

Speech at the City Palace (Exhibition Palace) May 15th 1921

Valencians:

I cannot express to you my state of mind, after such a beautiful, enthusiastic and above all spontaneous reception.

Even if I had written ten times more than I have written, even if I had sung of Valencia with those accents that you would not have found in any poet, from Homer to the present, even if I had achieved the greatest feats in the field of action or in the field of literature, I would not be able to place myself on the same level, I would not be able to deserve such a great demonstration of affection as the one you have shown me.

I have only one merit for you: the merit of being your brother by birth and the merit that wherever I go, the image of Valencia, which is the image of my childhood and my youth, of the most beautiful part of my life, accompanies me everywhere.

On this occasion, during the days that I am going to stay in Valencia, with more calm and with more strength, I will tell you how the image of Valencia has accompanied me on all my pilgrimages, which have almost covered the whole of the earth.

Sometimes the memory has been by contrast, when I was contemplating the gigantic city of New York; by the force of the contrast, the smiling fields of Valencia came back to my memory.

On the other side of the United States, on the shores of the Pacific, I have found a Valencia that you all know by name: I have been to California, one of the most beautiful countries on earth.

Do you know what California is? California is simply Valencia.

I need only say that in the same way that maps reproduce countries and underneath they say: "Proportion of 1 per 1000", with California it is the other way round: it is a city enlarged to 1 per 1000; but it is no more, no less, as beautiful as Valencia.

The only satisfaction I shall have when my last hours come is that my literary work will have served to reveal, not only to Spain, not only to Europe, but to most of the nations of the earth, what has been the life of Valencia on the coasts, what has been the life of Valencia in the huerta, what has been the life of Valencia in the Albufera; and I shall die with the peace of mind of having contributed to national literature the image of one of the most beautiful countries by nature, the most fruitful for civilisation because of the artists of all kinds that it has produced.

We'll be seeing each other all week long - Viva Valencia!