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A Study of Social Changes in Porto Rico Since 1898

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A STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGES IN PORTO RICCO SINCE 1898

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Over three decades ago the American flag was raised over the Island of Porto Rico. The change of sovereignty occurred on October 18, 1898, at noon, while the American band struck up "The Star Spangled Banner", the American war vessels saluted with guns and the inhabitants of Porto Rico stood silent, some foreboding, others hopeful. Would the American sovereignty bring more goodness, both material and spiritual, to their Island than did the four centuries of Spanish rule?

It is the purpose of this thesis to study the social evolution which has occurred in Porto Rico, if any has occurred, since the introduction of American ideals and institutions. Despite the visitation of three cataclysms since the American occupation; a hurricane in 1898, an earthquake in 1918, and a hurricane in 1928; what progress has been made in the fields of education, health and sanitation, industry, morality, and standard of living? America has had the opportunity to inculcate her ideals and institutions in a Latin American country; an opportunity to encourage, supplement or supplant four centuries of Spanish culture; and my interest lies in the evaluation
of the efforts of America's endeavors.

The writer has not attempted to trace the changes in the field of religion, because authentic reports of the status of religion have not been accessible; and the people are, moreover, in main, members of the Catholic Church, which has by degrees and where feasible, followed its age old principle of supplanting American bishops and priests for those of Spain and Porto Rico. Changes in industry have been recorded only inasmuch as they affect the standard of living and general welfare of Porto Ricans. By studying the social conditions prior to 1898 in the previously mentioned fields, and comparing the conditions to those existing in the successive years of the American sovereignty, the writer hopes to study whatever social changes have occurred.
CHAPTER I

EDUCATION

1. Educational facilities under Spanish Regime

Under the Spanish rule the principle of education for the masses in Porto Rico was neglected. This was quite natural because in Spain, as in most countries during that period, the opportunity to become educated was a privilege of the wealthy; and, consequently, one would not expect to find popular education in an island when the mother country did not possess it. Since American rule, public education has been intensified and the illiteracy rate has been reduced from 85 per cent to 45 per cent. (5:19) It is estimated that of the 15 per cent literates in 1899 only one-half of one per cent possessed education above the elementary school level. (47:266) and only six per cent of the children of school age, five to seventeen, were enrolled in schools both public and private. (47:266)

An investigation, in 1899, of the prevalent methods of instruction, under the direction of Victor S. Clark, disclosed that the classes were held in the teachers' homes since there were few public school buildings. (47:266-67) The teachers
were paid by the parents of the students and quite naturally the children of wealthy parents were the focus of the teachers' attention. Most of the learning was by rote, text books were very scarce, and usually the property of the teacher.

When Caparra was organized in 1509 by Nicholas de Ovando, Governor General of the Indies, one of the functions of the Church was to teach Indians the religious doctrine; and that, if the Colonist had more than 40 Indians in his service, he should teach one of the boys to read and write; and the sons of all Caciques when 13 years of age were to be instructed to read and write by Franciscan Friars. After four years of instruction of Castilian Grammar, the boys were to be returned to the Spaniards to whom they were allotted and were to teach the other Indians.

In the Memoirs of the Royal Commissioner to Porto Rico, 1765, it is reported that there were only two schools for children in the Island. The first authentic statement of a school actually functioning in Porto Rico is found in a memorial prepared by Reverend Juan Ponce de Leon and Antonio de Santa Clara in 1582.

The Royal Decree of August 24, 1788, gave formal permission to the Dominican Friars to instruct classes in philosophy. The Convent schools of Santo Domingo and San Francisco maintained instruction in Spanish grammar, Latin, philosophy and religion.
In 1770 General Miguel de Mason, Governor of Porto Rico, issued a General Directory which provided for public instruction. The Lieutenant of each district was to select a competent teacher whose duty it was to teach reading and writing to at least one of every two children of a family. The classes were to be held in a resident convenient to all and were to consist of any white children, free mulattoes and blacks who asked admission. The teacher was paid by the parents of the children. (47:255)

"In 1799 the Cabildo of San Juan appointed four young women to give classes including reading, writing, and the Christian doctrine, to girls. These four teachers were to receive fifty pesos a year for their efforts, but up to 1804 they had been paid nothing. As from 1799 to 1848 only fourteen such teachers were appointed, and as none had ever been designated before, we conclude that education for women was practically nonexistent up to 1850, after which it gradually improved until 1898 found approximately 8,000 girls enrolled in school." (47:256)

By 1860 there were 12 private schools in San Juan; (47:265) the Sacred Heart Academy for girls which was established in 1870 is still in session in Santurce. The 1899 report of the United States Insular Commission states:

"The only schools worthy of consideration as such are the "Beneficência", and the school of the Sisters at Santurce. The first of these is simply a school for orphans and poor children, ... cared for, clothed, fed and educated at public expense......The other at Santurce is located in a public building and has some 200 or more pupils. It is conducted by the nuns of the Sacred Heart." (45:51)

Two normal schools were established in 1891 and
an Academy for Cadets in 1875. (47:265)

The Royal Academy of Belles Lettres founded in 1851 for the purpose of instructing and granting licenses to primary school teachers, investigating schools and methods of class room procedure, and holding literary contests. It achieved success only in the latter project. (47:259) The Academy was abolished about ten years later and supplanted by the Superior Board of Public Instruction. Governor Messina, who presided over the Board, divided education into elementary and secondary units in 1865 and made primary education compulsory. (47:260) The Board required each town to organize a local school board and made a two year normal school education a prerequisite for all primary teachers seeking appointments.

Governor Jose Marchesi in 1867 inaugurated a system of public school inspection, but his efforts were interrupted by the hurricane of San Narcio and the earthquakes occurring in the latter part of 1867. (47:260) Another curtailment of education was the rebellion of 1868; since the Spanish authorities believed that the teachers would create a liberalist spirit among their pupils, the support of the schools was neglected.

The Porto Rico schools, including the Instituto Civil, were closed in 1874 by Governor Jose Laureano Sanz in order to replace the native teachers with competent teachers from Spain. (47:261)
The Governor, whose term began in 1878, gave impetus to educational developments; so much so, that in 1881 there existed on the Island 484 schools with an enrollment of 24,120 students, only 1,524 less than at the change of sovereignty in 1898. (47:261)

2. The system of education erected by the Military Government.

In May 1899, General Henry, the Military Governor, promulgated a code of school laws in which the policy of publicly owned schools was introduced. Free education was offered to those between six to 18 years of age. The school year was reduced from twelve months to nine (it is ten now). Provision was made for urban graded schools wherein each teacher was not to have more than 50 pupils and every school having four teachers or more was to be supervised by a principal. The curriculum prescribed consisted of English, arithmetic, geography, United States history, and theory of Civil Government. Teaching of Church doctrine and religion was eliminated. The legal qualification and salaries of teachers were set forth in this code. It stated the relationship between schools and municipalities and made reservations for the establishment of high schools, normal schools, and professional schools.

3. The educational system of the Civil Government.

The Military Government granted large powers and responsibilities to local school boards, but
this system proved to be impracticable because the local government lacked sufficient experience and stability. When Civil Government was introduced in 1900, a highly centralized and unified system of education was inaugurated. By passage of the Organic Act in 1900, the educational affairs of Porto Rico were placed in the hands of the Commissioner of Education, appointed by the President of the United States for a four year period. (2:1) The Commissioner's powers and responsibilities were greatly extended by the enactment of the basic school law March 25, 1901. (2:1) Subsequent legislative acts have further extended his powers, responsibilities and prerogatives.

The personnel of the Department of Education gradually increased as the school system extended. In 1930 the following officials composed the personnel: (13:2)

1 Commissioner of Education.
2 Assistant Commissioners.
1 Chief of Division of Property and Accounts.
1 Chief of Bureau of Municipal School Affairs
1 Chief of Bureau of Extension Work and Examinations.
11 General Superintendents.
11 Special Supervisors.
45 District Supervisors.
45 Assistant District Supervisors.
1 Chief of Division of School Health
23 High School Principals.

The Commissioner of Education has the power to appoint all his subordinates and approve educational expenditures, both municipal and insular. However, the Insular legislative body appropriates
all Insular funds for the support of schools. The Commissioner performs his duties of superintendence over the school system through his local representative, the District Supervisor.

It is the duty of the General Superintendent to direct manual training, agriculture, home economics, rural education, physical education, English, Spanish, history and school decoration. Each supervisor directs school activities in his own district, there being 45 in the Island.

There existed from 1901-19 school boards composed of five members elected by qualified voters of each municipality. These boards had jurisdiction over school property and the nomination of teachers and principals, subject to the approval of the Commissioner. The school board of each municipality included the District Supervisor, who although not entitled to vote, participated in its discussions, examined its records, and acted as a general advisor.

The school director performs the functions of the obsolete district school boards. There is one director for each of the 56 municipalities. He is authorized to erect, repair and improve school property; rent buildings for school purposes; provide suitable furniture and equipment; employ janitors and nominate teachers.

