

Down In Porto Rico

BY

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FOREWORD

THIS book is not a history of Porto Rico. It is intended to give a picture of Porto Rican life as it now exists. To do this it has been necessary to fill in an historical background. The prominent figures, however, are the Porto Ricans of to-day. We spent a year on the Island studying their home life, their personal characteristics, their social, moral, and religious customs, their education, their economic condition, and their efforts at self-government. The writer has enjoyed the hospitality of a number of Porto Rican homes, has formed many warm friendships, and has faith in the ultimate success of the Porto Rican people.

We have not written in a spirit of criticism, neither have we attempted to gloss over imperfections. There has been no attempt made to cover up the mistakes and shortcomings of Porto Ricans, Spaniards, or Americans. Our one aim has been to paint the picture true to life. If this work succeeds in giving its readers a clearer view of conditions "Down in Porto Rico," to the end that they may help to usher in a brighter day to these, our fellow-citizens, we shall feel that we have not labored in vain.

JANUARY, 1906.

G. M. F.

CHAPTER I

PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL SKETCHES

I. PHYSICAL FEATURES

PORTO RICO is the fourth in size and is the farthest eastward of the larger islands of the West Indies, standing at the gateway to the Caribbean Sea. It is situated between $18^{\circ} 30'$ and $17^{\circ} 55'$ north latitude, and in longitude between 68° and $65^{\circ} 10'$ west from Greenwich. In shape, Porto Rico is almost a rectangle, being about one hundred miles long and about thirty-six miles wide.

The surface is exceedingly broken. With the exception of a small strip of level coast line, the Island consists of a series of hills and valleys. The highest point is in the northeastern part and is called El Yunque. This peak rises about 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. In a general way the range of hills extends from east to west through the center of the Island, but it is so broken that it can scarcely be called a continuous range. The valleys all have rivers which vary from tiny rivulets in the dry season to raging torrents during the rainy season.

Surface

The number of rivers vary from forty to sixty, according to the judgment of the geographer in distinguishing between brooks and rivers. Much more rain falls on the northern side than on the southern side of the Island. The trade winds from the east bring moisture, which is precipitated on the northern portion of the Island, thus supplying rain nearly the whole year. On the southern side, there are months at a time when no rain falls and agriculture is carried on by means of irrigation. The Island, therefore, has a wet and dry side rather than a wet and dry season.

Soil The soil of Porto Rico, as a rule, is very productive, although in many places it has been cultivated so long without fertilization of any kind that it has become quite poor. The north side, owing to the abundance of rain, is well adapted for grazing and for raising crops that require much moisture; while the south side is especially favorable to the growth of sugar cane. One of the anomalous conditions that is observed here is the comparatively small areas that are under cultivation. With an immense population, it would be thought that agriculture would be carried on intensely as in the

crowded parts of Europe. Such, however, is not the case. Although every foot of land is tillable, there is less than one fourth under actual cultivation. Various reasons are given for this state of affairs. The chief ones advanced are as follows: that much of the land is owned by men who live in Spain; that in Porto Rico there is an exceedingly small middle class; that it is almost impossible for the farmer because of his poverty and the smallness of his wage to buy land to cultivate; that the banks hold heavy mortgages on much of the property; that the roads are so bad as to render transportation difficult and very expensive; and that the markets on the Island are not large enough to demand additional produce, while commerce with other countries is not sufficiently regular or profitable to allow the producer to depend upon it. These objections, however, can all be overcome, and there is no good reason why with such fertility of soil, Porto Rico may not some day be a rich and profitable garden plot for the large American cities of the Atlantic Coast.

The coast of Porto Rico has numerous harbors, but none at present that are available for vessels of deep draught. San Juan,

Coast
Line

Guanica and Jobos are landlocked and are considered fine harbors for small vessels. Arecibo, Aguadilla, Mayaguez and Ponce are open roadsteads. These are the principal harbors of Porto Rico, all of which are in need of improvement

**Neigh-
boring
Islands**

Near the coast of Porto Rico and belonging to it are a number of small islands of more or less importance. The island of Culebra, lying to the eastward, is rocky and barren, but it has a magnificent harbor, capable of sheltering the largest war vessels. It seems to be the intention of the United States naval authorities to use this island as a coaling station and a harbor for vessels.

The island of Vieques, situated southeast of Porto Rico, is quite fertile. It is about twenty-five miles long and seven miles wide. The southern portion of the island is given up largely to producing sugar, while in the northern part the raising of cattle is the chief industry. This little island supports a population of about 7,000 souls.

There are also a number of smaller islands that belong to Porto Rico and are situated quite near its coast. At the entrance to San Juan harbor lies Goat Island, which is

used by the government for a leper colony. This has led to the suggestion that the other islands could be used by the government for prisons, asylums, and various public institutions.

The climate of Porto Rico is delightful. Climate There is never any cold weather and very few hot days. The thermometer remains quite regularly between sixty-five and eighty-five degrees, but the average change from hottest to coldest is only six degrees. Every day the trade winds blow from the east and moderate the temperature. This sea breeze springs up late in the afternoon and lasts through the evening and into the night. It is delightfully refreshing and enjoyable, but it has a soothing rather than an invigorating effect upon persons. The nights are usually cool and very frequently rain falls.

In the higher elevations the temperature is considered much cooler than along the coast, but nowhere is the heat unbearable. According to the United States Weather Bureau report, the lowest temperature of the day is usually between 5 and 6 A. M. It then rises until 10 A. M., when it remains stationary till about 2 P. M. It then falls

gradually until 5 A. M. of the next day. The month of January has the lowest mean temperature, the month of August the highest mean temperature, but May has the highest temperature of the year. At San Juan, the highest temperature recorded since the Weather Bureau was established was 94° in May, 1903, while the lowest was 65° in March of the same year.

The year is divided into the wet season and the dry season. The former includes the months from April to November, while the latter extends from December to March. The rainfall during the rainy season is 48 to 49 inches, and during the dry season 10 to 11 inches. At no season of the year are there many rainy days. In the afternoon or evenings, without much warning, the rain begins to fall heavily, but the shower is soon over. To the casual observer there is little difference in the weather between the dry season and the wet season. At no time of the year does the rain incommode him to any great extent.

Dengue
Fever

Most Americans, coming as they do from farther north, find the climate of Porto Rico enervating. While they acknowledge the charms of this tropical atmosphere, they

soon long for the invigorating air of the North. Many persons during the time they are becoming acclimated in Porto Rico are subject to attacks of "dengue" fever, which is a sort of malaria known in the South as "break-bone" fever. The experiences of those who are thus afflicted are far from enjoyable, but happily the malady is neither fatal nor of protracted length.

Porto Rico, like all other West India Islands, is subject to occasional hurricanes. These are destructive to life and property and usually work great havoc. The last of these storms occurred August 8, 1899. Over two thousand people lost their lives and the destruction to property was enormous. The towns of Ponce, Arroyo, Humacao and Yabucan suffered the most. The coffee plantations in the interior were ruined, the cane crops along the coast were destroyed, many sugar mills were blown down, fruit trees were uprooted, and, as a result of the storm, famine immediately followed. Had it not been for the prompt aid received from the United States, thousands of other lives would have been lost. These hurricanes, however, are not frequent. During the 400 years of the recorded history

Hurricanes

of Porto Rico, there have been six in the sixteenth century, one in the seventeenth century, two in the eighteenth century, and ten in the nineteenth century.¹

II. HISTORICAL SKETCHES

PORTO RICO was discovered by Columbus on his second voyage, which left Cadiz September 25, 1493. On the sixteenth of November, the southeastern part of Porto Rico was sighted. The fleet sailed along the southern coast, then up the western shore, and on the nineteenth Columbus landed and planted the cross south of the present town of Aguidilla. This spot is now marked by a granite monument erected by the people in 1893 on the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Iland. The granite is in the form of a cross and bears the following inscription: "1493, 19 de Noviembre, 1893."

