

"ALLÍ DONDE LAS OLAS REFULGENTES. . . ."—"WHERE GREAT GLASSY SURGING WATERS ROLLED. . . ."

### XIII

## TOURING

### Porto Rico Through a Tourist's Eyes

By Francis W. Hoadley,

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A visitor to many beautiful spots throughout the world who welcomes the invitation to write of the charm of Porto Rico, that island which gave new strength and health to him. Formerly Assistant Treasurer, Alabama Terminal and Improvement Company, and Auditor, Alabama Midland Railway Company. Ex-Member of the Staff of Cassier's Magazine, Engineering Magazine, Railway Age and other publications. Ex-Editor, Tariff; Ex-Editor, Trans-Continental News. Late Advertising Director, Trans-Continental Freight Co. Magazine and Publicity writer.

#### THE BIRTH OF PORTO RICO

(\*Science has established that Porto Rico has submerged and emerged several times.")

Where great glassy surging waters  
Spread and rolled across the deep,  
Now lies one of Nature's daughters,  
Sea born from earth's troubled sleep.

A child of Nature's toil majestic;  
Born to the bosom of the sea.  
Fashioned by God's methods plastic  
And his wish that it should be.

A gem of Nature's own devising,  
Framed by glorious tropic skies.  
Land of wondrous beauty rising  
To rejoice all human eyes.

Porto Rico, 1923.

F. W. H.

If I know history correctly, Columbus and Ponce de León were the first tourists to visit Porto Rico, they being members of the first personally conducted tours which landed on that Island.

**Why Ponce de León Returned a Second Time.** Having viewed the Island's charms very thoroughly by trips around it both by passenger and freight steamers, as well as by inspection car trips over the American Railroad, and by long automobile rides in every direction, the writer desires to state that he is not surprised that Ponce de León, after once experiencing the Island's charm, soon returned to make it

a second visit, and he can well imagine that when Christopher paid his visit to it, while on his second tour of the West Indies, he was exceedingly sorry to have missed it on his first trip.

In picturing Porto Rico, as he has been asked to do, it is hard to know where to start, there being so much of interest to be seen and enjoyed. In fact, the task reminds the writer of those times when a beautiful girl has asked him to help her unsnarl a tangled skein of worsted—he does not know just where to start and feels sure that he will have hard work to find an end.

**Perfect Climate and Perfect Roads.** Porto Rico—the jewel of the Caribbean, has both a perfect climate and a perfect network of fine roads. Fourteen hundred miles of roads on an island thirty-six miles wide, and a hundred miles long; highways as smooth as a New York or Chicago boulevard, which take one in comfort through the most beautiful scenery of the tropics, the equal of any in the world.

To get down to material facts, however, Porto Rico possesses an unrivalled climate—the writer speaks from experience on this point, he having spent both the summer and winter months on her hospitable shores. She offers unrivalled scenery and many charming vistas—excellent health conditions, and freedom from epidemics, volcanoes, devastating storms, snakes and poisonous insects or reptiles.

**No Wet or Dry Season.** It knows no wet or dry seasons, has an average temperature of 76 degrees, a rainfall of 77 inches, and at all seasons of the year, the trade winds and frequent showers—the latter often of but a few moments duration—cool and freshen her air, thus making this land where winter never holds sway, ideal for tourists.

**Some of its Many Attractions.** So much for Porto Rico's general conditions, but what next? Shall we first describe its old fortresses and dungeons, telling of El Morro, the fortress built in 1584, which greets the tourist's eyes as his steamer rounds the point as she proceeds to her landing? Or shall we speak of the island's ancient buildings and churches, or of Casa Blanca that snowy castle built four hundred years ago, and now occupied by the Comman-

der of those men of Porto Rico who comprise the United States army there, and reverence the Stars and Stripes?

Or by virtue of its antiquity, shall we first mention the Cathedral from whose tower has come the peal of bells, day after day, ever since 1540? Or shall we first of all describe the island's overwhelming natural beauty of mountains, valleys, palm groves and irregularity of sky line and landscape?

