

# RIZAL, FILIPINO MARTYR, WROTE REMARKABLE POEM

By FORMER CONGRESSMAN CLYDE H. TAVENNER.



DR. JOSE RIZAL,  
The Filipino Patriot.

Every year June 19 is celebrated by Filipinos as the anniversary of the birthday of the Filipino martyr, Dr. Jose Rizal, regarded as the greatest man the Malay race has produced.

Rizal, who spoke seven languages and was a cultured and much traveled man (on one occasion he traveled across the United States), earned the enmity of Spanish governors in the Philippines by protesting against the oppression of the Filipino people. As a boy he had witnessed scenes that sent shafts of grief into his poet soul, and he early dedicated his life to the liberation of his "land adored." At the risk of his life, and at the sacrifice of his career, friends and loved ones, he became the spokesman for the stifled grievances of the voiceless multitude, and thus became "the living indictment of Spain's wretched colonial system."

Rizal could have saved his life, as he had been warned by friends not to return to the islands. He could not be dissuaded, but before returning to Manila left a letter with a friend in Hongkong to be opened after his death, in which he wrote: "Gladly do I go to expose myself to peril, not as any expiation of misdeed (for in this matter I believe myself guiltless of any), but to complete my work and myself offer the example of which I have always preached. A man ought to die for duty and his principles. I hold fast to every idea which I have advanced as to the condition and future of our country, and shall willingly die for it. I hold duties of conscience above all else. Besides I wish to show those who deny us patriotism that we know how to die for duty and principles."

While Rizal was in Europe working for Philippine reforms, the Spanish governor-general, to indirectly punish Rizal, carried on a relentless persecution of his parents and relatives in the Philippines, driving them into exile. To his parents Rizal left a second letter, saying: "Should fate go against me, you will understand that I shall die happy in the thought that my death will end all your troubles. Return to our country and may you be happy in it. Till the last moment of my life I shall be thinking of you and wishing you all good fortune and happiness."

Spain had meanwhile determined on having Rizal's life, foolishly thinking that if his voice was stilled agitation for the reforms he championed would end. Rizal was arrested on a trumped up charge of treason and condemned to death. But no sooner had the firing squad completed its work than the teachings of Rizal almost instantaneously became the passionate inspiration of the whole Filipino race. His unjust execution had simply transferred the intense patriotism of Rizal to the breasts of an entire nation of people. The Philippine nationalism of today dates from the sunshiny morning of December 30, 1896, when Rizal was led forth from his prison to willingly give, as he himself said, his life for his country's redemption.

While touring in the Philippines recently the conviction was ever present in my mind, and I could not throw it off, that the real inspiration as well as the leadership of the Filipino people in their present desire for independence is the spirit of Jose Rizal. The memory of Rizal and the desire for independence seem to be synonymous in the mind of the average Filipino.

Rizal is the inspiration of all classes, of old and young, of all the people; he is not dead, for his spirit is everywhere in that beautiful land. His picture adorns the homes of the poorest families; streets, avenues and cities are named in his honor, while his statue stands in the parks and public squares. In life Rizal was a beautiful character, kind and considerate of all, gladly giving his life for his country, and in memory he has become the national idol. With such a spirit as its national inspiration the Philippines can not help but reach heights now not dreamed of.

While awaiting death in his cell during his last night on earth Rizal wrote a remarkable poem, "My Last Farewell." He secreted the manuscript in an alcohol cooking lamp, where it was found after his execution. It follows:

## MY LAST FAREWELL

By DR. JOSE RIZAL.

Farewell, dear fatherland, clime of the sun caroled,  
Pearl of the Orient sea, our Eden lost;  
Gladly now I go to give thee this faded life's best,  
And were it brighter, fresher or more best  
Still would I give it thee, nor count the cost.

On the field of battle, 'midst the frenzy of fight,  
Others have given their lives without doubt or heed;  
The place matters not—cypress or laurel equally white,  
Scaffold or open plain, combat or martyrdom's plight.  
'Tis ever the same, to serve our home and country's need.

I die just when I see the dawn break  
Through the gloom of night, to herald the day  
And if color is lacking my blood thou shalt take  
Pour'd out at need for thy dear sake,  
To dye with its crimson thy waking ray.

