusing the fireworks of a suburban fiesta for the cannonade that would signal the start of the rebellion. Were men to be murdered, women raped, the lowest passions given rein in revolution when its success rested on such trifles and accidents?

"I do not mean to say, that our freedom must be won at the point of the sword," Father Florentino is careful to say in the final apostrophe of the *Fili* while Simoun lies dying. "The sword now counts for very little in the destinies of our times, but I do say that we must win our freedom by deserving it, by improving the mind and enhancing the dignity of the individual, loving what is just, what is good, what is great to the point of dying for it. When a people reach these heights, God provides the weapon, and the idols and the tyrant's fall, like a house of cards, and freedom shines in the first dawn. Our misfortunes are our own fault, let us blame nobody for them ... As long as the Filipino people do not have sufficient vigor to proclaim, head held high and chest bared, their right to life in human society and to guarantee it with their sacrifices, with their very blood; as long as we see our countrymen feel privately ashamed, hearing the growl of their rebelling and protesting conscience, while in public they keep silent and even join the oppressor in mocking the oppressed; as long as we see them whipping themselves up in their selfishness and praising with forced smiles the most despicable acts, begging with their eyes for a share of the booty, why give them independence? With or without Spain, they would be the same and perhaps worse. What is the use of independence if the slaves of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow? And no doubt they will, because whoever submits to tyranny, loves it!"

What are we to conclude from this? In Rizal's mind the Filipinos of his generation were not yet ready for revolution because they were not yet ready for independence, and they were not ready for independence because they were still unworthy of it. When the individual had learned to value social good above personal advantage, and when these individuals had become a nation, then "God would provide the weapon," whatever it might

be, whether revolution or otherwise, and independence would be won. Until a new uncorrupted generation arose, independence would be a delusion, a change of masters, and it were better to bury the Revolution in the depths of the sea.

Bonifacio would disagree. History and the Revolution would not wait for the “pure and immaculate” victim.

[3]

For all that, Rizal was clearly no longer the loyal reformer that he has often been made out to be; he was not even a convinced advocate of gradual and peaceful emancipation. As early as 1887 he had written Blumentritt: “Peaceful struggle will always turn out to be a dream because Spain will never learn the lesson of her former colonies in South America. Spain cannot see what England and the United States have learned.” He added however, “But in the present circumstances we do not desire a separation from Spain; all that we ask is more attention, better education, a higher quality of government official, one or two representatives in parliament, and more security for ourselves and our fortunes. Spain could win the affections of the Filipinos at any time if only Spain were reasonable. But whom God would destroy, He first makes mad.”⁹ A month later he gave his friend a glimpse of one of the *Fili's* main themes: “The Filipinos have desired Hispanization for a long time, and they were wrong in doing so. It is Spain, not the Philippines, that should desire the assimilation of the country, now we have been taught this lesson by the Spaniards and we should thank them for it.”¹⁰ Scarcely four months later, on his twenty-sixth birthday anniversary, his thinking was even closer to what would be Simoun's basic strategy.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 19 June 1887 —

... I can assure you that I have no desire to take part in conspiracies which seem to me premature and risky in the extreme. But if the government drives us to it, that is to say, when there remains to us no other hope than to seek our ruin in war, when the Filipinos shall prefer to die rather than to endure their miseries any longer, then I too shall advocate violent means. It is

Spain who must choose between peace and ruin, because it is an evident fact, well known to all that we are patient, much too resigned and peace-loving ... But everything comes to an end in this life, there is nothing eternal in this world, and this applies also to our patience. I cannot believe that you, as a free man, as a citizen of Europe, would like to advise your good friend to endure all and to act like a cowardly man, without courage.¹¹

This was even before his return to the Philippines and the Kalamba evictions. By June 1888 he could exclaim to Blumentritt: "I believe it is too late; the Filipinos have already lost the hopes they placed in Spain! Now we await our fate from God and ourselves but never again from any government!"¹² By October, when news came of the decrees of deportation against his family, his feelings were sharpened by personal bitterness: "Those who deport or imprison any individual without a right to do so can only expect our hatred and, if we cannot avenge ourselves, our sons and, if not, our grandsons will do so!"¹³

However, he was still far from thinking like Simoun. Another letter to Blumentritt in January 1889 is nearer to the mind of Father Florentino. "We desire the happiness of the Philippines but we want to obtain it by noble and just means for reason is on our side and we should not therefore do anything evil. If, to make my country happy, I had to act vilely, I would refuse to do so because I am sure that what is built on sand will collapse sooner or later ... If it were impossible to overcome our enemies now, another day will dawn, another day will come, for there must be a God of justice; otherwise we would turn atheists."¹⁴ But these "noble and just means" were no longer confined in his mind to parliamentary representation and other such reforms. To del Pilar he confided in April 1890: "I am assiduously studying the events in our country. I believe that only intelligence can redeem us, in the material and in the spiritual, I still persist in this belief. Parliamentary representation will be a burden on the Philippines for a long time. If our countrymen felt otherwise than they do, we should reject any offer of such representation but, the way we are, with our countrymen indifferent, representation is good. It is better to be tied by the ankles than elbow to elbow. What can we do?"¹⁵

Here is no straight progression, step by step in rigid theory, but a flexible accommodation to the realities of the situation as it is driven into Rizal gradually that there is as little to expect from Spain as there is from the vast majority of his indifferent countrymen. One can see the theme of the *Fili* taking shape: the Filipinos may eventually “prefer to die rather than to endure their miseries any longer,” and then “violent means” will become inevitable; but in the long run “only intelligence can redeem us, in the material and in the spiritual.”

He had not kept these views to himself and, strange as it may seem to a later generation brought up in a tradition of a general Revolution, they were not popular even among the expatriates. We have been habituated to think of Rizal as a mild and gentle reformer who shrank from the thought of separation from Spain, most of all a violent revolution; it would seem that, on the contrary, he appeared to his contemporaries, especially after the publication of the openly subversive *Fili*, as a wild firebrand, as demagogic as López Jaena himself. There was indeed an odd rapport between the prim and scholarly Tagalog and the bohemian Ilongo. Unexpectedly, they seem to have understood and liked each other and one must consider the possibility that they were brought together by a certain affinity in ideas. We have seen that López could no more stomach the prudent policies of “*España en Filipinas*” than the editors of the latter could trust him. It was at about this time that the fortunes of the Ilongo took a curious turn that foreshadowed Rizal's future actions and may not have been entirely without effect on them.

After contemplating standing for a seat in the Spanish parliament, López Jaena had turned once more to his medical studies but a cousin who had promised to support him did not send the necessary funds. In despair López Jaena decided to go to Cuba. Rizal, who was in Brussels, was vehemently opposed. “For many months,” he wrote Ponce, “I have received nothing from the Philippines, that is why I am thinking of returning there as soon as possible, and let God say what is to happen. Graciano should do the same; instead of going to Cuba to catch the yellow fever, he should go to the Philippines and let himself be killed in support of his ideas; one dies only once and, if one does not die well, a good opportunity is lost which will not come again. Let him go resolved to face the danger and the danger will disappear; or at least he will be a martyr to his ideas. I am opposed to his

going to Cuba; it would be pointless; Cuba is exhausted, it is an empty shell. If one must die, let one die at least in his country, for his country and in the name of his country.”¹⁶ Whether moved by Rizal or not, López Jaena abruptly changed his plans, although the Colonial Office had offered to pay for his trip, and decided to go home instead. “I go without fear,” he announced, “I am resigned to everything, ready for everything, to fight if necessary, to die if need be.”¹⁷

Unfortunately he stayed in Manila only four days and, as he candidly confessed to Blumentritt, “I left in a hurry because I had the suspicion that if I stayed some time in the Philippines, as I desired, I would land in Bilibid or in the Marianas persecuted by our friends the friars.”¹⁸ Anti-climaxes like this exposed not only López but Rizal himself, who had the same reputation as a firebrand separatist, to the most-telling satire. It was not long in coming. On the 15th of April 1892 *La Solidaridad* carried an article whose point the expatriates could hardly miss. Entitled “Five-and-Ten-Cent Redeemers,” it was a satirical article on the mythical city of Villailusa, “The City of Illusion.” “Times were bad in Villailusa and its governments could not be worse ... to make things worse there existed in the place a corporation of rascally caciques who did nothing but live on the country like parasites, deceiving the governments and exploiting the credulity of the people.” After, giving examples of the capacity and lust of these caciques, an obvious reference to the friars in the Philippines, the article went on:

Naturally, the reaction finally came because it is a natural law that patience has its limits, despite sore-ridden Job, and, as is also natural, once the idea of a vigorous protest took shape, it was sought to put it in action hastily and without counting on popular support or the means of action.

And there was one more reckless than the rest who, believing himself to be called by God, set himself up, albeit uneasily, as a teacher, raised his voice and anointing himself the apostle of the gospel, spoke thus to the oppressed people in accents that were almost apocalyptic:

“Do you not know that complaints are fit only for the weak? Will you endure any longer this slavery that degrades you and not destroy all existing institutions? Here are the tablets of the Law;

here are your rights. *Nolumus regnare super nos*, we do not want you to rule over us: here is your battlecry against the powerful. To the fight! To the death! To arms!”

Thus he spoke and, descending from the platform which had served him for a rostrum, adopted a posture of tragic withdrawal, raising his hand to his breast like another Napoleon.

“But, good sir,” one poor devil, looking, like a philosopher with a hangover, felt bound to object, “what do we gain by knowing all these tablets if we do not explain their meaning to the people and if, in addition, we do not even have one bad musket to shoulder? If we do not have even a single bullet, or the worst of boats or, which is saddest of all, one peseta to invest in all these essential needs, do you not think that we shall make a ridiculous show of ourselves? Do you not consider that the losers will be persecuted with horrible reprisals? Let us educate the people, let us inspire them with noble ideas and civic spirit, let us proclaim the right to life, let us organize people for victory, and let us raise money, money, money. But while we lack this and have no organized forces, do you not believe convenient the movement within the law, the press campaign, the parliamentary struggle?”

“What are you saying, you wretch? What objection do you raise? Money? No need for that. A heart and a sword, that is the secret. What fine patriots God made you! The press? We have already written enough.”

“We should not expect anything from the governor, the mayor or even the parish priest. Have you heard? Do you think I do not do enough by making speeches and showing you the way, by driving you into the struggle? I myself should not fight; my life is sacred, my mission higher. When you have won, I shall take care of organizing and ruling you, and in between decrees I shall regale you with my epic songs and hymns of victory or with some romantic story of heroism.”

“Do you need supplies? They will drop from Heaven, which protects just causes, and if not, then don't eat. Arms? Buy them. A military organization? Do it yourselves. Ships? Swim.

Transports? Carry your baggage on your shoulders. Equipment? Go naked. Barracks? Sleep in the open. Doctors? Drop dead, for these are all duties imposed by patriotism.”

“And afterwards?” objected one who was growing more and more enthusiastic by the minute.

“Afterwards, I!” (With grandeur.)

A handful of enthusiasts eventually goes out into the streets, crying death to tyrants, and ends up in front of a building where the authorities are gathered by some coincidence. The ruler of the city looks over the unarmed rabble which is shouting: “Death to tyrants! Long live the revolution! Long live Iluso I! Long live liberty! Throw out the oppressors! Down with these scoundrels!” With withering scorn the ruler retorts: “Oh, yeah?” Then amid general laughter the “rebels” are rounded up by the police, some to be sent to the scaffold, others into exile, protesting that they had been only mouthing the words of another, of Iluso I, “our redeemer.”

“Where is this gentleman?” asks the rulers.

But Iluso did not appear; he had gone off to weep over the misfortunes of the Motherland. He had already proved his patriotism by making speeches!

But nothing was needed to fight!

To create a climate of opinion was the last thing to worry about!

And patriotism? Ah, that is ... mere poetry when one lacks what is necessary to defend one's self and to win.

But he would have said to himself, seated in Olympian grandeur: “I am reserved for higher things. I am the only prophet, the only one who loves his country as she should be loved, that's me! He He, He — his name was heard in every corner of the earth.

And the earth shook.

And men trembled.

And women gave birth out of pure joy.

And children sucked their thumbs.

And Villailusa remained enslaved.

And he spouted a fountain of axioms.

And he kept sucking his thumbs, but with patriotism and with grandeur, until he became transformed into a human sphinx.

And they put him in a madhouse.

Ah, these redeemers ... nuts!

The article ended with a report from the *New York Herald* the revolution in Chile against the dictator Balmaceda had cost fifteen million pesos.¹⁹

The point of the satire's author, who signed himself "Edilberto de Leporel," was obviously that the peaceful press and parliamentary campaign for reforms should be continued, and that it was premature and quixotic to talk of a recourse to arms when there were neither arms nor money to buy them. While Rizal had expressed his disillusionment with the propaganda activities in Spain, he himself, as we have seen, had scarcely advocated an immediate revolution, and it is difficult to understand why he felt that he was being attacked. Perhaps he had not yet completely recovered his equanimity after the humiliation he believed he had undergone in Madrid. Before leaving Europe he had confided to Blumentritt: "Many have complained about me, saying that I do this and that to the Filipinos. I have some hidden enemies. I want to go [to the Philippines] so as to hear no more about it; I have enough with my political enemies, I do not want to have other enemies inside the party."²⁰ Shortly afterwards he was more specific:

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 9 October 1891 —

... You would like me to write an article for *La Solidaridad*; unfortunately, I must confess that I do not plan to write another article for that newspaper. I could have told you this before but I wanted to hide from you the unpleasant attacks made on me. Many things have happened among us ... I suggested many plans; they made secret war on me. When I tried to get the Filipinos to work, they called me an "idol," said that I was a despot, etc. They wrote to Manila twisting the facts and said I wanted this and that, which was not exactly the truth. I know from some that even

before my *Filibusterismo* went to press, they were already saying that it was worthless and much inferior to the *Noli*. They plot secretly here against me, petty things, as if they were determined to destroy my modest reputation. I am withdrawing to avoid a split; let others direct policy. They said that Rizal was a very difficult personality; very well, Rizal leaves the field.²¹

Now he was convinced that his “hidden enemies” were once more at work. He had no difficulty in identifying “Edilberto de Leporel” as Eduardo Lete and lost no time in protesting to del Pilar. He could not understand what purpose they could have had in attacking him.

J. Rizal to M.H. del Pilar, 23 May 1892 —

... If you were pursuing a subtle political purpose, why such bitterness, why not write to me confidential why did you do it? Had I not told you before leaving Europe that I would never do anything against you? What mad dog bit you that you should attack me when here [in Hong Kong] I have nothing at all to do with politics and work only to prepare for the Filipinos a refuge of freedom [the Borneo colony project], spending the rest of my time in writing a few things? Have I not told you that I was leaving politics to you so that you may gain a lot of prestige? Did you have to attack me for that? I cannot understand it at all. That is why I say to myself that if you have acted for political motives, I applaud you and want you to continue because it seems to me that you are on the right path. For the time being I am very much disliked by the friars; so, by getting rid of me, you can achieve much in the way of assimilation. That was my purpose in depicting the dark character of Simoun, so that it might be realised that the members of the *Solidaridad* are not subversive, I would have thought that you understood my ideas; only that in putting them into effect, you played your part with such verisimilitude that you even went after me. But then, why not name me outright so that those Spaniards who are not abreast of our affairs and may not catch the allusions will have no doubt that you are attacking me?

... I am not saying that I despise the article; on the contrary, I esteem and am very much struck by the courage of Lete in attacking me with such fire, boldness and, above all, self-confidence. I like men who are ready for anything. You can give me an explanation if you want to do it; I am only pointing out that the step taken is very delicate and of far reaching consequences. I wash my hands of it ...

... I am anxious to receive a satisfactory explanation because it seems to me that we are now entering a crisis. To my regret you are making me re-enter politics, and I shall have to write letters again to Manila and other places some of these days in order to stop the schism. I am growing more and more convinced that, in writing the article, Lete went too far and that you allowed yourself to be carried away. Friendly or hostile, the article, while it may hurt me, could hurt the interests of the Philippines even more. Who knows, however, if it may not, after all, do good; it awakens me and, after a silence, I return to the struggle. But I must assure you once again that I enter the struggle without bearing arms against you or against any other Filipinos; I shall reactivate the propaganda campaign and re-enforce the *Liga*.²²

One must grant a certain nobility in this letter, no less than a shrewd political instinct. The *Fili* had been openly and deliberately subversive, renouncing the propaganda campaign for reforms and assimilation in favor of independence through direct action; the *Soli*, in attacking its author, would clear itself of any similar objective. But had this subtle political maneuver been the real purpose of the editors? In attacking Rizal, they might be misleading the Spaniards, but were they not also dividing the Filipinos? It was indeed a “very delicate step, of far reaching consequences,” a veritable “crisis.” Besides, Rizal noted in the same letter, “Leporel” had in effect revealed in his article that the campaign for “assimilation” was only camouflage for the work of preparing a revolution. “Why say this? Why go peddling these wares when nobody is buying?” In a second letter he was even more specific, “It is rather childish to proclaim to the city and to the world that arms, ships and money are needed to make a revolution; this is a discovery that, while it may not be too dated, has at least been put into practice already in places on earth that are not too

civilized. Our friend Lete might be excused for revealing to us such a novel theory, although he perhaps thought me more stupid, more ignorant and more candid than I really am.”²³ His suspicions of a personal attack were, it would seem, not entirely allayed. Del Pilar hastened to re-assure him.

M.H. del Pilar to J. Rizal, 20 July 1892 —

... You are mistaken. How could I have allowed [Lete] to attack you when I am interested in maintaining your prestige? How could I have done so when, in spite of what has happened between us (or rather, with you) I have not given up the hope of renewing our old ties, for I consider that petty differences in approach are not sufficient to destroy our identity of principles, ends and sentiments? How, when my way of handling things depends on unity, fraternity, mutual tolerance and mutual support among those who share the same idea? What will it have served me to have swallowed in silence the attacks, injuries and bitter experiences which I have had at the hands of many for the sake of harmony? I repeat, you are mistaken.

I am sure that Lete, in writing the article, did not think of referring to you and much less of upsetting you. He described a type whose approach is diametrically opposed to yours. You do not reject those approaches which contribute and prepare the way for yours; you yourself have told me repeatedly: “There is no approach we should not try.” Why should you imagine yourself depicted in a character who rejects and destroys all preparations? If I had believed you to be such a one, I would indeed have thought of offending you and you know well that I could not offend you for anything or anybody.

Whether or not my word counts for anything, I should like to put you in the picture. Before everything, be assured that Lete's article was inspired by the news that arrived from Manila at that time about an active and effective campaign to destroy all our propaganda organization, to destroy the *Soli*, to destroy the center, to destroy, in brief, all preparations for ultimate solutions so as to concentrate only on these solutions themselves. Although the hidden originator of this way of thinking is in bad faith, those

who follow it undoubtedly act in good faith, believing that they are rendering a service to the country. That is why Lete thought of calling for reflection, and the medicine he used was not an opiate but a caustic. But believe me, he did not want to allude to you for you had nothing to do with this campaign.²⁴

Whoever it was that was advocating “ultimate solutions” without preparation, remains “hidden” even to history. And there the matter ended. Del Pilar hinted that someone had been trying to divide Rizal and him and their followers, whether for his own “Mephistophelian” purposes or the friars'. “I am glad that you say you will be more useful in the Philippines,” Rizal wrote to del Pilar, “I do not deny the services you are rendering there [in Madrid], and that you are *for now the only one* who can render them, but since the *Soli* reaches Manila only with great difficulty, your efforts are very handicapped. Many of our countrymen take it for granted that we are or will be more useful abroad than in our country; when they can prove to me that a sick man is cured sooner the farther he is from the doctor and medicines, I will believe it.”²⁵

[4]

He had other reasons to return. In February 1891 Buencamino had reported to him that, with Paciano and his brothers-in-law rusticated in Mindoro, Rizal's aged parents and his sisters had been left alone and abandoned, the family estates neglected and turning back to jungle, their townmates completely weary of the fight, penniless and cowed.²⁶ “What has become of my family?” he cried to Blumentritt a month later.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 29 March 1891 —

... When I think of them I am overcome by such sorrow that, if I had less faith in God, I would have done something foolish. I am not sorry that I started this campaign and if I were now in the first flush of life, I would do just what I have done because I am sure that I should have done so, it was the duty of any man, and God might ask me why I had not fought evil and injustice when I saw them.

But when I think that everyone, my parents, brothers, friends, nephews and nieces, have to suffer in my name, then I feel immensely unfortunate and lose all feelings of gladness. When I find myself alone with my thoughts I ask myself whether it is not better to be a good family man than a true Christian ...

I have also received letters from my countrymen in which they speak of their sufferings and persecutions, telling me that they will stand firm and are not afraid of all the arbitrariness of the powerful. Sometimes I wish that a volcano would blow up the Philippines and swallow all such sufferings and injustices so that we might all sleep the sleep of death!²⁷

By this time he had finished the *Fili* and was thinking again of going home to share the misfortunes of his family. “It seems to me that the storm is past; the sun comes out again for all, all has been sacrificed, and nothing remains but ruins. Thanks be to God! We have lost everything and have nothing more to lose; now things must get better ... My father and all my family remain courageously united and are still faithful to the Filipino party, and my brother is even braver in exile than he was before. All my family now carry the name of Rizal instead of Mercado because the name Rizal means persecution! Good! I, too, want to join them and be worthy of this family name ... That is why I think that now is the most opportune time to return to the Philippines and share all dangers with them for I was always of the opinion that I can do more in my own country than abroad. What good have I done these last three years and what misfortune occurred because I was not in my native land?”²⁸ When the *Fili* was off the press he was even more determined to go home—“I must return to the Philippines. Life here is getting to be a burden, I must give an example of not fearing death even when this is terrible ... I go to meet my destiny.”²⁹

But there was the matter of funds. Fate issues no free tickets. He had to reckon also with the opposition to his return put up by the Propaganda Center in Manila and by his own family. “In our opinion,” Narcisa wrote, “it is not expedient for you to return these days because you would run great risks; besides, here you would do nothing but there you can do much.”³⁰ Would it be preferable to go only as far as Hong Kong? He wrote Basa about a plan to open a school there under his direction which would

teach languages, the sciences and the arts in the Jesuit manner. He could also practice ophthalmology.³¹ As late as October, two weeks before he would actually take ship, he was telling Blumentritt: “I still don't know exactly whether I should go to the Philippines or establish myself in Hong Kong. My country draws me, I want to embrace my parents and brothers, but my friends and countrymen are against it.”³² On the *Melbourne*, which he had boarded at Marseilles, the pull of his native land became stronger. “The nearer I get to my country, the more vehement is my desire to return to the Philippines. I know that all consider it a folly, but something is pushing me to it. Is this fate or misfortune? I cannot give up my desire to see my native land.”³³

The Spaniards made the choice for him. “Only a few lines,” he wrote Blumentritt from Hong Kong in December, “to let you know that my father, my brother and one of my brothers-in-law have arrived here, fugitives from Manila. My aged mother, who is blind, is in the hands of the Spaniards ... I am looking for a house; my sisters too are coming.”³⁴ He would not have to go home, after all, to see his family. They had been driven out of the country to see him. Even Doña Teodora was with them by the end of the year.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 30 December 1891 —

... My aged and blind mother is here too to be free from tyranny. They sent her from Manila to Santa Cruz in La Laguna by mountain road, going from town to town, because she did not identify herself as Realonda de Rizal but simply as Teodora Alonso! But she has always and always called herself Teodora Alonso! Imagine an old woman of more than sixty-four, going up and down mountain roads with her daughter, guarded by constables! She asked to be allowed to travel by steamship, offering to pay everything, even the constables' fares, but the noble Spanish “gentleman” did not allow it! when I learned of this act of gallantry and nobility, I wrote the “gentleman” telling him that his behavior towards women and young girls was most unworthy; that barbarians and Chinese conducted themselves more nobly and humanely. When my mother and sister, after a journey of four days, reached Santa Cruz, the Governor there was deeply moved and pardoned them.

They are now here and give thanks to God that they find themselves in a free country. Life in the Philippines has become impossible: without courtesy, without virtue, without justice!

That is why I think that *La Solidaridad* is no longer the place to give battle, this is a new fight. I should like to follow your wishes, but I believe that it will be all in vain; the fight is no longer in Madrid. It is all a waste of time.³⁵

It had been ten years since he left Manila for the first time—had it all been “a waste of time,” if not worse? Our hearts go out to Rizal, brooding and raging on his rocky piece of alien soil. How far away in time and space were now the moonlit terrace where a melancholy boy said his beads, the classroom with its Roman and Carthaginian banners, the shy flirtations in the convent-school parlor where a pert little minx had pinned a paper flower to his hatband! And how treacherous and empty must now have seemed those dreams of fame and glory, the gold medals and the silver quills, the poems that would move all hearts, the speeches in all tongues, the novels that would bring a whole regime tumbling down, the history that would reverse History! Popular education, parliamentary representation, civil liberties and rights, the Spanish way of life—all “vain hopes.” He must have felt utterly alone, surrounded though he was by his family, for he alone must bear the responsibility for their ruin; because of him they had been stripped of their possessions and they had been driven from their homes in his name. What was he now? A reformer who no longer believed that reforms would come, a separatist who left to God the attainment of independence, shunned by his supporters in Manila, mocked by his fellows in Madrid, a man who had destroyed everything he touched and what he most loved. For him it was a time of despair, and yet of hope. “The sun comes out again, for all, all has been sacrificed and nothing remains but ruins. Thanks be to God! We have lost everything and have nothing more to lose. Now things must get better ...”

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XIV

- (1) Ep. Riz., III, 61.
- (2) Ep. Riz., V, 585.
- (3) Ep. Riz., III, 174.
- (4) Ep. Riz., III, 194, 195.
- (5) Ep. Riz., III, 200.
- (6) Ep. Riz., III, 205, 216, 229.
- (7) Ep. Riz., III, 234.
- (8) Ep. Riz., III, 231 et seq. The letter to del Pilar begins on 246, and the reference to the *Fili* on 248.
- (9) Ep. Riz., V, 68.
- (10) Ep. Riz., V, 78.
- (11) Ep. Riz., V, 170.
- (12) Ep. Riz., V, 265.
- (13) Ep. Riz., V, 318.
- (14) Ep. Riz., V, 396.
- (15) Ep. Riz., III, 9.
- (16) Ep. Riz., III, 79.
- (17) Ep. Riz., III, 185. López Jaena is quoted in a letter from Tomás Aréjola to Rizal.
- (18) Ep. Riz., III, 198. Again López Jaena is quoted indirectly, this time in a letter from Rizal to Blumentritt.
- (19) *La Solidaridad*, 15th April 1892.

[\(20\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 606.

[\(21\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 614.

[\(22\)](#) Ep. Pil., I, 258.

[\(23\)](#) Ep. Pil., I, 261.

[\(24\)](#) Ep. Pil., I, 262.

[\(25\)](#) Ep. Pil., I, 261.

[\(26\)](#) Ep. Riz., III, 152.

[\(27\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 584.

[\(28\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 589.

[\(29\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 606.

[\(30\)](#) Ep. Riz., III, 120.

[\(31\)](#) Ep. Riz., III, 143.

[\(32\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 615.

[\(33\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 621.

[\(34\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 624.

[\(35\)](#) Ep. Riz., V, 627.



PART THREE



XV

A Choice of Islands

Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done.

BERNARD SHAW

It will be time for us to be moderate when we have won.

VICTOR HUGO

[1]

Did Rizal know his own importance? He was not an arrogant man; what his enemies and rivals took for arrogance was essentially sincerity; he had not only the courage but the stubbornness of his convictions. He would not

dissimulate, he would not compromise, he would not submit, he would not endure contradiction or criticism, he would not suffer fools and knaves gladly. At the same time, he had no false modesty; as we shall see, he was fully aware of the prestige and influence which his writings, particularly his novels, had given him, at least among his countrymen. “Men have placed me,” he would write the Spanish Governor General, “at the head of the progressive movement in the Philippines and have attributed to me a certain influence on its aspirations.” But repudiated, as he thought, by his comrades in the propaganda movement, his political strategy shrugged away, his leadership disputed, even his sincerity and courage questioned, he did not and could not realize that, to the Spanish friars in Manila and the colonial authorities on whom they exercised their sinister influence, he was still, as always, the brain and soul of disaffection to the regime. “A man,” Oscar Wilde has said, “cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies,” and the Spanish friars, brooding on the scorpions with which Rizal had lashed them in the *Noli*, the *Fili* the *Morga* and the *Soli*, were the worst of enemies; they were enemies with a festering sense of personal injury and with a driving sense of righteousness. Marooned in their monasteries and parish houses, their ears cocked in the confessional and the sacristy to the gossip of church mice, their intelligence from Madrid distorted by distance, ignorance and bad will, they were not privy to the dissensions among the liberals and to the isolation of Rizal. They may have caught vague echoes of the introduction among the natives of Masonry, thereto the exclusive social reserve of liberal Spaniards in the archipelago⁽¹⁾; they would later be dismayed by the belated discovery of a great conspiracy among the peasants and the artisans, those folk whom they had so often compared to the patient carabao—all these quakes and tremors were attributed to one man, whom they made in their minds into a veritable giant shaking the regime single-handed with his wicked writings. Rizal, in their obsessed judgment, was everything: the master Mason of them all, Grand Orient himself, the supreme conspirator, the instigator of the intellectuals, the corrupter of the common people, the root, the spring, the keystone of it all—only tear up that root, fill up that spring, knock out the keystone, and the whole business of *filibusterismo* would be bankrupt.

The Marquess of Tenerife had shown in Kalamba how to deal with the family and followers of this master agitator but he himself remained out of reach, first in demoralised Europe with her liberal constitutions, and now in

Hong Kong under the protection of heretic Englishmen. If they had only known it, their hated antagonist was not only doubtful of the supremacy which they had accorded him but was not even sure what to do next.

For a time the Rizals apparently considered settling down in Hong Kong. “We are all living here together,” Rizal wrote Blumentritt happily, “my parents, my sisters and my brother, all at peace, far from the persecutions they suffered in the Philippines. They are very happy with the English government; they remark everything and, in many of the comparisons they make, they find many things which I could not have observed. My father is even more uncompromising in his judgments; he says: 'I want to die here, I don't want to go home anymore; life there is unbearable.' A sad effect of the Dominican's hatred is that even my aged mother, who was so devout and religious, has now lost her faith; she says everything is a fraud and that the friars have neither faith nor religion; she wants to believe only in God and the Virgin Mary and nothing else ... My brother is translating the *Noli Me Tángere* into Tagalog. He has already translated quite a lot ... When I can get away from the work of my profession, I am writing the third part of my book [the first two being the *Noli* and its sequel the *Fili*] in Tagalog ... I am finding it very difficult to write the book because I cannot express many of my thoughts freely without introducing neologisms; furthermore I have not had much experience writing in Tagalog ... Here I practice [my profession] as a doctor and already have a little clientele. I have under my care many people sick of influenza, which is epidemic here ... My mother, a brother-in-law and a sister are ill of it at home; thank God, they are out of danger.”²

In another letter to Blumentritt: “We are living here in a small house [with the typically quaint British name of Rednaxela Terrace, No.2] paying a monthly rental of \$40. We have furnished and decorated it. The main receiving room is also my study, we have few visitors. I have hung up here and there paintings, arms, photographs; you and your children are before my eyes every day. My sisters busy themselves with the housework; my father looks out to sea and watches the ships.”³ Don Francisco, in fact, was enjoying himself thoroughly. “He has been putting on weight,” Rizal wrote his sister María, “his cheeks have turned rosy, he is always in high spirits and keeps going on walks. He is really happy in Hong Kong; all of them are most thankful that they got here.”⁴

It must have been an exciting, exhilarating time after the somber oppression of Kalamba: Rizal's two unmarried sisters, Josefa (nicknamed Pangoy) and Trinidad, had accompanied their mother to Hong Kong and were busy learning English. María also wanted to come but her brother reminded her tactfully that she had three children. Narcisa was distracted with the death of two of her sons and by the depressing visit she had paid to her proscribed husband Antonino in Kalapan, Mindoro; but Doña Nenang, Saturnina, the eldest sister, whom José must still address formally as *usted*, was all for the new life.

Saturnina Hidalgo to J. Rizal, February 1892 —

... I am much thrilled that our parents and all of you are having a happy life ... We shall get there yet; one can live anywhere. I do not think that not knowing English is an obstacle to doing business. One can pick up a language quickly enough; one speaks it badly at first, then in broken phrases, and little by little one can learn to speak perfectly well. I should like my boys to go to school there but I am not sure that the certificates they may get there will be recognized here or in Spain ...⁵

Was this the answer, was this the way it would end after all? Would he settle for a quiet life like the survivors of '72, like Regidor, “a Spanish advocate” in London, like Pardo de Tavera in Paris, like Basa in Hong Kong itself, keeping a kindly eye on a fresh young generation of turbulent spirits, always ready to help and to advise but too weary and too wise to be burnt twice?

They would not have let him do it. There were letters from everyone. One from Sixto López, who had been lately in Hong Kong and was writing in haste from Amoy, passed on some shipboard gossip about the friars in Manila: the Dominicans were in a frenzy because they thought Rizal was returning to the Philippines and would stir up Kalamba again; already the lawsuit there was costing them forty thousand a year. A total stranger signing himself Lorenzo Miclat, writing bravely enough from Manila and giving him his address, sent his greetings “as a humble son of the country, and therefore your brother,” and offered to assist him in his “patriotic work” with a monthly or yearly pension. Alejandrino, on holiday in Brussels, reported that his father had organized in the Philippines “a society whose

aim is to counter-act del Pilar's lamentable policy.” The members wanted Rizal to accept the association's leadership and return to Europe to implement “a more reasonable policy;” there would be no difficulties about the subsidy and Alejandrino thought he should accept the offer “if only out of love for our unfortunate country” and so as not to “defraud the hopes of an entire people, who have confided to you the remedying of the evils with which they are now afflicted.” Linares Rivas wrote from Madrid that he had seen the Minister of the Colonies about the Kalamba outrages, and that the latter seemed persuaded that an injustice had been committed and should be righted. Edilberto Evangelista also sent from Ghent the expressions of his sympathy over the happenings in Kalamba and said that in a way it was welcome news; such abuses would hasten the march of events. From Paris Aristón Bautista spoke cryptically about a *Katipunan* and plans “for the welfare of our people.” Also from Paris Juan Luna sent him twenty-one illustrations for the *Noli* and offered to do illustrations for the *Fili* as well, or ten or fifteen engravings for a propaganda pamphlet in picture form, “in the Japanese style,” to reach the illiterate masses. How really modern they were, these “new men!” Juan's bellicose brother Antonio, from Madrid, was out for blood, and vowed he would return to Manila “having always in mind my duty as a separatist.”

It was flattering to be consulted again about policy, about the need for another form of organization, about the program of “assimilation” and the hidden objective of independence, about the editorship of another newspaper. “If it is to be like the *Soli*, there is no need for it. If it is revolutionary, then let it ask for independence, and this can be done anywhere, even in Hong Kong. For this last purpose you can count on me as a contributor.” This from Luna. There were other letters of sympathy from Govantes in Madrid; from Boustead in Biarritz (Adelina and Nellie had had the mumps!) warning him that the friars were treacherous and had their agents in Hong Kong; from Mariano Ponce, congratulating him on the rescue of his family—“the day of vengeance will come.”⁶

[2]

It was enough to restore anyone's self-confidence. Perhaps he had misunderstood or exaggerated the criticism made against him among the

expatriates in Spain. Perhaps there was still something he could do for his people. The third volume of his novel was not going too well. Not only was he finding Tagalog awkward but also he was no longer in harmony with his original purpose. He had planned it in a mood of withdrawal from politics. “I should like,” he had written Blumentritt, “to write a novel in the modern sense of the term, an artistic and literary [work]. This time I want to sacrifice politics and everything for art.” He had found “a beautiful theme,” the book would deal with “Tagalog customs,” exclusively with “the usages, the virtues and the defects of the Tagalogs.”⁷

Now, under the stimulus of his correspondence, his interest in politics was beginning to re-awaken. He went so far as to thank the editor and staff of the *Soli* for the campaign they had been conducting on the Kalamba episode although his tone was not wholly warm.

J. Rizal to the Editor and staff of La Solidaridad, 17 March 1892

... Although I do not think you had any other purpose than to show that there is solidarity in the whole of the Philippines, if not latent, when one part of it is in danger, I should like, nevertheless, to express my gratitude and that of my family; since for some time I contributed to your columns and worked with you, I believe I have a right to your help ...

The Manila committee no longer writes to me. The campaign is useless ...

I have wanted on several occasions to go to Manila to face the bull close up but, in view of the repeated and panicky opposition to it, I have had to desist for the time being. The committee goes into a real panic, a terror, every time I say I am going back. I have always thought that one can only go into a corner when one is that afraid ...

If there was one thing that could be said for Rizal, it was that he was not afraid. The panic of the Manila committee led him to re-examine his whole political strategy. In his grief and anger over the persecution of his family in Kalamba, he had exclaimed to Blumentritt: “I have lost my hopes in Spain; that is why I shall not write one more word in *La Solidaridad*. It seems to

me all in vain.”⁹ The radical ideas of that firebrand Antonio Luna were more appealing than ever now.

A. Luna to J. Rizal, January 1892 —

... It is necessary for the Filipinos to organize themselves in another way, to be ready to make good their rights by force, in case they are attacked, without however abandoning the campaign in Madrid. What happened in Kalamba is an individual case, but the Spaniards (in the Peninsula and in the Philippines) have given it a very marked political character. Why? Because Spanish policy, in the past, in the present, and always, is to reign by terror, and to do this the first step is to undermine the sense of security in the colony. This is so true that through this sense of insecurity Novales was led to mutiny, and what happened in Kabite was due to the same thing. It is said that third time lucky but the blow will have to be given at the proper time, it must be studied and prepared at leisure, striking when noble and gallant Spain is involved with another nation in undoing wrongs, or with some others in keeping her house in order.

The propaganda for assimilation is necessary but separatist propaganda should be even more active for the practical thing is to seek adherents in shaking off the yoke [of Spain entirely] since we shall not obtain [assimilation] and even if we did (which is almost impossible) we would be worse off than ever. I should like to make clear, therefore, what is on my mind: we should work for independence, bonding together, making ourselves into apostles to gain men and money. For all this much study, a great deal of tact and prudence and no boasting of our strength, will be required. We shall achieve more if we give the impression that we are inactive and have forgotten our duty than by making a demonstration of strength that we do not have. Persevering and silent, we shall be Jesuits, raising a house wherever we have managed to hammer in a nail.

I offer my services in this sense, with the sole condition that I shall be allowed to cut myself off from the active campaign should I see that it will be only an armed riot. It is not that I

dream of success but that I dream of showing a resistance for which it may be said: “You are a manly people.” I think you understand me well enough; if they defeat us, let it be at the cost of much blood. I shall go, then, to Manila and in all my acts keep ever in mind my duty as a separatist ...

You already have then (if these are your own ideas) a follower around here who will work with constancy.^{[10](#)}

Were these his own ideas? Did he understand Antonio Luna well enough? For precisely these ideas he had been maligned and satirized in the *Soli*. Now Antonio Luna was offering him his pen to attack the *Soli* itself.^{[11](#)} He was not alone in his disillusionment and in his growing inclination towards a more active and positive policy, a policy of “separatism,” of independence, enforced by arms if necessary Edilberto Evangelista, who would be a fighting general like Antonio Luna, was of much the same mind now and he also shared Rizal's contempt for the Manila committee.

E. Evangelista to J. Rizal, 31 March 1892 —

It was sad to read your letter and to see that you find yourself there surrounded by an opposition that hampers the realization of your ideas instead of receiving the resolute support of those who, to all appearances, love their country.

But you should not be discouraged; on the contrary, your zeal and efforts should be redoubled. The long and short of it is that the corrupt generation, which precedes us and will soon be extinguished, wishes to leave us still this melancholy heritage of slavery because their ideas of patriotism and freedom are not very clear, yielding as they do to family interests. War is coming nearer in Europe, a fearful war; the whole world fears a butchery unprecedented in history but, faced with the concept of Nation, no one dares deny himself and all feel in their consciences the duty to die for the Nation. So you see that the stupid expression: “what a waste of blood,” has no meaning for patriots ... It is necessary that these ideas, conservative but never patriotic, should not reach the youth and the fresh generation that follows us for in that case

the salvation of our Nation would become a problem without solution.¹²

And again:

E. Evangelista to J. Rizal, 29 April 1892 —

What is to become of our beloved country's cause? ... When shall I have the joy of admiring, my eyes filled with tears, our brave young men like true *sons of the Nation*, their breasts heaving with noble love, rallied round their banner and truly ready to shed their blood for her, since this is the price that we must pay for our freedom! ...

Why don't you make an effort to find out how many share your ideas and are moved by the same impulses? I mean that your thoughts must take actual shape through the organization, in defiance of the Government, of a Revolutionary Club, which you could lead in Hong Kong or any other place. Do not the Cuban separatists have one? Or the progressives in Spain? Well, you are better informed than I am, but I am sure that the main, the only obstacle you would have to overcome in such an enterprise would be the opposition of our old men and our rich men who tremble at the thought of being threatened in their interests by the Government's reprisals. The rich and the powerful in our country will always be the principal factor in sowing fear and uncertainty in the bravest hearts. Think on how the victory may be won; you would deal a terrible blow to our enemies which, while it might not have an immediate success, would at least change the present situation.

Obviously Evangelista was not being very loyal to the *principalía* (he had complained in his previous letter that Abreu and Alejandrino were avoiding him and had moved to another lodging house because he was short of funds and they were afraid of losing their reputation of being “wealthy” among the girls of Ghent;¹⁴ but then, neither was Rizal so concerned with the resources of the *principales*, with his family estates under writ of dispossession and his father, brother and kinsfolk proscribed. Alejandrino himself, who would also become a general, was still trying to get him to go back to Europe to re-assume the leadership of the expatriates. But what

caught Rizal up, whatever bold and desperate projects may have been in his mind, was an earnest letter from Blumentritt. What had Rizal written to him that he could have drawn such an urgent warning?

F. Blumentritt to J. Rizal, 30 January 1892 —

... Above all, I plead with you not to get involved in revolutionary movements. For whoever begins a revolution should have at least the probability of success if he would not burden his conscience with the useless spilling of blood. Whenever a people have risen against another people that ruled them, a colony against the metropolis, the revolution has never succeeded on its own strength. The American Union won freedom because France, Spain and Holland supported it. The Spanish (American) republics reconquered their liberty because of the civil wars in the metropolis and because North America furnished them money and arms. The Greeks made themselves independent because England, France and Russia supported them. The Rumanians, the Serbs and the Bulgars won their freedom with the help of Russia; Italy, with that of France and Prussia; Belgium, with that of England and France.

Everywhere those peoples who relied on their own strength succumbed before the soldiery of the legitimate government: the Italians in 1830, 1848 and 1849; the Poles in 1831, 1845 and 1863; the Hungarians in 1848 and 1849; and the Kider in 1868.

If an insurrection should break out in the Philippines now, it would end in tragedy because the very fact that they are an archipelago would alone make it improbable for any rising without a navy to have a chance of success. What is more, the rebels would not have ammunition for more than five weeks. Add to that the fact that there is still great a number of partisans of the friars among the Filipinos.

A revolution would only lead the educated classes to death and would increase the burden of tyranny. A revolution has no probabilities of success unless:

(1) a part of the army and navy should rebel;

- (2) the metropolis should be at war with another country;
- (3) there were money and munitions at hand; and
- (4) some foreign country were to lend its official or secret support to the insurrection.

None of these conditions are to be found in the Philippines.¹⁵

How percipient of Blumentritt! All his four conditions would be met in 1898 and the Revolution would succeed, and yet ultimately founder because of a fifth unforeseen factor, the colonial ambitions of the “foreign country!”

[3]

What Rizal was turning over in his mind seems fairly clear. *La Solidaridad* had failed to secure reforms in the Philippines through a propaganda campaign in Spain, partly because the various committees supporting it had not provided sufficient funds even for a puny fortnightly, partly because both conservative and liberal governments in Madrid had one policy in common overseas: to keep the empire. The harsh measures taken by Weyler in Kalamba, and the evident relief and gratification with which they had, in general, been received by the Spaniards in both the peninsula and the Philippines, proved that there was nothing more to be expected: from the peaceful advocacy of reforms. “What did we obtain with the campaigns of *La Solidaridad*,” he asked Blumentritt, “except Weylerisms, the Law on Banditry and the tragedy of Kalamba? It seems to me that to parley with the government is only a waste of time.¹⁶ The welfare of the Filipinos would have to be sought with other means.”

There is no doubt that the Spanish and Cuban revolutions exercised a powerful influence on the minds of the expatriate intellectuals. In his death cell Rizal would recall that the republicans in Madrid had taunted him with the advice that one asked for democratic freedom with bullets, not on one's knees. The Cuban Revolution, proclaimed by Céspedes in 1868, had fought for ten long sanguinary years before ending in an armed truce, and not before costing Spain 140,000 casualties, 700 million pesos, the pledge of autonomy and other reforms, a general amnesty and a humiliating

agreement with the United States permitting Cubans to acquire North American citizenship.

This was what Luna had referred to when he had told Rizal that, while an armed separatist movement might not succeed in securing the ultimate objective of independence, it would at least show that the Filipinos were capable of “manly” resistance and that, while they might be defeated in the end, it would be at the cost of so much blood that the Spaniards would be taught a salutary lesson. “They may not have great generals,” was the judgment of Martínez Campos who finally “pacified” the Cubans, “but they have what they need: remarkable guerillas.” Why not the Filipinos?

The expatriates knew well enough that, before his assassination, the sagacious king-maker Prim had actually contemplated an audacious plan which would grant Cuba independence in exchange for economic and cultural concessions; the absolutist propaganda had distorted this into a rumor that Prim wanted to sell the island to the United States for 100 million pesos and the screams of protest had reached the Cortes but Prim had gone so far as to send feelers to the North Americans on the acceptability of his compromise plan when he had fallen a victim to his assassins.

Martínez Campos himself, whose “policy of attraction” had been simple—everything from good government to bribery, had written, in defending the truce of 1878: “The insurrection [in Cuba] persisted because governments have thought that here there was no remedy but terror and that it was a matter of self-respect not to grant reforms until after the last shot had been fired. We would never have finished that way, even though we had crammed the island full of soldiers. It is necessary, if we do not want to ruin Spain, to enter openly into the field of [political] freedoms; I believe that if Cuba is too small to be independent, she is more than enough to be a Spanish province.”

The lessons to be learnt from the Cuban experience had not been lost on Rizal, del Pilar, Luna and others of like mind, although it would take Bonifacio and Aguinaldo to apply them; the Pact of Biyak-na-Bato would be the Philippines' Peace of the Zanjón. In the meantime, we may read between the lines of the feverish correspondence between Hong Kong, Madrid, Paris, Ghent and Leitmeritz the emergence of a new strategy, a “Cuban” strategy. Repudiation of the old “corrupt” generation of

principales, as Evangelista had called them; a separatist movement under cover of the old propaganda for assimilation, as Antonio Luna suggested; a “third time lucky” *coup de force* struck when Spain was involved in a quarrel with another nation, perhaps Imperial Germany, with her ambitions on the Carolines, or Imperial Japan, would play North America to the Philippines and Cuba.

Rizal's mind may not have been made up once for all either way, but it is significant that at about this time he began to plan a new organization which would be called the *Liga Filipina*. As early as February 1892 there is a revealing letter from López Jaena in Barcelona.

G. López Jaena to J. Rizal, 18 February 1892 —

... Páez tells me in his letter that the new committee has no means of living and that the old one is dying ... we have coincided in the name of *Liga*, which you are giving to the association you are founding there, and [which is also the name of] the one here, which has been in action since the first days of January and is eminently political ...¹⁷

What was this new *Liga*? Was it Evangelista's “*Revolutionary Club*?” Was it Antonio Luna's idea of how the Filipinos should “organize themselves in another way, to be ready to make good their rights by force?” It will be recalled that Aristón Bautista, writing to Rizal from Paris in January, had made a cryptic reference to a *Katipunan*, which is, after all, only the Tagalog word for association or league. By May he was writing to Rizal from Saigon, en route to Manila, reminding him to send “instructions ... for the promotion of our ideals.”¹⁸

The *Liga* has invariably been represented, as Rizal (perhaps with Antonio Luna's counsels of prudence, tact and no boasting in mind) had sought to represent it to the Spanish authorities, as a peaceful association with purely civic aims. These were: “(1) union of the entire archipelago into a compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body, (2) mutual protection in every exigency and need, (3) defence against all violence and injustice, (4) development of education, agriculture and commerce, (5) study and application of reforms.”¹⁹

But were these aims wholly innocuous? Union where Spain ruled by disunion? Mutual protection—against whom? Defence against all violence and injustice—from whom? Development of education, agriculture and commerce—for what purpose? “To gain men and money?” Study and application of reforms—how, when the *Liga* was not the government?