A bilingual system of education was introduced in Porto Rico since it had become a depen-
made to suppress Spanish; however, for a period of six years, English was taught only in the first grade and Spanish not introduced until the second grade; and to 1916-17, all subjects other than Spanish were taught in English. (5:24) It was then realized that progress was being retarded by the use of the English language for purposes of instruction in all grades. Now oral English is a special subject offered in the first and second grades of the urban schools and in the second and third grades of the rural schools. Reading English is introduced in the third grade of the urban school. Up to the fifth grade the language of instruction is Spanish, except in English classes. From the fifth grade on, the language of instruction is English. All instruction in rural schools is achieved in Spanish. (5:23-25)

Up to 1907 the curriculum of rural schools, because of lack of sufficient funds, was limited to the first three grades. In 1910 the inability to supply the sufficient number of teachers and rooms led to the adoption of the double enrollment system. In 1925, 76 per cent of the rural pupils were included on the double enrollment plan, 9:00 to 12:00 A.M. and 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. The fourth grade rural is considered equivalent to the third grade urban because of the decided disadvantages incurred by the use of the double enrollment system. At present the rural popula-
tion of school age totals close to 375,000 of whom only 33 1/3 per cent are enrolled in rural schools. (13:3) The double enrollment plan is the basis of educational schedule of four-fifths of the rural students, and, consequently, 80 per cent of the pupils receive only a half day of schooling. (13:3)

In an attempt to offer practical education to the mountaineers of Porto Rico, who compose 80 per cent of the entire population, Commissioner Juyke introduced the division of rural schools into first and second units during 1928-29. (47:276)

The first unit consists of academic subjects for the first three grades with the addition of some practical work in agriculture and native industries. The second unit schools include above the third grade, subjects such as agriculture, home economics, and sundry trades in collaboration with the usual academic subjects. There are 36 second units now in operation with an enrollment of 5,000 pupils. (75:5) The purposes of these second unit schools is: (3:75)

"To raise standards of living in the rural communities; to improve the productive capacity of the island; to carry out a program of social and health instruction based on the needs of the people in the rural centers; and to improve the life and home conditions of the people."

Half of the day in the second units is given to instruction in the academic subjects and the other half is devoted to vocational work. The boys are offered instruction in animal husbandry, agriculture,
tin-smithing, auto-mechanics, shoe-repairing, carpentry, hair-cutting, and house wiring. The vocational subjects offered the girls are cooking, sewing, lace making, and hand and machinery embroidery.

The boys engaged in truck farming are permitted to retain one-third of the case value of produce sold. The vegetables are sold in the community or are consumed in the school lunch-rooms. There are over 15,000 home gardens in existence as such projects are encouraged by the second unit schools.

The work in animal husbandry and carpentry is as practical as truck farming. The students in the animal husbandry classes are instructed in pig, chicken, rabbit, goat and cattle raising. Such instruction is assisting the endeavors of Porto Rico to increase and improve the breeds of domestic animals. In the classes in carpentry the boys are instructed how to make such furniture as will increase the comfort of the home.

The girls receive dietary instruction in cooking classes. They are taught what constitutes a well balanced diet of Porto Rican produce. Another course offered to boys, of equal importance socially to the dietary instruction offered the girls, is shoe-making and repairing. It is imperative that the peasants wea...
shoes if plans to eradicate uncinariasis are to be effective.

A social worker is maintained by the second units. It is her duty to visit the rural homes and give advice on health, social and education al matters. She keeps the municipal directors and health officers posted on the needs and medical condition of the rural community.

The plans of the second unit also include the utilization of rural schools as community social centers. A reading room is available to pupils and parents in the evenings. On Sundays the representatives of the Department of Health, Agriculture and Labor, Education, and the Bureau of Education, and Industry give lectures open to the public.

Lunchrooms are part and parcel of the second units and serve the students who live too far from the school to go home for lunch. The lunchroom is also a means of training the students to eat the essential foods constituting a well balanced diet. In 1926-29, 536 lunchrooms served 21,452 lunches daily at a cost of $0.39 per pupil. (47:278)

The first secondary school was founded in san Juan in 1900, and was followed by Ponce High School in 1901, and Mayaguez in 1904. (11:36)

The curriculum of the first high school included Latin, French, English, Spanish, Chemistry, Physics, geography, algebra, plane geometry, and manual
training. It was a curriculum preparatory for a four year college course in the United States. A two year commercial course was added to the general courses of the high schools in 1905 and in 1913 the curriculum was extended to a period of four years. At present there are 23 four year high schools with an enrollment of about 6,000 students. A University High School is maintained by the University of Porto Rico. The enrollment at this High school is about 300. There are private accredited high schools having a total enrollment of about 4,000 pupils. (13:4)

Continuation schools were established 1909-10 in some of the larger towns. The inadequate number of high schools could not take care of the ever increasing number of eighth grade graduates, consequently the continuation schools were introduced. At present the number of continuation schools is listed as 22 with a total enrollment of 1200. (13:4) The boys are offered manual training, and cooking and sewing are offered the girls. The continuation schools are accredited with the high schools, and when a pupil completes any year he may enter the succeeding year of a regular high school.

There were two industrial schools in Porto Rico in 1931 and another one in the process of organization. The following subject are taught: cabinet making, mechanical and architectural drawing, auto mechanics, carpentry, concrete work,
electricity, plumbing, printing, needlework, and embroidery. The school located in San Juan has an enrollment in its day and night courses of 702 and the school at Ponce which is of more recent organization has an enrollment of 125. As previously stated, some trade instruction is given in the second unit schools, also.

Higher education at the time of the American occupation consisted of two normal schools, one for men and one for women; and the Instituto de Segunda Ensenanza. The schools were closed, shortly after the change of sovereignty occurred, because of inadequate facilities to train teachers. At the close of 1899 the Insular Board of Education authorized the Organization of a school for training teachers. In 1903 the University of Porto-Rico was established by an act of the Legislature, and the normal school became a part of it. The early function of the University of Porto Rico was teacher training solely. Later, colleges of Liberal Arts, Pharmacy and Law were added, all being situated at Rio Piedras. Then a college of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts was founded at Mayaguez. The enrollment of the University in 1925 was 1,212. In 1931 the total enrollment in all branches was about 3,500. Since 1925 a College of Education, a College of Business Administration, and a Graduate School of Tropical Medicine have been added. The school of Tropical Medicine is under the auspices of Columbia Uni-
versity of New York and the Insular Government. Facilitating research work in tropical diseases and teaching graduate students are its objectives. Some splendid work has been executed in the fields of Sprue, Anemia, Uncinariasis, Pilaria, and Malaria.

The University of Porto Rico is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor. The board consists of:

Commissioner of Education—Ex-officio chairman.
One Senator
One Representative
Six other Persons, two graduates of University of Porto Rico, one recommended by Pan-American Union.

The executive head is called the Chancellor and he is appointed by the Board.

The financial support of the University is received from several sources: (47-279)

(a) A 2 mill tax on all real and personal property on the island.
(b) Proceeds from sale of University land, farm products, property and miscellaneous receipts.
(c) 50 per cent of all fines collected in courts of the island are put into permanent University Fund, of which 75 per cent of income is used to finance University.
(d) Student tuition and fees.
(e) $50,000 yearly received from United States Government through Morril-Nelson Fund to support Agricultural and Mechanic Art instructions.

From these sources a grand total of close to $818,000 is collected.

Physical education is included in the curricula of all schools. Calisthenics, games and folk dances are included in the Physical Education pro-


grasses. Playgrounds are used for recreational activities; there are 1,200 in Porto Rico. (47:277) Physical Education instructors are not numerous, but all teachers are instructed to take part in the Physical Education supervision. Interscholastic games, such as volleyball, basketball, and baseball are popular. Track and field meets are held every year, and the large towns enter competitors.

A few months preceding the American occupation there were 645 schools in the island. Of the 645 schools, 390 were for boys, 135 for girls, one for adults and 26 were private schools. (5:15) By 1931 the number of schools had increased to 2,250. (13:5) The total enrollment in 1899 was 29,182 with actual attendance of 21,873; while in 1925 the total enrollment reached 230,120 with an attendance of 192,715. (5:19) Private schools now have an enrollment of 7,000. Among the private schools is the Polytechnic School at San German where students are prepared for practical vocation, and dignity of labor is emphasized. All private schools are under government supervision.

At the time of the American occupation, there were no publicly owned school buildings. (12:23) In 1900 there were 39 publicly owned school buildings, and this number increased to 2,250 in 1931; 1,080 publicly owned and 1,170 rented. (13:5)

Marked improvement has been made in the
ican Sovereignty was extended to Porto Rico. In 1898 the estimated illiteracy was 85 per cent; by 1910 it was 66 per cent; 1920 it was 55 per cent; 1925 it was set at 45 per cent. (5:19) Night Schools for laboring men and women were taught by volunteer teachers without remuneration. During 1926-29 some 2,345 men and women became literate by attendance at night schools. (47:274-5) Adult illiteracy is being reduced by the efforts of students in higher grades in attempting to teach their parents how to read and write. On May 1, 1929, the A B C campaign was launched by the Legislature. (47:275) The purpose of the campaign was to reduce and finally eradicate illiteracy. Each person on the Island was given the opportunity to join the campaign by paying a fifty cent fee and promising to teach at least one illiterate to read and write.

The total yearly expenditure for educational facilities has increased greatly since 1899. In 1923 the educational expenditure was $2,929,944; in 1924-25 it was $6,988,072; whereas in 1899 it was $238,096. In the period 1926-29, 56.24 per cent of public funds of Porto Rico was spent on Educational facilities. (47:249) Between 1899-1929 about 80 millions of dollars were spent by Porto Rico on Education. (47:251) The following is an account of the financial support received from the United States: (47:250)

(a) 1900 President McKinley granted Porto Rico $200,000 for education, money
received from custom duty on Porto Rican goods entering United States.
(b) $15,000.00 Allotment from trust funds.
(c) $35,000.00 For Insular Normal School.
(d) $150,000.00 Allotment for school buildings, April 30, 1902.
(e) $50,000.00 Annually to Insular College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts.
Herrill-Nelson Act.
(f) $2,000,000. 0 Voted by Congress to reconstruct schools and roads after 1928 hurricane.

