



A GLIMPSE OF PORTO RICO.

I first caught a glimpse of San Juan one rainy dismal day early in November. Land had been sighted hours before, and it was a disappointment that the fog so impeded our view. At 4 o'clock the group of disheveled, land-hungry passengers were able to discern the city, and they doubtless felt a big pull at their hearts as they saw the dear old flag floating over Morro castle, whose dingy, battered walls projected far out to sea. Just then the clouds broke and the sun came out, lighting up a scene of wondrous beauty. It was not at the city that we looked then, but at the marvelous coloring of the mountains in the interior, the green terraces and glimpses of inland water. Then we watched the apparent approach of the city in the foreground. Though built upon an island and connected with the mainland by a bridge, to those ignorant of this fact San Juan seems to be placed upon a hill.

The antiquity of San Juan is unquestionably its most impressive feature, and the majority of the buildings appear to be built of yellow, grimy stone. When it became necessary to make a decision regarding a hotel, my choice was immediate when I saw upon one of the representative cards of the three American hotels, the name "Mayflower." But for the benefit of those who place implicit trust in the American hotels of Porto Rico, I would mention in some detail my experience in this one, which advertised to be the "home of Americans."

Built at one side of a narrow street, a street scarcely twice the width of the sidewalks of Boston, upon a street filled with other buildings almost identical in structure, its facilities for ventilation in this tropical climate may be guessed at. True, the parlor was not unattractive, with its massive furniture, lace draperies and rickety piano, but it is to a spot he may call his own that the pilgrim turns. I was given a room off the dining room, a desirable location, I was informed. This room was separated from others of its kind by a thin partition about 8 feet in height, the room being fully 14. The door was knobless, latchless and fastened by a primitive bolting arrangement. The bed, an iron structure, from the canopied top of which hung curtains of white muslin, was not an unattractive spot, till you tried it. Over some rusty, springless springs were placed two folds of cotton material containing some flinty substance, the composition of which I could not ascertain, although I'll own to ripping up a corner to try and gain information. Two sheets and a pillow of the same rocky composition—that's all.

In the dining room is where the so-called American ideas are introduced. The tables are in exact imitation of the San Juan Y M C A restaurant. They advertise American chefs, yet the first sight that greets your eye is a circular loaf of the native bread (of which I have become exceedingly fond), of alarming proportions, and no apparent way of eating it. When the kindly chef upon the transport told me that they cooked everything in grease and garlic, I doubted his word. But they do. Upon the bill of fare, written in English by the interpreter, I ordered apricot pie. It materialized in a shapeless mass swimming in three inches of grease. Naturally the only Americans at this hotel are transients.

Santurce is the American colony of San Juan. Situated three miles from the city, upon the beautiful bay, the ocean breezes make the location cool and comfortable. The houses too are pleasant. Pretty little green and white painted cottages, spacious two-story villas, each with a broad balcony, these have been rented by Americans, and here may be found genuine American boarding houses with bona fide American cooks, and it was to Santurce the writer moved after a brief and memorable stay in one of San Juan's American hotels.

To return to the city: The two main streets, Calle de Fortaleza and Calle de San Francisco, are exceedingly narrow.

This effectually prevents the introduction of electric cars, but public coaches draw sometimes by a horse, a mule and a native pony take their places at the regulation 6-cent fare. At present public conveyance from San Juan to Santurce, aside from the coaches, is by means of a steam railway, which stops at intervals of less than an eighth of a mile. This is soon to be replaced by an electric road. In the capital the buildings are seldom more than two stories in height, and a strange feature of those in the residential section is that you may glance up to a second story balcony and see a beautifully attired, abundantly powdered "senorita" languidly waving her fan, and know her to be the possessor of a goodly income, then look in upon the ground floor and see a scene of dirt and squalor and human life that cannot be realized until seen. Withered, distorted old women; repulsive, half-clad mothers; young girls, half-grown children, and from five to 10 little nude babies, all jumbled together, with cooking utensils, decaying fruit, dogs and goats.

This is in no way an exceptional case, nor is it an exaggerated one. This feature of the lowest class—blacks or peons—living together upon the ground floor, with really good families above them, is hard for Americans to understand. I said blacks, but it is not unusual to see a child with a skin as fair as the babies at home, and with beautiful yellow curling hair, among her black brothers and sisters. Yet above these creatures live families who have as pleasant and refined homes as could be desired. I was privileged to go into one of these as a guest—but that is another story. The government buildings, of which "The Palace" is chief, are attractive. The stores in the shopping district are interesting to say the least. Around the "plaza principal" or public park are many signs of American thrift and enterprise.

Like all other "new countries," San Juan, as the chief city, is overrun with speculators, many of them already disappointed and cursing the fate that brought them here. The government employees are for the most part agreeable people, and there is plenty of pleasant American society and some really "swell" functions to help compensate for the trials and tribulations to which American mankind is subjected. A popular song, with a familiar melody, contains these words:

"There's San Juan that is fairer than day.