No, let us play fair with all her charms, and because the only way for a tourist to see all her beauty is by her wonderful roads—and right here it is that by not following this plan, many a "tripper" trips up—roads which cross and recross the Island and curve up and down her mountain heights, many of them centuries old and lasting testimonials to early Spanish engineering skill, let us first take a trip over them.

**Over the Carretera Militar.** Let us start from her capital city—San Juan with its moulding heritages of the past and its splendid modern buildings—that city which for a half century before St. Augustine, Florida, was thought of as making history—and take the great Carretera Militar, perhaps the world's greatest highway, certainly a road of thrills and delights for the tourist.

We are off! Through San Juan, that city where buildings of Old Spanish architecture stand shoulder to shoulder with fine examples of modern style and which is built upon an Island—the off-spring of its parent island, Porto Rico. First through narrow and busy streets, then past the beautiful Porto Rican Casino, and on over a broad Carretera through Puerta de Tierra, past the Y.M.C.A. building, the Carnegie Library, and on over San Antonio Bridge to the main island of Porto Rico and the beautiful residential suburbs of Miramar and Santurce. Just over the bridge we pass the Union Church, a handsome modern Protestant place of worship, followed by spacious homes of solid San Juan citizens.

Now let us glance back toward Fort San Gerónimo and the romantic walled city, crowned by the great San Cristóbal Fort, with the fine harbor, wide lagoons and mountains to the left, and forming a sight that has filled

the writer's eyes with joy every morning as he has raised his head from the pillow.

On we go over the level land characteristic to the Island's entire outer edge, through Rio Piedras where the tourist, if wise, will stop to view with his eyes the wonderful trees of the Jardín de la Convalecencia which form a massive arch of green foliage high above the visitors' heads, that spot where formerly stood the summer home of Porto Rico's Spanish Governors, but which today is used as a park where her humblest citizen is welcome to sit and rest.

Or perhaps, if the visitor possesses the proper introduction, for a short visit with Don José Monclova in order to view the wonderful collection of gold, silver and bronze medals won by him for pharmaceutical preparations at Expositions the world over.

Then up and up in curves and spirals to the Island's highest town—Aibonito, located at an elevation of about 2,000 feet. And what a view lies before us then—"Oh how beautiful," you say, and in so saying have unconsciously, perhaps, given the meaning of the name of that town—Aibonito.

Then down we dip in countless turns to Ponce, that city founded in 1692, and today so wide awake with enterprise, and noted the island over for its many beautiful girls who greet the tourist's eyes in such numbers on Sunday evenings, strolling about the central Plaza with its beautiful walks and ancient Cathedral, a fit background for Ponce's beauties.

**The Moving Picture Route to Porto Rico.** How varied a panorama the wonderful Military Road presents to the tourist's eyes—picturesque country estates, glorious gardens, the whole island being one beautiful park designed by God, palm groves, vast fields of waving sugar cane and hillsides covered with tobacco and coffee, fruit plantations, purple mountains, green hills, rocky crags, and ever changing shadows, and great splotches of brilliant sunlight over all this vast series of entrancing views—the "Moving Picture Route to Porto Rico," such is the Military road to the tourist. Extravagant? No, those words of mine fail to do justice to Nature's extravagance in bestowing beauty upon Porto Rico.

Now a long stretch under the shade of intertwined mango trees or under the flaming arches of wide-spreading flamboyantes, or "fire trees," which at certain seasons, from their fallen blossoms, spread a carpet of brilliant color over the entire road.

On we go, one moment on a straight stretch between groves of banana, orange and grapefruit trees, the next skirting the edge of precipices with far flung views before our eyes. Up and up we go, climbing to a summit which discloses a view long to linger in the tourist's memory. A view of two oceans—on our right the Atlantic, the Caribbean on our left. From this point, more than twenty towns greet the tourist's eyes. And—now look, see how this road of pleasure and delights has described almost a perfect figure eight in its upward climb.