Over 80 per cent of the money spent on education in Porto Rico has come from the Porto Ricans, and under the direction of American officials, they have been able to build up a centralized and highly unified system of education. However, in the United States as a whole, the annual cost per pupil of public school education has more than doubled in 20 years from 1900-1920; in Porto Rico the cost per pupil per annum, was $15.46 in 1900 and had not been increased up to 1920. (30:540)

The accomplishments have been great, however the need for further development is made evident by the Brookings Institute Survey Commission. The following quotation is self explanatory: (3:77-79)

"Educational needs are still great; the situation in the rural communities is nothing short of deplorable. It appears that approximately 97 per cent of the urban school children between 5 and 14 years of age are on the school registers, while only about ten per cent of those in country districts are registered. Even so, there are not sufficient accommodations for the country children, and about two-thirds of the rural schools operate on the double enrollment system under which the children attend only half a day...

"Moreover, only a small percentage of
the children attend school for any great number of years. It appears that about 84 per cent of the rural children who enter school stay only to the end of the third grade, and thus receive but the barest elements of even a primary education. It is not surprising, therefore to learn that the census of 1930 showed that about 60 per cent of the country people over 10 years of age could not read or write, and that 74 per cent of the adult population was illiterate."

The Brookings Institute Survey attributed the above conditions to the poverty of the Island. Of the 150 rural schools visited by a representative of the Institute, it was found that 97.3 per cent of the children had coffee for breakfast, 42.3 per cent of the children had black coffee without any milk, and 2.7 per cent had come to school without breakfast of any kind.

The Brookings Survey reports that upon questioning many natives upon the benefits derived from his education, he usually answered that there was none. Newspapers or other reading material is very scarce in the rural sections and consequently the individual with schooling makes little practical use of his academic training. This appears to be one reason why modern educational plans in Porto Rico emphasize the need for practical vocational education and less stress is put on rural academic education.

"But in spite of its apparent lack of real bearing upon the life of the common people, the jibaro wants his children to go to school, especially if he has been in school himself. In some way the little schoolhouse is the
only sign of hope in the primitive and poverty-stricken rural communities; it is after all the promise of a new day, and so it seems to the poorest of them. Take the schoolhouse out and the rural community in Porto Rico would be hopeless, indeed. It is the one center of social activity that is visible in all of Porto Rico, and is the chief source for the emergence of democratic ideas in the Island." (3:79)
CHAPTER II
THE JUDICIARY SYSTEM
1. The Spanish Judiciary.

The judicial system of Porto Rico under the Spanish rule strongly resembled that of the mother country. Close connection with the executive branch of the government was its distinguishing characteristic. Here, as in all the countries of Latin Europe, the contrast with our system, altho at its origin merely a difference in degree, had become a difference in kind. The inability of the judiciary of the Latin countries to assert its independence against the executive was due primarily, to the fact that it never attempted to bring popular opinion to its support. The Spanish intimate relation of executive and judicial functions was well marked in Spain's colonial possessions.

At the time of the American occupation the judicial system comprised the mayor's courts, the municipal courts, the courts of first instance and the courts of civil and criminal appeal. \( 29: 30 \) The jurisdiction of the mayor's court, which was a purely local tribunal, was restricted to minor offences, such as the violation of local
ordinances, or executive decrees, known as "Banderas Municipales". (45:25) In each municipality there was furthermore a municipal court known as the "Juzgado Municipal". (45:35) Its civil jurisdiction covered cases in which the amount in controversy did not exceed 200 pesos ($120.00 gold) provided the parties were able to arrange their suit amicably in court, but if litigation were necessary the municipal judge could only take cognizance when the amount in controversy did not exceed 20 pesos ($12.00 gold). (24:70) In towns in which there was not a higher court, the municipal court exercised jurisdiction in cases involving amounts as high as 30 pesos ($18.00 gold). The criminal jurisdiction of this court extended to offences defined in the third book of the criminal code, and included the minor offences and misdemeanors.

Immediately above the municipal courts were the courts of instruction and first instance. To these courts, of which there were 12 in the Island, was assigned the duty of conducting the preliminary investigations whenever a crime or felony was committed; they took the place in this respect of the coroner's court, and to a certain extent of the district attorney and grand jury in the American system. In civil cases these courts exer-
cised original jurisdiction over all matters not within the competency of the mayor's and municipal courts.

The Criminal and Territorial Audiencias were the highest Insular courts. (§7:§1.) The criminal audiencia exercised original jurisdiction over all offences of the grade of felonies and crimes. The preliminary investigation conducted by the court of instruction which was known as the "Sumario" was forwarded to the criminal audiencia, and upon the basis of this document, together with such collateral investigation as he might conduct, the district attorney or "fiscal" formulated the indictment. There were three such courts in the Island; one at San Juan; one at Ponce; and one at Mayaguez. Each court was made up of three judges, and to each court was attached a public prosecutor and other necessary court officials. Appeal could be taken from the criminal audiencia to the Supreme Court at Madrid.

The territorial audiencia occupied in civil cases the position of a court of appeals from decisions of the court of first instance. This court was made up of seven judges and was exclusively a court of appeals with the one exception that it exercised original jurisdiction in impeachment proceedings.
2. Innovations by American Judiciary System.

The reorganization of the judicial system did not take place until sometime after the establishment of American rule. In December, 1898 therefore, the military commander issued an order: ( )

"It having become evident that owing to their slow process and the overcrowded state of their dockets the civil courts cannot act with sufficient promptness against the bandits that are still committing crimes of arson and murder on the Island, there not having been a single conviction in such cases, and an immediate example being necessary, military commissions will be appointed for the trial of such cases as may be properly brought before them."

There were 1,500 to 2,000 prisoners confined in jails who had not been tried; and 2,000 outside jail awaiting trial. One man was held in prison 22 months charged with stealing a pan of beans, and another was confined 20 months for stealing a two cent loaf of bread. Long incarceration was very expensive, and frauds were prevalent. The prison boards were paid for the keeping of prisoners at so much per capita per day. The prison boards used only part of the money for the subsistence expenditure of the prisoners and pocketed the greater portion. (∗5:37 )

The military commissions were immediately organized in four of the towns; San Juan, Ponce, Mayaguez, and Arecibo; and performed signal service in repressing lawlessness.
and corruption. The successful operation of these commissions led the military commander to apply to Washington for authority to declare martial law in any section of the Island that showed indications of lawlessness or instability. In granting the power to establish military commissions, the Secretary of War recommended that wherever possible, provisional courts should be substituted for military commissions. Accordingly, by order of June 3, 1899, the commanding General created a provisional court composed of three judges: one law judge and two army officers. This court was given jurisdiction over all offenses usually cognizable in a United States Court, and during the ten months of its operation performed excellent service.

The reorganization of the local judiciary was made by military orders of July 15 and August 15, 1899.( 29:47 ) Under this plan the municipal courts were retained and were assigned the additional duty of conducting the preliminary hearings and preparing the "sumario" in criminal cases, a function heretofore exercised by the Judge of Instruction. The civil jurisdiction of the former court of first instance was transferred to the district courts, of which five were established. To these district courts was also transferred the criminal jurisdiction of the "audencia en lo Criminal". In order to fulfill the function exercised prior to the American
occupation by the Supreme Court at Madrid, an In­
sular Supreme Court composed of five justices was
created.

Under the next system the jurisdiction of
the municipal courts was considerably enlarged.
In addition to the preparation of the "sumario"
in criminal cases they were given jurisdiction over the
following
conditions. First—in all civil cases where the amount
involved between litigants does not exceed $400.00;
Secondly, in criminal cases of misdemeanors as pro­
vided in book three of the criminal code; petty
thefts, frauds, and offences against property in
cases where the amount of object of the offence
or damage occasioned does not exceed $5.00, with
the exception of those misdemeanors comprised in
article 530 of the criminal code, which are with­
in the competency of the district court. Thirdly,
assaults, when the healing of wounds caused there­
by shall have been completed within fifteen days.

The Mayor's Courts were retained, but
the powers of the mayor radically changed. The
Military governor, in a special order, formulated
a series of municipal ordinances to be enforced in
all the towns of the island, and the Mayor's Court
was given jurisdiction over all violations of
these ordinances.

This system, perhaps the best which could
be devised at the time, showed grave defects later
in organization as well as in operation. The
power granted to the Mayor's Court led to serious abuses, particularly during the period immediately preceding the Insular elections of 1900. It was charged that they were using this power to persecute those of opposite political faith. That the fact that there was no appeal from the decision of the Mayor tended to aggravate the feeling of discontent and gave rise to a general demand for the abolition of the Mayor's Court.

The judges of the municipal court were elected by the voters of the towns and received no salaries, being entirely dependent upon fees; this system was prevalent before the American occupation and was continued by the military government. Complaints of abuse were numerous throughout the Island, and the danger was in some respects greater in criminal than in civil cases, for the municipal courts were entrusted with the preliminary examination whenever the offence was of sufficient gravity to bring the case within the jurisdiction of the district court. For these examinations the judges received no compensation, a fact which led to hasty and incomplete investigation, resulting either in serious injustice to the accused or in lack of due regard for the interests of the community.

The Legislative Assembly of the Island in December, 1900 abolished the Mayor's jurisdiction over violations of local ordinances and placed
this power in the hands of special police justices elected by the people. However, it was soon discovered that the resources of the community would not permit of two local tribunals. Consequently the Legislative Assembly in January, 1902 passed an act providing for the merging of police courts with the municipal courts and providing for the appointment of justices of the peace in each municipality. The justices salaries were fixed and payable out of the local treasury. The jurisdiction of the justice's court included all misdemeanors for which the fine that may be imposed would not exceed $250.00, or for which the imprisonment was not to exceed six months. The justices were also given jurisdiction over violations of municipal and police ordinances, all cases of petty larceny, of breaches of the peace, riots and routs.

The United States District Court was established by the Organic Act of April 12, 1900. (27 E.) This court was given jurisdiction over all cases that would come before district and circuit courts in the United States. From the very beginning, it made use of the jury and proved a model for the Insular Courts in the introduction of this system.