The organization sought to be established by the statutes of the *Liga* was even more significant; in effect, it would be an *imperium in imperio*, an underground government running parallel with the established regime. There would be a base of local popular councils; their heads would compose the various provincial councils, and the heads of the latter a supreme council with power of command over the entire *Liga*.²⁰

A member was bound to “sacrifice all personal interests and obey blindly and to the letter all commands and verbal or written instructions of their council or provincial head; immediately and without losing time inform the authorities of his council of anything that he might see, observe or hear constituting a danger to the tranquility of the *Liga* ...; and keep the deeds, acts and decisions of his council and the *Liga* ... absolutely secret from outsiders, even though these were his own parents, brothers, children; etc., and even at the cost of his own life ...” He would “submit to no humiliation,” go to the rescue of any fellow-member in danger, and recruit new members.²¹ Were all these precautions and injunctions really necessary for a purely civic association?

Upon the outbreak of the Revolution a number of statements were made to the authorities which, with due consideration of the circumstances in which they were made, are nonetheless enlightening on the real purpose of the *Liga*. One José Dizon, a member, stated that it had been organized in the Philippines by Domingo Franco, by order and upon instructions of Rizal, who had sent him the *Liga's* statutes from Hong Kong, and that its purpose was “to open shops, workshops, businesses, industries and even a bank, if possible, to raise funds for the expenses of an armed uprising.”²² Numeriano Adriano, another member, declared that the only objective of the *Liga* was to obtain the absolute independence of the Philippines and that it was really organized on three levels: a supreme council composed of men of wealth and prestige in Manila, local associations in the suburbs composed of persons from the middle-class, and popular councils composed of persons from the lower-class.²³ Antonio Luna himself, in a

statement little short of hysterical among other things cried: “I am not a rebel or a Mason or an agitator; all the contrary, I am an informer!”—said: “The *Katipunan* is the *Liga Filipina*,” and “its author is Don José Rizal.”²⁴ Indeed, as well shall see, the *Liga* and the *Katipunan* were not entirely unconnected.

[4]

At the same time that he was laying down the basis for the *Liga* Rizal was pursuing another radically different course. It may have been a cover for his real activities; perhaps he was not so politically naive as he is sometimes taken to be. It is more probable, however, from the trouble he took in promoting it, that it was an alternative policy, conceived in the depths of his disillusionment with politics and deeply influenced by Blumentritt's warnings. Weyler's term of office had come to an end in 1891 and he had surrendered the supreme command in the Philippines, not without veiled criticism that he had undertaken military campaigns in the Carolines and in Mindanaw to prolong the usual three-year period at Manila.²⁵

The successor of the harsh Marquess was another veteran of the Carlist wars—all these restless generals had to be given something to do, and Manila was far enough away, and troublesome enough to keep them out of trouble—Eulogio Despujol y Dusay who had been promoted to brigadier and created Count of Caspe for a brilliant victory he had gained in that Spanish city over the republican rebels of Zaragoza in 1874. Now in his very late fifties and a lieutenant-general, Despujol had somehow gained a reputation for benignity, if only in contrast with the Teutonic ruthlessness of his predecessor; he was expected to be a second Carlos Ma. de la Torre.

But, although an experienced field officer who had fought energetically, intelligently and bravely in the African, Dominican and Carlist campaigns, winning another promotion and the Cross of San Fernando with a gallant victory against heavy odds (four battalions against twelve or thirteen), he was essentially a staff officer, skilled in the arts of the courtier and therefore all the more vulnerable to intrigue and political blackmail. He had commanded in Valencia and had served as director general of military instruction before being sent to the Philippines; afterwards he would

command in his native Cataluña, preside for two terms over the Supreme Council of War and Navy and the War Advisory Board, and serve in the Cortes as a deputy for Puerto Rico and as a life senator. He had, in short, a penchant for politics, but his were conservative.

Rizal seems to have taken the change of generals to be a change of regime. On the 23rd December 1891, moved apparently by the routine manifesto issued by the Count upon his assumption of office, he wrote Despujol a political message of his own which is not without interest.

J. Rizal to E. Despujol, 23 December 1891 —

Your Excellency, in taking over the government of the Archipelago, issued a call to all those who seek the good of the Philippines, both islanders and peninsulars. Your Excellency finds himself in a country, deeply demoralized and about to fall into a lamentable skepticism which can cause a crisis, and consider yours to be the act of a prudent ruler and a man of goodwill.

I too, Your Excellency, am one of those who seek the good of the country and I am ready to sacrifice for her my past and future, as I have done, enduring and hoping in resignation, because I have faith in the justice of her cause. In good or bad faith, men have placed me at the head of the progressive movement in the Philippines and have attributed to me a certain influence on its aspirations. If Your Excellency believes that my poor services can be useful to point out the evils in the country and help in healing the open wounds of recent injustices, Your Excellency has only to say so and, confident in your word as a gentleman that my liberties as a citizen will be respected, I shall place myself immediately at your orders, and Your Excellency may then see and judge [for yourself] the loyalty of my conduct and the sincerity of my words.

If your Excellency rejects my offer, you will know better than anyone else what you are doing but I shall have a clear conscience in the future. I shall have done all that I should without ceasing to seek my country's welfare, to keep her for Spain by means of a solid policy based on justice and a community of interests.

Expecting to have the honor of receiving a reply, I am, with deep respect, Your Excellency's sure and loyal servant, etc. etc.²⁷

His Excellency's sure and loyal servant did not, of course, have the honor of a reply. How was the Count to know that this agitator's rather impertinent letter would find its way into the history books? To do Despujol justice, we must consider the chances of such a letter to the President of the Philippines from a fellow traveler in the books of Military Intelligence being actually read and considered today. But it must have been read.

Rizal's motives remain in ambiguity. Was he, so to speak, giving the regime one last chance to “keep the Philippines for Spain by means of a solid policy based on justice and a community of interests” so that thereafter he might proceed with “a clear conscience” on more radical courses? Or was he, as Despujol would later argue indignantly, merely seeking an excuse to return to the Philippines with official approval in order to subvert the regime?

His actions suggest that he was sincere, or at least that he was sincerely undecided. The Count's failure to reply seemed to close all doors except to one ready to break them down with the butt of a gun. But he still shrank from revolution, premature revolution, and, when the right time came, he might be too old to fight. Perhaps the only reasonable thing left to do was to throw in his hand, to start afresh somewhere else. He conceived the idea of founding a Filipino colony in North Borneo and went to work on it with characteristic energy and thoroughness. It would be a community of free men with guaranteed rights and liberties. “In Borneo,” he wrote Blumentritt, “I shall not be a [mere] farmer but the leader of the farmers who plan to emigrate there with me.”

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 23 February 1892 —

... You know very well that I am always, at all times, ready to serve my country, not only with my pen but also with my life, whenever my country should require from me such a sacrifice. But I see that I am growing old and so my ideals and dreams are vanishing; if it is impossible for me to give my country liberty, I should like to give it at least to these noble countrymen of mine in other lands. That is why I am thinking of emigrating to Borneo; there are vast lands there where we can found a new Kalamba.

When the exiled and persecuted have found a haven in Borneo, I will then be able to write untroubled and to look at the future, if not happily, at least consoled.²⁸

The project aroused the enthusiasm of his friends, most of them as disheartened and undecided as himself. Aristón Bautista wrote from Paris asking for news about the colony. Juan Luna did the same: "I and the majority of those residents here are wishing to hear that your plan is already a success." Even the swashbuckling Antonio ended his analysis of the politics of revolution with "I too may very probably be one of the inhabitants [of this colony] if circumstances compel me to." Poor López Jaena, living in the gutters of Barcelona, wrote a pathetic appeal: "I am greatly desirous of joining you there [in Borneo] get a plot of land ready for me suitable for sugarcane; I shall go there as soon as you let me know, to dedicate myself to planting cane and milling sugar. Give me details of everything!" His brother-in-law Hidalgo was less sanguine. "That Borneo thing is not right. Shall we leave the Philippines, our beautiful country? What will be said by *these* and *those*? For what purpose would all our sacrifices have been made? Shall we go to an alien land without having exhausted all our strength for the good of the country which has sustained us since our birth?"²⁹

The challenge would be repeated to him from higher and less friendly sources but he was not to be discouraged. He had made the acquaintance in Hong Kong of H.I. Dalrymple, the local agent of the North Borneo Company; by January 1892 he had sent W.B. Pryor, the administrator, the details of his project. The settlement would be permanent and it was planned to expand it in time through the sale or lease of lands for 999 years. But it would be more than a mere settlement; what was envisioned was "the creation of a free, independent and happy people" and for not only lands but liberties were required. None of the settlers could be compelled to serve under arms or give free labor unless the independence of the territory itself was in danger. They would rule themselves in accordance with their own usages and laws; they would administer their affairs and, defend themselves under the protection of the Company, on the same terms as those given in the treaty with the local Bornean rulers. They would be judged by their own judges and juries. As a contribution to state expenses they would pay the taxes on alcohol and opium but, in case of further need, they would not

have greater obligations than those of British subjects in the same circumstances and conditions.³⁰

By March he had received a favorable reaction; North Borneo needed settlers and Mr. Pryor invited him to visit Sandakan to discuss details. But he would give the Governor General one more chance. He wrote Despujol, reminding His Excellency of his previous letter, to which he had received no reply. He was not writing again to reiterate the offer of his services: His Excellency had known how to win for himself the sympathies of the people and “if God grants him three years of life [the usual length of the Governor General's term of office], then for three years the Filipinos will have peace and tranquility.”

They were not a difficult people to rule, he lectured His Excellency: “a little love,” and they would soon forget past grievances. If things took a turn for the worse in the future, then they would only need remember His Excellency and the old story that “the rulers of the Philippines were like tinned sardines, alternatively in reverse.” He himself considered it his duty to obtain “the attachment to Spain of all the Filipinos.”

And then to the point of the letter he had said that he had been identified as the leader of the progressive movement (“this word,” he could not resist adding, “is understood by some in a good, and by others in a bad sense, according to whether they are enemies of progress or not”). He was also taken as a “disturber” of the peace, he had, he admitted, “disturbed” a great number of people in “their peaceful exploitation of their neighbor and the laws.” His Excellency might share this opinion and, to assure the tranquility of his regime, Rizal proposed to found a settlement in North Borneo. Those who professed to seek the happiness of the country sometimes used violent and unjust measures like deportation and exile; well, “we have no objection to exiling ourselves.” Would His Excellency, then, grant the necessary permission for the settlers to change their nationality, liquidate the few possessions they had left after all their troubles, and guarantee their free emigration? Again he awaited a reply.³¹

It came indirectly through the Spanish Consul in Hong Kong after Rizal had returned from Sandakan. “The Philippines being so short of men, it was not very patriotic to take a number out to cultivate foreign soil. Any Filipino could contribute freely to the prosperity of the country anywhere in the archipelago.”

It was a chillingly correct reply and perhaps Rizal blushed when he heard it since he was never insensitive to reproaches against his patriotism.

[5]

It seems unreasonable to believe as some have suggested, that Rizal was undeterred, that he returned to the Philippines when he did, still at work on the plan for a Borneo settlement and with otherwise perfectly innocent motives. Without the permission of the Governor General, it would simply not work out; it would be impossible to raise enough money to buy or lease a thousand acres of land, with an option for five thousand more and perhaps an additional ten thousand, at \$4 to \$6 an acre. To use for this fundamentally private project any funds that might be raised through membership fees in the *Liga* was out of the question for the aim of the *Liga* was exclusively to unite the Filipinos and defend their rights in their own country. It had really been a choice of islands: Borneo or “Cuba,” peaceful emigration or eventual revolution, and, by refusing his permission for the Borneo project, Despujol had cast Rizal's dice for him. The Count would not be very happy with the score.

On the 21st June 1892 Rizal addressed a third letter to the Governor General.

J. Rizal to E. Despujol, 21 June 1892 —

Your Excellency:

The purpose of this letter is to inform Your Excellency that on the mailboat which carries it I go to my country, first of all to place myself at your disposal, and then to arrange some private affairs of mine. Friends and strangers have tried to dissuade me from taking this step, reminding me of the hidden dangers to which I expose myself, but I have confidence in Your Excellency's sense of justice, which protects all Spanish subjects in the Philippines, in the justice of my cause and in my clear conscience, God and the laws will guard me against all intrigues.

For some time past my aged parents, my relatives and friends, and even persons unknown to me, have been cruelly persecuted—it is said, because of me. I present myself now to take upon my

shoulders the burden of these persecutions, to answer any charges that may be brought against me, to put an end to this affair, so bitter to the innocent and so depressing for Your Excellency's government, which wants to be known for its justice ...³³

It is significant that Rizal makes no further mention of the Borneo settlement; the reference to “some private affairs of mine” is too obscure to really mean much; the whole burden of the letter is a direct challenge. Here he is, the author of the *Noli* and the *Fili*, the annotator of Morga, the polemicist of the *Soli*, the Kalamba agitator, the “disturber” of the peace, the “head” of the progressives, the instigator of the intellectuals, the corrupter of the masses, delivering himself into the hands of his enemies.

That Rizal had no illusions about the dangers to which he was exposing himself or about the purpose of his homecoming is made even more manifest by two sealed letters which he left with a Portuguese friend “to be published after my death.” They are dated the 20th June 1892, a day before the letter to Despujol and a day after his thirty-first birthday anniversary. One is addressed to his family.

J. Rizal to his family, 20 June 1892 —

To my dear parents, brothers and friends: The love that I have always professed for you has led me to take this step; whether or not it is prudent, only the future can tell. Things are judged by their successful consequences but, whether they turn out well or badly [for me], it must always be said that I was doing my duty and it does not matter if I perish in doing so. I know I have caused you great suffering but I am not sorry for what I have done and, if I had to start all over again, I would act as I did because it is my duty. I leave gladly to expose myself to danger, not in expiation of any misdeeds of mine (for in this matter I do not believe I have committed any) but to bring my work to a climax and bear witness to what I have always preached.

A man should die for his duty and his convictions. I maintain all the ideas which I have expressed on the present state and future of my country and I shall gladly die for her, and even more gladly to obtain for you justice and peace.

I risk my life willingly to save so many innocents, so many nephews, the children of so many friends and others who are not friends, who suffer in my stead. Who am I? One man alone, almost without a family, rather disenchanted with life. I have suffered many disillusionments and the future before me is dark, and will be very dark indeed if it is not illumined by the light, the dawn of my country. On the other hand there are so many who fall of hopes and dreams, will, all perhaps be relieved when I am dead for I expect that my enemies will be satisfied then and will no longer persecute so many innocent people. To a certain degree their hatred of me is justified, but not with regard to my parents and relatives.

If I am unlucky, let all know that I die happy in the thought that with my death I will have obtained for you the end of all your sorrows. Return to our country and be happy there.

To the last moment of my life I shall think of you and wish you all manner of happiness.

The other letter is addressed to his countrymen.

J. Rizal to "the Filipinos," 20 June 1892 —

To the Filipinos:

The step I have taken or am about to take is very risky, no doubt, and I do not have to say that I have given it much thought. I know that almost everyone is against it but I know too that almost no one knows what goes on in my heart. I cannot go on living knowing that so many suffer unjust persecution because of me; I cannot go on living when I see my brother and sisters and their numerous families hunted like criminals; I would rather face death and gladly give my life to free so many innocents from such unjust persecution. I know that for the time being the future of my country partly depends on me; that, with me dead, many would exult and that in consequence many desire my ruin. But what shall I do? Above all I must do what my conscience tells me to do; I have obligations to the families that suffer [for my sake], to my aged parents, whose sighs touch my heart; I know that I alone,

even with my death, can make them happy, returning them to their country and the tranquility of their home. I have nobody but my parents; but my country has still many sons who can take my place, and who are doing so to her advantage.

I also want to show those who deny our patriotism that we know how to die doing our duty and for our convictions. What does death matter if one dies for what one loves, for one's country and loved ones?

If I thought I were the only possible fulcrum for a Philippine policy, and if I were convinced that my countrymen would have use for my services, perhaps I would hesitate to take this step; but there are still others who can take my place, who do take my place to advantage; even more, there are those who find me superfluous and who leave me inactive because my services are not needed.

I have always loved my poor country and I am sure I shall love her to the last moment if men should prove unjust to me; my future, my life, my joys, I have sacrificed all for love of her. By my fate what it may, I shall die blessing her and wishing for her the dawn of her redemption.

Publish these letters after my death.^{[35](#)}

It is absolute nonsense to say, in sight of these letters, that Rizal was returning to the Philippines to finance a settlement to Borneo. He was “taking upon his shoulders the burden of all the persecutions” against his family; he was going to obtain for them “justice and peace” and an end to their sorrows. Perhaps he was no longer wanted, his services no longer needed—there is here a of resentment and bitterness—but there was one last service he could render, he would “bear witness to what I have always preached;” he was going to prove that the despised Filipinos could “die for their convictions;” he was ready to be shot, and in a way he was expecting it. “Publish these letters after my death” —surely that is clear enough. He would be disappointed.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XV

- (1) Kalaw, 17.
- (2) Ep. Riz., V, 632.
- (3) Ep. Riz., V, 638.
- (4) Ep. Riz., III, 266.
- (5) Ep. Riz., III, 271, 273, 297.
- (6) Ep. Riz., III, 265, 276, 279, 281, 282, 286, 287, 291, 296, 303,
- (7) Ep. Riz., V, 633. In what may be taken as a judgment on his previous novels Rizal wrote: “Quiero escribir una novela en el sentido moderno de la palabra, una novela artistica y literaria. Esta vez quiero sacrificar la política y todo por el arte ...”
- (8) Ep. Riz., III, 299.
- (9) Ep. Riz., V, 633.
- (10) Ep. Riz., III, 291.
- (11) Ep. Riz., III, 293.
- (12) Ep. Riz., III, 308. Oddly enough Evangelista writes to Rizal in French.
- (13) Ep. Riz., III, 326. Again in French. Evangelista was as good as his word. He died in battle, defending the trenches he had built for Aguinaldo.
- (14) Ep. Riz., III, 309.
- (15) Ep. Riz., III, 289.
- (16) Ep. Riz., V, 637.
- (17) Ep. Riz., III, 296.
- (18) Ep. Riz., Ill, 343.

(19) Retana, 236 et seq., quoting from a document furnished to him by D. E. de los Santos.

(20) Op. cit. The local council was identified as “Cp;” the provincial council, as “CP.” The supreme council as “CS.” They would carry names different from those of the places where they were located, presumably for security.

(21) Op. cit. Members were also instructed to adopt an alias. Their monthly contribution was ten centavos.

(22) Arch. Fil., III, 284 et seq. (204 et seq. of Documentos Politicos de Actualidad, la Serie, in the said volume). It should be noted that the overall numbering is at the bottom of the page; the numbering of each particular document, at the top.

(23) Arch. Fil., III, 311 (231).

(24) Arch. Fil., IV, 199 (19) et seq. Luna states: “No soy rebelde, ni masón, ni filibustero; al contrario, soy delator y creo haber cumplido como hijo leal de España” (201/21). Farther on: “Hacia el 18 o 20 de Julio dije al Dr. Panzano, mi antiguo director en el Laboratorio municipal, para que transmitiera a S.E. el Gobernador general lo siguiente: Hay agrupaciones o sociedades secretas formadas por gente de pueblo dispuestas a levantarse ... Tengo estas noticias por conversaciones habidas con D. José Alejandrino, ingeniero, íntimo amigo mío, y D. Moisés Salvador, contratista de obras y propietario ... Por el 27 de Agosto, antes del ataque de Santa Mesa, por confidencias que yo buscaba, delaté al Dr. Panzano (para S.E.) la *Liga Filipina* y el *Katipunan*, asociaciones con tendencias dudosas. La existencia de la *Liga* lo supe por don Moisés Salvador, la de la vasta *Katipunan siang anak nang bayan* (sic), por el Dr. Bautista Lin (D. Aristón), uno o dos días antes de ser detenido este señor... Algunos dias despues dije al Dr. Panzano: El *Katipunan* es la *Liga Filipina*. Se ha traducido *Liga*, Asociación. por *Katipunan* (reunión o asociación). Su autor es D. José Rizal ... Vuelvo a repetir: No soy rebelde, ni filibustero, ni masón. Me puse al lado del Gobierno, como era mi deber, y delaté cuanto sabía, con riesgo propio, Así, confiando en la justicia de V.S., no dudo que seré absuelto y libre” (Op. cit., 201/21 to 206/26).

(25) Weyler, 344.

(26) Dicc. Hist. Esp., and Enciclopedia Espasa, biographical notes.

(27) Ep. Riz., III, 270.

(28) Ep. Riz., V, 637.

(29) Ep. Riz., III, 286, 287, 294, 342. Hidalgo's letter is on 269.

(30) Palma, 221 et seq.

(31) Ep. Riz., III, 305.

(32) Retana, 232, quoting Despujol's rustication decree.

(33) Ep. Riz., III, 348.

(34) Ep. Riz., III, 346.

(35) Ep. Riz., III, 347.



XVI

Climax and Anti-climax

It is not I who have been outlawed, but
liberty; it is not I who have been exiled, but
France!

V_{ICTOR} H_{UGO}

The time is out of joint; o cursed spite.
That ever I was born to set it right!

S_{HAKESPEARE} (H_{AMLET})

[1]

A secret agent of subversion, an underground resistance worker, does not normally announce his coming, present himself to the authorities upon his arrival, book a room in the best hotel in the city, travel here and there with

no ostensible purpose, visit his fellow conspirators openly and gather them together in dinner parties, make speeches and organize his network at a semi-public meeting.

Yet this was what Rizal did when he arrived in Manila with his widowed sister Lucia at noon on Sunday the 26th June 1892. His letter cannot have preceded him for it was coming on the same mail-vessel. But the Spanish Consul in Hong Kong was no fool and had obviously warned the authorities in Manila. "I was met," Rizal recorded, "by many soldiers, including even a major. There were also a captain and a sergeant of constabulary in disguise. I landed with my baggages and went through Customs inspection. From there I went to the Hotel de Oriente, where I was given Room No. 22 facing the Binondo church."

He sought audience with the Governor General at four o'clock; it seems to have been an awkward time (after all, it was a Sunday afternoon!) and he was told to return at seven that evening. The Count gave him no reason for complaint. He saw Rizal for three minutes and immediately pardoned his father but not the rest of the family, telling him to return on the Wednesday. From the Palace he went to visit his married sisters, Narcisa López and Saturnina Hidalgo. Rizal, ever a meticulous diarist, has left us a succinct record of his movements.¹

"The following day [Monday] I went to the railway station at six o'clock in the morning, [bound] for Bulakan and Pampanga. I visited Malolos, San Fernando and Tarlak and, on my way back, Bakolor. I returned to Manila at five o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday." "At half-past seven on Wednesday I saw His Excellency but again failed to get him to lift the sentence of banishment although he gave me some hopes about my brothers. Since it was the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, our interview was cut short at a quarter past nine on the understanding that I would make another appearance the following day at half-past seven."

"The following day, Thursday, we spoke about the Borneo question and the General showed himself opposed, indeed very much opposed, to it. He told me to return on the Sunday."

"I returned on Sunday, we spoke of things of little importance and I thanked him for lifting the sentence of banishment on my brothers. I informed him that my father and brother would arrive [in Manila] by the first mailboat.

He asked me if I wanted to go and return to Hong Kong and I answered yes. He told me to return on the Wednesday.”

“On Wednesday he asked me if I insisted on returning to Hong Kong and I said yes ...”

This bare recital does not do justice to the sensation that Rizal's return had caused in Manila. It must be granted that the Count Governor himself showed him the greatest consideration, receiving him no less than five times in eleven days and granting the pardon of his father and family. One need only compare this amiable accessibility with the comparative aloofness of a modern President of the Philippines. Indeed Despujol was doing his best to be another de la Torre or, in Rizal's metaphor as Weyler's successor, Weyler upside down. He had reopened the Palace to the Filipinos, he had put coachmen in native dress; a devout Catholic, educated by the Jesuits, who, as on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, made it a point to perform his religious duties in the Jesuit church of St. Ignatius, he had, by this very token, antagonised the friars.² Already they were campaigning in Madrid against him and his educational reforms. The Spanish Consul in Hong Kong had told Rizal: “It is quite possible that General Despujol, who is moved by the best desires to introduce many good reforms, may not remain in the country for the usual term. If the Government in Spain refuses him the introduction of any [of these reforms], you can be sure that he will submit his resignation. General Despujol is a real gentleman and as such would relinquish the government of the islands rather than give in.”

The Count must have been aware of the outraged criticism with which his benignity toward the author of the *Noli* and the *Fili* was being received in the City's friaries and monasteries. He would also have suffered some qualms himself for Rizal was everywhere received by his countrymen with disturbing enthusiasm. What was the purpose of his trip to the provinces? Whom had he visited? What had he said? Rizal does not seem to have made much of a secret of the *Liga*. Did he really think that the authorities would see no danger, no hidden subversive purpose, in a union of all the Filipinos, sworn to absolute secrecy, unconditional obedience and mutual succor?

Within a week of his arrival a meeting was called, allegedly at his request, by Timoteo Páez and Pedro Serrano, in the house of a Chinese half-breed, Doroteo Ongjunco. It was a large wooden house in Tondo, not facing the street, Ilaya, but still not entirely concealed by a stone building formerly

occupied by the city's guild of half-breeds.⁴ Security, in modern terms, was almost negligible. A small group of liberals and progressives, almost all of them Masons, had gathered there to listen to what Rizal had to say.

They made a curious but significant collection: Ongjunco, the host, a man of property; Serrano (*Panday Pira*), a schoolmaster and a philologist, who had introduced Masonry among the Filipinos, José Ramos (*Socorro*), a Spanish half-breed, princer and engraver, owner of a shop called “Great Britain,” and first Worshipful Master of the first Filipino Masonic Lodge, the *Nilad*, Páez (*Rajah Matanda*), a commission agent, orator of the *Nilad* and Worshipful Master of Triangle 7, *Lusong*; Domingo Franco (*Felipe Leal*), a Bisayan and one of the few non-Tagalogs, a tobacco shopkeeper, also a Mason; Agustín de la Rosa, book-keeper, Worshipful Master of Triangle No. 4, *Luz*, Ambrosio Salvador, mayor of Quiapo and a rich contractor, also a Mason; Numeriano Adriano (*Ipil*), notary, Worshipful Master of the Lodge *Balagtas*; Bonifacio Arevalo (*Harem*), a dentist, one of the founders of *Balagtas*; Arcadio del Rosario, also a member of *Balagtas*; Luis Villareal, tailor, Worshipful Master of the Lodge *Taliba*, Faustino Villaruel (*Ilaw*), a Spanish half-breed, founder of the Lodge *Walana*, whose lovely daughter Rosario became the first Filipina Mason under the name of *Minerva*, sister inspector of the feminine *Logia de Adopción*, where one of Rizal's sisters, Trinidad (*Sumibol*), would also serve as sister secretary and another, Josefa (*Sumikat*), would be a member; Estanislao Legaspi, artisan and Mason; Gregorio Santillán, also an artisan; Mariano Crisóstomo, property-owner; Deodato Arellano, an army employee and brother-in-law of Marcelo del Pilar, Genaro Heredia, property-owner, Ambrosio Flores (*Musa*), lieutenant of infantry, retired, founder of the Lodge *Bathala*, Grand Master to be of the Grand Regional Council of Philippine Masonry; Pablo Rianzares, lawyer and first publisher of *La Solidaridad*, Juan Zulueta playwright, poet, employee; Teodoro Plata, an employee of the courts, also a Mason; Moises Salvador (*Araw*), master builder, emissary of del Pilar, first Worshipful Master of the Lodge *Balagtas*; Francisco Nakpil, silversmith; Apolinario Mabini (*Katabay*), lawyer, the Masonic peace-maker, Grand-Orator to be of the Grand Regional Council; and Andrés Bonifacio, warehouseman in a brick factory.⁵

Printer, poet, silversmith, shopkeeper, book-keeper, commission agent, dentist, schoolmaster, tailor, notary, contractor, officer, lawyer, master

builder, men of property, white collar workers, and the warehouseman who in the end would be the first of them all!

There is, of course, no contemporaneous record of what Rizal told them. If the patriotic underground was marvelously careless, the regime appears to have been equivalently lax and clumsy. The decree banishing Rizal has, as we shall see, not one word about the Tondo meeting or the *Liga*!

Much later, upon the outbreak of the Revolution, sworn statements would be belatedly extorted from some of the participants. Moises Salvador would say that Rizal sent him the statutes of the *Liga* from Hong Kong and that its Supreme Council in Manila had Franco for president, Mabini for secretary, and Adriano, Arevalo and Rianzares for members. He would add that Rizal had told the meeting that it was necessary to organize an association to be called *La Liga Filipina*, whose object and end would be to obtain the separation of the Philippines from the Spanish Nation; and that a second meeting had been held in Franco's house at which the members of the Supreme Council had been chosen.⁶ Franco, for his part, would claim that the meeting took place on the night of the 26th June [the very day Rizal had arrived from Hong Kong], called by Rizal himself, who had sought to persuade them of the usefulness of organizing the *Liga* in order to raise funds by various means to obtain the independence of the archipelago. He would deny that he had been elected president; it had been Ambrosio Salvador, with Pedro Serrano for secretary, Bonifacio Arevalo for treasurer, and others.⁷ One Valentín Díaz would profess to remember, on the other hand, that a certain Donato or Tato, brother-in-law of Marcelo del Pilar [Deodato Arellano] had been chosen president of the *Liga* at a meeting attended by Bonifacio, Adriano, Páez, Legaspi and others.⁸

What does appear likely is that the meeting had been arranged for Rizal by his friends and followers; that he had sought this occasion to launch the *Liga* properly although it would seem that a beginning had already been made on the basis of the material he had sent from Hong Kong; and that he had carried them all away with his prestige and his enthusiasm. But carried them whither? Had he, as Franco and Salvador later claimed under duress, come out openly for separation and independence? Or had he concealed this ultimate purpose, planning to reveal it only when the association had been firmly established on the basis of absolute secrecy, blind obedience and unconditional comradeship?

A certain ambivalence continues to puzzle us in Rizal. If his purpose in returning to the Philippines had been, as he had stated in his sealed letters of farewell, to win peace and justice for his family and others persecuted in his name, then he had already achieved his objective in one week with the pardon extended by Despujol to his father and family, and he could therefore, in thanking the Count on the Sunday after his arrival, say also, repeating it on the Wednesday, that he wanted to return to Hong Kong.

If he had another ulterior purpose, to organize the *Liga* as a new vehicle of action to replace the futile propaganda movement for reforms, then why return to Hong Kong? Why his blithe disregard for secrecy? Indeed his two days in the provinces had already aroused the authorities. On Tuesday the 5th July, upon confidential instructions of the Governor General, the constabulary had made simultaneous raids on the houses of all whom he had visited in Bulakan, Pampanga and Tarlak and had seized a number of copies of the *Fili* and “subversive” pamphlets.

No conspiracy could have been plotted so recklessly, no underground movement organized so openly above ground! One does not know whether to gasp at Rizal's candor or marvel at his boldness! The Count of Caspe might be a noble gentleman, anxious to show himself the reverse of the Marquess of Tenerife, but, after all, he had his duties as head of the regime, charged with holding the Spanish Pacific Empire for the Queen Regent and the infant Alfonso XIII.

Rizal's enemies had not been idle. Despujol had probably been driven to order the provincial raids by their denunciations. Warnings and loud complaints of laxness. There was another surprise in store both for him and for Rizal. It was officially reported to him that the Customs inspection had found, in a bundle of bed clothes in Rizal's luggage, copies of a pamphlet mocking the friars and, what was really more than a pious Catholic like Despujol could endure, Leo XIII, the Holy Father and Supreme Pontiff himself!

We should probably acquit both Rizal and Despujol of malice or duplicity in this matter. The Count had treated the great agitator with thoughtfulness and generosity, receiving him day after day, pardoning his father and family, consulting his wishes, discussing his disloyal project of a settlement in Borneo, all of which he certainly would not have done if he had been advised, at that time of the Customs report. Now he saw himself as a man

deceived, whose sympathies had been abused, whose good nature had been taken advantage of by one who must have appeared to him to be the rankest and most barefaced of hypocrites and traitors. To have it imposed upon his goodwill and condescension, to have exchanged views, nay, chatted, with one so far above his station, after smuggling despicable blasphemies and all the while underhandedly distributing them among his unwary and misled admirers! The decree banishing Rizal burns with righteous indignation and those who had thus slyly encompassed Rizal's ruin and Despujol's discomfiture must have smiled sardonically at the candor of both men.

Despujol's good faith had certainly been surprised; he does not seem to have asked why the Customs report had been brought to his notice only after more than a week, or how such reputedly clever fellow like Rizal could have attempted to smuggle in the pamphlets so clumsily, or indeed whether Rizal had had anything at all to do with the publications found in the houses of his friends in the provinces. Despujol was as angry as only a kind man can be when he believes that he has been imposed upon.

Rizal was equally surprised and indignant. Record his interview with the Count on Wednesday the July, he writes: "After we had conversed a while he told me that I had brought some proclamations in my baggage; I denied it. He asked me to whom the pillows and sleeping-mat might belong and I said they were my sister's."

Despujol was in a cold rage and informed Rizal that he was sending him to Fort Santiago. His own nephew and aide took Rizal in a palace carriage to the Fort. "They gave me a room furnished in the usual fashion with a cot, a dozen chairs, a table, a wash basin and a mirror. The room had three windows, one unbarred looking out on a courtyard, another one barred looking out on the city wall and the bayshore, and a third which served as a door and was locked. Two artillerymen [that is to say, Spaniards] were on duty as guards. They had orders to fire on anyone who might signal from the shore. I could not write or speak to anyone except the officer of the guard."

The Fort commandant let him have some books from his private library and his own orderly served Rizal's meals. (It is characteristic of Rizal that he notes down what he was given for breakfast: coffee, milk, a piece of bread and a cake: and that he was given four courses each for lunch and dinner.) He was kept eight days in the Fort. On the 14th July he was notified that he

would be taken to Dapitan in Mindanaw at ten o'clock that night. He had everything packed and ready by that time but, since they did not call for him, he went to sleep. They came for him shortly after midnight. Despujol had sent his nephew and aide in the same palace carriage to take him to the docks; really one cannot fault the Count in courtesy. There was a general to make sure that he was taken aboard the *Cebu*, which sailed at one o'clock in the morning carrying troops to the southern islands: detachments from the artillery regiment, the cavalry, engineers, constabulary, and the 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd and 74th regiments of infantry. One of the military convicts aboard aroused Rizal's curiosity: a Spanish sergeant whose Muslim mistress in Mindanaw had been seduced by his superior officer. He had hogtied the officer; the latter had been drummed out for allowing himself to be so degraded, and now the sergeant was going to be shot, and the enlisted men who had obeyed him condemned to twenty years' imprisonment.

Rizal was given a good cabin on deck, marked *jefes* (commanding officers?), next door to the captain commanding the entire detachment. He was always under guard but he was served from the officers' mess and in the evenings the commanding officer himself took him for a walk on deck. They reached Dapitan on Sunday the 17th July, three weeks to the day after he had arrived in Manila from Hong Kong. Three weeks from expatriation to banishment! There were heavy seas when the commanding officer took him ashore; "we were in darkness, our lantern lighted a path covered with grass."⁹

[2]

The Count of Caspe is possibly one of the most misunderstood figures in Philippine history. Surely more credit can be given him for the generosity which he displayed towards Rizal's banished family, the consideration which he showed the satirist of the friars and the religion to which he so devoutly adhered, his continuing thoughtfulness toward one whom he had every reason to believe had abused his good faith.

But Despujol, Weyler's alternative, successive and opposite "sardine," now committed a political mistake which even the Teutonic Marquess would have been hard put to conceive. Wounded and repelled by what he thought was Rizal's abuse of his confidence and his sacrilegious cynicism, he issued

a decree of banishment which gave the Spanish friars a triumph far beyond their expectation.

Despujol starts by recalling that Rizal had published several books and had had attributed to him proclamations and pamphlets which were “of very doubtful Hispanism and, while not openly anti-Catholic, brazenly anti-friar;” and that nonetheless upon his return he had been granted the pardon of his family and had been allowed to move freely in the provinces. Then he goes to the immediate charge that a few hours after his arrival the superior authorities received official notice that, in the cursory inspection made by the Customs surveyor of the baggage of passengers arriving from Hong Kong, there had been found in one of the packages belonging to [Rizal] a bundle of loose printed leaflets with the title 'Poor friars!' in which “the patient and generous meekness of the Filipino people was satirized and the customary accusations made against the religious Orders.” He then returns to Rizal's writings, specifically, the *Fili*, which he finds “dedicated to the memory of the three traitors to the Nation condemned and executed after the events in Kabite by virtue of a judgment by competent authority [but] extolled by him as martyrs,” and in which Rizal approves and adopts, by inscribing it on the title page, the doctrine that “in view of the vices and errors of the Spanish regime, there is no other salvation for the Philippines than separation from the Mother Country.” After that Despujol goes back to the leaflets in which, he states, it was sought “to de-Catholicize, which is equivalent to de-nationalizing, this Philippine land which will always be Spanish and as such always, Catholic” by “throwing the filthy mud of the most infamous calumnies at the august face of our common Father, the visible head of our Holy Mother Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, in brief the most beloved Pope Leo XIII.” From these premises Despujol draws the conclusion that Rizal has at last unveiled his true purposes: “it is no longer a question of mere attacks on monkishness which, more or less casuistically, had been represented as compatible in the Philippines with respect for the Catholic faith; nor is it any longer limited to insidious charges of the traditional affronts and blunders of Spanish colonial policy, nor to the systematic depreciation of the national glories, which pharisaically were sought to be reconciled with a false love for the Mother Country. Now it appears evident and proven in an undeniable manner before the eyes of all that the whole purpose that he [Rizal] pursues in his works and writings is nothing else but to uproot from loyal Filipino breasts

the treasure of our Holy Catholic Faith, the unbreakable keystone of national unity in this land.” In the exercise of his discretionary powers as Governor General and Viceroyal Patron of the Church Despujol thereupon banishes Rizal “to one of the Southern islands,” prohibits the introduction and circulation of his works as well as of any other proclamation or leaflet in which the Catholic religion or national unity is attacked directly or indirectly, and orders all who have in their possession such book or pamphlets to surrender them to the authorities within a certain period, under penalty of being considered dissidents and treated as such.¹⁰

The unreasonableness of the decree need not concern us over much. It is made obvious that the real evidence against Rizal is the whole body of his writings, yet these were known to the authorities long before his return. Even the *Fili*, as the decree itself admitted, was circulating in the Philippines when Rizal was still in Hong Kong. Why then was he not seized immediately when he landed in Manila?

If the discovery of the leaflets, the immediate cause offered for the banishment, had been reported to superior authority “within a few hours” after Rizal's arrival, how was it that he had been received with every consideration and granted signal favors by the highest authority himself for a week and a half afterwards? Nor was it true, as the decree stated, that Rizal had offered no defence except a “futile denial” and had sought to throw the guilt on to his own sister. Rizal's entry in his journal sounds more natural and credible; that he was merely asked “to whom the pillow and the sleeping mat [in which the leaflets had alledgedly been found] might belong and I said they were my sister's. Later in his rustication Rizal was to argue with his Spanish warden: “If my sister had brought [the leaflets] I would have known about it; if I had wanted to bring them in, nothing would have been easier than [for her] to place them in her bosom or in her stockings.”¹¹ What annoyed Rizal most was that he would be taken for a simpleton if the story was believed, and a simpleton he would have had to be to try to smuggle in the leaflets at all when he knew that he and everyone and everything connected with him would be under the most severe and searching suspicion.

In any case, if the smuggling of the leaflets was a punishable offence, why was not Rizal formally charged and tried in the courts; instead of being spirited away from palace to fortress, without a trial, without even an

opportunity to defend himself? If they constituted such a heinous crime, why had Despujol himself said in his decree that it would have been ready, “at the smallest sign of repentance,” to pardon Rizal? Obviously the leaflets were the merest of excuses.

Retana points out that they were allegedly discovered by a nephew of the Archbishop, who was a Dominican friar, and that sometime before Rizal's arrival the Spanish judge of the Walled City, Miguel Rodríguez Berriz, had discovered that a number of leaflets attacking the friar were actually being printed in an orphan asylum belonging to the Augustinians. This brings us nearer to the truth of the matter. The “absolutists” and the “apostolics” were in full rout in Spain, the constitutional monarchy seemed unassailable. The friar estates in the home country had been seized and sold at public auction, and freedom of religion, at least in private, had been recognized. Whether the government in Madrid was conservative or liberal, it would be loyal to the Constitution, and so would be its agents in Manila, at least when they first arrived.

If they were to hold their last bulwark in the Philippines, the Spanish friars had somehow to create and keep alive what Antonio Luna had aptly called “a sense of insecurity,” if necessary even by maligning themselves in leaflets and booklets which could then be attributed to some vast, elusive, deadly dangerous underground conspiracy of Masons, intellectuals, native seculars, agitators, foreign agents, whoever might suit their book, and who could be branded indiscriminately as “separatists” and traitors.

Even more essential, the Spanish friars had to persuade the men sent out from Madrid, the generals, directors, governors, who might well be progressive, intellectuals, even Masons themselves, leaders of the “liberal revolution” against Isabel II, that the interests of the Spanish nation were so closely bound up with the interests of the Spanish friars that they were practically identical. By and large they had succeeded in this in the past through suitable warnings, advice, protests, intrigue and cajolery. But in Despujol's decree they obtained far more than that; they secured what amounted to an official confirmation of their thesis from the very highest source and from one who would be least suspect of being their creature, the liberal fraternizing Despujol himself.

How they encompassed the Count of Caspe is a matter for conjecture. Surely they played on his feelings of outrage, his revulsion at being duped,

as he thought, by an unscrupulous agitator. They would also have appealed to his religious sentiments: really, to accuse His Holiness the Pope himself of being a money-grabber was intolerable! Finally they would have hinted obliquely at Madrid's possible displeasure with an over-complaisant, too generous a Governor General who allowed a subversive agitator to move about the country freely, organizing Masonic lodges. This, at least, was the excuse given by Despujol to the Minister of the Colonies in Madrid in transmitting copy of his decree.¹³

However it was done, the import of Despujol's decree is unmistakable. The “quibbling” distinction between attacks on the friars and attacks on religion itself is brushed aside; the unity of Church and State is emphatically re-affirmed—to “de-Catholicize” the Philippines is to “denationalize” them; the Philippines will always be Spanish and by that very token always Catholic.

The point did not escape the astute Marcelo del Pilar in Madrid. Commenting on the decree of banishment in the *Soli*, he pointed out that the offence charged against Rizal was essentially one of being anti-Catholic, not of being anti-Spanish. It was no excuse, he argued, to say, as Despujol had said, that the Catholic Faith was “the unbreakable keystone of national unity.” Despujol could not make identical what was made different by laws in force in the Philippines and by the very elements constituting the population of the country, for unlike Spain, where the people were all Catholic or at least Christian, the Philippines were populated not only by Christians but also by pagans and Muslims. If the Catholic religion was the basis of national unity, were then these millions of non-Catholics to be excluded from the nation and hence from the authority and protection of the Governor General as the highest representative of the nation? Despujol's thesis seemed, to del Pilar, equally against the law; he had the authority of the Spanish Constitution behind him when he asserted that “the Catholic religion is the state religion but it is not obligatory for all the inhabitants of the country. The [Philippine] penal code reserves for Catholicism religious supremacy and the exclusive right to public worship and propaganda. But far from imposing [Catholic] doctrines or participation in [Catholic] rites, [the code] sanctions and guarantees that other religious beliefs shall be respected.”

But whatever Plaridel might say, the Spanish friars had won a remarkable victory, even a decisive one. It was a triumphant climax of a long campaign. To all intents and purposes, and plain for all to read, Rizal was being punished (retroactively and without trial!) for the *Noli* and the *Fili*, and they could not complain that he had not been shot out of hand (there would be time enough for that) and merely banished indefinitely—to Dapitan, it turned out, on the very doorstep of the Muslims, with whom no doubt he could descant at leisure, and welcome, on the Inquisition and the wrongs of the Crusades.

For Rizal it must have been a stunning experience. It had all started so well, and it had ended so abruptly. He had won a pardon for his family; that, at least was something gained. But what was to become of the *Liga*? “The union of the archipelago” would seem very far indeed from his foothold on the vast unknown island of Mindanaw whose fierce shaven-paced Muslims had little in common except race with the meek Christians whose villages they had, not so long ago, plundered and laid waste.

He had returned to his country ready, almost eager, to defend and die for his convictions. Instead he had been bundled off in the dead of night to the edge of nowhere. Nobody had even tried to poison him! He may have recalled with a dry smile the warnings he received when he had arrived in Manila: the friars had drawn lots to murder him, the parish priest of Tondo had hired assassins, the hotel owner had been bribed to poison his food. He had taken it seriously enough to eat only in the house of some friend where mealtime surprised him.¹⁵

And here he was, very much alive, a liberator who could not liberate himself, an apostle like St. Francis with only birds and beasts for his congregation!

It was almost an anti-climax not to have been shot.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XVI

- (1) Ep. Riz., IV, 1, et seq.
- (2) Palma, 238.
- (3) Retana, 275, quoting a handwritten report to Despujol from Carnicero.
- (4) Palma, 239.
- (5) Retana, 245 et seq.; Kalaw, 42 et seq.; Retana gives biographical sketches of most of the men involved.
- (6) Arch. Fil., 293/213.
- (7) Arch. Fil., 306/226.
- (8) Arch. Fil., 300/220.
- (9) Ep. Riz., IV, 2-3.
- (10) Retana, 253 et seq. The decree was published in the Gaceta de Manila, 7th July 1892.
- (11) Ep. Riz., IV, 28.
- (12) Retana, 259.
- (13) Ep. Riz., IV, 16. Despujol states: “(Rizal) se dedicaba a organizar Llog. a MMas. (Logias Masónicas) como centros de propaganda de sus ideas.”
- (14) Retana, 262, footnote.
- (15) Ep. Riz., IV, 34.



XVII

A Commerce in Butterflies

Behold, Your Reverence, God's Messenger
planting coffee and cocoa!

RIZAL (IN A LETTER TO PASTELLS)

Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

A.C. SWINBURNE

Rizal was ever a lively man, full of curiosity and enterprise, and any new environment stimulated him. Before leaving for Dapitan he had managed to scribble a hasty letter to his family.

J. Rizal to his family, 14 July 1892 —

I am leaving this evening or tomorrow for Dapitan, where I am being banished. I go gladly knowing that the General grants you freedom, and because I believe that wherever I might go I should “always be in the hands of God who holds in them the destinies of men.”

In the eight days I have been here in Fort Santiago I have been treated well, and I have no complaints except for the deprivation of liberty. But one cannot have everything ...

If my mother receives her eyeglasses, she should cover the lens for the right eye with some paper, when I return I shall operate on her so that she may see quite clearly with both eyes ...

I still do not know how long I shall be in Dapitan. If there are good lands in Dapitan, I may easily settle down there, and then you can come, and we can make a home and bring all our things. There are no friars there: [the priests] are all Jesuits.

I do not have time for more now. I shall try to write to you more at length from Dapitan. I shall tell you how it is there, and if the land is good, and if the friars do not meddle ...¹

Within a week of his arrival he wrote his mother that he was well, and felt almost “on holiday.” They were to send him nothing; he needed nothing except a pair of good shoes and they would be difficult to send by mail. He did not think Paciano had done well to take the place of their brother-in-law López who had been banished to Jolo, but now that it was done perhaps. Narcisa could spend a season in Hong Kong for her health.²

Soon he was deep in schemes for a settlement. Kalamba could be re-created in Dapitan, if not in Borneo. He came from a farming family and he was always conscious of the value of good land. He had not been in Dapitan a month when he asked the local commander, Ricardo Carnicero, if he could cultivate the lands stretching from the town square to the seashore, and

promptly set about having them planted with fruit trees. He also had an eye on a virgin stretch of land south of the town and next to the shore where he planned to plant a thousand coconut trees.³ Later he would have a try at buying and selling hemp and copra.

He had thought of borrowing ₱1,000 from his family, Then in September he had a stroke of good luck, Carnicero, another local Spaniard and he learned that Ticket No. 9736, in which they had equal one-third shares, had won a second prize in the lottery worth ₱20,000. His share came to about ₱6,200. The happy news was brought to Dapitan by the mailboat *Butuan* with pennants flying so that Carnicero, thinking that some official was aboard, went to greet it with a brass band.⁴

By the next month Rizal had invested half of the money in some land by the sea which he said was as good as winning another lottery prize (he sent the rest to his father). Carnicero had thought it worthless at first; later he agreed that Rizal was right. Title to the land had cost him ₱18 and he expected to earn ₱2,000 yearly from it. By January 1893 he could boast that he had “more than fifty *lansones* trees, twenty mango trees, *macupa* trees, some fifty *lanka* trees, *santol* trees, *balones*, eighteen mangosteens ... I have planted some 1,400 coffee and 200 cocoa seedlings ...” But wild monkeys and wild boars would wreak havoc on them later. By March he had built a pretty little house for ₱40.⁵ Life was not too dull.

