

THE WIFE OF RIZAL

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Bas-relief of the Wife of Rizal

MUCH has been written and said about Jose Rizal, but comparatively little has come to light about the martyr's wife. It is for this reason that an article

about Josefina Bracken Taufer, the woman whom Rizal married, has been prepared for publication in *THE YOUNG CITIZEN*. The story is as follows:

Among Doctor Rizal's patients was a blind American named Taufer who was an engineer in Hongkong. He and his wife had adopted a girl named Josefina Bracken. This girl had known Rizal, "the Spanish doctor," in Hongkong. She persuaded her foster father to visit Rizal, who had been exiled to Dapitan, with the hope that Mr. Taufer's eyesight might be benefited by an operation by Dr. Rizal.

The frequent visits of this young woman to the doctor with her father gave Rizal ample opportunity to meet her, and it was only natural that he should fall in love with her. Ultimately they were engaged to be married.

Josefina Bracken Taufer was a lively

and capable Irish girl. There was no reason why the couple should not be married, for Rizal considered that his political days were over. Accordingly they agreed to become husband and wife.

Mr. Taufer was in despair when he learned that nothing could be done to restore his eyesight, so he took his adopted daughter with him to Manila before she and Dr. Rizal could be married.

On July 28, 1896, an order from Manila was received by Rizal in Mindanao saying that he would be given his freedom on condition that he go to Cuba for medical service. On arrival in Manila harbor, Rizal was transferred to a Spanish cruiser which was to take him to Spain. About 10 o'clock at night he summoned his sweetheart to come on board, and he bade her goodbye.

Upon arrival at Barcelona, Rizal was detained by Spanish officials, who declared that he was one of the chiefs of the *Katipunan*, and ordered that he be sent back to Manila for trial. Rizal's sweetheart was among the first who learned of his arrival in Manila.



The alcohol lamp in which Rizal's farewell poem was hidden.

Soon after Rizal landed in Manila, he was imprisoned in Fort Santiago. Miss Taufer asked for permission to visit Rizal in his prison cell, but this was refused by Spanish officials. A week

later on Monday, December 27, 1896, he was visited by his entire family who brought Miss Taufer with them.

About half an hour later Rizal suggested to Miss Taufer that their marriage service should be performed before he was shot. She agreed to the arrangement. The next morning she was not admitted to the cell, but on the morning of the execution, at six o'clock, she went to see Rizal, and they were quietly married.

Josephine Bracken Taufer, the wife of Rizal, was interviewed in 1899 at a house in Calle Dulongbayan in Manila. In the course of the interview this young woman, who became Mrs. Jose Rizal just 15 minutes before the execution of the Filipino hero, told the following about her last hours with Rizal:

"Rizal begged me to forgive him for the sorrows he had caused me, and told me that in the little alcohol cooking lamp he had hidden a paper for me—the last message to his country. Then we parted forever, for the Spanish officers refused to let me talk with him any more.

"I went to the place of the execution on the Luneta, as he bade me. I was not permitted to go near him. He behaved with great fortitude all the time.

"I followed Rizal's body to the Paco cemetery, but they shut the gate in my face. I cried out, but it did no good. After a short time I tried again to go to Rizal's grave but again the soldiers guarding it refused. I told them they

might shoot me but I would go, and they let me pass."

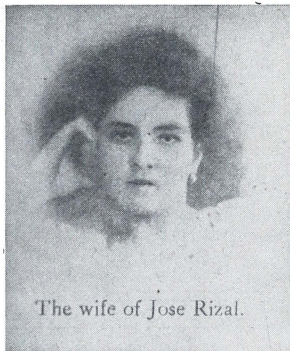
Rizal's widow fought in the Philippine insurrection against Spain. Finally she was caught and sent to Hongkong. After the death of her adopted father she married Don Vicente Abad, who at the time was connected with the Tabacalera Company in Hongkong.

What the outcome of this second marriage was we do not know, but after the second anniversary of Rizal's martyrdom

was observed under the American regime, Josephine Bracken Taufer came back to the Philippines.

She lived temporarily in Cebu and earned her livelihood by giving lessons in English. One of her pupils then was Sergio Osmeña, now vice-president of the Philippine Commonwealth. Afterwards she was a teacher in the public schools.

Later Mrs. Rizal went to Hongkong where she was placed in a hospital on account of ill health. She died in Hongkong and was buried in the Catholic cemetery.



Photograph of Rizal's Wife

REVIEW

1. What was the name of the woman whom Jose Rizal married?
2. In what city was her home?
3. Why did her foster father visit Rizal?
4. Where was Rizal living at that time? Why?

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CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

(Continued from page 458)

lowly I go. Into the midst of riches and poverty. And the thing I find is always the same. It fills my heart with happiness.

CRISTETA: Surely you did not find anything so very wonderful here, sir.

ANA: We were only wrapping Christmas presents. What could you find here to make you happy?

CRISTETA: We were so happy about our presents for Mother and Grandmother and Daddy, that we couldn't think of anything else.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS: And what are these Christmas presents which give you so much joy?

JUAN: A holder for Dad's neckties. I made it at school.

ANA: And I made a little red pincushion for Mother.

PEDRO: And a gold ring for Mother!

CRISTETA: They are wonderful presents, aren't they?

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS: Of course they are. And it all goes to prove what I say. I never knew it to fail. Automobiles or pincushions, it is always the same.

JUAN: What do you mean?

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST-

MAS: I mean just this. Wherever there is love, there is joy. And wherever there is Christmas joy, there is the Christmas Spirit. That is why I am with you children. Merry Christmas!

ALL: Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! And may the Christmas Spirit always remain with us!

CURTAIN

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is the meaning of this playlet?

2. Is there a lesson to be learned from it? What is the lesson?

3. Is the opening of this playlet a happy scene?

4. Could such a scene be found almost anywhere in the Philippines?

5. Did these children belong to a happy family? Why do you think so?

6. Were they rich?

7. Were the two brothers and the two sisters loyal to each other?

8. At what point in the story did the Christmas Spirit enter.

9. Why did the Christmas Spirit not leave with the singers?

10. Were the children's presents costly?

11. What makes a Christmas present worth while?

12. Why do we give presents at Christmas?

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(Continued from page 469)

5. Of what nationality was Miss Taufer?

6. Why did Rizal not marry Miss Taufer in Dapitan?

7. What official order did Rizal receive?

8. Tell of his departure from Manila.

9. What accusation was made in Spain against Rizal?

10. Where was he sent? Why?

11. Where was Rizal imprisoned?

12. Can his prison cell still be seen? (Yes)

13. What request by Miss Taufer was refused?

14. Who visited Rizal in his prison cell on December 27, 1896?

15. What agreement did Rizal and Miss Taufer then make?

16. When were they married? How long before Rizal's execution?

17. What did Rizal tell about the alcohol lamp at his last meeting with Miss Taufer?

18. Did Mrs. Rizal witness the execution of her husband?

19. How did Rizal act at his execution?

20. What request did Mrs. Rizal make at the gate of Paco cemetery in Manila?