



**T**EODORA ALONZO Y QUINTOS was the mother of our national hero Rizal. She belonged to a well-to-do and cultured family of Manila. Her father, Lorenzo Alberto Alonzo, was an educated and wealthy man. He was at one time *capitan* of the municipality of Biñan, Laguna. Her mother, Brigida de Quintos, was also well educated and good in mathematics. Among her relatives were lawyers and priests.

She was born in November, 1827, in Manila. She first studied reading and writing at home under her mother. Then she was placed in one of the well-known convent schools in Manila, the Colegio de Santa Rosa. Here she received an education considered sufficient for young ladies in those days.

In 1848 she was married to Francisco Rizal Mercado of Biñan. They made their home in Calamba, Laguna. They had ten children; namely Saturnina, Paciano, Narcisca, Olimpia, Lucía, María, José, Josefa, Trinidad, and Soledad.

Like the typical Filipino mother she was devoted to her family. She was the head of the household and the manager of the family property. She was known to be a

## Teodora Alonzo y Quintos (1827-1911)

By Dr. Encarnacion Alzona

successful business woman. Her family was the richest in the town of Calamba.

In dealing with her children she displayed firmness of character. She demanded obedience from them, and she reprimanded them when they committed any fault. One of the stories she used to tell them was *The Moth and the Lamp*. It was about a moth which was burned in the flame of a lamp, because it disobeyed its mother. She taught them their first letters. It was she who taught Rizal how to read in Spanish from a popular reader entitled *Amigo de los Niños*. When Rizal began writing poetry, his mother was his critic, for she had literary ability.

She was a martyr. As she lived on land owned by the friars, Calamba was a friar estate, she came into conflict with the friars. She was subjected to all kinds of vexations, and finally the friars, and later the Guardia Civil, brought false charges against her. For her trial, she was ordered to go to the capital of the Province of Laguna, Santa Cruz. She was compelled to walk all the way from Calamba to Santa Cruz. Although found innocent, she was thrown into prison where she stayed for two and one-half years. With Rizal's persecution, her troubles increased, for she was not spared by the Spanish authorities. Some of the family property was confiscated, and the family was ordered out of Calamba. The family then moved to Manila. As a culmination of her sufferings, she lived to see her son executed for being a patriot who loved his country more than his life.

The Philippine Assembly in 1908, recognizing her great sacrifice, proposed to grant her a pension in her old age, but she refused it saying: "My family have never been patriotic for money."

She died in 1911, a true patriot, worthy of the homage and veneration of the Filipino nation.