



Entered as second class mail matter at  
the Manila Post Office on Dec. 7, 1955

DECEMBER  
1961

VOL. XIII

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

No. 12

# RIZAL FOR ALL TIMES

**Gen. Carlos P. Romulo**

*-Philippine Ambassador to the United States*

The survival of a great nation was at stake. On the battle field of Marathon a crucial battle was being fought. If the Persians won, a rising civilization would have been nipped in the bud. The Greeks were fighting for their life. They won — and the news of their victory was carried by a Greek runner who ran all the way for many miles to give the great tidings to his people. But as he arrive in Athens he fainted and he could only gasp one word as he expired: "Xantippe!" meaning, rejoice. He did not announce, "We won!" He did

not exclaim "We defeated the enemy!" It was not the elation, nor the pride, nor the arrogance of triumph. It was the spiritual expression of release from a dreadful suspense; it was not so much exultation as inspiration, inspiration for a nation to rise to the nobility of the heroism of those who fought and died that their nation may not perish. It was to rejoice that a civilization could continue to live and flourish.

Thirty-three years ago, on December 30, 1928, I said that the greatest merit of this great Malayan is that there will al-

ways be the unknowable Jose Rizal.

For over two decades since Jose Rizal gave his life for his country, we have been prolific interpreters of his life and of the deeds that have translated that life into a power dominating the thoughts of our people.

At times he is the statesman guarding the hard-won and harder-kept political conquests now in our hands; at other times he is the divinity jealously imposing the precepts ruling our moral conduct. On occasions, we approach him as the loved and lasting arbiter of our loyalty to our present leaders; on other occasions we acclaim him the ultimate standard for our conduct in the home and out of it, for our ideals of a model childhood, of youth maturing into useful manhood.

There is not a phase of our life upon which we cannot bring to bear the telling and permanent influence of Rizal. He is with us, present with his support, when we are in the right. He is against us, convincing in his opposition when we are in the wrong. If, drooping in spirit, we give way to disappointment and discouragement, the whole story of his epic death declares us renegades to the

cause of which he is the martyr.

### *Our Last Resort*

We thus feel that we know him, that we have sounded the depth of his being, that we hold him the companion of all the hours when we give ourselves to the companionship of our country.. Just as he comes to us and in an unflinching priesthood, ordained us into beings greater than what we might be, — because before us are tasks demanding greatness in character, greatness in thought, and greatness in deed, — so we go to him in the hope that we discover, for our fortitude, the dimensions of his mind and the deeper and larger dimension of his sacrifice.

### *Learning to Know Him*

And we have flattered ourselves that we have ventured successfully into this loving inquest into the proportions of his glory. There is no creed or dogma in his political bible but we have reduced into simple terms that even the unlettered among our people shall commune with him and joyously and loyally pledge their support of his leadership. There is no facet of his many-sided genius but we have long and painstakingly and searchingly examin-

ed, and, to our increasing wonder found each developed by him, disciplined by his stern ethical principles into service for the Motherland.

### *Supremely a Patriot*

Even his art as a writer is the art of the political writer. He was the reformer, the fighter for privileges and the recognition of the inherent rights of his people, before he was the poet, the novelist, or the pamphleteer. His means and methods were those of the artist; his aims and his objectives were those of a patriot. He made beauty the handmaid of patriotism. Underlying all his inspirations was his undying devotion to a country under alien domination, to a people feeling, at the climax of his era, supreme confidence in their power to achieve self-rule and a supreme contempt for imposed authority.

### *Built for All Time*

We sense also that wherever he addressed his energies, his leadership of a secret society, for example, the one dominating urge that unsphered his capacity to command others, was his desire to give permanence to his high-hearted dreams for his people. He joined the Masons, not to adjure the church,

but to feel that at that time he had in his power one more force with which to free his people from a double tyranny; the tyranny of superstition over the hearts of the Filipinos, and the tyranny of the defective system of government over the Philippines.