The Legislative Assembly in March, 1903, enlarged the appellate powers of the Insular Supreme Court. Before 1903, the Insular Supreme Court occupied the position of a court of cassa-
tion. The court was no longer to be confined to errors in procedure or of law only, but takes cognizance of all facts and proceedings in the case as they appear in the record. This change broadened the basis of appeal and gave the Supreme Court the position of great importance in shaping the jurisprudence of the Island.

Juvenile Courts were established in 1915. These Courts have jurisdiction over dependent neglected or delinquent children. They are not separate courts, but are branches of the seven district courts of the Island. All children of Porto Rico are within the jurisdiction of the seven district courts, because these courts have jurisdiction over rural areas as well as towns and cities. The prosecuting attorneys and the judges of the municipal courts are ex-officio probation officers. The judges of the district courts have the power to appoint other probation officers.

The attorney general reports that in 1930-31, 144 cases were disposed of during the year and 295 cases were left pending. (30:51) A special probation officer was appointed to do preventive work among Juvenile delinquents. In San Juan, the juvenile offenders were brought before the probation officer for a hearing before taken to court. Many juvenile offenders through the cooperation of schools, police,
Parent and probation officer were corrected without court action.
CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

In 1898 there were two kinds of marriage prescribed by law, civil and ecclesiastical; the latter for Catholics and the former for Non-Catholics. The conditions prescribed for each were free consent of parent, certificate of age, proclamation of the bans etc., and the priest required confession and communion. The morning marriage was most popular with the poor Catholics, since it was the only gratis ceremony. Fees for marriage were very high, so high that the poor people could not afford the sanction of the Church. (45:7)

Many of the small communities were composed of interrelated families, and if a person of one family wished to marry a person of a related family, it was necessary to get an ecclesiastical dispensation before the marriage could be performed. Such dispensations were very difficult to get.

General Henry request the Commissioner of the Island to collaborate with the Secretary of State and Secretary of Justice to draw up an order facilitating civil marriage for all—making it free. An immediate increase in judicial
marriages resulted. (42:49)

Divorce, with the privilege of remarriage, was unknown to the Spanish system; because it was forbidden by the Catholic Church, to which practically the whole Island pledged allegiance. It is true that in certain circumstances the marriage tie could be annulled, but this was done by an ecclesiastical court sitting as a special tribunal. The native lawyers were divided in opinion as to the advisability of introducing a right that might undermine the sanctity of the marriage tie. Under the American military rule the civil code had been amended by military orders to the extent of allowing divorce in certain specific cases, and it was pointed out that the large number of divorce proceedings instituted under this order was an indication of what might be expected if it were made a permanent part of the legal system. Although the advisability of introducing the right of divorce under certain circumstances was accepted by the commission, it was felt that the changes should be made gradually in order to avoid any possible danger to the stability of the marriage tie. The recommendation to the Legislative Assembly therefore, sanctioned divorce in the following circumstances: first adultery on the part of either of the parties to the marriage; second, conviction of one of the parties of a felony involving loss of civil rights;
and third, cruel and inhuman treatment. The Legislative Assembly took a more advanced stand and added five additional grounds for divorce, viz: First, habitual drunkenness or the continued use of opium, morphine or any other narcotic; second, the abandonment of the wife by the husband or of the husband by the wife for a longer period of time than one year; third, absolute, perpetual, and incurable impotency incurred after marriage; fourth, the attempt of the husband or wife to corrupt their sons or to prostitute their daughters, and connivance in their corruption or prostitution; fifth, the attempt of the husband to prostitute the wife.

The following statement of illegitimacy is presented to supplement changes in morality. Of the 11,475 children born during seven months ending April 1900; 5,217 or 45 per cent were illegitimate. Twenty six years later, the illegitimacy rate had been reduced to 20.89 per cent. (42:113) In 1930 the following report was given: (22:164-5)

"In our country we may find certain types of illegitimate children born to parents not legally married, but who are practically children by marriage; these are the children that first see the light of day in a mountain hut, born to a man and a woman who have lived and are living together permanently, though their union be not blessed by the Church nor sanctioned by the law."

In Santa Isabel, a municipality, 48 per cent of the children born in 1926 and 1927 were illegiti-
mate; 27 per cent in Villalba; 29 per cent in Aibonito; 25 per cent in Comerío; and 28 per cent in Utuado. The municipalities of Naranjito, Corozal, and Morovis had illegitimacy rates of 11, 12 and 13 per cent, respectively. (22:166-67)
CHAPTER IV

HEALTH AND SANITATION

1. Health and Sanitary conditions before 1898 and during early years of American Occupation.

Under the Spanish regime there existed a code of sanitary regulation, but the laws were disregarded. The ordinances of the sanitary code of laws had created a superior board of health, composed of a group of men possessing high official rank, but lacking skill and knowledge of adequate sanitation. Their decisions could be, and often were, annulled by the captain general.

Local health boards existed, but their powers were limited, since their decisions were subject to approval of the central authority. Two other organizations existed in collaboration with the local boards of health. One was the sub-delegation of medicine which was created in 1768 with the function of supervising examinations, ratification of foreign degrees, issuing professional licenses to graduates of Spanish Universities or the University of Cuba; serving as arbitrator in disputes between physicians and patients; and reporting, at the request of the court of justice, on medicological matters sub-
mitted to the subdelegation. The second organization was the subdelegation of pharmacy, which possessed unusual power over the pharmacists of the Island, and had the power to levy heavy fines upon violators of its law.

There were four sources of water supply; cisterns, springs, and wells, creeks and rivers, and aqueducts. Of the 188,305 dwellings in the Island in 1901, 55,093 obtained water from cisterns; 7,896 derived water from springs or wells on the premises; 85,348 stated the natural streams, brooks, and rivers as water supply sources; and 9,393 obtained water from artificial aqueducts, which were located in large towns only. It is evident that the majority of people used the natural streams, brooks and rivers as source of water supply. The streams were used not only as public laundries, but as common sewers for surrounding localities; the wells were located in the courtyards in the cities and towns and often in close proximity to cesspools; the filth accumulated on the flat roofs of the houses and was swept into the cistern which collected the rain as it drained off the roof.

San Juan, Ponce, and Mayaguez had water works and aqueducts, but they were incomplete and in poor condition. Outside of these three cities water works and aqueducts were in non-existence. On the Island of Culebra, there was no cistern large enough to supply water during the dry season, and water had to be brought to...
the Island from Vieques. (34:0:5)

There was no adequate system in use for the disposal of garbage. Although it was burned in some places, this was not the usual practice. In 1902 about one-half of the houses were equipped with garbage disposal facilities. The Military Government found it necessary to forbid the people to throw filth, garbage, dead animals, or solid or liquid waste of any kind into the streets. (34:69)

Not a single city, town or hamlet on the whole island had a complete sewer system as late as 1902; although a few houses were equipped with sewer pipes connecting the dwelling with the sea or some other outlet.

The conditions in the hospitals before 1900 is best shown by the following abstraction from the First Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico: (27:53-54)

"The hospitals are not directly under insular control, their support, inspection, and government being left to the local authorities in each municipality. In the 66 municipal districts into which the island is divided there are 40 hospitals or structures which are called by that appellation; in many cases they are mere sheds, without proper equipment or attendance. There are also 19 asylums, of which the same remark in a less degree might properly be made. The hospital buildings in Ponce, Mayaguez, and Arécibo are good enough, but in the capital city the Chief Municipal Hospital is a mere shanty, badly equipped and destitute of many essentials. But there is also in San Juan a small hospital, founded many years ago and managed by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, which may be classed as a model of its kind, but being supported by public contributions is often in lack of funds."
The Triocohe Hospital of Ponce is in an excellent building, and the service is good, but it is faulty in sanitation. The hospital in Arecibo, though in a commodious building, is badly equipped and destitute of all pretensions to sanitation. The two hospitals at Humacao were destroyed by the hurricane and have not yet been rebuilt. More than one-half of the population of the island is unprovided for with any sort of hospital accommodations, and in those towns and villages where the hospitals exist they are badly constructed, inefficiently equipped, wretchedly managed, and almost destitute of any proper sanitation. There is a new smallpox hospital just finished in Ponce, at a cost of over $2,300,000.00 largely raised by private contributions, but it is hoped that it may not be necessary to use it long, and prudence may require its destruction. But there is much to be done elsewhere in the same line, notably in the care of the blind, the paralytic, the epileptic, and other incurables, also the aged mappers and other unfortunate... I cannot close this topic without a further allusion to the deplorable fact that there does not exist upon the island at this time an asylum of a public character devoted to the blind, the crippled, or the helpless and aged paupers...  

2. The Modern Sanitary and Health System.

The modern sanitary organization of the Island began on June 20, 1899, the date on which the American Military Government established the board of health.

The success of general vaccination, under the direction of the then Chief of Military Sanitation, Colonel John Van R. Hoff, surgeon, U. S. Army, exterminated for many years the epidemics of smallpox that frequently invaded the Island, and was one of the most encouraging experiences justifying the desirability of giving the Island an effective sanita-
A detailed and complete study of sanitary laws then existing was made and it was seen that the sanitary laws in relation to the sanitary laws in foreign countries were satisfactory, although on several occasions they were not vigorously enforced, thus permitting the spread of some imported diseases, among them Yellow Fever and Smallpox. The interior sanitary regulation in regard to emergency cases were not very efficient in the suppression of the causes disturbing public health.

Methods of sanitary control were adopted in order to eradicate smallpox and yellow fever, and in 1930 not a single death was caused from these two diseases.

(47:181)

In 1926, in order to obtain sound scientific data on the sanitary conditions in the Island, in regard to the factors contributing to the inception and spread of bubonic plague, a study of fleas which infested the rats was made. (47:131-45)

The city of San Juan was divided into four zones:

1. docks,
2. waterfronts and structures confronting docks,
3. commercial districts not on water fronts and
4. the remainder of the community.

