An American Bride In Porto Rico

An Avenue of Young Cocoanut Palms

An American Bride In Porto Rico

By
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To
my mother-in-law, who has learned to love me, this little volume is affectionately dedicated :: ::

ILLUSTRATIONS

"I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

"I would be friend of all—the foe—the friendless;
I would be giving, and forget the gift;
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up—and laugh—and love—and lift."

An American Bride in Porto Rico

Overland Limited, June 10, 1905.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

I know we have not been out of your mind for a moment since we left and that you are now wondering when you will enjoy the first letter from us. We think of you very often as the distance between us lengthens and we want to tell you so, for, after all, that is the "chief end" of letters. Harry still makes unfavorable and embarrassing comments on my appetite but I cannot help it, and, besides, when one is patronizing a dining car, the only way to get even is to eat, eat. We are now in the observation car and our boy is reading while I write. He has been such a dear that I feel I must thank you all over again. You brought him up in the way he should go, though I know you did not reckon on the way of matrimony.

I know perfectly well that you are not quite willing I should have him but we are both so convinced that this is exactly the way he should

go, that I've determined to make you willing. I am not the girl to pass by such a treasure as Harry. Poor dear mother! I can see you yet, as you watched us from the front door when we left the house, and when we turned the corner I'm certain you went around to the kitchen door so you could see us a little while longer, and then I know what you did. But wipe your eyes and don't cry any more, and don't hate me too hard, for I am not taking him away—only going along with him to mend his socks and shoo the mosquitoes away. There is room in his big dear heart for us both. Your place will never be usurped, but kept as sacred and as green as ever. Just let me help you love him.

Chicago, June 13, 1905.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

We arrived in this wind-swept, dust-covered city to-day and plan to leave at midnight—just one hour from now, via Niagara. The few precious hours we have had here have been spent in dragging our weary feet through dirt and soot and I have been cleaning the streets with my new travelling suit that I bought to look pretty in. I feel like investing in a box of sapolio and letting the whole of

Niagara run over me. They tell us that Porto Rico is hot and dirty. I wonder if it is worse than Chicago in June.

New York, June 19, 1905.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

After four days in this high-roofed airy city we sail to-day. We haven't even tried to feel missionary yet, for we are still so much bride and groom that we have had hardly a thought of our waiting congregation.

San Juan, Porto Rico, June 29, 1905.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

We have had such a splendid, awful, happy, sad trip. Splendid, because we are alone in the big world together. Awful, because I have had my first startling revelation of my husband's unangelic qualities. I thought he was the kind that does not tease, but I now see my mistake. In Chicago, he put my shoes on, laced them up and remarked, after walking about some little time, that, except for the fact that they were loose, they felt fine. In New York, he locked me in a dark clothes-press and left me there for half an hour because I would not say "please"; and on shipboard, he leaned up against the door of our stateroom and

laughed until he had to hold his sides because I was seasick. And I a bride of but three weeks! The kind wife of the clergyman who met us said: "Poor little thing! Going way up there in the mountains to that forsaken village. How can her husband have the heart to take her there?" So much for my red cheeks and Harry's bald head. She thinks that I am eighteen and he is thirty.

We have been here a week trying to see San Juan and we now feel that we are quite a part of what is about us. As the first view of the stolid old city met our expectant gaze from the deck of the steamer as it entered the harbor, we were impressed with a feeling of awe and veneration that one always feels for things old and strange, but this has now given way to a complication of feelings, emotions and sentiments that belongs only to Spanish surroundings and the tropics.

San Juan is a great big pile of formidable looking stone battlements with heaps of foaming waves breaking and breaking against them; within its walls are old prisons and forts and guard-houses and moats, latticed balconies and vari-colored tile-roofed dwellings, attempts at shops and cobblestone streets, cathedral spires and black-gowned priests, and market-places

enough to keep a sightseer going for a month, and there is a pretty good trolley line to go on. There are peddlers of all classes, kinds, sizes and sexes; black people and white people and tawny people, big people and middle-sized people and little wee people; soldiers and sailors, guns and old gaping places where guns used to be, and a whole harbor full of ships that carry Spanish flags and French flags, English flags, German flags and American flags. There are, also, pretty gardens and palm-bordered avenues, palaces and shacks, automobiles and ox-carts, lavish wealth and dire poverty, fierce scorching sun rays and dazzling, daring moonbeams, and this isn't half. I've been whisked about at such a pace and enthused at so many things that, in my efforts to assimilate a little of the great moving picture, my brain is whirling like a "merry-go-round."

