**University Life**

Jose Rizal to Blumentritt, November 8, 1888 – I still remember and will never forget that when I was sixteen my mother told my father: “Don’t send him to Manila any longer; he knows enough; if he gets to know any more, they will cut off his head.” My father did not reply, but my brother took me to Manila despite my mother’s tears.

Don Francisco had no intention of cutting short his younger son’s scholastic career, particularly since Paciano had to leave the university himself.

At first he had been attracted to the priesthood (Rizal would have been a JESUIT) but this is a natural propensity in young boys and girls in religious schools.

The Jesuits suggested that he take up farming. Nut his real choice was between literature, law and medicine

Paciano Rizal to Jose Rizal, 1883

In any case Jose marked time by enrolling both in the Ateneo for a course in land surveying and in the Dominican University of Santo Tomas in the course of philosophy and letters, apparently because his father wanted him to study metaphysics.

He also engaged successfully in the final test of the course, a public defense in Latin.

In the Ateneo he won two medals, in *topography* and in *agriculture*. He was later to qualify as a surveyor and expert assessor with the grade of “excellent.”

In the next term, he made up his mind to study medicine because his mothers’ sight was failing. He was given in sixteen subjects three passing grades, eight “goods,” three “very goods,” and only two “excellent.” Perhaps medicine was not his real vocation. Yet for all that he was to prove a most skillful ophthalmologist.

Rizal had been graded “aprovechado,” that is to say, “proficient” in physics in his pre-medical course in Santo Tomas.

His first infatuation was with a saucy little Batangueña by the name of Segunda Katigba.

The Filipina girls in Rizal’s time were married young because their parents wanted to be relieved as soon as possible of the vexing responsibility of protecting the virginity, nay, the inaccessibility, of their daughters.

Jose never found himself alone with the fascinating Segunda. They would see each other on their Sunday visits to the Trozo house but always in company.

In El Filibusterismo, it pictures life in Manila as the Noli life in the province.

Rizal describes the student of his times (in the Ateneo)

* some were dressed in the European fashion
* they walked briskly
* loaded with books and notebooks
* worried
* going over their lessons and their compositions

Those from Letran could be distinguished from the others because,

* they were almost dressed in the native fashion
* were more numerous
* carried fewer books
* university men dressed more neatly and carefully
* they ambled along and carried not books but walking sticks

He was spending the summer holidays in Kalamba after his first year in medical school when, going along a street one dark night, he failed to doff his hat to a constabulary lieutenant, who promptly cut him with a native whip across the back, threw him in jail despite his wound and threatened him with deportation.