Rizal's own story of his life

José Rizal

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RIZAL'S OWN STORY OF HIS LIFE

"IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND THERE
ARE NAMES WHICH OF THEMSELVES SIGNIFY
ACHIEVEMENTS. THEY CALL FORTH
REVERENCE AND REMIND US OF GREATNESS."

EDITED BY AUSTIN CRAIG, RIZAL
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OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Mr. A. Garcia achieved creditable illustrations out of poorly preserved photographs whose historical accuracy has not been impaired by the slightest embellishment.

And the entire establishment of Messrs. E.C. McCullough & Company--printers, pressmen and bookbinders--labored zealously and enthusiastically to do credit to the imprint: "Made in Manila--The Work of Filipinos".

The Memory of Rizal is kept alive in many ways:

1. A province near Manila bears his name.

2. The anniversary of his death is a public holiday.

3. A memorial school has been built by the Insular Government in his native town.

4. His home in exile has been made a national park.

5. The first destroyer of the future Philippine navy is named "Rizal".

6. Rizal's portrait appears on the two-peso bill.

7. Rizal's portrait appears on the two-centavo postage stamp.

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Handwritten quote: It is commonly said that the life of a good writer is best read in his works.

--Autographic quotation from Rizal.

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RIZAL'S OWN STORY

MY BOYHOOD

José Rizal wrote the first three chapters in 1878. He was seventeen years old at that time.

CHAPTER I

My Birth and Earliest Years in Kalamba

I was born on Wednesday, the nineteenth of June, 1861. It was a few days before the full of the moon. I found myself in a village. I had some slight notions of the morning sun and of my parents. That is as much as I can recall of my baby days.

The training which I received from my earliest infancy is perhaps what formed my habits. I can recall clearly my first gloomy nights, passed on the azotea of our house. They seem as yesterday! They were nights filled with the poetry of sadness and seem near now because at present my days are so sad. On moonlight nights, I took my supper on the azotea. My nurse, who was very fond of me, used to threaten to leave me to a terrible but imaginary being like the bogey of the Europeans if I did not eat.

I had nine sisters and a brother. Our father was a model parent. He gave us the education which was suitable in a family neither rich nor poor. He was thrifty. By careful saving, he was able to build a stone house. He also bought another house; and he put up a nipa cottage on our plot of irrigated ground. The cottage was shaded by bananas and trees.

At nightfall, my mother had us all say our prayers together. Then we would go to the azotea or to a window to enjoy the moonlight; and my nurse would tell us stories. Sometimes sad and sometimes gay, nurse's stories were always oriental in their imagination. In these stories, dead people, gold, and plants on which diamonds grew were all mixed together.

When I was four years of age, my little sister Concha died, and for the first time I cried because of love and sorrow. Till then I had shed tears only for my own faults, which my loving, prudent mother well

knew how to correct.

I learned to write in my own village. My father looked after my education. He paid an old man, who had been his schoolmate, to teach me the first steps in Latin. This teacher lived in our house till he died, five months later. He had been in almost perfect health and it was at the moment of death that he received extreme unction.

In June of 1868, I went to Manila with my father. That was just after the birth of Trinidad, the third sister younger than myself. We went in a casco which turned out to be a clumsy boat. I shall not try to tell how happy I was at each new stop on the banks of the Pasig. Beside this same river, a few years later, I was to be very sad. We went to Cainta, Taytay, and Antipolo, and then to Manila. In Santa Ana I visited my eldest sister, Saturnina, who at that time was a student in La Concordia College. Then I returned to my village and remained until 1870.

CHAPTER II

My Schooling in Biñan

Biñan is a town about one and one-half hour's drive from my own town, Kalamba. My father was born in Biñan, and he wished me to go there to continue the study of Latin, which I had just begun. He sent me over one Sunday in the care of my brother. The parting from my family was tearful on the side of my parents and my sisters, but I was nine years old and managed to hide my own tears. We reached Biñan at nightfall. We went to an aunt's house where I was to live. When the moon came up, a cousin took me around the town. Biñan

appeared to me large and wealthy but neither attractive nor cheerful.

My brother left me after he presented me to the schoolmaster, who, it seemed, had been his own teacher. The schoolmaster was a tall, thin man with a long neck and a sharp nose. His body leaned slightly forward. He wore a shirt of sinamay that had been woven by the deft fingers of Batangas women. He knew Latin and Spanish grammar by heart; but his severity, I believe now, was too great. This is all that I remember of him. His classroom was in his own house, only some thirty meters from my aunt's home.

When I entered the classroom for the first time, he said to me:

"You, do you speak Spanish?"

"A little, sir," I answered.

"Do you know Latin?"

"A little, sir," I again answered.

Because of these answers, the teacher's son, who was the worst boy in the class, began to make fun of me. He was some years my elder and was taller than I, yet we had a tussle. Somehow or other, I don't know how, I got the better of him. I bent him down over the class benches. Then I let him loose, having hurt only his pride. After this, possibly because of my small size, my schoolmates thought me a clever wrestler. On going from the class one boy challenged me. He offered me my hold, but I lost and came near breaking my head on the sidewalk.

I do not want to take up time with telling about the beatings I got, nor shall I attempt to say how it hurt when I received the first ruler blow

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