As we walked with our guide through Morro Castle, we could not but feel a new and almost reverent respect for its crumbling, hoary walls that told of traditions not our own. We forgot to-day and moved for a time in other lands and other forgotten times. We were actually inside an old medieval fort with towers rising above us and dungeons lying beneath us. We looked up at the high-perched sentry boxes and down

through dark, musty, underground passages. We walked through them, too, and I fancied I could hear the clanking of chains and the groans of prisoners within and could see the stony-faced guards as they paced to and fro on their monotonous beat, black-whiskered and pompous, I was sure, as in the days of old Spain.

I was completely lost to the present when our guide led us out to the open air again, where we had another view of the ocean's greatness, and thought of you and of the miles and miles that lay between us. Porto Rico seemed but a tiny speck that could be washed off the map by any one of the long breakers which were rolling in, if only the breaker should rise a little higher. Our guide showed us where, but a few years since, Admiral Sampson's ships had anchored and then, with a Spaniard's native desire to please, he led us to one of the upper battlements and exhibited a great rent—the rent made when Sampson's lead struck San Juan, shattering Spanish power in the little island just as completely as it had shattered Spanish stone and mortar in this thick wall.

The sight of this brought us back immediately to the present and we remembered that we were, even amid all these strange scenes and strange

faces and strange tongues, really upon American soil, and the stars and stripes floating above the fort reaffirmed us. Then we visited Casa Blanca, the old castle of Ponce de Leon, the settler and first governor of the island. It is the largest old building in the city and was, I can easily believe, in days long past and gone, the scene of many a wild tragedy and bloody encounter. We are told that the favorite pastime of its daring master was to hunt his escaped prisoners and runaway slaves with bloodhounds and to have the heads of the natives cracked open with one blow of the sword. But that was a long time ago and to-day Casa Blanca, though it covers the mortal remains of that fierce old mariner, is as peaceful and tranquil as the waves that break against its walls on a summer day.

How narrow and queer the streets of San Juan appear and what toy life throngs their two-foot walks and fills the market-places! We have seen more to-day than our eyes could possibly take in, but I haven't time to tell you about it all.

Callers came in this evening to meet the "new missionaries" and it is now eleven o'clock. Our suit cases are yet to be packed; Harry is pacing the floor and we must leave on

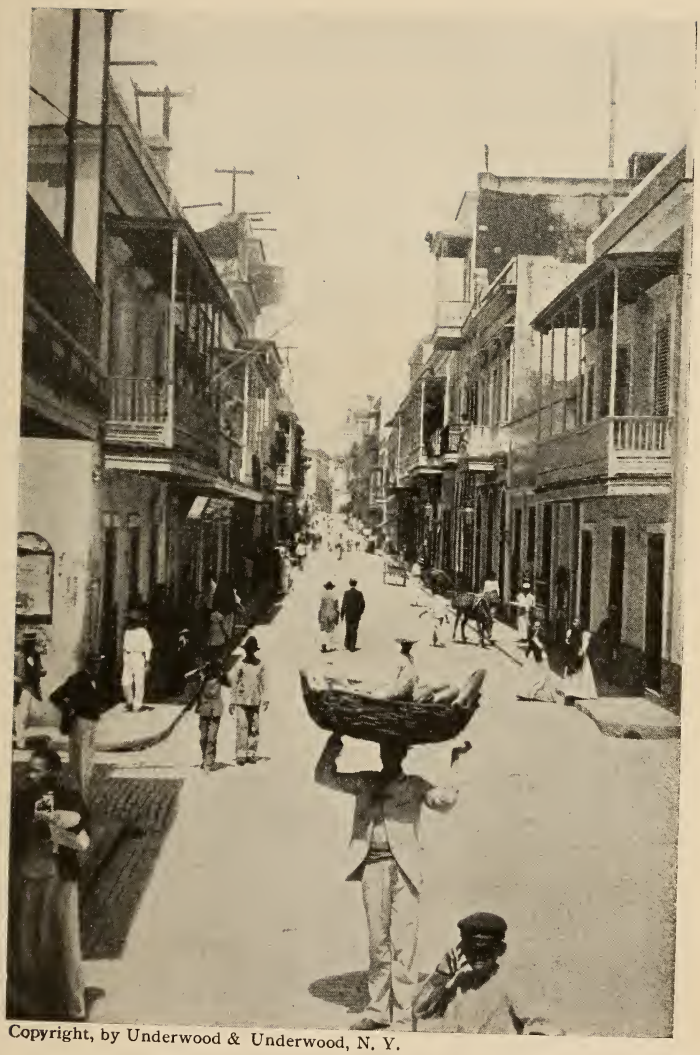
the six o'clock train in the morning. We are tired and anxious to get into our own little corner. We could both be homesick to-night if we half tried. We have had our trip, "taken in" San Juan, and the romance of being missionaries is fast giving way to stern realities. Our journey, I said, has been sad and happy. Sad because we are leaving our dear ones so far behind, happy that we exist and have each other to love. They tell us that we will get a good many hard knocks down here, but so long as the enemy does not batter down the outer walls and besiege our own little castle inside, we mean to stand our ground.