J. Rizal to Teodora Alonso Rizal, 19 October 1892 —

... I am here in good health, thank God I have enough diversions to keep me from getting bored. I am busying myself with a number of things: I am collecting shells, from time to time I go riding (the local governor lends me his chestnut horse, a good one), I go bathing in a creek, I have many patients and perform many operations, and even win in the lottery! I only lack your company to make me happy.

I have sent Father ₱2,000, and with some accounts which people in Manila have in my favour we should have ₱3,500 or ₱4,000, enough to build a house here. We can use the same furniture we have there [*in Hong Kong*].

I am sending Don José Basa ₱200 on the pretext that they are to cover household expenses. On no account must you take any

money from him, for I owe this gentleman a number of small amounts [which he advanced to me] when he was rich and I was a student, and now that he has come down in the world I want to repay him the small expenses I occasioned him in the past.

Gather all the paintings I have of Luna; not one of them must be sold!

... I am puzzled that Trining does not write a single line. What is the matter with her?

Pangoy writes very well in English and has given me great joy. I am going to write her a few lines ...

Have you received the eyeglasses they should have sent you from Paris?⁶

J. Rizal to T. Alonso Rizal, 5 January 1893 —

... I have not spent too bad a Christmas or New Year's Eve here; no doubt I could have had a better time under other circumstances, but in those in which I find myself I could not have wanted more. Everything is relative, and things change according to one's point of view. Three Spaniards came from a neighboring town and, together with the local commander, another local Spaniard, and a Frenchman, we had a gay Christmas Eve dinner. We went to hear the midnight Mass; for you must know that I hear Mass every Sunday.⁷

His letter to Pangoy (his sister Josefa) is one of the few he wrote in English, and may therefore be of some interest to an English-speaking generation. Rizal's command of a language he had picked up himself is remarkable, although one or two "Hispanisms" or perhaps "Tagalogisms" show he shared the difficulties that still bedevil his countrymen.

J. Rizal to "Miss Josephine Rizal:" undated —

My dear sister,

I got the few lines you have written for me and I am very glad to see how far are you advanced in English. Please, write always to me, and be diligent in learning everything you can while you stay there. Tell to Trining she must write too and study.

Take care of our dear Mother who is getting too old.

You must keep my library clean and proper, my instruments also, in order they may not get rusty.⁸

And another, written when Pangoy had returned to Kalamba:

J. Rizal to “Miss Josephine Rizal,” 26 October 1893 —

Dearest sister:

Yours at hand, I am very glad to see that you nearly master the English language.

I should be very glad if you all come here; here is not so warm as there; our house here is small but the ground is large and it is situated between lovely mountains.

You will receive from the Chinese Pedro Cuesta \$20, \$10 out of them for a lottery ticket, and the \$10 remaining for different things I should like to have, I wrote to our brother-in-law Maneng.

The \$50 I was going to send there, you will not receive them perhaps as I disposed of them.

Send my best regards to Don Pepe.

Let me call your attention to an English word that you do not write properly. *They are* (ellos son); *there* (alli). [In Spanish: Do not mix up these two.] This is the only fault I found in your letter.

Tell our father that I should like to see him; I hope we shall see one another very soon. Kiss him the hand for me.

Thanks for the paper, and for everything you sent here.⁽⁹⁾

He was becoming that typical figure, the family bachelor: the fond fussy bachelor uncle. Here is a charming letter to his nephew Alfredo Hidalgo:

J. Rizal to A. Hidalgo, 20 December 1893 —

I was very glad to read your letter and see how much progress you have made. I congratulate you on the letter and on your receiving the grade of “excellent.”

I think I should call your attention to a slight mistake you made in your letter, a mistake which many commit in society. One does not say, “I and my brothers send our greetings,” but “my brothers and I send our greetings.” You must always put yourself last; you must say: Emilio and I, you and I, my friend and I, etc.

For the rest, your letter lacks nothing in clearness, conciseness and correct spelling. Go ahead, then; study, study and think over well what you have studied; life is a very serious matter, and only those who have brains and a heart have a good life. To live is to be among men, and to be among men is to struggle. But this struggle is not an animal, material struggle, nor is it a struggle only with other men; it is a struggle with them but also with one's self, with their passions but also with one's own, with errors and with anxieties. It is an eternal struggle, [which one must sustain] with a smile on one's lips, and tears in the heart. In this battlefield, a man has no better weapon than his intelligence, no greater strength than that of his own heart.^{[10](#)}

His mother and unmarried sisters had left Hong Kong in April of that year 1893, and Doña Teodora and Trinidad had joined him in Dapitan towards the end of August. They would leave early in 1895 and María with her two sons would take their place. His father would never be able to join him; from Hong Kong he had returned to Kalamba. He would not see Paciano again.

His letters to Blumentritt during this period give us a clear and good-humoured picture of life in Dapitan, “I have a square house, a six-sided house, and an eight-sided house. My mother, my sister Trinidad, a nephew and I live in the square house; in the eight-sided house are my boys—some children whom I am teaching figuring, Spanish and English—and one or another patient on whom I have operated. My chickens live in the six-sided house. From my house I can hear the murmur of a crystalline rivulet which drops from high rocks, I can see the shore, the sea where I have two small boats—canoes or *barotos* as they are called here. I have many fruit trees ... I have rabbits, dogs, cats, etc. I get up early, at five o'clock, inspect my fields, feed the chickens, wake up my workers, and get them to work. At half-past seven we breakfast on tea, pastries, cheese, sweets, etc. Then I

examine and give treatment to my poor patients, who come to see me, dress, and go to town in my *baroto* to visit my patients there. I return at noon and have my luncheon, which has been made ready for me. Afterwards I teach my boys until four o'clock, and spend the rest of the afternoon in the fields. At night I read and study.”¹¹

In another letter: “My life goes on peacefully and monotonously. To pass the time and help the local people here a little, I have turned merchant. I buy hemp and ship it to Manila. I was lucky this month; I made \$200 at one blow ... My present life is tranquil, peaceful, withdrawn, without glory, but I think it is also useful. I am teaching some poor but intelligent children how to read Spanish and English, mathematics (including geometry), and how to behave like men. I have also taught the local people how to make a better living, and they think I am right ... This coercion [his banishment] upon me has taught me a new language, Bisayan, and how to handle a boat; it has given me a better knowledge of my country, and has rewarded me with some thousands of dollars [his lottery prize]! God can send good fortune in the midst of the persecutions of one's enemies.”¹²

In a third: “In six hours I must read many letters and answer them, load my hemp aboard ship, see the local commander, make inquiries, ask about the money for my business; etc., etc. The ship comes only once a month and stays here only eight hours, sometimes less. I have to open cases, inspect merchandise, visit my patients, give advice—sometimes my head is all awlirl. I have turned half-physician half-merchant. I have started a mercantile company here; I have taught the poor inhabitants of Mindanaw to unite in order to do business so that they can make themselves independent and free themselves from the Chinese, and thus be less exploited. But I have a lot of talking to do with the local commander, who although he is a good man, nevertheless favors the Chinese; he prefers the Mongols to the people of Mindanaw. Fortunately the company prospers; we are making some profits, and the poor Dapitaños become active and content.”¹³

In a fourth: “Now we are going to make a reservoir on my lands. I have fourteen boys whom I am teaching languages, mathematics, and how to work. Since we have nothing to work on, I have decided to build a dike of stone, brick and cement so they may learn.”¹⁴ The reservoir would irrigate this land during the dry season; the boys were making great progress and

were having fun as well. They belonged to “the best families in town, and one can judge their zeal for study when, even though they have to work; for me, they work in order to study. If I asked them for money [instead], I am sure they would pay it with pleasure, and more would come. Ah, how much a good college is needed here, with good teachers who would teach in order that their pupils might learn and not merely lose their time as usually happens!”¹⁵ It was the old Ibarra. He was even thinking of making a wooden machine for the manufacture of bricks and planned to produce six thousand a day. All he lacked was a furnace! But in Belgium and in Baden he had seen bricks cooked in the open air without a furnace, and perhaps Blumentritt knew how it was done in Bohemia.¹⁶

But, like many another expatriate who had stayed abroad too long, he found his country's climate too hot,¹⁷ and remembered the picnics in Germany. “One walks in the woods, picks strawberries and at the next inn asks for Rhine wine and sugar to make a fruit punch! Then one comes to some village, orders a meal at some restaurant, and eats with zest, and afterwards, one goes to sleep under the pine trees on a soft carpet of pine needles. How I would love to feel now the cold of the North!”¹⁸

He held fast to his family. In July 1894 he operated once more on his beloved mother's eyes: she was such a trying patient! The operation had been a success for she immediately regained her sight with great clarity. The incisions “had been healing very well the first three days,” he complained to his brother-in-law Hidalgo, “but this made her only reckless; she refused to follow my instructions any longer and went to bed and got up by herself, went out to the porch, and put on and took off her bandages, again all by herself, always telling me nothing was going to go wrong, until her eye became inflamed (she thinks it must have been struck one night) and now it is very bad. I do not know whether or not I can secure any improvement now. The incision was reopened, the iris has been ruptured, and now she has a violent inflammation of the eye. Nothing can stop her; she insists on reading, going out into the light, and rubbing her eye. What is happening is beyond belief. Now I understand very well why one should be prohibited from giving medical treatment to members of one's family.”¹⁹

But they were both deeply moved when she had finally to leave him in January 1895. “She is going to Manila on the next mailboat,” he wrote Blumentritt, “because my father, who feels himself growing weaker and

weaker by the day, wants to see her ...”²⁰ In another letter: “My father is well again, but my aged mother does not want to leave him; they are like two friends in the last hours before farewell; knowing they must be parted they do not want to be far from each other.”²¹

Even after she was gone, he pursued her with affectionate importunities. In September he asked her to write to him all about her parents, ascendants, et. al.; “I plan to write an account of our ancestry for the benefit of our nephews.”²² The next month, complaining that he had not heard from her, he sent some verses he had promised as well as a “Hymn of Talisay.” “Talisay” was the name of his homestead, and the “hymn” had been composed as a “college song” for the boys he was tutoring.²³ It is of considerable interest because, as we shall see later, it would be presented in evidence against him at his trial. The verses for his mother, entitled “*Mi Retiro*” are some of his best. They reflect in a polished glass not only the enchantments of his rustic life but also its bitterness.

*Cabe anchurosa playa de fina y suave arena
y al pie de una montaña cubierta de verdor
planté mi choza humilde bajo arboleda amena,
buscando de los bosques en la quietud serena
reposo a mi cerebro, silencio a mi dolor.*

*Su techo es frágil nipa, su suelo débil caña,
sus vigas y columnas maderos sin labrar:
nada vale, por cierto, mi rústica cabaña;
mas duerme en el regazo de la eterna montaña,
y la canta y la arrulla noche y día la mar.*

*Un afluente arroyuelo, que de la selva umbría
desciende entre peñascos, la baña con amor,
y un chorro le regala por tosca cañería
que en la callada noche es canto y melodía
y néctar cristalino del día en el calor.*

*Si el cielo está sereno, mansa corre la fuente,
su cítara invisible tañendo sin cesar;
pero vienen las lluvias, e impetuoso torrente*

*peñas y abismos salta, ronco, espumante, hirviente,
y se arroja rugiendo frenético hacia el mar.*

*Del perro los ladridos, de las aves el trino,
del kálaw la voz ronca solos se oyen allí:
no hay hombre vanidoso ni importuno vecino
que se imponga a mi mente, ni estorbe mi camino;
sólo tengo las selvas y el mar cerca de mí.*

*¡El mar, el mar es todo! Su masa soberana
los átomos me trae de mundos que lejos son;
me alienta su sonrisa de límpida mañana,
y cuando por la tarde mi fe resulta vana
encuentra en sus tristezas un eco el corazón.*

*¡De noche es un arcano! ... Su diáfano elemento
se cubre de millares y millares de luz;
la brisa vaga fresca, reluce el firmamento,
las olas en suspiros cuentan al manso viento
historias que se pierden del tiempo en el capuz.*

*Diz que cuentan del mundo la primera alborada,
del sol el primer beso que su seno encendió,
cuando miles de seres surgieron de la nada,
y el abismo poblaron y la cima encumbrada
y do quiera su beso fecundante estampó.*

*Mas cuando en noche obscura los vientos se enfurecen
y las inquietas olas comienzan a agitar,
cruzan el aire gritos que el ánimo estremecen,
coros, voces que rezan, lamentos que parecen
exhalar los que un tiempo se hundieron en el mar.*

*Entonces repercuten los montes de la altura,
los árboles se agitan de confin a confín;
aullan los ganados, retumba la espesura ...
son espíritus dicen que van a la llanura
llamados por los muertos a fúnebre festín.*

*Silba, silba la noche, confusa, aterradora;
verdes, azules llamas en el mar vense arder;
mas la calma renace con la sonriente aurora
y pronto una atrevida barquilla pescadora
las fatigadas olas empieza a recorrer.*

*Así pasan los días en mi oscuro retiro,
desterrado del mundo donde un tiempo viví;
de mi varia fortuna la Providencia admiro:
guijarro abandonado que al musgo sólo aspiro
para ocultar a todos el mundo que tengo en mí.*

*Vivo con los recuerdos de los que yo he amado
y oigo de vez en cuando sus nombres pronunciar:
unos están ya muertos, otros me han olvidado;
mas ¿qué importa? ... Yo vivo pensando en lo pasado
y lo pasado nadie me puede arrebatár.*

*El es un fiel amigo que nunca me desdora
que siempre alienta el alma cuando triste la ve,
que en mis noches de insomnio conmigo vela y ora
conmigo, y en mi destierro y en mi cabaña mora,
y cuando todos dudan sólo el me infunde fe.*

*Y la tengo, y espero que ha de brillar un día
en que venza la Idea a la fuerza brutal,
que después de la lucha y la lenta agonía,
otra voz más sonora, más feliz que la mía
sabrà cantar entonces el cántico triunfal.*

*Veo brillar el cielo tan puro y refulgente
como cuando forjaba mi primera ilusión,
el mismo soplo siento besar mi mustia frente,
el mismo que encendía mi entusiasmo ferviente
y hacía hervir la sangre del joven corazón.*

*Yo respiro la brisa que acaso haya pasado
por los campos y ríos de mi pueblo natal;
acaso me devuelve lo que antes le he confiado:*

*los besos, los suspiros de un ser idolatrado,
las dulces confidencias de un amor sin igual.*

*Al ver la misma luna, cual antes argentada,
la antigua melancolía siento en mí renacer;
despiertan mil recuerdos de amor y fe jurada, un patio,
una azotea, la playa, una enramada,
silencios y suspiros, rubores de placer.*

*Mariposa sedienta de luz y de colores,
soñando en otros cielos y en más vasto pensil,
dejé, joven apenas, mi patria y mis amores,
y errante por doquiera sin dudas, sin temores,
gasté en tierras extrañas de mi vida el abril.*

*Y después, cuando quise, golondrina cansada,
al nido de mis padres y a mi amor volver,
rugió fiera de pronto violenta turbonada:
vime rotas las alas, deshecha la morada,
la fe vendida a otros y ruinas por doquier.*

*Lanzado a una peña de la patria que adoro,
el porvenir destruído, sin hogar, sin salud,
¡venís a mí de nuevo! sueños
de rosa y oro, de toda mi existencia el único tesoro,
creencias de una sana, sincera juventud.*

*Ya no sois como antes, llenas de fuego y vida
brindando mil coronas y la inmortalidad;
algo serias os hallo; mas vuestra faz querida
si ya no es tan risueña, si está descolorida
en cambio lleva el sello de la fidelidad.*

*Me ofrecéis, ¡oh ilusiones, la copa del consuelo,
y mis jóvenes años a despertar venís!...
gracias a ti, tormenta; gracias, vientos del cielo,
que a buen hora supisteis cortar mi incierto vuelo,
para abatirme al seno de mi natal país.*

*Cabe anchurosa playa de fina y suave arena
al pie de una montaña cubierta de verdor,
hallé en mi patria asilo bajo arboleda amena,
y en sus umbrosos bosques, tranquilidad serena,
reposo a mi cerebro, silencio a mi dolor.*⁽²⁴⁾

He was “a pebble kicked aside,” who now thought only of concealing from all “the gift I have in me.” He lives on his memories of those whom he has loved: “some are dead, others have forgotten” him. Only the past remains, “my faithful friend,” and continues to inspire him with “faith,” faith that someday “the idea shall prevail over brute force.” For himself he gives “thanks to the storm, thanks to the winds of the sky” that have cut short his “uncertain flight”—the flight of “a butterfly avid for light and color,” the flight of “a swallow whose wings have been broken” —and beaten him down to his native shore.

He had confided to Carnicero's successor, Juan Sitges, a doctor himself, in May 1893: “My family is ruined. I, because of my color, cannot find a clientele in Europe; I can only make a bit of money practising my profession in my own country, among my own people. Everybody wants to go to Manila, but, if I set up my practice there, I will be banished again at the first sign of trouble, or even shot. I must make my life in Dapitan, for my own peace of mind. My future is here.”²⁵

[2]

He was not entirely out of touch with the great world. That most exclusive, loyal and jealous brotherhood, the community of scientists, had not forgotten him, whatever his color. The Spanish censors were apt to be difficult about letters in a foreign language on matters that were incomprehensible to them, but one way or another, the European scientists managed to reach out their antennae to their proscribed colleague.

First and always, of course, there was Blumentritt. He offered to send him books from the *Universal Bibliothek* list; Professor Kluschak had neuralgia but still went on great walks up and down mountains; the death of Dr. Czepelack had been a disaster; Dr. Meyer and his wife had paid a visit from Dresden, and Mrs. Meyer, a painter, had admired Rizal's statuette of “The

Triumph of Life over Death;" the French, English, Dutch and German linguists were all asking him about Rizal; Blumentritt himself was preparing an ethnographic map of Mindanaw and would name some rivers after the Jesuit missionaries. Two and a half months later he was sending Rizal a copy in German of his "Supplement to the Alphabetical List of the Names Given to Indigenous Races in the Philippines;" the Geographical Society in Madrid would publish a Spanish translation. He had translated a treatise of Rizal on the transcription and orthography of *Tagalog* and had it published in the bulletin of the Royal Society and distributed among all Orientologists; he had also been studying a catechism in the *Ilongot* dialect, and was now working on a mythological dictionary, and learning the grammar of the *Tiruray* dialect.²⁶

Rizal was impressed by the activities of his dearest friend, and complained: "I, on the other hand, am doing nothing." He was doing nothing of the sort. He was learning Malay with the grammar Blumentritt had sent him and was growing convinced that Tagalog could not have been derived from Malay. Blumentritt had early on suggested to him that he write a Tagalog grammar; some had already been had published by learned friars but, argued the Austrian scholar, these were neither Filipinos nor had the qualities which had made Rizal shine in the circle of French, English, German, Dutch and Austrian Orientalists. Rizal, not content with having finished it toward the end of 1893, now embarked on the even more ambitious project of a monumental dictionary of all the languages and dialects of the Philippines with equivalents in Spanish, English, French and German! He tried to enlist the interest and help of his relatives but there is no record that he received it.²⁷

He also kept up his interest in history. He discoursed learnedly on the origin of the name Mindanao, or Mindanaw, deriving it from *danaw*, the Bisayan word for lake, and *magi*, possibly a contraction or corruption of *malaki*, meaning great, and thus identifying the island with its most prominent geographical feature, the great lake of Lanaw. He had also inquired into the origin of the name Dapitan, and had derived it from the Bisayan word for a meeting place. He had brought some documents dating back to 1718, one of them signed by Bustamante, the Governor General who had been assassinated by the friars, from the ruined descendants of a Boholano chieftain Lagubayan. According to Bustamante, Lagubayan had led eight

hundred families to the site of the present town after his sister had been betrayed. He had received the first Spaniards generously and given them pilots and guides to take them to Bohol and the chieftain he had left there in his stead, the very Katunas (Si Katunaw) who had entered into the famous blood pact with Legazpi. Fearing that the documents would be lost in Dapitan, Rizal had deposited them in the Library-Museum in Manila.²⁸

What a prodigious talent he had, and what inexhaustible energy! He had made a collection of more than two hundred species of seashells, all classified and in order, and all from the Dapitan region. He offered them to Dr. Meyer; how much would he get for them? Dr. Meyer, however, was more interested in other specimens, and Rizal sent him a collection of reptiles, crustaceans, beetles, etc. The rats had got at his collection of tortoises, hawks and other birds! A month later he was sending Dr. Meyer another batch of snakes, scorpions, worms, more beetles, a boa constrictor, and asked in return for German translations of Greek and Russian classics. “I send you lifeless nature; you send me in return the spirit in the pages of these books!” His choice is of some interest: Gogol, the Russian satirist of the corruption and pettiness of Czarist bureaucracy; Turgenev, another Russian novelist, brooding over the clash between young Westernized intellectuals and their conservative elders; and two ancient Greek playwrights, Aeschylus, father of Greek tragedy, and Sophocles of the Oedipus, Antigone and Electra.

His next shipment was a collection of butterflies, more reptiles and fishes; after that, acknowledging Dr. Meyer's gift of a work of his on the Negritos—three birds, a wild boar's head, a porcupine, the skin and skeleton of a muskrat and some insects, in return for which he wanted a mathematics treatise in French, and, if possible, a small case of instruments to measure skulls. He was thinking of studying racial differences in Mindanaw!²⁹

Dr. Joest in Berlin had another inquiry for his “esteemed colleague.” He had just bought for his museum a small collection from the Carolines, the Philippines and the Palaus. One of the items was a decorated bamboo case apparently used to carry messages. How were the two pieces put together? Did the drawings have any significance?³⁰ A Dutchman, S. Knuttel, residing in Stuttgart, had heard about him from some friends, and wanted him to submit regular reports on Philippine volcanoes for a history of volcanoes on which he was engaged. He would not take no for an answer; it

did not matter that Rizal, as he had demurred in his ever courteous reply, was in fact quite far from Mayon and Taal, or that he had not made any special studies in geology; he was nearer to these volcanoes than Knuttel at any rate, and surely he could tell when there was an earthquake!⁽³¹⁾

A friend of Blumentritt's in Prague, Napoleon M. Kheil, launched him into a commerce in butterflies; Rizal had sent some to Meyer, but Kheil was a very different sort of customer. He had travelled throughout Spain six times and had spent his time taking photographs and hunting butterflies, locusts and blow-flies to complete his entomological collection which, he claimed, contained species from all over the world. Rizal sent Kheil a number of butterflies from Mindanaw through Blumentritt. Kheil scolded him unmercifully. Had he no idea at all how to handle butterflies? One did not catch butterflies by hand but in nets; one did not pierce them with pins, but placed them carefully in envelopes, caking care not to spoil the wings. Kheil sent him two nets, envelopes, in which to place the specimens, and a few damaged butterflies which Rizal had sent him just to show how the thing was not done. In his next letter he lectured Rizal on just how to kill the butterflies once they had been caught: they should be killed with alcohol or cyanide; and four months later complained that Rizal “had still not learned the art of catching butterflies, and was apparently seizing them in his fist!” The correspondence ends at this point; either Kheil or Rizal must have come to the end of his patience!³²

It was so much more pleasant to hear from Dr. Rost, who had been so good to him in London. Alas, the poor old man had bad news.

R. Rost to J. Rizal, 15 September 1893 —

... As for myself, I am sorry to say that, in obedience to a new law which provides that civilians over 65 have to retire from the service, I shall cease to be librarian at the India Office at the end of this month and that I shall have to live on a pension less than half of my salary. This is most unfortunate, as I am still in the enjoyment of my mental faculties. Still, while I have hitherto devoted myself exclusively to others, I shall now be able to pursue my favorite studies inclusive of the “*lenguas Filipinas*.” I hear that grammars and dictionaries of some of the dialects (*Bagobo, Manobo, Moro-Maguindanaw*) of Mindanaw have

recently appeared, but only some volumes about the *Tiruray* have come into my possession. Why do not the publishers send copies to Europe for sale? If you require any books from here I will gladly procure them for you. Only you must let me know how I am to address and send them.³³

Indeed the case of poor Dr. Rost had exercised most of his colleagues in the scientific community. The staid and aloof British Dictionary of National Biography goes so far as to say that his retirement was “necessitated by a somewhat strained interpretation of the Civil Service Superannuation Act.”³⁴ *The Athenaeum's* obituary noted that he had “retired, somewhat unwillingly, but continued to do cataloguing and other useful work in private for the institution in which the real interest of his life was centered.”³⁵ Rizal's reply has not been preserved. “There was a cry of joy all over the house as I shouted out, 'a letter from Rizal!', and I had to read it aloud to the family,” wrote back Dr. Rost. It was comforting to know that in London at least there were friends who wanted him back “that we may cherish you and show you our high regard and affection!” What a “dear man” Rizal must have been to be singled out so affectionately in the memory of one who had, after all, made the India Office Library “the natural and regular resort of all students of the East, old and young.”³⁶ The old man wanted him to contribute articles to the Asiatic Society of Singapore, to the Royal Asiatic Society in London, to the Shanghai Society, or to the one at Wellington in New Zealand. He enclosed book reviews from Luzac's *Monthly Oriental List* “for which I supply all the notices.” He was always generous with what his obituary called “his profound knowledge, ready counsel, and genial sympathy.”

But, pensioned off, he was almost as unhappy on Primrose Hill as Rizal in Talisay.

R. Rost to J. Rizal, 7 December 1894 —

... I informed you in my last letter how badly I have been treated by the Indian Government in requital for my long and faithful and dedicated services. In order to earn something in addition to my meager pension, I have to work harder in my 73rd year than I have done since my school days and my eyesight is beginning to fail me.

Could you not employ your enforced leisure in writing some treatises about the various vernaculars spoken in Mindanaw and their relations to Tagalog and Bisaya? I could get them printed for the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.³⁷

Had Dr. Rost heard nothing of Rizal's Tagalog grammar and of his “monumental” dictionary of all the languages of the Philippines? If he had not, he soon did for in his next letter he was not after Rizal. “Your Tagalog Grammar should be published without delay. The minor philological essays may subsequently be taken in hand and be brought out in a separate volume.”³⁸ In less than a year Rost was dead. Blumentritt, ever Rizal's gossip and go-between with the scientists of Europe, broke the news to him.

F. Blumentritt to J. Rizal, 14 February 1896 —

... I must give you the sad news of the death of our common friend R. Rost. This venerable old man left on the London express to give a lecture in a college in Canterbury, and on alighting from the train had an attack of apoplexy from which he immediately expired. Oriental science loses in him a hardworking and resourceful servant and collaborator, and his friends a man who had “a heart of gold.” He was always especially fond of you, and always referred to you as that “pearl of a man.”³⁸

That is tribute that most would desire, many have been given, and few have deserved: “a pearl of a man,” from a man through whose fingers many an emerald, amethyst, and ruby of Orient and Occident had slipped unremarked.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 9 April 1896 —

Your brief letter which I received yesterday giving me the news of Dr. Rost's death caused me great grief. Dr. Rost was like a father to me in London and never forgot me. I had kept his very affectionate letters, sent to me here in Dapitan, and they show that he was not only very good to me but even improved on his goodness. His house on Primrose Hill was a real home for me.

He has died serving the cause of science! His last letter to me was written in a shaky hand and indicated a presentiment of death.

Among other things he told me:

“Jagor and I had been speaking about you only a few days ago (he came here to attend the geographic Congress though he is eighty years old!), and Blumentritt also spoke much about you in his last letter. I wish and pray that Heaven may grant me before I die the great blessing that I may behold your dear face once more. My health is very indifferent, constant cares and worries have brought on diabetes and my vital strength is waning ... If I could do literary work of my own choosing, I should, feel happier! It is a great treat to converse with old friends!”

I do not want to complain to my friends about my position; I know there are others in worse; but I do complain that I cannot see the faces of those who, like wise old Rost, have loved me well and have died, without our having seen each other again.

If I did not believe in the immortality of the soul, I would invent it to gladden myself with the hope of seeing him again!⁴⁰

One must grant Rizal the honors of the exchange. Really, to invent the immortality of the soul to see poor old Dr. Rost again!

[3]

The sudden descent upon the rustics of Dapitan of a man like Rizal, already famous in his early thirties, a professional man with all the manners of the great world, who could as well discuss theology with the parish priest as feed the chickens and make bricks, and a bachelor, must have driven the town's marriageable girls and their mothers to distraction. Such a tidy, such a dependable, such a serious, such a gallant, such a desirable young man! He was, of course, the more cautious may have reflected, suspect in the eyes of the authorities, an agitator denounced by the Governor General himself, a free-thinker and a lost soul, according to the Jesuit missionary, and his future uncertain. But there were all the signs that he was ready to settle down in Dapitan; he had been heard to say that his future was there. What woman can resist the delicious pleasures of self-abnegation, of reforming, a reprobate and converting a sinner!

But this most eligible of catches, dropped by some miracle within the reach of the marriageable daughters of Dapitan, was also most tantalising. He would not go about serenading; he spent his nights reading books and writing letters, and his days chasing beetles and snakes. He was not unsociable, attending all the official functions of the district with impeccable manners, making it a point always to greet the ladies first, Filipina or not, and addressing them as *señora* this and *señorita* that.⁴¹ But no one seemed to be able to catch his eye and hold it.

There was the episode of the stockings. Retana, quoting Carnicero, says that Rizal was upset when, upon arriving in Dapitan, he remarked that none of the ladies wore stockings. No sooner was this known than the young ladies decided to supply the lack, and a cunning Chinese shopkeeper promptly sent to Manila for these exotic items by the dozen. “The first Sunday after the arrival of the merchandise.” Recalled Carnicero, “the young ladies of Dapitan appeared for Mass in stockings and slippers, and this novel spectacle aroused general interest. However, some one spread the word among the young ladies that only women of doubtful reputation used these articles of apparel, and so they went home and took them off and never put them on again in all their lives.”⁴²

Rizal himself had another version. In a letter to his sister Trinidad he wrote: “The girls here are wearing stockings and shoes by order of Father Vicente ... During Holy Week the women were obliged to put on men's socks, ugly and of the worst quality, at three *reales* a pair. If I had had five dozen [ready to hand] I would have sold them all. However, do send me two dozen cheap black stockings; otherwise they might buy my own socks off me.”⁴³

Whether the young ladies of Dapitan put on stockings to please the eligible young doctor, or whether the enterprising young merchant merely took advantage of a missionary's decree, the point seems to have been that, legs bare or legs stockinged, the marriageable daughters of the district did not interest Rizal.

To this cozy little provincial hive came now a queen bee. One Mr. Taufer arrived at Dapitan to have his eyes cured by the renowned ophthalmologist. He was accompanied, by his adopted daughter, a Miss Josephine Bracken. An undated letter of introduction from Rizal's schoolmate and friend Julio

Llorente has been preserved; it refers somewhat ambiguously to “Mr. Bracken.”⁴⁴

Miss Bracken had the buxom good looks that had always attracted Rizal in Europe; her photographs show her as having a rather heavy face with a sad down-tilted mouth and deep meditative blue eyes. A touching little record of her life, which we reproduce unedited, is attributed to her-own pen.

DESCRIPTION OF MY LIFE

22nd February 1897 Monday

My Mother is a native of Ireland and was married to my Father on the 3rd of May 1865 in Belfast Ireland. My father's name is James Bracken, and my mother's Maiden name was Elizabeth Jane MacBride. We were five brothers and sisters. Charles, Agnes, Nelly, Francis and myself Josephine. Charles was born on the 10th April 1869. Agnes was born in Malta on the 14th May 1873. Francis was born on the 2nd of June 1875 and died on the 1st September 1875, Nelly was born at Gibraltar on the 21st July 1871, and I was born in Hong Kong at the Victoria Barracks on the 9th of August 1876. My father is a Corporal and Detachment [Detachment] School-master of a Detachment of Pembroke Camp. My mother died on the 2nd of September 1876 after giving birth to me. After the loss of my beloved mother I was then removed to the care of a neighbour until after her burial. As my father is a military, he could not attend to all of us especially me for being so very small he gave me to a family to be adopted. The kind benevolent couple Mr. and Mrs. Taufer took very good care of me until I was seven years old. Unfortunately, at that age was when my adopted mother died.

This was when I was seven years of age 1882

Mrs. Taufer died on the 8th October 1882 with a heart disease. A year after Mr. Taufer took to another wife, then my troubles commenced little by little. On the 13th July 1889 we took a trip up to Japan on account of Mrs. Taufer's illness; we stayed in Japan three months; but as her health did not recover we returned back to Hong Kong. We arrived in Hong Kong on the 24th of November 1889. But Mrs. Taufer got worse and died on the 26th April 1890.

This is when I was fifteen years of age 1890

On the 12th November 1891 Mr. Taufer took to a third wife which was a torment to me. On the 12th December I left Mr. Taufer's house and went to the Italian Convent because I could not stand any more of her troubles. I stayed in the Convent two months when Mr. Taufer came begging me to go home because his wife were starving him. As I could not hear him complaining I went back on the 3rd February 1892 to take care of his house. On the 14th September I had trouble again with Mrs. Taufer and hunted her out of the house. In 1893 Mr. Taufer got very ill and had sore eyes, as he tried several doctors but none could do him any good.

This was when I were eighteen years of age

On the 5th September we went to Manila for the purpose of seeing Dr. J. Rizal, unfortunately Dr. Rizal was not in Manila but up the province. We stayed in Manila for six months and then we went up to Dr. Rizal place. We arrived in Dapitan that is the name of the province on the 14th March 1894 in the morning at 7 o'clock. We stayed there a week before Dr. Rizal operated on his eyes. After a week's time Mr. Taufer could see a little. On the 22nd February Dr. Rizal asked Mr. Taufer if he had any objection if he marry me. But Mr. Taufer objected it, but as I had affection towards Mr. Rizal I intended to marry him. I accompanied Mr. Taufer back to Manila and returned to Dapitan in the next

steamer. By that time Dr. Rizal prepared everything for our marriage, when everything was prepared I heard from a Spaniard that when we are married they would separate me from my husband. I thought it over and told Dr. Rizal that it is better for us to wait until he gets his freedom, anyhow I stayed with him for one year, and we lived very happy. Thank God I had a very peaceful life as if I were a child on its mother knee I cannot complain of his care. Ha, yes, but it did not last very long. My happiness lasted only 20 months then my sorrow commenced again.

This is when I was nineteen years of age, 1895⁴⁵

There was something forlorn about the little brown-haired Irish girl, thrice orphaned of mother and adoptive mother, that must have appealed to the protective instincts of Rizal, himself so rich in relatives and so fond of them. She was so tiny (she was only five feet tall, but then he was only five feet four inches in height), and tinier still under her enormous flowered hat, too young at seventeen to be taking care of a blind possessive old man. Was there a touch of incest, a jealousy as fierce as stern Mr. Barrett's for Browning's invalid Elizabeth, in the relations between Mr. Taufer and Josephine, his daughter twice over, for he stood as sponsor at her baptism as well as adopted her? There are those bickerings and quarrels with the third Mrs. Taufer, a "torment" to Josephine; there is the pleading at the Italian convent; there is Mrs. Taufer "hunted" out of her own house; and there is Mr. Taufer at last driven to such a frenzy when Josephine wants to marry that he tries to cut his throat and is prevented from doing so only by the prompt intervention of Rizal. This is, Retana's suggestion, it is so to say, the Spanish version of the affair.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Taufer's despair may only have been that of a lonely blind old man, riddled with venereal disease, panic-stricken by the thought of being left completely alone and helpless.

It is not easy to follow the progress of the relations between Rizal and Josephine. She was to write that her “happiness” lasted twenty months, and that she “stayed” with Rizal “for one year.” The only way to reconcile this with the confusing chronology of her “description of my life” is to ignore altogether, as an unaccountable lapse of memory or of the pen, her recollection that she and her adopted father “arrived in Dapitan on the 14th March 1894.” (Can it possibly be the date of their arrival in Manila?) In any case it seems far more likely that they arrived in January to February 1895; that they stayed a week before Rizal operated on Tafer's eyes; that after another week Tafer “could see a little;” and that “on the 22nd February Dr. Rizal asked Mr. Tafer if he had any objections” to his marrying Josephine. Tafer objected; and Josephine accompanied turn back to Manila towards the middle of March. This is clearly established by a letter from Rizal to his mother.

J. Rizal to Teodoro Alonso, 14 March 1895 —

My dearest mother:

The bearer of this letter is Miss Josephine Leopoldine Tafer, whom I was on the point of marrying, with your consent, of course. We broke off our relations at her instance because of the many obstacles in the way. She is almost completely an orphan; she has only very distant relatives.

Since I am interested in her and it is very likely that she may decide to join me afterwards, and since she may find herself there alone and abandoned, I beg you to extend to her your hospitality there, treating her like a daughter until she finds a better opportunity or occasion to come.

I ask you all to treat Miss Josephine as a person whom I hold in great esteem and regard, and whom I should not like to see exposed [to danger] and abandoned ...⁴⁷

For Josephine herself, his “swallow,” Rizal had a flight of verses:

*Josefina, Josefina,
Que a estas playas has venido*

*Buscando un hogar, un nido,
Como errante golondrina;
Si tu suerte te encamina
A Shanghai, China o Japón,
No te olvides que en estas playas
Late por ti un corazón.*⁴⁸

Josephine's "affection" for Rizal did not let her fly so far. She was back in Dapitan on "the next steamer," possibly in April-May. She found, as we have seen, that he had "prepared everything for our marriage" but, hearing from a Spaniard that once married she would be separated from her husband, she thought it over and told Rizal it would be "better for them to wait until he got his freedom." "Anyway, I stayed with him for one year." That is to say, she went to live with him, probably in July-August 1895. This would account for the "one year" she said she spent with him since they left Dapitan at the end of July 1896, and Rizal embarked for Barcelona in the last half of August of that year. It would also account for her "twenty months" of happiness, from the time they first met in January-February 1895 until they parted in August 1896.⁴⁹

Additional support for the belief that their affair came to a point sometime in July-August 1895 is found in two other letters of Rizal. "Miss Bracken," he writes to his sister Trinidad in July 1895, "has come, although I did not expect her, but she has done well. It had been rumoured in Manila that I had sent her away, and she has come back to prove that I did not. But she wants to leave again afterwards. It is wrong to spread such gossip; it does me harm."⁵⁰ Earlier that month he had written his mother: "Miss Bracken, who has been behaving towards me here better than I expected, is leaving now, and, although she says that she is coming back, I do not believe that she will decide to do so afterwards, for this place is so depressing and lacks everything. I shall therefore be alone, entirely alone, with only my patients and my boys for company." But she did not leave after all and we can assume that they had arrived at an understanding.

Josephine seems to have been closest to Trinidad, of all of Rizal's sisters, perhaps because there were only eight years between them. Rizal writes to her in praise of Josephine in August 1895:

J. Rizal to Trinidad Rizal, 27 August 1895 —

... Miss B. sends you a pair of slippers which you will find inside the drawer of the cabinet ... Miss B. is not going there ... she keeps me company, takes care of my clothes better than I could have imagined ... I do not believe that there could be anyone like her in her place.^{[52](#)}

And a month later

J. Rizal to Trinidad Rizal, 25 September 1895 —

... Miss B thanks you for your regards, and sends hers. She cooks, washes, sews, and takes care of the chickens and the house. Not having *miki* to make *pancit* she has contrived to produce some sort of noodles out of flour and eggs, which serve the purpose. I would be grateful if you could send me a little coloring matter for bagoong—she makes that too! She can also make *chili miso* but it seems to me that we have enough of that to last us ten years!^{[53](#)}

And the next month;

J. Rizal to Trinidad Rizal, 23 October 1895 —

... Miss B. makes *suman*, *bagoong*, and bread, but since we did not get any flour by this mailboat I do not know what we are going to have for breakfast ...^{[54](#)}

And by the November mailboat:

J. Rizal to Trinidad Rizal, 21 November 1895 —

... Miss B. thanks you for your gifts with all her heart; it is very likely that she may go on the next steamer. She believes she is better than her reputation, and what she does for me, the way she obeys me and looks after me, would likely not be done by a Filipina.^{[55](#)}

They could not be married; as we shall see, the Church demanded his recantation and submission before she would consent to their participation in the Sacrament of Matrimony. It was not something that Josephine, a

pious believer, could take lightly. But she had never been demanding, and she swallowed her pride and her scruples, although when they were more than she could bear she always said she would go away. “The person who lives in my house,” was Rizal's authentically Tagalog and not ungallant description of her to his mother. But he had no reason for complaint.

J. Rizal to his mother, 15 January 1896 —

... She is good, obedient and submissive. We lack nothing except that we are not married, but, as you yourself say, better to a ... [love?] in God's grace than be married in mortal sin. We have still to have our first quarrel, and when I give her advice she does not answer back. If you come and get to know her I have every hope that you will get along with her. Besides, she has nobody in this world except myself. I am her whole family ...⁵⁶

In February Trinidad and Josephine were exchanging gifts; Josephine also sent music books for Rizal's nieces and thanked his mother for a gift of stockings.⁵⁷ Rizal had a cryptic letter to his sister later that month: Josephine was going to Manila “to ... I think you have forgotten.”⁵⁸ What happened was that she was expecting a baby. Did she lose it because they had a quarrel or because he played a prank on her and upset her?⁵⁹ Rizal did not give a cause in a letter to his mother.

J. Rizal to Teodora Alonso, 12 March 1896 —

... Miss B. thanks you very much [for your gifts] and does not know how to reciprocate. She cannot go there just now because there is nobody here to look after the nephews. She bathes them, and washes and mends their clothes, so that, poor girl, she is never at rest, but she does it willingly for she has a great love for the boys, and they love her more than they love me! ... I am afraid she has had a miscarriage; she was very seriously ill the day before yesterday.⁶⁰

Poor Josephine! Born in a barracks, farmed out as a baby, nursing two Mrs. Taufers, tormented by the third, running away and going back, saddled with a sick, blind, jealous old man, falling in love and running away (she always seemed to be running away and going back), wanting to wait and wanting

to marry, gossiped about, slandered, wounded in the depths of her Irish Catholic heart by the sneers and shrugs of her lover's sisters, so eager to please with her little gifts of music-books and muslin collars, so desperate to be accepted with her rice cakes and noodles and dried fish! She was not afraid to work; she had been working all her life, a corporal's daughter brought up by stepmothers, to whom cooking and washing and minding the children and feeding the chickens was the very purpose of a girl's life. She was not bored by Dapitan, whatever Rizal might think: here she had at last made some sort of home for herself, outside the pale of the law, in the shadow of the Church's reprobation, but still a home, a family, which she had never had in crowded exciting Hong Kong and Tokyo. It would be a real home and "a whole family" when the baby came, and now she had lost him.

Rizal, we are told, made a pencil sketch of the dead child, who was named after Don Francisco.⁶¹ Things changed after the miscarriage. Perhaps Josephine realized that she did not make her lover happy, although she herself, so many times orphaned, might feel "like a child on its mother's knee." Perhaps he felt that all this was chasing butterflies. There was talk again of her going away. "Miss B. will go on the next mailboat," Rizal told Trining in April.⁶² "Miss Bracken is taking you *paho*, lard, and coconut oil which she made expressly for you," he wrote in May or June.⁶³ But they could not make up their minds to part and in the end it was he, and not his "golondrina," his "sister swallow," who went when the summer was shed.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XVII

- (1) 100 Letters, 385.
- (2) Ep. Riz., IV, 24.
- (3) Ep. Riz., IV, 32.
- (4) Ep. Riz., IV, 41, 42.
- (5) Ep. Riz., IV, 54, 55, 115; 100 Letters, 395.
- (6) 100 Letters, 387.
- (7) 100 Letters, 393.
- (8) 100 Letters, 391.
- (9) Ep. Riz., IV, 178.
- (10) Ep. Riz., IV, 184.
- (11) Ep. Riz., V, 657.
- (12) Ep. Riz., 664.
- (13) Ep. Riz., V, 668.
- (14) Ep. Riz., V, 675.
- (15) Ep. Riz., V, 676.
- (16) Ep. Riz.; V, 687.
- (17) Ep. Riz., V, 680.
- (18) Ep. Riz., V, 686.
- (19) Ep. Riz., IV, 207.
- (20) Ep. Riz., V, 673.
- (21) Ep. Riz., V, 679.

- (22) 100 Letters, 438.
- (23) 100 Letters, 448.
- (24) Poesias, 64 et seq.
- (25) Ep. Riz., IV, 160.
- (26) Ep. Riz., IV, 60, 155, 167.
- (27) Ep. Riz., IV, 58, 206, 211, 242.
- (28) Ep. Riz., IV, 242; Ep. Riz., V, 703.
- (29) Ep. Riz., IV, 176, 180, 200, 204, 210.
- (30) Ep. Riz., IV, 187.
- (31) Ep. Riz., IV, 202, 208.
- (32) Ep. Riz., IV, 217, 230, 255.
- (33) Ep. Riz., IV, 172.
- (34) Dictionary of National Biography, London, XLIX, 1897.
- (35) The Athenaeum, 19th February 1896.
- (36) Ep. Riz., IV, 185.
- (37) Ep. Riz., IV, 223.
- (38) Ep. Riz., IV, 245.
- (39) Ep. Riz., IV, 275.
- (40) Ep. Riz., 705.
- (41) Retana, 286.
- (42) Op. cit., quoting from a letter from Carnicero.
- (43) 100 Letters, 500.
- (44) Ep. Riz., IV, 227.

(45) 100 Letters, 559. et seq. I have reproduced the document unedited, partly to retain its flavour, partly because its authenticity is questioned. However, there seems to be no valid reason to doubt the genuineness of the part here reproduced.

(46) Retana, 339. Asserts Retana: “Al inglés acompañable, en concepto de sobrina (*fingida*), Miss Josefina Bracken, irlandesa, joven (de unos diez y nueve a veinte años), delgada, de mediana estatura, pelicastaña, ojos azules; vestia con elegante sencillez, y de su ambiente transcendia cierto *sprit* (*sic*) picaresco, propio de la mujer avezada al trato de los hombres. Ella, segun dicen, había actuado en un café-concierto de Hong Kong, de donde la saco Mr. Stopper (*sic*), que, si entonces no estaba ciego completamente de la vista, debio de estarlo de amor ... Tal confianza llevo depositar en la muchacha, que ella era la que firmaba los talones siempre que su tio necesitaba sacar dinero del Banco. Tio y sobrina instaláronse en un pequeño *bahay* proximo a la casa de Rizal.”

(47) Ep. Riz., IV; 233.

(48) Poesias, 68.

(49) The chronology of Rizal's affair with Josephine is made even more confusing by her “Description.” The only way to accept as correct the date (14th March 1894), she gives of her arrival in Dapitan would be to assume that Tauffer remained under Rizal's medical care there for almost one year until March 1895. In this assumption the progress of the affair would not have been so rapid as one would imagine. Retana quotes some unpublished notes of Epifanio de los Santos which suggest that Rizal at first took Josephine for a spy and never ate anything without her eating herself first. See Retana, 339.

(50) 100 Letters, 431.

(51) Ep. Riz., IV, 257.

(52) 100 Letters, 436.

(53) 100 Letters, 444.

(54) 100 Letters. 454.

(55) 100 Letters, 465.

(56) 100 Letters, 478.

(57) 100 Letters, 486.

(58) 100 Letters, 490.

(59) Quirino, 282; Retana, 341, again quoting unpublished notes of Epifanio de los Santos.

(60) 100 Letters, 493.

(61) Retana, 341, states: “Rizal lo retrato, al lápiz, en la guarda de un libro, que conserva la familia del doctor.”

(62) 100 Letters, 501.

(63) 100 Letters, 505.



XVIII

A Race with Revolution

I have spent the energies of my youth serving my country, although my countrymen should now refuse to admit it ... My services are now useless ... Still, we cannot have everything; we cannot get all we want. I should like to be God, and I am not even a sacristán, which, according to some people, is the first step towards being nearer to God.

RIZAL (IN A LETTER TO HIS MOTHER)

Rizal banished was still Rizal alive and in the Philippines, still the apostle of “de-Catholization” and “denationalization” both to friends and foes.

From the beginning he had been under the close surveillance of the politico-military governor of the district, Carnicero. Despujol had originally designated the Jesuit mission-house in Dapitan to be Rizal's place of residence in his rustication, but Father Pablo Pastells, S.J., then the Jesuit Superior, had written Father Antonio Obach, S.J., the Jesuit missionary assigned to the town, to require Rizal, before giving him hospitality, to make a public retraction of his religious errors, issue statements unmistakably pro-Spanish, undergo the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, make a general Confession, and thereafter lead a model religious and pro-Spanish life.¹ This was rather a heavy price to pay for a roof over one's head and Rizal refused to comply with these exorbitant conditions and went instead to live with Carnicero, who was a free-thinker himself.

The two got along famously, and Carnicero, in a report to Despujol dated the 30th August 1892, reproduced one of their conversations or perhaps a summary of several, which throws some light on Rizal's political beliefs at that time, or at any rate on what he wanted Carnicero to take for his political beliefs.

CARNICERO – Tell me, Rizal, what reforms seem to you convenient to introduce in this country?

RIZAL – Well, I'll tell you. In the first place, give the country representation in the Cortes. This would put a stop to the abuses committed by some people.

Then, secularize the friars, putting a stop to the tutelage which these gentlemen, together with the Government, are exercising over the country; and distribute the parishes, as they are gradually vacated, among secular priests, who could well be either native or peninsular Spaniards.

