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In attempting to give an account of the spiritual condition of the Islanders, I must not forget that it is a very easy thing for one to make many mistakes who is not only a stranger on the Island, but to whom the language, customs & manners of the people are all new. So that I am relying upon my own impressions only when my observations can not deceive me and am guided by the testimony of those who, on account of long residence and thorough acquaintance with the language, are well qualified to judge.

No one is so ignorant as to suppose that the task of a missionary is to teach

March 22/57

In coming to Porto Rico, I was frequently asked the question "Will you not do those people an kindness rather than otherwise, by unsettling their faith & leave them perhaps with no religious belief at all?"

This may be the idea held by many who are ignorant of the spiritual condition of the people of Porto Rico, but there is no room for such a fear when you are once informed as to what are the facts in the case.

~~It is~~ ^{It is} worshipped
~~It is~~ of the dark Continent
Of course I do not mean
that the Porto Ricans are
all uncivilized or barbarous
I do not mean that they
are all crude or unpolished
in their manners & mode of
living, but I do mean
that their spiritual condition
is deplorable in the extreme.

Pass along the highways
and you will see the
lower class herding to-
gether in miserable little
shacks many of them
half nude or entirely so
& with no more idea of
the marital bond than
the brute creation about
them. From such homes
what can we expect more
than the carnal instincts

3
that there is a God and a
future life of rewards
& punishments. Every nation
or tribe, however ignorant or
oppressed knows that much.
The work of the Christian
Missionary is to give the
poor deluded one a correct
idea of the one true God
man's true relation to Him
how He should be worshipped
& served and to carry to them
the comforts & consolations &
help of the gospel of the
blessed Lord & Master whom
we love.

According to this definition
of a Missionary's work the
need of the people of
Porto Rico is as great
as that of any people
from the idolatrous Mon-
golians to the superstitious

more grace of manner & with the possession of wealth it is better concealed perhaps, but nevertheless exists.

This I have observed; the Holy Sabbath is totally ignored as a hallowed day. A few weeks ago the Legislature did enact a law requiring all stores & shops to be closed after 1 o'clock on Sundays but theatres, balls, picnics &c are reserved for that day.

The following instance illustrates the low standard of truthfulness even among the better class.

The Alcalde (Mayor) sent a police man to summon a prominent business man to his court - when the message

teach. On the cities you will see at the first glance the evidences of a depraved & unscrupulous populace; great stone walls capped with broken glass or high iron fencing surrounds every home with gates locked by day as well as by night and wherever possible a fierce watch dog guards the premises, but even this does not prevent much theft & other crime.

I am told by those who ought to know, that among the upper classes, the educated & wealthy people, Sin, immorality &c, is just as prevalent. With more

8
purely a man of the
world, living for the world
& conforming to the world
in all things. But

what better could be expected.
The church which has
been established here for
generations does not attract
them to her worship - only
a few women gather there,
the men may give a
passing glance now & then
but to be interested, to take
any part in the Service, to
even attend a service is
as foreign to their thoughts
as to spend a leisure
hour in prison. Friends
& relations attend the funeral
of their departed one &
if the family of the deceased

7
was desired the gentleman,
who was busy in his store
replied, "tell the alcalde that
I am not here, I have gone
to the Bay for a bath & will
not be back for two or three
hours. The messenger hesitated
but the gentleman insisted
that such an ~~answer~~ answer
should be returned as he
had no time to obey the
summons and when the
policeman was induced to
return with such a report
the busy merchant went
on with his work not
giving a second thought to
the falsehood ~~which~~ he had
told. Controlled by policy
and the customs of society
with now & then a little
natural kind-heartedness
we find the Porto Rican

10
So the Protestant Missionary
will not uproot any
established faith nor
leave the people with
no religion at all. What
he does will be to supply
so far as his efforts are
successful a faith where
now there is none.

That our God is the ruler
of Nations and governs
in & through them has
been known since the
days of Nebuchadnezzar
and yet how slow we are
to consider the Government
a ~~part~~ ^{one} of His agencies
for evangelizing the world.
Slower here in Porto Rico

9
is wealthy & can afford
to pay for the services of
the Priest, they may go
to the church and be present
as the burial service is
perfunctorily gone through
with, but more than this
the church does not
gain their attendance.
What respect can they have
for an institution, which
is only known to them
by the taxes it exacts to
purchase immunity from
the future evil day.
So far as the country districts
are concerned, outside the
towns, I am sure the
people are as Greek
strangers to the gospel
as the most ignorant of any
land.

of the Island. Schools
of all grades, from the
Primary to the High School
together with Manual &
Industrial training, are
in operation or about to
begin. If you, my
reader, could attend one
of the public exercises
such as I attended on
the 22nd of Feby. and see
the bright eyed interesting
little children, listen to
their recitations & songs
and note the wonderful
improvement that must
have been made by them
during the past two years,
you heart too would have
overflowed with gratitude

