

MR FATHER

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THE PHILIPPINES FREE PRESS requests that I write something pertaining to the daily life of General Aguinaldo - his habits, customs, opinions on topics, his likes and dislikes. I gladly do so.

I shall begin with his daily routine whenever he is at Kawit. He gets up very early in the morning, often before five o'clock except after a very long trip when, through fatigue, he oversleeps. But this seldom happens. He says he has already reached the age when he can sleep only from three to six hours a night. When preparing an important document, he sometimes does not sleep at all. He does not dictate his statements. He writes them out in long hand, closely spaced and in very fine letters. He goes at it paragraph by paragraph, perfecting each paragraph by writing it several times. He then goes on to the next, and so on. Whether in Spanish or Tagalog, that is his method. After finishing his own draft he turns it over to his advisers for polishing and revision.

At about six in the morning he takes his daily exercise, followed by a cold shower. Before he was given a chest expander, his exercise consisted in stretching his arms out above his head, then bending his body, with legs stiff, and then straightening to the erect position. He did that 113 times - because when he was operated upon for appendicitis some gauze was left inside and was found only on the 113th day. Now he has modified this by adding exercises with the chest expander. He began with two springs; now he uses five. When he has time he goes swimming in the small pool under his room to which he has a private entrance. After his shower he invariably pours plenty of alcohol on his head, wetting the hair and scalp thoroughly with it. I suspect that this is the reason why he has very few gray hairs, and I have been suggesting to Mr. Melencio that he follow suit in order to prevent incipient baldness.

About eight o'clock he takes his breakfast consisting mostly of fruits mango, papaya or bananas, any kind - plenty of oatmeal with fresh carabao milk, two soft-boiled eggs and a cup of chocolate. When he is in a hurry he mixes the oatmeal, the eggs and the chocolate in a soap plate. He says the mixture is great!

Half an hour later, he is on his way to Manila. He seldom fails to go to his office. If he cannot leave early, it is because there are veterans or other people at the house who would like to talk to him. It is a rare morning or evening that he does not have people waiting for him. Either they need his assistance on something or they want to consult him about diverse affairs. Sometimes he is even asked to play the role of sooth-sayer to locate a lost article. Among the older residents in the environs of Kawit, he holds the reputation of being able to indicate where lost things can be found by their owners. Evidently most of his guesses have turned out correctly.

Many Visitors

To reach the third floor of the Roxas building, where his Manila office is located (now his office is at Calle Lara, San Nicolas district) he prefers not to use the elevator he walks up the numerous steps for the exercise there is in it. All day at his office he is literally swamped with callers - people of various hues, creeds, and political faiths; people who want recommendations; veterans with their troubles. With what patience he listens to each and every one!

There is no time limit to the calls either. The long-winded sometimes stay the whole morning or afternoon-conferences by installments - occasionally stopping to allow other to finish their business. It has been suggested that there be strict orders setting time for those calls. "It can't be done," is the General's reply, "it might be resented, especially by those of the older generation."

Eats Lunch in Office

He does not go out for lunch. He takes it right in his office, a very simple affair by the way - a glass of milk, toast, and some cookies- day in and day out. He eats it usually at one o'clock, due to the numerous visitors.