Reform the administration in all its branches.

Encourage primary instruction; eliminating all meddling by the friars and giving the teachers of both sexes better salaries.

Divide government jobs equally between peninsular Spaniards and the inhabitants of this country.

Make the administration moral.

Create schools of arts and trades in provincial capitals with a population of more than 16,000.

These are the reforms I would propose. Once they are introduced in the manner I have stated the Philippines would be the happiest country in the world.

CARNICERO – Rizal, my friend, your reforms do not seem to me to be at all bad, but undoubtedly you forget the very great influence the friars have both in Manila and in Madrid, for which reason it is almost impossible to put your reforms into practice just now.

RIZAL – Don't you believe it. The influence of the friar is greatly on the wane in every field. I would dare assure you that, given a government [*in Madrid*] even slightly progressive, with room for five or six men like Becerra, [*the influence of*] the friars would disappear. People in Madrid know perfectly well what the friars are doing here, so much so that in our very first discussion Pi and Linares Rivas ... told me some things which I, who was born here, did not know. I can give you the names of many others who like these gentlemen, are perfectly aware of the lives and miracles of the friars in the Philippines, but as they themselves told me: "The bad governments which have been coming one after the other in Spain are responsible for the great abuses committed by the religious Orders; the day things change, we shall not forget these gentlemen." I need not tell you that here in the Philippines the friars are not loved, and they grow more and more disliked and hated because they meddle in everything. The banishment of my family was due to the charges made by a friar.

CARNICERO – And are you then in favor of the expulsion of the friars?

RIZAL – No, sir, because there should be room for everyone in my country.

CARNICERO – You know, of course, that a good proportion of your reforms is going into effect at the beginning of next year. I suppose you are pleased with the salary increases for teachers, the increase of school supplies, and all the other decrees you read yesterday.

RIZAL – Quite. I approve of all of them. But I am afraid they may not go into effect ... [Despujol] will face obstacles raised by the religious Orders. However, I have already instructed all my friends to give their support to all his reforms ...

“Rizal,” Carnicero announced exultantly, “is disposed to be won over. What disturbs him most is the thought of abandoning his friends to whom he has great commitments, while these in turn see everything through Rizal's eyes and have placed in him all their hopes for the attainment of their ideals. One of Rizal's ambitions is to become Deputy for the Philippines, for, once in the Cortes, he says that he could expose whatever happens in these islands.”² Congressman Rizal, and a congressman dedicated to making exposures, at that! Still, as we shall see later on, this idea was to be brought forward from another quarter and for a rather different purpose.

In his next report dated the 21st September 1892 Carnicero added two of Rizal's proposals for reform which had slipped his mind: freedom of religion and freedom of the press.³ The Count had apparently instructed Carnicero to sound out Rizal on certain matters and to get him to put down in writing his desire to stay in Dapitan; possibly he was trying to forestall criticism in Spain and the rest of Europe. Rizal's letter to that effect was forwarded with the report. Dated the 25th October 1892 it said that, while not a farmer by calling, he (Rizal) would dedicate himself to agriculture gladly “if my situation changes and I could enjoy full freedom to cultivate” his lands. He would even send for his family, his possessions and his books, “always on condition that I were assured their free entry and my free use of them.” He need not add, he said, that the Government could have his word that he would not abuse the freedom that might be granted him.⁴

Despujol turned down Rizal's application on the 10th December. When notified by Carnicero, he lost his temper and went so far as to threaten His Excellency with writing to his friends in Madrid if the order of banishment was not lifted in six months. Carnicero assured the Count confidentially that Rizal's letters, if he wrote them, would not reach their destination.⁵ But Despujol would soon be recalled, rather summarily dismissed by a new liberal government, and the most liberal of Colonial Ministers, Antonio Maura. Despujol had outstayed his usefulness although he refused to the last to admit it and would not resign.

Carnicero, for his part, was replaced by Juan Sitges, who reported to the acting Governor General, Federico Ochoa, on the 24th May 1893, that he had got off to a bad start with Rizal. To begin with, there had been a disgraceful rumour that Ochoa had given Sitges orders to shoot Rizal if he made any slip. Then, in order to put things in their proper place, he had

moved Rizal out of headquarters, assigned him to live in another building within sight, required him to report morning, noon and night, and forbidden him to visit any of the boats or to walk beyond the streets of the town. To further tighten his security measures, Sitges had issued an order forbidding even the smallest craft to leave or enter the bay without notice.⁶

But his relations with Rizal improved. In his next report, this time to the new Governor General, Ramón Blanco, Marquess of Peña Plata, Sitges could say that Rizal “did everything that he was ordered to do.”⁷ Rizal had something in mind. At about this time he was busy drafting an appeal to Despujol's successor. The original was a heated denunciation of the processes to which he had been subjected: “in time of peace, without evidence or trial,” he had been torn from family, home, engagements and interests, “deprived of the rights which are not denied, not only to the humblest Spanish subject, not only to the lowest member of any community, but even to the vilest of criminals.” Nevertheless, desiring peace for country and government, “convinced as always that our destiny is to make progress through suffering” and that “the good of society can only be found in its orderly development under a legal government,” he had preferred to wait for that government to remedy this “involuntary injustice.” But time was passing, circumstances changing. “Life in a district which lacks everything, far from the environment where one has been reared and to which one has grown accustomed, the continuous struggle with the climate ... and the uncertainty of the future, all would undermine the most robust of constitutions, and corrupt the few good qualities one might have. Besides, I am of an age when illusions vanish to give way to realities, an age when, if time is not spent to advantage, a useful future may be converted into one with lamentable consequences ...”

“The greatest criminals, Excellency, who have called upon themselves the indignation of the people with low and base crimes, can defend themselves and enjoy the guarantees given by laws. If they are convicted, they know to what they are sentenced, and are often pardoned even before the end of their term. I, on the other hand, suffer in uncertainty; for an imaginary offence which cannot be proved because it is absurd and ridiculous. At most my crime would consist in having desired, for my [countrymen] the exercise of political rights ...; my crime would be behaving desired what the Constitution and our laws grant us [it would be to have] sought our

freedom, and I say freedom and not independence because I well know that a people can be independent and enslaved at the same time ...”

“I have committed no other crime than the crime inborn in every Spaniard, in every man who loves his fellowmen ... I appeal to the judgment of every patriotic Spaniard, to the sentiments of every man with a heart, I appeal to Your Excellency to tell me if the crime of which I might be accused is not the necessary result of the Spanish education which I have received, the consequence of my being a Spanish subject, a crime which would become a virtue if, instead of a Filipino, I were a peninsular Spaniard.”⁸

But he seems to have changed his mind. In the final form in which the appeal is sent to the Governor General, the passionate defence of his political program is quietly dropped and only the legal argument maintained.⁹ It was, in any case, very badly timed. The appeal was dated the 13th February 1894. On the 1st March Blanco, who had served as military governor of Mindanaw in 1866, would resume Weyler's campaign against the Muslims which had been suspended by Despujol, and his mind would have been on the *datus* and *sultans* of Lanaw and not on the disarmed agitator in a peaceful missionary settlement.

The campaign was a success, although, oddly enough, there is not one word about it in Rizal's correspondence and journals. The Marquess, leading an expeditionary force of three brigades, at first found the going difficult; he had no maps, his cavalry could not charge through jungle, his columns were ambushed or set upon suddenly in loyal towns. The objective was the Muslim stronghold of Marahui. After the failure of several attacks, Blanco had to settle down to a long siege; trenches were dug, the artillery was at last brought into action, sappers undermined the walls of the cottas, which had to be taken one by one at great cost. Casualties were heavy on both sides; the Muslims lost a *sultan* and twenty-three *datus*. But finally Marahui fell and Blanco consolidated his victory by launching a small fleet of gunboats in Lake Lanaw.⁽¹⁰⁾

In November 1894 the Marquess visited Dapitan aboard the cruiser *Castilla*. He received Rizal and had a long conversation with him. It seems he suggested that Rizal go to Spain “for his health.” Rizal demurred. The upshot was that Blanco promised that he would be moved to Vigan or some other town with more amenities in the Ilokos or La Union. “I would have

wanted him to free me, but in view of certain difficulties it is not possible just now.” By February or March 1895, Rizal applied for permission to open an agricultural settlement along Sindangan bay. Again there was no reply from His Excellency.¹¹

[2]

While Carnicero, Sitges, and later the linguist Rafael Morales, watched over Rizal's body, the Jesuits were probing his soul. Obach himself had never had Rizal as his pupil but in the subsidiary mission station of Dipolog, a few kilometers away, was the same Vilaclara who had worried so much about the traps that the enemy of souls might lay for his sodalist José. Pastells did not think this was enough and informed his Provincial in Spain that he was sending re-enforcements in the person of Rizal's old guide to the Muses, Father Sánchez. He arrived in Dapitan in August, hot on Rizal's heels. He soon had his former pupil making archaeological excavations with him working on a big relief map of Mindanaw for the town square, planning an aqueduct. Rizal was grateful enough for the pleasant company of an old friend and a cultured scholar, but remained obdurate in his religious convictions.¹² Their long walks, we are told, would end invariably with a good-humoured gibe from Rizal,

“You do not convince me. Father, I do not believe in the Eucharist or in the rites of the Catholic cult.”¹³

One day Obach had a try and asked Rizal to contribute to the fiesta of St. Roch, patron saint of the principal barrio of Dapitan, and whose intercession pious Catholics invoke against disease.

“But, Father,” retorted Rizal, “how can you ask me to contribute to the support of a competitor? The day St. Roch performs all the cures, I, as a physician, would be out of a job!”¹⁴

When it was evident that Sánchez had failed, he was transferred to a new parish, Tagana-an. Pastells went after Rizal by correspondence, as we shall see in detail farther on. He had no better luck. His successor as Superior of the Jesuit Mission, Father Juan Ricart, S.J. apparently thought the root of the trouble was that wretched free-thinker Carnicero. In a confidential complaint to General Ochoa, Ricart said that Carnicero “has stopped

going to Mass for a good long time, even on solemn feast days, and this is all the more notorious in that he is the only Spaniard [in the place] beside a deportee; even when he goes to Mass he does not kneel, not even genuflecting to the altar, and merely giving a nod of the head ... On Good Friday he had a cow slaughtered and the meat taken openly to his headquarters just when the people were leaving the church after the service. For this and other impieties the people call him “The Moor.” Ricart had his way and Carnicero, as we have seen lost his job.¹⁵ It cannot be imagined that this improved Rizal's relations with the Jesuits.

If anything, things took a turn for the worse when Josephine came to Dapitan. He was already, no doubt, causing grave scandal by living with his equally Catholic Irish mistress openly. But when, always proper, he tried to legalize the affair, Obach demanded a retraction of his errors and, we may surmise in view of the previous instructions of Pastells, at least a general Confession. Obach was correct from the Church's viewpoint; the Sacrament of Matrimony is one of the four Sacraments of “the living,” that is to say, the spiritually living, those who are in a state of grace, and neither Rizal nor Josephine, of course, was that. There was no civil marriage in the Philippines at that time (unlike Spain itself) and, where no canonical marriage was possible, the only alternatives left were open concubinage or a separation. Obach was perhaps prepared to bargain for Rizal's soul, but not at the expense of Catholic doctrine. He was ready to raise the matter to the bishop of Cebu.¹⁶ Josephine herself, as we have seen, thought it would be “better for us to wait.” This may explain in part her comings and goings, her flights and returns; it may have been a matter of conscience. But in the end there was her “affection” for the dear doctor, and she decided to “stay” Rizal, for his part, could quote her own words to his mother when she perhaps reproved him. “Better to love in God's grace ...” It was not to be the end of the story, and Rizal, ever sensitive to criticism, jealous of his reputation, and now bound to be equally resentful of any condescension towards his mistress, must have felt as uneasy as Josephine.

[3]

The friars were also keeping an eye on their tormentor. When they heard the Jesuits had failed to get round Rizal, they are said to have offered him a

professorial chair at the University, a landed estate of his own, and ₱ 100,000 in cash in exchange for a repudiation of the *Noli* and the *Fili*.

“What my right hand did, my left hand will not undo.” Rizal is said to have replied. “My two books are like a looking-glass. If you are doing the things I have written about, then it is you I was writing about. If not, then you have nothing to fear. You are trying to drown me in a glass of water, but you would not drown me if you had an ocean!”

It is also said that when his sister Maria heard about it, she urged him to take the offer. He would not be moved.

“But suppose they offered you half the Philippines?”

“Not even for that.”¹⁷

He was always a stubborn man, or a resolute man, depending on one's point of view.

But the friars had other weapons in their armory. In March 1895 he wrote a Portuguese friend in Macao: “The friars have sent a spy here called Pablo Mercado; then they sent another; then they got the sanitary officer here to watch me, according to his own admission. A doctor turned spy! Is it not sad?”¹⁸

Actually the Pablo Mercado episode dated back to 1893. On the 19th December that year he wrote Blumentritt: “A fellow showed up here sent by certain persons, whom many consider respectable, to try and get from me papers and books. I would not have wanted to do anything against him, but later I learned that he was passing himself off as relative of mine, etc., etc., and so I warned the commander [Sitges] who immediately had him arrested and sent to Manila. [In Latin, an exquisite touch for any monkish censor] He himself admitted he had been sent by the friars from whom he had received \$75!”¹⁹

There were more details in a letter he wrote the next day to his brother-in-law Hidalgo. “Speaking of Pablo Mercado, I must tell you that he came here passing himself off as a political follower to get me to give him letters, writings, etc. I soon saw through him, as they say, and if I did not throw him out of the house there and then, it was only because I always want to be courteous and polite to everybody. On top of it all it started to rain, and I had to let him stay the night, sending him away quite early the next

morning. I would have let him alone, I despised him so, but since the rascal went around saying confidentially that he was my cousin or brother-in-law, I informed the commander who arrested him. It appears from his statement that he was really sent by the Recollects, who had given \$72 and promised him even more if he could get from me letters to certain persons in Manila. The rogue said he was a cousin of one Mr. Litonjua, son of Little Luís, according to him, and a brother-in-law of Marciano Ramírez— he wanted me to write to them. Also, he had with him a photograph of mine which had been given to him by one Mr. Legaspi, from Tondo or San Nicolas, I forget which. It appears that he belongs to a rather good family in Cagayan de Misamis. Beware of him: he is a tall chap, stooping, and with a squint in his eye, dark, thin, wide-shouldered, rather impudent. He smokes a lot and spits even more ...”²⁰

Sitges could not have acted more correctly. Having arrested “Pablo Mercado” and found him in possession of an identity card issued to Florencio Nanaman, he ordered the native mayor, Anastasio Adriático, to conduct a formal investigation. The official record shows that “Mercado” admitted his real identity and said he was thirty years old, unmarried and a resident of Cagayan de Misamis. In May that year, he confessed further, the Recollect parish priest of his town had instructed him to present himself to Rizal (whom he would recognise from the photograph handed to him) and, on the pretext that he was a sympathizer, secure from Rizal letters or any other writings showing that he was a “Separatist.” He had been given money for his expenses, and had been promised a large reward if he was successful. If the parish priest should have died in the meantime, for he was then ill, Nanaman would receive his reward from the Friar Procurator of the Recollects.²¹

[4]

Nor were Rizal's friends idle. The news that in November 1894 Blanco himself had suggested to Rizal that he leave the Philippines for Spain soon reached Manila, and two months later, on the 13th January 1895, the Grand Regional Council of Philippine Masonry sent out an appeal for funds for “our very dear brother *Dimas-Alang*.” Rizal, said the Council, had absolutely no money to make the trip to Spain and to support himself there

until he could establish his medical practice. While he had some lands in Dapitan, it would be very difficult to sell them at such short notice. *Muza* (Ambrosio Flores), Grand Master, was not content with appealing to fraternal sentiments; the fact was that, for “the highest reasons of our own convenience,” Rizal had to be got out of the country. You will know that, as long as *Dimas-Alang* remains in the Philippines, and in spite of the fact that in his extreme prudence he has no communications and has never had any communications with us, we shall always have a sword of Damocles hanging over our heads and threatening us, for our enemies have adopted the Machiavellian technique of bringing in his name and attributing to his intervention any wicked plot, any imaginary disturbance, which they want to blame on us.”²²

Muza was undoubtedly right; as we shall see, the Spanish friars, through the regime, were blaming all the agitation on the Masons. The brothers, harassed by raids and deportations, divided by internal dissensions, dispirited, betrayed by informers (foremost among them *Panday Pira* himself, the original emissary from Spain, who was suspected of having handed the authorities a complete roll of Filipino Masons after pocketing the organization's funds), could scarcely breathe. Only one lodge, No. 199, *Modestia*, founded by Antonio Salazar, was still holding meetings, and in fact it was to *Modestia* that *Muza* addressed his appeal for funds. In any case, according to Salazar himself, *Modestia* was unable to make any contribution, and Rizal's friends had to look for the money somewhere else. They calculated that ₱3,000 would be needed and appealed to the *Compromisarios*, a group of wealthy liberals that had been formed in the wake of the short-lived *Liga*; the amount was subscribed, but not all the subscribers fulfilled their pledges, and half the amount had to be advanced, according to Salazar, by one *Compromisario* alone, Venancio Reyes.²³

However, neither the Grand Master nor the *Compromisarios* had taken Rizal's own wishes into account, and it soon became clear that Rizal was not going to Spain. It does not appear how he made his decision known, but still according to Salazar, confidential letters to and from him were being smuggled into and out of Dapitan in the biscuit tins and other provisions that were being sent to him by his sisters. In any case, Rizal's friends apparently decided to use the money to charter a ship which could spirit him out of Dapitan. Páez was commissioned to find a suitable vessel in

Hong Kong or Singapore, and a letter on this point, dated the 26th May 1895 from Trinidad Rizal to Basa, has been preserved. It introduces Páez to Basa as “a fine person” with “the hazardous mission of liberating my brother from exile, Mr. Páez will tell you everything we have planned here for that enterprise. He is a good friend to whom we owe many favors, and he is worthy of your trust. He goes to that port to charter a steamer and then ...”²⁴

But again they were not counting on Rizal himself. Two months before Páez had even left for Hong Kong, Rizal had written a Portuguese friend there: “It has been proposed to me that I make my escape, but I have nothing to blame myself for and I do not want to be called a runaway afterwards. Moreover, it would make it impossible for me to return later to my country.”²⁵

The scheme seems to have petered out in confusion. Salazar was to claim in his statement to the authorities that Páez had failed to charter a ship in Singapore, that the money had then been sent to Basa in Hong Kong, and that Basa had sent it on to Sandakan.²⁶ Rizal remained in Dapitan, more or less unperturbed.

At about the same time two of the “Burgos generation,” Basa in Hong Kong and Regidor in London, were mulling over their own plans to rescue Rizal. “We old men,” Regidor wrote, “should withdraw to the balconies and, behind curtains, should act, as sentinels and counselors, inspiring and advising those who enter as fresh re-enforcements in this fight for liberty and our rights, in which you fought and in which we and the friends of our generation were so roughly handled. Let us encourage and drive on this youth that I love and that inspires in me such hope if it goes along the proven paths which we had to take before it with the same purpose, a like enthusiasm, and the same generous faith ...”

Basa had written to Regidor on the 9th January 1895, asking him to work for Rizal's pardon through his friends among the Ministers in Madrid. Regidor, ill for five months, did not reply until the 7th June, and began by telling Basa that when he had visited Madrid the year before, he had heard from the expatriates there, to his surprise that Rizal no longer wanted to leave Dapitan because he had won some money in the lottery and had invested it in agricultural lands. Nevertheless, said Regidor, he had explored

all possibilities among his friends in the Government, and had come to the conclusion, based on the advice of his friends the Ministers themselves, that the matter could not be arranged in Madrid; it would have to be done in Manila, through the Governor General, and keeping the whole thing secret from the friars. Yet nobody had had the courage to offer to intercede with Blanco, and all were agreed that “the best solution was Rizal's escape. As you know, I have always been in favour of this practical solution, and I cannot understand why it is not adopted by our friend [Rizal] whom I had thought to be brave and intrepid.”

However, if Rizal would not run away, they would have to think of something else, and Regidor had an original suggestion. The political situation in Spain indicated that fresh elections would have to be called early in 1896. “I think,” he wrote, “that we should then try to get Rizal elected, very secretly, as Deputy [to the Cortes] from some constituency in Spain. If we succeed, then they would have to release him perforce since the President of the new Congress would have to require the Governor General [to allow Rizal's attendance at the sessions] over and above any exigencies or impositions of their Reverences. Are there not ten patriots in the land who would contribute a thousand duros each for this enterprise? If you can secure this loner to go to Spain to do the preliminary work in some constituency and present Rizal's candidacy with all due frugality, and without any ostentation or hullabaloo—these conditions, I repeat, are indispensable to obtain his election. If the sum I have suggested cannot be raised, then let it be cut down to four or five thousand, to be spent for the election of del Pilar by any other suitable Filipino who would undertake formally to work night and day for the liberation of Rizal and the other exiles, for the representation of the Philippines in the Spanish Parliament, and for the official employment in high positions of men who are pure Filipinos and basically so.”²⁷

This was something that if we are to believe Carnicero's earlier account, would surely appeal to Rizal. But Regidor's suggestion was not accepted. One last attempt was made to induce Rizal to escape, the most significant of all coming as it did from the *Katipunan*, its obvious purpose was not to get Rizal out of the country, as his liberal friends wanted to do, but to keep him in the Philippines, and keep him free to lead the Revolution that was being prepared.

José Dizon and Pío Valenzuela were to tell the Spanish authorities that the *Katipunan* Council had held a meeting in May 1896 at which it was agreed to rise up in arms and to send a mission to Japan for help, but to submit this decision previously to Rizal for his approval. Valenzuela had been chosen to go to Dapitan for this purpose and had raised ₱1,000 for the expenses of a trip there for himself, a blind accomplice called Raymundo Mata, and a servant, the ostensible purpose of his visit being to submit Mata to medical treatment by Rizal. Valenzuela had taken the steamship *Venus* towards the end of May, and, according to him, had met on board a sister of Rizal and his mistress Josephine. Upon reaching Dapitan they had taken Valenzuela to Rizal's house. Valenzuela had “explained his mission to Rizal, but when the doctor learned what he was about, he replied: 'No, no, no, a thousand times no!' quoting a philosophical principle, which [Valenzuela] did not remember, to show him that what was being planned was inexpedient because it would cause harm to the Filipino people, and giving other reasons to justify his refusal.” The next day [Valenzuela] had returned to Manila and informed Bonifacio. Bonifacio had at first been reluctant to believe Valenzuela's report of Rizal's attitude, but, once convinced of its truth, he “began to insult Rizal, calling him a coward and other offensive names.” Bonifacio, for his own reasons, had forbidden Valenzuela to reveal Rizal's disapproval of the Revolution, but he had done so anyway, and many of those who had offered contributions had backed out. Dizon was to add that another meeting of the *Katipunan* Council had been held and it had been decided to put fighting men disguised as passengers aboard a steamer bound for Dapitan, seize the ship on the high seas, and kidnap Rizal “taking him wherever they could.”²⁸

The pre-eminence of Rizal, the almost magical power of his name, surviving undiminished after four years in exile, are finally established by Bonifacio's angry resolve. Rizal was needed to make the Revolution; whether he liked it or not, they would make it; if without him, in his name; but, if possible, with him, even as a captive leader.

[5]

The object of all this frenzied plotting by friends and foes had his own plans. In June 1895 Blanco had given him permission to open the settlement

along Sindangan Bay. The reply had been delayed because Sitges had arrived in Manila at about the time Rizal's application was received, and Blanco had wanted to consult the local authority.²⁹ But Rizal had changed his mind. Early in May 1895 he had written another letter to the Marquess, this time taking up the suggestion that he leave for Spain. "I am beginning to feel unwell," he explained to his sister Trinidad. "I do not think I can endure much longer the kind of life I lead here: much work, poor food, and not a few troubles." His usually equable temperament was clearly under heavy stress. "Tell everyone to have more confidence in me, and not to look upon me always as a child who must be told everything, what he is to like and what he is to dislike. If my family has no confidence in me and always treats me like a child, how are others going to treat me and how are they to have confidence in my good judgment? I am in the hands of God and I have no reason, until now, to say that He has forsaken me. Let us always do our duty, do what is good, and leave the rest in His hands."³⁰

He was to have even more reason to complain in the next six months. Basa had rejected Regidor's suggestion of getting Rizal elected to the Cortes. Instead he had sent Regidor three thousand *duros* to try to get Rizal free by some other means. Regidor indignantly refused to consider the possibility of bribing Ministers in Madrid; he was on the best of terms with Govantes, who had been Minister of Justice, and knew that to offer him a centavo would not only offend him but compel him to oppose whatever was wanted. Regidor was also an intimate friend of Major-General Azcárraga, who would thrice be Prime Minister, but the general was so rich, so intelligent, and so honest that, once again, to try to bribe him would be fatal and a waste of money.

The resourceful Regidor had thought up another plan with Blumentritt. The Government needed doctors for its armies in Cuba, where José Martí, a nationalist writer like Rizal but a revolutionary organizer like Bonifacio who had no qualms about a resort to arms, had renewed the Cuban Revolution on the 24th February that year. If Rizal were to volunteer, "such patriotic conduct would prove that he is no subversive agitator but has the same sentiments as other Spaniards."³¹ The point in any case, was that he would get away from Dapitan.

Blumentritt, and perhaps Basa too, passed on the suggestion to Rizal, who accepted it somewhat passively. "With regard to your advice on going to

Cuba as a doctor, I think it is an excellent idea,” he wrote Blumentritt on the 20th November 1895. “I am writing immediately to the Governor General. The climate here is like that [in Cuba] with very little difference, and one dies here like everywhere else, when it is the will of God. I have something of the fatalist in me. [And] I believe, as you say, in serving the cause of humanity.”³²

The Spanish conscripts were, of course, part of humanity, but what was the Martí of the Philippines going to do in their ranks? These doubts did not seem to have troubled Rizal in his mood of resignation and apathy. He told his mother that he was taking Blumentritt's advice. Don Francisco and Doña Teodora did not relish the idea of their son jumping from the frying-pan of banishment into the fire of revolution, but Rizal would not be moved. “I understand perfectly your fears and those of my father,” he told her in December 1895. “However, as you yourself will say, we should have trust in God. Until now He has led me out of all dangers; why should He not do so in the future? I have reiterated my application since I did not receive a reply to my first.”³³

But as the months passed by without a reply to the first or to the second application, Rizal's resolution petered but, or perhaps he had second thoughts. In fact he was told by the local commander in May that his application had been turned down, and he had thereupon put in a new crop of rice and corn, laid the keel of an inter-island vessel with a capacity of three hundred cavans, and begun to convert his seaside house into a hospital.

What had happened was that the Marquess had endorsed Rizal's application to Madrid in the most favorable terms, but in the crisis of the Cuban Revolution and its North American complications, the decisive political importance in the Philippines of such an offer by Rizal escaped notice. Azcárraga, Minister of War, endorsed it at length to Weyler, who was General Officer Commanding in Cuba. The Marquess of Tenerife, who now had more on his hands than a bewildered community of dispossessed farmers, may not have given much thought to the erstwhile advocate of the Kalamba tenants and offered no objection. The papers went dribbling through the usual channels back to Blanco's desk, and on the 1st July 1896, the long-delayed approval of the application was finally sent on its way to Dapitan where it arrived aboard the *España* on the 30th.³⁴

Rizal was well and truly trapped, and trapped by the solicitude and ingenuity of his best friends! As he would write Blumentritt later, much too late, “I no longer planned to go to Cuba since more than six months had passed since my application, but, fearing that my refusal to go at that time might be attributed to some other cause, I decided to abandon everything and leave immediately.”³⁵

It is not difficult to see why Rizal was so dismayed. Only two months before, Valenzuela had informed him that the *Katipunan* had decided to rise against the regime, and that this revolutionary underground still considered him the titular leader of the new nation, the would-be people in arms. If he now refused the appointment to the Spanish armies in Cuba and the *Katipunan's* Revolution broke out, it was sure as death that he would be suspected of desiring to remain in the Philippines in order to lead it; just as it was almost equally sure that in fact the Revolution would be made in his name. He must run a race with Bonifacio's Revolution.

His predicament is best described by himself in a journal which, characteristically enough, he started immediately.³⁶ The *España* had anchored in the morning of the 30th; shortly afterwards the local commander had summoned Rizal to hand him Blanco's letter, which gave him a “sweet-sour” taste in the mouth, it was “cold meat coming after the dessert.” At first he said he could not possibly take the mailboat on its return trip, but would wait for the next one so that he could collect some debts owed to him and sell his properties. The commander and he had agreed on this and on writing the appropriate communications to the Governor General by four o'clock that afternoon.

His sister Narcisa and Josephine “wept and jumped for joy” when he told them the news, and, on second thoughts, it was decided to leave on the *España* the next day after all. He had made many friends and a crowd of them with a brass band went to see him off. They were a party of nine in all, plus the commander, who was going along; by midnight of Friday the 31st they were off. He had been in Dapitan, he noted “four years, thirteen days, and a few odd hours.”

The trip to Manila was rather tense because they were trying to catch the mailboat to Spain, the *Isla de Luzón*. They stayed in Dumaguete only from

dawn to evening Saturday, but long enough for Rizal to hear the piano played again after more than four years, and for him to perform an eye operation on the local captain of constabulary. In Cebu they were in such haste that unloading of the cargo was begun although it was a Sunday. A large number of sick people wanted the services of such a renowned physician, and Rizal found time to perform four operations. In Iloilo on Tuesday a local pharmacist was “courageous enough to greet me and invite me into his drugstore.” The same night they raced to Capiz but lost considerable time because the ship anchored far off, and one of the boats sent ashore did not return until late the next day. By three o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday they were off Romblon and refused a cargo of five hundred sacks of copra because they were in such a hurry. It was all for nothing; when they entered Manila Bay at dawn on Thursday, the *Isla de Luzón* was gone; they had missed it by a day.

Blanco sent a lieutenant of constabulary to meet him in a tugboat with orders not to land. Shortly after the *España* had docked, his mother arrived to see him with his sisters Lucía, Trinidad, and María and sundry nephews. They spent the day aboard chatting and playing chess; he had been told that he would be taken to headquarters at half-past seven that evening and that afterwards he could go home. In the meantime Narcisa and Josephine returned aboard. At quarter-past ten he was informed that His Excellency had changed his mind and that he was to be taken aboard the cruiser *Castilla*. In his contemporary journal he claimed this had “rather vexed me because it deprived me of the pleasure of seeing my parents.” On the other hand, in a letter to Blumentritt, he would say that he had himself “expressed the wish to be isolated from the whole world except my family,” and that, whether in deference to this wish or not, he had been sent aboard the *Castilla*.³⁷ It was a bad night, gloomy and rainy, when the gunboat *Otalora* took him across to the Navy harbor in Kabite.

He was told he was “detained but not imprisoned” aboard ship “to avoid embarrassment with friends and enemies.” He replied that he was glad that this measure was being taken and regretted only that the distance from Manila would make it difficult for his parents to visit him.

He sent for some of his clothes. The distraught Josephine (her letter has not survived) sent him the coat of his evening dress, which, he remarked rather testily, he did not need, but had neglected to send the trousers and the

waistcoat; he asked his sister Narcisa to have Josephine send him more shirt-collars and cuffs. They were not to send anymore to him with letters and parcels; it was all a waste of time and money. The bearer of his letter, a sailor who had been placed at his disposal by the Captain of the *Castilla*, would take back anything they wanted to send him; he would like four “very good” Laguna milk-cheeses, three tins of *foie gras*, two dozen mangoes, and *lanzones*.³⁸ The next day Josephine wrote to him again in English; her letter is reproduced unedited except for punctuation, because its occasional mistakes give it a charming spontaneity and sincerity.

Josephine Bracken to J. Rizal, 13 August 1896 —

My dear Joe:

This morning at half past eight Sra Narcisa received a letter from you. I am very sorry that I have a mistake of your cloth, not sending your pants and waistcoat, but as you said you are not in great need of it I only send you some more collars and cuffs. You ask in your letter Mangoes, cheese, tyrines [the *foie gras*] and some *lansones*. I hope I can fulfill your wishes in sending the things. Mangoes I am sure I can send to you but the other things I am not very sure yet; we send Antonio to see if we can get the cheese, *lansones* and tyrines.

Ah, my dear, I am suffering a great deal with them in Trozo; it is quite true they ought to be ashamed of me, as they say in my face and in Presenance of Sra Narcisa and their children, because I am not married to you. So if you hear that I don't go to Trozo any more don't be surprized.

If you like me to send all your things on board of the man-of-war I can do so. If you go to Spain, you see any one of your fancy you better marry her but dear, hear me, better marry than to live like we have been doing. I am not ashamed to let people know my life with you but as your dear sisters are ashamed I think you had better get married to some one else. Your sister Narcisa and your Father, they are very good and kind to me.

Yours Affect.
Josephine Bracken

P.S. Dear, I am very glad that I could get this *Foies grass* for you. I send you the tyrns of *Foies grass*, one hundred of sweet *santoles*. We will send to you tomorrow the cheese and lansones.

If you are not ashamed of me, alright, the same. ³⁹

Life was neither easy nor kind to Josephine. She was staying with Narcisa and her family; the Rizals were living in Trozo: Don Francisco, Doña Teodora, and presumably the unmarried sisters. We do not know what Rizal had to say in reply to Josephine; all his letters to her have been lost. But we can judge from her answer that it was not very re-assuring; he even wanted her to visit him aboard together with his family!

Josephine Bracken to J. Rizal, 17 August 1896 —

My darling Love,

I received your most kind and welcomed dated the 10th Wednesday. I am very much surprised not hearing anything about if you have received the three Tyrnes of *Foie grass* well, perhaps you have not received any other letters that I have written to you. I went to the Governor General today but unfortunately he is laid up with a severe cold, but his aide-de-camp told me to go back in three days to receive an answer from him.

Dear, I would like very much to go with your dear family but you know what I have written to you. I would like to go alone so I can speak to you better for in your family's presence we can [*not?*] be very free to each other.

I know, my dear, it breakes my heart to go and bid you goodbye, but, dear, what can I do than to suffer until the Good God brings you back to me again.

Your sister Choling came to visit me yesterday and she wants to give me her daughter María Luisa to me; she says she has great confidence in me; well, I told her, for my part, I am quite willing and satisfied but I have to communicate with you first if you are willing. I have also many pupils, about fifteen, three dollars each, and I am also studying Piano, \$4 a month in Doña Marías house, one of my pupils.

Dear, I have to do something like that because I am always sorry, thinking of you. Oh, dear, how I miss you. I will always be good and faithful to you, and also do good to my companions so that the good God will bring you back to me.

I will try all my best to be good to your family, especially to your dear old parents: “the hands that we cannot cut, lift it up and kiss it, or adore the hand that gives the blow.” How it made the tears flew in my eyes when I read those lines of you. Say, darling, say it makes me think of our dear old hut in Dapitan and the many sweet hours we have passed there.

Love, I will love you ever; love, I will leave thee never; ever to me precious to thee; never to part, heart bound to heart, or never to say goodbye.

So, my darling, receive many warm affection and love from your ever faithful and true till death

Josephine Bracken⁴⁰

We take this long last look at the unhappy Josephine because it is almost the end of her story. “The good God” will bring him back to her but only for one secret purpose. The “sweet hours” in Dapitan are gone forever, though heart be bound to heart. In the life of Rizal she plays a special part that spite, prejudice of many kinds, jealousy, the peculiar possessiveness of women, and the peculiar malice and unkindness of men, have too long deprecated and obscured. But for all the sneers and shrugs and sly uncomprehending smiles, she is the one woman whom Rizal loved; Leonor Rivera was a boyish fancy, the nostalgic phantom that haunted fitfully his years in exile; all the rest: Consuelo, Suzanne, Gertrude with her breakfast tray, Sei-ko and her tales of the *samurai*, Nellie the proselytizer, had never really made him pause in his restless journeys, never really pierced the armour of his cold passion for his country and her rights and liberties. If Rizal can be said to have ever loved anyone else but the Filipino Nation, then it must be said that he loved Josephine; he was her husband twice over, her open lover in defiance of all his innate propriety and sensibility; she was the one woman with whom he shared that most jealously prized of all his possessions, his name, and also his heart's intimacies.

But now it is time for him to go. He is rather thoughtless of her in these last days; he is still too bound up with his mother and his sisters, the natural enemies of every wife, of every mistress; he is back in the stream of great events after four years of heart-breaking and spirit-breaking isolation. History has once more taken hold of him, seized him with a grip that will not again be broken.

[7]

Bonifacio's Revolution was catching up with Rizal. He had arrived in Manila on the 6th August 1896. On the 19th Teodoro Patiño, a member of the Katipunan, revealed the whole conspiracy. On the 25th the constabulary had a minor skirmish with what seemed to be a band of dissidents. On the 30th the *Katipunan* attacked the Spanish powder-magazine at Marikina.⁴¹

Rizal would claim at his trial that, immediately upon the outbreak of these disturbances, "I offered myself unconditionally to His Excellency." In the manifesto which he offered to publish at that time he elaborated on this and said: "Spontaneously I offered the use of my services, and also my life, and even my name in any manner thought expedient to suppress the rebellion." His defence counsel would add, however, that, ignorant of this offer, which does not seem to have been accepted by Blanco, Spanish public opinion in Manila had suspected Rizal of applying for a post in Cuba only to have an excuse and an opportunity for leaving Dapitan and being in Manila at the time set for the insurrection.

Yet, all oblivious, Rizal, aboard the *Castilla* and later on the steamer *Isla de Panay*, could hope that he had won the race. Who could suspect him when he was being held incommunicado? The Governor General, the Marquess himself, gave him two autographed letters of recommendation to Azcárraga and the Colonial Minister, with a covering letter that seemed to absolve him from all blame for the insurrection.

R. Blanco to J. Rizal, 30 August 1896 —

... I have no doubt that you will find favour with the Government with your behavior in the future, not only because of your pledged word, but also because present events have made it

evident to you that certain modes of conduct, the product of wild ideas, lead only to hatred, ruin, tears and blood.⁴²

The Marquess's letters to the Ministers were equally re-assuring:

R. Blanco to Marcelo de Azcárraga, 30 August 1896 —

... Rizal's behavior during the four years he stayed in Dapitan was exemplary and, to my mind, he is all the more worthy of forgiveness and benevolence in that he appears in no way complicated in the chimerical attempt which we all deplore these days, neither in any of the conspiracies nor in any of the secret societies which had been plotted.⁴³

Surely he was safe! The treatment given to him aboard the *Isla de Panay* confirmed his belief. He was given a large cabin all to himself. Early on Thursday the 3rd September they were off. He had found time to write farewell letters to his mother and sisters. His only worry, he told them, was how they had passed and would pass “these days of confusion and anxiety.” As for himself, “His Excellency the Governor General has behaved very well towards me; I shall show him, if God gives me time and health, that I know how to reciprocate ... Do not worry; we are all in the hands of Divine Providence. Not everyone who goes to Cuba dies, and in any case if one must die, at least let it be doing good.” He did not mention Josephine, and in another letter written to his mother from Aden eighteen days later he merely says in a postscript: “Please tell Josephine that I cannot write to her because I lack the time. Let her take this letter as one written to her as well.”

Does Rizal lose some of his stature as he moves away from his troubled country? Is it merely the distance he is putting between himself and Bonifacio's peasants and artisans in arms that makes him seem smaller, blurred, ambiguous, indifferent, out of reach, out of hearing? What are you doing, Rizal, in your comfortable cabin while Bonifacio is falling back from Balara? What can you be thinking of, with Llanera and Belmonte marching on San Isidro behind a bamboo band, with *Muza* and *Harem* and *Ilaw* and *Minerva* in Fort Santiago?

Rizal, he tells us in his journal, was vexed because he had heard that he was being blamed for the disturbances in Manila. At Singapore one of his liberal

friends, the wealthy Pedro Roxas went ashore with his son and did not come back. The Filipino expatriates in the city had visited him aboard and urged him to do the same; they were prepared to sue for a writ of *habeas corpus* to set him free; but he had given his word to the Marquess, and to avoid any attempt to liberate him against his will, he remained on ship.⁴⁵

He was reading the Bible, and had a Jesuit under his medical care. On the 25th September he saw the *Isla de Luzon* leaving the Suez Canal on her way back to the Philippines, crammed with conscripts. On Sunday the 27th he was told at dinner that according to the latest telegram, Francisco Roxas, Genato and Osorio had been shot in Manila. "Who is this Osorio? May God have mercy on them! They say six thousand soldiers are being sent to Manila."

There had been other telegrams. On the 28th he recorded: "They have given me some bad news that, if true, would make me lose faith in everything." On this day he wrote an agitated letter to Blumentritt. He made two copies of it, one in ink and another in pencil. The hand-writing on the envelope of the one Blumentritt received was not Rizal's; it may have been smuggled ashore at Malta by a fellow-passenger.

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 28 September 1896 —

... With these letters [Blanco's to himself and the Ministers] I left Manila on the 3rd of this month, confident that I was going to Cuba to make my name and answer all calumnies. Now they tell me that I am not going there. I cannot believe this because it would be the greatest injustice, the most abominable infamy ... I have offered my services as a doctor, ready to risk my life in the hazards of war, leaving all my business behind. I am innocent and have nothing to do with the disturbances, and can swear to it. And now, by way of reward, they are sending me to prison! I cannot believe it, Spain cannot behave so infamously; but that is what is taken for certain aboard ...⁴⁶

But there was nothing official yet, merely shipboard gossip. On the 29th he wrote in his journal. "There are people aboard who do nothing but slander me and invent curious stories about me. I am going to become a legend." At four o'clock in the afternoon of the 30th he was officially notified by the

captain of the ship that he should go to his cabin after dinner and stay there until further orders, perhaps until they had cleared Malta. He asked why this was being done. He was told that some of the passengers had said he would try to go ashore at Malta and stay there. He protested against the importance given to such gossip. On the 1st October the ship left Malta but he remained in his cabin. "Somebody wants to steal my papers by entering the cabin while I am asleep. I surprised a waiter entering my cabin on tiptoe, and a steward poking his head through the skylight." On the 3rd October, after exactly thirty days' voyage, the ship reached Barcelona. He was placed under guard. At three o'clock in the morning of the 6th he was awakened by a sergeant and told to pack his things; an hour later an officer took him ashore. He was being taken to Fort Montjuich, the grim and ill-omened prison-citadel of Barcelona.

He had lost the race after all.

He was treated with great discourtesy. Guarded by two men on horseback, he had to carry his own luggage up the steep climb to the fortress until he found and bribed a stevedore to do it for him; he was searched and put in a cell, then routed out again early in the afternoon with shouts and threats, forced to carry his baggage all the way down again until he found someone to help him, searched three times more, and taken to the headquarters of the General Officer Commanding in Cataluña. It was the Count of Caspe, "a little thinner," and in full uniform, with the brilliant sash of a lieutenant general. He had come back from the docks where he had witnessed the embarkation of re-enforcements for the Spanish army in the Philippines. He received Rizal standing. How unbearably awkward it must have been for Despujol! It seemed he always had to be unpleasant and unkind to this courteous agitator with his air of innocence. To banish him once, to face him again so unexpectedly, and to arrest him on telegraphic orders from Madrid and ship him back, only God knew to what purpose! Rizal for his part had never held any grudge against the Count; he had told Carnicero in Dapitan. "To tell you the truth, I do not complain of the severity with which I have been treated by the Governor General because my country expects from him great reforms." They chatted for a quarter of an hour on "many important things," and then Rizal was told he would have to go aboard the ship carrying the troops to the Philippine campaign. The *Colón* was crowded with soldiers and their families, saying goodbye; "I heard my

name several times and people looked at me with curiosity.” The vessel left the same night.

They took away his journal shortly before reaching Port Said; one of the guards forbade him to cover himself with a blanket, another one wanted him to keep the light on all night; he was put under lock and key whenever the ship was in port. When he neared Singapore an attempt was made to free him on writ of *habeas corpus*. Chief Justice Lionel Cox ruled that the affidavit supporting the petition was defective in that it did not make a sufficient allegation of the court's jurisdiction over a Spanish subject held by the Spanish Government aboard what was *prima facie* a Spanish troop transport and therefore a foreign public vessel, which under international law was outside local jurisdiction.⁴⁸ Rizal does not seem to have been aware of these efforts on his behalf. All he noticed was that he was unexpectedly handcuffed. But he was regaining his composure.

“I think that God is doing me good by allowing me to return to the Philippines in order to disprove so many charges against me. Either they will give me justice and acknowledge my innocence, and then I shall have all my rights restored, or they will condemn me to death and then I shall have expiated my supposed crime in the eyes of society. She will forgive me, and later, without you any doubt, I shall be given justice, and become one martyr more.”⁴⁹

No physician could have made a more accurate prognosis of his own case.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XVIII

- (1) Retana, 269, quoting from “Rizal y Su Obra” by Manuel García Barzanallana.
- (2) Ep. Riz., IV, 28 et seq.
- (3) Ep. Riz., IV, 41.
- (4) Ep. Riz., IV, 57.
- (5) Ep. Riz., IV, 83.
- (6) Ep. Riz., IV, 158.
- (7) Ep. Riz., IV, 165.
- (8) Ep. Riz., IV, 189.
- (9) Ep. Riz., IV, 193.
- (10) Almagro, II, 225 et seq.
- (11) Ep. Riz., IV, 221, 222, 225, 248.
- (12) “Francisco de Paula Sánchez” by Leo A. Cullum, S.J., in *Philippine Studies*, VIII, No. 2 et seq.
- (13) Retana, 287, apparently drawing on Carnicero's reminiscences.
- (14) Retana, 318, this time apparently depending on notes furnished by Sitges.
- (15) Retana, 311, basing himself on papers furnished by Blanco, specifically the charges formulated in a letter from Ricart to Ochando; Cullum, op. cit.
- (16) Quirino, 279.
- (17) Quirino, 260.
- (18) Ep. Riz., IV, 236.
- (19) Ep. Riz., V, 658.

- (20) Ep. Riz., IV, 182.
- (21) Retana, 319 et seq., quoting a report from Sitges to Blanco, dated Dapitan, 10th November 1893.
- (22) Arch. Fil, III, 122/42.
- (23) Arch. Fil, III, 246/166; Kalaw, 105 et seq.
- (24) Arch. Fil, III, 276/196; Ep. Riz., IV, 236.
- (25) Ep. Riz., IV, 235.
- (26) Arch. Fil, III, 276/196.
- (27) Ep. Riz., IV, 236 et seq.
- (28) Arch. Fil, III, 289/209, 348/268. The first reference is to the statement of José Dizon Matanza; the second, to that of Pío Valenzuela.
- (29) Ep. Riz., IV, 252.
- (30) Ep. Riz., IV, 251.
- (31) Ep. Riz., IV, 280.
- (32) Ep. Riz., V, 687.
- (33) 100 Letters, 460, 471.
- (34) Ep. Riz., IV, 278; V, 708; Sp.Doc., 48.
- (35) Ep. Riz., V, 709.
- (36) Sp. Doc., 48 et seq.
- (37) Ep. Riz., IV, 293.
- (38) Ep. Riz., IV, 281.
- (39) Sp. Doc., 7, unedited.
- (40) Sp. Doc., 13, also unedited.
- (41) Agoncillo, 137 et seq.

(42) Ep. Riz., IV, 284.

(43) Ep. Riz., IV, 294.

(44) Ep. Riz., IV, 284, 287.

(45) Sp. Doc., 59.

(46) Ep. Riz., IV, 292, 295 footnote, quoting Blumentritt as observing:
“Parece que un pasajero escribió las señas del sobre de la una (*copia*),
pues no es de puño de Rizal.”

(47) Ep. Riz., IV, 29.

(48) Palma, 277.

(49) Sp. Doc., 68.



XIX

A Leader Overtaken

Nothing is so powerful as an idea arriving at the right time.

GOETHE

Just as one swallow does not make a summer,
so also one man does not make a revolution.

RIZAL

What is the use of independence if the slaves
of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow

EL FILIBUSTERISMO

On the night of the 7th July 1892, the day of Despujol's decree banishing Rizal, some of those who had attended the first and last meeting of the *Liga* met at the house of del Pilar's brother-in-law, Deodato Arellano, and organized the *Kataastaasang Kagalang-galang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan*, the Most High and Noble Association of the Sons of the People. Among its founders, beside Arellano himself, were Bonifacio, Plata, Valentín Díaz, Ladislao Diwa, and José Dizon, all, as the name of their new society made plain, “sons of the people.”¹ Its debt to the *Liga* was obvious: its declared purpose was “to unify the hearts and minds of the Tagalog;” and its members were bound by oaths of secrecy and obedience and “mutual help.”²

The fact that Arellano was elected *supremo*, that Bonifacio is said to have treasured del Pilar's letters to his brother-in-law, and that the statutes of the organization were submitted to del Pilar for approval, have suggested to some that Rizal's great friend and rival was the true inspiration of the *Katipunan*. But it is now generally agreed that the *Katipunan* was the creation of Bonifacio. It was he who made and unmade supremos, Arellano followed by Román Basa, until on the 31st December 1895 he assumed the leadership openly.