Doquiere, July 15, 1905.

Dearest Mother Gertrude:

Your long letter this week was the first we had had for a month and we fairly devoured every word of it.

Before leaving New York, we had been instructed to "see the work" as we went along, so we stopped here for a few days and we've been "seeing." The central church here in the city is a stone edifice of modern design, quite like the churches at home. The services, too, and other departments of church activity are the same, except that we hear no English



Vending the "Staff of Life" in San Francisco St., San Juan, Porto Rico

spoken. I am already convinced that Spaniards and Chinamen are first cousins (at least, if language is any criterion), for, so far, I have been unable to detect the slightest difference in the effect produced by the two tongues upon my tympanum. There is, however, a difference in the way they talk. The Chinese are always so serene and self-possessed. They can walk along—a whole string of them—in single file, the leader chattering with the tail-piece in a most subdued monotone, and I never yet saw one of them put his water jar down to make a single gesture. But a Porto Rican never could express himself with his linguistic appendage alone. He requires arms and legs to help him out, and to see him in dead earnest is to behold St. Vitus resuscitated. His gesticulations are truly alarming. His framework suddenly becomes disjointed, his body is a-quiver, and not a nerve or muscle of his entire body is still.

Last night we went to a country meeting station, about six miles from town, the occasion being our first horseback ride. Such pacers and such moonlight! For the moment I wished the whole world were made up of saddle-horses and moonlight and Harry to ride beside me. But the meeting! It brought the tears in spite of myself. I forgot all about every good time

I ever had in my life, forgot the fairy dreams of the tropical home I had planned, forgot Harry and all, and I just wanted to buy every old woman there a new dress, send all those hungry looking young men off to college, and gather all those sweet little brown-eyed children, yes, and the black kinky ones, too, into my arms and take care of them the rest of my life. It was the first time in my life that missions and missionaries ever seemed so real and tangible to me, and I began to realize that to be "called to the field" means something very great. I know, mother, that you and father feel it more, too, now that your only boy has been given to the cause.

I know you have always been "interested in missions," I mean just like all church people at home are. You have belonged to the Missionary Society, paid your dues, read your *Home Mission Monthly*, and when you have been asked to "lead in prayer" you've stood up with your knees knocking together and in a quavering, trembling, faltering voice, you've thanked the Lord that you and your friends have been brought up in a Christian land, and ended your prayer by asking Him to "bless the heathen" without much of an idea of who the "heathen" are or what is meant by blessing them.

More than this, you have dropped money into the plate once a year on the Sunday morning when the pastor presented the "cause of missions"; but, in your heart of hearts, hasn't a missionary always been somebody's else son—just one of a lot of queer people who make up a kind of a long-nosed cult and go to foreign lands to preach and give tracts to the heathen, and, like Hamlet's ghost, appear every now and then and sometimes oftener to trouble Christian people's consciences and who won't let them rest well at night until they have pledged as much as twenty-five cents a year to missions? And hasn't he always had a gray beard and a *shiny*, threadbare black coat and a wife with a pious face who always combed her hair straight back and dressed her babies from the contents of a barrel? I was completely dumbfounded when I first landed here and saw that missionaries are just like other people—only some of them seemed to me to be a great deal better than most people. I was amazed, too, to find that the majority of them (down here at least) are young and good looking and most of the men wear linen collars and shave every morning. The women, too—"tell it not in Gath"—have pretty clothes and pompadour their hair and live quite as other folks do.