A Cap-
tain Ap-
pointed

In 1505, Vicente Yanez Pinzon was appointed Captain of the Island, and was authorized to build a fort there. Pinzon transferred his rights to Martin Garcia de Salazar, while he himself sought larger fields of conquest on the continent.

Ponce
Explores
the
Island

In 1508, Don Juan Ponce de Leon, who had been with Columbus when he landed at Porto Rico, then known as Boriquen, ob-

¹Acosta's Notes to Fray Inigo Abbad's History of Porto Rico.

tained permission from Commander Ovando of La Espanola, as Santa Domingo was then called, to take a party on an exploring trip to Boriquen, which Columbus had named San Juan de Bautista.

Ponce fitted out a "caravel" with a few followers and some Indians as guides and interpreters. He called at the island of Mona, which was then inhabited by Indians, and made friends with them. From here he sailed to the island of San Juan. Ponce and his men were well received by the natives, who entered into bonds of friendship with them. Ponce then requested the chief to show him where they found the yellow metal from which they made disks. An Indian pointed out the auriferous sands of several rivers, and Ponce took with him some samples of the gold found there. The exploring expedition continued until it came to the Bay of San Juan. Here Ponce left some of his companions to lay the foundations of a town, while he returned to La Espanola to report his voyage and test his samples of gold. The gold was not as fine as that found in La Espanola, but it was still considered valuable.

**The
First
Settle-
ment**

Ponce soon returned to San Juan, where he assisted in building the town of Caparra on the bay facing the present site of the capital. This town retained its original site and name until 1521, when by royal order it was transferred to the present situation and the name changed to Porto Rico. Later the whole Island became known as Porto Rico and the town was called San Juan.

**Diego
Columbus**

Ponce was not permitted to remain in control of San Juan for any great length of time. Diego Columbus claimed the right to rule the island by virtue of the discovery made by his father. In this he was sustained by the King of Spain in 1511, and Ponce delivered his office to Juan Ceron and withdrew to his own residence in Caparra.

**Indian
Rebellion**

During the time Ponce was governor of San Juan, his followers scattered all through the island in search of gold. They compelled the Indians to wash the river sands for gold and proved themselves hard taskmasters.

The Indians were further degraded and practically reduced to slavery by a system of "distribution" by which they were assigned to the settlers in various numbers. The Indians resented this, but they still be-

lieved that their oppressors were supernatural beings, and hence they were afraid to oppose them. They had this illusion dispelled in the following manner: One of their number volunteered to carry a young Spaniard across a stream. When they reached the deepest part, the native threw him into the water and held him down until he drowned. By this act they learned that the Spaniards were subject to death. This was a signal for a general rebellion which continued until the death of the chief Guaybana. Left without a leader, the Indians soon subsided into their former condition of servitude.

In 1544, the King of Spain ordered the Indians to be set free, but it was too late — the race had perished. The number of Indians in Porto Rico when the Spaniards first arrived has been variously estimated from 16,000 to 600,000. When the Bishop of San Juan, in 1544, reported how many had been set free by royal proclamation, he said that the total number affected, including men, women and children, was sixty.

**A Doomed
Race**

With the rapid extinction of the Indians, the output of gold decreased until the settlers in desperation bought negroes on

**Negroes
Introduced**

credit in the hope of discovering new deposits. In 1534 news came of the wonderful riches of Peru and Mexico, and the island was almost depopulated. The governor imposed the death penalty upon any one who should attempt to leave, but, notwithstanding threats and punishments, the inhabitants nearly all succeeded in getting away from the island.

**Internal
Disorder**

From this date until the close of the century, Porto Rico was in constant turmoil from foes within and without. The few Spaniards who remained quarreled about the forms of government. The negro slaves had in many instances withdrawn to the hills and forests from which they made incursions upon their old masters.

**Attacks
From
Without**

In addition to these troubles, the island was in a defenseless condition and was harassed by pirates and privateers. In 1595, the English under Drake made an attack upon the island, but a Spanish fleet sent to convoy some merchantmen carrying gold to the King happened to be in the harbor of San Juan and compelled the English fleet to withdraw. Two years later the English under Lord Cumberland landed at what is now called Santurce and took possession of

the capital. Dysentery and yellow fever wrought such havoc among the troops that the English commander was obliged to leave the island.

In 1625, a Dutch fleet of seventeen vessels appeared in the harbor of San Juan and took the city; but after a siege of one month, in which they failed to take the fort, they sailed away, having lost their general, one of their largest vessels, and four hundred men.

During the rest of the seventeenth century, Porto Rico was at war with privateers, freebooters and pirates who infested the West Indies and preyed upon Spanish commerce. England, France and Holland furnished most of these, and as Spain was at war with these nations at home and was being defeated by them, she had not the force to spare for the defence of Porto Rico, and the islanders had to shift for themselves.

In 1702, the English attacked Arecibo, but were forced to re-embark. In 1703, they landed in the neighborhood of San German, but were again compelled to return to their vessels. Other attacks were made by them in 1743 near Ponce, and in 1797, upon the capital, but they were not successful.

At this late date, the beginning of the nineteenth century, Porto Rico had a population of only 155,426. Owing largely to the smuggling custom then in vogue, these people were unable to pay the expenses of the government, and \$100,000 annually had to be sent from Mexico to make up the deficit.

Immigra-
tion En-
couraged

In 1815, a royal proclamation was issued known as "Regulations for promoting the population, commerce, industry and agriculture of Puerto Rico." Foreigners were invited to the Island, rights of Spanish citizenship were promised them, land was granted them free of all expenses, they were to be exempt from export duties on their products and from import duties on agricultural implements, negro slaves could be brought into the country without restriction, and free trade between Spain and her possessions was to be in force for fifteen years.

This decree attracted many colonists from the French and English Antilles. They came with capital, with slaves, with agricultural knowledge, and their influence in Porto Rico did much to improve economic conditions here. The population was

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further increased by emigrants from Hayti, Santo Domingo, Venezuela and other places where war drove out many of the inhabitants who desired a land of peace.

This order marked the beginning of a new life in Porto Rico. From the discovery of the Island to 1778, immigration was restricted to Spaniards. At that date Catholic workmen of other nations were granted admittance, but in 1815 the doors were opened to all. This was restricted somewhat the following year by requiring those who had not gained a residence to depart from the Island, but great good had already been accomplished by the large influx of foreigners. During the remainder of the nineteenth century there was a steady increase in population and comparatively little war.

In 1825, a body of enthusiastic Colombians, under Simon Bolivar, landed near Aguadilla with the intention of helping the Porto Ricans to throw off the Spanish rule as they themselves had done. The people, however, did not respond to this army of liberation, and the Spaniards compelled them to withdraw and the enterprise was abandoned. The next disturbance was in

**New Con-
ditions**

**Later
Disturb-
ances**

1868. About 800 men met at Lares and set up the Republic of Boriquen. After a few days of enthusiasm, the army of the Republic dwindled to two or three hundred men who were finally put to flight by about a dozen militiamen.

**Emancipa-
tion of
Slaves**

An event of importance occurred on March 22, 1873. This was a decree by the Republican government of Spain giving freedom to all negro slaves in Porto Rico. By this proclamation, 34,000 persons were released from the bonds of slavery.

The last fifteen years of Spanish rule in Porto Rico was characterized by many acts of persecution. Men of education who advocated liberal ideas were thrown into prison, or exiled, or tortured. Persons belonging to secret societies whose purposes were supposed to be disloyal were arrested by the civil guard and subjected to severe tortures. Not only were suspected men maimed, but in many instances, they were killed by instruments of torture.

