

**'The Family Decides to Assimilate,' Chicago Record, July 15, 1899**

When Washington Conner, the missionary representing the United States of America, had seated himself in front of the Kakyak residence and started in to explain his plan for civilizing the Tagalos Mrs. Bulolo Kakyak and her daughter Eulalie heard the talking and came to the door.

The five members of the family listened with serious interest as Mr. Conner set forth to them in ready phrases the necessity of adopting the habits, the customs and the civilizing implements of North America.

"We are going to begin in this island a process of benevolent assimilation," said Mr. Conner.

"What is that?" asked Mr. Bulolo Kakyak.

"A benevolent person," said Mr. Conner, pulling reflectively at his red mustache, "a benevolent person is one who has the disposition to do good to others and make them happy. Assimilation refers to the act of bringing to a resemblance, likeness or identity. The plan of benevolent assimilation, for which I am the agent, contemplates the instruction of you islanders in all the details of our American civilization. We love you; therefore we are going to put before you certain examples and precepts to enable you to become similar to us. In the language of a popular song, 'Of course you can never be like us, but be as like us as you're able to be.'"

"But why should we try to be like you?" asked Mrs. Kakyak from her place in the doorway.

"Because we want you to," replied Mr. Conner. "These islands have fallen into our hands, or at any rate they will fall into our hands as soon as we get enough troops here to conquer all of them, and it occurs to us that we have been designated by a wide Providence to take charge of you simple-minded islanders and educate you. You are the white man's burden,"

"We don't want to be," said Mr. Kakyak.

"Well, you are, just the same. You have been described to us as 'half devil and half child.'"

"He's not complimentary, to say the least," remarked Eulalie, with a frightened glance at her mother.

"I don't think we are as bad as all that," said Mr. Kakyak reproachfully. "To be sure we live in a small house here, and we wear as few clothes as possible, but you must admit that we are peaceable and industrious. We work in the fields every day. On Sunday we go to mass. My two sons have attended the parish school and have learned to read and write. Eulalie can play on the harp. We are content with--"

"I know, I know," said Mr. Conner. "We understand that you Tagalos are a docile and

industrious people, and there is no disposition on our part to underrate any of your domestic virtues but we understand, also, that you are prone to be untruthful at virtues, times and that you frequently cheat in trading. In order to prepare myself for missionary work among the sullen people of this island I have read all the late books and magazine articles dealing with our new possessions, and there seems to be a general agreement that, although you are not illiterate, and although you are outwardly pious, still you will misrepresent and deceive under certain provocations."

"Are the people in your country honest and truthful?" asked Mr. Bulolo Kakyak.

Mr. Conner frowned slightly and then said, after a few moments of deliberation: "During political campaigns we may exaggerate, and in moments of excitement may draw the long bow--now and then. As far as honesty is concerned I will not deny that we sometimes gouge one another in horse trades; but, no matter what our lapses may be, we invariably prescribe honesty as the best policy for other people, particularly if they are dark people and live a long distance away. Another thing, there is a great difference between the barbaric lying and cheating of a primitive race of islanders and the judicious misrepresentation of a cautious and highly civilized race. Of all the people who have lived in North America, George Washington was the only one who never told a lie. At the same time, we now have our lying so systematized that a great many persons seem to be fully as truthful as George was. When you have been benevolently assimilated you may not be cured of lying, but you will lie so well that no one can catch you at it."

"That would be an advantage," said Mr. Kakyak, nodding his head.

"I can't see why the people in the United States, 10,000 miles away, are so much worried about our welfare," said Francisco, the 20-year-old-son. "They never heard of us until about a year ago, and now they're chasing us up every valley on the island, trying to--"

"Assimilate us," suggested the father.

"Yes, I suppose that's what they call it. For one, I don't want to be assimilated."

"If you know when you're well off you will take advantage of the instruction which I am about to offer you," said the missionary. "The United States is going to keep this island, and the philanthropic scheme of assimilation, which has been officially indorsed at the white house, is going to be inaugurated at once. Those who don't want to be assimilated had better take to the jungle. This isn't the first time that we've tried this benevolent assimilation. We've assimilated Indians, Mexicans and Chinamen, to say nothing of several millions of Negroes, and when any one of them hung back, I'll tell you, it went hard with him."

"I am a man of peace and I'll do almost anything to keep the soldiers out of this valley," said Mr. Kakyak.

"We are ready to take lessons and do just as you say.

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Conner. "I'll have my trunks moved up here the first thing in the morning and we'll begin work at once. I trust the results will be satisfactory. Probably

you have no idea of how much you will have to learn before you can be classed as a civilized person. I am going to begin my task by telling you something about our great political parties. Do you realize, Mr. Kakyak, that as you are now a subject of the United States you must identify yourself with a party?"

"Must I, indeed?"

"Yes, sir, you and these other members of your interesting household must be either republicans or democrats.

"There are two parties, then?"

"There are two parties that stand a chance of winning. No civilized man of fair intelligence will belong to a party unless there's some show of winning out."

"What are you--a republican or a democrat?"

"I am now a republican," replied Mr. Conner. "That's how I got this job as missionary. If there should be a change of administration next year I might be induced to listen to reason and find much virtue in the democratic platform."

"I suppose it would be the part of wisdom to ally one's self with the party in power,' said Mr. Kakyak, meditatively.

"First rate!" exclaimed the missionary, seizing him by the hand. "You have the instinct of a patriot. That is what we call in civilized speech 'getting into the band wagon.'"

"At the same time I would prefer not to make any choice until I have talked with you at some length. When do you wish to begin instruction?"

"To-morrow morning. I will lodge with you to-night if you have no objections."

"Certainly not. I will swing a hammock for you under the banana trees."

"You couldn't let me have a folding bed, could you?" "We haven't any."

"Ah, that's so. You are not civilized as yet. Well, swing your hammock and I will turn in."

Darkness had settled upon the jungle of the mountainside and wide fields of the valley. That night the stranger slept in the hammock under the palms. The Kakyak family talked of him in whispers before they retired. They were distrustful and apprehensive.