

are nearly unanimously agreed that the Genoese was a mediocre navigator, even for his time. The author is in error regarding the line of demarcation. Pope Alexander VI. did not "with remarkable impartiality" shift the arbitrary line to 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. This was accomplished by the Treaty of Tordesillas. Students of Spanish exploration in the Americas will be surprised to read that

The armies of conquistadors who carried civilization later from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lived on the great droves of swine descended from the eight pigs that Columbus took on his second voyage.

In placing a final estimate on Mr. Walsh's *Isabella of Spain*, the reviewer is constrained to make use of the biographer's own words applied to Henry Charles Lea's *Spanish Inquisition*, "He is so violently prejudiced that his conclusions are untrustworthy". It is extremely doubtful whether the gains to historical science and to the Catholic Church through the publication of this book will be nearly commensurate with the evident labors involved in its preparation.

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Porto Rico, a Caribbean Isle. By RICHARD JAMES VAN DEUSEN and ELIZABETH KNEIPPLE VAN DEUSEN. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, [c. 1931.] Pp. [8], 342. Illus. \$3.50.)

Porto Rico: a Broken Pledge. By BAILEY W. and JUSTINE WHITE FIELD DIFFIE. ["Studies in American Imperialism", edited by Harry Elmer Barnes.] (New York: The Vanguard Press, [c. 1931.] Pp. xxxv, 252. \$1.50.)

Two candidly written books upon the same subject more unlike in approach, attitude, and conclusions than these are would be difficult to find. They illustrate strikingly the weight of subjective factors in descriptive and interpretative writing.

Captain and Mrs. Van Deusen know Porto Rico and its people more intimately than do Doctor Diffie and his coadjutor and they are conscious of no mission to prove a thesis. Their personal equation comes from long social and official contact and expresses sympathetic understanding rather than zeal for social or political reform. Loving Porto Rico as it is, they see it as an island rich in legend, romance,

scenic beauty, and cultural traditions. They portray excellently these aspects of its life and history, though at times, especially in appraising historical and literary personalities, with a heightened touch that betrays their close association with their environment. As a result their volume, which is the more attractive piece of book-making of the two, is most engaging reading.

Mrs. Van Deusen's long connection with educational work in Porto Rico, during which she wrote several books of literary merit about the island, and her husband's seven years' service as secretary of the governor, have made their factual material so familiar that it flows smoothly into a current of pleasing narrative. No other succinct account of Indian life before Columbus, of the epoch of discovery and settlement, and of the four centuries of Spanish sovereignty, excels that in the first three chapters of this volume. Two chapters follow reviewing the period of American rule and describing the political organization of the island, after which we are given in some thirty pages a description of the people and their life and customs that, while not blinking facts, conveys a very different impression from that left after reading Doctor Diffie's study.

Nearly one-half of the volume is devoted to religious and cultural life, education, and a final chapter upon places of historical and scenic interest. Some repetitions occur here, due partly to the topical organization of material and partly to joint authorship, but they are allusive rather than discursive and do not burden the text excessively. The illustrations are well chosen and reproduced and a map, which Doctor Diffie's volume unfortunately lacks, precedes the bibliography and index. Altogether this is one of the best books that has been published upon the island for the visitor and casual sightseer. While entertaining it is not superficial within the compass of its theme, and being written *con amore* and with an insight that can not be approached by an outsider, it captures aspects of truth that escape the latter. It helps to explain why the common people of Porto Rico, despite economic hardship, usually prefer to stay at home.

Porto Rico: a Broken Pledge, since it contains an indictment in its title, naturally invites discussion. Harry Elmer Barnes introduces the book with a short essay on American imperialism and a word about the series of which it forms a part. Ten chapters of text describe the progress of Porto Rico—considered simply as movement through time

—from the American occupation down to the present, the staple industries, public utilities, tariff, overpopulation and labor, the desire for independence, and the unhappy fruition of our country's sins—at least of omission—in the community as it exists today. As described by these visitors, Captain and Mrs. Van Deusen would hardly recognize their home and neighbors.