In 1896, the government instituted more liberal laws in deference to public opinion of other nations, especially of the United

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States. On November 25, 1897, a royal decree was signed granting autonomy to Porto Rico.

Spain, however, was too late in introducing her reforms. The Island was declared in a state of war by the governor-general on April 21, 1898, and on July 25, Porto Rico became a part of the United States.

III. WHO ARE THE PORTO RICANS?

WHEN the Spaniards discovered Porto Rico, they found the Island inhabited by a copper-colored race, who, in common with the natives of the other West Indies and of the continent, became known as Indians. While those of Porto Rico resembled the Indians of the continent in the color of the skin, in the prominent cheek bones, and in the long, coarse hair, they differed from them in many respects. The Indian of the continent was a large, raw-boned, warlike savage, who delighted in hunting and fighting. The Indian of Porto Rico was short in stature, stout, peaceful and indolent. He is described as having a flat nose, poor teeth, dull eyes, narrow forehead, and a skull artificially fashioned into the shape of a cone. Most of his time was spent in a hammock

The Aborigines

Mixture
of Span-
ish and
Indian
Blood

made from the bark of trees. Unlike the Indian of the North, he cared little for flesh foods and lived chiefly on vegetables. His place of abode was a hut built of sugar cane which had one opening only. Thus having a permanent hut instead of a movable wigwam, he was more established in his residence than the Indian of the continent. He was like him, however, in wearing very little clothing, in painting his body, in decorating his hair with feathers, in belonging to a tribe whose ruler was called the chief.

Negro
and
Indian

These were the people that Ponce found when he came to explore the Island in 1508. Spanish blood began to mingle with Indian blood from the very first. Ponce won the friendship of the powerful chief Guaybana, and in order to strengthen this bond, he married the sister of the chief. His example was followed by many other Spaniards in those early days, since there were few Spanish women in Porto Rico for many years after this event. As a result, a new race appeared, ethnologically known as Mestizos, the children of Spanish men and Indian women.

In 1513, negro slavery was authorized and the slaves introduced were chiefly males.

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As the Indians were practically slaves also, and worked side by side with the negro, another mixture of blood took place, and the Zambos, the children of negro men and Indian women, appeared.

Still
Another
Mixture

When the negro women and later the white women came to the Island, a still further admixture took place. For the first three hundred years, however, there seem to have been comparatively few white women on the Island.

The
White
Popula-
tion

The white population during this period consisted of government officials who rarely brought their families with them, the government troops, convicts who had served their sentences in the forts, adventurers and pirates who were looking for wealth, and the merchants who controlled the commerce of the Island. It was not until the "Act of Grace" in 1815 brought emigrants and their families from the French and English Antilles, and from Santo Domingo and Venezuela, that there began to be a permanent white element in the population. Since that date there has been some immigration, but as no official record has been kept, it is impossible to find out how large the number

has been. The following statistics show that the large increase of population both by immigration and natural increase has been made during the nineteenth century. They also show the relative percentages of white and colored persons, according to their own statements.

Date	Total Pop.	White	Colored	Percentage	
				White	Colored
1802	163,192	78,281	84,911	48	52
1812	188,014	85,662	97,352	46.8	53.2
1820	230,622	102,432	128,190	44.4	55.6
1827	302,672	150,311	162,361	49.7	50.3
1830	323,838	162,311	161,527	50.1	49.9
1836	357,086	188,869	168,217	52.9	47.1
1860	583,308	300,406	282,775	51.5	48.5
1877	731,648	411,712	319,936	56.3	43.7
1887	798,565	474,933	323,632	59.5	40.5
1897	980,911	573,187	317,724	64.3	35.7
1899	953,243	589,426	363,817	61.8	38.2

White
Popula-
tion

From this it would seem that the white population has been from 44.4 per cent to 64.3 per cent of the whole population from the year 1802 to 1899. All through the history of Porto Rico many white men married or brought up children with creole or even black women. The color line has been

largely disregarded. It is only reasonable to suppose that many persons of mixed blood have been classed as "whites" in the census.

This view is reinforced by the results of an investigation into the white population of the present day. The census of 1899 gives the whites 61.8 per cent of the whole population, yet one who passes through the Island and notices all the shades from white to black, knows that this cannot be true. There is evidently a minority of the inhabitants who do not show traces of negro or Indian blood. In an investigation which the writer made in San Juan in the present year, 1904, of a number of white families considered among the best of the city, it was discovered that more than 60 per cent. had colored blood in their veins, yet in the census all were counted as whites. In conversing with prominent men who are well acquainted with the people in all parts of the Island, they have given estimates of the proportion of whites which range from 25 per cent to 40 per cent. The census, no doubt, is true so far as it has recorded the answers of the people, but it must be remembered that a Porto Rican must have

strong distinctive marks of negro ancestry before he is willing to acknowledge that he is not white.

We believe that the present population is very largely an amalgamation of white, black and Indian blood. Mr. Salvador Brau seems to have a like opinion, for he states in his book, "Puerto Rico y su Historia," that the Porto Ricans of to-day have inherited the following characteristics from their ancestors: "Indolence, taciturnity, sobriety, disinterestedness and hospitality from the Indian; physical endurance, sensualism and fatalism from the negro; and love of display, love of country, independence, devotion, perseverance and chivalry from the Spaniard."

The whites, therefore, of Porto Rico must be considered in an entirely different sense from European and North American whites. They represent a genus of their own, the Porto Rican whites.

CHAPAER II.

THE HOMES OF THE PEOPLE

I. DWELLINGS OF THE POOR

IN Porto Rico, as in the United States, there are great differences in modes of living, dependent upon the place of the home and the economic condition of the occupants. We shall discuss the homes under two heads: the homes of the poor and the homes of the higher classes. Among the poor, there is the life in the "patios" of the larger cities, in the shanties of the suburbs, in the smaller towns and villages, at the "haciendas" or plantations, and in the country.

There are no great cities on the Island, only two, San Juan and Ponce, having a population of over 30,000, and neither of these exceeds 35,000. In the minds of the Islanders, however, San Juan is a great metropolis, and they speak of "La Capital" in much the same way as Americans refer to New York. San Juan has always been as it is now, the chief commercial port. The frequent attacks upon it by pirates and by hos-

San Juan

tile powers at war with Spain early demanded fortifications. In 1533, the construction of El Morro was begun in order to guard the entrance into the harbor. In 1630 was begun the wall which completely enclosed the city. Early in the eighteenth century, the construction of Cristobal was begun to guard the city on the landward side.

Narrow
City
Limits

The islet of San Juan is almost three miles long and one half mile wide, but less than one-third of this area lies within the city walls. This has compelled the inhabitants to live in crowded quarters. There are probably not a dozen detached houses in the city. The buildings are all constructed of brick and stone covered with plaster or cement. On the principal streets most of these are two stories high, with an occasional three-story house, and perhaps a half dozen that are four stories high. On the less important streets, the one-story type prevails. The whole city is a solid mass of masonry. There are no vacant lots or breathing places and no back yards. The two chief plazas or squares of the city are the Plaza Baldorioty at the center of the

city, and the Plaza Colon on the eastern side, adjoining Fort Cristobal. These are both quite small and are cemented.