Bonifacio was two years younger than Rizal, born to a poor couple in Manila on the 30th November 1865. Left orphaned at an early age with five brothers and sisters, he was far from being a scion of the *principalía* or “a child of good family.” Indeed his life is one of almost complete contrast with that of Rizal. He barely got through primary school, and thereafter had to go to work as a member of Manila's growing slum proletariat. First he made and peddled canes and paper fans; later, having taught himself some Spanish, he became a clerk-messenger for a foreign firm, then a salesman of rattan, tar and other commodities, and finally a warehouseman for another foreign business concern, Fressel and Company.

He shared one passion with Rizal, reading, and their choice of books was oddly similar: Sue, Dumas, Hugo, typical of their age. Maurois, Hugo's biographer, has written that *Les Misérables*, for instance, “was but one more expression of the spirit of the times. George Sand, Eugene Sue, and even Alexandre Dumas and Frederic Soulie were all of them writing novels about the sufferings of the poor.”⁴ Bonifacio knew all about that at first hand; he went on to read about the French Revolution.

He became a Mason. The Spaniards then and now have been more frank and perceptive than the Filipinos on the profound influence of Masonry on the Philippine Revolution, and the reasons for it. Castelar, analyzing the Spanish colonial disaster, would say: "It is enough to see the slave-holding oligarchy in the West (Cuba) and the theocratic oligarchy in the East (the Philippines) for us to be persuaded to believe that Reaction was the first and only cause of our disasters. If, despite the selfish slave-holders, we had given self-government to the Cubans, the rebels would not have triumphed as they have triumphed; and if we had disentailed the Church estates in the Philippines, the Tagalogs would not have fought as they have fought." Soldevilla, the compendious Spanish historian, adds: "The success of Masonry in the Philippines can be explained by the fact that Spanish colonization had there an essentially missionary character, and the friar was the principal representative of Spain in the eyes of the Filipino, and not always a sufficiently worthy representative."⁵

Masonry was thus the soul of disaffection to the regime because the regime was clerical, and in Catholic countries Masonry, condemned for its indifferentism, tends naturally to be anti-clerical; as well as because the regime was absolutist, and Masonry, with its motto of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" was inevitably anti-absolutist. In Spain Masonry provided a haven and a point of departure for the exiled reformers, the plotting expatriates, the lonely and the lost. In the Philippines it was common ground for rich progressives, bourgeois intellectuals, and discontented clerks and mechanics. Masonry might not itself be a subversive organization, but the founders, leaders and members of the *Liga*, the *Compromisarios*, the *Katipunan*, and the various committees and associations that had preceded them, were almost invariably Masons. Del Pilar, like Mabini one of the Master Masons of them all, made the matter clear in a letter to a third Mason, Juan A. Zulueta.

M.H. del Pilar to J.A. Zulueta, 1 June 1893 —

... Masonry [in Spain] is for us a means of propaganda. If the Masons there [in the Philippines] seek to make Masonry a vehicle of action for our ideals they would be very much mistaken. A special organization is necessary, dedicated especially to the cause of the Philippines; although its members or some of them

may be Masons, it is necessary that it should not itself depend upon Masonry ...⁶

But what were the friars and the constabulary to think when they came across the same names and Masonic pseudonyms again and again in the police reports and the whispered intelligence from spies and agents? What were they to think, except that it was all one vast Masonic underground, here, there, and everywhere, when they found the same appeals for brotherhood, the same “triangles” and cell-structures and secret committees, for all the world like Masonic lodges, with the same mysterious rituals and oaths?

The result was that, as *Muza* had complained, the Spanish friars blame everything that went wrong on Rizal; and everything that Rizal was supposed to be doing, on the Masons, who were hounded mercilessly with raids, searches, arrests and deportations. On the 22nd January 1895 Mabini wrote del Pilar that “the government has ordered the arrest of all Masons taking part in meetings” and that “the lodges have again suspended their activities.” The next month lodge *Modestia* reported to the Spanish Grand Orient that “not only the most ruthless persecution is being preached by our eternal enemies, but our complete extermination, regardless of the means employed.” By August Mabini was recommending the suspension of publication of the *Soli*, “people here are giving every excuse to evade any kind of payment.”

The Masons, suffering from what *Muza* called “depressed spirits,” “exaggerated fears,” and “obstructionism,” would have been amazed to learn that they had reduced the friars to the same pitiful state of nerves. On the 13th March 1896 Archbishop Nozaleda himself denounced all the members of the municipal board of Malolos as Masons, and they were dismissed and banished; more denunciations came from other friars of Filipino Masons in official positions in Lipa, Taal, and Bawan in Batangas, in Pilar and Samal in Bataan, in Pagsanghan and Santa Cruz in Laguna. One of the police reports quoted an alleged Mason in Taytay, Morong, as boasting that “they were as numerous as the grains in a bowl of rice.” An official document estimated that “almost all the inhabitants of the archipelago, from the wealthiest to the poorest” were Masons, and that “along the banks of the Pasig alone there are 17,000 Filipino Masons.”

On the 4th April 1896 Blanco received a telegram from the Colonial Minister in Madrid:

Alarm is felt here about a separatist movement carried on in that archipelago by means of Masonic propaganda, which excludes Spaniards and is being directed exclusively by Filipinos. As you are probably posted on everything, I request you to keep me well informed and in detail, and, should there be any cause for alarm, please exercise extreme vigilance and give the necessary instructions to the provincial governors.

On the 15th the Marquess, who had been called little less short of a Mason himself because he had tried to restrain the frenzy of the friars, reported that he had issued orders for stringent investigations and immediate reprisals. The Minister congratulated the Governor General and sent him a royal decree dated the 2nd July 1896 requiring local authorities, in close cooperation with the friars, to investigate any secret societies, to keep a record of suspected members, to keep the latter under constant surveillance, to send to trial any found conspiring against the regime and, if acquitted, to banish them by administrative order. It was suggested that the Marquess himself should take the most severe measures in Manila, which was probably the residence of “most of the members of Masonry as well as the hierarchs and important leaders of that infamous sect, and the cleverest and shrewdest conspirators, all of them responsible for the evils we are trying to correct.”⁷

[2]

The persecution of the Masons is of considerable importance in our story because it gives a plausible explanation for the failure of the regime to discover the *Katipunan* for more than four years. While parish friar and police spy, informer and garrison commander, Archbishop and Governor General went chasing after the aproned brethren, the majority of them progressive *principales* and liberal *ilustrados*, Bonifacio was quietly but tirelessly working among the masses, whose huts did not seem worth a search, who could scarcely be suspected of being able to write their own names, let alone subversive propaganda, who congregated dumbly in

cockpits, circus tents and dank alleys, and were presumably more interested in keeping body and soul together, and a shirt on their backs, than in the high politics of reform and revolution. These were the faithful, the submissive, the unspoiled. The anarchist assassinations, the socialist riots of Valencia and Barcelona, the very idea of social justice, had not yet, the regime believed, reached the peasant huts along the lake and the bay, or the Tondo slums over which the zealous friar Mariano Gil kept a hot suspicious eye from his hilltop church and parish house.

So it was that Bonifacio and the *Katipunan* escaped and grew. It would seem that Bonifacio used Masonry for his own purposes, borrowed much of its philosophy and ritual, but never aspiring to leadership or even active membership in the brotherhood, preferred to build up his own association of the Sons of the People. He had a surer instinct than Rizal's, a more penetrating insight, when it came to organising a conspiracy. He had more of del Pilar's command of revolutionary techniques: the appeal to the common people, using their own language, satisfying the natural need of the poor and distressed for a sense of security, tempting their appetite for mystery and action, withal training them in discipline and loyalty by flattering the moral impulses so pure and uncompromising among those who are not subject to the temptations of wealth and breeding. Rizal might have the better mind, knowledge of the world and the nature of imperialism, the greater vision, an understanding of the rationale of revolution, but Bonifacio was poor enough to know that revolutions are fought by the common people who have nothing to lose by them.

Yet granting that Bonifacio was a born plotter, a born organizer, his achievement in creating and concealing and expanding the *Katipunan*, commands admiration. We are told by his classic biographer that the *Katipunan* had only three hundred members by the end of 1893.⁸ By August 1896, or in little more than two years and a half, it had thirty thousand, and the Revolution would prove that this number was not wholly exaggerated. How was this done by a warehouseman without connections, without resources? His trusted friend was Emilio Jacinto, a law student so poor that his clothes were bought from pawnshops, who had joined the movement at the age of eighteen and would be only twenty-one at the start of the Revolution. Jacinto acquired a command of Tagalog and was thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Rizal and del Pilar, but he does not seem to have

been a particularly effective recruiter for revolution. Bonifacio had very few others on whom he could rely.

The wealthy progressive, Francisco Roxas, had told the *Katipunan* emissary who approached him for funds. “What a silly thing! I cannot give you one centavo. If you don't give up this foolish idea of yours, I shall denounce the *Katipunan* and all its members to the authorities!”¹⁰ Rizal himself had disowned, and would later condemn, the movement. Antonio Luna, asked to intercede with the *principales*, had replied sardonically by baring his teeth and asking: “How shall we fight, with these?”¹¹

Bonifacio's newspaper, *Kalayaan*, an eight-page broadsheet printed secretly with a press bought with the lottery winnings of two sea-divers, with a font of type so deficient that pages had to be printed one at a time, carrying del Pilar's name as editor and Tokyo as the place of publications, had taken three months in the press and its first and last issue had only an order of two thousand copies.¹² If Bonifacio had no press, no wealthy supporters, not even trained agents, neither had he weapons nor foreign sympathizers to supply them. He was reduced to the expedient of using two of his men to steal guns and pistols from the naval arsenal where they were employed; they would take the weapons apart, smuggle them out in garbage pails, and put them together again in the shop of a Chinese who had to be given a third of the loot—not the easiest way to equip a revolutionary army!¹³ An appeal for help to the commanding officer of a Japanese cruiser, the *Kongo*, had brought nothing but promises despite an exchange of gifts and compliments.¹⁴

Surely Rizal, Antonio Luna, and Francisco Roxas had every reason and justification to call the whole plan “absurd.” For all that, it was done.

[3]

Bonifacio's Revolution would find the Spanish Government already heavily engaged in Cuba but still, with the conservatives back in power, obdurate against reforms. Rizal had not been wrong in despairing of any concessions that might be gained in Spain from Spain; the alternation in power of Cánovas del Castillo and Sagasta, of conservatives and liberals, had shown the natives both of the Philippines and Cuba only two faces of the same

coin. Where the conservative Cánovas had cried in 1891 that Spain was ready to use “the last man and the last peso” to keep her colonies, the liberal Sagasta, echoing him in 1895, said that Spain “in defence of her rights and her territory was ready to spend her last peseta and to give the last drop of the blood of her sons.”¹⁵

The only reforms offered had been those drafted by Antonio Maura, a gifted young lawyer who, not yet forty, took his first portfolio as Colonial Minister in Sagasta's “cabinet of notables” in 1892. “A cabinet of notable calamities,” a member of the Opposition was to sneer, “and Maura was the greatest of them all because, while the stupidities, blunders and mistakes of his colleagues only affected certain departments, and the Conservative Government managed to correct these errors easily, those of Maura affected the whole country and Spain, to correct them, must now spend a river of blood and a river of gold.”¹⁶ Blood and gold again, not inappropriately the colors of the Spanish flag.

In fact, only Maura's administrative reforms could have just saved the situation. But mild and tentative as they were—a short measure of autonomy for Cuba, and an administrative reorganisation in the Philippines which gave the Filipinos of Luzon and the Bisayas some participation in local government—they were greeted with such intransigent hostility that Maura, called a separatist and an agitator, had to resign. A new Sagasta cabinet had, nevertheless, to find some solution to the problem of colonial unrest and in 1895 Maura's project had been revived in an even milder form with Buenaventura Abárzuza as Colonial Minister. Maura himself was recalled to the cabinet as Minister of Justice in order to cooperate in drafting what were now called the Abárzuza proposals. Approved by the Congress on the 13th February 1895, they had been received with such enthusiasm in Cuba that the separatist leaders were forced, in order to maintain their position, to declare the renewal of the Cuban Revolution ten days later. One month afterwards the liberal government fell and Cánovas and the conservatives were back in power; their government, Silvela had prophesied, “would be born without prestige, would live contemptibly, and would die without glory.”¹⁷

The change in Madrid did not immediately affect the Philippines. The Marquess of Peña Plata remained in office. Blanco, who was 63 in 1896, was one more veteran of the Carlist wars and colonial campaigns. As a

lieutenant he had been seriously wounded while helping to suppress revolts in Valencia and Barcelona; as Governor General of Cuba in 1879, he and General Camilo García de Polavieja had quickly won the so-called *guerra chiquita*, the little revolution that had briefly disturbed the truce. He had gone on from insurrection to insurrection, putting down one in Santo Domingo and another in Badajoz. He was a gentleman of some distinction, for Alfonso XII had made him head of the royal military household, and, when the French had rioted against the Spanish king as a pro-German “Uhlán,” he had accompanied Alfonso ostentatiously alone in a walk along the streets of Paris.¹⁸ For his campaign against the Muslims in Mindanaw he had been given a vote of thanks by both houses of the Spanish parliament, and promoted to Captain General. He would end his military career as Governor General of Cuba with the melancholy duty, which broke his heart, of handing over the last shred of Spain's American Empire to the victorious North Americans.

Blanco, known as a gentle compromiser, would be sent to Cuba to replace Weyler, and, in a desperate and futile last effort to rally the Cubans to the old country, to set up and swear in an autonomous Cuban government. But these qualities which made him desirable in Cuba in 1897 made him undesirable for the Spaniards in the Philippines in 1896.

By the middle of the year Bonifacio's security measures were beginning to fray at the edges. The *Katipunan*, had grown too large for perfect control. As early as 1895 a letter in its primitive code had fallen into the hands of a Dominican friar, and the loss had been blamed on the supreme council's own secretary, whose sister was married to a Spaniard. Nothing seems to have come of it, except that the unfortunate secretary and his half-brother were expelled from the organization.¹⁹

Now a veritable disaster was about to befall the *Katipunan*. Bonifacio had worked best under cover of the regime's obsession with Masonry and the *filibusterismo* of the middle-class expatriates and progressives. But scattered reports now started to reach the intelligence desks about a new secret society, new in an entirely different way, embracing as it did an element in society which had never been thought capable of taking the leadership in subversion. *La Epoca* had feared most in the Kabite 1872 mutiny a new and infinitely dangerous alliance between the Filipino seculars and the Filipino troops; later observers had translated this, in terms

of another generation, into what might become an equally fatal coalition between wealthy progressive and liberal intellectuals; none seems to have feared or even expected a rising of the peasants and the workers on their own initiative.

Now a friar reported rumors that some sort of secret society seemed to have almost twenty thousand members in the small towns around the capital. The parish priest of Guadalupe passed on the information that it was apparently called the *Katipunan*, and the parish priest of Santa Cruz in Manila itself reported surreptitious meetings of suspicious persons. On the 5th July 1896 a constabulary lieutenant in Pasig discovered that agents of presumably the same society “were enlisting men for an unknown purpose, making those who joined sign with their own blood, taken from a small wound in the arm, a pledge not to reveal the aims, purposes or designs of the association.” On the 13th August two members of the *Katipunan* quarrelled so bitterly that one of them, Teodoro Patiño, blurted out its secrets to his sister Honoria in the orphan asylum of Mandaluyong. Honoria, simple soul, burst into cries and lamentations at what must have seemed to her the impending doom and damnation of her brother; she was overheard by one Sister Teresa, the nun-porter, who quickly learned what it was all about, and persuaded Patiño to reveal the conspiracy to Gil in Tondo. We are not told why Patiño, by now probably distraught and thoroughly bewildered, was instructed to go to the friar priest of Tondo; Gil, for his part, seems to have been struck more by the information that there were a thousand and a half men in San Mateo poised for an attack on Manila than by the nature of the *Katipunan*. He was impressed enough to require Patiño to prove his allegations with some concrete evidence. He was told that the *Katipunan* receipts for contributions were being printed from a lithographic stone hidden in the printing shop of the *Diario de Manila*, where Patiño worked. Gil immediately informed the constabulary lieutenants on duty in his district, and hastened himself to the publisher of the newspaper; the press room was ransacked, the stone was found, the locker of one of the workers whose name appeared on the receipts was forced open and a dagger discovered together with the statutes of the *Katipunan* and other documents.²⁰

It is easy to imagine Bonifacio's discomfiture, rage, and fever of planning when he learned of the discovery, possibly through the immediate arrests of those directly implicated. In a last desperate effort to throw the regime off

his tracks he and Jacinto faked letters and signatures purporting to show that the *Katipunan* was financed by such wealthy progressives as Francisco Roxas, Luís Yangco, and others. The stratagem worked but only for a time.^{[21](#)}

While these men were being seized and tortured, loudly protesting their innocence, the *Katipunan* was called to general assembly in Balintawak on the 24th August. In the meantime Bonifacio, Jacinto and other leaders of the association slipped out of Manila the very night of Patiño's revelations. On the 21st, at the head of five hundred men, they left Balintawak for Kangkong; the next day they left for Pugad Lawin, apparently still undetermined on a course of action; on the 23rd, their numbers doubled, they decided for open rebellion rather than continued concealment and flight. They were armed only with long knives, but when Bonifacio announced the decision and asked them to confirm it by tearing up their identity cards, they did so with a great cry for the Philippines and the *Katipunan*.^{[22](#)}

But a detachment of constabulary was sighted and the *Katipuneros* quickly scattered, pouring their half-eaten rice into their hats, which were lined with tobacco leaves, and gulping down this rice-tobacco as they stumbled to their next rendezvous at Pasong Tamo. The constabulary caught up with them there on the 25th; there was a brief skirmish and the rebels, for that is what they now were, fell back towards Balara. Government reinforcements arrived on the 26th, but Bonifacio and his men were already moving toward Hagdang Bato where, on the 28th, he issued a proclamation calling for a general rising on the next day. His secret instructions to the *Katipunan* in Kabite were that the signal “will be the putting out of all the lights on the Luneta.”^{[23](#)}

But there were no risings on the 29th (had the Kabiteños remembered the fatal mistake of 1872?) and Bonifacio saw that he must strike a blow if the whole movement was not to collapse and the *Katipunan* reduced to a wandering band of hunted outlaws. On the 30th he attacked the government powder-magazine in San Juan del Monte and was beaten off with eighty casualties by forces under Blanco's second-in-command, General Echaluce. However, an example had been set.

On the 31st the *Katipunán* rose in Kabite to such good effect that the military governor of the province, General Diego de los Ríos, was completely cut off at the naval base. One relief column was beaten off. Another more powerful one, dispatched from Manila by Blanco under his own chief of staff, General Aguirre, was ambushed and driven back. A military cordon had to be put up to defend the provinces of Laguna and Batangas; Kabite, except for two towns and the naval base, was in the hands of a new leader, now suddenly in the forefront of the rebellion.²⁴

His name was Emilio Aguinaldo. As mayor of his home town of Kawit, he qualified technically as a member of the *principalía*. But he had much more in common with Bonifacio than with Rizal, and indeed, if the Tondo warehouseman can be taken as symbolic of the new urban proletariat, the Kawit farmer was equally typical of the share-croppers and peons who had taken to the field and would carry the brunt of the battle. Born on the 22nd March 1869, he was six years younger than Bonifacio, and only twenty-seven when he built Kabite into the stronghold of the Revolution.²⁵ He was a natural soldier, courageous, cunning. He spoke little Spanish, and to the end of his revolutionary career, as dictator and president, would exhibit a patient and humble trust in the intellectuals who would write his manifestoes and constitutions. But he knew his business of war by instinct.

Bonifacio's men had won effective control of the province of Manila, except for the city itself, during the first weeks of the rebellion, other parties were soon setting the whole of Central Luzón in a turmoil; Aguirre, defending Santa Cruz, capital of La Laguna, was in desperate straits, and so was Major López Arteaga in Bulakan; farther north, Llanera had taken San Isidro in Nueva Ecija; to the south, two more Spanish columns, one from Kalamba and the other from Tanawan in Batangas, going to the relief of Talisay, were cut to pieces, and the Marquess, who had prudently moved from Malacañang to temporary quarters in the Walled City, was forced to take to the field personally on the 11th October 1896.²⁶ Against a growing army of twenty thousand rebels, he originally had available seven infantry regiments, two cavalry squadrons, and one artillery regiment with two mountain batteries. But of those troops only the artillery men, as in 1872 were Spanish, and six of the seven native infantry regiments were on garrison duty in Mindanaw. Blanco had perforce to suspend all operations and remain on the defensive until he received re-enforcements of a

thousand men from Spain, two thousand volunteers, and four thousand of the native conscripts whom he recalled from the south.²⁷

The Marquess had seriously underestimated the Revolution and now gave every appearance of indecision. On the one hand, he had promptly declared a state of war in the provinces of Manila, Bulakan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlak, La Laguna, Kabite, and Batangas (Bonifacio's *Katagalugan* joined by the *Kapampangan*, the eight provinces that would surround the future Filipino Sun with their rays). He had put in motion the “most severe” processes and imprisoned and executed a great number of prominent persons suspected of disaffection to the regime; he had decreed the attachment of the properties of the rebels; and on the 25th October had issued a decree imposing the death penalty by firing squad, after court martial proceedings dispensing with all formalities, upon all who should help the rebels by sabotage, giving of information, supplying of food or munitions, or procuring the desertion of Filipino soldiers, a decree which would necessarily affect the trial of Rizal.²⁸

On the other hand, he had offered amnesty to all who should surrender themselves to the authorities, and had suspended the campaign in Kabite until the arrival of re-enforcements. On the 31st October the patience of the Dominicans came to an end. In a telegram to their mother-house in Madrid, the Dominican Archbishop Nozaleda and the Provincials complained with admirable succinctness: “Situation worsens. Rebellion spreading. Blanco's apathy inexplicable. To avert danger, appointment new leader urgently necessary. All agreed.”²⁹ We are told that Blanco had never got along with Nozaleda, a theologian in his fifties who had taken possession of the archiepiscopal see of Manila five years previously. Although praised on occasion by the Filipino intellectuals, and known, it was said later by Maura, for his “serenity, virtue, and love of truth,” he also had “the gift of authority, patriotism.” Long after the Revolution, his appointment to the see of Valencia would be attacked by Morayta who charged him with collaborating with the American victors after the fall of Manila;³⁰ but in 1896 Nozaleda was the most Spanish of Spaniards. His hostility was fatal to the Marquess of Peña Plata; the Marquess of Pidal and his brother, intimate friends of the Archbishop and the Dominicans, exerted their influence on Cánovas, and the Conservative Premier found the Queen Regent in

agreement on the appointment of General Polavieja as second-in-command to Blanco.³¹

When Cánovas had earlier proposed the similar relief of Martinez Campos, the “Pacifier of Cuba,” by Weyler, Maria Cristina had opposed it, fearing the atrocities that would give the grim Marquess of Tenerife the name of “Butcher of Cuba.”³² But she made no such objection to Polavieja, who was known as “the Christian General” because of his piety, and was head of the military household. Polavieja was named ostensibly to take the place of Echaluze, who was recalled for reasons of health; he landed in Manila on the 2nd December with his own staff of trusted generals (Zappino, Lachambre, Cornel and Galbis). But everyone knew and expected what happened on the 8th; Blanco was offered his old post as chief of the royal military household; he understood, accepted, and resigned shortly afterwards; and Polavieja was named in his place and took possession of the office on the 12th.

The change would be fatal for Rizal. The new Governor General had not concealed his intentions to make war like Weyler, *una guerra sin contemplaciones*, a phrase difficult to translate but perhaps best rendered as “war without scruples.” A native Madrileño, he had made his name in Cuba, where he had served several times under Blanco, whom he now supplanted. He was a hard fighter and a superb strategist. “If he did not fight in more wars than he did,” it was said of him, “it was only because there weren't any.” His brilliant strategy in Cuba “was studied as a model in the great military schools of Europe.” In the Philippines his swift reversal of the situation would win him the greatest praise from foreign military experts. Withal he was not utterly the short-sighted bigot and bully that he has been made out to be in Philippine history because of his atrocious blunder in approving the execution of Rizal. In Cuba he had openly stated his belief that Spanish domination could be maintained only by force of arms, and that “instead of trying to prevent at all costs and for always the independence of Cuba, which it would be useless to attempt, we should prepare ourselves for it, remain on the island only so long as it is reasonable to do so, and take the necessary measures to avoid being thrown out by force, to the prejudice of our interests and our honour, before the time when we must leave in all friendliness.”

He arrived in the Philippines at the age of fifty-eight, broken in health, forced to take a daily laxative and sedatives at night. But he set up his headquarters in the field at Parañaque, and in a brief campaign used his re-enforced army of thirty thousand men, divided into three corps, so effectively that by March 1897 the insurrection had been driven back to its bulwark in Kabite, reduced by half. On the 15th April 1897 Polavieja took ship back for Spain, having resigned because he had been denied the re-enforcements he demanded for complete victory. His successor, Fernando Primo de Rivera, Marquess of Estella, would finish the campaign by assaulting the rebel fortress of Kabite, reducing it completely, and, having driven Aguinaldo to the caves of Biyak-na-Bato, would there arrive at the bargain that seemed to seal the fate of Bonifacio's Revolution.³³

By that time Bonifacio himself would be dead. But we should not look that far ahead. For the purpose of our story we must remember how the situation looked to the Spaniards when Polavieja took over the high command. Everything then seemed in disarray: Manila virtually besieged by a faceless foe, their lives in danger, their honor tarnished. Rizal's prosecutor would be voicing their thoughts in asking his judges to "remember that the many victims who, because of the present insurrection, sleep eternally in this soil which will be forever Spanish, ask for justice; so also do the wives and daughters of officials, careful of their honor, who have been vilely outraged by a wanton and cruel mob; and the thousands of mothers who, with tears in their eyes and anguish in their hearts, follow step by step the shifting fortunes of this campaign, thinking constantly of their sons ..." It would be useless for Rizal's defender to plead that "judges cannot be avengers; judges can only be just."

[4]

Upon the outbreak of the insurrection the regime had immediately opened a general inquiry which was entrusted to Colonel Olivé, the same Olivé who had commanded the detachment sent to enforce judgment against the Kalamba tenants. When Rizal's name kept cropping up in the statements made by those who had been arrested or who had availed themselves of Blanco's offer of amnesty. Olivé had asked the Marquess to secure the return of Rizal to the Philippines to answer for the offences in which he had

been implicated. The request could not be refused, notwithstanding the Governor General's own letters of recommendation in which he had absolved Rizal of all blame, and the telegram had been sent to hold Rizal prisoner and send him back by the next ship.³⁴

He arrived on the 3rd November and was immediately taken to Fort Santiago. However, it was not until the 20th that he was summoned before Olivé for the preliminary investigation. In accordance with Spanish criminal procedure he was informed of the charges and the evidence against him but was allowed only to give testimony on his own behalf, without the right to cross-examine the witnesses against him or to offer any formal defence. The oral and documentary evidence had all been derived from the main inquiry, the documents, according to Retana, having been among those seized in Bonifacio's warehouse, which he had apparently converted into archives of subversive literature.³⁵

On the 26th, after interrogating Rizal, Olivé endorsed the case to Blanco, and the latter appointed Captain Rafael Domínguez, Infantry, to institute the proper proceedings as special Judge Advocate. Domínguez recommended prosecution, it appearing that Rizal was “the principal organizer and the living soul of the insurrection in the Philippines.” Blanco then endorsed the case to the Judge Advocate General Nicolás Peña for his opinion and recommendation.

Peña recommended that the case go to trial, that the accused be kept under arrest, that an order of attachment be issued against him in the amount of one million pesos, and that he be provided with an officer as counsel. On the 8th December Lieutenant Enrique de Alcocer, Judge Advocate, ruled that there was a *prima facie* case against Rizal for the complex crime of rebellion through illegal association, the last being the necessary means of committing the former. Domínguez then offered Rizal a choice of counsel, and, coming across a familiar name in the army list, Taviel de Andrade, Rizal pointed it out. It was not, however, his walking companion of other days but a brother, Luís.

On the 11th December the formal reading of the information took place. The accused raised no objection on grounds of jurisdiction, pleaded not guilty to the crime of rebellion, admitted only that he had written the statutes of the *Liga* to develop commerce and industry, waived the right to make any further statements or to amend those he had already made (except

to say that he had taken absolutely no part in politics since his banishment to Dapitan), repudiated the testimony against him, and waived the right to secure further evidence or a further confirmation of the oral evidence presented at the preliminary investigation.

By this time Blanco had already been relieved by Polavieja. Domínguez returned the papers to Malacañang on the 13th December for a final decision; on the 17th the Judge Advocate General gave the opinion that the case was ready for trial before an ordinary court martial without the need of an assessor or law member; on the 19th the case was turned over to Domínguez and Alcocer, who would handle the prosecution; and on the day after Christmas the trial was opened at the Cuartel de España. It was more of a hearing, an oral argument between opposing counsel, than a trial as generally understood, since no witnesses were called and cross-examined, no evidence submitted.

The legal issues were not complicated. In his address for the prosecution Alcocer rested his case principally on Rizal's "admissions" regarding the *Liga* and on the perhaps rather fanciful connection between the *Liga* and Bonifacio's insurrection which he derived from the statements made at the inquiry. At the preliminary investigation Rizal had indeed admitted that he might have told, although he was not sure that he had actually told the meeting of the *Liga* at Ongjuncos's house that through the *Liga* the arts, commerce, and industry would make progress, and that "the country, once the people were well-off and united, would attain its own freedom and even its independence." Alcocer added that "in crimes of this nature, which are founded on rousing the passions of the people against the governmental powers, the main burden of guilt is on the man who awakens dormant feelings and raises false hopes for the future." He was referring to Rizal's propaganda activities in his books and other writings.

For the defence Taviel de Andrade took what would seem to be an excessively technical position, conscious perhaps of the prejudice against the accused in the broader field. His main argument rested on a rule of evidence, in the law applying the Penal Code of Spain in the Philippines, which provided that its penalties could be imposed only when guilt had been established through the following means: ocular inspection, confession of the accused, credible witnesses, expert opinion, official documents, or conclusive circumstantial evidence. None of these, he argued, were

available against Rizal. He challenged the veracity and impartiality of those who had given statements incriminating Rizal; they had “a direct and very marked interest” in trying to ascribe to Rizal the leadership of the insurrection since they themselves faced such a charge, but would reduce their liability to that of mere followers or accessories if their stories were believed. On the other hand, Rizal himself had confessed to nothing but writing the statutes of the *Liga* and there was nothing illegal to be found there. The official reports submitted against him were equally worthless; they might be admissible in an administrative proceeding but not at a trial to prove a criminal offence punishable by death. What remained? Only “his life, his past works and writings, his previous record” as an agitator for reforms, but all these were known before the present insurrection. “Would any tribunal, with no other proof of guilt except that record, have condemned Rizal to death before the 19th August, before the events that are now taking place? Surely not.”

But the same day, after hearing Rizal in his own defence, the court martial found him guilty as charged and condemned him to death. The decision was signed by José Togores, president of the court, and Braúlio Rodríguez Núñez, Ricardo Muñoz, Fermín Pérez Rodríguez, Manuel Reguera, Manuel Díaz Escribano, and Santiago Izquierdo. Also on the same day the judgment was endorsed to Polavieja who referred it to the Judge Advocate General. Peña adopted Alcocer's arguments wholesale and found Rizal guilty as a principal by induction through his propaganda activities. He recommended that Rizal be executed by firing squad at the place and time designated by the Governor General. On the 28th December Polavieja approved the recommendation and ordered Rizal to be shot at seven o'clock in the morning of the 30th December in the field of Bagumbayan.³⁶

That in brief is the statement of the legal case against Rizal.

[5]

Rizal had been convicted ostensibly on the strength of the oral and documentary evidence secured against him at Olivé's continuing inquiry,³⁷ and in all fairness to his judges that evidence should be evaluated. Within the limitations of Spanish court-martial procedure, which apparently did not allow what we know as cross examination of hostile witnesses in these

cases, there was not such a total failure of the evidence against him as most of his biographers have been led to believe.

Most of the documentary evidence can be rightly dismissed as worthless. There is, for instance, a cutting from the *Hong Kong Telegraph* containing an anonymous letter to the editor criticising Despujol's decree banishing Rizal. There is a letter giving news of fresh rustications signed with the pseudonym "Rizal the Second." There is even a fragment from Rizal's "college song" for his Talisay pupils:

*Somos niños, pues tarde nacimos
mas el alma tenemos lozana
y hombres fuertes seremos mañana
que sabrán sus familias guardar.
Somos niños que nada intimida
ni las olas, ni el baguio, ni el trueno,
pronto el brazo y el rostro sereno
en el trance sabremos luchar.*

*Nuestros brazos manejan a turno
el cuchillo, la pluma, la azada,
la piqueta, el fusil y la espada,
compañeros del fuerte varón.³⁸*

A song for children (*somos niños*)—really, it is too childish for all the references to knives and guns and swords! Rizal explained patiently that he referred to possible Muslim raids on the Christian settlement of Dapitan.

Other documents are relevant only to show Rizal's alleged state of mind, and only if contributing to *La Solidaridad* (a perfectly legal newspaper in Madrid, its place of publication) and membership in Masonry were assumed to be criminal activities connected with rebellion. They include a letter from Antonio Luna to Mariano Ponce dated the 16th October 1888, suggesting that Rizal's opinion be sought on the rival claims of Lete and Llorente to the editorship of the paper; another letter, from del Pilar to Deodato Arellano dated the 7th January 1891, indicating that Rizal wanted to identify the Filipino expatriates in Madrid with the *Soli*; a third letter, from del Pilar to Juan Zulueta dated the 1st June 1893, saying that the *Liga* "apparently" was trying to do what Masonry should not do to further the cause of the

Philippines; a fourth letter, from one Carlos Oliver to an unknown dated the 18th September 1891, quoting from an alleged letter of Rizal (obviously hearsay) which speaks of “slavery,” and describing him as “the man sent by Providence to all of us to lead us to the Promised Land of liberty;” a Masonic communication informing Rizal of his designation as Honorary Worshipful Master of the Lodge *Nilad*; reports (again hearsay) that Emilio Jacinto and José Turiano Santiago had, at meetings of the *Katipunan*, mixed cries of “Long live Dr. Rizal!” with subversive slogans of “Long live the Philippines!,” “Long live liberty!,” and “Death to the oppressor Nation!” and “Union!”; and finally a sixth letter, from Ildefonso Laurel to Rizal dated the 3rd September 1892, congratulating him on a rumour about his pardon from banishment, saying that the people looked up to him as their “redeemer and savior” and that they were “ready to shed their blood for his redemption and that of the country,” and sending him a fraternal embrace “for the country, for whom all, someday, united, wish to die.”

The legal objections that suggest themselves would be sustained in any court today or, for that matter, as Taviel de Andrade argued, in any Philippine civil court of Rizal's time: the evidence is immaterial, irrelevant, not properly identified, mere opinion, pure hearsay. The only documents directly attributable to Rizal are a letter signed with his Masonic pseudonym, seeking the co-operation of the Hong Kong committee in an unidentified “patriotic work;” another letter to his family, saying in part: “I see the hand of Providence in these banishments of educated people to distant points; it will keep the spirit of the towns awake, disseminate ideas, accustom the people not to fear danger and to hate tyranny, etc.,” and finally a Tagalog song which speaks of a beautiful Oriental land that a despot has loaded with chains and groans in endurance, dying like a slave. “Happy is he who can give her liberty.”

Rizal admitted authorship only of the “Talisay” verses, the letter to his family, and the Masonic letter (it is not clear to which this refers, but neither the letter appointing him Honorary Master nor the Hong Kong one is relevant unless it is assumed, as perhaps the court assumed, that the *Katipunan* was a Masonic organization and the rebellion a Masonic plot). Speaking before the court martial he asked it to consider that, if these letters contained some sharp criticisms, they were written at a time “when we had

been stripped of two houses, barns, lands, etc. and my brother and brothers-in-law banished.”

The oral testimony given at the inquiry (without benefit of cross examination) was stronger, however. It would be tedious to go through the whole record in detail. Keeping in mind the case of the prosecution, that the accused Rizal was the real leader of the rebellion, that the *Katipunan* was only his *Liga* in another form, that Masonry was behind both, that all sought to overthrow the constituted authorities and secure the independence of the Philippines from Spain by force of arms, that Rizal's writings and other works had actively promoted these illegal ends, and that he was therefore guilty as a principal by induction, a summary of the prosecution's evidence should be sufficient to evaluate the case against him.

It will be recalled that Taviel de Andrade would limit his oral argument at the hearing to technical objections to the evidence. Rizal had full confidence in the “nobility” of his counsel, but evidently had had his doubts, shared by his family, about the handling of his defence. Thus he had asked for a confrontation with the witnesses against him, a request which Domínguez had refused to grant. He had also prepared a memorandum on the questions of fact involved on the 12th December.

J. Rizal to L. Taviel de Andrade, 20 December 1896 —

It is very likely that my sister will show up at your house to talk to you about my case, and it is also very likely that, in her anxiety to see me free, she will make a request that may annoy you. You will know how to forgive the impatience of women. Not knowing you personally, she has suggested to me the advisability of consulting a professional lawyer. To speak frankly I neither want it nor need it, having you; I rely more on the nobility of my defender than on technical ability, and I think you have enough of the latter to handle my little case. Furthermore, you have more knowledge of certain things than another lawyer, with whom I have not talked, would have. However, since I have put my case in your hands, I leave it all to your good judgment. Do what you like, ask expert advice or not, as you see fit. I shall be satisfied with your decision.

Allow me to remind you that I have asked for a confrontation [with the witnesses] in your presence, but the Judge Advocate has not consented.³⁹

The day before the hearing he wrote again in some anxiety:

J. Rizal to L. Taviel de Andrade, 25 December 1896 —

The Judge Advocate has informed me that the hearing of my case will be held tomorrow. I was waiting for you this morning to speak to you about an important matter but no doubt your engagements did not allow you to come, as the Judge Advocate expected. If you have time, I should like to speak to you before presenting myself before the court. I, shall be very grateful [if you can come] this afternoon, tonight, or tomorrow.⁴⁰

We do not know whether or not Taviel de Andrade had this final interview with Rizal. In any case defence counsel limited himself at the hearing to discussing a rule of evidence and appealing for impartiality. He was in an invidious position for, as a Spaniard, he must have shared some of the attitudes of the prosecution. “[Rizal's] ideas and theories regarding the regime under which the Philippine archipelago should be ruled, and the rights, prerogatives and liberties which in his opinion should be granted [to the country], may perhaps be considered inconvenient,” he admitted, “and there may well be a tendency to repress them.”

In any case, he did not enter into matters of substance. Rizal's own defence, collated from his memorandum of the 12th, his oral argument of the 26th, and his answers to Olivé's interrogation, are here contrasted with the case for the prosecution.⁴¹ The main memorandum, of course, was not placed before the court.

To start with, Rizal admitted knowing only five of the thirteen affiants against him: Moisés Salvador, whom he had met casually in Madrid in 1890, his father Ambrosio Salvador, Pío Valenzuela, Deodato Arellano, Pedro Serrano, and Timoteo Páez. He impeached the credibility of the last three on the ground of hostility towards him: Arellano because he was the brother-in-law of del Pilar, with whom Rizal had quarreled, Serrano because Rizal had heard that the former was “making war” on him, and Páez, who had been introduced to him by Serrano, for the same reason.

The statements made by the thirteen affiants, corroborating one another on occasion, made the following points.

1. **Subversive propaganda.** While in Madrid Rizal founded an Association of Filipinos which supported the subversive newspaper, *La Solidaridad*.

RIZAL—It is false that I founded the Spanish-Philippine Association; this was in existence long before I went to Madrid. The same can be said of *La Solidaridad*; this was founded by Marcelo H. del Pilar and was always edited by him [The association] I founded in Madrid had no other object than to make the Filipinos [there] lead more moral lives, to get them to attend their classes, to discourage them from contracting debt, etc. When I wanted to criticize the actions of *La Solidaridad*, Marcelo H. del Pilar was against it ... This proves that the political [policy] of the paper was never under my direction.

2. **Masonry.** Rizal was one of the leaders of Philippine Masonry, and sent Pedro Serrano back to the archipelago to organize lodges for the purpose of disseminating subversive propaganda.

RIZAL—It is false that I gave Serrano orders to introduce Masonry in the Philippines. Serrano had a higher degree than I had ... This is proved by the letter he afterwards sent to me when I was in Hong Kong ... in which he names me Worshipful, as if it were a great thing. If I were the head, since when does an officer permit himself to promote the Captain General? ... I left Madrid in January or February 1891 and since then ... left Masonry. I had nothing to do with introducing Masonry among the Filipinos.

3. **The Liga.** Rizal wrote the statutes of the *Liga* and sent Moisés Salvador to the Philippines to organize it, its purposes being to supply means for the attainment of Philippine independence. Upon his return to the Philippines in 1892 Rizal called a meeting in the house of Doroteo Ongjungco at which he explained the need for the *Liga* and said more or less the following: that he had found the Filipinos discouraged and without any aspirations of becoming a free and self-respecting people, that consequently they were always at the mercy of the abuses committed by the

authorities, that through the *Liga* the arts, industry, and commerce would make progress, and that, once the country was prosperous and united, it would attain its own freedom and even independence.

RIZAL—I agree that I may have said what I am alleged to have said at the house of Ongjungco because I have said it many times, but I am not sure that I actually did ... It is true that I drew up the statutes of the *Liga* at the promptings of Basa and that they were sent to Manila, its purposes being unity and the development of commerce and industry. But I did not call the meeting in the house of Ongjungco, whom I do not know. How could I convoke persons whom I did not know to meet at the house of one who was equally a stranger to me? The *Liga* never became active for it died after the first meeting upon my banishment. If it was reorganized nine months later by others, I knew nothing about it.

4. **The *Katipunan*.** Rizal was the honorary president of the *Katipunan*, which was the same thing as the *Liga*, and whose purposes were to proclaim the independence of the Philippines, make Rizal supreme leader, and kill the Spaniards. His photograph was displayed in the *Katipunan's* headquarters. Shortly before the insurrection the *Katipunan* had sent Pío Valenzuela to Rizal in Dapitan to seek his decision, as supreme leader, on the proposed rebellion and the plan of seeking aid from Japan.

RIZAL—I know nothing of the *Katipunan* and have had no relations or correspondence with them. I do not know Andrés Bonifacio, even by name. It would have been easy to secure a copy of a photograph which I had taken of myself in Madrid. I gave no permission for the use of my name, and the wrong done to me is beyond description ... I had absolutely nothing to do with politics from the 6th July 1892 until the 1st July 1896 when I was informed by Pío Valenzuela that an uprising would be attempted. I gave advice to the contrary ... Someone has alleged that I was the leader. What kind of a leader is that who is not even consulted on plans, and is only given notice of them so that he can escape? What kind of a leader is that who, when he says no,

[his followers] say yes? ... Even more, when the rebellion started, I was incommunicado aboard the *Castilla*, and I offered myself unconditionally (something I had never done before) to His Excellency the Governor General to suppress the uprising.

It cannot be denied that Rizal's defence is more than sufficient to raise a reasonable doubt as to his guilt. He was righting for his life, convinced of his own innocence. Did he prove too little for the court martial, and too much for history?

[6]

In fact Rizal's defence presents us with a dilemma. Was he innocent or guilty? If innocent, then why is he a hero? If guilty, how can he be a martyr? The answer is that he was neither guilty nor innocent. The evidence before the court-martial was insufficient to justify a finding of guilty and a sentence of death, and consequently Rizal died an unjust death, martyr to the prejudices and hatreds he had aroused. Nor, as we shall hereafter see, was he truly innocent for the charge that he had inspired the Revolution, which was in fact born of his concept of a new united Nation of Filipinos, who now rightly acclaim him as their national and nationalist hero.

There can be no argument that he was against Bonifacio's Revolution. Not only had he offered his “unconditional” services to help suppress it, when he was aboard the *Castilla* waiting for the steamer that would take him to Spain and Cuba, but, on his return, already a prisoner, he had indicted a manifesto condemning the Revolution.

Countrymen:

Upon my return from Spain I learned that my name had been used as a battlecry by some who had taken up arms. The news was a sad surprise for me, but believing that everything was over, I kept silent before an accomplished fact. Now I am aware of rumors that the disturbances are continuing and, in case some are still making use of my name in good or bad faith, I hasten to address you these lines in order to right this wrong and to disillusion the unwary, and so that the truth may be known. From the very start,

when I learned what was being planned, I opposed it, and I proved its absolute impossibility. That is the truth, and there are living witnesses of my words. I was convinced that the idea [of a revolution] was highly absurd, and what is worse perverse. I did more. When later, in spite of my advice, the movement started, I spontaneously offered not only my services but my life and even my name to be used in any manner thought opportune in order to suppress the rebellion. Convinced as I was of the evils that it would bring in its train I was happy to make any sacrifice in order to prevent so many useless misfortunes. This is also on record.

Countrymen, I have given proofs, as much as any one else, of desiring liberties for our country, and I still desire them. But I made them conditional on the education of the people so that by means of learning and work they would have their own personality and make themselves worthy of [such liberties]. In my writings I have recommended study and [the development of] civic virtues, without which there can be no redemption. I have also written (and my words have been repeated) that reforms, to be fruitful, must come from above, for those that come from *below* are irregular and insecure changes. Holding these ideas, I cannot do less than to condemn, and I do condemn, this absurd and savage rebellion, plotted behind my back, which dishonors the Filipinos and discredits those who can be our advocates. I abhor its criminal activities and reject any manner of participation in them, condoling with all heartfelt sadness with those who have been unwary enough to have been fooled. Return, then, to your homes, and may God forgive those who have acted in bad faith.⁴²

Rizal had offered to make such a statement on the 10th December, before the formal reading of the information against him. He submitted the text for approval on the 15th, while final action on his case was pending before the Judge Advocate General. We have no reason to think that Rizal was thus trying to influence the minds of his prosecutors; he had made an analogous offer long before his arrest, and he had used even stronger language in his memorandum of the 12th for the use of his defence counsel. He was only expressing his convictions.

This memorandum is in some ways rambling and repetitive, but it is of such importance in understanding Rizal's political beliefs that, slightly rearranged to restore the continuity of ideas, its full text on the issue of independence and democratic rights should be read. It is also useful to remember that the word *libertades*, as Rizal used it, carried the concept of “freedoms”—freedom of religion, freedom of speech and of the press, freedom to elect representatives—which are more usually referred to in English as “democratic rights,” guaranteed in our times by the Constitution's Bill of Rights.

I have always been opposed to the rebellion, not only because it is absurd and inopportune, but also because I had hopes that Spain would soon grant us democratic rights ... and because I foresaw that to prevent future development the closest union between Spain and the Filipino people was necessary...

I have asked insistently for freedom of the press and for representation [in the Spanish Cortes] as the means of preventing uprisings, as safety or escape valves. I have become outstanding among many because, during the time I was engaged in politics, I played the part of a “free press” and of Deputy for the Philippines, and I can say that from 1884 to 1891, when I stopped writing, there were neither mutinies nor riots nor political banishments ...

Since 1884 I kept the Government in touch with the trend of public opinion, I asked with urgency some concession such as representation [in the Cortes]; I revealed the abuses that were being committed; I was the escape valve. They eliminated me in 1892 by banishment and the valve was closed ...

I have never believed and still cannot believe that these aspirations of mine might appear criminal in the eyes of the Government. They are the aspirations that an eminently Spanish, and therefore patriotic, education has produced in me. As a child I was educated among Spaniards; I have been nourished on the great models in the history of Spain, Greece and Rome; afterwards in Spain my professors were all great thinkers, great patriots. Books, newspapers, [historical] examples, reason itself,

all made me desire the good of my native land, as the Catalán seeks the good of Cataluña; the Basque, the Galician, and the Andalusian, that of Vizcaya, Galicia, and Andalucía, etc. I was so unconscious of doing wrong that I have never accepted the protection of another nation: twice I was offered German nationality, once the English, but I never accepted ... [I said that] we were well off with Spain ... that in spite of everything, we were linked to Spain by three centuries, the same religion, and bonds of affection and gratitude, none of which we had with another nation ...

Now, then, many have taken my phrase, “to enjoy democratic rights,” or “to have independence,” two entirely different things. A people can be free without being independent, and a people can be independent without being free.

I have always wanted democratic rights for the Philippines and I have always expressed myself in this sense ...

That I have also believed that little by little autonomy would be achieved, and then independence in the course of time, is true.

Spain will abandon this [country] when she becomes convinced that her future lies in Morocco, and that [staying here] involves sacrifices more than anything else, and she will abandon this [country] even though the Filipinos may wish to stop her, as she tried to do at various times in past centuries.

I have also believed that, if Spain systematically denied democratic rights to the Philippines, there would be insurrections, and so I have said in my writings, bemoaning any such eventuality but not expecting it.