**A Two Million Dollar Monument to Ancient Engineers.** A trip by this road by automobile fills one with the joy of living and the deepest admiration of the skill and labor of those Military engineers who built it to last, at an expenditure of about \$2,000,000, and thus give lasting pleasure to mankind for many long years after their work on earth was done, and well done, to judge by this road of permanence, and of changing views.

**Don't Forget Your Overcoat or Wrap.** Perhaps the tourists may be so fortunate as to make the start from San Juan in the early morning hours—to do so though a private or hired car is necessary—the public motor bus, which is the most reasonable way to reach the interior towns and Ponce, not starting until about eight—and if so, he will be well repaid for rising early by seeing the tropical sun rise over the mountains revealing new beauties to his eyes. Should such be his good fortune, here is a word of warning—don't forget your overcoat or wrap, for no matter how temperate the air may be in San Juan when you start, it will not be long before the crisp mountain air of the interior will make same most acceptable.

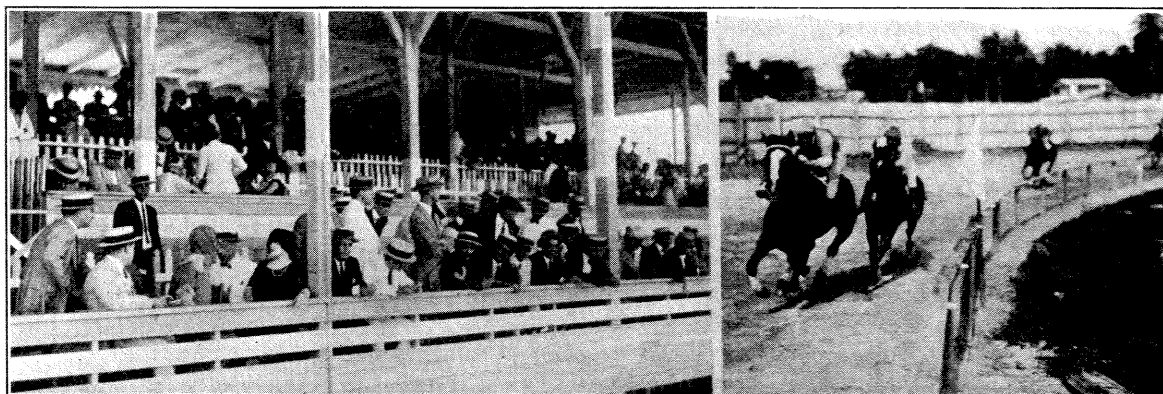
**Temperature Range.** Don't think of Porto Rico as a land of torrid heat just because it lies in the tropics, as it has an all the year round climate which surpasses any in the world, with a temperature of an average range from 76 degrees in the coolest months to 79 degrees in the

warmest months of summer, and in the middle of the day the rays of the sun are tempered by the trade winds and the decreasing humidity.

**A Tip Given to the Tourist by Ponce de León.** Up in the mountains all through the summer months too, the tourist will be glad to have a blanket to sleep under. Charming surroundings, delightful scenes, and superb climate, such the factors which make the tourist marvel at Porto Rico, that island possessing such a vast assortment of pleasure and health-giving features. The island so easy to reach, and which once reached affords such convenient means of seeing all its many wonderful

lights and shadows of her incomparable and innumerable panoramas, bring ever-changing degrees of charm to the eyes of the tourist.

**Some Famous Landings.** As the tourist steps ashore on Porto Rico, let him reflect too, on other landings which have been made upon the Island. At Aguadilla where Columbus first landed to replenish his water supply from the same spring that the tourist's eyes see today; at Santurce—the beautiful residential district of San Juan, where in the open, in mid winter, the author writes this tribute to the island's charm—it was in 1597 Lord Cumberland landed English troops, and where in 1797 other English troops were landed only to be obliged



EL HIPÓDROMO.—“THEY'RE OFF.”

sights. No wonder Ponce de León in his tours to the Western World, visited Porto Rico long before he did Florida, though with all his dreams he never dreamt that by so doing he was giving a valuable tip to all tourists.