To give an idea of home life in this city, it is necessary to describe a typical two-story house. On the second floor, the large front room, usually extending the full width of the house, is the parlor, which has the only outside openings of the building. These are called windows, but in reality they are double doors with full-length shutters. There is no such thing as glass windows in Porto Rico, except a few that have been introduced by Americans. Adjoining the parlor are one or two bedchambers and a dining-room into which the stairs lead. The width of the house from the dining-room to the kitchen at the rear is about equally divided between an inner court or "patio" and bedrooms. The hallway is a corridor outside the wall, overlooking the court, and is either entirely open on this side or has lattice work to protect it. The kitchen and a small room leading into it occupy the same relative position at the rear of the court as the dining-room and bedrooms do at the front of it. As there are no spaces between buildings, the rear of the

A Typi-
cal House

house touches the rear of the one adjoining, and thus prevents either light or ventilation from that direction. The only openings to any of these rooms are the large double doors which open into the court. When these are closed, the inmates have neither light nor ventilation, except, as in some cases, a door opens into the adjoining room, or a little pane of glass has been built in the flat roof and furnishes a few rays of light.

The general plan of a house is an oblong from thirty to forty feet wide and from 125 to 150 feet deep, with a court about one half the width and two thirds the length cut out of one side.

**Life in
Patio**

The plan of the lower floor is similar to that of the upper except when it is used as stores. Then the space as far back as the court or "patio" is used as a store, and the rooms opening into the court are rented to families. In these "patios" we find filth and poverty that cannot be described. Each of the small dark rooms, with no opening except a door, and that admitting only the foul air of an overcrowded and dirty court, is the home of a family sometimes numbering a dozen persons. There is little or no

furniture in the room. Where they all sleep is a problem! In some of the rooms there is a tier of berths along the side, but in many cases the children sleep on the bare floor, disputing this space with rats, roaches and fleas. There is no need for a table, because they have no regular time for meals. They eat when they feel like it if they are able to procure food, otherwise they go hungry. Almost any hour of the day you can see adults and children chewing a piece of dry bread, or a stick of sugar cane, or eating fruit in a more or less advanced state of decay. If they should want a fire to warm water or prepare food, they buy a few cents' worth of charcoal, put it into one of the rectangular oil cans that have become such a universal utility article throughout the Island, place a kettle upon the coals, and the kitchen is complete. It is hardly necessary to state that these improvised stoves are not in the rooms, but in the "patio."

A view of these "patios" gives impressions that cannot be forgotten. An inner court perhaps forty or fifty feet long and fifteen or twenty feet wide; several lines filled with clothes that have just been hung up to dry

and incidentally to limit the light and air of the enclosed yard; a number of dirty, naked babies of all ages up to six or seven years; lazy men sitting against the side of the house, asleep or talking to their neighbors; women with but a single garment on, and that very filthy, either washing or cooking, or sitting on the ground, and like the men gossiping and smoking some cigar stumps they have picked up in the streets; boys and girls with scarcely enough clothing to cover their nakedness running errands, quarreling among themselves, and following quickly in the footsteps of their parents in helping to increase the population of the Island; odors of all kinds, the garlic and onions of the cook, the tobacco fumes from the smokers, the fetid atmosphere caused by the filth strewed about on the ground, and the exhaustion of the oxygen caused by the many inhabitants, are merely suggestions of the unsanitary condition of the homes, of the squalor, filth and abject poverty of the thousands who live in the "patios" of the city.

**Suburban
Shanties**

We pass from the city to the suburbs. Near San Juan there is a stretch of marshy land facing the bay. Here are built several

large villages composed entirely of shanties placed close to each other. The frame work of these dwellings is square timber when it can be obtained, but more often poles answer the purpose. The siding is varied according to the ability of the owner to secure materials. Occasionally it is all made of new lumber. Oftener it is made up of old boards that have been picked up, store boxes that have been taken apart, tin cans that have been straightened out, advertising signs of either tin or wood, and, in many cases, the bark of the palm tree or the leaves of the sugar cane are used. For a roof, discarded pieces of corrugated iron or tin or boards are made to do service, but frequently thatch is used. When the ground is marshy, the buildings are elevated on posts and a floor is built as rapidly as boards enough can be secured for that purpose.

These shanties have usually one or two rooms. When there are two, the partition is very often made of canvas or some other cheap material. In the front room, the chief article of furniture is a hammock, in which the man of the house spends much of his time. Children abound, and the little naked youngsters are everywhere in evi-

dence. The kitchen is the same open-air-charcoal-oil-can arrangement that has been previously noted. Many of the women earn money by washing for persons in the city, and almost any hour of the day they can be seen going to and from the city with their bundle of clothes carefully poised on the head.

Life in the shanties is in some respects an improvement over that in the "patio." Here they have at least the fresh air from the sea. This is indicated by the very suggestive name of one village, "The North Pole." On the other hand, they live in these marshes, where there is no drainage and no sewers. All the filth and excrements mingle with the marshy soil which sends forth its poisonous gases to be inhaled by the people. The name of another of these villages, "Venice," gives a strong suggestion of its watery surroundings.

The conditions that obtain among the poor of the "patios," and of these conglomerate shanties of the marsh, are more local than general in their character, and are found chiefly in San Juan and vicinity. Our further description of the homes will

apply almost equally well to all the other towns and villages of the Island.

The general plan of the Porto Rican town is a central plaza, facing which the Catholic Church is the most imposing structure. The public buildings, if there are any, are on this square, and the chief stores and hotels are here also. Away from the plaza and its immediate vicinity, nearly all the houses are detached. While in every town there are many comfortable and a few elegant houses, the great majority are cheap, little cottages and tumble-down shacks. In many of the villages, the Catholic Church is the only substantial building to be seen, the rest being little wooden structures or thatched cottages. These houses are built in very much the same way as those described before. The materials used are seldom new, and the completed dwelling, with its leaky roof, uneven floor and scanty furniture, is far from attractive or comfortable. It would seem, however, that life among the poor of the smaller towns and villages is not attended by so many disadvantages and distressing conditions as are found among those of the larger cities.

Village
Life

**Life on
the Plan-
tations**

At a few of the large plantations, the lot of the poor is hard. They are not much better than slaves. The owner or some of his friends or relatives keep a store where prices are high and quality poor, but by force of circumstances the employee must buy his goods there. He is usually in debt, and the employer's coupons are good only at the store. For this reason, he is unable to release himself from his bondage. At some of these estates, the people are herded together like cattle. A long, narrow, shed-like building is constructed, divided into small rooms, each of which is rented to a family. These people are perhaps among the most unhappy of the Island, for while their poverty may not be so severe, they feel themselves in the hands of a master.

**Rural
Shacks**

The homes of the poor peasants are much the same all through the country. The houses are built of poles for the frame, palm bark or leaves of the sugar cane for the sides, and the roof made of thatch from the sugar cane. Sometimes they rest upon posts two or three feet from the ground, but often are built upon the ground so that no floor other than the earth is needed. This usually contains but one or two rooms—a

bedroom and a sitting-room. In the sitting-room is the ever popular hammock. Frequently a box or two does duty as chairs, but usually when the inmates want to sit down, they use the floor. The bedroom sometimes contains a platform which serves as a bed for the whole family.

The peasant and his family live out of doors most of the time, and while they are extremely poor, they do not suffer much from actual hunger. The constant vegetable diet, however, has the effect of weakening the system and causing much ill-health. The annual expense for clothing the family is very light. The children need absolutely nothing till they are seven or eight years old. None of the family wear shoes. They make their own hats, and all that needs to be bought is a little cotton cloth to cover the nakedness of the older members of the family.

This, in brief, is a description of the homes of the poorer classes of Porto Ricans, as seen in city, suburb, plantation, village and country. And in these homes are found about three fourths of the entire population of the Island.

II. HOUSES OF THE HIGHER CLASSES

The Parlor IN San Juan few of the houses are detached. The front walls come out flush with the sidewalk and form a continuous wall from street to street. On the second floor a narrow balcony is built out over the sidewalk, which is rarely ever more than four feet wide. On the first floor the lower part of the windows, which extend to the floor, have an iron railing to protect the parlor from the street. The whole room, however, is exposed to the gaze of the passers-by when the shutters are open, which is of necessity most of the time, to admit light and air.