The *heathen*, also, seem to be perfectly normal human beings, not unlike those of us who have come here to teach them, and, so far as I can see, none of them have horns. When I bade farewell to my native Golden West and set my face towards this little island, I was fully prepared to live in a shack and sing hymns from morning till night, and, to be honest, I hardly had the courage or the grace to brave up to it; but two hearts are stronger than one and Harry's heart and courage helped mine. However, I'm glad I haven't a long nose (since we've been married, Harry has frankly told me that he always had regarded it as "smudgy") and that I don't have to live in a shack and that we won't have to sneak off where we are not known, every time we feel like dressing up for tea. I can begin now, and feel as brave as the children of Israel when they tackled the walls of Jericho.

But, "to resume"; the sense of the intense reality of being a missionary came over me and almost overwhelmed me at the first meeting I attended, and I wish I could speak with the tongues of men and angels, so that I could tell you what I saw and felt on that evening, meeting with those we have come here to help. I wish, too, that you could pass it on and tell all the

church-members at home that paying their dues and reading missionary reports is not their whole duty to the cause. Try to fancy, if you can, a crowd of country people, many of them, both old and young, barefooted, old women with the remains of once respectable bandanas or turkish towels or any old thing over their heads, shy-looking *señoritas* and bashful youths, some white, some black, seated on the crudest kind of benches in a dingy, smoky, greasy room in the home of a kind-hearted, hospitable country squire, with their half mute faces taking in your every look, word and gesture, telling you all too plainly that they looked to you to be their models,—and then you can, perhaps, get some idea of what I mean. Try, also, to picture yourself and daddy young again and fond of life and things at home, down here, face to face with the fact that you are missionaries, with so much that you have left behind and the bridges all burned, too, with a mission board back of you who sent you here not to fail, but to succeed, and you may feel a little of what we feel to-night.

The towns we have passed through on our inland trip so far are old and primitive looking; the streets are rough and narrow and you bump over the identical stones that Columbus

found when he landed here four hundred years ago. The Porto Rican seems to think, "'Twas good enough for father and it's good enough for me." The houses, many of them having tile or brick roofs, are gaudily painted in from two to ten colors. I speak, of course, of the houses of the more comfortable and better class, but these are not all. There is here a great background of little huts or shacks, the architectural plan of these buildings being strictly "mission," and the building materials employed consisting of four straws stuck into the ground with a leaf spread over the top. It is in these that the great mass of the Porto Ricans live. Many of the people seen in the streets in the daytime are barefooted, and some are but scantily dressed. In by-streets and open houses it is common to see children, ranging in age from mere infants to five and six years, wearing nothing but a birthday dress. As a whole the common people look neglected and crushed.

On the other hand there is a bright side to life here. The people seem to be contented and happy and I can easily believe there might be quite as much poverty and suffering in some of our own home cities as there is in Porto Rico, only, perhaps, it is not so much in

evidence. We see here plenty of comfortable, refined, and even rich and costly homes, though I am not in the least prepared to write of them. The houses are substantial, large and airy. The doors and the windows are wide and high but contain no glass. They are open most of the time during the day and the people can practically live out-of-doors. The Porto Ricans, however, shut everything up as tight as a drum at night and are really concerned about the Americans who leave their windows open and persist in breathing fresh air.

I must tell you of our trip from San Juan and then close. We came in a most antiquated little train that looked like the pictures of the first train in the old "United States History." When we got ready to start, the conductor rang a dinner-bell and the engineer blew a police whistle. We rode in the first-class car which reminded us of those old horse cars that still haunt San Francisco. Their speed, too, was about the same. Once a cow got on the track in front of the engine, which whistled and shrieked, and all the people leaned out of the car windows to see what dire calamity had occurred, but the cow continued her head-on course down the track. At last she got off, because, I suppose, she was tired of playing,

and all the heads came in and all the passengers settled themselves again and the train quickened speed, as did also the cow, and she proved to be the better sprinter of the two and got back again on the track. However, after another series of shrieks from the engine, and another general craning of necks from the car windows and another hundred yard dash, she decided to let us go on in peace.

Nothing else of a particularly exciting nature took place after that, until we found ourselves being unloaded at Camoui, a town about half way between here and San Juan. Here we took,—now what do you suppose? An automobile—a real "Puffing Billy."

