

'Eulalie and the Stranger,' Chicago Record, August 12, 1899.

Mr. Washington Conner, traveling representative of the civilization of the United States of America and advocate of the doctrine of benevolent assimilation, was somewhat of a puzzle to Miss Eulalie Kakyak of Luzon, and yet she discovered that she had a growing interest in the tall stranger. Perhaps his tallness had something to do with her growing interest. The young men of Luzon were hardly more than 5 feet in height and weighed about 120 pounds each. Mr. Conner straightened to within a half-inch of 6 feet and he must have weighed 170 pounds. Physically, at least, he was a superior being. Little girls usually have a feeling of awe in the presence of large men until they discover that they have a certain power which the large men cannot resist, and then the awe gives way to a coquettish sense of authority.

For the first day or two Eulalie had stood in fear of A' Conner. His comparative immensity of stature was appropriately supplemented by a rather heavy and rasping voice and a frowning manner. Furthermore, he was an American, and her countrymen had been at war with the Americans, therefore it was not strange that she regarded the missionary with distrust and doubted his motives. He had talked volubly in order to reassure the Kakyak family of the straightforwardness of his intentions, and yet he had not explained the situation to Eulalie's satisfaction.

Why were the Americans so anxious that the Tagalos should be "assimilated" and become like unto the people of the United States? Why should not the Tagalos be permitted to seek happiness in their own way, without the guidance or intervention of people living thousands of miles away? Why should Eulalie's father be dragged into the complications of American politics? Why should Eulalie's mother be compelled to wear a disfiguring hat, a torturesome corset and a stiff shirt waist when she preferred the loose garments of Luzon?

These and many other questions Eulalie had asked, and Mr. Conner had answered them, but Eulalie held that his answers were manifestly absurd. Mr. Conner said that the Kakyak family should do this, that or the other thing in such and such a way because it was the American way of doing that particular thing. He said that the Kakyak family had become American subjects as the result of a very adroit business deal with the Spanish government. The reason for allowing them to become American subjects whether they craved the honor or not was that, as American subjects, they could be played upon by certain influences which would result in their "assimilation." The government at Washington desired that the inhabitants of the Philippine islands should become gentle and temperate and humane and well-behaved, the same as all people in the United States. The Tagalos, of all the tribes, had resisted American authority, and sadly enough, as Mr. Conner put it, for they should have been the first to welcome it--because the Tagalos can read and write, they have schools and churches, they love good music and print their own books, they have a certain capacity for government and organization. Mr. Conner expressed regret that the Tagalos, a comparatively intelligent tribe, with at least the rudiments of what he termed "culture," had resisted the philanthropic efforts of the United States, while the sultan of Sulu, who was a polygamous bush-whacker, had shown much better judgment, for he had embraced the new civilization and become a shining advocate at a salary of \$12,000 a year.

However, Mr. Conner was quite sure that sooner or later the Tagalos would be convinced of the error of their resistance and would partake of the blessings of northern civilization, only to become deeply attached to it when they had comprehended its full beauty.

The missionary had talked to Eulalie in the foregoing strain day after day, and yet the maiden was puzzled as to the merits of his case. She tried to believe that the tall stranger was sincere. Certainly he had the manner of sincerity, and yet she fancied at times that he was merely obeying orders and trying to bolster up a policy that did not fit at the joints. But she was very young and quite unsophisticated, and perhaps her judgment need not be projected into a controversy which belongs to statesmen and business promoters.

But, to repeat an earlier observation, if Eulalie was puzzled she was likewise interested. Had she not discovered that the stranger, great and gruff and dictatorial as he had seemed at the beginning, could be wound around her tiny brown finger? A week had passed since Conner had ordered, with military firmness, that she discard the short skirt and the insufficient waist of Luzon for the long skirt, the shirt waist and the feathered hat which he brought in the black trunk. Yet Eulalie still wore the short skirt; her bare shoulder still peeked baldly above the loose neckband of her waist; her head dress was still a cluster of white plumes, plucked fresh every morning from the moist boundaries of the ricefield.