The higher class people occupy the second floors, and in some cases, they are found on the first floor, but this is not the rule. Entering one of these homes, we find that the material used for flooring is usually tiling for the parlor, dining-room and kitchen, wood for the bedrooms, and cement or tiling for the halls.

The parlor is the chief room of the house. This is used quite generally as the living-room of the family, and most of the furniture of the house is found here. Portieres commonly hang before each door and win-

dow of the parlor. There seems to be a uniform mode of arrangement of parlor furniture in all these homes. A center table with a marble top is found in the middle of the room. On either side of this table, and facing it, are several large armchairs and rocking chairs. Close against the four sides of the room, the small chairs and the sofa are placed. All these have cane backs and bottoms. The furniture is either carved mahogany, which has been brought from Spain, or a style of bent wood painted black, which has been imported from Austria, or the cheaper woods which are also painted black, this being the popular color for furniture. Sometimes there are corner pieces, and also large mirrors in finely wrought frames, or little carved tables with marble tops made to set against the wall. The whole arrangement is in lines running parallel or at right angles to each other. The large number of chairs, and the stiff conventional manner of arranging them, are the most striking features of a Porto Rican parlor.

The ample dining-room contains the table, the chairs, and a large sideboard to hold the numerous dishes used at dinner time. The

**The Dining
Room**

different meals are about the same as on the continent of Europe. Bread and coffee in the morning, meat breakfast between eleven and twelve, and dinner about six or seven in the evening. Dinner is the one full meal of the day. It has quite an elaborate menu which is served in courses. Soup, fritters, two or three kinds of meat, rice, red beans, salads, dessert, fruit, coffee and wine is an average dinner. There is no fixed order in the serving of the courses so that one is not sure what article of food comes next. Most of the food is quite greasy and is strongly flavored with onions and garlic. There is a marked sameness in the bill of fare week after week. The food seems to be wholesome and indigestion is not a common complaint. At the close of the meal, the male members of the family light their cigarettes or cigars, while all remain around the table and join in conversation. The use of tobacco, which is quite general among the poorer classes of women, is not indulged in to any great extent by those of the better classes.

The Bed Rooms

Passing from the dining-room to the bedrooms, we find in each of them a high iron bedstead with a mosquito netting across the

top. This is tucked up through the day and let down at night. The coverings of the bed are the sheets and a counterpane. The sleeper rests either upon a canvas stretched across the bedstead, or upon a wire mattress with a covering not sufficiently thick to prevent the wires from leaving an impression upon the body. Carpets are practically unknown in Porto Rico, but a small rug usually lies in front of the bed. There is a mahogany wardrobe, which takes the place of closets, which are not used here, and a dresser, which adds much to the appearance and comfort of the room. There is also a small table upon which rests some religious emblem, as the image of the Virgin Mary or the crucifix. The only means of ventilation in these rooms is the door, and this is frequently kept closed during the night for the Porto Rican is afraid of a draught, and especially so of the night air.

In the kitchen, the most interesting feature is the great tile construction which extends across the side of the room and is used for cooking purposes. It is about three feet high, and two or three feet wide. In the top of it are a number of square holes into which gratings fit to hold the charcoal used

The Kitchen

in cooking. The number of these holes makes it possible for the cook to prepare several dishes at the same time. Extending over the entire range, in the form of an inverted funnel divided perpendicularly, is the large flue or chimney to conduct the heat of the fire and the odors from the cooking food to the air above.

**The Bath
Room**

The bath and toilet rooms are modern innovations that have come with the water works and sewers. The use of them is still comparatively limited, and there is much room for improvement in this direction. The old bath tubs were made after the Roman style. Huge vessels built of brick, cemented inside and covered with tile on the outside, or in some cases they were hewn out of marble. The modern porcelain tub is the one now being installed.

**Homes Out-
side of the
City**

The homes of the well-to-do classes in the small towns and in the country are similar to the one just described, in their furnishings and the arrangement of them. They differ largely, however, in the construction and general appearance of the houses. Some are built of brick and cemented outside and inside, but more are wooden structures with light board partitions between the rooms,

and all the walls painted. In the case of the brick buildings, the more important partitions are built of brick, and the others are of plaster. All of these partitions are given a lime wash. Wall paper is little used.

The houses are one or two stories high, a balcony in front which is sometimes built around the side, large window openings extending to the floor and closed by double shutters. There are no glass windows. Sometimes a pane of glass is found built in the roof, or placed at the top of a shutter, or over a door, but such cases are rare.

Where there is room, the yard in front of the house is divided into flower beds in which grow large tropical bushes which either by their variegated foliage or the abundance of their flowers, give a most pleasing effect to the appearance of the home. While there are quite a number of these houses scattered throughout the Island, they are remarkably few for so large a population. Perhaps the principal reason why there are so few elegant residences is the fact that most of the wealth has always been in the hands of the Spaniards, and they have regarded Porto Rico as a place to make money and afterward to spend it in Spain.

The few Porto Ricans who became wealthy also thought of Spain or France as a place to seek pleasure rather than to spend their money in beautifying their homes on the Island. Thus the money secured here has been spent largely in Europe, while Porto Rico has been regarded as a place for temporary residence.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS AND CUSTOMS

I. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

THE modern Porto Ricans are short in stature, slender in figure, graceful in motion, animated in conversation, quick in action, and, with the exception of the pure whites and the pure blacks, they are brown-skinned, due to the mixture of white, negro and Indian blood.

The color of the hair is black, and varies from straight to kinky, according to the amount of negro blood in the veins. Character-
istics

The teeth are exceedingly poor. Whether this is due to the chewing of cane, the acids of the fruits, the eating of sweets, the excessive use of tobacco, the results of immorality or the inheritance of generations of ancestors likewise affected, cannot be definitely stated. The lack of good teeth is almost universal. Among the higher classes, this defect is remedied to some extent by the skill of the dentist, but large numbers of the people have the front teeth out, or a stray tooth perhaps left, or several incisors or

canines in a bad state of decay. The absence of front teeth or the poor condition of the ones remaining is the most disfiguring feature of the average Porto Rican.

Lack of
Nourishing
Food

Being small in body, neither men nor women have much muscular strength, but when they are so inclined, or when occasion demands it, they have considerable power of endurance. The lack of nourishing food is largely responsible for this weakened condition of the body. The peasant lives on rice and salt fish chiefly and rarely tastes fresh meat of any kind. In thousands of cases the only time he has fresh meat is at Christmas when he roasts the little razor-backed pig that has been raised for this occasion. Add to this fact the unsanitary condition of living, and it can be readily understood why the country people have so much sickness among them.

Physical
Disability

In an article on anæmia, written in the spring of 1904, Dr. Stahl, a well-known Porto Rican physician, makes this statement:

“Out of the million inhabitants of Porto Rico, it is calculated that at least three fourths live in the country and that more than 95 per cent. of these are sick with Un-

cinariasis. Out of the remaining 250,000 found in the cities and larger towns nearly half that number, constituting the poor of the suburbs and by-streets, also suffer from this disease. In short, more than 800,000 inhabitants of Porto Rico are suffering from so terrible a plague, and its consequences are more or less manifest and disastrous.

"In the country districts, I except only the children at the breast; among the adults we can hardly find one free from infection. In the colored man, the deeper his color the less exposed is he to contract the infection and the infection does not attack his organism with such intensity as it does with the white man.