From this time we had the right of way and the only time we were interrupted in our mad career was when we met a double ox-team. The leaders did a quick-step, right-about-face and stretched themselves lengthwise across the road. But they, too, after looking us over like a crowd of custom inspectors, allowed us to pass on our way. The most astonishing number of people and the most impossible lot of baggage was piled in and tied on to that machine; but we had a good ride, even if we were bounced up and down a good deal and blown about by every wind. The road lay

through most picturesque country, made up of mountains and little valleys with fields of tall sugar-cane and groves of palms lying in between them, and it wound in and out and around, every now and then giving us an unexpected glimpse of the ocean that stretched out far beyond our vision in great purplish blue sheets.

It is now late and I am tired, but before retiring, will you please pass around some of those sandwiches with butter in them that I know you have made this evening ?

Masalla, Porto Rico, Aug. 1, 1905.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

We are in Masalla at last and the evening and the morning are the fifth day. We came up from Doquiere in a coach that would require abler pens than mine to describe. We left Doquiere at one o'clock, P. M. It was almost as hot as Chicago. The coach, so slightingly alluded to above, certainly was the most disjointed, rattling mass of rusty bolts, sunburnt leather and wobbly wheels it has ever been my privilege to behold. Hitched midway between the end of a natural sized pole and the dashboard were two of the rattiest, most disconsolate looking little animals ever dignified

by the name horse, and they were draped in the most abbreviated concoction of a harness that ever served the purpose, I feel sure. The whip, some feet longer than any I had seen before, was evidently intended to span the gap between the back part of the horses and the coach proper, and it certainly accomplished its purpose, for it took but a few cuts from the *cochero* to convince the most skeptical that those "rats" could run, for run they surely did. True, they fagged several times and balked on a steep river bank, but a few more lashes from the long whip served to renew their interest in what they were doing; so, in due time, much to the relief of the beasts, we arrived in Mediavia, sixteen miles up in the mountains.

The only really narrow escape we had was when the driver fell asleep, let the reins drag on the ground, and we all but locked wheels with an ox-cart. At Mediavia, we were entertained by a missionary and his family, consisting of a sweet little wife and two babies. After this, we came by means of another carriage and some strings, up, up, eight miles further into the mountains, where we dropped anchor. Everything here is delightfully interesting and the scenery is almost as good as your own "beautiful Berkeley." We can see a

little Mt. Tamalpias from our window in the mission teachers' home, where we are camping for the present, while all of the worldly goods with which Harry endowed me are floating around somewhere between here and San Juan. The Bible woman is here too, and as soon as we arrived they dropped everything and left me mistress of the house. I suppose this was because I am married, but I don't appreciate the distinction a little bit. With my limited resources, limited knowledge of the subject in hand, a cook who cannot speak a word of English (or cook either) and I absolutely tongue-tied so far as Spanish goes, you can imagine how I keep house. I had what I supposed was stewed chicken and gravy to-day and Harry asked us all if we would have more soup.

Our house is just across the street from the old crumbling Catholic church, where a much mutilated pavement and a pile of stones in the corner of the enclosure tell of the time when, during the American siege of Porto Rico, the Spanish troops took possession of the premises, converted the front part of the church into a barracks, the back part into a stable, and the towers into a prison, while of all available brick and stone they constructed a toy fort. I guess they had "mess" in the place of "mass"

there for a while. However that may be, this story was told us by a very anti-Spanish Porto Rican gentleman who speaks good English, and the gist of it is that, when the Spanish soldiers learned that the American troops were actually on their way to Masalla, they dropped their guns, and with the entire population of the town following in their wake, they fled to the surrounding hills and mountains. But they might have spared themselves all this trouble and exposure, for it was during this very march that peace was declared between Spain and the United States.

They tell us that no one can excel a Porto Rican in his desire to please. Add to this fact our friend's genuine admiration for Americans and American government, and you might explain away half of the story. I give it only as he told it, but to appreciate it, one must *see* him tell it. But what a "snap" our soldiers would have had at Masalla had they but been allowed to complete their conquest. They could have sauntered into town, found the "missus" out, hitched their horses and cooked their supper beneath the star-spangled banner, and their praises would have been sung far and wide.