Zone (1) supplied 39 per cent of the rats captured, (2) 21 per cent, (3) 6 per cent and (4) 34 per cent.

The work began in July, 1926. Every rat brought to the laboratory was choked to death and hung over hot water into which the fleas dropped.
The fleas were put in a ten per cent solution of KOH and the next day were classified under the microscope.

During the first year of the campaign, 360 live rats were trapped in San Juan; the highest points of concentration of rats was found to be on the docks and in buildings confronting waterfronts.

The campaign was concluded in 1929, but in the third report which covered the period July, 1928 to June, 1929, no conclusion of the three years work is presented, altho Dr. Carrion states that such a conclusion will be released in a future publication. (40:158-166)

Some excellent hospitals have been established by the United States; there outstanding contribution being the improvement of nursing standards. (11:20)

Number among these hospitals are the Presbyterian Hospital at San Juan, St. Luke's (Episcopal) at Ponce, and the Congregationalist Hospital at Humacao. Many nursing sisters trained abroad are now on the staff at Servants of Mary and other Roman Catholic Orders. There are 17 Catholic hospitals in the Island now.

62 municipalities are equipped with water supply systems; two have systems under construction, but 13 are without water system of any kind. 46 per cent of the urban population receives filtered and chlorinated water; 9 per cent receives only chlorinated water; 38 per cent use untreated water; and 7 per cent have no water supply system at all. Of
the 77 municipal centers only 24 have sewerage systems; six more are under construction. (47:182)

The local health boards, the superior board of health, and the subdelegations of medicine and pharmacy were abolished by the American military government. A new superior board of health was established by general order no 91 of June 29, 1899. (54:45) The board consisted of the Commissioner of Interior, the Commissioner of Education, two physicians and a pharmacist. The boards was granted the management and control of the insane asylum at San Juan, which had previously been under the direction of the public educational authorities. In 1900 when the civil government was established, this superior board of health became a bureau of the department of the Interior. In 1902, the legislature passed an act which provided for the appointment of a director of health. In 1904, the department of health, charities and correction was established. The superior board of health acted as advisory body to the director of health, charities and correction in all matters concerning sanitary investigations, locating causes of diseases, births, marriages, deaths, etc.

The Commissioner of Health directs the Insular Department of Health and has general supervision over all matters pertaining to public health and sanitation in Porto Rico, with the exception of
the Federal maritime quarantine. (34:49) The Insular Board of Health, a division of the Department of Health, acts as an advisory and legislative body in all matters pertaining to public health, and makes sanitary rules, regulations and ordinances to prevent and suppress contagious and epidemic diseases.

Under direct supervision of the Insular Board of Health are the Bureau of Uncinariasis, Bureau of Transmissible Diseases, the latter is divided into (1) the Division of Epidemiology, which is concerned with the prevention and treatment of Communicable diseases, and has under its jurisdiction the Insular Quarantine Hospital, (2) Division of Social Medicine and Puericulture, which maintains pre-natal clinics, child-welfare clinics, tuberculosis clinics, and so forth, and a staff of visiting nurses.

Other Bureaux and Divisions under the Department of Health are those of Plague Prevention, Malaria Control, Food and Drug Inspection, Vital Statistics, Social Service, Biological and Chemical Laboratories, Bureau of General Sanitary Inspection, and Bureau of Sanitary Engineering.

The Health activities in the separate municipalities are administered by the various bureaux of the Insular Department and are gradually being organized into Municipal Health Units under the direction of a trained Medical Health Officer, who
acts in the capacity of a local representative of
the Insular Commissioner of Health.

The Board of Medical Examiners was created
in 1903, and consists of five members, who have
jurisdiction over the issuing of licenses for the
practice of medicine, and surgery, optometry, os-
teopathy, midwifery, nursery and minor surgery.
Previous to petitioning for examination, the appli-
cant must submit to the board a diploma from an
accredited medical school, college or university.
The Board strives to uphold the standards of the
medical profession and the reputation of the pro-
fession in the Island. (39:128)

The Board of Dental Examiners was created
in 1905, and is composed of three members whose
duty consists of examining candidates for admission
to the practice of dentistry in Porto Rico. Every
effort is being made to keep in touch with dental
examiners in the United States to keep abreast the
best practice and to be able to suggest needful
amendments to local laws. (30:128)

The Board of Pharmacy was created in 1906.
It is composed of five pharmacists who have pract-
iced pharmacy for a term of four years prior to
appointments. The members of this board hold office
for four years. The function of the board is to
grant certificates to persons qualified to practice
the profession of pharmacy in Porto Rico. (30:128)
The Board of Veterinary examiners, created in 1916 is authorized to grant certificates and to perform work similar to that of the above mentioned Boards.

The Insular Board of Health is composed of seven members and is an advisory and regulatory body in matters pertaining to the public health. It has legal power to prescribe sanitary rules and regulations for the prevention and suppression of contagious and epidemic diseases. It is auxiliary to the Insular Department of Health, and its orders, when approved by the executive council have the effect of law. In 1928, the Board made a thorough inspection of all factories for the pasteurization of milk and ordered the required regulations. New regulations governing registered medicinal formulas and patent medicines were also made. Revised and additional regulations were considered, including bread acidity, rat proofing, apartment houses, smoke prevention, transmissible diseases, registration of factories producing molasses, medical inspection of schools, and prophylaxis of venereal diseases. This gives one an idea of the diverse fields in which the Insular Board of Health functions.

During the Spanish regime there was no organization or institution devoted to scientific investigation in any way resembling the present work of the Institute of Tropical Medicine and
Hygiene. Soon after the American occupation, a Superior Board of Health was organized, equipped with a laboratory to make scientific investigations. In 1901 the tropical and transmissible disease service was provided by legislation and in 1911 it became part of the Bureau of Transmissible Diseases. Not until 1912 was the law passed creating the Institute of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene of Porto Rico. Established primarily as a center for original investigations and research, it has been able to carry on many extensive and invaluable services of a practical nature of great benefit to the profession and to the people. Diagnosis and treatment of Tuberculosis, Sprue, Malaria, Syphilis, Uncinariasis, Typhoid Fever, etc., has been given special attention. The study of obscure cases and the identification of the rarer diseases are often referred to the Institute. Hundreds of patients visit the Institute and receive personal attention whenever possible. The records of the thousands of cases examined and treated are now, and will be in the future, of immense value in the prevention and treatment of tropical diseases and of all diseases under tropical conditions.


a. Uncinariasis.

Uncinariasis or Aneria was the most destructive
and general disease in Porto Rico. It was the cause of 13 to 22 per cent of all deaths in the period 1890-1900. (34:126-4) It was found to be most prevalent among the poor and badly fed. Bad hygiene and inadequate diet were considered the causes of the disease.

Lieutenant Ashford (later Colonel) was a pioneer in the field of research pertaining to Uncinarianias. He discovered the Ankylostomum duodenale, which discovery facilitated the diagnosis of anemia. The Fort Rican Anemia Commission was organized in 1904, and three physicians were appointed by the Governor to carry out the work which was to establish in various parts of the Island, dispensaries for the treatment of Uncinarianias. This Commission functioned until 1908, when the legislature modified the organization, changing its name to "The Anemia Dispensary Service and made it a bureau of the Department of Health, Charities and Correction.

The deplorable sanitary conditions surrounding the natives' homes are set forth in the 1904 report of the Anemia Commission: (1904:32,49)

"In a discussion of infection of natives by larvae producing Uncinarianias, we believe that we should emphasize the fact that it is usually in the immediate vicinity of his home, or even sometimes inside the hut, that the jibaro is infected. . . . Owing to weakness due to the disease itself or to indolence, his excursions to the montecito become shorter and shorter and result in a general pollution by himself and his family, of a considerable
area around his house."

"Even the last census report gives no conception of the absolute disregard for sanitation in this respect in the country districts. Practically all of our Utuado cases stated that they deposited their faces in the open country and had no latrines nor even a hole in the ground for this purpose. Our special cases there, are fair examples of the average; of 61 persons, 53 had no latrines and 6 generally used them but only two of the latter owned the country, the rest in the town. In Banyan, a much larger per cent of our patients were more comfortably situated in life; 342 were questioned on this particular, and 53 stated that they used latrines; the rest, 289, never used one."

In 1905 the Anemia Commission reported that about 800,000 of 1,000,000 inhabitants of the Island were infected with the parasite causing Dicinarisis, and that the infection was increasing; those yet unaffected were becoming infected, and those already infected were becoming more heavily so. (14,1905:38) Between 1906-07 the 35 stations of the Island had examined 89,233 patients suffering with the disease, 22,936 of whom were cured. (14,1907:31)

Printed circulars were widely distributed, in which the nature of the disease was made plain, and also, the manner of contracting it, and the means of avoiding it. These circulars reached the planters and interested them in sending patients to be cured at the dispensaries. In addition to this, each patient on receiving his medicines was issued a colored card with printed instructions as to the manner in which they should be taken and the means which should be adopted to
avoid further infection. In addition to these prophylactic measures, sanitary inspectors visited the homes in the country barrios or townships and reported on the general health conditions prevailing therein. The inspectors advised those who had not visited the dispensaries to do so. These methods brought a greater number of sick to the dispensaries and caused latrines to be constructed where they had been none. (14, 1907:9-21) Latrine Campaigns were instigated in 1921 and by 1931 153,000 latrines had been constructed. (37:64)

By 1908 there were 59 dispensaries established and between 1905-09, 54,725 patients were treated. The sum total of persons treated for Uncinariasis to June 30, 1910 was 267,968 or about one third of the population. During 1930-31 some 50,000 people were treated. It is reported that in 1931 there were 600,900 islanders afflicted with Uncinariasis. (37:1)

b. Tuberculosis.