"Let us admit that of the 800,000 infected, half are light cases for some reason or other; there are left 400,000 anæmics that cannot conscientiously be considered light cases. Of these, one half, 200,000 are included in that circle in which 100,000 can be considered grave cases and 50,000 very grave, really helplessly ill, incapacitated from all kind of physical and mental labor. These not being able to work and earn their bread, and their near relatives lacking the means of sustaining them, dedicate themselves to

begging, and at times even this work is too great for their strength and they die worn out by their disease and their hunger."

The government has taken this matter in hand and is making an investigation of the conditions that exist here. An anæmic camp was established at Bayamon and later removed to Utuado. Dr. Ashford of the United States Navy has charge of this camp, and the results of this investigation are not yet known. While visiting Utuado in July of 1904, I learned that about four thousand patients were being treated weekly. With the introduction of sanitary measures, the knowledge of how to cure the prevalent diseases, the teaching of physiology and hygiene in the public schools, there will undoubtedly follow a better state of health.

Diseases

Another cause of physical debility is found in the widespread immorality of the people. Venereal diseases are exceedingly common.

A physician of San Juan told me that in his large practice, he was surprised to discover how many persons were suffering as a result of either their own or their parents' immoral acts. This is seen in the many forms of skin diseases that are so prevalent

here. The faces of many are marred by eruptions and irritations that point to ancestral excesses. We refer to this phase of life at this point because of its physical results; in a later chapter, we shall deal more fully with the question in considering moral conditions.

Another cause that acts disastrously upon the physical life of the Porto Rican is the constant and almost universal use of rum and tobacco. The boys, and sometimes the girls, learn to use tobacco at an early age. As tobacco is grown here and is easily procured, the use of it is quite general among the men and boys of all classes, and among the women of the lower classes. This has the effect of impeding the growth and preventing a full physical development. The use of rum is widespread also. While comparatively few drink to the point of intoxication, there is a constant tipping that is injurious to the system. Many times it is used to destroy the pangs of hunger. The poor very often find it easier to get a little tobacco and rum than to secure a good, nourishing meal.

Rum and
Tobacco

We would ascribe, therefore, as the cause

of much of the physical debility that is so prevalent among the Porto Ricans, to lack of proper food, unsanitary modes of living, results of immorality, and the widespread use of tobacco and rum.

II. MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

THE Porto Ricans being chiefly of Spanish descent or having been closely associated with Spaniards, have many of the general characteristics of the Latin race.

They are impulsive, excitable, talkative, demonstrative. On the streets, in the stores, in the homes, they talk in loud tones accompanied by many varied and suggestive gesticulations. The movements of the hands and arms, the expression of the countenance, the positions of the body, the inimitable shrug of the shoulders, enable the listener to understand much of the conversation without hearing a word. With their naturally excitable nature, it is almost impossible for them to wait until one person finishes speaking, but several, and sometimes the whole company, are talking at once.

In the plazas where they gather in groups of two or more, instead of a quiet friendly conversation, you soon hear every group

talking in high and loud tones, so that the plaza usually sounds like a school yard where the children have just been given a recess. The habit of giving immediate expression to their thoughts has become so fixed that frequently one hears persons as they walk along the streets talking aloud to themselves.

In public speech, the orator is usually verbose. The Spanish language is rich in adjectives, and there are a number of ways in which the speaker can express the same thought in different words, most of which he feels obliged to use. Thus an orator is enabled to pronounce a great many words in an address without the necessity of furnishing many ideas. Verbose

The Porto Rican is extremely fond of the spectacular. This is manifested in the gaudy wearing-apparel of all classes, in the decorations and processions of the religious feasts, and in the carnival, which lasts about ten days. Fond of
Spectacular

As a people, they are pleasure-loving, light-hearted, without care, and without any adequate idea of responsibility. This perhaps is due in large measure to their training. During Spanish rule, government Pleasure
Loving

positions and almost all the commerce of the Island were in the hands of the Spaniards. The Porto Rican had no need of developing either powers for governing or for looking after important interests. All that was expected of him was to be obedient and respectful. Thus by generations of training, they have become as light-hearted and irresponsible as a set of children.

Self Confident

Notwithstanding this simplicity of mind, the Porto Rican has a sublime confidence in himself. He thinks he can do things as well as any man living. Ask a carpenter if he can do a certain piece of work for you, and he is ready to begin without even waiting for your description; a young man or a young woman with scarcely an elementary education wants a certificate to teach. A native preacher can be called upon to preach a sermon without a moment's notification. The newly-fledged politicians want either independence or statehood at once—they know more about government than any of the United States officials. It makes no difference what class you approach, you find this same satisfaction and confidence in their own ability.

It need hardly be added that results do

not measure up to their high professions. Workmen as a rule perform their tasks in a most slipshod, careless manner. The carpenter mutilates the wood, the painter splashes paint over everything in the vicinity of his brush, the butcher tears and slashes the meat without regard to order, the coachman ties his harness up with ropes, the house-servant requires the constant presence of the mistress of the house to prevent covering up, instead of cleaning out the dust, the teacher and preacher are prone to draw upon their imaginations more than upon definite information, and the politician, if he cannot have his way, either resigns his position or sulks, refusing to take any part in the deliberations of the body of which he is a member.

The Porto Rican is by nature and training of an uncompromising temperament. This is especially manifest in his politics. There are numerous fights and riots during political campaigns and at election times. Although peaceable by nature, he cannot tolerate an opinion differing from his own, and blood flows freely in the pre-election contests. They have not yet learned to submit gracefully to majority rule.

Uncompro-
mising

Apt Scholars Under proper instruction, it has been shown that the Porto Ricans are apt scholars. The carpenter soon learns to do his work with precision and skill. Order and neatness rapidly take the place of disorder and carelessness. If the people could only be brought to see their need of instruction instead of having such a high estimate of their own abilities, progress would be made much more rapidly.

**Musically
Inclined**

The people of the Island seem to be fond of music, but their ideas of it are most primitive. The common people have a gourdlike instrument with a number of horizontal indentures over which they draw a stick rapidly. This is called the "juiro" (pronounced "weero" or "witcherow"), and is used to accompany the guitar, tambourine or violin. The piano is used to a limited extent among the better classes, but their use is not such as to arouse the enthusiasm of a musician. The instruments are chiefly of inferior make, and owing to the climatic conditions, the wires become rusty, and the tones produced are decidedly "tin-panny." These are played with but little expression, the idea seemingly being to make as loud a sound as possible. Some of the brass bands that play

in the plazas of the larger towns produce fairly good music, but others of them are simply nerve-racking. Much that passes under the name of music could more properly be called noise, but where Porto Ricans have had opportunity for study and development, they have proved that musical ability is not wanting among them. In singing, they have commendable enthusiasm. Their voices are often shrill and harsh, lacking sweetness or soul power. This no doubt is due largely to their lack of training and practice. The church music in which they took part was limited to the chants of the Catholic Church. Secular songs were scarce and only the rudest kind were sung by any great number of the inhabitants. Since the introduction of gospel hymns by the Protestants, and the songs of the public schools, and greater facilities for the study of music, there has been a wonderful improvement in this respect, and all over the Island one can now hear the cheerful songs learned in school and church and from special instructors.

The Porto Ricans have not yet learned the dignity of labor. Their ideas, probably derived from the Spaniards, lead them to

Labor Not
Dignified

disdain the appearance of work. The gentleman and the lady do not work themselves—they merely direct their servants. To carry a package on the street is indicative of either poverty or lack of breeding. A family must be very poor if they cannot afford several servants. To do any kind of housework cannot be considered by the lady of the house. She sits in the parlor dressed in loose garments and spends much of the day in idly rocking to and fro in a rocking-chair. When she goes out shopping, she is either accompanied by a servant who carries her small purchases, or she hires a boy to carry them for her. If she is so poor that she must do some kind of work, this fact must be carefully concealed from her neighbors. A woman in good social standing is not expected to do any work that can be done by a servant.

