

The Life of Teodoro M. Kalaw, Sr.

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In the roll of illustrious Filipinos, the name of Teodoro M. Kalaw scintillates as a star in the firmament of the Philippine hall of fame. A lawyer of the first water, Kalaw was an author *non pareil*, a journalist incorruptible, an educator extraordinary: a man among men.

But among the varied skills and attributes of this versatile Batangueño his stature as a Mason juts out in bold relief in this part of the world where Masons are militant and their epic deeds in the struggle for Philippine freedom highlight this country's glorious history.

As a lawyer, Teodoro M. Kalaw shone not only in the practice of that great and noble profession of law but also as a professor thereof, and as author of law books and other literary gems in various fields of human endeavor. However, the vast, preponderant portion of his works dealt with his element — political science.

As an author, there is hardly any other Filipino writer living or dead who could approximate the breadth and depth of his prolific pen.

Kalaw was born in Lipa, Batangas, on March 31, 1884. Among the most brilliant sons ever contributed by Batangas to the glory of the Malayan race, he married a carnival queen of exquisite beauty, Pura Villanueva. Of this happy union was born another carnival queen no less beautiful than her queen mother — the now one and only Maria Kalaw Katigbak.

Teodoro M. Kalaw obtained his

elementary education from the *Colegio de Sebastian Virrey*, and the *Rizal Institute* of Lipa; his high school at the *Colegio de San de Letran*. It was at the *Liceo* that he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree, but his Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees he obtained from the *Escuela de Derecho*.

It was not by a fluke that Kalaw reached the heights that he did. Born of a sufficiently well-to-do if not a rich family from the popular standard of those times, the young Kalaw was not above working his way to obtain an education. As a student, he worked as a reporter on the newspaper *El Renacimiento*, a Filipino-Spanish daily, of which he later became the editor and, later still, after his graduation, the editor-in-chief.

This was then in 1907. Then a member of the Philippine bar, Kalaw's talent was quickly recognized with his appointment as Manuel Luis Quezon's secretary to the International Conference of Navigation in Russia. Upon his return from that assignment overseas, he became a professor of law and concurrently the director of his alma mater, the *Escuela de Derecho*.

This young, brilliant son of Batangas took to politics as an eagle to the air. He served in the Philippine Assembly as representative from the third district of Batangas for the term 1910-1912, after which he was appointed director of the Philippine Library and Museum.

His various high positions in the

government came one after another in rapid succession, higher and ever higher in spontaneous recognition of his extraordinary aptitudes. Under-Secretary of Interior in 1916, he became the Secretary the following year, a position which he resigned in 1922 in order to become the Executive Secretary and Chief Adviser of the Philippine Independence Mission to the United States. In 1929, he came again the director of the Philippine Library and Museum.

It was after his return from the World Naval Meet in Russia that he wrote one of his foremost literary works of note, entitled *Hacia la Tierra del Mar*. This was followed by *La Constitucion de Malolos* and *El Divorcio en Filipinas*, both of which concern his favorite elements as a lawyer — constitutional law and civil law.

The versatility of his able and prolific pen was well manifested in 1912 when, in the short span of that year he produced three works — *Las Ideas Politicas de la Revolucion Filipina*, *Principios de Vida Social*, and *Teorias Constitucionales*.

His inclination to political science is sufficiently patent in his *Como se Puede Mejorar Nuestra Legislacion*, which he wrote in 1913; *El Ideario Politico de Mabini*, and *Manual de Ciencia Politica Filipina*, all of which were written in the six years ending in 1918.

Except for his comprehensive and enlightening work entitled *La Masoneria Filipina*, which was also written in 1918, all his literary output thereafter until 1928 was on political science—*La Revolucion de Filipinas*; *Court Martial of Andres Bonifacio*, and *La Campaña del Kuomintang*.

This deeply religious Mason then wrote *Dietario Espiritual*, followed by other works of political and quasi-military complexion, like *Gregorio H. del Pilar*, *Las Cartas Politicas de Mabini*, and *El Espiritu de la Revolucion*.

Untold other works came from his golden pen, some never published. Among the salient literary works edited under his direction were publications of the National Library of which he was director, including the *Epistolario Rizalino*, Volumes I, II, III, and IV; *Ang Pinagtatalunang Akta ng Katipunan*, and *Revolucion Filipina* by Mabini in two volumes, in addition to the biography of Gregorio del Pilar, *El Heroe de Tirad*, of which he was the author.

Towering as he may be in the national scale, Teodoro M. Kalaw as among Masons is a figure than whom none is said to be greater or has contributed more to Masonry and to the ultimate ends of that Venerable Brotherhood. Grand Master of Regional Grand Lodge under Gran Oriente of Spain during 1914-1917, he was elected Past Honorary Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in 1925, and Grand Master in 1928. His masterful work, *La Masoneria Filipina*, reflects the scope and extent of his vast contribution to Masonry in this part of the world, and his thorough knowledge of the problems and the vicissitudes of that Ancient Craft in this jurisdiction, the Philippines became free of the Spanish yoke. The work is properly subdued as regards the indomitable courage, indefatigable struggles, and extreme sacrifices of his brother Masons for the ultimate emancipation of this country after more than three centuries of captivity under the

claws of the beats of prey which sport the habiliments of so-called Apostles of Christ.

Such was the wide versatility of the man that in whatever field he turned to try his mettle and prove his worth, he quickly earned distinction and obtained recognition. It must be borne in mind that all of this prodigious output of the most abstruse literary works was accomplished while Kalaw was creditably performing his heavy duties in his various capacities in the government.

As a cultured scholar and literary luminary he belonged to the Royal Academy of Arts and Letters, a Filipino-Spanish literary association

in the Philippines, of which he was president. He was likewise a member of the Academy of Political Science of New York, and of the exclusive *Real Academia de la Lengua Española* of Spain.

Thus we see the towering stature of Teodoro M. Kalaw, viewed in national perspective. But there is a jewelled phase of the man's character which was known to only the few who were privileged to move within his immediate circle. Uncompromising in matters of principles, his heart of gold was a tender as eider down. Compassionate to all living creation, charity was the main feature of his strong personality, the salient attribute of the Mason.



Deputy Grand Master Juan S. Alano pictured with some of the brethren of Maguindanaw Lodge No. 40 on his official visitation to the Lodge on Sept. 26, 1960.