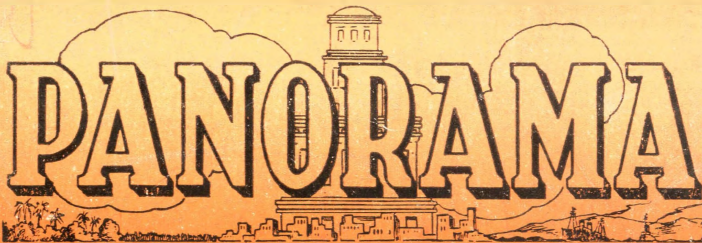


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RIZAL ON THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

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Rizal on the Education of Women

OPEN your children's eyes so that they may jealously guard their honor, love their fellow-men and their native land, and do their duty. Always impress upon them that they must prefer dying with honor to living in dishonor. The women of Sparta should serve you as an example in this; I shall give some of their characteristics.

When a mother handed the shield to her son as he was marching to battle, she said nothing to him but this: "Return with it, or on it," which meant, come back victorious or dead, because it was customary for the routed warrior to throw away his shield, while the dead warrior was carried home on his shield. A mother received word that her son had been killed in battle and the army routed. She did not say a word, but expressed her thankfulness that her son had been saved from disgrace. However, when her son returned alive, the mother put on mourning. One of the mothers who went out to meet the warrior returning from battle was told by one that her three sons had fallen. "I do not ask you that," said the mother, "but whether we have been victorious or not." "We have been victorious," answered the warrior. "If that is so, then let us thank God," and she went to the temple.

Once upon a time a king of theirs, who had been defeated, hid in the temple, because he feared the popular wrath. The Spartans resolved to shut him up there and starve him to death. When they were blocking the door, the mother was the first to bring stones. These things were in accordance with the custom there, and all Greece admired the Spartan woman for them. Of all women—a woman said jestingly—only you Spartans have power over the men. Quite natural—they replied—of all women only we give birth to men. Man, the Spartan women said, was not born to live for himself alone, but for his native land.—*From Rizal's letter to the women of Malolos, February, 1889.*