Porto Rico is much concerned over its tuberculosis problem. Whereas it was reported in 1899 that "consumption" was the cause of 143 deaths out of a total of 1,151 (42:10); Rodriguez Paredes gives the mortality rates of 267 in 1927, 340 in 1926, 235 in 1928 and 322 in 1911 as the highest during the period 1910-29. (27:431) The lowest
mortality rate during this period was 134 in 1914. This was during the period 1912-16 when the general death rate in the Island was low. There has been no tendency for the mortality from Tuberculosis in Porto Rico to come down.

Rodriguez Pastor states:

"Mortality and Morbidity statistics in Porto Rico point to a greater incidence of the Tuberculosis in females than in males. Tuberculosis seems to be more common in females between the ages of ten and fifty, and more prevalent in females in the first ten years of life, and after fifty. In the United States, Tuberculosis is more prevalent in males than in females."

"The highest mortality from Tuberculosis is found in the larger urban centers, such as San Juan, Ponce, Mayaguez, Caguas and Guayama. Overcrowding is a factor of importance in the causation of Tuberculosis, and a direct ratio is noted between the Tuberculosis mortality and the density of population of different parts of the Island."

"Extreme poverty is an important cause of Tuberculosis in Porto Rico. Large families, very low salaries and the scarcity of work bring about conditions which favor the spread of the disease." (27:441-43)

Porto Rico has the highest Tuberculosis mortality rate of any civilized country whose records are accessible. (3168) The rate for the urban centers exceed that of the rural population three and one-half times. In 1930 there were 230 beds available at the Insular Sanitarium and 300 available at local hospitals; totaling a total of 490, and the number of people suffering from Tuberculosis in 1930 numbered 35,000. (34:1)
c. Malaria.

Malaria is a serious health problem of Porto Rico and very difficult to control. The topography of the Island, with a mountainous interior and low lying flat coastal plains surrounded by the sea and indented with numerous swamps, affords a multitude of breeding places for Anopheles mosquitoes, which carry the malaria infection.

The methods of prevention used are drainage, both surface and tibb; keeping small streams clear of obstruction; removal of vegetation from the edge of creeks and ponds; keeping the canals and laterals in irrigation districts free from accumulations and obstructions; the use of petrol on stagnant waters and of Paris green wherever applicable; making outlets to the ocean from low areas; and in some cases removing flood gates. Quinine is used for treatment and cure after the disease has been acquired. It is furnished free to persons unable to purchase it. (34:45)

Some 200,000 people were suffering from Malaria in 1929-30. (36:1)

4. Infant Mortality and Children’s Health Programs.

A survey of Infant Mortality in Porto Rico revealed the following:

“Our eipher for infant mortality during the
last fiscal year of 1927-28 was 146 for each 1,000 births. In the last five years the average was 148. For each 1,000 children born here almost 130 succumbed before they were a year old. During the last 19 years, our infant mortality cipher has fluctuated, being very high from 1917-27 and not so high in 1914, 1924 and 1926, but in general no tendency to a decrease in infant mortality is apparent."

In the United States, the rate of infant mortality in 1916 was 101. This year (1927) it was 64. In twelve years, the cipher of infant mortality has diminished 37 per cent in that country."(22:155)

179 per 1,000 is the infant mortality rate for the fiscal year 1928-29, about two and one-half times the rate for the same year in the United States.(27:8) In other words, in Porto Rico, 18 out of every 100 children born die before one year old.

The coastal towns, especially those on the west coast, and the urban centers where the population is very dense, are the location of the highest rate of infant mortality. Infant mortality is higher in boys than in girls. During 1926 the mortality rate per 1,000 inhabitants in girls was 168 and in boys 191. The highest mortality of children under one year of age in Porto Rico occurs in children one to six months old while in the United States the highest mortality in children under one year occurs in children under one month.(22:168)

The milk industry has made much progress in Porto Rico. Refrigeration of milk and sterilization of bottles by steam has been adopted. A great deal of progress has been made in the
campaign against milk adulteration. In 1901-02 the percentage of adulteration was 25.0 while in 1927-28 it was 5.57; showing a tendency to better the milk industry of Porto Rico. (23:174)

In the 31st Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico it is stated that 93 milk stations were maintained during the year 1930-31. Governor Roosevelt says:

"I have visited those stations and seen children just starting on the service who were little more than skeletons. At subsequent visits at a later period I have been literally unable to recognize those children, so greatly had their condition improved." (37:17)

The first baby clinic was established in 1921 in Puerta de Tierra, the poorest section of San Juan. Municipal physicians made the examinations of both mothers (prenatal) and of infants. The nurses made follow-up visits and instructed the mothers in the methods of food preparation for their babies and other elements of child care. The difficulties encountered by the nurses were numerous. Over-crowded living quarters, lack of cooking utensils, poor standards of cleanliness, scarcity of milk and the custom of feeding the baby on the family diet at an early age were some of the obstacles encountered. Despite the deluge of handicaps, other baby clinics were established in Bayamón, Barranquitas, and Ponce. Baby conferences were opened in San Juan, Barrio Obrero, La Puerta, and in Mayagüez and
Comerio. These conferences were sponsored by the American and Junior Red Cross Organizations, the Department of Health, and local authorities. (11:31)

The Porto Rican Department of Health established a vision of Child Hygiene in February, 1922. An extensive study was made of the condition of children in the poorer sections of San Juan. (12:31)

The plans consisted of census of dwellings in securing district; information pertaining to each house; physical examination of all children under five years of age; collecting and analyzing data on economic status of family, employment of mother, marital status of the parents; and giving instruction in methods of feeding infants. A sanitary inspector made the housing inspection and took the census. A district doctor made the physical examinations. The Insular Department of Health detailed eight nurses to stations established by the American Red Cross. The study revealed the need for dental clinics and improvement in sanitary conditions. Glandular affections, neglect of vaccination, and inadequate nourishment were found to be prevalent. The people were given many object lessons in more hygienic living; garbage was disposed of more promptly; and the pools of stagnant water, breeding places for mosquitoes, were drained. (12:31)

The Children's Year Program included a
plan to facilitate cooperation among existing agencies in Porto Rico interested in children's activities. (11:31)

This work was undertaken by the Children's Bureau and the American and Junior Red Cross. The following activities constituted the Children's Year Plan:

1. Summer fresh air camp, financed by the American and Junior Red Cross.
2. Inauguration of health teaching in the schools.
4. Establishment of dental clinics.
5. Mothers' and infants' conferences.
7. Treatment of rural school children by two traveling physicians.
8. Campaign for the prevention of blindness.

In 1921 the Junior Red Cross established the first vacation camp for children. (11:32) About 100 children of the poorer section of San Juan were sent to this camp at Barranquitas. Clothes and shoes were provided by the American and Junior Red Cross; physical examinations were given before the children entered the camp; and injuries, illness, etc. incurred while attending camp were attended by the local physician and dentist. The school authorities at Barranquitas cooperated with the Junior Red Cross and offered the school house to be used as a dormitory and the school lunch accommodations as a kitchen and dining room. There was a noticeable improvement in the health of the children within a few days. Such items as milk, soups, eggs, and meats were inoculated into the meager diet of these poor children.

Physical examinations in the schools were
introduced in San Juan by the Municipal Commissioner of Education. (12:43) Three physicians were engaged to make the examinations and school nurses were appointed to assist and follow up the cases needing further attention. However no attempt was made to administer treatment. The parents received notification of the child's defects which were capable of being remedied. These examinations showed the absolute need for enlarging the program of school medical and dental service. Three dental clinics were established; an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist was added to the staff; and volunteer treatment of poor children was systematized and extended. Similar physical examinations of school children were carried out in Bayamon, Quebradillas, Ponce, Utuado, Aguadilla, and Comerio.

Two teachers on the staff of the Children's Bureau introduced health teaching into the public school system of Porto Rico in 1923. (12:35) Health instruction, given in all grades, pertained to personal hygiene, diet, sleep, elimination and play. Care of the teeth, ventilation of sleeping quarters need for more milk consumption and importance of a well balanced diet were stressed by the health teachers.

About one out of every 460 inhabitants in Porto Rico in 1899 were blind. Ignorance and
poverty were the two factors contributing to this condition. The consensus of opinion of 30 of Porto Rico’s most prominent practitioners of that time attributed the most common cause of blindness to gonorrheal ophthalmia, most frequently neonatorum. (39: 130-1) Ignorant quack doctors, and more often old women, with the abundance of superstitions, were usually employed in cases of child-birth. There were few specialists and no free dispensaries.

Under the direction of Dr. W. W. King, surgeon of the United States Public Health Service and member of the Institute of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene of Porto Rico, a study of over 4,000 school children in 1914 revealed many cases of Trachoma. (12:49) Children of thirteen different localities were examined and none were found free of the disease. Of all the children examined 9.5 per cent were reported as having positive cases. The reported results of the survey made evident the need for a continuous program of cure and prevention.

In 1921 the commissioner of health secured a small appropriation for prophylactics to be used on the babies eyes at birth, in order to reduce Ophthalmia Neonatorum. (39: 56)

The Porto Rico Department of Health maintains Asilo de Ciegos (Asylum for the blind) at Ponce, whose functions are the care of the indigent blind and treatment of the eye cases referred by
public authorities. The asylum has accommodations for about 100. In 1919 the department of education established a small school for the blind children of the asylum.

The Campaign for Prevention of Blindness in 1921 revealed these conditions: the shortage of physicians; limited facilities for skilled refraction; and wholesale employment of ignorant midwives at childbirth.