**Natural Beauty and Charm Unsullied After Four Centuries.** Porto Rico today in many ways possesses all the virgin tropical charm that was hers over four hundred years ago when Columbus first saw it. True, today she possesses for the tourist's comfort all that modern civilization demands, but true it also is, that to the eyes of the tourists today she presents her great natural charms of land and sea just as when Columbus and Ponce de León first viewed them.

To sum it all up, she is blessed with a uniformity of climate, yet one free from monotony, just as the island's mountainous nature, its unsullied tropical verdure and the ever-changing

to sail away again about two weeks later. At Guánica, on the southeast coast is perhaps to the tourists from the States the most interesting spot of all, as it was there that American troops were landed under General Miles in 1898.

**Other Interesting Spots.** If on landing, too, he sends a cable home, let him call to mind that at Arroyo it was where Morse tried out his telegraph invention. And as he takes the wonderful ride over the Military road, let him stop and refresh himself at Coamo and see there the oldest mineral springs in America—springs famous since the days of Spanish conquest, and whose waters were known and prized by the Indians for their valuable mineral qualities, long before the eyes of the white men ever rested upon Porto Rico.

**A Never to be Forgotten Spot.** The truth is, Porto Rico though a mere thumbprint upon

the map of the Western Hemisphere, is a spot which due to wonderful scenery, agreeable climate and health building air, makes an impression upon the hearts of visiting tourists which time never erases.

Christopher Columbus had one advantage over the writer when he chanced upon Porto Rico back in 1493, he had a definite destination in view—Santo Domingo, while the writer had no idea of where he wanted to go when he chanced to think of the island as he lay upon a hospital bed in New York recovering from a nervous breakdown caused by long continued strain.

On the other hand Ponce de León when he visited Porto Rico in search of a life-giving spring, failed to find it, which is where the writer had the advantage over that adventurous gentleman, as directly upon landing in Porto Rico in March, he certainly found a Spring which put new life into him.

**Just Ninety-six Hours from New York.** In fact it was in Porto Rico where friend Christopher found at Aguadilla the water he needed for his ships, when he first landed on Porto Rican soil, and friend Ponce did not find the water he wanted, that the writer discovered the quickest and most delightful way for a tired man or woman to secure the most important factors of perfect rest and renewed vitality—soft, health-building air, restful, quiet, beautiful scenery, cool, sleep-wooing nights and happy days in pleasant surroundings, with congenial companions—in fact, real, solid comfort found—and don't miss this point—just ninety-six hours from New York.

**Small in Size, Big in its Delights.** Which is the reason that he would advise all those who plan a trip for rest and enjoyment to think of Porto Rico—the land of eternal summer and perpetual wonder. An island small in size, but big in its delights, where the sky is always blue and it is hard for the visitor to be blue, and the sunshine like the hearts of its inhabitants is always warm and tender.

As the reader has been asked to think of Porto Rico, it is no more than fair that the writer should state what he thinks of that beautiful island, the most lovely of all the is-

lands of the world which it has been his good fortune to visit.

There is much to interest the tourist's eyes in Porto Rico, and a wide choice to meet his fancy or his taste—horse races and good ball games, first class moving pictures, busy markets with animated scenes of people of all types, engaged in the purchase of fruit and vegetables and everything else, from a palm-leaf hat to an odd-shaped basket or a drink of tamarindo, that delicious beverage so good to one's taste, and for one's health. A beautiful park by the sea, a great modern wireless station at Cayey, the Ballajá Barracks built to accommodate 2,000 Spanish soldiers, now housing the Porto Ricans who form Uncle Sam's army there and over which flies the Stars and Stripes. The Carnival, should your visit be made toward the first of February, and the city hall built in 1799 and which faces the Plaza Principal, where concerts are held in the evening.