We live up-stairs, and the ground floor of the

house is a store, which arrangement is so common here. Extending across the entire front of the house is a three-foot balcony, without which, according to the Porto Ricans, life would not be worth living; for, above all, they do love to see what is going on. From this balcony, we look out into the central square or plaza, found in all Spanish towns. Here it serves also as a market-place and Sunday morning is the big market time of the week. The humbler country people come in with their packs on their heads, while the more prosperous ones use packhorses and saddle-bags. They come early in the morning and select their place of business on the "first come, first served" plan, and hold it on the principle of the survival of the fittest. They improvise a make-believe counter, hoist an apology of an awning over it and spread out their wares for sale. Every possible bit of space on the plaza seems to be occupied by some vender surrounded by his patrons who swarm about him; the buying and selling and bartering and clamoring, united with the roar of voices that rises out of the scrabble, all but rivals a New York Stock Exchange—only, in this case, it is possible for a reasonably intelligent person to get some idea of what is being done.

Our reception to Masalla was pathetic, but as hearty as the struggling little band of Protestant Christians here could make it. They met us about a mile out and escorted us into town. Of course we could not talk to them, but they just beamed at us and looked us over from head to foot, and I am sure that had they been able to speak in a known tongue, they would have said the polite and proper thing. Needless to say that we were "the observed of all observers" as we came into town.

We are quite in love with the sweet-faced Bible woman here and she is a great help to us. Our Spanish teacher came to see us yesterday and we arranged to begin lessons at once. It is embarrassing, to put it mildly, to be obliged to stare blankly at people and be unable to speak. It does, however, develop facial expression. My maid, Carmela, lets out a perfect volley of Spanish at me every little while and I just stand stupidly in the middle of the floor and smile a sickly smile. But when, on rare occasions, I succeed in saying a word that she can understand, she beams at me with such pride that I am encouraged to try again.

It seems so good to get your never-failing weekly letter. Don't forget that we are always

interested in even the slightest detail of what takes place at home.

Masalla, Aug. 15, 1905.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

Every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth seems to be running at large here. To begin with, when we arrived from Mediavia, Harry found a snake in his suit case, which article I must have put in as I prepared the luggage for our departure. I did not, however, take the trouble to wrap it in tissue-paper. And the roaches! I have never before believed that they could develop to such mammoth proportions nor that they could marshal such hosts in one night. The kitchen looks innocent enough by daylight, but if I suddenly appear with a lamp at night I am greeted by a vision of these creatures in regiments and battalions, lined up on the stove, the table and the shelves, as numerous as Gideon's original army. I get, however, but a momentary glance at them, for at sight of a light they break ranks and flee to the most remote and unheard-of cracks and crevices—loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

There is another class of insects, too, quite as numerous, and even more troublesome than the

above mentioned. A Californian already knows him well, but an Easterner blushes to mention his name. Though they never really cease their vigilance by day or by night, they seem to favor roaming at large by night—particularly in beds while the inmates are trying to sleep. Another thorn in the flesh is an insect known the world over. He crawls through the screen doors, in your meat-safe, and trails with all his followers in great caravans about the house; they swim in the tins of water set to catch them and get into our beds and our sugar bowls, and some people say that when one goes out to dine with a Porto Rican friend, they are *apt* to be in the soup.

The mosquitoes are simply too numerous to mention and I falter at the mere idea of giving you any adequate conception of their subtle treachery. They will duck their heads and crawl through the most formidable kind of a net, and it is utterly useless to attempt to persuade them that they haven't as good a right on the premises as you have. There are here large insects, also, that are called "horses." We were thinking of buying one and the owner sent word that he charged forty dollars, but his last price was thirty.

Life grows more interesting every day. I

can actually understand, at times, what that mysterious woman in the kitchen says. The other day she spread out a miscellaneous collection of things on the shelf and began selling them to me by way of a lesson in Spanish. I argued about the price and bought them all, first individually, and then collectively. I am developing a new cranial bump.

The teachers who occupy this house are now away on their vacations and the house is undergoing repairs during their absence. There is a perfect mountain of desks and other school furnishings and household goods and what not all piled up together, which the painters, as they work, move about from room to room; so our surroundings are not exactly what you would term tidy. Our trunks arrived this week and now we dare not unpack them, for "the powers that be" are beginning to talk about moving us away from here. Isn't this exciting, moving already! I thought that if I married a Presbyterian minister I could stay at least a few months in a place. Harry was called to Doquiere, so, on Friday morning, we mounted two fiery steeds and started, but by the time we arrived at Mediavia, I had bumped so many black-and-blue spots on the saddle that I decided to remain over night and visit the

brethren there. Harry returned the next afternoon and I again joined him, reaching Masalla at six o'clock in the evening. The first thing we did was to make a grand rush for the States mail that was waiting for us, and then I managed to get some dinner on to a small table which we dug out of the general heap, the dining-room having been on the painter's programme that day. After this we pulled out a bed and went to sleep.

