

Something Concerning the Isle of Porto Rico.

Its Chief Characteristics Are Climate, Which Is Very Hot; Sugar, Which Is Very Sweet; Tobacco, Which Is Very Fine, and Rats, Which Are Very Big.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The general gossip concerning Spain and her provinces has scarcely touched the island of Porto Rico, which, now that Cuba has almost passed from under the control of the mother country, is the last remaining possession on the Western continent of the empires that once claimed about 15,000,000 square miles of territory in the New World.

That Porto Rico will probably be the next to go is considered certain, and in view of the fact that more than one revolution has taken place on the island, and the spirit of freedom is strong among the people, it seems probable that the loss of Porto Rico to Spain is not far distant.

Porto Rico is the fourth in size of the Greater Antilles. Cuba, the islands of Hayti and Jamaica, each being larger. So far as its mileage is concerned, the last Spanish island is by no means imposing in size, containing in round numbers 2,500 square miles, being somewhat less in size than the state of Connecticut and a little larger than the combined states of Delaware and Rhode Island.

There are uplands and lowlands, pasture lands, sandy bottom and loamy bottom. There are districts that grow tobacco as fine as that of the Vuelta Abajo Valley of Cuba, while the yield of sugar from cane is greater per acre in Porto Rico than in any other sugar-producing country in the world.

The climate of Porto Rico is probably more severe on people from a temperate zone than that of any other of the Antilles. Someone has described the climate of Madrid as three months of winter and nine months of snow, and leaving out the winter, the description fits Porto Rico with utmost exactness.

Winter, however, is not so much as it merely a comparative term, the difference being about this, that in Porto Rico during the winter time the stranger from the temperate zone only gains with the heat while in summer he drops to lower ground.

The mean winter temperature in Porto Rico is eighty degrees; the mean summer temperature of St. Louis in July is 79, so that the winter in Porto Rico is a close approximation to the month of July in St. Louis. To natch a winter of this description a summer temperature that would melt lead might be anticipated, but there is not that difference that might be expected for the reason that the thermometer in Porto Rico seldom rises above 100, and the heat of the day is tempered by the sea breezes which blow freely over every part of the island.

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Sunday School Lesson for April 24.

A Lesson on Forgiveness.

Matt. XVIII, 21-35.

BY J. E. GILBERT, D. D., LL. D., Secretary of American Society of Religious Education.

INTRODUCTION.—After the transfiguration Jesus descended from Mount Hermon, and in the valley below healed a lame boy which then the disciples had failed to do. His absence, as he journeyed, he referred again to His death. Crossing the sea He entered Capernaum and repaired to the synagogue. There He was approached by the tax collectors who inquired on the subject of tribute.

QUESTIONS.—These last verses awakened reflections in the mind of Peter, who was called upon to answer questions. He desired to know how many times a brother ought to be forgiven, whether the limit should be fixed at seven transgressions. One of the prophets (Amos, 1, 2) had declared the great of every household, the name of every planet, or while they will devour indiscriminately anything edible they have a penchant for sugar and sugar cane and many an unfortunate planter has come out in his field, and his entire crop has been ruined by a swarm of rats.

ANSWER GIVEN.—It is safe to assume that all the nations are under the decision of this question. Shall it be three, or four, or seven? The opinion of Jesus is to be compared with that of Jewish doctors. "Not until seven times, but until seventy times seven," that is, without limit. Peter was asked to move all bounds to the exercise of forgiveness. The Master had exhibited His true quality and prepared His disciples for the judgment seat of Christ.

LIKE A BOGUS TRILBY.—Could Fiddle Under Spurious Hypnotism Walk as When Not Under It. From the Morning Oregonian. A short time since there arrived in Portland, a young gentleman who is a very skillful and artistic performer on the violin. On account of this and other good qualities, he found a warm welcome in musical circles, and frequent engagements at the most fashionable hotels were held for his entertainment.