The term American imperialism begs the whole question of tropical development and interprets a dynamic process as a static evil. That is why its challengers so often end in barren criticism rather than constructive proposals, and incline—by implication at least—to contrast a horrid present with a mythical golden past. Doctor Diffie's exposition does not entirely escape this. He seems to hark back to a former peasant economy, antedating the plantation system, which he regrets even if he would not restore. This may explain why, in discussing land in food crops, for example, he forgets to allow for intercropping and alternate cropping with coffee and tobacco, which play an appreciable part in the subsistence of the people. Nor is it pointed out that the maximum area ever recorded in food crops was planted during the World War without curtailing the already extensive staple crops. The fact that small independent landowners generally prefer to plant cash crops like cane and tobacco to raising corn and sweet potatoes is not mentioned. The wages—including field and factory—paid to Porto Rican laborers per acre of cane or tobacco are probably more than the cash value of any subsistence crop that could be raised, whether on small freeholds or big plantations, on an equal area. In a word, Porto Rican agriculture obeys the same economic laws as farming on the mainland. Markets determine profits, and profits determine land utilization.

Local food production has been adversely affected during the past twenty years by the banana blight, which has considerably lessened a very important source of subsistence in the coffee country, where this plant is used for shade. On the other hand the diversification of employment, which largely accounts for the improvement in the condition of the average inhabitant of the island since 1898, has been made possible largely by the extension of highly capitalized agriculture. That development has its drawbacks, but the net result has been to ameliorate the condition of the workers. A person who knew the

island at all well in 1899 and thirty years later needs no figures to prove that fact.

While the existing tariff and shipping laws, which come in for sweeping condemnation, doubtless could be amended so as to consult the welfare of Porto Rico better than any laws designed primarily for the mainland of the United States, there is probably not an island in the West Indies, including Cuba, which does not envy our little dependency its present fiscal status. We recall no mention by the author of the fact that all customs duties collected in Porto Rico, amounting to about \$2,000,000 a year, go into the insular treasury, and would have to be replaced by additional local taxes were they abolished. In fact, the numerous and important fiscal favors which the federal government shows the island are overlooked. Similar oversights occur in comparing food costs now and before the American occupation. Not only was the island provisioned in no slight degree, during the Spanish régime, from the United States, over a tariff wall which does not exist for the same commodities today, but local consumption taxes were levied upon the food of the laborer which burdened his budget out of all proportion to his income.

Further instances might be cited where the authors seem to have skimmed one scale of the balance to overload the other in appraising the results of thirty years of United States rule in Porto Rico. Yet one must assent to their contention that this rule has not wrought as many blessed miracles for the common people as some mainland officials have claimed. They point out real evils and grievances, some of which are of a kind not unknown in other parts of the United States. But they have measured Porto Rican conditions with a mainland yardstick. Rarely in the tropics do we find a peasantry or a praedial proletariat that is better off than the *jibaros* and the field hands of Porto Rico. Wages and general labor conditions are better than in most of the neighboring islands. Public services, such as schools, roads, and hospitals, are more adequate; and they have been supplied in the most part by the people of the country. What might have happened if the dependency had remained a Spanish colony or had become independent is pure speculation. The reviewer believes that the condition of the common people would have been worse than it is today. The best land was as much monopolized by large private owners in 1898 as it is in 1932 by big plantations. The gulf between

master and servant was as wide as it is now. Organized welfare work for the humbler classes was more pitifully inadequate than it is at present, and there was little of the spirit that finds expression in such directions. Labor was prohibited by drastic laws from combining for its own betterment. Patriarchal reminiscences of the former slave economy survived here and there, but they were mere vanishing traces. Initiative and the technique of progress have come from the United States, though in no small part through the hands of Porto Ricans.

In 1898, America's war fever begot visions similar to those of two decades later. We thought we were saving a world for democracy and blessing the oppressed with self-determination. Our public men, and our army and navy officers—not yet hard boiled by overseas' experience—imagined that by some magic like that the preceding generation had attributed to the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, we could suddenly make over Spain's former subjects into our own image. We promised more than we could fulfil. They may thank us for some aspects of our failure. Whatever they may think of our political system, they are uncomfortable under the preponderant monetary power of our economic system. Dr. Diffie and his associate, stimulated by this dissatisfaction, measure the difference between these early promises of ours and what we have achieved, and call it a broken pledge. Literally, they are right. But Captain and Mrs. Van Deusen, with their happier conclusions, have likewise caught a true message from Porto Rico.

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Library of Congress.

The Northern Republics of South America. Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. By KENNETH G. GRUBB. (London: World Dominion Press, 1931. Pp. 151. Maps. \$2.00.)

Paraguay. Its Cultural Heritage, Social Conditions, and Educational Problems. By ARTHUR ELWOOD ELLIOTT. (New York: Teachers College, 1931. Pp. xiv, 210. \$2.50.)

Both of these volumes concern Protestant missionary and church activities in South America, and both are written with rather definite a priori conceptions. The first volume by Mr. Grubb, who is the author of other books published by the World Dominion Movement, is