Why had she dared to disobey? Because she knew how to cuddle and coax. The trick of the eyes was hers, because no girl needs to learn from a book. It was known in Luzon before any American landed on the island to show off his patented improvements on nature.

She knew how to put her hand on Washington Conner's sleeve and pout and whisper that he must not be cruel. Yes, Eulalie knew all these, although she had never attended a finishing school or lived at a summer hotel. And Washington Conner, although he knew many things (mostly facts) and had taken a degree at an inland college, did not know how to resist these caressing blandishments, and there is no record of the fact that he wished to resist them.

All this was hardly to his credit. He had gone to Luzon to put into execution the serious plan of a very serious gentleman named McKinley, and he should not have been diverted from the straight path of his undertaking by any wayside glimpse of a little girl with a brown shoulder. He was a man with a mighty mission, and he had no business to while away his time with a snip of a maiden whom he could have picked up lightly and set on his knee. He could have done so, and he would have been glad to do so, doubtless, only that he was restrained by a sense of the proprieties. He had come to Luzon to pose as an example for the simple islanders, and of course knew that he ought not to begin by making bold with flirtatious young women. If he did such a thing the Tagalos might suspect that it was part of the American code of morals which he was striving to introduce.

He spent much of his time with Eulalie and they talked a great deal, but his conduct was at all times circumspect. Only, he had not changed her in the least. She was still Eulalie of Luzon and not Miss Kakyak of the United States of America.

With the other members of the family, Mr. Bulolo Kakyak and wife, Luneta, and the two

sons, Francisco and Patricia, he felt that he was rather more successful. He had lectured to them daily. He compelled Mrs. Kakyak to wear her corset for at least an hour each day. Mr. Kakyak had begun the task of reading political editorials. More than that, the missionary had induced the family to take a summer vacation on the American plan and had moved them over to the riverside, where they were uncomfortably huddled under an improvised tent, made by lacing together several mats.

On the first day of the camping out Eulalie and Washington Conner were sitting on the river bank, intent on nothing and with no desire for serious occupation.

"It's fearfully warm to-day," said the missionary,

"It must seem so to you, poor man," said Eulalie. "Why don't you remove your coat?"

"Remove my coat? Dear me! No, thank you. You mustn't ask a gentleman to remove his coat, Eulalie."

"Why not?"

"Well, in the United States it is not considered good form for a gentleman to sit in the presence of a lady and not wear a coat."

"But you are not in the United States now."

"No, but I must observe the etiquette of my own country."

"I don't see why."

"Because--well, it's the very point I've been trying to impress on your family, Eulalie. We have decided upon certain social customs and certain rules of conduct, and if we abandon these what becomes of our much-vaunted civilization?"

"I don't care what becomes of it," replied Eulalie, with a petulant little smile. She began to pick up small pebbles from between the grass-blades and toss them out into the water.

There was a long pause, and then Eulalie asked again: "Won't you please take off your coat?"

"Why do you insist?"

"Because I am sure you must be uncomfortable."

"I am, but as I have told you, a man in the United States isn't permitted to be in his shirt sleeves while he is sitting and talking to a young lady."

"But the United States is many thousands of miles away. Your friends won't see you. I am the only one who will see you, and I would prefer to have you comfortable. That's a very pretty shirt you have on. Oh, pshaw! You're the stubbornnest man I ever saw."

"I don't mean to be, Eulalie," he said, rather sheepishly, as he arose and pulled off his coat, tossing it back into the soft grass.

"There!" she exclaimed. "Now, I know you will feel better."

There was a light of triumph in her eyes.

As for Washington Conner, he felt as Adam or Samson or Marc Antony must have felt at that moment when he realized that the woman had the long leverage on the situation.