THE EARLIEST HISTORY OF PORTO RICO was that of all the Spanish islands, discovery, the extermination of the natives in war or in slavery, the abandonment of the island by the military adventurers who first occupied it, its subsequent occupation by agriculturists and the importation of negro slaves to take the place of the natives.

Politically the island is under the same rule, or rather misrule, as other Spanish provinces, being governed by Spaniards who come out from the mother country with the sole idea of making all they can as speedily as possible and returning to Spain. The leading planters are Spaniards who reside only a small portion of the year on the island, the rest being spent in Spain, but allow their plantations to be managed in wasteful fashion by overseers and agents.

SALE ORDERED.—Jesus did not pause with a mere abstract statement of the broad Christian rule. Had He done so the disciples might have thought that the teaching was unimportant and impracticable. He therefore gave an illustration intending still further to unfold the meaning of the commandment. The illustration may be treated under four heads. The first part (verses 21-25) presents the stern creditor dealing without mercy with an unrepentant debtor. The second part (verses 26-35) shows the debtor's efforts to pay the debt, and the creditor's refusal to accept anything less than the full amount.

DEBT FORGIVEN.—There is only one way of escape from slavery and all its consequences, and the servant listens to that method—he appeals to the goodhearted master for forgiveness. He had attempted an excuse, or invoked the law, or thought of flight or resistance, but he would have done worse. He would have sold himself, or perhaps he would have sold his wife and children, and all that he had. This illustration was common throughout the entire oriental world, and was practiced in Europe within a comparatively recent date. This illustration is of the highest importance, for it shows the power of the law, and the power of the creditor's mercy.

THE CONCLUSION.—The influence of Christ's teaching in this case may be seen in the writings of the apostles. This same Peter, who raised the question, wrote thirty years after, "See that ye love one another with pure hearts fervently" (1 Peter, 1:22). John doubtless had this illustration in mind when he wrote that "the love of God is that we should love one another." Paul not only condemned litigation by church members (1 Cor., 6:1-8), but set forth in the clearest terms, the very principle of Christ (Eph., 4:32), "forgiving one another as the Lord has forgiven you."

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in the relation of the parties and the amount of the debt.

SERVANT FINISHED.—The next scene of the parable depicts the judgment that fell upon this heartless servant. There are at least four items: 1. The conduct of his fellows, who were sorry who condemned and reported (verse 31). This is the first form of retribution that overtakes the wrong-doer—the loss of good opinion of associates. 2. The arraignment. The Master calls the culprit into His presence and says, "O, thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all that debt because thou wast a merciful man. Shouldst thou have pity on thy fellow?" (verse 32). The act which should have softened the heart of the debtor appears to have been hardened by the Master's forgiveness. 3. The chastisement (verse 33). The master was angry—he who had been compassionate and benevolent. He delivered the offender over to the officers to be confined in prison, and there punished, thus suffering the same as an infidel suffers upon his unbelief. The law, the pardon was reversed. The penalty of the law was enforced.

PRINCIPLE STATED.—The parable being complete Jesus applies it to the subject in hand (verse 35). He is plainly personal speaking of those who were about Him. He would have the apostles know, and of course all others also, that God's mercy toward men is conditioned upon their attitude toward their fellow men. "My heavenly Father," he says, "for the moment humbling himself shall he exalt you" (Lk., 14:11). "If ye forgive not," and to make the more forcible the forgiveness must be from the heart. This same teaching had been given in the sermon on the mount (Mt., 6:14-15). The wisdom of the requirement must appear to all. One law must precede in your relation the same governing the relation between man and man as between God and man. Otherwise there would be favoritism and confusion. Besides, the formation of character, the development of the nobler spiritual qualities, is possible only as a man rises into that higher realm and becomes Godlike in that he is merciful. A feeling of relentless animosity toward any person, whatever the offense, is prejudicial to every virtue.

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