My dreams, when life first opened to me,  
Were to see thy loved face, O gem of the Orient sea,  
From gloom and grief, from care and sorrow free;  
No blush on thy brow, no tear in thine eye.

Dream of my life, my living and burning desire,  
All hail! cries the soul that is now to take flight;  
All hail! And sweet it is for thee to expire  
To die for thy sake that thou mayst aspire;  
And sleep in thy bosom eternity's long night.

If over my grave some day thou seest grow  
In the grassy sod, a humble flower,  
Draw it to thy lips and kiss my soul so,  
While I may feel on my brow in the cold tomb below  
The touch of thy tenderness, thy breath's warm flower.

Let the moon beam over me soft and serene,  
Let the dawn shed over me its radiant flashes,  
Let the wind with sad lament over me keen;  
And if on my cross a bird should be seen,  
Let it thrill there its hymn of peace to my ashes.

Let the sun draw its vapors up to the sky,  
And heavenward in purity hear my tardy protest;  
Let some kind soul o'er my untimely fate cry,  
And in the still evening a prayer be lifted on high,  
From thee, O my country, that in God I may rest.

Pray for all those that hapless have died,  
For all who have suffered the unmeasured pain;  
For our mothers that bitterly their woes have cried,  
For widows and orphans, for captives by torture tried,  
And then for thyself that redemption thou mayst gain.

And when the dark night wraps the graveyard around,  
With only the dead in their vigil to see;  
Break not my repose or the mystery profound,  
And perchance thou mayst hear a sad hymn resound;  
'Tis I, O my country, raising a song unto thee.

When even my grave is remembered no more,  
Unmarked by never a cross or a stone;  
Let the slow sweep through it, the spade turn it o'er,  
That my ashes may carpet thy earthly floor,  
Before into nothingness at last they are flown.

Then will oblivion bring me no care,  
As over thy vales and plains I sweep,  
Throbbing and cleansed in thy space and air,  
With color and light, with song and lament I fare,  
Ever repeating the faith that I keep.

My fatherland adored, that sadness to my sorrow lends,  
Beloved Filipinas, hear now my last goodbye,  
I give thee all: parents and kindred and friends;  
For I go where no slave before the oppressor bends,  
Where faith can never kill, and God reigns e'er on high.

Farewell, father and mother and brothers,  
Dear friends of the fringed!  
Thankful ye should be for me that I rest  
at the end of the long day.  
Farewell, sweet, from the stranger's land,  
my joy and my comrade!  
Farewell, dear ones, farewell! To die is  
to rest from our labors!

## SAYS ALL FILIPINOS WANT INDEPENDENCE.

"It is frequently said that only the politicians in the Philippines want independence, but I do not think such is the case," said Dr. D. M. Gandier, superintendent of the California Anti-Saloon League, who has just returned from the Philippines. "I have met all classes of people from various parts of the islands and all alike seem to me to desire independence. I am inclined to think that they have the ability to govern themselves. We are developing a social and political conscience in America and they will develop one there; and I very much doubt that they will learn as fast under present conditions as they would under complete independence. Independence in some form is bound to come and I am inclined to think that it had better come soon."

## FILIPINO LEGISLATORS DEBATE IN ENGLISH.

The English language recently was used for the first time in the debates of the Filipino House of Representatives. The fact was cabled to the United States Insular Affairs Bureau. The principal speakers were Messrs. Benitez, De Guzman and Virata. These members are graduates from the University of the Philippines. English is taught exclusively in the public schools of the Philippines, and it is announced, will continue to be if independence is granted. According to an estimate based on the census just completed, seventy per cent of the inhabitants of the Philippines over 10 years of age are literate. This is a higher percentage of literacy than that of any South American country.



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" 1908	142,413.20
" 1910	607,390.23
" 1912	1,008,686.37
" 1914	1,287,124.62
" 1916	1,412,686.06
" 1918	1,691,775.12
Nov. 17, 1919	2,198,801.53
Feb. 28, 1920	2,289,202.14
y 4, 1920	2,371,439.68

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