This is the sense of what I said: that it was necessary to be self-respecting, to unite, so that when [these] developments occurred, we should not fall into the hands of Japan, or England, or Germany ... Quite some time ago, in July 1887, certain eminent Japanese asked me why we did not rebel, saying that they would help us, etc. etc. I answered them that we were well off with Spain and did not want to be passed from hand to hand ... They replied that Japan had no interest at all in the Philippines and

would help only for racial reasons; I smiled and showed them from history that their ancestors had not thought the same way ...

I shall not deny that sometimes seditious and punishable thoughts passed through my mind, above all when my family was being persecuted, but afterwards reflection, the realities of the situation, and the absurdity of these thoughts brought me back to my senses, for I do not consider myself so stupid or so foolish as to desire something impossible or mad ...

How am I to blame for the use of my name by others when I neither knew of it nor could stop it? Many also use the name of God for their own ends and desires.

Let the statutes of the *Liga* be examined, and it will appear that what I sought were unity and commercial and industrial development, etc. etc.

That these things [unity and prosperity] may pave the way for a revolution in the course of time, I do not deny, but it is also possible that they may prevent a revolution, for a prosperous people living in comfort do not expose themselves to the hazards of adventures ...

I wanted unity first, the opening of factories, industries, banks, etc. Thus I have lent moral and material aid to those who studied crafts and industries in Europe; I myself have spent much time studying ceramics, how to tan leather, how to make cement, etc. My dream was the prosperity of the country.

I knew that it was impossible to obtain democratic rights, much less independence, by force of arms; the other colonial powers like England, Germany, et al. would not allow it, and afterwards Japan would swallow us.

But with a prosperous and educated people, democratic rights would not be long in coming. I wanted the Filipino people to appear [before the world] self-respecting, noble, honest, for a people that make themselves contemptible by their cowardice or vices expose themselves to abuses and impositions. In general, man oppresses whom he despises ...

What are we to make of these extraordinary statements? Surely we must consider them partly in the light of the purpose for which they were written. In effect, Rizal had prepared a brief for the defence, and, like a good lawyer, he was attacking the prosecution at its weakest point, the insufficiency of its evidence on any direct connection between him and the rebellion. But the condemnation of the Revolution as “inopportune” fell far short of what was expected of a loyal Spanish subject.

The Judge Advocate General was not so blind that he did not see the implications of Rizal's manifesto; in refusing to approve and issue it, he complained that Rizal “limits himself to condemning the present rebellious movement as premature and because he considers its success impossible at this time, but suggesting between the lines that the independence dreamed of can be achieved by means less dishonorable than those used at present by the rebels when the [level of] culture of the people could serve as a most valuable factor in the struggle and as the guarantee of its success. For Rizal it is a question of opportunity, not of principles or objectives. His manifesto can be condensed into these words: 'Faced with the proofs of defeat, lay down your arms, my countrymen; I shall lead you to the Promised Land on a later day.'”

We should not deny what the Spanish Judge Advocate General admitted, or close our ears to the hidden meanings that he was alert enough to catch. There might be no argument that Rizal condemned Bonifacio's Revolution; it is equally beyond dispute that they both pursued the same end—the independence of the Philippines. The difference between them lie in the choice of means and opportunity. Bonifacio put his trust in force, and had been driven to take up arms prematurely by the discovery of the *Katipunan*. Rizal believed in the gradual and natural evolution of the Filipino Nation over the course of years and foresaw the international developments that would make eventual independence an inevitable conclusion on which “metropolis and colony would peaceably agree.”

In his masterly “Critique of Rizal's Concept of a Filipino Nation,” Professor Cesar Adib Majul has explained that Rizal aimed at a community of Filipinos that would supplant the traditional community held together by allegiance to the Spanish Crown and the Roman Catholic Church. This “alternative community” was necessary because Rizal, according to Majul, no longer believed that the people of the Philippines could expect political

rights, cultural advancement, and economic progress from the old regime, dominated as it seemed to be in the Philippines by the entrenched forces of reaction and obscurantism. That was why the *Liga*, purposefully described as *Filipina*, was to seek, after the basic unity of the entire archipelago, such objectives as political reforms, the encouragement of commerce and industry, and the spread of education. Eventually independence would come, perhaps even through revolution, but there had to be “a moral basis” for such a revolution, and a modern democratic Nation to take the place of the overthrown regime. Otherwise, “the slaves of today” would only become “the tyrants of tomorrow.”⁴³

We need not follow Dr. Majul all the way in his analysis— particularly in his disparagement of Spain as lacking “the state or administrative organization or the institutional make-up to render reforms possible or “effective in practice” in Rizal's time—to agree that his interpretation of Rizal's concept of a Filipino nation” is cogent and persuasive. As we have seen, Rizal had gone on a long and bitter hegira; fleeing from the enemies of progress in the Philippines, he had first hoped to win reforms in Spain itself from the Spanish subjects by the Spanish Constitution; he had written novels, pamphlets, articles; he had besieged Ministers of the Crown and leaders of the Opposition, and in the end had seen the failure of his policy. The *Noli* and the *Fili*, proscribed in the Philippines, unread in the great world of Europe, had failed to arouse the international storm of indignation and sympathy for which he had hoped; the *Soli* was a fortnightly sheet without circulation, without influence, without resources, without even much hope of life; and for all his anxious and angry importunities of Spanish liberals he had failed even to save his own family from banishment and ruin. In Hong Kong he had come to understand that the Filipinos must work out their own salvation in their own country; they must defend themselves and depend upon themselves; and it was to lay the basis for this new strategy that the *Liga* was conceived.

Withal, he remained a reasonable man, and reasonable men do not make revolutions unless they are sure to win. He also remained a member of the middle classes, wary of violent quakes “from below.” It is significant that he called his proposed organization the *Liga Filipina*, based essentially on an assumed solidarity of interests among Filipinos of all classes, while Bonifacio called his the *Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan*, the Association

of the Sons of the People. It is equally significant that Rizal wrote the *Liga*'s statutes in Spanish, and that Bonifacio used Tagalog, the language of the common people in his region; Bonifacio's counterpart for *La Solidaridad*, written in Spanish to demand reforms, was *Kalayaan*, "Freedom," openly calling in a native language for independence. Between Rizal and Bonifacio, between the *Liga* and the *Katipunan*, lay three great issues which remain unresolved to this day in modern society.

The first issue, which has been at the root of all the national revolutions against colonialism in the twentieth century, is a question of precedence. Should a colonized people be given independence before they are "ready" for it? Who decides whether they are "ready" or not? When can they be considered "ready"—when they are trained for self-government, when they are habituated to democracy, when they have the economic resources for a viable society? But will any colonizer ever allow a subject people to make themselves really "ready" in this sense? Is it not, on the contrary, necessary for a colonized people first to secure control of their own destinies as an essential condition for promoting their own interests? Which should come first, national independence and sovereignty or democratic freedoms and economic strength? We know Rizal's answer; he wanted "unity and prosperity" first; independence could come later, made inevitable by "progress."

The second issue is closely related for it is a choice of means. Are freedom and independence to be gained by evolution or by revolution? Should it be "revolution from above," dictated by "enlightened self-interest," or "revolution from below," a struggle between irreconcilable class interests? Rizal's answer inspires all his writings; it is the one constant in the evolution of his political philosophy. Ibarra and Elías, in their memorable dialogue in the *Noli*, might have been Rizal and Bonifacio.

"Take up the cause of the people, join them, do not turn a deaf ear to their voice, give an example to the rest, give us an idea of what it is to have a country."

"What the people ask is impossible. It is necessary to wait."

"To wait is to suffer ..."

“If I should ever see the mob in arms, I would take the side of the Government and fight against it because I would not recognise my country in such a mob ... We cannot find our way without the light of knowledge.”

“Neither can freedom be won without a fight ...”

“But I do not want that kind of freedom ...”

“Without freedom there can be no light ...”

Ibarra turned Simoun changes his tune and savagely upbraids the student Basilio, who still seeks “assimilation” with Spain.

“Ah, youth, always naive and full of dreams, always running after butterflies and flowers! You league yourselves together so as, with your activities, to unite your country to Spain with rosy wreaths, when in reality you are forging chains harder than diamonds.”

“You ask equality of rights, the Hispanization of your customs, and you do not see that what you ask is death, the destruction of your, nationality, the annihilation of your country, the consecration of tyranny!”

“What will you be in the future? A people without character, a nation without liberty; everything in you will be borrowed, even your very defects! You ask Hispanization, and you do not turn pale with very shame when it is denied you. And even if they should grant it to you, what are you seeking? What do you hope to gain? At best, a country of *pronunciamientos*, a country of civil wars, a republic of the greedy and the needy, like some South American republic!”⁴⁵

Simoun here expresses Rizal's disillusionment with Spain and his growing realization that a new Filipino Nation must be made. But Rizal is still far from approving the “revolution from below” or indeed the rash and reckless use of force. He makes Simoun plan what is in reality not a revolution but anarchist assassinations and mob riots for purely personal reasons of revenge, and frustrated for equally trivial motives, he is read a lesson on his deathbed by the old Ibarra turned into Father Florentino.

“I do not mean that our freedom must be won at the point of the sword; the sword no longer wields much influence on the destinies of our age; but I do mean that we must win our freedom by deserving it, improving the mind and enhancing the dignity of the individual, loving the just, the good, the great to the extent of dying for it; when a people reach such heights, God gives them the weapons they need, the idols and the tyrants fall like a house of cards, and the dawn of freedom breaks.”

“Our sufferings are our own fault; we should blame no one else. If Spain saw us less tolerant of tyranny, and more ready to fight and suffer for our rights, she would be the first to give us freedom because when the process of conception reaches the time of birth, woe to the mother that would seek to stifle the child!”⁴⁶

The third issue between Rizal and Bonifacio, however, is not so well defined as Professor Teodoro Agoncillo has made it out to be in his bold and original biography of Bonifacio, “The Revolt of the Masses.” The *Liga* sought to recruit the rich progressives and the liberal intellectuals. The *Katipunan*, on the other hand, was a mass movement drawn from the proletariat. But any difference in their social objectives was undefined and unspoken; Rizal read Voltaire and Bonifacio read Carlyle and the “Lives of the American Presidents;” neither seems to have read Marx or Bakunin or Proudhon. Both the *Liga* and the *Katipunan*, therefore, were based on the comfortable theory of the social compact: unity, mutual protection and mutual help. But neither was aware of the issue that was already tearing western civilization apart: the choice between liberty and equality.

Unus instar omnium, “one like all,” might be the *Liga*’s device, but that is as far as Rizal seems to have gone, and it was not very far. Agriculture and commerce were to be encouraged and developed—but for whose benefit? Significantly enough, the *Liga*’s funds were to be lent to any member who needed capital; shops, warehouses and commercial establishments were to be opened where members might buy goods at a discount. At most the *Liga* was a national co-operative association. Nor did the *Katipunan*, as far as the evidence shows, go much farther; its peasants and workers might have had ideas of their own, but there is nothing in Bonifacio’s “Decalogue” or in Jacinto’s “*Kartilla*” that hints at the expropriation and distribution among

the workers of the great landed estates, at the seizure of mines, banks, corporations and other private enterprises, at the equalization of wealth or even of opportunity, or even at the organisation of labor unions to protect the workers from sweatshop wages and hours. When Jacinto wrote of the “equality of all men,” he meant only that “the origin of all is the same” and no race was superior to another.⁴⁷ The “*Kartilla*” was a collection of moral rules and exhortations of which Rizal, or for that matter Archbishop Nozaleda himself, would have approved.

The truth of the matter is that neither Rizal nor Bonifacio was fighting a class war; it is to be doubted that they had even heard of it; the Philippine Revolution was “French” not “Russian;” it was the political expression of a nation and not of a class. For all that it must also be granted that Bonifacio made his Revolution with peasants and workers while Rizal sought his Nation through the “unity and prosperity” of the middle class.

Who was right and who was wrong? Recto has pointed out that the popular myth is groundless, and that it was Rizal who was the realist, and Bonifacio the idealist. The idealist proved himself the better realist at the start for the Revolution all but succeeded. The realist Rizal ultimately proved himself the better idealist because it was only when his Nation achieved unity and prosperity that independence was won. His superb powers of political analysis and prophecy did not desert him to the very end; Bonifacio's Revolution was defeated by Polavieja and Primo de Rivera, and Aguinaldo's Revolution and Republic won initial success but were ultimately betrayed and destroyed by the intervention of a foreign power. Democratic rights and liberties came gradually and inevitably, as Rizal had foreseen; so did autonomy; and finally, half a century after his death, so did independence, peaceably agreed upon by metropolis and colony when it served the economic interests of the United States of America, and put in effect when international realities forced the western colonial powers to liquidate what they had already lost. America's labor unions, beet sugar combines, and dairy lobbies were Spain's “Morocco.” Japan's racist “liberation” of the Philippines was an even more sanguinary and cynical a swindle than Rizal had imagined and predicted.

Rizal was a prophet and, like all others, was without honor in his own country. In some ways he was also a nationalist who did not recognize his Nation when it suddenly rose before him, a bloody apparition in arms. He

was a revolutionary who condemned his own revolution, a revolution inspired by his exhortation and example, a revolution made in his name, a revolution fought for his aims.

The pure and dedicated Jacinto was Rizal's true son, had he but known it, and the shrewd, stubborn, resourceful, proud and eloquent Mabini his blood-brother, his political Paciano. But in every human society each generation leaps forward over the backs of its fathers, Rizal, del Pilar, López Jaena, the Lunas, had vaulted over the reforms and assimilationists of the Burgos generation, the Basas, Regidores, and Pardo de Taveras. Now Rizal himself, the “revolutionary from above,” the autonomist, the gradualist, was a leader overtaken not only by the hurry of history but also by a new generation with stronger lungs, nimbler feet, more ruthless and reckless, fresh and uncorrupted still by worldly wisdom and unwounded by defeat and disenchantment. “Ah, youth, always naive and full of dreams, always chasing after butterflies!”

Perhaps Polavieja killed the wrong man.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XIX

- (1) Agoncillo, 43 et seq.
- (2) Agoncillo, 85.
- (3) See “Plaridel, Separatista” by J. C. de Veyra, Ep. Pil., I, 307 et seq.; Agoncillo, 45.
- (4) “Victor Hugo” by Andre Maurois, tr. G. Hopkins (London 1956), 379.
- (5) Soldevilla, 486.
- (6) Ep. Pil., I, 265.
- (7) Kalaw, 116, et seq.
- (8) Agoncillo, 47.
- (9) Agoncillo, 81 et seq.
- (10) Agoncillo, 112.
- (11) Agoncillo, 111.
- (12) Agoncillo, 77.
- (13) Agoncillo, 134.
- (14) Agoncillo, 131 et seq.
- (15) Soldevilla, 365, 373.
- (16) “Antonio Maura” by Diego Sevilla Andres (Barcelona 1953), 101.
- (17) Soldevilla, 369 et seq.
- (18) Almagro, I, 413.
- (19) Agoncillo, 73.
- (20) Agoncillo, 136 et seq.

(21) Agoncillo, 143 et seq.

(22) Agoncillo, 147 et seq.

(23) Agoncillo, 148 et seq.

(24) Agoncillo, 172 et seq.

(25) Agoncillo, 178 et seq. Aguinaldo, as mayor of his native town, might well be considered a member of the petite bourgeoisie rather than a peasant; he was, in fact, a landowner.

(26) Almagro, II, 344. The Spanish history of the campaign may be found in “La Insurrección en Filipinas Guerra Hispano-Americana en el Archipelago” by Manuel Sastron (Madrid 1901). Almagro gives an adequate summary. Agoncillo gives the most detailed Filipino version I have come across.

(27) Almagro, II, 337 footnote; Agoncillo, 159.

(28) Almagro, II, 338, 343; Agoncillo, 160 et seq. Blanco's decree provided: “Artículo primero: Serán pasados por las armas como culpables de traición: Primero, los que inutilicen u obstruyan caminos, vías férreas, líneas telegráficas o telefónicas o aparatos destinados a cualesquiera de estos servicios, así como los que causen averías que interrumpan dichos servicios y los que destruyan o intercepten puentes, esteros y canales; Segundo, los que faciliten a los rebeldes provisiones de boca o guerra, con que puedan prolongar la resistencia, y los que les comuniquen noticias sobre las operaciones que contra ellos se están realizando o se proyecten; tercero, los que realicen trabajos de cualquier clase que sean para conseguir la desertión de individuos del Ejército leal al campo rebelde. Artículo Segundo: Los reos de los delitos a que se refiere el artículo, precedente serán juzgados *por los consejos de guerra en juicio sumarísimo*. Manila, 25 de octubre de 1896” (emphasis supplied). From the terms of the decree it was to be expected that Rizal would be judged “summarily” by court martial.

(29) Almagro, II, 346; Agoncillo, 168.

(30) Enciclopedia Espasa, biographical note.

(31) Almagro, II, 347.

(32) Soldevilla, 384.

(33) Dice. Hist. Esp., biographical note; Almagro, II, 346 et seq., 352 et seq.

(34) Retana, 354; Palma, 276 et seq.

(35) Retana, 354 footnote,

(36) See “The Trial of Rizal,” ed. and tr. By H. de la Costa, S.J. (Ateneo de Manila 1961), which is based on Retana's transcription of the official “proceso.” I also relied heavily on Palma, 294 et seq., and on the interrogatories and statements in Arch. Fil. The charges against Rizal were of illegal association and rebellion, the first being alleged to have been the means to commit the second, both therefore constituting a complex crime punishable with the penalty imposed for the graver offence in its maximum degree (death). Article 188 of the Spanish Penal Code declared illegal, among others, any association whose purpose was to commit any of the crimes punished by the same Code. Article 220 declared guilty of rebellion those who rose publicly and in open hostility to the government for the purpose, among others, of proclaiming the independence of any part of the territory included within the term of Philippine Islands; and Article 230 imposed the penalty of *cadena perpetua* to death upon those who promoted or maintained such a rebellion by induction and upon the principal leaders of the rebellion.

The law on criminal procedure was contained in the so-called Provisional Law for the application of the Penal Code in the Philippines, published in the *Gazette* on the 19th December 1886, as supplemented whenever necessary by the provisions of the Spanish law of criminal procedure.

Blanco's decree (see Note No. 28 *supra*) invested the *Katipunan* rebellion with a military character and placed persons accused of it under the military jurisdiction of courts martial. The Spanish court martial procedure was considerably simplified in 1875 when the various classes was reduced to one, whose members varied in rank in

accordance with the rank of the accused. In the case of Rizal, a civilian, the court was composed as in cases involving enlisted men and officers below the rank of captain, of a president with the rank of colonel and members of the rank of captain. A detailed description of the procedure followed in these courts may be found in Escriche's "Diccionario Razonado de Legislación y Jurisprudencia" (1874), II, 500.

(37) Olivé was in general charge of investigating all those involved in the rebellion. 'y' (38) Poesías, 63.

(39) Ep. Riz., IV, 296. The Spanish Articles of War (Codigo de Justicia Militar) provided: "No se practicarán careos sino cuando no fuere conocido otro modo de comprobar la existencia del delito o la culpabilidad de alguno de los procesados" (Art. 469, quoted in de la Costa, op. cit., 152).

(40) Ep. Riz., IV, 296.

(41) For these texts I relied mainly on transcripts furnished to me in London by Director Luís Montilla.

(42) Retana, 374; Palma, 296.

(43) Majul, particularly 7 et seq.

(44) Noli, 320.

(45) Fili. 49.

(46) Fili. 297.



XX

The Hounds of Heaven

“All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at
home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!”
Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
“Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest
Me.”

[1]

Like Bernard Shaw's St. Joan, Rizal was not only his country's first nationalist but also its first Protestant. That is to say, he rejected not only the subordination of his people's welfare to that of strangers, but also the submission of any man's reason to the authority of another who claimed to be the unique interpreter of God's will. He was not an atheist, a materialist, or even an agnostic; he believed in God. He was essentially a Protestant, although he might have his doubts about the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, in that he believed in the supremacy of private judgment.

We cannot get away from this impression in reading his novels and his pamphlets. Like Victor Hugo he may satirize superstitions with a certain affection, a fond understanding of "the daughters of religion and the mothers of poetry."¹ Bernard Shaw has pointed out that one can be "an anti-Clerical and a good Catholic too. All the reforming Popes have been vehement anti-Clericals, veritable scourges of the clergy. All the great Orders arose from dissatisfaction with the priests: that of the Franciscans with priestly snobbery, that of the Dominicans with priestly laziness and Laodiceanism, that of the Jesuits with priestly apathy and ignorance and indiscipline. The most bigoted [Protestant] is a mere Gallio compared to Machiavelli, who, though no Protestant, was a fierce anti-Clerical. Any Catholic may, and many Catholics do, denounce any priest or body of priests, as lazy, drunken, idle, dissolute, and unworthy of their great Church and their functions as the pastors of their flocks of human souls."²

Rizal is only exercising the right, in charity, of every good Catholic in exposing the foibles of wicked priests and their falls from grace; his witty gibes at spinsters avaricious of indulgences, and at rich usurers trying to widen the gates of Heaven with firecrackers or to sneak into Paradise in a tattered habit bought and sold with emeralds for a painted image, may even be defended as the righteous whipping of hypocrites and merchants from the Temple; nor is it an article of faith to believe, as he made it uproariously plain he did not believe in the uses of grimy scapulars, girdles, votive candles and holy water. He might shudder at the sensuous and political temptations of the confessional, the pulpit and the cloister; he might even

express polite doubts at the truth of certain miracles—all in good faith and, we should add, in good company, for the Church is not so eager as many of her children to see divine intervention in every apparent suspension of natural laws, and is always aware of the frailties of human flesh and mind. But theologians and Church apologists have professed to find attacks against the Catholic religion in thirty-six per centum of the *Noli* and in twenty-seven per centum of the *Fili*,³ and any reasonable Catholic will sniff heresy in their sneers at the Sacrament of Penance or in the attribution of the doctrine of Purgatory and the gaining of indulgences to the covetousness of the Iranian priests of Zoroaster.⁴

He was very Protestant in this, as well as very modern in his indifferentism; one religion was as good as another in the sense that one conscience was as good as another; all roads did not lead to Rome, but they all lead to Heaven; and few lead to Hell because he could not reconcile the absolute and perfect goodness of God with the condemnation of one of His creatures to eternal damnation. To “save” Rizal, to re-convert him to orthodoxy, to re-enlist him in the One, Holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church, was therefore an urgent and overwhelmingly important objective in those last twenty-four hours that remained. The regime was Spanish, but by that very token it was also and necessarily Roman Catholic. The revolution was anti-friar, and therefore adjudged to be anti-clerical, even anti-Catholic; Rizal was no tonsured cleric like Burgos, Gómez and Zamora; he was an intellectual, a modernist, a Protestant! What could not be gained if he were to deliver his soul, the soul of the insurrection, in the hands of Mother Church and Mother Spain! If he were to forswear his religious heresy, it might well be taken in the field for a recantation of his political schism.

The chaplain of the Spanish regiment of artillery offered his services; poor man, they were curtly refused. Perhaps we should not judge or misjudge the motives of the Archbishop of Manila, the prudent Fray Bernardino, in then calling upon the Jesuits to attempt the conversion of their former favorite, or their motives in turn in laying siege with such ardor and resourcefulness to the conscience of Rizal. They were Spaniards, it is true, desperate to keep the Philippines for Spain; they were also priests, “ordained after the order of Melchisadech,” dedicated to the belief that “joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repented more than over ninety-nine just men who need no repentance.”

The Jesuits went eager into the fray. “What would have happened,” wonders Retana, “if on the 29th December 1896 there had been no priests in Manila other than friars, and that half a dozen of these, possibly Dominicans, the exploiters of Kalamba, had stayed put in his cell with the purpose of overcoming Rizal's will? Rizal would not have stood them for one second because he despised them with all his heart.”⁵ But Rizal could not deny himself to his old professors; he might not think of them as highly or admire them as unreservedly as when he had sat at their feet in the Ateneo, but he did not hate them. Fray Bernardino, a Dominican who had been Rector of San Juan de Letrán, chose his agents shrewdly.

The first to call on Rizal were the Rector of the Ateneo, Father Miguel Saderra Mata, S.J. and Father Luís Viza, S.J. The following version of what transpired thereafter is that of the Jesuits;⁶ we have no other. Rizal, we are told, “received them with great courtesy and true joy, and after greeting them asked for a copy of Kempis [*The Imitation of Christ by Thomas á Kempis*] and the Gospels, and expressed his desire to go to Confession.” It seems that he also asked if by some chance the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which he had carved as a student at the Ateneo, had survived. Father Viza had brought it along and taking it out of his pocket, said: “Here you have it, the Sacred Heart comes to seek you out.” Rizal, we are told, again by the Jesuits, “took the image and kissed it. It stood on his table, before his eyes, the twenty-four hours before his execution, and it received his last kiss on going out to the scaffold.”

But things were not to be so easy as all that. “Although one could almost see with one's eyes the action of grace inclining Rizal to save himself, nevertheless irreligion had become rooted in that unfortunate man's heart in so cold, calculated and skeptical a fashion that he resisted God's grace with tenacity, causing no little sorrow to those who with such zeal desired his salvation, during the day and part of the night before his death;” Saderra left early, and then Viza retired from the scene, perhaps not so much routed as exhausted. They were followed by Father Rosell, S.J. who did not seem to have made much headway; he left “badly impressed, inferring, from the little he had heard from Rizal, that the latter was a Protestant.” At ten o'clock of the 29th came Father José Vilaclara, S.J., the same who had so

solicitously enjoined him eighteen years before “in the name of God,” not to “neglect your attendance at the meetings of the Sodality and your reception of the Sacraments, which are the most effective means against perdition and the best precaution against the thousand traps that will be laid for you by the enemy of souls.” Alas, here was the young José trapped indeed for Vilaclara was accompanied by Father Vicente Balaguer, S.J., who had been a missionary in Dapitan, and when the latter offered him a medal of the Blessed Virgin the quondam sodalist took it coldly and said: “I am not much of a Marian.”

The root of the difficulty seemed to be, according to the Jesuit account, that while Rizal repeatedly expressed his wish to make his Confession, they had perforce to deny it him until he had cast aside his “rationalism” and his “Protestantism;” and signed “a retraction of his errors.” To secure a suitable formula for this purpose Balaguer and Viza called on Archbishop Nozaleda at noon of the 29th; earlier, Father Pío Pi, S.J., the Superior of the Jesuits, had also discussed the formula with Fray Bernardino. A seventh Jesuit, another old professor, Father March S.J., was in the meantime helping Vilaclara keep Rizal company. An eighth, Father Federico Faura, S.J., director of the Manila Observatory, had also visited him briefly that morning.

“Father,” Rizal is said to have greeted him, “do you remember the last time we spoke, and what Your Reverence predicted? You were a prophet; I shall die on the scaffold.”

The Jesuit seems to have been deeply moved.

“Be convinced,” he replied, “that we, who were your teachers, were the only ones who did not deceive you. Repent in time. We shall console you. Remember that when you were studying at our school you always prayed before that image of the Sacred Heart that you yourself carved. Ask, and it shall save you.”

To understand and appreciate Rizal's position on this crucial issue of salvation we must go back to the searching discussion which he had undertaken with a ninth Jesuit, Pastells, during his rustication in Dapitan, a discussion by correspondence, meditated and reflected upon, carefully expressed, coldly argued, on both sides, in an atmosphere of tranquility, leisure, and freedom from the hysterical urgencies of the death-cell. The

Jesuit account of the spiritual struggle in those last twenty-four hours is unavoidably one-sided; Rizal's beliefs are only lightly sketched; it appeared to the Jesuits then that “Rizal did not admit the authority of the Roman Church or Pontiff, and had for his rule of faith the Scriptures interpreted by his own judgment; in brief, that he was guided by what seemed a Protestant criterion but was in fact mixed up with free-thinking and a strange pietism. Pressed further, Rizal finally came to say that he was guided only by his own reason and that he could not admit any other standard than that of his own mind which God had given him, adding with a cold-bloodedness enough to freeze anyone that he would thus appear before God, untroubled, and that he would not change, for if he were to admit another criterion, God would reprove him for having abandoned the judgment of that pure reason which He Himself had given him. He showed himself, therefore, a resolute free-thinker.”

This summary is fair enough as it goes, but it does not do justice to the sincerity and profundity of Rizal's beliefs. The Jesuits seem always to have betrayed a certain condescension toward their former pupil in religious, if not in other matters, a condescension perhaps natural in the professional theologian for the amateur and the self-instructed, but which was bound to offend and antagonize so earnest a scholar as Rizal.

[3]

The Jesuit Obach had opened the Dapitan controversy by handing Rizal a gift from Pastells, the apologetics of Sardá with the message: “Tell him to stop being silly, wanting to look at his affairs with the prism of his own judgment and self-love; *nemo iudex in causa propria* (no one can sit as judge on his own cause).”⁷ It was the heart of the matter, and Rizal seized on it without hesitation.

J. Rizal to P. Pastells, S.J., 1 September 1892 —

... What greatly calls my attention is not the word “silly,” which I take as well merited although it sounds rather strong for Your Reverence's elegant pen ... but the fact that Your Reverence thinks it “silly” to “look at one's affairs with the prism of the judgment and self-love” of each and every one; really, I do not

see the point ... I do not know at all to what actions of mine Your Reverence refers; however, it does not seem to me to merit reproof that one should look at his affairs with the prism of his own judgment and self-love, for God must have given us them for something. For if we were to look with the prism of others, it would not only be impractical since there would be as many prisms as there are individuals, but also we would not know which one to choose among so many, and in choosing we would have to use our own judgment, unless we were to make an infinite series of choices, which would have the result that we would all be running each other's houses, others ruling our actions and we ruling theirs, and all would be confusion unless some of us should disown our judgment and self-love, something which in my humble opinion would be to offend God by spurning His most precious gifts.

And I say this because I imagine that God, in giving each one the judgment He has, did what was most convenient and does not want the man with lesser judgment to think like the man with greater and the other way round, just as one should not digest his food with another's stomach, but rather as machines, perfect [in themselves] of various kinds, and adapted to the purposes which He knows, each should use up a certain amount of coal in its boiler, run a certain amount of miles at a certain speed, and He knows why he made it so.

To me judgment is like a lantern which a father gives to each one of his sons before they set out on rough and winding paths. To that one who must cross ravines and precipices he will not give an oil lamp, for the oil might spill; to that one who must face a gale, he will give a lantern of heavy glass, and to another who must traverse inflammable gases, a miner's lamp with a metal screen ... Woe to him who midway, on a whim or in sheer madness, changes his lamp for another! Let each one keep and improve his own; let him not envy or despise anybody else, while at the same time profiting by the reflections of their lights and by the signs and warnings left those who have gone ahead.

With regard to self-love, I must confess, in all ingeniousness, that I have truly asked God to deprive me of it, but He who better knows what is good for us, has kept it in me; now I understand that a man should never be without this feeling, although never to excess. I hold that self-love is the greatest good that God has given man for his perfection and his integrity, saving him from many base and unworthy actions when the precepts which he has been taught and in which he has been trained are forgotten. To me self-love, which can be called worthy when it has not become a passion, is precisely like the sap that drives the tree upward in search of the sun, the steam that pushes the ship on its course, restrained by judgment. To me man is a masterpiece of creation, perfect within his limitations, who cannot be deprived of any of his component parts, moral as well as physical, without becoming disfigured and unhappy.⁸

Here is the very credo of humanism, an act of faith in the individual judgment, a declaration of independence for the human mind. Yet it is compounded with what the Jesuits would describe as “a strange pietism” and also with an uneasy sense of predestination that is incompatible with the freedom of the human mind and will. “I am most grateful to Your Reverence for your prayers,” he ended his first letter to Pastells. “I too pray from time to time but really, when I do, I cannot think of anything to ask for. I believe I have everything, and that whatever happens to me is His will, and I am content and resigned. Is this the fatalism of the Oriental? I do not know, but I do say to myself always: I shall work, I shall do this and that, and God will always have His way.”⁹

Pastells could turn a metaphor as neatly as Rizal, and in his reply, after blaming the *Noli* on the Protestants and the *Fili* on the Freemasons, he matched him prism for prism and lantern for lamp.

P. Pastells, S.J., to J. Rizal, 12 October 1892 —

... Now then, coming down specifically to the saying *Nemo iudex in causa propria*, which is what we are about, I say that you should not be guided in your affairs by the prism of your own judgment and self-love because these are obstructed and falsified by erroneous principles and disorderly affections.

A modern author well says that truth is to the mind what light is to polarization. Polarization, as you know very well, is a phenomenon in the reflection or refraction of light by which the latter decreases or increases or becomes invisible in accordance with the angle at which the ray of light falls and the refractive or isorropic medium. The light, continues the author, is not to be blamed for anything that happens to it when it is subjected to the phenomenon of polarization. The same thing happens, then, to truth and good faith when they cross the refractive medium of certain minds and hearts; a kind of spiritual polarization takes place by virtue of which truth and good faith decrease or disappear, and error and bad faith reach the greatest intensity, in accordance with the angle at which things are seen. Has not your mind, with these angles of reflection or refraction of ideas, suffered at least a kind of spiritual polarization which does not let you see the truths as they are?¹⁰

How then is truth to be known? The answer of authority is authority. The wisest man alive cannot know everything. “In the greater number of truths we must abide, and in fact we do abide, not by our own criterion or judgment, but by the criterion or judgment of the rest. And this, which is a fact and the manifest truth in scientific and artistic matters, is even more so in moral and historical matters, in which external authority grows to become a criterion of truth which draws from our soul an assent, a certainty, which is really infallible.”¹¹

It is a great truth that the great Father of all families has given to each of his sons for his journey through this life his own lantern or judgment, but it is no less true that this lantern, because of the poor oil provided for us by our disinherited first parents [the reference is to original sin], gives little light, and that because of our indolence the lamp-glass grows grimy, or the wick grows damp, or the oil gets spilled, and then we follow fitful and phosphorescent lights that suddenly dazzle us, and then leave us in the middle of the road in a terrible and heartsick darkness.⁽¹²⁾

In this darkness “we need another lamp to light our path; we need a supernatural light,” that is to say specifies the Jesuit, the word of the prophets inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the divine light of Jesus Christ Himself. Natural knowledge must be assisted by supernatural knowledge, imparted by revelation and accepted with faith founded on reason. “You tell me that sometimes you too pray. Who prays, hopes; and who hopes in God, believes in God; if this hope is supernatural, your faith also is supernatural. You say that you cannot think of anything to ask for. Ask Him for the supernatural gifts of faith, hope and charity.”

Rizal devoted most of his rejoinder to a defence of his novels. “And with regard to my being Protestant! If Your Reverence only knew what I have lost by not declaring my conformity with Protestant ideas, you would not say such a thing. If I had not always held the concept of religion in respect, if I had taken religion as a convenience or as the art of having a good time in this life, I would now be, instead of a poor exile, rich, free, and full of honors.”

J. Rizal to P. Pastells, S.J., 11 November 1892 —

... Rizal a Protestant! Only out of respect for Your Reverence can I suppress the guffaw that rises inside me. Your Reverence should have heard my discussions with a Protestant pastor in the long summer evenings in the lonely depths of the Black Forest. There, speaking freely, calmly, with deliberation, we discussed our respective beliefs in the morality of peoples and the influences on them of their respective creeds. A great respect for the good faith of the adversary, and for ideas which were necessarily poles apart due to the diversity of race, education and age, led us almost always to the conclusion that religions, no matter what they were, should not make men enemies of one another, but friends, and good friends at that.

From these discussions, which took place almost every day for more than three months, I think I got nothing more, if my judgment does not fail me, than a profound respect for any idea conceived with sincerity and practiced with conviction. Almost every month the Catholic parish priest of a little town on the banks of the Rhine came to visit [the Protestant pastor], and this priest, an intimate friend of the Protestant, gave me an example of

Christian brotherhood. They considered themselves two servants of the same God, and instead of spending their time quarrelling with each other, each one did his duty, leaving it to their Master to judge afterwards who had best interpreted His will.¹³

This in parable was the modernist answer to the argument from authority. Who had authority, who was authority, and by what authority did it assume authority? Rizal found Pastells's similes “beautiful and exact,” he admitted the possibility that the truth had been “polarized” in passing through his mind. Was he not a man and therefore fallible? He agreed that man's intelligence could not grasp all things, and turned the argument upon the Jesuit by observing that indeed, outside of mathematical propositions, man could not be certain of much. “In social, moral and political questions we are so much in the dark (I speak for myself) that many times we confuse the truth with our convenience, when we do not muzzle it to let our passions speak.” He insisted that only human reason can connect itself, but he admitted that it was much inferior to “supernatural (divine) light.” Still, and here he was holding his ground, “who on this our small planet can call himself, with just reason, the reflector of that Light? All religions claim to possess the truth—do I say religions? Even man, even the most ignorant, the most bewildered, claims to be right.”¹⁴ He had another metaphor for the Jesuit.

I fancy that men in search of truth are like students in a drawing class sketching a statue around which they sit, some nearer than others, others farther off, these from a certain height, those others at its very foot, all seeing it in a different way so that the more they try to picture it faithfully, all the more their sketches are different from one another. Those who sketch directly from the statue are thinkers who differ from one another because they start from different principles; they are the founders of schools and doctrines.

A great number, however, because they are too far away, or cannot see well, or are less skillful or are lazy, or for some cause, content themselves with copying from the copy nearest to them, or, if they are well intentioned, from the copy that is or seems to

them to be the best. These copyists are the partisans, the active sectaries of an idea.

Still others, lazier still, and not daring to draw a line for fear of making fools of themselves, buy a ready-made copy, or perhaps a photograph, or a lithograph, and go off happy and self-satisfied. These are the passive sectaries, those who believe everything to save themselves the trouble of thinking.

Now, then, who would judge the sketches made by others by comparing them with his own? He would have to place himself where those others were, and judge from their own points of view. Even more, his eyes would have to be at the same height and at the same distance at which the others had theirs; the retina of his eyes would have to be identically shaped with those of the others, the same refractive conditions would have to be present, and the same artistic sense.

And do not tell me, Your Reverence, that truth seen from all angles, must always appear the same; that would be true only for Him who is present everywhere.⁽¹⁵⁾

They were back on the ground of private judgment. Pastells dismissed the simple little parish priest of the Rhine with a gesture: the man was “some ignorant nincompoop, who had lost his Catholic common sense, that is what he must have been to consider the Protestant as a servant of the God of the Catholics. Such a thing could be said only by someone who like you believes that the differences between Catholics and Protestants are only matters of opinion and not of faith.”¹⁶ What would all this lead to? Moderate Protestants believed that a man could be saved within any of their sects; liberal and progressive Protestants, that he could be saved within any religion; and free-thinkers, that he could do his duty and attain happiness without any religion at all! “If this was admitted, then away with science and philosophy, the most contradictory principles and the most illogical and monstrous conclusions should all be respected as axioms of the truth.” The enthronement of human reason, the Jesuit argued, would thus lead to its destruction and a universal skepticism. Human reason would be the “reason of unreason.”

There could be consideration for the “good faith” of an adversary, but none for his errors, for which severity would be charity, and pity, cruelty. The true religion must consider the false as ene-mies; “he who is not with Me, is against Me.” The Saviour had brought “not peace, but a sword.” Pastells sought to overwhelm his antagonist with Scripture. “I am the light of the world;” “I am the truth.” These were the words of Jesus Christ, and Pastells held Rizal at sword's point: “Do you admit the divinity of Jesus Christ and the divine institution of His Church?” Rizal had written of different aspects, different conceptions of the truth, each equally valid from the viewpoint of the thinker and beholder. He had asked: “Who can call himself the reflector of that Light?” Now the Jesuit asked in turn: “And does, my dear friend, the divine mission of Jesus Christ, His divinity itself, count for nothing, weigh nothing in the intellectual balance ...?”¹⁷

Unfortunately we do not have Rizal's reply in its entirety. We have only a fragment which seems to avoid the challenge, although we may gather that this was not exactly so from Pastell's next letter. Nonetheless it is a rationalist's moving and heartfelt act of faith.

J. Rizal to P. Pastells, S.J., 9 January 1893 —

... These days I have examined my beliefs and my principles, reviewing what little has remained of the “shipwreck of faith,” as my dear professor, Father Sánchez, would say, the solid foundations which have remained firm after so many storms. I should like to be as sincere, as precise as possible in the definition and exposition of my ideas ... I answer your question gladly, and will speak frankly and sincerely, so that Your Reverence may see if all is lost or if something remains that may be of use.

I firmly believe, by reason and by necessity more than out of faith, in the existence of a Creative Being. Who is He? What human sounds, what syllables in what language can capture the name of this Being whose works overwhelm the imagination of anyone who thinks on them? Who can give Him a suitable name when some miserable creature down here, with transient power, has two or three names, three or four surnames, and many cities and dignities?

We call him *Dios*, but this at most only reminds us of the Latin *deus*, or the Greek *Zeus*. What is He like? I would attribute to Him in an infinite degree all the beautiful and holy qualities that my mind can conceive, if I were not restrained by the fear of my own ignorance. Someone has said that each man makes his God in his own image and likeness, and, if I remember rightly, Anacreon said that, if the bull could conceive of a god, it would fancy that god horned and with a mighty bellow.

For all that, I dare believe Him infinitely wise, powerful and good; my idea of the infinite is imperfect and confused, seeing the marvels of His works, the order that reigns among them, their magnificence and overwhelming vastness, and the goodness that shines in all.^{[18](#)}

It is plain, however, from the Jesuit's next letter that Rizal had not surrendered. He believed in God; after that ... Pastells was undismayed. "Not all is lost; your soul still carries the lifesaver of hope; don't let go of it, for it shall bear you to the harbor of salvation. You have sucked the pure doctrine of the true religion with your mother's milk, in her lap, in the midst of your family, and in the Ateneo Municipal, to which the writer himself is an irrefutable witness, and sooner or later you will return to the bosom of our Holy Mother the Catholic Church."

In the meantime, skillfully picking up each of Rizal's cues, and not without eloquence, Pastells roved quickly over the vast field of Catholic apologetics, which could not have been unfamiliar to his correspondent, a former Jesuit student. The nature of the Causeless Being, the teleological argument for its existence, the divinity of Jesus Christ as proved by His Resurrection from the dead, the divine institution of the Church of Rome, the relations between faith and reason, the divine inspiration of Scriptures, the nature of miracles, salvation outside the Church, etcetera, etcetera.^{[19](#)}

Rizal, ever courteous, waited two months before replying because he was unwilling to wound his Jesuit adversary with continued argument; he was reading "with the greatest interest and the most lively attention" the works of Bougeaud, sent to him by Pastells to re-enforce Sardá; "let us see if by reading it *my faith* is altered, or *the faith*, whose absence Your Reverence deplores, is born anew; if not, we shall have to be content with what God

offers to each of us. With Your Reverence I preferred to confine myself strictly to defending my own ideas, without taking the offensive, but Your Reverence challenges me, and here I go, to my regret but with empty hands, for I neither want to use weapons, nor do I have them for I lack the books to verify my quotations.”²⁰ His refutation, as we shall see, was brief but brilliant. The same month Pastells returned to the attack in a letter of inordinate length, and there the correspondence ends, with each side firmly unconvinced, still in its trenches under unstruck flags, the battle to be joined again at another place and another time.

It is more convenient to summarize these last exchanges in the form of argument and refutation, rejoinder and reply.

RIZAL—We are entirely in agreement in admitting the existence of God. How can I doubt it when I am convinced of my own? Who recognizes the effect, recognises the cause ... Now then, my faith in God, if the product of reasoning can be called faith, is blind, blind in the sense that it knows nothing. I neither believe nor disbelieve in the qualities that many attribute to Him. I smile at the definitions and meditations of theologians and philosophers on this ineffable and inscrutable Being ... Man makes his God to his own image and likeness and then attributes to Him his own works, just as the Polish magnates chose their king, afterwards to impose their will upon him. We all do the same thing, and so does Your Reverence when he tells me: “He who made eyes, will He not see? He who made ears, will He not hear?” Your Reverence will pardon me, but since we have spoken of Anacreon's bull, let us hear it bellow: “He who made horns, will He not throw us with horns?”²¹

PASTELLS—[After explaining that he was writing by analogy] God needs not eyes to see or ears to hear ... God possesses what are called positive perfections in an infinite and absolute degree. [His] creatures participate in the perfection of God in a finite degree and by analogy.

RIZAL—I do not think that Revelation is impossible; rather I believe in it, but not in the *revelation* or *revelations* which each religion or all religions claim to possess. Upon examining them

impartially, confronting them with one another, and scrutinizing them, one cannot but recognize in all of them the human thumbprint and the mark of the time in which they were written.^{[23](#)}

PASTELLS—What thumbprint and what mark? That of the writers who wrote the sacred books under divine inspiration? But do we Catholics mean that the sacred books have nothing human about them? And does that give you, for that reason, the right to affirm that the sacred books were not divinely inspired? Shall we deny that God was the Author of the inspiration ... because he had recourse to human instruments in order to communicate with men? Will you deny that when a compositor touches the keys of an organ sounding the notes he pleases, he is the author of the music, rather than the bellows, the air, the pipes, the strings, and the keys that produce the material sounds? As long as the Catholic Church recognizes the divine finger of inspiration behind the human thumbprint, it is enough to assure that the books of the Old and the New Testament, recognized as such by the Catholic Church, must be received by the faithful as sacred ...
^{[24](#)}

RIZAL—I believe in revelation, but in that living revelation of Nature which surrounds us on all sides, in that voice, potent, eternal, incessant, incorruptible, clear, distinct, universal, like the Being from which it comes; in that revelation which speaks to us and compenetrates us from the day we are born till the day we die. What books can better reveal to us the goodness of God, His love, His providence, His eternity, His glory, His wisdom? “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” What other Bible and what other Gospels does humanity want? Ah, does not Your Reverence believe that men have been wrong to seek the divine will in parchments and temples instead of seeking it in the works of Nature under the august dome of the heavens? Instead of interpreting obscure passages or ambiguous phrases, which have provoked hatreds, wars and dissensions, would it not be better to interpret the facts of Nature in order to adapt our lives better to its invisible laws, using its forces for our own perfecting?^{[25](#)}

PASTELLS—But we are discussing another kind of revelation, revelation properly speaking, supernatural revelation which has been given by God to man for his eternal salvation ... And what can the supposed living revelation of Nature teach us for our justification, sanctification and eternal salvation? Not one word. We would be left in complete darkness about our ultimate end if there did not shine in our souls the bright lighthouse of supernatural hope, based on faith in the revealed truths that God in His grace has given us.^{[26](#)}

RIZAL—I do not deny that there are absolutely necessary and useful precepts which cannot be found clearly enunciated in Nature, but God has placed these in the heart, in the conscience of man, His best temple, and that is why I would rather adore that good and provident God who has endowed us with all that is necessary for salvation, who keeps open before us continuously the book of His revelation, with His priest speaking to us incessantly through the voice of our conscience.^{[27](#)}

PASTELLS—[That voice] is not incessant because, heard only in the bosom of our conscience, how many times are its cries muffled by the callouses formed in it by a bad life? ... Review the pages of the history of peoples and nations, races and tribes in diverse times and ages, and you will find how in all of them, except Christendom, all kinds of errors have multiplied.^{[28](#)}

RIZAL—I cannot believe that before the coming of Jesus Christ all peoples were buried in the profound chasm of which Your Reverence speaks... Nor can I believe that after Christ all was light, peace and good fortune, that the majority of men turned just. No, I would be belied by the battlefields, fires, faggots, prisons, acts of violence, the tortures of the Inquisition, the hatred that Christian nations profess towards one another over petty differences, slavery tolerated, if not sanctioned, for eighteen centuries, prostitution ...^{[29](#)}

PASTELLS—It was Jesus Christ who brought the world that true peace which made the men who received it the adopted sons of God and the heirs of Heaven ... The heart is the best temple in

which to adore God in spirit and in truth ... but this interior temple requires another on the outside so that men may render unto God external homage, sincere expression of the internal, before men and as men composed of body and soul. For his reason we are obliged to adore God ... who opened for us the book of natural law and that of supernatural law, depositing both in the infallible custody of the teaching Catholic Church ...³⁰

RIZAL—All the brilliant and subtle arguments of Your Reverence, which I shall not attempt to refute because I would have to write a treatise, cannot convince me that the Catholic Church is endowed with infallibility. It also carries the human thumbprint; it is an institution more perfect than the others, but human after all, with all the defects, errors and vicissitudes proper to the work of men. It is wiser, more skilfully directed than many other religions as the direct heiress of the political sciences, religions and arts of Egypt, Greece and Rome; it has its roots in the hearts of the people, in the imagination of the masses, and in the affections of women; but, like all others, it has its obscurities which it clothes with the name of mysteries, its puerilities which are sanctified as miracles, its divisions and dissensions which are called sects or heresies.³¹

PASTELLS—What have [Egypt, Greece and Rome] got to do with the Christian religion? This has its branches in the hearts of the people, but its roots and foundation in the Christ from which it sprang. Nor is it based in the imagination of the masses and the affections of women, but in the will of God and the efficacy of supernatural grace by virtue of the merits of Christ.³²

RIZAL—I shall go after something more transcendental. Who died on the Cross? Was it God or was it man? If it was God, I cannot understand how a God, conscious of His mission, could die, or how a God could exclaim in the garden: “Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from me,” or how He could again exclaim from the Cross: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” This cry is absolutely human, it is the cry of a man who had faith in justice and the goodness of his cause; except for the “Tomorrow thou shalt be with me,” the words of Christ on

Calvary all suggest a man in torment and in agony, but; what a man! For me, Christ-man is greater than Christ-God.³³

PASTELLS—Who died on the Cross? I answer, Christ as man, that is to say, when Jesus Christ died, his soul left his body, and the person of Christ remained united in the soul and in the body ...³⁴

RIZAL—I do not make an assumption when I say that the voice of my conscience can come only from God. I reason by deduction. God cannot have created me for my harm; for what harm had I done Him before being created that He should will my damnation? Not can He have created me for nothing, or in indifference, for then what is the purpose of my sufferings, for what purpose the slow torture of my unceasing desire? He must have created me for a good purpose, and for that end I have nothing to guide me better than my conscience, and my conscience alone, which judges and qualifies my acts. He would have been unreasonable if, having created one for a purpose, He had not given me the means of attaining it, like some ironmonger who should try to make a knife without an edge.³⁵

PASTELLS—God must have created man for some good purpose attainable after this life, for, if God is just, where would He reward him who dies unjustly to defend His justice? Where would He punish the sinner who for his vices has received in this world only pleasure, riches, honors? God made me to love Him and serve Him in this life and to enjoy Him forever in the next. To attain this end the grace of God, the merits of Jesus Christ, and our own good works, are needed.³⁶

The controversy ended on an uncertain note. Pastells promised to give in his next letter the proofs of the divine origin of the Church of Rome.³⁷

Rizal, for his part, ended his last letter to the Jesuit with a characteristic gesture: “A question occurs to me. Who is more foolishly proud: he who is content to follow his own judgment, or he who proposes to impose on others not even what his own reason declares but only what seems to him to

be the truth? The reasonable has never seemed foolish to me, and pride has always shown itself in the idea of imposition.”³⁸

[4]

Few men have the time or desire to explore for themselves the vast, the infinite reaches between creature and Creator, or even to sense the terrible intimacy between the sinner and his Saviour. These few, mystics, hermits, reformers, penitents, preachers, poets, consumed by ineffable passions, wrestling with shapeless terrors, marked with mysterious wounds, speaking the language of birds and beasts, seized by revelations on the highways, beside burning bushes, on thunderous mountain-tops, were few enough in Rizal's age, when the human mind was entranced by the revelations and miracles of science; fewer still in Rizal's Philippines, where men could speak to God only in the language of ritual and dogma; fewest perhaps in our own times when it is impolite to discuss religion except as a political factor. Yet in other ages millions of men killed one another to give testimony that there are one or three persons in God, that the Son proceeds from the Father, that only faith is necessary for salvation.

