

# CUBA AND PORTO RICO.

*What they show of Themselves  
at the Pan-American.*

## EACH HAS A BUILDING

CUBA'S BUILDING ONE OF THE FINEST IN THE FOREIGN GROUP—PORTO RICAN COFFEE. X-7-28

Americans at the Pan-American Exposition will look with a great deal of curiosity for the exhibits of the two islands thus spoken of in the treaty of peace drawn up in Paris in December, 1898:

"Article I.—Spain relinquishes all claim of sovereignty over and title to Cuba.

"Article II.—Spain cedes to the United States the island of Porto Rico."

The language is a little different in the two cases, it will be noticed; and Cuba comes hither as a ward of Uncle Sam, while Porto Rico is a member of the family. But the Cubans and the Porto Ricans are alike specially interesting, as the nearest and most interesting to us of all the islands whose destiny was changed by the war of 1898. What does the Pan-American Exposition have to tell us about them?

### *Porto Rico at the Fair.*

It is harder to find all the Porto Rican exhibits than it is the Cuban, for the reason that Cuba, like Chili, has concentrated all her exhibits in a single building, while those of Porto Rico are scattered

about the grounds. The visitor who starts out to find all the Porto Rican products will have to embark on a little voyage of discovery. There is a Porto Rican pavilion in the group of foreign and State buildings east of the Triumphal Bridge, and there are Porto Rican exhibits in the Agriculture building, the Manufactures and Liberal Arts building, and the Manufactures annex. They are all on one side of the grounds, however, within a short distance of each other, and the search for them whets the interest.

The Porto Rican pavilion stands between the Illinois and the Chili buildings, and faces the red New England building. It differs from several of the Spanish-American buildings in that no attempt was made in it to bring together all the exhibits of the island. It is, as its name "pavilion" would imply, a reception hall and resting place. It is an attractive little building of wood and staff, in white and light bluish green, and contains only a single large room and a small kitchen at the rear. The doors stand open, and the windows are mere unglazed apertures in the wall, closed at night by solid shutters. There are, within the reception-room, a piano, chairs, table and desk, and the walls are ornamented with Porto Rican hats and other woven work in straw. Almost any hour of the day one can hear piano music floating from the pavilion. The little building is characteristic of Porto Rico in its breeziness and coolness. The big doors and the wide-open windows let the wind play through it all day long. It is one of the coolest places on the grounds.

This pavilion is not only a reception hall and resting place, but it also serves to acquaint the visitors with the excellence of Porto Rican coffee. A cup of fragrant coffee is served to every visitor

who desires it. When the Americans went to Porto Rico at the conclusion of the war of 1898, they were surprised to find how good the native coffee was. Stories are told of Army families which took thither a stock of good coffee from this country, and were astonished to find that they could get as good or better there. The Porto Rican coffee is not a cheap coffee, but it is notable for its fine flavor and aroma. This Porto Rican pavilion was established partly to teach Americans something about its merits.

The main exhibit of Porto Rican industries and products is to be found in the Agriculture building, at the entrance in the southwest corner, adjacent to the exhibit made by Central and South American lands. Its most striking features are its displays of coffee, tobacco and sugar. These are extensive and fine in quality. Other exhibits include starch, spices, rice and other cereals, cotton, beans, chocolate, cacao beans, castor-oil beans, bay rum, alcohol, brandy and rum, and fibers and various manufactures thereof, including ropes and cordage. A visitor from Boston the other day was astonished to find in the Porto Rican exhibit some of the finest sisal hemp that he said he had ever seen. The display of hats will interest any visitor. These are of various kinds and include some fine Panamas. Among the exhibits is one showing how Panamas are woven; the completed fabric is as thin as paper and as elastic as can be desired.

Here at this exhibit the Porto Rican commission has its office. The Porto Rican Legislature made an appropriation of money for exhibiting the industries of the island at the Pan-American Exposition, and the commission gathered the articles here displayed. The commission consists of Senor Don Jose T. Silva,

Senor Dr. Don Jose Gomez Brioso and Maj. George W. Fishback.

What makes the Porto Rican exhibit specially interesting is that it shows such a variety of articles of high commercial value. Before 1898 the capabilities of Porto Rico were of importance chiefly to Spain, and they were hampered by excessive taxes and a general lack of encouragement. Now a new future is open to Porto Rico. The island is in the path of development, and its possibilities mean much to the United States. This Porto Rican exhibit shows what the potentialities of the island are, as a producer of many articles of great commercial value.

The women of Porto Rico make their exhibit in the Manufactures building and the Manufactures annex. Through peace and war, through storm and calm, the Porto Rican women are busy with their needles, and their exhibits show how expert they are in embroidery, weaving and kindred arts. Their principal exhibit is in the department of applied arts, near the center of the Manufactures building. Here are several cases filled with embroideries, laces and other articles. The finest of the exhibits probably is a set of bedspread, valance and pillow shams, of embroidered blue silk, bordered with lace. The value of this is put at \$550. Also to be specially noted in this section is a portrait of Columbus, embroidered by Senorita Obdulia Cottes upon white silk in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of Porto Rico by Columbus on his second voyage, on November 16, 1493. The portrait reproduces an old engraving; it is embroidered with the finest of black silk, and the effect is that of an etching.

The exhibits sent by Porto Rican women were too many for the space assigned in the Manufactures building, so some of them are to be found in a booth in the Manufactures annex, beyond the canal to the east. Here are more embroideries and similar manufactures; and curious hats woven of white and colored straw, with the loose ends of the straws projecting from the fabric at the edge of the brim like an aureole, and with a picturesque tuft of fiber at the top of the crown. Here, too, is a specimen of the curious fish-scale decorative work manufactured by Porto Rican women; this particular example is a lyre composed largely of colored scales. Another interesting exhibit is a piece of embroidery having as the chief feature of its design a well-executed map of Porto Rico. The island bears the United States flag, but, probably through lack of familiarity, the fair maker placed the flag on the staff with its union down, thus converting it, unintentionally, into a signal of distress.

The articles of women's workmanship come from San Juan, Ponce and Guayama and for the most part bear tickets showing that they were sent by societies of women. The visitor studying these Porto Rican manufactures can always have the courteous help of Porto Rican women, since several have come to the Pan-American with the exhibits from the island. Senora Dona Teresa Antonsanti is a woman manager for Porto Rico and is

an honorary member of the board of women managers. She started the first school of the American type in Porto Rico and is active in philanthropic work. She is assisted here in the care of the exhibits by Senorita Cottes and Senorita Lopez, who also came from Porto Rico.

Buffalo Express  
July 28, 1901