11
it is my manifest, however,
that the government is at
work, to roll back the tide
of ignorance & depravity and
sin. Thousands of dollars
are spent each year to
support a civil government
by which law & order are
maintained, life & property
protected while the wheels
of commerce & trade move
smoothly forward. Thousands
of dollars are spent to
maintain the troops stationed
here that the government
may be enforced & peace
prevail. Thousands of
dollars the government
is investing every year
in educating the children

felt that ¹⁴ surely God
is using this great
government of ours
in His own work. and
if you could see, the
noble unselfish devotion
that is manifested by the
American young women
who have come to teach
in these schools I think
you would feel that God's
Holy Spirit is surely
moving them in their
unselfish devotion of their
lives to the great cause
in which they have
enlisted.

And then too the
Capitalists are here ^{Millions}
& millions of dollars are
invested, developing the

to God that ¹³ He is doing
so much through the
American Government for
the uplifting of humanity.
If you could have
listened to the speeches
of Mr Lindsay the newly
appointed Commissioner of
Education for the Island,
Mr James E. Russell of New
York and Mr C. Hanford
Anderson of Philadelphia
as they addressed the "Confer-
ence for Educators" a
few days since & heard
them tell what noble
ideals are held & magnifi-
cent plans ^{are} formed for
the progress of the Educational
system on the island, I
think you too would have

rising upon the ruins
of the present disgrace
and in all things a new
life covering the whole
land.

But as I behold this
vision, as I note with
pleasure what is being
done for the material, the
physical & the mental
improvement of the Island,
another scene comes before
my view.

The policy of our Govern-
ment has been from the
beginning, rigidly to separate
the State from the Church,
to have nothing to do with
man's religious views but
to leave him to worship
God according to the dictates
of his own conscience.

Natural resources of this
luxuriantly fertile land
and the wheels of machinery
are humming with their
busy roar. What a
decade will bring forth
does ~~not~~ require the wisdom
of a sage or the inspiration
of a prophet to foretell.

Ten years or perhaps a
little more & Porto Rico
will be a garden spot on
Earth; her children educated,
her laborers skilled, her
lands giving forth of its
richness products by the
hundred fold enough & to
spare, her coffers running
over with increased revenues
which other lands shall pour
into her lap, homes

ative of ~~of~~ the gospel of Christ than the ~~frank~~ superstitious worship which can not appeal to them and what better can we expect than, with their increased temporal advantages, only blank atheism. Spiritually no better, perhaps the last state worse than the first.

Can it be that the Church of God will allow the Government to be wiser - to do more for the uplifting of humanity in Porto Rico than she will do for the salvation of souls here? To keep apace with the progress of the day to rise equal to the opportunities of the hour.

Time has proven the wisdom of this policy at home and it is strictly observed in Porto Rico today. The teachers are not allowed even to open school with religious exercises. No sort of religious training (save of course, the Christian lives of these noble women giving its light through ~~that duty~~ ~~to~~ is given in the schools or will be. The Government in none of its departments undertakes this task. The capitalists can not be expected through their operations to do it. What then? Educate the children, teach them to reason & think for themselves ~~and~~ give them no other represent

the few military roads, the 159 miles of R.R. and the steam boats, which only touch a few coast towns, the only way of travel is on horse back as the roads of are impassible for vehicles, yet if the American School teacher can encounter the lonely path or mountain trail on her pony, surely the Soldier of the Cross will not shrink from the undertaking. With a band of self earnest, energetic and unselfish men prompted by a burning desire to save souls and filled with

to clear our skirts of the responsibility laid upon ^{us} we must be up & doing, and while the body and mind are being trained we must see to it that the heart is right - the soul converted.

That there awaits the Missionary a cordial welcome, I am convinced, that the progress of his work will be rapid, I can not doubt, but that grand opportunities are passing is only too true. Owing to the size of the Island the work of evangelizing can be done with facility, It is true that apart from

22
books, the great silent
missionaries, distributed
wherever they could be
read & were appreciated
from such a sowing
an harvest would inevit-
ably put forth & soon
churches & chapels would
spring up, & congregations
be formed & a Diocese
added to our American
Church. But best
of all these kindhearted
people would have the
glowing love of God
filling their hearts as
they rejoiced in a life
hitherto unknown and from
among them will the

23
the Holy Ghost, led by a
big hearted wise &
~~selfish~~ self-sacrificing
Bishop this whole land
could be reached & the
sound of the gospel
heard, directly or indirectly
by every one. If such
a system were inaugurated
here as was used by
the itinerant Methodist
preachers in the early
days of America and
the seed of the gospel
scattered in every part
of the Island, preaching
places in every town &
hamlet visited at least
once each month by either
priest or Bishop, prayer-

23-

Master find his own
in that day when
He comes to make up
his jewels.

E. Sterling Gunn

Ponce, Porto Rico,

March 22nd 1902,