

Special Selection.

A REVIEW OF THE ANEMIA COMMISSION UPON HOOK- WORM DISEASE IN PORTO RICO.

The Commission appointed by the United States Government in February, 1904, for the "*Study and Treatment of Anemia in Porto Rico*" has submitted a report to the Governor of that island. This report covers 209 pages, and is printed both in the Spanish and the English language.

The Commission was composed of experts in their special field, and the amount of work accomplished by these gentlemen, and the exceedingly painstaking manner in which they attended to every detail of the subject stamps this enquiry as one of the most scientific and thorough investigations ever undertaken in the cause of public health.

As early as 1899, Dr. Bailey E. Ashford, who later became a member of this Commission, discovered the parasite *ankylostoma* in the feces of anemic patients who were then crowding the field hospitals of Ponce. This was the first positive evidence that the disease in Porto Rico, known as *anemia*, was not the ordinary form, but *ankylostomiasis* or *uncinariasis*, produced by the parasite sucking the blood, and so prevalent did this disease become during the ensuing years that fully ninety per cent. of the population became affected.

When the Commission appointed by the Government of the United States began its investigation in Porto Rico, it established a hospital consisting of tent-wards, first at Bayamon and later at Utuado, the most anemic districts of the island.

The object of the treatment was first to remove the parasite and then to kill the anemia. To kill the parasite, thymol, malefern and betenaphthol were given, but the preference was for thymol. First, the patient received a purge of salts, and then on the following day he was made to fast until one o'clock, and then was given thymol in doses not exceeding four grammes; then another purge was given to remove the bodies of the parasite killed with the antiseptic. The purpose of the first purge was to clear the intestines of mucous etc., so as to allow the thymol to act. The thymol and purge treatment was continued once a week until the feces showed no more *uncinaria*.

While thymol kills the parasite and the purges remove them from the intestines, also diminishing the amount of toxines in the