Among the men there is the same contempt for manual labor. The merchants must of necessity be busy men, but they are very careful not to degrade themselves by doing any kind of common labor. They object to performing work that can be done by an employee. Business men do not carry bundles home at night. They seldom lend a



SOME NATIVE TYPES
"Lavenderas" or Washerwomen
Group of Colored Children

hand when some little mishap occurs, or when repairs are needed. They are gentlemen, and menial tasks are for common workmen. The same spirit is shown among the tradesmen. When a plumber is sent for, he usually comes accompanied by his man. His business is to tell the man what to do, while he himself stands by and watches him. The farmer does not go out to work upon his farm. He mounts a horse and rides around telling his laborers what work must be done. Ask a common laborer to carry your hand-baggage to the boat or to the station, and very likely he will come at the appointed hour with a colored boy whom he orders to take up the load and carry it while he himself receives the money and walks by the side of the boy. From the highest to the lowest classes this false notion concerning labor is found. It is a heritage of slavery and peonage and ought to have no place among a democratic people.

The Porto Rican is an inveterate gambler. The rich planter will play cards until he loses the profits of a whole year and then will sometimes mortgage his land. The leisure hours of the middle class are given up to the same practice. The poor will throw

The Gamb-
ling Habit

dice for their last penny and will then go hungry. The cockfights call forth the highest bets within reach of the spectators. When the Catholic Church has special need for money, it gets up some sort of a raffle. Boys apply the same principle in selling their wares. They go through the streets with sweetmeats for sale. You put a penny in the machine, turn a wheel and get as many pieces as are indicated by the finger at its stopping place. Everywhere the spirit of gambling seems to have taken hold of the people and become a part of their life.

III. CUSTOMS

THERE are many customs in Porto Rico that seem especially queer to an American because he finds nothing similar to them among his own people. To a person from another Latin country these differences are not so great.

Courtesies

The forms of salutation are practically the same as those used in other Spanish countries, but it sounds strange to one unaccustomed to it to hear a person say "adios" or "goodbye" when he greets you on the street, or to see a man sign himself, "Your true servant who kisses your hand,"

or, if written to a lady, "Your faithful servant who kisses your feet." When a gentleman wishes to be remembered to the wife of his friend, he says to him, "Place me at the feet of your wife." When a gentleman is introduced to another, he repeats his own name and adds, "at your orders," and before parting he places his house at your disposal. These extravagant expressions have no significance other than that of formal courtesy.

The manner of disposing of the dead is shocking to an American. Bodies were allowed to rest in vaults or in graves only so long as the rent was paid. When this was neglected, the skeleton, or what remained of the body, was thrown into the bone vault, which is a cistern-like hole, open at the top and exposed to the weather. This practice was forbidden during the military government of the United States, and has not been permitted since. The burial of a poor person is a pitiful sight to witness. The body is laid in a rough, unplanned box, without a lid or any kind of a covering. A strip of wood is nailed on each side and allowed to project a couple of feet at each end for convenience in carrying it. Four

Burial of the
Dead

men raise the box to their shoulders, and, walking in the middle of the street, make their way to the cemetery. Women are not allowed by custom to accompany the body to the grave. Sometimes a few boys and men follow, at other times not a person is seen except those carrying the body. When the grave is reached the corpse is lifted out of the box, and with more or less consideration, lowered into a shallow grave and covered up by shovelling in the earth upon the unprotected body, or upon a few branches of trees that have been placed upon it.

An American lady told me of an occurrence witnessed by herself in a cemetery. She saw some men bring in the body of a child in one of these open boxes, and they did not even take the trouble to lift the little body out of the box, but dumped it into the grave as if it were nothing but a clod. A recent law forbids the use of these open boxes, but they are still used in many parts of the Island.

**A Strange
Custom**

They have a queer custom here in regard to a child that is still-born. Instead of mourning over it, they have a feast in honor of the occasion. They claim that as the little one never committed any sin, its com-

ing is in reality an angel's visit to the home. The festivities of the occasion resemble somewhat the accepted idea of an Irish "wake." Eating, drinking, music and dancing occupy the attention of the friends during the hours of the night.

One is amused in seeing persons carrying open umbrellas on bright moonlight nights. This has given rise to the report that the natives are afraid of the moonbeams and take this method of protecting themselves. The real object, however, seems to be protection from the falling dew. Not only is the Porto Rican afraid of the night dew, but he is superstitious about the night air. Upon retiring to his bedroom, he closes all openings and practically seals himself in until morning. This custom undoubtedly contributes to the diseases of the lungs which are quite prevalent.

Wherever it is practicable, the washer-women carry their clothes to a stream instead of carrying water to their homes. They congregate at some point where they sit on the stones and pound the clothes upon them. The tropical sun beats down upon these women as bareheaded, barefooted, and barelegged they perform their tasks, but

**Fear of
Night Air**

**The Washer-
woman**

they seem not to be disturbed by it. At the close of the day, they balance their burdens upon their heads and return to their homes which may be a mile or two distant. Their manner of drying clothes brings dismay to the person who owns them. The clothes are hung up on barbed wires or on prickly bushes, so that when the wind blows it works disaster to the garments. At other times the clothing is laid upon the ground in filthy lots and in different kinds of objectionable places, so that they are not only soiled, but there is danger of carrying disease in them.

**A Barefooted
People**

It was estimated by the shoe merchants in 1899 that 700,000 persons in Porto Rico wear no shoes, and if one is to judge by appearances, there are many of that number who rarely or never wash their feet. The skin becomes hardened and encrusted so that they are able to walk over sharp stones or rough roads without much inconvenience. In the large towns many compromise by wearing a sort of slipper or shoe with the heel tramped down. They hold this on by the toes while the heel part of it flaps and slides along the pavement. Men, women and children in large numbers use this sort of footwear in the towns, but in the country

the custom of going barefooted is almost universal.

Except on dress occasions, the Porto Ricans are prone to be careless in their personal appearance. Men and women of the poorer classes wear soiled clothing most of the week, but on Sunday they come out arrayed in garments starched so stiff that they could stand alone.

Personal
Appearance

The women of the higher classes come to coffee in the morning with disheveled hair and garments loosely put on. They sit frequently around idly in deshabbille during the forenoon, but in the evening they dress well for dinner and for social events. Even when dressed for the street one cannot help noticing that in many cases there are evidences which betray the lack of neatness and care.

An abundant use of cheap perfumery and face powder is also noticeable among the Porto Rican women. Even the blacks lighten their color by a generous application of powder.

Among the poorer classes, there is a decided lack of taste displayed in the choice of colors. Yellow, green, pink and red in all sorts of combinations are the prevailing

colors. There has been quite a modification in these respects since the advent of the American women.

Market Day

Another custom that seems strange from the American point of view is the making of Sunday into the chief market day of the week. Each town has its market place which is used more or less through the week, but on Sunday, it is a perfect hive of business. People from the country crowd in with articles for sale, and those from the town go to market on that day even if they absent themselves the rest of the week. The chief use of Sunday seems to have been—market and mass in the morning, out-door pleasure in the afternoon, and a dance or concert or play of some kind for the evening.

A Natural Ambition

One of the pathetic features connected with the people of mixed blood is their desire to be considered white. As we have stated before, there is a comparatively small percentage of pure whites and a large percentage of persons of mixed blood. These latter want to be classed as whites. By a generous use of face-powder, by skillful dressing of the hair, by talking disparagingly of persons of negro blood, by explaining their own dark complexion as due either

to the sun or to Indian blood, or to a dark-skinned Spaniard, they try to avoid suspicion themselves, but they cannot eradicate the unmistakable signs of the negro race. With this kind of a feeling prevailing, one is surprised at the lack of sentiment against intermarriage. Especially among the poorer classes, blacks, whites, and persons of mixed blood live together indiscriminately. Among the higher classes, if a person has but a small amount of negro blood he can pass as white and marry into the best families.

