

A PANORAMIC REVIEW OF PUBLIC-HEALTH ACTIVITIES IN PORTO RICO

The following synopsis of the film on public-health activities in Porto Rico was written by Dr. Antonio Fernós Isern, Assistant Commissioner of Health. The film will be exhibited after the lecture given on that subject by Dr. Pedro N. Ortiz, Commissioner of Health of Porto Rico, in Boston and Philadelphia.

[Titles in large type; explanation of pictures in small black type]

Porto Rico, the old Island of St. John the Baptist, had her Miles Standish, her William Penn and her Sir Walter Raleigh. in the romantic figure of Don Juan Ponce de León.

(Ponce de León Statue in old San José plaza in the city of San Juan, Porto Rico.)

In this church, four centuries old, his remains were kept until 1908, when the fourth centenary of the foundation of the city of San Juan was celebrated.

(The old chapel of the Dominican Convent.)

On that date his glorious ashes were transferred to the old Cathedral and there they lie under a marble stone which reads:

I. N. D.

“Under the pontificate of his Holiness Pious X and while the Episcopal See was occupied by Bishop William Jones, the transfer was made to this Cathedral from the Church of St. Thomas Aquinas (now of St. Joseph), where they had laid since 1559, of the remains of Juan Ponce de León (of the land of Campos), whose noble birth was honored by his gallant deeds. A soldier at Granada, a Captain at Hispaniola, Conqueror and Governor of San Juan of Boriquén, discoverer and first Adelantado of Florida, brave warrior, able leader, loyal subject, honest administrator, loving father, industrious and perseverant colonist, his soul went to God and his body to earth at Havana in June 1521.

To his venerable memory and in the honor of Christian civilization, by his impulse, started; by his bravery consolidated; and by his diligent cooperation extended in this fertile

Porto-Rican land, this pious homage is dedicated by the Spanish Club of San Juan."

(Here the old Cathedral is shown, outside and inside. The marble stone with the Spanish inscription, under which Ponce de León is buried. The first minister of the Christian faith that there ever was in America, Alonso Manso, is buried here also. His marble stone is also seen.)

The manor house of the Ponce de León family still mounts guard on the walled edge of the narrow entrance to the bay,



Entrance to Central Office at San Juan, Porto Rico.

named "Puerto Rico" (Rich Port). The passing centuries have extended the name of the port to the whole Island while the name of the Island has been kept by the "City".

("Casa Blanca"; in English it would be "White House"; at present it is occupied by Headquarters, Military Post of Porto Rico.)

This is the "City"; the City of San Juan, which Ponce de León founded in the year 1508 and where he lived until the year 1521 when he left on his second voyage to the "Island"

of Florida, under the authority of the King of Spain, to conquer and settle as he had done in the Island of San Juan.

(A general view of the city of San Juan with its old buildings, narrow streets, busses, trolley cars, automobiles, new buildings, old forts and suburban residential sections, in a quaint mixture of tradition and progress.)

San Juan is by far the oldest city under the American flag.
(City Hall is here shown.)

Columbus discovered the Island in the year 1493.
(Statue of Columbus at Columbus Square.)

The city was the stronghold, but the fields were the place of toil. The early settlers scattered themselves over the fertile soil of the beautiful Island.

(General landscape view of Porto Rico. The green sugar-cane fields, tobacco plantations and coffee plantations.)

Each settler was granted a number of acres of land. They kept coming from Europe, as the centuries rolled on. Thus the Porto Rican people originated.

(Pedestrians. Plain people in their daily life.)

Slaves were imported from Africa since the early days of the colony, but the Porto Rican slave owners obtained the abolition of slavery in the year 1873.

Here is the home of a small farmer.

(View of a Porto Rican home in the country; property of a small farmer.)

Porto Rico's connections with Europe were severed in the year 1898 when she became a part of the United States. Many changes have taken place in this twenty-eight years, but the recent Old-World influence is still strongly apparent. Like all European countries, Porto Rico has her peasant class. The conditions under which these people live are aggravated by the devitalizing influence of hookworm disease which still prevails in the Island and which is now being fought according to very efficient methods.

(A glimpse of conditions on the hilly section of the Island where hookworm has caused on the white population a condition comparable to that of the poor whites of Kentucky and Tennessee. Tropical surroundings give a peculiar atmosphere.)

There is another reason for the poor condition of the peas-

ant and that is "Malaria" which abounds in the coastal plains while hookworm disease is more serious on the hills.

(Irrigation fields. Cane plantations.)

Anopheline mosquito breeding follows closely artificial irrigation.

On the southern section of the Island there are very large extensions of irrigated land, devoted to sugar-cane plantations.

(A map of the Island of Porto Rico showing the sections devoted to sugar cane.)

In order to keep the big sugar mills going large tracts of land must be given over to cane-growing.

The Aguirre Centrale.

(A view of one of the big sugar mills on the Island.)

The Department of Health, assisted by the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, is trying to find a way by which the interest of agriculture and industry may be made compatible with the interests of Public Health to the betterment and promotion of both.

(Views showing the work against malaria in the malarial zones. Malaria mosquitoes and general activities for the control of mosquito-breeding.)

These are not the only problems. The population of the Island has grown so rapidly in her four centuries of settlement that many towns have sprung up, even though 75 per cent of the population still lives out in the country.

(Different views of towns and cities in the Island of Porto Rico.)

These towns are clean and progressive but they have also their slums where tuberculosis is rampant.

(Views of the slums where the poorer class lives in towns.)

Infant Mortality is naturally high, under the circumstances, but a good fight is being made against it.

(Measures taken to control infant mortality.)

Porto Rico has the coöperation of the International Health Board. Dr. Rolla B. Hill, who was lately the representative of the International Health Board in Porto Rico, is given a farewell picnic by the members of the Department of Health and their families.

(Porto Ricans entertain their continental friends.)

After having inaugurated the new Leper Hospital and the School of Tropical Medicine, and leaving behind well advanced the buildings for the new Insane Hospital for 1,000 patients, the Commissioner of Health of Porto Rico sails for the United States while his Assistant takes charge of the Department.

(Pictures of these new buildings are shown here.)

Dr. Pedro N. Ortiz arrives at Philadelphia to take part in the sesqui-centennial celebration of American Independence. He will deliver various addresses while on the Continent.

The Commissioner of Health of Porto Rico takes part in this national celebration, bringing to his fellow citizens, and especially to his fellow physicians and Public-Health workers, the greetings of their fellow citizens of Porto Rico.