It may therefore be difficult, but nonetheless important, for us to remember that Rizal was a modern man in a medieval community, and that his religious beliefs, different as they were from those of the majority, were a matter of greater weight, both to himself and to society, than we would now be inclined to think. He was also a non-conformist in a society where Church and State were united, and were consequently religious skepticism was “unpatriotic” and political dissent “irreligious” or, on the other side of the barricades, where the freethinker was the standard-bearer of freedom of thought. This will explain why the news of Rizal's retraction was received by his fellow liberals and progressives and by the rebels on the field with scorn and disbelief, and why to this day it is repudiated by humanists and rationalists. It also explains the extraordinary efforts made by the Jesuits, under the orders of the Dominican Archbishop, to win him back to Catholic orthodoxy; these “hounds of Heaven” would not leave him alone, they would not let him go; he scarcely had time; and he had so little time, to scribble a few letters, to copy out the marvellous poem that would be his farewell, to kiss his mother for the last time; and always he was surrounded

by the tools of conversion: words, prayer-books, rosaries, medals, images, an altar, a crucifix, and the inexorable clock.

We are told by the Jesuits that when they first approached Rizal on the 29th December they found him the same “cold-blooded” skeptic they had always considered him to be. Their protagonist was Balaguer who, on the 8th August 1917, made a sworn statement in Murcia, Spain, of his recollection of these events, based, he averred, on his own knowledge, and on a contemporary record which he had made with much detail on the 30th December, and which he produced before the notary. The original memorandum is not now available and the following account is transcribed and translated in part from Balaguer's affidavit.³⁹

XXX

When [Father Vilaclara and I]—writes Balaguer—entered the death-cell, we exchanged greetings [with Rizal] and spoke of various things, and then I, who knew his record and the errors contained in his books, had to ask him about his religious ideas in order to accomplish our delicate mission.

On first impression he showed himself a Protestant because of the phraseology in which he manifested love and reverence for Jesus Christ, and soon enough told me more or less explicitly that his rule of faith was the word of God contained in Holy Scripture; but when I showed him how false and indefensible this criterion was, since, without the authority of the Church, he could not be certain of the authenticity of Holy Scripture, or of which of the Books had been truly revealed by God, and that private judgment could in no way interpret God's word at its own choice, he frankly declared himself a rationalist or freethinker, admitting no other criterion of truth but private judgment.

Having then demonstrated to him the absurdity of rationalism in view of the lack of instruction of the immense majority of humankind, and of the absurd and monstrous errors committed by the wisest men of pagan times, I tried to prove to him with irrefutable arguments that there is and can be no other rational criterion than supernatural faith and divine revelation, guaranteed by the infallible authority of the Church, as witness reason itself, history, and the motives of credibility⁴⁰ offered by the Church in evidence.

Cornered by these invincible arguments, he went to the extent of telling me that he would be guided by the mind that God had given him, adding with chilling self-possession that he would thus appear before God's Judgment Seat, content with having done his duty as a rational being. When I attacked him then with the arguments of Catholic doctrine, he began to raise the objections, a thousand times refuted, of heretics and rationalists, and we had to discuss the criterion or rule of faith, the authority of the Church, its infallibility and divine teaching mission, the power to make miracles, the death-sentences on Ananias and Sapphira,⁴¹ Holy Scripture, the Vulgate,⁴² St. Jerome's version,⁴³ that of the Seventy,⁴³ Purgatory, the variations among Protestant churches, the argument of Balme⁴⁵ against them, the cult of saints, and especially the extent of redemption, and many other points in apologetics, a thousand times refuted with unanswerable arguments.

As I assailed him with the logic and the evidence of Catholic truth I told him vehemently that, if he did not surrender his mind and reason to faith, he would soon go to appear before the Judgment Seat of God and would be most surely damned. When he heard my threat, his eyes were filled with tears and he answered:

"No, I shall not be damned."

"Yes," I replied. "You will go to Hell, for, whether you like it or not, *extra Ecclesiam Catholicam nulla datur salus*. Yes, outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation. Truth is one and cannot be other than one. Truth, by its very nature, is uncompromising in all matters, and more so in religious matters which are the most transcendental."

Thus reprehended, he was moved and told me:

"Look, Father, if I, in order to please you, said yes to everything and signed whatever you put before me, without conviction, I would be a hypocrite and would offend God."

"Certainly," I said. "We do not want that. But believe me, it is an incomparable sorrow to see a person one loves so obstinate in error, to see that he is headed for damnation and be unable to free him from danger. You pride yourself on being sincere; well, then, believe me that, if giving our own blood and lives we could procure your salvation, we should do so right now, offering to be shot in your place."

“But, Father,” he replied with emotion, “what do you want me to do? It seems I cannot overcome my reason.”

“Offer up to God,” I answered, “the sacrifice of your self-love, and, even against the voice of your reason, ask God for the grace of faith, which is a gift of God, which He offers in abundance, and can be gained infallibly with humble and persevering prayer. The only thing required is that you should not reject it.”

“Very well, Father,” he said, “I promise you that I shall spend the time that remains to me in life asking God for the grace of faith.”

“Rest, then,” I said, “and think over what we have discussed, and have recourse to the Lord with confidence in the infallible efficacy of prayer, for the heart of man is in the hands of God.”

For a better understanding of the events of that day, I think it opportune to set them down in order.

Father Vilaclara, now deceased, and I reached the Royal Fort of Santiago at about ten o'clock in the morning. Having been received by Dr. Rizal, I began the discussion with him already described. At noon I went to the Palace to report to the Prelate as instructed, and I had to tell him that until then the condemned man remained obstinate in his errors and in his ideas contrary to the Catholic faith. Upon hearing this, the Prelate, in his burning zeal for the conversion of Dr. Rizal, immediately issued a circular to all the religious communities in Manila asking them to pray for the conversion of the condemned man. In all of them fervent prayers were said; in some, many acts of mortification were offered for the same purpose; and in one or another, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed on the altar.

At three o'clock in the afternoon or a little later I returned to the Royal Fortress, where Father Vilaclara had remained, and continued my discussion with Dr. Rizal until nightfall, leaving it off at the point already mentioned. I then went to the Ateneo, and thence with Father Viza to the Palace, to give an account of the condemned man's state of mind, which then offered a hope of conversion for he was already asking for the formula of retraction. So I asked the Prelate for the formula which he had offered to supply, but he told me that it was not yet finished and that he would send it to me soon.

When I reached the Fort, night having already fallen, I found Dr. Rizal impatient; he asked me for the Prelate's formula. This arrived at last around ten o'clock, and when the condemned man heard of this, he asked me for it urgently, and, without even giving me time to read it, he sent for me and asked for it to be read to him.

We both seated ourselves at a table where there were writing paper and implements, and I began to read out [the formula]. But upon hearing the first paragraphs, he told me:

“Do not go on, Father, that style is different from mine, and I cannot sign it, for it should be surmised that I am writing it myself.”

I then produced Father Pi's shorter and more concise formula; I read out the opening paragraph and he told me:

“That style is simple like mine; do not tire yourself, Father, in reading it all out. Point out what I must profess or express as we go along, and I shall be writing, and making my own observations when proper.”

So it was done. I would point out an idea, and he would go on writing, with a firm hand and in clear characters, making some remark or adding a few phrases.

After the discussion, Dr. Rizal was surely surrendering to the impulses of grace, for he had isolated himself and prayed as he had promised. That was how he appeared when he wrote the retraction.

This began: “I declare myself a Catholic, and in this religion wish to live and die.”

Dr. Rizal told me: “Add (and he was already writing it out after the word religion), in which I was born and educated” (as if to place on record his Catholic schooling).

I went on reading, and he agreeing and writing with some brief remark on his part and explanation on mine. When he reached the paragraph on the detestation of Masonry, he showed some resistance to subscribing these phrases of the formula: “I abhor Masonry as a society condemned by the Church,” and gave me this reason. He told me that he had known Masons who were very bad men, but those with whom he had dealings in London were businessmen and seemed good people. He also seemed to give me to understand that the type of Masonry existing in the Philippines did not

require the denial of the Catholic faith, although I am not aware of that; but in any case it seems that Dr. Rizal belonged to one of the lower degrees in which it was not explicitly obliged to abjure the faith. After a few remarks he proposed to me that he himself should write and sign, as he did, this formula: "I abhor Masonry as the enemy that it is of the Church and condemned by her," and so he wrote it. I went on reading out and indicating the ideas of the formula, and he agreeing, with some minor remark.

Thus, for example, the ending said: "The diocesan prelate ..." and he made the addition: "as the superior ecclesiastical authority," [continuing] "may make public my declaration." He asked me to let him add the words "spontaneous and voluntary" to the phrase "my declaration," saying with great emphasis.

"Well," I told him, "Put down 'spontaneous' and let it go at that."

He finished writing and thus it was.

It was half past eleven o'clock, and he dated it the 29th of December.

The text, copied word for word from the original, reads as follows:

I declare myself a Catholic, and in this religion in which I was born and educated I wish to live and die. I retract with all my heart whatever in my words, writings, publications and conduct has been contrary to my condition as son of the Church. I believe and profess whatever she teaches, and submit myself to whatever she commands. I abhor Masonry as the enemy that it is of the Church and as a society prohibited by the same Church. The diocesan prelate, as the superior ecclesiastical authority, can make public this my spontaneous declaration to repair the scandal that my actions may have caused, and so that God and men may forgive me.

Manila, 29th of December 1896.

JOSÉ RIZAL.

This declaration or retraction was signed, with Dr. Rizal, by Sr. Fresno, Head of Detachment, and Sr. Moure, Adjutant of the Garrison.^{[46](#)}

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Balaguer further stated under oath that he himself took Rizal's hand-written retraction to the Ateneo before his execution, that he placed it in the hands of Pi, that on the same day the Superior of the Jesuits took it to the Archbishop's Palace and gave it to Nozaleda, who handed it in turn to his secretary, González Feijóo, the latter depositing it in his office in the file for confidential documents.

The text appears to have been released to the press and published, but the original document was not produced by the authorities of the Church until it was allegedly found in the archives of the Archbishop's Palace by Father Manuel Gracia and published in a Jesuit periodical on the 18th July 1935, words “spontaneous and voluntary” to the phrase “my declaration,” saying with great emphasis.

[5]

The controversy over Rizal's retraction and conversion is one of those issues which will never be resolved because, at least among Filipinos, neither side is open to conviction. The foreigner, mercifully aloof from the religious and political passions aroused by this question, would suggest a simple solution. The handwritten document of retraction having been produced, is it genuine or is it forgery? That is a matter for handwriting experts, and the weight of expert opinion is in favor of authenticity.^{[47](#)}

In his simplicity the foreigner might go farther. Why, he might ask, is it so important whether or not Rizal returned to Catholic orthodoxy in his death cell? If he was converted, he did not thereby become less of a nationalist, for Burgos after all was an ordained priest, or less of a patriot, for surely Catholics can be patriots, and in fact the great majority of Filipinos are Catholics. If he did not recant, the Catholic Church is not thereby proved false, or any of its dogmas, doctrines, rituals and practices; the Church has survived the apostasy of greater men than Rizal. No reasonable Filipino would expatriate himself simply because Rizal was converted; no Catholic by conviction would abjure his faith simply because Rizal did not recant.

But reasonableness is a straw in the winds of this controversy. The very integrity of Rizal himself has been put at stake, and it is therefore impossible to evade the issue in any biography of his, which in the slightest way pretends to be honest. The case against the authenticity of the retraction has never been put so persuasively as by Palma, and we are bound to consider it.

At the very start it must be said, with the greatest respect, that he evades the issue. He admits that the instrument of retraction could not be “ignored if it could be proved that the text as well as the signature of Rizal were genuine and authentic.” He then makes no effort to enter into this question and merely makes reference to the doubts raised by another author. He proceeds to argue that, even if both text and signature were authentic, “the document would prove Rizal’s abjuration of Masonry but not his conversion” to Catholicism. “One act,” he states, “is independent of the other.” He adds, still in the subjective sense, “it would prove also that, if Rizal had recanted his religious ideas, he had not done the same with his political ones. In any case, a document obtained by means of moral violence and spiritual threats has very little worth in history.”

This is the weakest part of his case and we should not be misled into underestimating his very cogent argument. It is nonsense to say that the retraction does not prove Rizal’s conversion to Catholicism; the language of the document is unmistakable. It is a truism to say that the recantation of his religious error did not involve the repudiation of his political aims; in fact that is the case for the Roman Catholics. However, that the document was extorted under threat of damnation brings us nearer to the heart of the matter, as we shall hereafter consider. But first we must hear the evidence that Palma and others so persuasively offer to suggest that—the authenticity of the document apart—Rizal did not in fact recant, and that the Jesuits and the regime knew that he did not.

Why, they ask, did Rizal fail to tell his fond and pious mother that he had returned to her faith? It would have given her such great joy and consolation! Why did not the Jesuits try to save his life, putting his conversion beyond doubt and showing off their prize? Why was his body not handed over to his family, and instead secretly buried? Why was it not buried in consecrated ground? Why was his death entered on a special page of the register between an unidentified man and a suicide, both of whom

must have been supposed to die impenitent and unshriven? Why were there no requiem masses said for the repose of his soul? Why was a copy of the retraction not furnished his family despite their requests? Why was a certificate of marriage between Rizal and Josephine Bracken similarly withheld, and why has it not been produced to this date? How odd that the original of the retraction should be found only thirty years after! How curious that the wording of the handwritten document should differ from the versions first published by the press, by Retana and by the Jesuits! Why did Retana fail to mention that the retraction had been signed before two witnesses? Why was the Jesuit pamphlet left unsigned? The pamphlet is shot through with demonstrable errors about Rizal's life—why not about his last hours?⁴⁹

These questions about the external circumstances surrounding Rizal's recantation are surely enough to raise a doubt. But what we might rather improperly call the internal argument, the argument drawn from Rizal's own character, is even stronger. By the Jesuits's own account, he remained firm in his rationalist convictions almost to the very end, say, until he had only twelve hours left to live, from nightfall to dawn. It is incredible that he should then suddenly cave in. Who was Balaguer, after all? How could a simple missionary from Dapitan succeed where Pastells, Sánchez, Sardá and Bougeaud had failed? Why should Rizal, still in the full confidence of his rationalist convictions, ask about the image of the Sacred Heart that he had carved as a schoolboy? He had long ago stopped believing in images. Why should the tears spring to his eyes when threatened with hellfire? If there was one thing he had studied it was the doctrine of eternal damnation and he had rejected it. Can it be really believed that Rizal asked insistently for the formula of retraction and that it was withheld from him for a time deliberately? Why should he recant in his death-cell when he had refused to recant in Dapitan? How could he declare his wish to “live” in the Catholic religion when he knew he was about to die? How could he “believe and profess” whatever the Catholic Church taught, and “submit” to whatever she commanded, when he had explicitly rejected, in his correspondence with Pastells, the divine authority of the Church of Rome? How could he declare his “abhorrence” of Masonry as an enemy of the Church, when, as a Mason, he knew that it was not? And then to go to Confession three, four times in succession, to hear two masses on his knees, to read out his recantation before the altar in the presence of his jailers, to sign acts of

faith, hope and charity, to put on humbly and gratefully the sodalist's medal he had brushed aside only a few hours before—really, what could be the motive for these absurd extremes of self-abasement? What did he have to gain? Heaven? He did not believe in Heaven. Yet how much he had to lose! It would give the lie to his novels, overthrow his life's work, send him to the grave with a stain upon his character.⁵⁰

These objections cannot be taken lightly, although some are more easily dispelled than others. Rizal did not tell his mother because he had no opportunity to do so. A footnote by the official editor of Palma's own biography affirms that, after considering all the evidence, it would appear established that Doña Teodora said goodbye to her son on the afternoon of the 29th, and did not see him in the morning of the day of execution, after his conversion the night before.⁵¹ His retraction of religious errors would not affect his conviction for political offences, and therefore no question could arise of saving him from execution any more than there could have been in the case of Burgos, Gómez and Zamora, good Catholic priests to the end, who nonetheless died under sentence of the court martial. Rizal's body was buried secretly, and indeed his grave placed under guard for some time, for obvious political reasons; to be specific, because it was feared that the insurgents who fought under the banner of his name might unearth his body, either to revere it as a nationalist relic or to propagate a myth about his survival or resurrection. It was for this reason also that the execution was held within a military square on the Luneta, and the crowd prevented from reaching the body. These precautions have not been unknown in our own times, and indeed they were not unknown to Pilate.

No requiem masses could be said openly, presumably because the penal code forbade public obsequies for a condemned man.⁵² This does not mean that such masses could not have been offered in private. It would seem that Rizal was buried in the cemetery at Paco,⁵³ not in a niche but in the ground, under a cross with his initials reversed; this was presumably consecrated ground; if not, it could have been consecrated for the occasion; in any case Rizal's body was not flung into the bay (like Don Rafael Ibarra's?) or buried casually in some ricefield (like his brother-in-law's). The entry of his death on a special page of the registry between two presumed impenitents (Christ between two thieves?) may very well have been due to the fact that he was, at least in the eyes of the Spanish

authorities, an executed felon. This status of Rizal before the law at that time, which tends to be forgotten now that he is the national hero, explains most of these difficulties.

To take one last example, it argues more for the severity, the arrogance, the hard-headedness of the regime, than for the non-existence of the recantation or the marriage certificate, that copies of these were denied to Rizal's family. The authorities may well have felt that they were under no obligation to accommodate the family of a condemned man who had put the regime in continuing danger of its very life. Was there in any case, time, occasion or need to issue a marriage certificate? In the eyes of the Church matrimony is a sacrament which the two parties minister to each other in the presence of a priest and witnesses. A civil registration or certificate is superfluous for its validity—an issue which has bedeviled relations between Church and State in all Catholic countries—the efficient cause of the contract being the mutual consent of the parties. We may take it that there was no marriage certificate, since it has never been produced, but that does not necessarily mean that there was no canonical marriage. “Before his execution,” wrote Josephine Bracken in the story of her life, “he married me at 5 o'clock in the morning.”⁵⁴ And after the marriage he had given her a copy of Kempis as a farewell token dedicated “to my dear and unhappy wife.”⁵⁵

It is, of course, an admitted fact, even by Palma himself, that the text of the retraction was released to the press and published in the Philippines and in Spain. It may be, as Palma states, that from the beginning doubts were expressed as to its authenticity but that they could not be said out loud because it would have been dangerous to do so. That is a reasonable assumption. But that Retana failed to append the names of the two witnesses to his publication of the retraction seems to be of no significance; neither Retana nor Palma was reproducing the Jesuit account word for word, and Retana indicates an omission after Rizal's signature with the conventional does. The original Jesuit pamphlet was left unsigned apparently because it was a communal effort; however. Pi's treatise appeared under his name, and, as Palma himself notes, the definite work by Piñana is supported by the sworn statements of Viza, Pi, Father Silvino López Tuñón, Nozaleda, General Rafael Domínguez, Fiscal Gaspar Castaño, Rosell, Balaguer, Taviel de Andrade and Feijóo, as well as by the

death certificates (to explain the absence of statements from them) of Fresno, Moure, and Antonio Díaz.⁽⁵⁶⁾ No court of law would discard the testimony of these witnesses, as yet unimpeached, merely because, as Palma contends, they may be prejudiced, as ecclesiastics and Jesuits or their adherents.

The errors about Rizal's life which Palma points out in the Jesuit pamphlet do not necessarily vitiate its account of his last hours; the former were based on hearsay, the latter presumably on actual knowledge. Some variations have been pointed out by J. Collas in the language of four "texts" of the retraction.⁵⁷ One, in English, by a certain Fr. Francisco A. Ortiz, cannot have been put forward seriously for comparison; it is admittedly a mere translation. The three Spanish texts are Retana's, Pi's, and the handwritten document from Gracia.

It is elementary that the Gracia manuscript, being the original, should be controlling. It will be recalled that Balaguer handed the original of the retraction to Pi who took it the same day to Nozaleda in the Archbishop's Palace, where it was placed in the confidential archives. The others are mere copies; Pi presumably relied on Balaguer's copy, and Retana on Pi's or Balaguer's; and any variations are in all probability attributable to faults of the first or second copyist. In the case of the printed versions, and one might conceivably dig up all newspaper accounts of the period, we must even take into account the mistakes of editors, typesetters and proofreaders; thus it would seem rather extravagant to cavil at the "r" in "religion" being in upper or lower case, or at the difference between "iglesia" with an initial "i" and "Yglesia" with an initial "y." All these ingenious arguments must stand or fall on the authenticity of the handwritten original, since the other "versions" are obviously not alternative originals but merely copies. If the other "versions" differ from the manuscript, the most that can be said is that they are bad copies or imperfect recollections. As long as the genuineness of Rizal's handwriting cannot be successfully challenged, the recantation must be accepted by any reasonable man, as it would be accepted in any court of law; even the circumstance of its belated discovery in the archives of the archdioceses of Manila supports this conclusion since, as J. Ma. Cavanna points out, the perforations by termites in the upper left hand corner of the document, especially a perforation in the letter "c" in "creo"

towards the end of the sixth line, argue further for its authenticity or at least for its having been written long before 1935.⁵⁸

But if Rizal did it, why did he do it? Why did he choose to “stain” his record? Whoever asks such a question might also ask why Rizal voluntarily wrote his manifesto of the 15th December calling the revolution “highly absurd, and what is worse perverse.” Why did he declare that “when the movement started, I spontaneously offered not only my services but my life and even my name to be used in any manner thought opportune in order to suppress the rebellion?” Why did he “condemn this uprising as absurd, savage, planned behind my back, dishonouring the Filipinos and discrediting those who can be our advocates;” why did he say he “abhorred its criminal activities and rejected any manner of participation” in it, and advise his countrymen to return to their homes, praying God to forgive those who had acted in bad faith? This language is stronger, more damaging, in the eyes of posterity, to Rizal's reputation as a nationalist, yet its authenticity has never been denied!

But in all fairness we should make a distinction. When Rizal condemned Bonifacio's appeal to arms, he did so entirely in accordance with his known convictions; he was not being inconsistent with his political beliefs; he was not recanting. Thus, he explained in the same manifesto that he wanted democratic freedoms for the Philippines but that he had made them conditional on “the education of the people,” he had recommended the cultivation of “the civic virtues without which there is no redemption.” And he had declared that reforms, to be fruitful, should come “from above,” for those that came “from below” were irregular and insecure.⁵⁹

Not so with his retraction of religious errors.

We may take his enquiry about the image of the Sacred Heart as either characteristic gesture of thoughtfulness and courtesy on his part, or a pious invention or exaggeration or inversion of memory on the part of the priestly narrator. It seems a trifle.

We may also accept that he was not too fervent a Mason. He had been given the title of Master Mason by the Spanish Grand Orient of Madrid six years before, and had been given powers the next year to convey its greetings and fraternal sentiments to the French Grand Orient and the German Great Lodges.⁶⁰ Later, apparently in his absence, he was appointed Honorable

(Honorary?) Worshipful Master of the Philippine Mother Lodge *Nilad* but it was Pedro Serrano Laktaw who was the organizer of Filipino Masonry and José A. Ramos who was the actual Worshipful Master. It is fair to conclude from a reading of the official history of Philippine Masonry that Rizal never took a leading part in its activities, and that its moving spirits were rather del Pilar, Serrano, Mabini, Páez and others.⁶¹ In fact Rizal himself stated he had ceased being a Mason when he left Madrid in 1891.

It is false that I gave Pedro Serrano orders to introduce Masonry in the Philippines. Serrano had a higher degree than mine in Masonry. I did not go beyond the 3rd degree while Serrano had the 30th or 33rd, and this is proved by the letter which he afterwards sent to me when I was in Hong Kong, a letter which appears in the records of the trial, in which he names me *Worshipful*, as if it were a great thing. If I were the head, since when does an officer permit himself to promote the Captain General? This letter prove the falsity of the assertion. Besides, Serrano and I parted in Europe on rather bad terms. I left Madrid in January or February 1891, and since then stopped writing and participating in the policies of *La Solidaridad* and left Masonry [*me di de baja*].⁶²

Why should it be so strange then for Rizal to “abhor” Masonry as a society when he had in fact already left it four years before? Even Palma seems resigned to accept it. Rizal apparently had no great love for Masons; he had quarrelled with del Pilar and Serrano, and at his trial, only a few days before, Masons had testified against him, among them Serrano, Páez, Moíses Salvador, José Dizon, and Antonio Salazar.⁶³

But Masonry as a code of principles was another matter. In many ways Rizal was Masonic in his indifferentism: one religion was as good as another, let each man serve the Grand Architect in his own way. In this sense there could be no “abhorrence” of Masonry without submission to the authority of the Church and recognition of its divine institution, its exclusive titles to the truth. Palma's distinction was, after all, unnecessary. If we do not accept Rizal's submission to the Church his “abhorrence” of Masonry is essentially meaningless.

What or who can have convinced him to make his profession of belief in whatever the Church teaches, his submission to whatever she commands? With all respect to the shade of the earnest self-satisfied Balaguer, we must agree that it is extremely unlikely that this rough missionary, fresh from the mangrove swamps, flustered and stumbling, we may imagine, through his half-forgotten lessons in apologetics, could have shaken the calm witty scholar where Pastells with all his elaborate arguments had failed. Indeed we do not have to believe this, whatever credit Balaguer gave himself in his account, or even that Rizal collapsed in tears at the threat of hellfire.

He did not. This is clear from the Jesuit's own story. At noon of the 29th Rizal was still "obstinate." At nightfall, Balaguer had to plead with him to "surrender his mind and reason," which suggests that the Jesuit was certainly not having the better of the argument, or at least that Rizal was unconvinced. Even after the warning of imminent damnation, of which so much seems to be made, Rizal protested that, if he signed anything at that time, it would be "without conviction," and as "a hypocrite," which indicates that even the danger of eternal Hell had not really moved him.

"What do you want me to do? It seems that I cannot overcome my reason."

This is not the cry of a man blackmailed out of his senses. In fact Balaguer beats a retreat. He has spent all his ammunition; the fortress still stands. He must call up re-enforcements from a higher command.

"Ask God for the grace of faith," he pleads, rather desperately, and, when Rizal agrees, exclaims in a burst of unexpected poetry: "The heart of man is in the hands of God."

[6]

There is nothing so personal to a man as his religion, and, it is never so personal as when he is about to die. If we are to arrive at a real understanding of what happened to Rizal after poor honest blustering Balaguer left him, we must remember that, above all, he was a man about to die. In twelve hours, in ten, in eight, as the dawn came spreading across the Pacific and over the high barrier of the Sierra Madre, he would go "*donde el que reina es Dios*," and God would not ask him about his politics.

He was finished with all that. He could do no more for his people except to die, and he would die bravely, without regrets, as a witness for their freedom. He could do no more for his family, except lift from them at last the burden of his fame. There was poor Josephine, and he would have to think about her. But surely there was nothing else, no other claims upon his generosity, no other suitors for his sword, surely there was an end of it now. He might be dying for his people, but he would die alone; death cannot be shared. It was he alone who must now examine his conscience, who must define his beliefs once for all and for ever, who must make the ultimate choice, who must prepare to face his God. Bonifacio and Aguinaldo and their peasants in arms could not bear witness before the Judgment Seat to his love of peace; or the liberals and republicans, Morayta and Pi y Margall, Blumentritt and all the scientists of Europe, to his love of truth. Only one witness, himself, at the bar, would be admissible, petitioner and respondent, plaintiff and defendant, accuser and accused, and the issue would be, what is peace, what is truth, who is God, how is it between Him and me.

The struggle in the death-cell, therefore, is no longer between Rizal and the regime, between Rizal and the friars, between Rizal and Balaguer. The real, the true struggle is within Rizal himself, between Rizal and Rizal. A man who is about to die believing in God as Creator and Judge, the man who kneels? Sits? Throws himself on the narrow iron cot? Paces up and down the cell?— this man, knowing him as we do, knowing him to be an honest seeker after the truth, the young man who asks how he can be saved but cannot “overcome his reason,” is surely not thinking of his name in the world, for that is vanity of vanities, and vanity soon to be left behind, but of the God he will face in a few hours. It will not be Anacreon's God, horned and bellowing. But will it be the God of the *Noli*, the God of Rizal in Dapitan, made as he claimed then “in his own image and likeness,” a wise, tolerant, forgiving Father, All-Good, All-Merciful. Will it be the God of Pastells and Balaguer, Yahweh, the God of the Inquisitors, a stern Judge, mindful that His creature has used his free will to disdain His Son's previous blood, All-Knowing, All-Just?

The rationalist asks us to see a serene Rizal, politely disdainful of priestly fairy-tales, reposing his confidence in the human mind, prepared to face his Creator “untroubled” because he has relied on the only compass given him,

his own conscience. He is tricked, bullied, slandered “beyond the grave” by a faked recantation, but the truth is, he never surrendered.

One whose sympathies are not engaged on either side must face the authenticity of the instrument of retraction, on the one hand, and, on the other, the admitted failure of the intellectual assault on Rizal's position, and can only wonder what it was that happened to the decided rationalist who had promised Balaguer to kneel and pray for the grace of faith.

The Catholic finds his answer in that very gift of grace. As night fell over the gray stone city of convents and monasteries, some prayer, perhaps the anguished cry of his mother telling her beads as in the moonlight nights in Kalamba, perhaps the mortifications of some Poor Clare (peace to thee, María Clara) prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, perhaps even the self-satisfied prayer of some friar in his stall, moved the hand of God to touch with His finger the heart of Rizal.

The rationalist will not be convinced by the arguments that failed to convince Rizal. But no one can assert that Rizal could not have humbled himself or that he would not have cancelled with a stroke of the pen the convictions of his scholarship until he himself stands on the brink of eternity, and beating the feeble wings of human reason, wonders if they will carry him safely across.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XX

- (1) Quoted in Maurois, op. cit., see Note No. 4, Chapter Nineteen.
- (2) “St. Joan” (Preface) by G. Bernard Shaw.
- (3) Cavanna, 207, who claims that of the *Noli's* 332 pages, 120 or 36 percent contain “passages against religion;” and of the *Fili's* 293 pages, 80 or 27 percent. The “passages” are not quoted or otherwise specified, nor the reasons why they are believed to be “against religion.” There is a general discussion on 192 et seq.
- (4) *Noli*, 71.
- (5) Retana, 245.
- (6) “Rizal y su obra,” op. cit., see Note No. 1, Chapter Eighteen.
- (7) Ep. Riz., IV, 36.
- (8) Ep. Riz., IV, 36 et seq.
- (9) Ep. Riz., IV, 39.
- (10) Ep. Riz., IV, 45 et seq.
- (11) Ep. Riz., IV, 47.
- (12) Ep. Riz., IV, 47-48.
- (13) Ep. Riz., IV, 64.
- (14) Ep. Riz., IV, 66-67.
- (15) Ep. Riz., IV, 67-68
- (16) Ep. Riz., IV, 72.
- (17) Ep. Riz., IV, 75.
- (18) Ep. Riz., IV, 85.
- (19) Ep. Riz., IV, 91 et seq.

(20) Ep. Riz., IV, 117 et seq.

(21) Ep. Riz., IV, 118.

(22) Ep. Riz., IV, 135.

(23) Ep. Riz., IV, 118.

(24) Ep. Riz., IV, 131-132.

(25) Ep. Riz., IV, 119.

(26) Ep. Riz., IV, 136.

(27) Ep. Riz., IV, 120.

(28) Ep. Riz., IV, 136.

(29) Ep. Riz., IV, 121.

(30) Ep. Riz., IV, 140.

(31) Ep. Riz., IV, 120.

(32) Ep. Riz., IV, 154.

(33) Ep. Riz., IV, 122.

(34) Ep. Riz., IV, 145 et seq. *The Catholic Dictionary* explains: "Hypostasis means person or individual, and the hypostatic union is the union of two distinct natures of God and man in the one person of Jesus Christ. Christ in the true God and true man, consubstantial with the Father according to his godhead, consubstantial with us according to his humanity. The two natures are inseparably united, without confusion; they do not lose their distinction by their union, but what is proper to each is conserved; but they are united in one person and one subsistence. There are consequently two wills and two operations."

(35) Ep. Riz., IV, 120.

(36) Ep. Riz., IV, 141.

(37) Ep. Riz., IV, 154.

(38) Ep. Riz., IV, 123.

(39) Almagro, II, 821 et seq., Apéndice Num. 25, entitled “Acta a requerimiento de D. Vicente Balaguer Llacer. Murcia,” 8 de Agosto de 1917. Despacho, Arco del Vizconde, Num. 4. “I cannot in conscience find any valid reason to doubt Balaguer's honesty and truthfulness. However, I am always open to persuasion.”

(40) “Motives of credibility” are described by *The Catholic Dictionary* as “sure signs by which revealed religion is made evidently believable by divine faith.”

(41) Ananias and his wife Sapphira were struck dead for lying about the price of a piece of land which they had sold in order to give the proceeds to the early Church (Acts V).

(42) According to *The Catholic Dictionary*, The Vulgate is “the Latin version of the Bible in common use in the Catholic Church and declared authentic or authoritative by the Council of Trent.” See following Note.

(43) Again according to *The Catholic Dictionary*, the New Testament of The Vulgate is “St. Jerome's version of the old Latin text made in 382 by command of Pope Damasus.”

(44) I must confess I am baffled by this reference.

(45) Dicc. Hist. Esp., biographical note, which singles out his book “El protestantismo comparado con el catolicismo, en sus relaciones con la civilización europea” (1844), which is obviously what Rizal and Balaguer were discussing.

(46) I am troubled by what seems to be a contradiction in this sworn account of the alleged retraction. Balaguer says: “Después de algunas observaciones me propuso él mismo escribir y firmar como lo hizo esta fórmula: 'Abomino de la Masonería como enemiga que es de la Iglesia y reprobada por la misma', y asimismo lo escribí.” Yet, in the alleged document of retraction quoted in his own affidavit, Balaguer states that what Rizal wrote was “Abomino de la Masonería como enemiga que es de la Iglesia y como Sociedad prohibida por la misma Iglesia.”

(47) The authenticity of the document has been upheld, among others, by Dr. Otley Beyer, then professor of anthropology in the University of the Philippines and curator of its museum of archaeology and ethnology, and by José I. del Rosario, former professor of chemistry in the same university. I am not aware of any authoritative impeachment of the genuineness and authenticity of the document.

(48) Palma, 341.

(49) Palma, 334 et seq.

(50) Palma, XXXV.

(51) Palma, 343 footnote.

(52) Thus, Art. 85 of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines now provides in part: "In no case shall the burial of the body of a person sentenced to death be held with pomp."

(53) This is, of course, of general knowledge, the original grave may be seen to this day.

(54) 100 Letters, 563, Appendix J. See Note no. 45 to Chapter Seventeen. The authenticity of, at least, this concluding part of the statement has been seriously challenged.

(55) Quirino, 310.

(56) "¿Murió el Dr. Rizal Cristianamente? Reconstitución de las últimas horas de su vida: Estudio historico" by Gonzalo Ma. Piñana (Barcelona 1920); see also Cavanna, VII, for a summary of the Catholic position.

(57) "Rizal's Retractions" by J. Collas (Manila 1960).

(58) Cavanna, 222.

(59) See Notes No. 41 and No. 42 to Chapter Nineteen.

(60) Sp. Doc., 189-194.

(61) Kalaw, II-VI.

(62) There is a photostatic copy of this document, much reduced, in Cavanna, 1 et seq. As stated *supra*, I relied on a transcript supplied by Director Montilla.

(63) Arch. Fil., III, 179/99 et seq.



XXI

An End and a Beginning

The just and the worthy must suffer to make their ideas known and widespread. The vessel must be shaken or broken to release the perfume, the stone must be struck to make the spark. There is something providential in the persecutions of tyrants.

E_L FILIBUSTERISMO

In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality.

[1]

Early on the 29th the sentence of death had been read to Rizal and he had acknowledged notice under protest. He was then turned over formally by Domínguez to Juan del Fresno, the commanding officer of the detachment which would hold him in custody until his execution, and placed *en capilla*, that is to say, not in a chapel but in what was now technically a death-cell. In point of fact it was a large chamber with grilled windows apparently used by the garrison for other purposes. It was comfortably furnished with a bed, chairs, a table with writing materials, and an altar. He was granted the privilege of being left unbound, but was constantly under the eye of three enlisted men, supervised by two officers, all peninsular Spaniards. All suitable precautions against suicide were ordered.

These seemed scarcely necessary. Rizal was in good spirits. In between arguing with the Jesuits, who had arrived even while the death sentence was being read to him, and who would not leave his side until it had been carried out, he had breakfast and thanked Taviel de Andrade for his services.

He had wanted to leave his counsel a tie-pin, but the judgment of the court had required him to deposit the amount of one hundred thousand pesos to answer for any civil liabilities arising from the crime of which he had been found guilty (the law is now substantially the same), and Rizal, protesting that he had no properties except those in Dapitan, which had already been attached, turned over to the court the only valuables he had left; a pair of binoculars and the golden tie-pin in the shape of a bee.¹

Then he received a Spanish correspondent, Santiago Mataix of the *Heraldo de Madrid*. Rizal took Mataix's hat to hang it up and, when the journalist protested, said courteously that after all he was at home. Two Spanish newspapers of great circulation had sent representatives to Manila: the *Heraldo* and *El Imparcial*, whose correspondent was Manuel Alhama.

Alhama, who never managed to enter the death-cell, had sent a report full of inaccuracies, not the least of which was that, when the death sentence was read to Rizal, he "was deeply moved, turned pale and was about to fall to

the floor.” He quoted Rizal as protesting: “I did not expect it! This is not what was promised me.” And again, when told to acknowledge the reading of the sentence by signing at the foot of the document. “I do not agree. This is unjust! Here it says that I am a half-breed, and it isn't true! I am a pure Filipino!” And again, when urged to go to Confession so that he could marry Josephine, whom Alhama described as “a Canadian, a woman with a turbulent past, whom Rizal met in Hong Kong when she was a bar waitress”: “I want nothing to do with priests! They are to blame for what is happening to me!” Yet Alhama went on to say that Rizal threw himself weeping into the arms of the Jesuit Faura, and that it was the latter and Vilaclara who had brought Rizal an image he had carved as a schoolboy, an image of the Virgin!²

Mataix was a more responsible journalist, and surely a more enterprising one since he had gained admission to the death-cell without permission and “in violation of the most stringent regulations.” However, he was, afterwards to claim that he had no intention of “submitting the poor prisoner to the gross cruelty of an interview.” Instead Mataix engaged Rizal and one of the Jesuits in conversation. There were reminiscences of childhood and school days. When the Jesuit recalled that Rizal had been president of the Sodality of St. Aloysius, Rizal contradicted him vigorously:

“Father, remember that I was never president, only secretary; I was not big enough. Mark you well, I have never presided over anything in my life. I was and still am not big enough for that.”

Reminiscing of the time when he had written the *Noli*, he was quoted as saying:

“At that time I was a simpleton, fair game for the *cocheros* of Manila; even the Pasig boatmen made fun of me. The Filipinos themselves did not think very highly of what this wretch was doing; some of them fought me, but on equal terms; nobody was speaking yet of apostolates, leaderships, and all that gabble which has ruined me. But then I went off to London and there I felt that I was being attacked with rancour; sermons were being preached against my book; I was being execrated; indulgences were even being granted, I believe, for the reading of pamphlets in which I was wronged. What happened next was only to be expected: each sermon was taken by my countrymen as a homily; every insult, as a panegyric; every attack was only fresh propaganda for my ideas. Such a campaign filled me with pride

—why deny it?—but, believe me, and you know this better than I do, I was never important enough for such criticisms, nor worthy of the fame that my misled partisans have given me. Those who have known me personally would neither raise me to the skies nor have me shot either. They would take me for what I am, a harmless sort of chap; my most fanatic followers are those who do not know me; if the Filipinos had known me personally, they would never have made my name a battlecry.”

He was quoted further as saying:

“If only the prudent advice of Friar Nozaleda, who was then Rector of the College of San Juan de Letrán, had been followed— far from rousing up a campaign against me, he only kept an eye on me as I went astray, giving no importance to the actions and writings of a youngster—I would not now be in a death-cell, and who knows if there would now be an insurrection in the Philippines!”³

It is necessary to remark that these quotations are Mataix's recollections long after the event, put down in a letter to Retana, and that in his dispatch to the *Heraldo* he said only that Rizal had been “repentant about his intervention in the events” of the revolution, that he had avowed his “harmlessness,” that he had expressed regret at not following Nozaleda's advice, that he had manifested “profound contempt” for the *Noli*, and, that “in spite of his terrible situation Rizal showed himself amiable, within the limits, naturally, of the gravity imposed by his sad situation.”⁴ With this precaution it may be added that Mataix also attributed to Rizal bitter criticisms of other nationalist leaders who supposed the Filipinos to be capable of self-government at that time; in his own judgment the people were not yet prepared, although some disagreed, “like the Lunas and the people from Malolos!” Mataix also claimed that Rizal acknowledged that he was being used as the standard of the rebellion, and that from the Spanish point of view, he deserved to be shot. But he complained bitterly about General Blanco and impressed Mataix with the argument that, if he had not been sincere in his offer to serve with the Spanish armies in Cuba, he could have escaped like Roxas in Singapore.⁵

The conversation with the correspondent of the *Heraldo* must have come as a welcome opportunity to relax and reminisce and philosophize after the tensions of the trial. How exhilarating it can be after the end and before the

beginning! It was an interlude between life and death. There were to be other callers that day: the dean of the Cathedral, the governor of Manila, Domínguez (to whom Rizal expressed his forgiveness of his judges), the attorney-general Castaño, and a number of Spanish officers, eager, no doubt, for some anecdote on which to dine out. When Balaguer left at noon to report to Nozaleda, Rizal had a few moments to himself. Earlier that day he had scribbled a note to his family: “I should like to see some of you before I die, even though it may be very painful. Let the bravest come. I have some important things to say,” signing himself “your son and brother who loves you with all his heart.”⁶

But there was no one yet, and he set himself to writing letters. One was to Blumentritt, “my dear brother.”

J. Rizal to F. Blumentritt, 29 December 1896 —

When you receive this letter I shall be dead. I shall be shot tomorrow at seven o'clock, but I am innocent of the crime of rebellion.

I am going to die with a clear conscience.

Farewell, my best, my dearest friend, and never think ill of me.⁷

He sent regards to all the Blumentritt family, and wrote along the margin: “I leave you a book as one last keepsake from me.” It was an anthology of poems in German which Blumentritt himself had sent him in Dapitan and which he had carefully annotated during his rustication.⁸

Then there was a letter to Paciano.

J. Rizal to Paciano Rizal, 29 December 1896 —

It has been four and a half years that we have not seen or spoken or written to each other, not, I believe, because of any lack of affection on my part or on yours, but because knowing each other so well we did not need to speak to understand each other.

Now that I am to die, it is to you that I write last to tell you how sorry I am to leave you alone in life, bearing all the burden of the family and our aged parents.

I think of how you have worked to give me a career; I believe that I tried not to waste my time. My brother if the fruit has been

bitter, it has not been my fault but the fault of circumstances. I know you have suffered a lot for my sake; I am sorry.

I assure you, my brother, that I die innocent of this crime of rebellion. I shall not utterly deny that what I wrote in the past may have contributed [to the insurrection], but I thought that the past would be expiated with my deportation.

Tell our father that I remember him. How? I remember his tenderness and his love. I ask him to forgive me for the grief which unwillingly I cause him.⁹

Dear Paciano, the noblest of them all, “even though a native.” How long since he had dragged a weeping child to the long-necked schoolmaster's house in dismal Biñang! How long ago and far away that eager laughing conspiracy to get the young poet off to the shining cities of the “enlightenment!” Dear Paciano, so proud of his lands in Pansol, so confident of his skill and energy, ruined now, proscribed, with the whole family of sisters on his back!

Finally, at nightfall, his mother came accompanied by Trinidad. The day before Doña Teodora had called on all her resources to dictate a letter to Polavieja.

Excellency:

Teodora Alonso de Rizal, a resident of Kalamba, born in Sta. Cruz, Manila, with all due respect and esteem has the honor to state to Your Excellency;

That her son, José Rizal y Mercado, having been sentenced by the court-martial to the extreme penalty for the offence charged against him of rebellion against the Mother Country, an offence which in all conscience and in the strictest justice has not been proved conclusively, all the more since she who has the honor to have recourse to Your Excellency is certain of the absolute innocence of her unfortunate son, she is now bound to entreat your generous heart and upright sense of justice to deign to turn your eyes and consider the tribulations of an unhappy mother, who at the close of her life and at the advanced age of seventy-one, will have to endure the greatest and most bitter of sorrows,

which is to witness the death of her unfortunate son, the victim only of fate; and of the unlucky circumstances which have surrounded him.

Excellency, I am certain, and it is most evident, that my unfortunate son José Rizal, who suffered with humility and resignation the exile to which he was sent five years ago by order of the highest authority of this archipelago, is innocent of the serious offence of which he is charged and for which he has been sentenced to suffer the extreme penalty. It is not my intention, Excellency, to censure or question in any manner the legality of the decision of a just tribunal, but, due to unfortunate and fatal circumstances, it has apparently made my unhappy son responsible for the most infamous of crimes, when he is in reality innocent.

In view of the foregoing, Your Excellency, I beg Your Excellency to deign take pity on the grief of a poor mother, who in the most crucial moment of witnessing the death of the fruit of her womb, turns to Your Excellency in the name of our God, beseeching him with tears of sorrow in her eyes and her heart in pieces to grant to her unfortunate son the commutation of the death sentence to which he has been condemned.

This is a boon which she expects to obtain from the recognized goodness of Your Excellency's magnanimous heart, and for which the undersigned and all her family, will be eternally grateful, raising prayers to Heaven to preserve your valuable life for the good and honor of our Mother Spain and the consolation of mothers.^{[10](#)}

At the foot of this document, written in a curlicued notary's hand, Doña Teodora has left her signature for us to see: *Teodora Alonso de R.* The hand is firm, and the flourishes under the name well and elegantly fashioned, despite her age and her fading sight, as if she had tried in one last despairing after-thought to impress “the Christian general” with the quality of his suppliant. No lawyer indicted this petition; not even the mathematician or the poet in Doña Teodora. It is rambling, repetitive, almost cowering, the distracted pleading of a mother who to save her son

has no compunctions about invoking “Mother Spain.” It is curious that neither of the men in the family, Don Francisco or Paciano, chose to put his name to this petition. This time Doña Teodora was taking matters in her own hands. The year before, when her son was in Dapitan, she had wanted to appeal directly to the Governor General, but José had discouraged her—it would be too much trouble, much coming and going and waiting, for what? To receive a rebuff. Well, rebuff or no, this time she would do it her way. She had never been one for the perilous fancies and adventures of her restless son, his gifted insights, his bold crusades; she had said long ago that they would cut off his head if he got to know too much; she had warned him when he was far away not to lose the faith; and here he was now, all that she had feared he would become, condemned to death, with a despairing Jesuit by his side.