And by faith you can see it afar,
For an office lies over the way—"

The rest won't bear repeating. Some one has said that the nights are what make Porto Rico a place to live in, and it is certainly true that, seated upon a balcony of these moonlight nights, with the perfume of roses wafted up from the garden, and the breeze from the ocean swaying the giant palms, one yields himself happily to the intoxicating influence. —[Reinette Lovewell.

AMONG OURSELVES.

Cats, Not Boys—I noticed on the first page of the June 1 issue an article, "Good-by to the birds." I am much interested in their protection, and from my experience I believe the cats have much more to do with the destruction of song birds than all the boys. I think we make a mistake when we charge it to the boys. I had a cat, a good one for rats and mice, but this spring it caught five song birds and three of them were robins, and I have given notice that I will kill every cat that I see on my premises if I can hit them. —[W. J. S.]

Even a Dog—Why is it I find so many sad hearts in the Council? Do they try to cultivate happiness? The more you dwell upon your troubles, the larger they grow. I feel very glad if I have been the means of helping Coddle's Sister. But I think one need not lack friends. I've a smile and a pleasant word for everyone I meet, even a little child. You will see how soon it will be returned. I make it a point to even speak to a dog. A wag of its tail pays me for my trouble. You will soon find you are a friend to every one by following that method. I have had much trouble through death. But I think they were all prepared. But they say living trouble is worse than death. First a young man of whom I was very fond, then a father, then mother, then

a brother. But I feel my loss is their gain, and have cast all trouble away and am light-hearted again. Coddle's Sister, may I ask are you really an actress? If so, please leave the stage. —[] aty Did.

Silence Is Sin—There are times when silence is golden; there are times when silence is sin. We ought to speak out our heart's gladness, and it would be far sweeter service if we would speak only of the pleasant things. Let us scatter smiles and sunshine, and thus brighten many a pathway. Where is the heart but what has its load of sorrow? We are far happier when we forget our own worries, and think of others. Life is hard for many. Can we not lighten the load by a word, a touch or an act of love?

"If any little word of mine
May make a life the brighter;
If any little song of mine
May make a heart the lighter,
God help me speak the little word,
And take my bit of singing,
And drop it in some lonely vale
And set the echoes ringing.
[Grace.

Silly Things—I am a telegraph operator also and want to ask Teddy not to judge the young lady too severely. Some girls are such silly creatures that they will sometimes treat a boy very coolly and strangely, when at the same time they are loving him with all their silly heart. It is natural to suppose that anyone who will climb to a table or chair when a small mouse takes his appearance will do other silly things accordingly. —[Baby Boy.

TRYING TO DO BETTER.

This world we live in, it is strange,
The people in it, too.
They never seem to be satisfied,
No matter what they do.
My father, he was wealthy once,
Blessed with golden store;
With ease and comfort at his wish,
But was looking still for more.
He went into a spec last fall—
Which he wishes that he never,—
For thus he lost all he had
In trying to do better.

Now if you have a little farm,
A pig, a horse, a cow,
Your wife can be the dairymaid
And you can take the plow.
Or if you are a lawyer,
Or living on your money,
Or if you're an actor on the stage
That sings those songs so funny,—
Be contented with your calling.
After wealth be in no sputter
Or you may come out like my poor dad,
In trying to do better.

E. W. P.

The Secret—There is work for us all in this world, whether married or single. Take up the duty that lies nearest you. Let the happiness of those around you be your delight, and you will find the secret of a happy life. —[Cousin Frank.

Be Careful—I think kissing is all right among mature boys and girls, if it is meant right. No gentleman should take the liberty to kiss a girl against her wish. I think a kiss to be condemned when forced upon unwilling lips. Johnny Boy, be careful with your new Marlin rifle. Three years ago the 14th of January your humble servant went hunting with a new 12-gauge shotgun and now I have only one arm. My left arm is off near the shoulder. I am a young man with little education, poor health, no parents, and must make a living by physical labor. I am going to truck this year. Let's, if Bachelor will not answer you, I will. I think you did just right to offer an apology. You showed a true lady spirit and should be complimented. I live in what is known as the cabbage belt of Virginia. Cabbage is the principal and money crop of our farmers. [Douglas Wyrick.

Respect the Farmer—When will the cheap story papers and magazines stop publishing their silly and slurring stories about the farmer and farmers' sons and daughters using quaint language, and illustrating how green the young people act, and how illiterate the old people are? It is probably the cause of many a young man leaving the farm. I have even known farm papers to publish the so-called wit of

The Jolly Girl

Often changes to the jaded woman. "I can't see what's come over Mary; she used to be such a jolly girl," was the remark of a young woman visiting a



school-mate. Marriage changes a woman. The drains and pains which are so often the sequence of marriage rob her of all vitality. Give her back her former strength and she'll be as "jolly" a wife as she was a maid. Doctor Pierce's Favorite Prescription gives back the lost strength by re-establishing the health of the delicate womanly organs. It drives the drains and stops the pains. It cures ulceration, inflammation and female weakness. It makes weak

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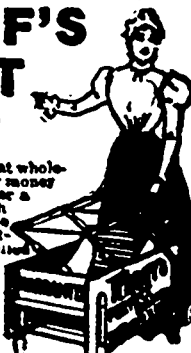
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