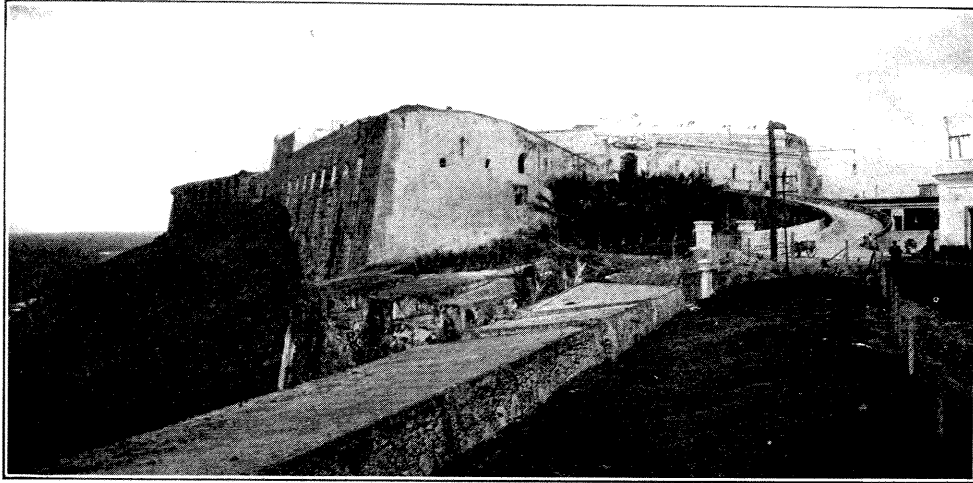
**San Cristóbal.** For a magnificent panoramic view of San Juan and the surrounding waters, one must not fail to visit San Cristóbal Castle, that ancient fortress erected years before the Revolutionary War of the American Colonies in 1776, to aid defend the Spanish possession of Puerto Rico from the operations of the English fleet which had already taken Havana, Cuba and other Spanish possessions in the West Indies.

Walk if you enjoy a stiff climb, or make the trip by automobile, no matter how you get there, the main point is not to miss a visit to this silent sentinel in the heart of San Juan. The ancient stronghold which bears upon its walls the age blackened scars of strife and time, and which, in days long gone, afforded such good defense against lustful buccaneers and freebooters of the Spanish main, and enemies of Spain including reckless Dutch and English admirals, bent on the capture of the city of San Juan.

Fort San Cristóbal, however though it can not claim the age of El Morro, that fort the construction of which was started in 1584 and not completed until nearly two centuries later, affords to the eyes of the tourist today, perhaps the most perfect bird's eye view

of the oldest portion of San Juan. Situated on the high land at the eastern end of the old city, from its parapets and ramparts a most entrancing and extended view of both the city

Across the ocean came a Spanish soldier, a mere unit of a force sent to strengthen the garrison, but a bold and handsome youth, the kind that is sure to win a woman's smiles.



EL MAJESTUOSO FUERTE DE SAN CRISTÓBAL.—A SPOT THAT AFFORDS ENTRANCING VIEWS.

and the sapphire sea that beats upon the island's shores, lies before the tourist's eyes.

**The Haunted Sentry Box.** And now look down there at that lonely sentry box which juts out over the sea, which is known to all as the haunted tower. Many the legend the tourists hears concerning the reason for its name, the fundamental reason for which is that from it there vanished time after time, the sentinels stationed there in days of old, to watch for foes of the "Port of Riches."

All of these tales are weird and into all of them the Devil is woven in different ways, but one there is which rings true to human nature especially the nature of the crafty savage. But even that has to do with the Devil—that devil which causes men to be untrue to innocent women.

**The Legend.** But listen to the legend of the Haunted Sentry Box as it was told to the writer one night while dining with a citizen of San Juan. Long years ago, so runs the tale, there lived with her parents a beautiful indian maiden, a maid who drew to her the bold glances of the braves, as a beautiful flower attracts the bee, and who started their hearts beating like the waves upon the shores of Porto Rico.

**Its Birth.** And then that man and woman met—the child of nature and the man from the land of the Dons—and from that meeting came a romance, a romance of love from which there came a babe and the mysterious tragedies which gave that sentry box you see there the name by which it is known today.

Soldiers of Spain were not sent to Porto Rico to indulge in pastoral love, theirs was the work of Mars not Venus, and so, the officers hearing of his escapade, swift punishment was inflicted upon that man. He was imprisoned, perhaps in that dungeon upon your left—who knows, while the indian maid swore vengeance; not upon the soldier alone, but upon all men who wore the same uniform as did her one time lover.