5. Care of the Lepers.

In 1900 it was estimated that there were more than 75 lepers in Porto Rico, 17 of whom were isolated at San Juan(39:129) Previous to November 1900 the lepers received very little attention, but on the above date, a colony was established at Isla de Cabras (Goat Island) at the entrance of the harbor of San Juan.(29:53-54) In 1926, the Lepers Hospital was transferred to Trujillo Alto with accommodations for 60 patients. It is a first class institution with modern standard equipment. It is situated on a tract of land 42 acres, and has complete water supply and sewerage systems; and the farm is used for agricultural purposes. 15 cottages, each containing four rooms, one for each patient, with a little parlor, veranda, shower bath, toilet and electric light. There are two dining rooms; one for women and one for men; a clinic and a laundry for the inmates. There is a large administration buildings with offices and living quarters for the nurses and employees.(48:17)
The death rate in Porto Rico has decreased from 31.5 in 1888 to 21.4 in 1930.

The following table shows the average trend of the death rate from 1888 to 1930. (31:133)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate per 1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>1894</td>
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<td>1895</td>
<td>29.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>27.8</td>
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<td>1897</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-00</td>
<td>41.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>36.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>24.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-08</td>
<td>21.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908-09</td>
<td>19.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909-10</td>
<td>22.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1911-12</td>
<td>24.97</td>
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<td>19.78</td>
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<td>21.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>26.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917-18</td>
<td>27.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-19</td>
<td>31.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1924-25</td>
<td>22.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927-28</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V

SOCIAL ECONOMICS

I. Status of land tenure in 1899.

In 1899 nearly two thirds of the cultivated land was held in units of less than 50 acres. Before the cultivation of tobacco and sugar on large plantations, the people grew sweet potatoes, yams, rice, corn and bananas, and had extensive grazing lands. Food was easily obtained and money had only a slight significance for these self-sustaining people. The people lived close to the land and starvation was uncommon. With the introduction of large plantations, the farmer sold his patch of land for what he considered just remuneration; but after the sale, he found himself minus the means of subsistence and reduced to the rank of laborer when his small capital was depleted. (12:12) It is estimated that 150,000 people became casual laborers after selling their farms to plantation interests. (49:22f) The cane lands increased
from 21,503 acres in 1899 to 237,815 acres in 1920. (12:13) Simultaneously with the reduction of grazing and food crop land, was the great increase of population which rendered the situation acute; an increase of 304,566 in twenty years.

In 1898 about 38,000 farms, containing one and three quarters million acres, or an average of 44.8 acres per farm, supported 24 persons to the farm; these were the larger farms. At the same time, there were 953,000 people who cultivated for themselves and dependents some 478,000 acres. (16:10,11) In 1920 the total number of farms had increased by 2,000 over the figure of 1898, but had decreased from over 58,000 in 1910, or 29.6 per cent. Small farms, under 20 acres, decreased over 30 per cent in the same period. (16:1454)


Large American corporations now own the larger part of the sugar-producing lands of the Island. Testimony to substantiate this statement is difficult to find, because landlords are restricted by law to ownership of 500 acres. (44:10) There are many ways of evading the 500 acres law and there is no provision for its enforcement. Consequently a concentration of ownership has developed. It is
reported that three American Corporations own the greater part of the most valuable sugar lands. (10:15) Testimony given thirteen years ago before the Committee on Insular Affairs of the United States before the House of Representative, gave the number of such American corporations as four, and credited Americans with ownership of 80 per cent of the sugar lands at that time. (44:20) Thus the ownership of 35 per cent of the total cultivated acreage of the Island is in the hands of three or four corporations.

A Homestead Commission was established a few years ago in order to alleviate the unequal distribution of land. The Commission divided the government land tracts into farming communities, composed of from 20 to 100 farms which ranged from two and one-half to 20 acres in size. Carefully selected landless families are permitted to build homes and live on these farms, and they repay the government in the form of rent, the purchase price of the land. On each farm community there is a government farmer, not a specialist, but an efficient and capable dirt farmer. This government farmer has a model farm and serves as a guide to the rest of the farmers in the community in all agricultural enterprises. (24:23)
In 1931 Governor Roosevelt reported that 1850 small farmers had been established on farms which they would eventually own themselves; 700 already own their respective farms; and 230 working families have been established in homes of their own. (37:6)

3. Leading Industries.

Sugar is the chief crop of the Island. It enters the United States free of duty, and more than 720,000 short tons of sugar of a value of nearly 54 million dollars were exported from Porto Rico in the year 1930. (36:13) Sugar brings in over half the total export values, and its production is estimated to occupy nearly 35 per cent of the total cultivated acreage of the Island, employing between 85,000 and 100,000 laborers. (16:10:11) Coffee, tobacco and fruits, which are being exported in increasing measure for the bulk of the remaining agriculture products.

Tobacco is the second largest crop; over 12 municipalities are dependent upon it as a major crop. The tobacco production is also a distinctly American controlled industry. From 40,000 to 50,000 acres are planted every year, producing some 30 million pounds of tobacco leaf. The buyers mostly American manufacturers, are better
organized than the producers and consequently control the situation. The extension of the American Farm Board Act is giving impetus to the formation of Cooperative tobacco Associations. (11:5) Over ten and one half million dollars of tobacco was shipped to the United States in 1930. (8:6)

Grapefruits, pineapples, and seedless oranges are produced and exported in large quantities, and an important canning industry has been established. About six and one half million dollars of fruit was exported to the United States in 1930. (8:5)

Coffee, the basic crop during the Spanish regime, has declined in production and export value. Frequent hurricanes, especially that of 1928, which destroyed 49 per cent of the coffee trees and 59 per cent of the shade trees, have worked havoc with the coffee industry. (11:7) In 1903 the coffee export had a valuation of nearly $4,000,000.00 and in 1931 the value of coffee exports did not exceed $550,000.

(37:30)


Much of the profit of the Island goes outside the Island to American stockholders. The Foreign Policy Association accredits to the profit, chiefly of American concern, the difference between the values
of imports and exports; over nine million dollars in 1926-27. One Company, the Fajardo, has returned in 23 years of business life, 12 times the value of its original stock, over 1,200 per cent in all, or more than 50 per cent per year; 1929 dividends on stock issued in another company in 1920 amounted to 33 1/3 per cent.

(18:450) The total receipts of the three largest companies, all American, in 1925-26 was 25 1/2 million dollars; in 1926-27 it was 32 million dollars. The net receipts were five and one half and nine million dollars, respectively.

5. Wages

The laborers were paid weekly by the planters, some in money and others in tickets redeemable at the Company store. In 1899 there was a law requiring that wages be paid in money, but the laborers had no means of enforcing it. The lot of the artisans was better than that of the laboring classes. They earned from about one dollar to one dollar and twenty five cents a day for ten to eleven hours work.(42:51)

Even in the rush season in 1928 wages are extremely low. $1.00 to $1.25 and $1.50 a day are reported as peaks of wage scale for men in the sugar regions during
the rush season. The wages are even less in the coffee regions, which employ comparatively a large number of laborers. (38:13-15) The Brookings Survey group estimated a man's wage at 70 cents a day and $150.00-$250.00 for the year, and Governor Roosevelt set the annual wages of the laborer at $200.00. Women receive much less and children still less. In an article in the New York Times, July 3, 1928, it was estimated that if the amount of money spent in wages every year in Porto Rico were to be divided equally among the working population, the average would be ten cents per person per day for a considerably long day. In 1930 it was estimated that the average Porto Rican workman's salary was 60 cents per day. (49:225)

The skilled workers in the textile industry receive slightly better wages than the agricultural laborers. The embroidery workers, principally women, receive a daily scale of $1.00 and less. In 1919 a wage law was passed making $1.00 a day a minimum wage for women 18 years of age and over. (12:25) Home work system was adopted in the making of blouses and all underpaid women were driven out of the factories to work in their shacks. When the woman did the
work in her home, it was difficult to determine how many hours she worked, consequently the law of 1919 was not enforced and many wages dropped below the minimum scale. In 1924 the law was found unconstitutional. In 1925 the average daily wage of these workers was 77 cents. (16:22-23)

In 1928 the prevailing wages of women in the needlework factories was $4.00 a week. (38:32)

Girls employed in needlework in several centers, which were under the direction of Mrs. Theodore R. Roosevelt, Jr., worked under pleasant conditions for $1.00 a day. In 1931 the average wage for shop workers in textile industry was $3.00 per week; women employed in tobacco factories from 25 cents to 50 cents a day. (23:2,3)

The common wages in the various industries in 1930-31 are increasely low; men receiving from 30 cents to $1.75 a day; women receiving 25 cents to $1.25; and children 12 cents to 40 cents a day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Common Wage</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Plantations</td>
<td>50¢-60¢-81.00 a day</td>
<td>81.50 a day</td>
<td>40¢-60¢ a day</td>
<td>25¢-40¢ a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Plant</td>
<td>75¢-90¢ a day</td>
<td>40¢-50¢ a day</td>
<td>20¢-30¢ a day</td>
<td>15¢-20¢ a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Plantation</td>
<td>75¢-90¢ a day</td>
<td>40¢-50¢ a day</td>
<td>20¢-30¢ a day</td>
<td>15¢-20¢ a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Packing</td>
<td>70¢-$1.00 a day</td>
<td>40¢-60¢ a day</td>
<td>35¢-40¢ a day</td>
<td>20¢-30¢ a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigar Factories</td>
<td>$1.00-$1.25 a day</td>
<td>$1.00-$1.25 a day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stripping shops.</td>
<td>50¢-$1.00 a day</td>
<td>60¢-90¢ a day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework and Embroidery</td>
<td>$1.00 a day</td>
<td>35¢-40¢ a day</td>
<td>20¢-30¢ a day</td>
<td>15¢-20¢ a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(37:93-98)
6. Family Expenditures.