It comes to us, also, as an overpowering realization that he knew the economics of preparedness for the self-erected authority over our nationals. And again, in this, as in the other activities of which he was the directing inspiration, if not the actual chieftain, he flooded the plan and the movement that might have embodied it, with the energy of his self-sacrificing spirit.

### *Filipino, First and Foremost*

Along the horizon where his service to the native land broods as in an unappealable judgement, over the service of which we of this generation and of the remnants of his generation would also render, his genius for guidance is the central circumstance. His is the personality drawn in heroic details. His the words that wander from sense to sense to upgather the counsels he has brought to us. His the direct consent when the consent was patriotic. His the direct denial

when to refuse was patriotic. And in equal measure his was the direct challenge of the iniquities of his age and the direct immolation that his age may be freed from tyranny, that we may be like him, Filipinos before we are followers or leaders, Filipinos before we are Visayans or Tagalogs.

But this which we vaunt is our complete resume of his great life, is it really complete? Have we outlined his great personality, and revealed all the splendor of its power and its proportions? Is there depth to his thoughts unknown to us, direction in his ideals undetected, drift and dispensation in his principles undiscovered, unscrutinized, unstudied?

We say there are. There is an unknowable Jose Rizal, always there shall be an unfathomable Rizal. He would not be the great character that he is were he sufficient unto a generation. He would belong then only to an epoch and not to all epochs. His real greatness is not that he grows with a progressive people, but that he cannot be outgrown by his country and by his people. He shall be with the Filipinos of the future in the climax of every conquest, nay, no superlative moments of victory shall be

achieved without Rizal standing as a presence sharing its moving hours and its moving minutes.

#### *Ever Old, Ever New*

Thus each generation that shall build its share of our national edifice shall discover Rizal. That which we of today can never know about him they shall know. The circumstances and conditions of their times shall bring out new points in his character, new shades of meaning in his thoughts, which we never suspected to exist. He shall fit into their drama of life, as he fits into ours, and as their problems shall be in many aspects different from our problems, they shall see in Rizal elements of greatness and leadership to harmonize with their particular concern.

#### *Always With Us*

So Rizal is Rizal the inscrutable. We can no more know him than we can the future. In our time he has attained full maturity. . But although the years shall leave us, he shall be given to those who come after us. Their problems shall have no height but he shall rise to equal them. No matter how deep their tragedies, how exultant their triumphs, he shall share them

and share them as the dominant leader.

Who would essay to know Rizal of the future would essay to predict these tragedies and these triumphs. There is and there must be this unknowable Rizal. He, more than any other Filipino immortal, embraces in his greatness the fullness of our possible destiny. Should it ever come to pass — and God forbid it — that we shall, in an internecine, a suicidal warfare, the natural off-shoot of the birth pangs of nationhood, become arrayed, brothers against brothers, Filipinos against Filipinos, Rizal like a God shall tread the fields of strife, and calm the passions down to one loyalty to a common country; to one love of a common native land, by giving one name only for all, the name Filipinos, because Rizal was first and last a Filipino!

#### *His Mandate*

And his mandate in this shall be his mandate in all the

events of the future, testing the temper of our national spirit, touching it to a fiery, adamant, achieving power.

May I thus plead the thought that the Rizal of our own generation is the only Rizal we know? Whoever thinks he could transfer him to a permanent pedestal, and say here is our national hero revealed in all his possibilities, is guilty of self-conceit. A new Rizal shall be born with each new era, a Rizal adaptable to every opportunity for service, a Rizal as glorious as any achievement yet greater than it, a Rizal responsive to every crisis yet emerging from each a more colossal Rizal, a Rizal calm in the midst of any frenzied generation, self-contained in the hour of mutual revilement and accusation, a Rizal as sacrosanct as the cause he defended and as immortal as that sacred cause.

\* \* \*

#### *DOG*

*During the siege of Paris in the Franco-German war, when everybody was starving, one aristocratic family had their pet dog served for dinner. The master of the house, when the meal was ended, surveyed the platter through tear-dimmed eyes, and spoke sadly:*

*"How Fido would have enjoyed these bones!"*