**Christened in Blood.** And to reap that vengeance she would crawl unnoticed in the small hours of the night, those hours before the dawn in which man's energy is sure to be at ebb, upon the sentry box without the walls of San Cristóbal, when, watching her chance, she would crawl upon the sentry posted there, kill him, throw his body into the sea and silently steal away.

Man after man vanished, the mystery of that lonely box grew, but none could solve it.

Time rolled by and then—one night when she crawled upon the sentry, she saw, thanks to a ray of moonlight before her the man she sought, her unfaithful lover. Slowly, stealthily she drew near him, every art of savage craftiness in play, every nerve alert, and every faculty bent upon the accomplishment of the crowning act of her revenge.

Unconscious of nearing danger that soldier gazed seaward, or perhaps dozed under the charm of the tropic night, and then—a swift silent rush, a stab and a dark form, on which a shaft of moonlight that pierced through the low hung clouds, just as the death dealing stroke pierced that soldier's heart, revealed a patch of crimson upon his coat as he was cast down into the tossing sea.

**What Happened Then.** And then, the disappearances ceased, perhaps because the Indian girl, separated from her lover in life, joined him in death in the troubled waters. Perhaps, because her vow fulfilled, she fled to the island's wilds, far from the white man, there to become a redman's slave, perhaps to die a wrinkled and aged grandmother in whose unprepossessing features no trace of romance would ever be dreamed of, but which—I know not.

**Is This Tale True?** Is this the true version of the origin of the haunted sentry box of San Cristóbal? Don't ask me, I have only repeated the tale as it was told to me by one who was born upon the island of romance and history. If you would learn more, come to San Juan, view the wonders which San Cristóbal spreads before the eyes of the tourist, see the Haunted Sentry Box for yourself, and then reflect how perfectly both its location and the working of the human mind, when roused by wrong, seem to point to its truth.

**Lawns Like Those of Old England.** And don't forget to visit one of the large Sugar Centrals to see with your own eyes the massive machinery which extracts the juice of the sugar cane—that first step in the manufacture of sugar for your breakfast table. At the Fajardo Central, too, is another sight to bring pleasure and thoughts of home to the tourist's eyes—a vast expanse of beautiful green turf, lawns which remind the tourist from the States

or England, of those beautiful lawns at home which he knows so well and the equal of which he did not expect to find in the tropics.

**Following Columbus' Example.** But for that matter Porto Rico is full of surprises for the tourist's eyes which a steadily increasing stream of tourists demonstrates. The people of all countries know the lure of "Uncle Sam's Tropical Garden", and the ships of the seven seas follow Columbus' example and visit her. Huge tourist steamers are a frequent sight in "the port of riches", thanks to two things—the fame of her wondrous beauty and the great development of the fine harbor of San Juan.

All of which but adds to the varied types one meets on the streets of her cities, where, as the author has so many times, one catches sight almost daily of strangers "doing the town," but never hears of a visitor "being done," as not only is the Island fair to look at, but her people are fair in their treatment of visitors.

**A Difficult Task—Picturing Porto Rico's Charm.** To other writers in this book have been assigned the task of describing the Island's developments of all kinds, and the great opportunities that Porto Rico offers—and rightfully, as all of them are versed in that on which they write. To the writer of this tribute to Porto Rico—a visitor on the Island—has been given what may seem a simpler task—the picturing of Porto Rico through a tourist's eyes. But come to this gem of the Antilles, this island summit of an oceanic mountain, one of the "protruding tips of the mightiest and most precipitous mountain chain in the world," washed by both the Atlantic and the Caribbean, and fanned by the trade winds; view her charms, enjoy her climate, her scenery and the hospitality of her people. And then, do as the author does as he writes these words—watch a Porto Rico sunset dye and paint mountain and valley, sea and lagoon, buildings and towers—the works of God and the works of man—with wonderful tints of crimson, pink, green and purple, and you will agree that the most difficult task of all is to picture the beauties of Porto Rico as seen through a tourist's eyes.