

'Social Customs,' Chicago Record, September 23, 1899.

"I don't remember that you and your mother have made any calls since I have been here," said the missionary one morning.

"I don't know what you mean," said Eulalie.

"Is it possible that here in the inland of Luzon the ladies are not given to the custom of going out on certain days to call at the homes of their acquaintances?"

"Of course, if we wish to see one of our friends and have a talk with her we go over to her house, but we never have any set time for such things."

"And you do not dress for it?"

"Why--no."

"Goodness me! Tell your mother to come out here. I might as well talk to both of you at the same time."

Eulalie stepped to the doorway and called aloud to her mother, who appeared in a few moments, wiping her wet hands on her skirt. She had been washing vegetables for the evening repast.

"Mother, there is something Mr. Conner wishes to say to you. It seems that if we are to become the same as the Americans we must set aside certain days for visiting."

"'Calling' is a better word," suggested the missionary, "What I mean is that you shall keep a list of the women friends who happen to strike at about your social level, and at least--well, once a month, say--you must make the rounds and call on all. Then, on days when you are not going from house to of them, you must remain at home, so that they may come and call on house, you."

Mrs. Kakyak shook her head wearily and murmured the Tagalo equivalent for "merciful Providence" Then she said:

"It seems to me that this wonderful civilization, of which you are forever talking, consists of a huge assortment of ceremonies which are the outgrowth of artificial conditions and which are contrary to the natural instincts of any human being."

"Certainly," replied Conner. "The purpose of civilization is to repress and hold down the natural instincts, so that people may be governed by rule and precedent, rather than by whimsical inclinations. If a woman were governed by her inclination in the matter she would not take the trouble to attire herself in her best costumes and pay repeated attentions to people whom she disliked very much. But under the fixed rules governing social intercourse she compels herself to perform these unpleasant duties, and even pretends to enjoy them, and when a woman does that she cannot be further away from primitive conditions. When you have become thoroughly civilized, Mrs. Kakyak, you will know what it is to approach a woman whom you thoroughly detest, kiss her with feigned heartiness and beg of her to come and take tea with you at her first opportunity."

"And yet you say we are a treacherous and deceptive people because some of us who pretend to be amigos are really in sympathy with the rebel government," said Firs. Kakyak, with a spiteful smile.

"I don't see any justice in that observation," said the missionary. "A tagalo who professes to be friendly to Americans while he is really in sympathy with his fighting countrymen is a traitor and is guilty of treason, and richly deserves the severe punishment which we are meting out to men of his kind whenever we can trap them in some overt act. But a woman who professes an affection for some one whom she despises is what we call, in the United States, 'gracious.'"

"That is your name for it, is it?" asked Mrs. Kakyak.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Conner. Why, you couldn't expect people who were exchanging calls or attending social functions every week to make a practice of expressing their actual sentiments. If they did society wouldn't last two days. No matter how wretched they may be, it is 'Charmed,' 'Delighted,' 'Jolly time' and so on, and although no one believes any one else, the general effect of this 'graciousness' is to alleviate and somewhat reduce the suffering which is inseparable from a contact with refined society. Do you follow me?"

"Oh, I suppose so," said Mrs. Kakyak, wearily. "You suggest, then, do you, that I put in a lot of my time going around to see women who don't want to see me and for whom, I may say with emphasis, I don't care two straws."

"Sh-h Sh-h-h! You will never make any headway in correct society if you talk in that manner. Let us say, rather, that I do advise you to take up the social obligations incumbent upon one in your station of life."

"That is, I am to call on every one I know and then on certain days I am to sit at home and permit them to come in and go through certain formalities of conversation with me? I should think it would be a dreadful bore to receive callers all afternoon."

"Oh, there is always a way of escape from these onerous social duties," said the missionary, with a knowing smile. "when the callers come you may find it to your advantage to be out or to be seriously indisposed and quite unequal to the task of receiving any one."

"Do you mean that we should go away from home in order to avoid meeting our friends?" asked Eulalie.

"And I do not see that it would be an advantage to be seriously indisposed," added Mrs. Kakyak.

"Your simplicity is refreshing," said Conner. "I do not mean that you need to go out or that you need to be really ill. But there is no great harm in having some one meet the callers at the door and give a plausible excuse for you. Don't think that the callers will be offended because of your failure to put in an appearance. They will leave their cards, and

as soon as the door has closed they will depart in high satisfaction and probably say to themselves, 'Well, we've got that off our minds, and it didn't take much time either.' The two cards which the ladies left, with other cards which accumulate, are put into a receptacle in the hallway or the front room, so that any one who visits the house may look at these and become aware of the fact that you have a calling acquaintance with many important people."

"Did you ever the like, Eulalie?" asked Mrs. Kakyak, as she took hold of her daughter's hand. "I never dreamed that there were such strange customs anywhere in the world. What's more, I don't see that there is any sense in such proceedings. As I understand it, I go to various houses and call on women merely for the sake of putting in an appearance. I haven't any particular message to deliver and perhaps we have no mutual interests."

"So much the better," said Conner, nodding his head. "In that case the conversation is not apt to be prolonged and you can depart all the sooner. The shorter the call the more satisfactory it is, as a rule."

"Very well, then; we will assume that I hurry through and go back home. Next day some of these women come to see me. I do not crave their society. I dread the tedium of interchanging conventional remarks all afternoon, so I take refuge in my own apartment and send out word either that I am not at home or that I am suffering from--what?"

"Usually a nervous headache," said the missionary.

"Quite so. My callers are informed that I am suffering from a nervous headache. What am I doing, as a matter of fact?"

"You are in loose wrapper, reading the latest novel."

"This quality of deception does not come under the head of falsehood?"

"Certainly not, because no one is deceived. The lady who comes to your front door and who is told that you will be unable her because of a severe headache probably knows, or at to see that you are propped up in a comfortable attitude least suspects, own room reading a book. She isn't very angry. She know how it is herself. Next time you go to her house and ring the bell you will doubtless hear that she is confined to her room with the same kind of headache."

"Well, admitting that there is no sin in telling such a falsehood--"

"Fibs, fibs," corrected Conner.

"Admitting that, why should I go around and encourage women to call on me if I don't want to see them when they come to repay the call? Why not keep away from those women whose society has no charm for me?"

"My dear Mrs. Kakyak, is it possible that any woman can be so deficient in social ambition? If you are to make any headway in your own circle; if you are to be known as a matroness and a club officer or get your name into print as a dictator in society, you must

have a following, and the only way to have a following is to maintain a large calling list and pay strict attention to your social duties."

"I don't think I will ever have any ambition in that direction," she said, smiling at Eulalie.

"Perhaps you would prefer to be an old-fashioned woman, who stays at home as much as possible and concerns herself principally with her family and her household duties. I wish to warn you that this type of woman is not very popular in America at present. If you will take my advice, now that you are about to be benevolently assimilated, you will try to make yourself a 'new woman,' as the term goes in America. You must learn to wear masculine garments, make public speeches and organize all sorts of clubs. What was your maiden name, Mrs. Kakyak?"

"Luneta Paranda."

"Then you should be known as Luneta Paranda-Kakyak, instead of Mrs. Bulalo Kakyak. The new woman doesn't allow her husband to overshadow her."

"Do you like the new woman?" asked Eulalie, softly, as she looked up at Washington Conner and smiled quizzically.

"I admire her very much as a fellow-worker in any philanthropic enterprise," said Conner. "Of course I don't believe I'd care to marry a new woman. It never occurred to me before, but I don't believe I would."

