

RIZAL IN LIFE ☆

THE more you know about Jose Rizal the more you love him. Contact with his life does something for your own. It grips you and stirs you with a desire to be noble like he was. He was the embodiment of an ideal, like Sun Yat Sen or Mahatma Gandhi—how like them both!

But Rizal is in danger—in danger of being turned into a cold statue on top of a monument, in danger of being honored or sainted or even worshipped by some, while the people who do him honor are not informed—or misinformed!—as to what he did and why he died. Even today he is lost to millions. His portrait is on their walls, they may have read his "Noli Me Tangere", they may even have memorized his "Ultimo Adios"; but when one relates some of the most important incidents of his life, nearly everybody, even among educated Filipinos, says: "I never knew that!"

Yet the *life* Rizal lived is a more abiding gift than the books he wrote. The conditions he fought against have largely been remedied, or will be remedied, and are becoming merely history, but the life he lived is of endless importance. Every Filipino youth needs

to be saturated with the purity, sincerity, and devotion of that lovely spirit. In public and private schools as well as in homes he must be studied. Now that the Commonwealth has come with all its hopes and perils, EVERYTHING will depend upon whether the Filipino people possess the ruling passion of Rizal's life: Progress for his country through character and education.

"So he who takes wise Education by the hand

Invincible shall guide the reigns of motherland."

Rizal was not perfect, yet a complete list of his "sins" could probably be written in one short paragraph. Rare are the men whose life story you dare begin by enumerating their weakness!

1. As a youth he played some jokes on his friends that made them angry.

2. For a time he chewed tobacco. (How has this escaped advertisers).

3. Occasionally he lost his temper:

He once fought a cab driver; he was heard to swear when he learned of some atrocities in the Philippines; he twice challenged men to duels.

One of these men, Antonio Luna, said something insulting about a woman of Rizal's acquaintance. In our day duels are outlawed, but in Rizal's day in Europe, his championing of the reputation of a woman was the highest proof of honor. Antonio Luna apologized and became Rizal's warm friend.

The other man, W. E. Retana, was chief editor of a paper controlled by friars in Spain. He made a bitter attack on Rizal, but when he received the challenge, he published a retraction and an apology. Retana later became Rizal's warm friend, ardent admirer, and greatest biographer.

These challenges were inconsistent with Rizal's philosophy of pacifism; and we must place them in the brief list of his weaknesses, though to the men of his own day they were an evidence of his moral strength and courage.

This seems to complete the list of his "sins"!

When we turn to study his virtues, Rizal shines like a diamond on every facet.

* This article is a portion of a book written by a known American author. The Community Publishers, Inc. is at present making the necessary preparations for the publication of this book.

A Class Who Won . . .

(Continued from page 118)

back a little due to Jose's absence. Then today a strange thing happened. Martin of the fourth grade-A class, who has never been absent since the opening of the school year, is sick. His mother came this morning and told me that Martin was

given purgative this morning because he had a very bad stomach ache last night. His whole day's absence gives the sixth grade class the lead in the race.

Juan had been chosen class representative to get the banner. To the surprise of everybody, he came forward, his face a picture

of sorrow and regret. Instead of taking the banner from the principal's extended hand, he faced the audience and said in a low but firm voice:

"My class does not deserve the banner. The Four-A class should have it. I played a dirty trick on Martin. I am sorry."