

Speech at the Jabonería Nueva Street

May 22th1921

Dear friends,

I wish I could express to you my state of mind. I can assure you that of all the festivals with which Valencia has entertained me, none has touched my soul so intimately as this one.

I found myself in the street which, during the first years of my life, was for me the summary of the world; every stone, every house, has for me emotional memories and they all evoke my initiation into life, the first years of my existence.

Here live all my memories of the past, the first vision of the world, which was a vision of struggle and war. Precisely between these two corners where I find myself, a revolutionary barricade greeted my birth in 69, and another barricade in 73, and in that vision of the revolutionary struggle, the love of Liberty, Democracy and the Republic began to be moulded in my spirit.

I consider it a title of honour to have been born in a neighbourhood which has at its heart the Plaza de las Escuelas Pías, which has been the theatre of all the republican movements and which has witnessed all the struggles of this people to defend their noble ideals.

This street of the Jabonería Nueva has travelled a long way without moving from here.

Its memory has accompanied me on all my travels and, in faraway countries, the first years of my life would spring to mind and I would see in this street that boy in short trousers and a long blouse, who, when he was already beginning to achieve some success in the middle of his life's journey, only aspired to conquer a flower of immortality to offer it to Valencia.

Of all the tributes, this is the one for which my soul is most grateful; not because it is an honour and flattering, but because it unites me more closely to you.

I have always been a propagandist for Liberty, Democracy and the Republic, these great ideals kept alive by the people of Valencia.

You do not know me now. I am a man of firm democratic ideals; I wish for this people a political organisation like that of the great republican country of the United States, and I never forget that I am and always will be a republican.

I do not forget my principles - how could I forget them!

But for the common work of Valencia I am obliged to respect everyone and I ask everyone to respect me.

I am going to continue my life. And if at any moment I feel my strength flagging or I am overcome by discouragement and fatigue, I will remember this plaque, and rise above it, I will feel energised to fulfil the mission I have set myself in defence of my ideals and of my beloved Valencia.