A recent investigation of the living conditions of a family of five in various sections of the Island was made (23:4). The following is the report of the investigation:

Sugar Cane Section

Average wage, per day, $0.60; per week $3.60
Food expenses during the week
reported by the Nural merchant or the laborers themselves 2.31
For other personal or general expenses 1.29

Coffee Section

Average wage, per day, $0.50; per week $3.00
Food expenses during the week 2.38
For other personal or general expenses .62

Tobacco Section

Average wage, per day, $0.55; per week $3.30
Food expenses during the week 2.86
For other personal or general expenses 0.44

This investigation did not include items for rent, clothing, medical service and medicine. This meager wage condemns the laborer and his dependents to a situation just a bit better than that of starvation.

So much emphasis is put upon the production of export commodities, that the people have to import the food for subsistence from the United States and elsewhere. Fresh green vegetables, milk and dairy products, eggs and fresh meat are deplorably lacking in the Islanders' diet. (16:10,11) On 20 per cent of the arable land of Porto Rico is used to produce food for home consumption. (16:25) Fresh milk and meats are a luxury and many thousands of children go without milk 365 days of the year. Some years ago
a special agent of the United States Department of Labor reported that the daily diet of a Porto Rican laborer's family, when its members were working, was as follows:

Breakfast—black coffee, without milk and quite often without sugar.

Lunch—Rice and beans, or rice and codfish, or codfish and plantains.

Supper—Rice and beans, or rice and codfish, or codfish and plantains.

At that time the landowner permitted the laborers to eat bananas and other tropical fruits gratis, and sometimes they made an entire meal exclusively of bananas. Today, fruit is a valuable export and the landowners charge their laborers for it. However, the diet of former years has not changed; the 1927 report of the Island Bureau of Labor says that bananas, codfish, rice, beans, cornmeal and coffee without milk are still the diet of the laborers. Bread is a luxury, and beef and pork are infrequent articles of diet. Bananas are sold two to five for one cent (whereas they used to be five cents for one hundred) and are consumed in quantities. Rice, with beans, pigeon peas, and kidney beans is the leading food of all rural laborers. These cost 7 cents to 12 cents a pound in 1927. Laborers in the sugar cane, tobacco, and fruit growing districts consumed similar foods to those of the coffee section, with the sole difference, the addition of a few other articles of diet—beef, pork, bread and candies—both imported and domestic.
When one notes that the average laborer’s wages, when he works, vary from 35 cents to $2.00 a day (more often only $1.25 or $1.50 per day as an upper limit) and that he works from four to eight months a year; the bureau’s report that the coffee laborer and frequently the sugar laborer spends all his earning for foodstuffs incapable of nourishing him is clearly not an overstatement. (38:37-38,3:69)

7. Housing Conditions.

The report of the Special Commissioner of Porto Rico, 1899 gives the following data on housing at that time: (42:49)

"The house of the laborer is very small and very poor. In the rural districts it is built usually of thatch of the palm, leaves of the sugar cane, or other vegetable fibres. It is placed on four posts, standing from one to three feet from the ground. The floor is very uneven and far from tight. It has generally three rooms, sometimes only two. These rooms are usually about 6 by 7 by 10 feet in size. Fortunately, no sash is needed for the windows in that climate. Almost no furniture is visible. A kettle serves as a sort of portable range. In this, with a little charcoal or splinters of wood, whatever cooking is necessary is done. Sometimes a scissors bedstead, without mattressed or pillows, and with little covering, is seen; sometimes a sack or two suspended from the roof does duty as a harrow. These houses are often occupied by families of five or more, who dispose themselves for sleep in the different corners of the room, often on palm branches. For chairs, a box or two must do as substitutes; and as for tables, it is not every man that can afford one."
In 1914, in the towns there were many private, wellbuilt, comfortable houses which were owned by skilled artisans; but the majority of the laborers' homes were of two types; either private houses constructed of boards with tin or tile roofs, or one story tenements made of brick or plaster. (15:10)

The private shack is described as a conglomeration of oil cans, boards, and pieces of soap boxes with roofs constructed from zinc and tile. The floors were made of boards and elevated from 6 inches to 2 feet above the ground. The wood used to construct the shacks was usually of such very poor quality that within five years; during which time paint was seldom applied, the tropical climate and profusion of insects completely eroded the structure. The interior of the houses usually consisted of 2 or 4 rooms, divided by low partitions. The houses were closely grouped and usually damp because they were built on low ground; the refuse which accumulated beneath the shacks was not always washed away by the tropical rains. Some of the occupants rented these shacks from landlords; some built the shacks but paid land rent; while others built shacks on municipal land and paid a small property tax for the use of the land. (15:11)
In a survey made in 1914 in Puerta de Tierra, a community just outside of San Juan, it is reported that 9,309 people were living in 880 houses and of this number 178 lived in 30 privately owned houses.

(15:20)

The typical patio in Puerta de Tierra harbored some 59 families who lived in three surrounding ranchones. Chickens, goats, cats and even babies played together in these unpaved, wash-strung patios. Waste water were deposited in a depression in the center of the patio. Two water closets and a faucet of city water served the common use of all these families. At night the sleeping chambers of the tenants were ventilated by the foul air of the patio, the only passage by which air entered the rooms. Some of the patios in the cities were paved with cement, but this was not the case in the towns.

(15:53)

In 1923 three fourths of all Porto Ricans lived in the rural districts and only a few owned land. The huts which they occupied were owned by their employers or plantation owners. The cost of a thatched hut was about $20.00. Long tough grass or leaves of the palm were converted into thatch and was used for the sides and roof, while boards raised one or two feet from the ground composed the floor. The hut consisted of one room, usually, but sometimes a rough partition divided the hut into a sleeping room.
and a living room. The cooking was done on the ground in the rear. Hammocks instead of beds, and boxes instead of chairs served as furniture. However, sleeping on the bare floor was not unusual. Ground were used for dishes and cooking utensils. The huts soon deteriorated because of the abundance of insect life. These huts, so common in the rural sections, are similar to the ones inhabited by Indians, according to description of early Spanish priests. (12:9)

In 1923 it was reported that the owners of the sugar plantations had built for their employers houses of lumber with zinc roofs. These houses were placed in close proximity to each other and ordinarily occupied without paying rent. Some sugar plantations had one family houses of 2, 3 or 4 rooms. By 1923 the multiple family plantation house were no longer being built, although many were in use. (12:10)

The tenements in 1924 were usually one story structures of brick, covered with plaster; although some two story tenements of cement and wood were located in San Juan, Puentes de Tierra and Mayagüez, but these were exceptional. The brick tenements were very damp; the floors were made of either brick or wood and were close to the ground. The average apartment consisted of three rooms, without windows, and divided by thin
partitions. These tenements were the cast off abodes of wealthy merchants. From 8 to 12 families were crowded into a structure where formerly one family dwelled.

The furnishings consisted of a rocking chair, couple of straight chairs, an oil lamp or candle on a stand, and a couple of enlarged photographs adorning the walls. In the bedroom there were one or more beds and a chair. A charcoal stove and cooking utensils furnished the kitchen. This is a description of the typical tenement furnishings; some were better and other more poorly furnished. (1511)

The Brookings Survey revealed that one half of the rural population lives in one or two room huts. 50 per cent of the single room shacks house eight or more people, and in 4 per cent of the cases as many as 15 people occupy one hut. (3:72)

The Worker's Settlement at San Juan and Arecibo under the direction of the Homestead Commission marks progress in the housing conditions of the laboring classes. (2313) However the shacks described in early reports are still apparent in the rural section and on the outskirts of towns and cities.
The 33 years of American Sovereignty in Porto Rico have been marked by a great deal of progress in the field of education. Since the American occupation, a highly centralised and unified system of education has developed, through the guidance of American educational principles and facilitation of the educational expenditures appropriated by Porto Rico and the United States. Practical education has supplanted academic training in the rural sections, and this change will be one factor in enabling Porto Rico to secure a sound economic basis in the future. Besides teaching the students specific vocations, beneficial and much needed instruction in proper diet, health and hygiene are presented. The illiteracy rate has been reduced from 85 per cent to 45 per cent. However, there still is a great need for further development in educational facilities, since 90 per cent of the children in the rural districts, age 5 to 14 are not registered in schools. The use of the double enrollment system in the rural sections, which deprives the students of a full day of school, is indicative of the great need for many more rural schools.
Trial by jury, the separation of the judiciary and executive departments, and the establishment of Juvenile Courts are the outstanding changes incurred by the American influence since 1898, in the judiciary field.

Divorce with the privilege to remarry and the right of civil marriage were introduced after 1898. Thus the Catholic Church was rendered impotent by the introduction of these two procedures.

Since 1898 the health of Porto Rico has been gradually improved. The death rate has decreased from 31.5 to 21.4. Smallpox and Yellow Fever, once the scourge of the Island, have been eradicated. Treatment of Uncinariasias, Tuberculosis and Malaria have been extensive; but, because of the nature of these diseases, the overwhelming increase in population, the poverty and ignorance of the people, their poor understanding of what constitutes an adequate diet, and their lack of pecuniary resources which would enable them to live in clean, healthy houses, the progress in alleviating these three diseases has been slow and greatly retarded. The same can be said of mortality of infants, which has shown no tendency to decrease. In general the sanitary conditions have been improved, a successful attempt has been made to uphold the medical profession's standards, and many hospitals have been established.
The exports of the Island have increased in the last 33 years, but the average income of the inhabitants of the Island has shown no noticeable increase. The American capital invested in the Island extracts the great majority of the profits of the Island, so the inhabitants of the Island are little better off now than before. Housing conditions have shown a slight improvement over the conditions prevalent in 1898.

When the activities of the last 33 years are considered in the face of the dire poverty, ignorance, and disease prevalent at the time of the American occupation, and the devastation and retardation which naturally follows two hurricanes and a cyclone; one cannot do other than confirm the opinion that the social changes which have evolved have been in the direction of progress.
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