

PRESENTATION OF DR. JUAN ITURBE
FOR THE HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SCIENCE BY THE
UNIVERSITY OF PORTO RICO

By DR. ROBERT A. LAMBERT, Director, School of Tropical Medicine

In the final analysis the man of science makes himself of value to the world in two ways: first, by contributing to the increase of knowledge; second, by applying that knowledge in such a way as to promote human welfare.

In history we find many examples of great men who have achieved greatness by the successful pursuit of new facts, while many others have won fame because, through their ability as administrators, as teachers or as physicians they have given knowledge a practical value.

The distinction between these two fields, the creative and the applied, cannot always be sharply drawn. In the case of many great men—Pasteur, for example—we see the investigator discover an important principle, and then immediately set himself to applying that principle or method to the benefit of mankind. The man whom this University is about to honor today has what we may call this mixed type of greatness.

He has made important contributions to our knowledge of certain diseases and their parasite causes, and he has, like the great master, Pasteur, used his energy, and his natural power of leadership, in applying this knowledge in his own country for the benefit of his own people, and incidentally for the benefit of other peoples similarly afflicted.

A perusal of his publications, which number more than a score, shows well the two phases of his activity. That schistosomiasis is no longer a serious infection among the people living in certain parts of Venezuela is due first to the fact that he discovered the intermediate host of this parasite and secondly to the activity of himself and others in eradicating the infection on the basis of the facts which he had brought to light.

When we look over the high mortality and morbidity rates of the greater part of tropical America, we see the need of more men of the type of Dr. Juan Iturbe; men, who are not only endowed with a great intellectual capacity, but who have also the initiative, the energy, and the perseverance necessary to develop their natural talents.

Dr. Iturbe obtained his B. A. degree from the University of Caracas; and then completed his six-years' course necessary for an M. D. degree. Not satisfied with this training he spent four years in Europe studying in the University of Berlin, Bonn, and Paris, under the direction of such scientists as Schadinn, Levin, and Hartmann. Only after this long period of training did he begin his life work in Venezuela. Since he is now only forty-two years old it is clear that he has accomplished much in a very short time. We are sure that he will accomplish even more in the twenty or thirty years (let us hope it will be forty) which lie before him.

The scientific accomplishments of Dr. Iturbe have been recognized by his colleagues both in Europe and America as evidenced by the fact that he has been elected to membership in the following societies:

National Academy of Medicine of Venezuela
 Academy of Medicine of Colombia
 Academy of Medicine of Peru
 Society of Tropical Medicine of Paris
 Society of Tropical Medicine of the United States
 Royal Society of Tropical Medicine of England
 Society of Naturalists of Germany.

Mr. Chancellor, from what I have said you will understand my pleasure in recommending that the University of Porto Rico confer upon Dr. Juan Iturbe today the title of Doctor of Sciences; I believe that this University will honor itself, as well as Venezuela and Latin America, in conferring this degree.

In conferring the degree, Dr. Thomas E. Benner, Chancellor of the University of Porto Rico, said:

"Juan Iturbe, citizen of Venezuela and the world; link between North and South America; doctor and wise investigator:

"By virtue of my authority as Chancellor of the University of Porto Rico I confer upon you the honorary academic degree of Doctor of Science."