Both mother and son wept, but they were not allowed to embrace each other, and he must be content with kissing her hand, and she with feeling his tears on her knuckles. She would not stay long; she must be about her business, there was no time to lose if His Excellency was to be moved. Her petition might have gone astray; it may have been purloined by some agent of the friars or carelessly thrown into some tray of pending papers. That evening, Doña Teodora, her daughters, and Josephine waited at the gates of Malacañang for the general to receive them. At length Polavieja emerged and they threw themselves at his feet, weeping and begging for mercy. His Excellency, reported Mataix, “would have wished that the performance of inexorable duties could have allowed him to indulge at the same time both the clemency of authority and his own inmost feelings of pity.”¹¹ It was subtly, delicately phrased; alas, the general was in full campaign, and there were good Spanish boys being shot that very night in Kabite by the rebellion this mother's son had raised about their heads.

[2]

Six of his sisters, a niece, and a small nephew had also been allowed to say goodbye to Rizal separately. He had few possessions left; almost nothing but his genius. He gave Narcisa a wicker chair; a handkerchief to his niece Angelica; a belt and watch with chain to Mauricio, María's son, the “Moris” who for some reason or other had always been his favorite nephew, to

whom he had written a Christmas greeting in English, and in his letter before sailing for Cuba had sent the admonition to “be always good and obedient.”

For María he had a special message, which is not without significance in the controversy over his refraction. “I am going to marry Josephine,” he told her. “I know you are all against it, you especially. But I want to give Josephine my name. Besides, you know the saying in the Bible: The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the sons to the third and fourth generation. I do not want you or her to be persecuted for what I have done.”

María was the closest to him in age among his sisters. Concha having died as a child, and we can smile at her sisterly possessiveness. But it was not to María but to Trinidad that he gave his true legacy. Perhaps it was not a deliberate choice but one dictated by opportunity and the fact that Trinidad knew some English. Exclaiming aloud what a pity it was that he could give her no better keepsake than a little alcohol burner, he handed it to her, whispering in English: “There is something in it.”

When she had returned home and bethought herself of the burner, she and María thought it empty at first, for Rizal had poured out the fluid. Then they heard a rattle, and fishing with a hairpin through the narrow opening for the wick, extracted a piece of common ruled paper, nine by fifteen centimeters, on which a poem of fourteen stanzas, seventy lines in all, had been written in the neat, how somewhat constricted hand of their brother.¹³

It was untitled and unsigned, and has come down to us with the rather repetitious and unimaginative title of “My Last Farewell.” It is, without a doubt, Rizal's major work as a poet, and we are assured by authorities in Spanish literature that it can rank with the best of its kind in that language.

A certain amount of controversy surrounds its composition but de Veyra, who is joined in this by Craig and others, has established beyond any reasonable doubt that it could not have been conceived and drafted in the death-cell.¹⁴ The manuscript given to Trinidad is obviously a final copy and not the original draft; as de Veyra points out, it is extremely unlikely that even the most gifted poet, and even at the culminating point of inspiration, could possibly have written seventy polished Alexandrines right off, without a single change or correction. Furthermore, Rizal did not have the time to compose his poem during the eleven or twelve hours he was in his

death-cell before Trinidad's arrival; there were callers of all kinds, officials, journalists, his family; there were letters to be written; above all, there were the Jesuits and their tenacious unrelenting discussions. From an analysis of the poem itself de Veyra concludes quite reasonably that it was put together from various fragments composed over a period of time, committed to memory, and actually written down in its final form, perhaps in the death-cell, but more likely than not one or two weeks before, and then hidden in the burner in preparation for the right opportunity. But the poet speaks of dying; he says farewell. Here lies the flaw in de Veyra's argument, for Rizal did not know he had been sentenced to death until the morning of the 29th; hence the patriotic myth of its composition in the death-cell. But wherever and whenever it was written, it must be read by all who would know Rizal.

*Adiós, Patria adorada, región del sol querida,
Perla del mar de Oriente, nuestro perdido Edén.
A darte voy alegre, la triste mustia, vida;
y fuera más brillante, más fresca, más florida,
también por ti la diera, la diera por tu bien.*

*En campos de batalla, luchando con delirio,
otros te dan sus vidas, sin dudas, sin pesar,
el sitio nada importa: ciprés, laurel or lirio,
cadalso o campo abierto, combate o cruel martirio,
lo mismo es si lo piden la Patria y el hogar.*

*Yo muero, cuando veo que el cielo se colora
y al fin anuncia el día tras lóbrego capuz;
si grana necesitas para teñir tu aurora,
¡vierte la sangre mía, derrámala en buen hora
y dórela un reflejo de su naciente luz!*

*Mis sueños, cuando apenas muchacho adolescente,
mis sueños cuando joven ya lleno de vigor,
fueron el verte in día, joya del Mar de Oriente,
secos los negros ojos, alta la tersa frente,
sin ceño, sin arrugas, sin manchas de rubor.*

Ensueño de mi vida, mi ardiente vivo anhelo,

*¡salud! te grita el alma, que pronto va a partir;
¡salud! ¡ah, que es hermoso caer por darte vuelo;
morir por darte vida, morir bajo tu cielo,
y en tu encantada tierra la eternidad dormir!*

*Si sobre mi sepulcro vieres brotar, un día,
entre la espesa yerba sencilla humilde flor,
acércala a tus labios y besa el alma mía,
y sienta yo en mi frente, bajo la tumba fría,
de su ternura el soplo, de tu hálito el calor.*

*Deja a la luna verme, con luz tranquila y suave;
deja que el alba envíe su resplandor fugaz;
deja gemir al viento, con su murmullo grave;
y si desciende y posa sobre mi cruz un ave,
deja que el ave entone su cántico de paz.*

*Deja que el sol, ardiendo, las lluvias evapore
y al cielo tornen puras, con mi clamor en pos;
deja que un ser amigo mi fin temprano llore;
y en las serenas tardes, cuando por mí alguien ore,
ora también, ¡oh Patria, por mí descanso a Dios!*

*Ora por todos cuantos murieron sin ventura;
por cuantos padecieron tormentos sin igual;
por nuestras pobres madres, que gimen su amargura;
por huérfanos y viudas, por presos en tortura,
y ora por ti, que veas tu redención final.*

*Y cuando, en noche oscura, se envuelva el cementerio,
y solos sólo muertos queden velando allí,
no turbes su reposo, no turbes el misterio;
tal vez acordes oigas de cítara o salterio:
Soy yo, querida Patria, yo que te canto a ti.*

*Y cuando ya mi tumba, de todos olvidada,
no tenga cruz ni piedra que marquen su lugar,
deja que la are el hombre, la esparza con la azada,*

*y mis cenizas, antes que vuelvan a la nada,
el polvo de tu alfombra que vayan a formar.*

*Entonces nada importa me pongas en olvido:
tu atmósfera, tu espacio, tus valles cruzaré.
vibrante y limpia note seré para tu oído;
aroma, luz, colores, rumor, canto, gemido,
constante repitiendo la esencia de mi fe.*

*Mi Patria idolatrada, dolor de mis dolores,
querida Filipinas, oye el postrer adiós.
Ahí, te dejo todo: mis padres, mis amores.
Voy donde no hay esclavos, verdugos ni opresores;
donde la fe no mata, donde el que reina es Dios.*

*Adiós, padres y hermanos, trozos del alma mía,
amigos de la infancia, en el perdido hogar;
dad gracias, que descanso del fatigoso día;
adiós, dulce extranjera, mi amiga, mi alegría;
adiós, queridos seres... ¡Morir es descansar!¹⁵*

Two voices speak this farewell. One is the voice of the patriot, innocent but guilty, who now makes his own the revolution he has discouraged, deplored and condemned. It is too late for worldly wisdom, “others are giving their lives on battlefields, without regrets or doubts;” but it is not too late to join them, “gibbet or open field, combat or cruel sacrifice, place matters not,” nor does it matter if the end be “laurel” of victory, “lily” of defeat, or “cypress” of martyrdom. When it is required by the Nation, it is beautiful to “fall that she may rise,” to “die that she may live.” Now, though not perhaps in the past, he is certain of final victory; the poet turns prophet on the brink of the grave; he dies “when day breaks at last after gloomy night,” and the blood he is to shed will be “gilded by her rising light.”

The other, gentler, more intimate voice is that of the son, the brother, the lover, who would not be forgotten. He, would survive in a “timid flower” (oh, timid flower, grow!) which friends might kiss, in a prayer at twilight, in a hint of mysterious music from the grave, in a clear and vibrant note in his Nation's ear, in the dust of her dust. The day has been long and weary, and

now he must leave them all to take his rest: father, mother, brothers, friends, and—his last thought, after all, is for Josephine—“sweet stranger, my love, my joy.”

[3]

“The retraction and profession of faith having been signed,” writes Balaguer, “and being thereby placed in a condition to receive the Sacraments [Rizal] asked us to hear his Confession. He knelt at the feet of Father Vilaclara and was a long time confessing. Then he meditated. He went to sleep quietly and on awakening confessed again. At this time he told us that before dying he wanted to marry Josephine Bracken, the Irish girl with whom he had been living with for two years.”¹⁶

This must have been around midnight, and Rizal, having taken the decisive leap back into his age of faith, appeared to be frenziedly trying to accumulate graces in the few hours of life that remained to him: that would be the Catholic explanation for two Confessions, in a row, and others still to come, which would other-wise seem excessive.

Vilaclara said wistfully that there were some rather beautiful acts of faith, hope and charity in his prayerbook which Rizal might like to read. Balaguer, still feeling very much the victorious commander on a hard-won field, thought it proper to observe that this was unnecessary since it was all embraced in the recantation anyway.

“Let me read them, Father,” said Rizal. “I want to give Father Vilaclara that pleasure.”

He had always had exquisite manners. What a boor this Balaguer was, really!

He took his old professor's prayer book, read the acts, gave his assent, and taking up his pen wrote down his name, saying “*Credo*” (I believe). The acts, Balaguer notes zealously, explicitly declared the Real Presence in the Eucharist, the Immaculate Conception, the personal infallibility of the Pope, and the doctrines on Purgatory and indulgences.

He asked for the instrument of recantation and profession of faith and, on his knees before the altar, insisted on reading it out loud, as well as

Vilaclara's acts of faith, hope and charity, before the two Jesuits and the judge advocate, the adjutant of the garrison, three artillery officers, and the commanding officer of the detachment and his men, who were gathered hastily, only Balaguer knows how, and fell astonished on their knees.

All gave thanks to God for this extraordinary change of heart; Rizal himself remained before the altar, sometimes on his knees, sometimes seated, and then confessed to Vilaclara for the third time. He asked Balaguer to read to him, as he meditated, some verses from the psalm *Miserere* and chapters from Kempis; he recited from memory the prayers he had learned in childhood and prayed the Rosary with the priests; he who had not been much of a Marian in the morning now asked Balaguer to bless and place upon his shoulders the blue ribbon and medal of the sodalist. Here was Rizal, a veritable prefect of confraternities, a sacristán indeed! But he seemed too engrossed making his peace with God to cavil at these little personal humiliations. He prevailed upon Balaguer to say Mass at three o'clock in the morning so that he could receive Communion; it was many years, he said, since he had done so. He went to Confession a fourth time before going to Communion, then heard a second mass on his knees, and had to be commanded to rest.

He spent his time on these acts of piety until half past five o'clock in the morning, when he took his breakfast together with some officers.¹⁷

He was waiting for Josephine, and in the meantime scribbled last messages to his family on holy pictures he begged from Balaguer. He wrote one letter to all in common.

To my family:

I beg your forgiveness for the grief I cause you, but one day or another I had to die, and it is worth more to die today in the fullness of my faculties.

Dear parents, brother, sisters: give thanks to God who has kept me tranquil before my death. I die resigned, hoping that with my death they will leave you in peace. Ah, it is better to die than to live in suffering. Be consoled.

I commend you to forgive one another the little vexations of this life, and to try to live in peace and good harmony. Treat our aged

parents as you would wish to be treated afterwards by your own children. Love them much, in memory of me.

Bury me in the earth, put a stone on top, and a cross. My name, the date of my birth, and that of my death. Nothing more. If you want to fence in my grave, afterwards, you can do so. But no anniversary celebrations! I prefer *Paang Bundok*.

Pity poor Josephine.^{[18](#)}

Paang Bundok, meaning in Tagalog foot of the mountain, was a common cemetery to the north of the city; Rizal would not be buried there but within the classic columnades under the lovely gnarled trees of the cemetery at Paco. How ironic that waving away of anniversaries sounds today!

He found time for a special note to his father.

30th December 1896

6 a.m.

My most beloved father:

Forgive me the sorrow with which I repay the anxieties and toil you underwent to give me an education. I did not want this nor expected it.

Farewell, father, farewell!^{[19](#)}

For his mother words seem to have failed him. "To my much beloved mother, Sra. Da. Teodora Alonso, at six o'clock in the morning of the 30th of December."^{[20](#)}

Both notes are signed rather formally with his full name.

Then it was time for poor Josephine. She arrived accompanied by Trinidad, who had to wait outside the death-cell. Both were in floods of tears. Balaguer notified the commanding officer of the garrison that he proposed to marry the condemned man and his mistress. The commander's precautions verged on the absurd. Rizal and Josephine were placed on either side of him and the commanding officer of the detachment, Fresno, who, in turn, faced him. In this curious sort of cross formation, the ceremony was begun. At first Rizal and Josephine were not even allowed to clasp each other's hands, but Balaguer insisted that this was part of the ritual, as indeed

it was. He cut the formalities short and, knowing that both contracting parties were free and capacitated for marriage, asked them only to express their mutual consent; this being given over their clasped hands, Balaguer pronounced the sacramental formula.²¹

Rizal took the Kempis and wrote on the fly-leaf: "To my dear and unhappy wife, 30th December 1896."

They had time to exchange only a few words.

"What is to become of you?"

Some say she answered that she would give lessons in English, others that she would go to the rebel camp in Imus, which seems unlikely in the circumstances.²²

Rizal commended her to the care of the Jesuits. Josephine had the last word in the affair. Some two months later, she wrote in a faltering hand: "... but unfortunately they brought him back again and shot him on the 30th of December 1896; before his execution he married me at 5 o'clock in the morning. This is when I am twenty years of age 1896. Josephine Bracken de Rizal. A Widow. Goodbye Father I am dead."²³ Indeed she was not to live very long after, but, with his Kempis, would be very pious.

[4]

At about half-past six o'clock the detachment that was to escort Rizal to the place of execution fell in. It was drawn from the Spanish regiment of artillery. The high command was taking no chances with mutiny; already the city seethed with rumors that Rizal's family was trying to provoke a rising in Tondo and Trozo, and that the Kabite rebels would make an audacious attempt to snatch him from the brink of the grave. On the Luneta itself the hollow three-sided square was formed by detachments from the light foot regiment, the battalion of local volunteers, and the Filipino mercenaries of the 70th regiment. The firing-squad was from the last, all Filipinos armed with Remingtons.²⁴

A bugler and a drummer led the detachment from Fort Santiago as it debouched into the Plaza del Palacio, and then between the Cathedral and the city wall, to turn sharply right through the narrow wicket-gate, called

just that, Postigo, and thus out of the old city into the Paseo de María Cristina along the bay.

Rizal was in black from head to foot, with only a white shirt and waistcoat for relief. His arms were bound loosely, elbow to elbow, and, some say, a black rosary hung from his right arm. He was accompanied by Taviel de Andrade, and the Jesuits Vilaclara and March; Balaguer should have been there but at the last moment he had been overcome with emotion and had asked March to take his place, his parting suggestion to Rizal being that, upon the command to fire, he should say the prayer of the blind man of Jericho: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

Most eyewitnesses have agreed that he was calm and self-possessed although somewhat pale, holding himself up straight as was his wont, his eyes searching the faces of those who lined the route. A Spanish reporter thought Rizal was looking for someone: a mysterious rescuer, or merely a friend of the proscribed? Perhaps he remembered Ibarra being taken to prison through the streets of his hometown, where "among the persons at the few open windows only the indifferent or the merely curious had shown pity" for one who no longer had "loves nor friends, nor future."²⁵

What did he see in the faces of his countrymen as they watched him go by to his death? Fear, contempt, admiration, anguish, resentment, love, hope, reproach, curiosity? There were few people at the start of the march; one of them, an old friend, tipped his hat quietly and Rizal bowed. But along the bay the numbers were greater, some stood quietly, others followed the detachment, still others ran ahead to the Luneta where a great crowd waited along the flanks of the military square.

These were the people on whom he had spent his genius, for whom he was about to die, and perhaps the reason the Spanish correspondent fancied he saw Rizal searching their faces was that, at this terrible moment, he was seeking judgment on himself and them. What had he done to them? What would they make of themselves, these beloved strangers whom he had taught to become a nation? The one thing the nationalist must learn is to forgive his countrymen.

Not one Elías among them, loyal, grateful, on whose strength, wit and courage one might rely utterly. These were the Isaganis and the Basilio, whose hearts belonged to their Paulitas and Julís, and who dreamed of

decorous careers; these were the wise but impotent Tasios, the cowed heartbroken schoolmasters, the cynical sacristáns, the shocked men of property and women of propriety, whose eyes fell when he looked into them. Don Custodio had prudently stayed at home with his files; Capitán Tiago was making the final arrangements for a fat new contract; Elías and Tales were across the bay and they were better there.

Yet we would be wrong to think that Rizal could now have had regrets or doubts. Let us look at him now, for the last time, in a few minutes he will be done with the world. In one way he has come full circle, for here he is again, walking along the city walls, flanked by Jesuits, the Virgin's blue token on his shoulders, as tidy and fresh as a first communicant, all the bile and anguish of his novels and his pamphlets washed away. In another sense he has started his people off on a journey from which neither they nor he will ever return. The young gallant crossing fencing sticks with Creole cadets is now far behind him, and so is the young poet of the silver quill (strange that he should recall in his farewell poem that phrase from "*A La Juventud Filipina*": "*alza tu tersa frente*"). Far away too the novelist who would touch the heart of Europe, the historian who would trouble her memories, the polemicist who would stir her conscience, the liberal who would win reforms— alas, he had never done these. He had come home expecting to be shot, and his enemies had sent him off to grow bored and scale on the edge of nowhere. He had gone off again, to seek relief and adventure in their own service, and now they were going to shoot him at last. It was about time. There was nothing more he could do for his people except to die for them.

Rid at last of political appetites, moral perplexities, intellectual pride, all the strings of his heart now dangling free and empty, he could utter innocently the thoughts springing unbidden from the memory.

"What a beautiful morning! On mornings like these I sometimes came here for a walk with my sweetheart."

Did it matter that she had been faithless?

"Is that the Ateneo? I spent a few years there."

Seven! Still, one cannot be a schoolboy forever.

Some say he exclaimed: "It was my pride that ruined me!"

But the sentiments do not fit into his mood; it was much too late for recriminations and regrets.

When they neared the military square, he quickened his steps, according to a Filipino eyewitness, or, on the contrary, according to a Spaniard, faltered. These observations must be attributed to the prejudices of the beholder; Rizal was following upon the disciplined measure of drum and bugle, and he could not have faltered because he was not that kind of a man, as every small incident that followed would show more than amply.

Once inside the square something of the searing realization of what death would mean went through him.

“Oh, Father, how terrible it is to die!” he exclaimed. “How one suffers ...”

Then: “Father, I forgive everyone from the bottom of my heart.”

How strange he must have looked, in his black European suit and black derby, facing the eight Filipinos of the firing-squad in their tropical campaign uniforms and straw hats. It was almost as if this somberly garbed man between the two lamp-posts had been indeed a foreign agent from some cold hostile kingdom, and his executioners the true defenders of their native land.

The officer in charge asked him to turn his back to the firing squad. He wanted to be shot in the front, but his request was denied.

“My orders are to shoot you in the back.”

“But I am not a traitor, either to my own country or to the Spanish nation!”

“My duty is to follow orders.”

Rizal shrugged his shoulders, refused a blindfold, and would not kneel.

He asked that his head be spared, and this time the request was granted.

He clasped the hand of his defence counsel, and then said goodbye to the Jesuits who gave him a crucifix to kiss. The army doctor on duty asked to feel his pulse. It was admirably steady.

He took his stand facing the bay, his back to the rising sun. The drums rolled, the shout of command was given, and the Remingtons of the 70th fired. With one last convulsive effort of the will Rizal twisted his body rightward as he fell, his last sight being perhaps the hard empty eyes of the professional soldiers, companions in arms of those who had impassively

lowered Tarsilo down the well and hunted down Elías as he swam in his own blood.

He was facing the dawn now, but this he was not to see.

“¡Viva España!” screamed Doña Victorina in her elegant carriage.

“¡Viva España!” shouted Father Dámaso, and added, shaking his fist, “y que mueran los traidores!”

“Long live Spain and death to traitors!” But as the last Spaniards gave their ragged cheer, and the band of the battalion of volunteers struck up, with unconscious irony, that hymn to human rights and constitutional liberties, the *Marcha de Cádiz*, the quiet crowd of Filipinos broke through the square, to make sure, said the Spanish correspondent, that the mythical, the godlike Rizal was really dead, or, according to others, to snatch away a relic and keepsake and dip their handkerchiefs in a hero's blood.

If he had seen them, the first Filipino would have known that he was not the last.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Chapter XXI

- (1) See de la Costa, op. cit., 70/143.
- (2) *El Imparcial*, 30th December 1896.
- (3) Retana, 417 et seq.
- (4) *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 5th February 1897.
- (5) Retana, 418, quoting Mataix.
- (6) Sp. Doc., 87.
- (7) Ep. Riz., IV, 297.
- (8) Id.
- (9) Ep. Riz., IV, 298.
- (10) Sp. Doc., 81.
- (11) *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 30th December 1896. “El General hubiera deseado que el cumplimiento de inexorables deberes le permitiera identificar la clemencia del gobernante con la piedad de sus sentimientos íntimos.”
- (12) Quirino, 306.
- (13) “*El Último Adiós de Rizal*” by J. C. de Veyra (Manila 1946), 14. This account is based on an affidavit subscribed by Trinidad Rizal on the 14th October 1908.
- (14) De Veyra, op. cit., 17-29.
- (15) De Veyra, op. cit., gives the various versions of the original and numerous translations.
- (16) Almagro, 827, i.e. Balaguer's affidavit.
- (17) Almagro, 827-828.
- (18) Sp. Doc., 89.
- (19) Ep. Riz., IV, 299.

(20) Id.

(21) Almagro, 828 et seq.; again, of course, Balaguer's affidavit.

(22) There is a little known letter in Ponce, 15, which is of some interest. It is addressed to Blumentritt from Hong Kong on the 3rd June 1897 and says in part: “La viuda de Rizal ha llegado aquí el 23 del mes ppdo. y la he saludado en tu nombre ... *Primo de Rivera la expulsó de Manila* ... Viene hecha una separatista: a esto conducen las crueldades de los españoles ... Cuando la toma de Imus ella corrió verdadero peligro de ser capturada por los españoles. Muy de mañana ella fué a bañarse al río; algunas mujeres fueron a buscarla participándola que se acercaban los españoles. Ella continuó tranquilamente su baño y despues fué a la casa donde vivía; allí encontró la comida hecha y comió. 'Si me matan, dice ella, no (yo?) quiero morir con los ojos abiertos.' Esto se dice entre los filipinos. Después de comer fué a buscar a sus compañeras con una olla en cada mano para darlas comida. A cierta distancia de la casa se acordó de haber dejado su revólver en casa, y cuando iba a volver hacia ella, divisó a una compañía de caballeria española. Ella siguió tranquilo su camino, esperando a cada segundo algún tiro por la espalda o que la persiguieran para apresarla. Ella no se explicaba aún porqué se escapó de aquel trance. Es el caso que los españoles siguieron de largo sin fijarse en ella (*y ella*) subió a su casa, cogió el revolver olvidado, y volvió a salir ganando las montañas.”

(23) 100 Letters, 363, Appendix I. it is odd, and perhaps significant for the question of authenticity, that Josephine should have closed her statement with “Goodbye Father.” Was the statement written for and to a priest?

(24) *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 31st December 1896.

(25) *Noli*, 364.



Epilogue

The First Filipino

As long as the Filipino people have not enough spirit to proclaim, brow held high and breast bared, their right to a free society, and to maintain it with their sacrifices, with their very blood; as long as we see our countrymen privately ashamed, hearing the cries of their revolted and protesting conscience, but silent in public, or joining the oppressor in mocking the oppressed; as long as we see them wrapping themselves up in their selfishness and praising the most iniquitous acts with forced smiles, begging with their eyes for a share of the booty, why give them freedom?

E. L. FILIBUSTERISMO

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

GEORGE SANTAYANA

Rizal was the first Filipino. Before him there were the natives of Suluan who rowed out to Magellan's camp on "The Enchanted Island" of Humunu; Pigafetta found them "courteous and honest." They were olive-skinned, rather plump, their bodies oiled and tattooed, with black hair hanging down to the waist, naked except for cloths wrapped round their heads, and over their private parts, strips of bark or, for the chieftains, a band of cotton embroidered with silk at both ends. They were armed with long knives, clubs, and shields and spears decorated with gold. They also wore golden bracelets and earrings; the holes in their ears were so large that a man could put an arm through them. They happily gave Magellan coconuts, oranges, bananas, rice, a jar of palm wine, a fish and a cock, in exchange for mirrors, bells and red caps—a buffoon's very apparel!

There was Humabon, the kinglet of Sugbu, "a short, fat, tattooed man" who began by requiring Magellan to pay tribute (which not four days before a junk from Siam had done for the privilege of buying gold and slaves), and ended up by agreeing to give the Spanish sole trading rights, scared out of his wits by a man dressed head to foot in armor, lured by the assurance that if he was baptized he would never again be haunted by demons. He received Magellan's envoy seated on a palm-leaf mat, naked except for a cotton loin-cloth, an embroidered veil on his head, a rich necklace, and golden earrings set with precious stones. He was eating turtle eggs, sipping palm wine through hollow bamboo tubes, and listening with a careless ear to four naked girls ("barefoot," added Pigafetta archly, remarking that they were "very pretty and almost as fair as Europeans") playing sweet tunes on drums and cymbals.

"They were passionately fond of pleasure and idleness," observed Magellan's Italian chronicler. But they were also "a people that loved justice," and kept strictly controlled measures of weight and length. They were good bargainers with their chickens, pigs and nee, and Magellan had to forbid his men to show an undue interest in gold. On the 14th April 1521 Humabon was baptized with the name of the King-Emperor Carlos, and his Queen ("young and lovely," Pigafetta assures us, her lips and fingernails

painted red, a great hat of palm-leaves with a triple crown, like the Pope's, on her head) Juana, no doubt after the unfortunate mother of Carlos, who had gone mad for love other husband, Felipe the Handsome.

But there was also Lapulapu, kinglet of Mactan, as bold and handsome and supple as the fish for which he was named, who thought himself “as good a man” as Humabon and would not pay tribute to “the, Christian king.” Magellan decided to teach him a lesson and set put for the little island with sixty men in helmets and breastplates. When Lapulapu was threatened with the strength of the strangers' spears, he answered that he and his men had spears as well. He was ready for battle but asked only that the stranger be good enough not to attack him at night; Magellan wisely interpreted this as a ruse to get him to do so, and later found that pits had been dug in the seashore. When he landed at dawn he found that his muskets did not frighten Lapulapu and his men; the balls, piercing their fragile wooden shields, wounded their arms but only seemed to infuriate them more. Magellan tried burning their houses; their martial rage only waxed hotter. They soon learned that steel did not protect the Spaniards below the waist, and a poisoned arrow transfixing Magellan in the leg. He ordered a retreat and the Spaniards fell back in a rout, wading through the surf towards their long boats. Lapulapu and his men pressed on their attack, throwing and picking up the same wooden spear as many as six or seven times. Finally one of them struck Magellan in the forehead; he transfixed the native with his own spear and lost it, and when he tried to draw his sword was cut down, falling face downwards in the water. Humabon tried to buy back the body; Lapulapu replied that he would keep it in memory of a brave man.¹ There was also Suleyman, one of the two rajahs of Manila; required to surrender to Legazpi's emissary, de Goiti, he replied that his men were far from being tattooed savages. He was waiting for the rains to come to put out the tinder for the Spanish muskets when the battle arose through a misunderstanding; de Goiti took Suleyman's fort, but later withdrew.²

But the strategy of the conquest and the long Spanish dominion had been proved: Humabon had set Magellan on Lapulapu; Bisayans from Panay would help Legazpi take Maynilad; Lakandula stood by while the chieftains of Hagonoy and Macabebe died fighting in Bangkusay channel; Bisayans would fight Tagalogs; Tagalogs, Bikolanos, Pampangos, Ilokanos; one tribe against another, under Spanish command, for Spanish profit. The Muslims

of the southern islands would raid the Christian settlements up to the mouth of Manila Bay itself; Bisayans under Spanish captains would march to Lake Lanao, and Pampangos garrison Zamboanga; the Muslims would fight for the Dutch against Christians fighting for the Spanish; Lakandula fought for Salcedo against the Chinese; his son, Magat Salamat, plotted with the Japanese; and Diego Silang offered his allegiance to the British. His widow's Tinggian lancers were beaten by Piddig archers. Cebuanos put down Tamblot's rebellion in Bohol and Bankaw's in Leyte; Lutaos surprised and defeated Sumoroy in Samar.

So it went throughout the centuries as one tribe after another took up arms, against the missionary friars or for them, in protest against a wine tax or against forced labor on the Acapulco galleons, in the name of the old gods or in the name of the new Spanish Constitution. Whether the revolt was long-lived like Dagohoy's in Bohol, which lasted eighty-five years, or as shortlived as Novales's, who “was outlawed at midnight, proclaimed emperor at two o'clock in the morning, and shot at five in the evening,” natives—allies, converts, mercenaries— fought against natives and kept the archipelago Spanish and Christian. Malong proclaimed himself king of Pangasinan; Almazan, king of the Ilokanos; and Apolinario de la Cruz, king of the Tagalogs.

No one proclaimed himself a Filipino.

Even at the time of our story del Pilar called his newspaper *Diariang Tagalog*, and ended his denunciations of the monkish power with the patriotic cries of “Long live Spain! Long live the Army! Down with the friars!” Rizal himself, writing to congratulate López Jaena as late as 1889, exclaimed: “*Sulung ang Bisaya at ang Tagalog!*”³ The eloquent Ilongo, for his part, informed Rizal with considerable satisfaction in 1891 that the Barcelona republicans had offered him a choice of three constituencies in which they would support his candidacy to the Spanish Cortes.⁴ Indeed as we have seen, Rizal too, had considered the same possibility; he did not aim so high as Pedro Alejandro Paterno who, after the Pact of Biyak-na-Bato, claimed that he was acknowledged by the natives as “Prince of Luzon,” and wanted to be named also a Spanish prince or duke, a grandee of Spain, first class, and a senator.⁵

Tagalogs, Bisayans, Pampangos, Ilokanos, Bikolanos were beginning to call themselves “Filipinos,” but they shared this name with any one of Spanish, Chinese or mixed, blood born in the Philippines; “Philippines” was still largely a geographical expression, and loyalty to the “Philippines” was the instinctive affection for the land of one's birth, one's “native land” rather than for a Nation. To the very end the Spaniard from Spain and the Spanish “Filipino” would refer to the natives merely as *indios*. Spanish Governors General in their decrees and proclamations might describe the natives as “Spaniards,” “Spanish citizens,” “Spanish subjects,” as indeed they were, for the Spanish Constitution had set down the principle that any free man born on Spanish soil was a Spaniard. “A Spaniard,” shrugged one of them, “is one who ... can be nothing else.”

It was Rizal, as we have seen, who taught his countrymen that they could be something else, Filipinos who were members of a Filipino Nation. He was the first who sought to “unite the whole archipelago” and envisioned a “compact and homogeneous” society of all the old tribal communities from Batanes to the Sulu Sea, based on common interests and “mutual protection” rather than on the Spanish friar's theory of double allegiance to Spain as Catholic and the Church as Spanish, “the unbreakable keystone of national unity” in Despujol's decree.

Burgos, Gómez and Zamora, traditionally identified with the birth of Filipino nationalism, were but the precursors of this new community, the Filipino Nation, and this should be obvious for the Philippine seculars were priests from beginning to end, with purely priestly grievances and ambitions, and thus they moved by necessity in the wider reaches of the Universal Church. The intellectuals of that generation, who shared the fate of the priests, were equally untouched by the concept of the Filipino Nation, for they moved in turn within the Constitution for all the Spains and all the Spaniards; the reforms, rights and liberties they desired were those guaranteed by the Spanish Constitution to all subjects of the Spanish Crown: representation in the Spanish Cortes, individual liberties, democratic freedoms.

The Filipino Nation was a narrower concept, more exclusive than the Universal Church and the Empire on which the sun had once upon a time never set; but, for those who would call themselves by the new name of Filipinos, it was also a larger and more comprehensive community of all the

tribes on all the islands of the archipelago, with duties and responsibilities that were more urgent and immediate. The racial secular nation would have to seek moral standards for its political, economic and social life independently of, although not necessarily in opposition to, theological doctrines and supernatural sanctions, and it would have to justify its existence and survival by serving the interests of its members over and above those of members of other nations. But Rizal's concept of a Nation, as we should perhaps remind ourselves on occasion was moral, unselfish, responsible, based uncompromisingly on a general recognition of mutual rights and duties. "What is the use of independence if the slaves of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow?" He never confused national independence with individual and social freedom.

Rizal is also the first Filipino because he is first in the hearts of the Filipinos. Nations are known by the heroes they have. If a people have the government they deserve, they also have heroes made in their own image and likeness. Rizal had many competitors for pre-eminence in the generation that gave birth to Filipino nationalism: del Pilar, hurling his Jovian thunderbolts at the Spanish friar, considered by his antagonists as "the real soul" of subversion, "much superior to Rizal," the prodigious, irreconcilable Mabini, prime minister of the war against the United States; and, of course, Bonifacio and Aguinaldo.

There is much to be said for del Pilar. But he died obscurely, almost unnoticed, curiously enough on the 4th July, the date of the recognition by the United States of the Third Republic of the Philippines. Also, del Pilar, like Mabini, was a Mason of the first caliber, and one must reckon with the Church in these matters. Mabini, for his part, would never be forgiven by the Americans for his intransigence.

A warlike people would perhaps have chosen Aguinaldo, the natural soldier who took command of the Revolution, routed the Spaniards on his second attempt, proclaimed the First Republic, and compelled the great North American Union to mobilize against him five times the forces required to secure the Spanish surrender. As president of the First Republic, Aguinaldo was also the embodiment of our short-lived independence, and, if he had fallen in battle, he might have been our national hero. The proclamation of the 12th June as our national independence day, re-enforced by the sentimental, and somewhat political, homages of North American and

Spanish officials, have shored up Aguinaldo's image but his real tragedy is that he did not die. He has lived on in a changing world which he has not understood and which no longer needs him.

Furthermore, heroes are born but they are also made. Not only must a great man die at a great historical moment, and die greatly, so that the nation feels that it dies with him, but after his death it is equally important that the veneration of his memory be encouraged, preached, and accepted by a grateful people. But in the early days of the American occupation, when it was forbidden even to fly the Filipino flag, it was unthinkable that the new sovereign should permit the hero-worship of his deadliest enemy. To allow the president of the Revolutionary Republic to become a living hero would have been to jeopardize the still precarious pacification of the conquered country. Aguinaldo was quietly isolated to end his days as an unsuccessful politician.

But even if he had achieved martyrdom, and even if the Americans had been disposed to allow his nationalist canonization, he would probably still have failed to inspire the whole-hearted love and worship of the Filipinos. We Filipinos have had our share of war and revolution and we know that they leave little room for ethical scruples. But it is to our credit that, while we recognize political necessities, we do not always approve of it. The success of the Revolution may have required a disciplined unity under an unchallenged dictator, and that unity may have demanded the elimination, first of Bonifacio, and then of Antonio Luna, as dangerous rivals of the supreme leader, but these acts of state, of political necessity, would have tarnished a patriotic image.

Why not, then, Bonifacio himself? Why not exalt the worker who organized the mass base of the Revolution among the proletariat and the peasantry, and who took to the field when the *principales* and the *ilustrados* still faltered? Indeed it is significant that labor unions took the initiative in resurrecting Bonifacio from official oblivion. The Marxist interpretation of our Revolution would be that it was a peasant uprising, led and supported by the proletariat, against a feudal system of land tenure; that it pushed aside the gradualist reformers who sought to protect their economic interests through fascist hirelings; and that it ultimately failed and fell far short of its populist goal because of the eventual alliance between American imperialism and Philippine reaction. Under this theory Bonifacio would be

the authentic hero; Aguinaldo, a “Bonapartist adventurer;” Rizal, an ineffectual Fabian.

Indeed it might well be asked: Was not Bonifacio the real maker of the Revolution? Did not history prove him right? Why is it that, for all that, he does not command, even among the masses, from whom he came, among whom he fulfilled his destiny, and whom he led into battle, a love and an admiration comparable to that inspired by Rizal, the property-owner, the very embodiment of the intelligentsia and the petite bourgeoisie, the aloof and gentle doctrinaire?

Yet the Filipinos have chosen Rizal unanimously, irrevocably. It cannot even be said that Rizal became the national hero because the Americans considered him the safest symbol of our nationalism and therefore allowed, even encouraged, his enthronization, for the Filipinos had chosen Rizal even before he died, and his final martyrdom was only the confirmation of a spiritual dominion that even the *Katipunan* acknowledged by rising in his name. The choice was ours. It was Rizal who lifted up the hearts of his generation, and who is enshrined by the Nation and Republic he made. From this choice of our national hero a number of conclusions can be drawn.

The most obvious is that we Filipinos love peace, for we have chosen to magnify a man of peace above the men of war.

The next is that we love freedom and justice, for we have given our worship to a man who, for their sake, forsook the comforts and pleasures of peace. “God is Justice,” wrote Rizal, “and he cannot abandon His own cause, the cause of Freedom, without which there can be no Justice.”

A third is that we prize virtue more than victory, and sacrifice above success, for Rizal died a “failure” in the eyes of the world, at the mercy of an unmerciful enemy. “Redemption,” wrote Rizal, “presupposes virtue; virtue, sacrifice; sacrifice, love.”

We have a national fondness for tragedy, and the essence of tragedy is that the virtuous man suffers because of his very virtues. It has also been observed that we commemorate our defeats rather than our victories. We may honor the fighters who, in hills and cellars, serve their country with the strength of their arms and the resourcefulness of their intelligence, the self-made men, the worldly men, the successful men who do the necessary work

of conspiracy, organization, revolt, and government, without which nothing would be accomplished. But we reserve our highest homage and deepest love for the Christ-like victims whose mission is to consummate by the tragic “failure” the redemption of our nation. They stand above the reproaches and recriminations of human life, and are blessed with true immortality. When, at their appointed time, they die, we feel that all of us have died with them, but also that by their death we have been saved.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES TO SOURCES

Epilogue

- (1) “Primer Viaje en torno del Globo” by Antonio Pigafetta.
- (2) Zaide, I, 151.
- (3) Ep. Riz., II, 143.
- (4) Ep. Riz., III, 237.
- (5) “Memoria” of Primo de Rivera.

Report me and my cause aright. The rest is silence.

SHAKESPEARE (OTHELLO)



A Working Bibliography

The basic source of any Rizal biography is, happily enough, Rizal himself, a conscientious diarist from his earliest days, a tireless and frank correspondent, and a fertile writer. The biographer must, therefore, start, and might indeed well end with:

MEMORIAS DE UN ESTUDIANTE DE MANILA, by P. Jacinto (J. Rizal), published in English translation by L. Ma. Guerrero under the title THE YOUNG RIZAL (Manila, 1951), cited in the References as Memorias.

RIZAL: DOS DIARIOS DE JUVENTUD (1882-1884), annotated by A. Molina (Madrid, 1960), cited as Diarios. The second diary may also be found in Retana, *infra*.

DIARIO DE RIZAL SOBRE SU BREVE ESTANCIA EN LA CAPITAL, contained in and cited through Epistolario Rizalino, IV, *infra*.

DE DAPITAN A BARCELONA: 64 DIAS SIN TOCAR TIERRA and DE BARCELONA A MANILA, by J. Rizal, contained in and cited through Documentos Rizalinos regalados por el Pueblo Español, *infra*.

EPISTOLARIO RIZALINO, the basic collection of Rizal's correspondence edited by Teodoro M. Kalaw, consisting of Volumes I, (1877-1887), II (1887-1890), II (1890-1892), IV (1892-1896), and V (Part I, 1886-1888, and Part II, 1888-1896) which contains his correspondence with Blumentritt (Manila, 1938), cited as Ep. Riz.

ONE HUNDRED LETTERS OF JOSÉ RIZAL, additional correspondence almost entirely from the López Memorial Museum (Manila, 1959), cited as 100 Letters.

DOCUMENTOS RIZALINOS REGALADOS FOR EL PUEBLO ESPAÑOL AL PUEBLO FILIPINO (Manila, 1953), cited as Sp. Doc.

NOLI ME TÁNGERE, a novel, English translation by L. Ma. Guerrero, (London, 1961), cited as Noli. There are number of other translations available.

EL FILIBUSTERISMO, a novel, English translation (The Subversive) by L. Ma. Guerrero, (Indiana University, 1962), cited as Fili. There are likewise a number of other translations available.

SUCESOS DE LAS ISLAS FILIPINAS POR EL DOCTOR ANTONIO DE MORGÁ ANOTADA POR JOSÉ RIZAL (reproduced by offset from the original book, Manila, 1961), cited as Morga.

POESÍAS DE RIZAL, edited and annotated by J. C. de Veyra (Manila, 1946), cited as Poesias.

EL ÚLTIMO ADIOS DE RIZAL, edited and annotated by J. C. de Veyra, (Manila, 1948).

FILIPINAS DENTRO DE CIEN AÑOS, a reprint of the original article (Manila, 1922), cited from *Soli, infra*. His other essays and articles may be found in the collection of *La Solidaridad* in Manila and Madrid, cited as *Soli*.

The amount of writing that has been done about Rizal is overwhelming. The general reader will find more than enough of what he requires in what have been considered the basic biographies:

VIDA Y ESCRITOS DEL DR. JOSÉ RIZAL, by Wenceslao E. Retana (Madrid, 1907), cited as Retana.

BIOGRAFÍA DE RIZAL, by Rafael Palma (Manila, 1949), cited as Palma. This work also won the 1938 award of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. There is an English translation by R. Ozaeta.

THE GREAT MALAYAN, by Carlos Quirino (Manila, 1940), cited as Quirino. This work also won a high award in the 1938 contest.

CRITIQUE OF RIZAL'S CONCEPT OF A FILIPINO NATION, by Cesar A. Majul (University of the Philippines, 1957), cited as Majul, broke new and fertile ground.

RIZAL AND THE PHILIPPINES OF HIS DAYS, by J. Ma. Cavanna, C.M. (Manila, 1957), cited as Cavanna, gives the Catholic version.

RIZAL IN JAPAN, by C. Z. Lanuza and Gregorio F. Zaide (Tokyo, 1961) is one of many interesting monographs written for the Centennial.

As I confessed in my Preface, I found it necessary in writing this biography "to read the history of Spain and to write the history of the Filipinos," the last, of course, only within the limited compass of Rizal's life.

For the Spanish background I relied chiefly on:

THE RISE OF THE SPANISH AMERICAN EMPIRE, by Salvador de Madariaga (New York, 1949).

THE FALL OF THE SPANISH AMERICAN EMPIRE, by the same author, (London, 1947).

HISTORIA POLITICA DE LA ESPAÑA CONTEMPORANEA, two volumes, by Melchor Fernández Almagro (Madrid, 1956), cited as Almagro.

HISTORIA DE ESPAÑA (particularly Volume VIII), by F. Soldevilla, (Barcelona, 1959), cited as Soldevilla.

SINTESIS DE HISTORIA DE ESPAÑA, by Antonio Ballesteros (Madrid, 1952), cited as Ballesteros.

A HISTORY OF SPAIN, by Rafael Altamira, translated by Muna Lee (London, 1949).

I had, fortunately, read much Spanish history in addition. But I am especially indebted to two invaluable works of reference, the ENCICLOPEDIA ESPASA and the DICCIONARIO DE HISTORIA DE

ESPAÑA (Madrid, 1952), cited as Dicc. Hist. Esp. I also found most useful and would readily recommend A CATHOLIC DICTIONARY (New York, 1952) and THE READER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA (New York, 1948).

For the Philippine background I used as a starting-point PHILIPPINE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY, two volumes, by Gregorio F. Zaide (Manila, 1949), cited as Zaide, which was readily available to me in London, as well as his JOSÉ RIZAL: LIFE, WORKS AND WRITINGS (Manila, 1957). However, it would have been impossible to write the biography without at least the following:

EPISTOLARIO DE MARCELO H. DEL PILAR, two volumes, the official collection of his correspondence edited by Teodoro M. Kalaw (Manila, 1955), cited as Ep. Fil.

DISCURSOS Y ARTÍCULOS VARIOS, by Graciano López Jaena (Manila, 1951), cited as López Jaena.

CARTAS SOBRE LA REVOLUCIÓN, by Mariano Ponce (Manila, 1932), cited as Ponce.

ARCHIVO DEL BIBLIOFILO FILIPINO, five volumes, edited by W E. Retana (Madrid, 1895-1905), cited as Arch. Fil.

LA REVOLUCIÓN FILIPINA, two volumes, by Apolinario Mabini (Manila, 1931), cited as Mabini.

LA SENDA DEL SACRIFICIO, by José Alejandrino (Manila, 1933), cited as Alejandrino.

MIS VIAJES CON EL DR. RIZAL, by Máximo Viola, cited as Viola. This was most recently published in The Journal of History, Manila, V. Nos. 1-2, 1957.

IMPRESIONES, by Taga-Ilog (Antonio Luna), (Madrid, 1891).

LA LOBA NEGRA, by José Burgos, ed. by Luciano de la Rosa (Manila, 1958).

NINAY, by Pedro Alejandro Paterno (Madrid, 1885).

Among secondary sources I consider the following indispensable:

HISTORIA GENERAL DE FILIPINAS, three volumes, by José Montero y Vidal (Madrid, 1894), cited as Montero.

THE HISPANIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, by John Leddy Phelan (University of Wisconsin, 1959), cited as Phelan.

LEGAZPI, by José de Arteche (Zarauz, 1947), cited as Arteche.

THE JESUITS IN THE PHILIPPINES, by H. de la Costa, S.J. (Harvard University, 1961).

THE TRIAL OF RIZAL, edited and translated by the same author (Ateneo de Manila, 1961).

THE REVOLT OF THE MASSES, by Teodoro A. Agoncillo (University of the Philippines, 1956), cited as Agoncillo.

THE POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL IDEAS OF THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION, by Cesar A. Majul (University of the Philippines, 1957).

RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION IN THE PHILIPPINES, two volumes, by Pedro S. de Achutegui, S.J. and Miguel A. Bernad, S.J. (Ateneo de Manila, 1960).

PHILIPPINE MASONRY, by Teodoro M. Kalaw, translated by F. H. Stevens and A. Amechazurra (Manila, 1956), cited as Kalaw.

WEYLER EN FILIPINAS, by W. E. Retana (Madrid, 1896), cited as Weyler.

MANIFIESTO AL PAIS SOBRE LOS SUCECOS DE CAVITE, by Carlos Ma. de la Torre (Madrid, 1872), cited as de la Torre.

THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, by John Foreman (London, 1899), cited as Foreman.

TRAVELS IN THE PHILIPPINES, by F. Jagor (London, 1875), cited as Jagor.

A VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINE ISLES, by Sir John Bowring (London, 1859), cited as Bowring.

LAS ISLAS FILIPINAS: DE TODO UN POCO, by Francisco Cañamaque (Madrid, 1894).

SILUETAS Y MATICES (GALERIA FILIPINA), by Antonio Chápoli Navarro (Madrid, 1894).

And a great number of memoirs and little fictions of the same genre, not forgetting an even greater number of polemical pamphlets put out by apologists and critics of the Spanish friars. The newspaper collections of the Madrid *hemerotecas* are in this respect invaluable.

I was unable, of course, to use the splendid Rizaliana series published by the José Rizal Centennial Commission because they were not available at the time I was writing this biography.

Finally I must make room for three works of a general character:

THE NATURE OF BIOGRAPHY, by John A. Garraty (London, 1958).

BIOGRAPHY AS AN ART, edited by James L. Clifford (London, 1962).

THE ART OF TRANSLATION, by Theodore H. Savory (London, 1957).

These confirmed my original desire to write a biography that would not be mere hagiography.

L. Ma. G.



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