IV. AMUSEMENTS

THE Porto Ricans are a pleasure-loving people, whose means for gratifying the desire for amusements are quite limited. Very few being able to read, books of all kinds are closed to them. The theatres are great attractions where they exist, but there are only a few of them on the Island, these being in the larger towns, and even here the people are too poor to patronize them in large numbers. Bad roads and expensive travel make it impossible to have any great assemblies at central points, so that "fairs" and "cir-

cuses" and "shows" are practically unknown.

The annual attraction for the whole Island is the religious pilgrimage to the Church of our Lady of Monserrate. This brings devout Catholics and many others not so devout from almost every parish. It furnishes a substitute for "fairs" and other such functions in bringing together the people from all sections of the Island.

**Intellectual
Gatherings**

Neither do the people come together in intellectual gatherings. Courses of vocal and instrumental music and lectures could neither be appreciated nor sustained. The ignorance and the poverty of the great masses of the people have shut them off from many of the sources of pleasure enjoyed by other civilized nations. The isolated position of the Island has also had the effect of limiting their intellectual opportunities.

**Out Door
Sports**

Until baseball was introduced by the American soldiers, there seems to have been little out-door sport. Few of the open air games have found a place in their amusements. Bathing, fishing and sailing are not favorite sports, the latter two are used to a limited extent, but almost wholly as a

means of livelihood and not for pleasure. It will be seen from these limitations that their field of amusement is rather restricted. This, however, does not prevent them from enjoying such things as they have.

As stated before, the love of gambling is very general throughout the population. Anything that can be turned into a game of chance meets with favor. Throwing dice, playing with cards, dominoes or checkers, are only interesting as money is placed on the game. Gambling

Betting on the cockfights is a most popular form of gambling. Before prohibited by law, many towns and villages had cockpits to which an entrance fee was charged. These exhibitions were usually given on Sunday afternoons and furnished the chief attraction of the day.

These fights were the best substitute they could provide for the bull fights of Spain and other Spanish countries. They were carried on in somewhat the following order: A number of cocks were tied to stakes placed within the enclosure, and when the spectators had arrived two were selected and the contest began. The fighting was done al- Cock Fights.

most entirely by spurs which had been sharpened to a point almost as fine as a needle. As the heads of the birds became bloody, their owners sponged them off until they could see to renew the struggle. This continued until one of the contestants succeeded in driving the long, sharp spur through his rival's head. The dead bird was then thrown aside, the bets paid, and a couple of new cocks were put in the pit to continue the sport for the crowd that was still eager for the fray.

During Spanish rule cockpits were licensed by the municipalities and were patronized by all classes of society. Under American rule these fights have been prohibited by law, but there are still many of them carried on in sheds, and other outbuildings in the cities and suburbs, and especially throughout the rural districts where the police are not so vigilant.

Dancing Perhaps the most popular form of amusement is dancing which is indulged in by all classes. Sunday night is the favorite time for the "bailes" or balls, with Saturday night as a close second. These balls last far into the night or rather into the morning. There are frequently more than forty

dances in the evening's program and the dancers move much more slowly than is the custom in the United States. The main feature seems to be a rhythmical movement of the body in time to music. They have also a dance which resembles slightly the waltz. The music played on guitars and a kind of mandolin is in very quick time, and the dancers fly around in a circle at a tremendous speed. This dance is more popular in the country, while the slow dances are used chiefly in the cities.

In the cities and towns one of the great attractions is the band concert in the principal plaza. In some places, there is a more or less ornamental band stand, but in others the band simply occupies a central position in the plaza. These concerts are given on Sunday evenings and on one or two evenings during the week. As the band begins to play, the crowd which has been gathering for some time commences to promenade up and down the plaza. This is kept up throughout the entire evening. There are a few benches around the side which are greatly in demand, and in San Juan rocking-chairs are placed in rows and rented for the even-

Band
Concerts

ing, chiefly to "los Americanos" as the Americans are called.

These concerts are really enjoyable affairs. The bright laughing faces of the young people promenading, the variety of colors that appear in the gowns of the young women and the neckties of the young men, the strains of the music that mingle with the laughter and conversation of the gay crowd, the balmy sea breeze fanning and soothing one's brow, the soft delicious air of this tropical Island bathing the body and filling the lungs—all these contribute to the fascination and charm of these gala evening hours.

The Carnival

The great annual festivity is the carnival which lasts ten days. This is the most disturbing of all the "fiestas." In San Juan, it is opened with a grand ball in the theatre. Two young women, chosen for their beauty, are crowned queens of the carnival. Immediately after the coronation, a great uproar takes place. Men and women begin throwing "popolita" upon each other in great quantities. This consists of millions of small disks of different colored paper. It can be bought in little sacks containing about half a peck each, and many have taken

a supply with them. Before the evening is over, every one has been covered with these bits of paper, and the floor of the theatre is in some places several inches deep with them. Dancing is kept up until the morning, and the carnival with all its fantasies has been formally inaugurated.

In the afternoon and evening of each day the masqueraders appear on the streets. These are usually persons of the lower classes, although there are many others who join with them. Men dress up to represent various animals such as a bear, a donkey, a cow, an owl, etc. The favorite mask represents the devil with horns and a tail. Such a one usually is followed by a crowd of boys who obey his orders. He asks questions and they respond in chorus as they parade up and down the streets. He forms them into a circle on the plaza, takes the center, and after various maneuvers breaks through and is again followed by his crowd.

The women vie with each other in making striking costumes out of bright colored cotton materials. Many of these only come to the knees, and the lurid colors of hosiery are everywhere prominent. These women run around in the most aimless manner, trying

to attract attention by their masks and by voices disguised as high squeaky falsettos such as are used in a Punch and Judy show. In the meantime the boys are not idle. They have sacks filled with flour, bottles of perfumery, etc., which they use freely upon the passer-by.

The evenings are given up to "bailes." One night there will be a "first-class" baile for whites, then a "second-class" for blacks, then a "black and white" baile for both colors, masks, of course, being used.

The closing feature of the carnival is a grand parade on Sunday afternoon. Carriages are gaily decorated with bright colored papers, and at the head of the procession ride the two queens. As they pass through the streets persons on the balconies throw balls of serpentine paper at the queens and at their friends in the carriages. They also hurl this paper from balcony to balcony, until the streets are a net work, which presents a "fiesta" day appearance as it sways in the breeze.

Much of this sport is innocent fun, but immoral men and women find in the disguises and masks of carnival week a suit-

able covering for taking liberties they otherwise would not dare to take, and in many ways they use their concealed identity for promoting their nefarious trade.

Perhaps the greatest part of the amusement of the Porto Ricans has been furnished by the Catholic Church. There were about forty "holy days," or "fiesta" days, as they were generally called, in each year. These were legal holidays, and work was quite generally suspended. The Church provided parades, semi-religious services, spectacular exhibitions, and, in many ways, it sought to gratify the taste of the people for amusement.

Religious
Festival

In our judgment, this custom was disastrous in several respects. It caused the people to regard the Church as an amusement bureau instead of an institution to direct their thoughts toward spiritual and ethical ideas. It brought into vulgar use many of the emblems and words that should have been used only in the Church or in connection with religious themes. It encouraged idleness by giving the working people more than forty holidays in addition to the

fifty-two Sundays of the year, thus putting a premium on idleness in a climate where every incentive to labor is needed to help overcome the enervating influence of the atmosphere.