

The Boyhood of Jose Burgos

By Jose Ramirez

WHEN you are old enough to study the history of our country, you will learn why three Filipino priests were executed by the Spanish government as a result of the Cavite Revolt. One of these priests was Father José Burgos, teacher of patriotism.

Burgos was born in Vigan on February 9, 1837. You can find Vigan on your map. It is the capital of Ilocos Sur, and it is the most beautiful town in the Ilocos provinces.

Jose's father was one of the prominent citizens of Vigan and his mother could read and write. She was one of the few who appreciated the value of an education. Jose's parents were strict with him for they wanted to see him become a good and useful man. They worked very hard so that they could give him all the advantages of a good education.

From his mother and father Jose learned to read and write. As a small boy he was studious. He always wanted to read, read, and read. He finished the *Cartilla*, and the *Caton* in a short time. Very soon he could read without the help of his parents. He studied hard at home and at school. His parents were surprised to see his rapid progress. So they began to think that their son would some day become a priest.

Although he was studious, Burgos did not neglect his health. He played a great deal with other boys. He was obedient and honest. He hated to quarrel with his companions, yet he was always ready to defend his playmates if they were in the right. His favorite games were *San Pedro*, *biola*, hide and seek, swimming, and running. In all these games he always played honestly and fairly. He was a good loser and a generous winner.

When he was studying in his home town, Jose paid close attention to his lessons so that in a short time he knew more than his classmates. It was by studying hard that he began the long struggle for an education — a struggle which he continued throughout his life. He took primary work under unkind teachers. He often complained that they did not teach him the meaning of the passages which they required him to memorize.

To make him work harder, one of his teachers

encouraged young Jose in his studies. He repaid his teacher by being always at the head of the class in all his subjects.

As a boy Burgos learned many things about his country which he never forgot. He learned that his fatherland was ruled by officers who were cruel and unjust. He heard that his countrymen were unhappy, and he kept thinking about them throughout his life. In Vigan he saw the poor badly treated, the farmers' crops taken away, and the people made to work hard and long and without pay. Everywhere he saw that the common people were not happy. He often wondered whether the people in other towns were also suffering in the same way.



Father Burgos, Teacher of Patriotism

Jose's ability surprised his delighted teachers, who persuaded his parents to send him to Manila to continue his studies. He studied in San Juan de Letran. In this college he was the head student. He led his fellow students in a protest, for he thought that a Filipino who was next to him in line should be appointed his successor as the head of the students. The students knew they were right and they won their case. As a result of this, Burgos made many enemies. His fearlessness when he knew he was in the right made many hate him.

Burgos studied for the priesthood in the University of Santo Tomas. When he finished his studies, he secured a position in the Manila Cathedral by taking a competitive examination.

You will study more about Jose Burgos later. He died in 1872 as a martyr. As a boy he was honest, obedient, upright, industrious, and studious. He loved his parents. He was a model Filipino boy.

NEXT MONTH

Stories about Rizal revealing his bright mind and keen wit even as a boy, his great love for things Philippine; about Leon Mu. Guerrero, the poor lad who lived to become one of our foremost scientists; and about Nicanor Abelardo, the humble but inspired composer of kundimans.