I take all this as philosophically as an owl, as I suppose it is only a part of the proscribed martyrdom of a missionary; only it is beyond my mental capacity to understand exactly why we should be passed around from pillar to post, with no settled place of abode. Still, I try to play the part of the optimist who sees the doughnut rather than that of the pessimist who sees nothing but the hole, and there is really a great deal here to make it all interesting. There is plenty of furniture here, surely, plenty of painters, plenty of time to paint, plenty of horses to ride, plenty of places to ride them, plenty of rice and beans and no time to get homesick. That night, however, we did unpack the trunk we had used in San Juan. My pink organdy was a crush of something that I did not care to look at, at the time. Harry's dress-

suit took the prize. He put on the coat with his gray homespun trousers, which were generously bespattered from his recent trip in the mud, and paraded about the room. As tired as we were, we laughed. As we piled things out, we wondered if any amount of pressing could ever bring them back to life. Here I must, as Samanthy says, "resume backwards."

While we were blissfully spinning along on our trip from San Juan to Doquiere in that "lightning express" which I wrote you about some weeks ago, I was suddenly seized with a startling recollection: "Harry," I said, "where did you put that wet bath towel that I used to wipe up the rain-water off the floor last night?" "I put it in the steamer trunk"—he told me with such evident satisfaction with himself for not having forgotten it.

Behold now, six weeks later, the unhappy result. Mother, dear mother! Why did you not teach your son that wet bath towels get mouldy? With great misgiving, I proceeded with the trunk. I sniffed, wept a little (we haven't been married long enough to begin scolding yet), counted ten, and then told Harry he might give my black grenadine dress to the cook. Perhaps it is a sin for missionaries to

wear black grenadine, but why, then, wasn't Harry's dress-suit mouldy, too?

On Sunday we opened our box of groceries which had also just arrived from San Juan, and we had some tea which we cannot get here, as coffee serves for all occasions, times and places. They burn it black, grind it to a powder and serve it with hot milk. You will never know what good coffee is until you come to Porto Rico. We had quite an American dinner that day, despite the confusion of the house, but Harry broke the top off of a jar of pickles, spilling the vinegar all over the table, and then he dropped a pineapple cheese into my teacup. I wondered at him, for he is such a self-possessed person. It surely is rare fun to keep house in Masalla; that is, if one is gifted with the happy faculty of sifting the nugget of fun out of the heap of tragedy that comes with it.

I ate an orange to-day that measured twelve inches in circumference and we paid five cents a dozen for them. Smaller ones are three cents.

The Bible woman here tells of a time some months since when she was playing the organ for Sunday morning service in the little chapel we are now using. This is simply a room opening directly off the pavement of the main

street and the doors and the windows have to be left open for ventilation. They were in the midst of the service when a man stopped in the door and tried to sell her a small squealing pig which he carried in his arms. She shook her head at him and then he began to barter and come down on the price. The people laughed but she remained unmoved, and, after unsuccessfully refusing several times, she shook her finger at him, which is the Spaniard's ultimatum, and he left. I am now organist and I do hope that no one will attempt to sell me a pig, for I shall buy it immediately to get rid of him, and with me sitting at the organ trying to soothe an infant pig, how do you suppose Harry will ever preach a sermon?

Harry is commonly known in the community as the "pastor." Yesterday he received the following letter, which serves to reply to your question as to whether English is spoken here. The envelope bore this simple address: "Paster city," and inside, it read, "Paster i herd that you wanted to by A horse i have a good one to sel you and if you want to see him i will bring him to the city for you to See it i guess you can understand me i will not fool you the horse has four years he has a very good color and large if you like to See him you can send

me ward by the same Boy yours truly ———. P. S. you look out for these Peapel in Porto Rico there will fool you in horses i will not fool you you can try him befour you by."

We expect to move to Doquiere in a few weeks. We are sorry, too, for we were beginning to love Masalla and we would like to work here.

Masalla, Porto Rico, Sept. 2, 1905.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

This week I simply cannot be cheerful. I'm down and out. My spirits are below freezing point, despite the hot weather, and when I look for the doughnut, all I can see is the hole. I am sick with a fever. (I wonder if it is the same kind that Peter's wife's mother had.) They tell me all newcomers get it, but I fail to see where that fact helps *me* any. Our Bible woman, sweet soul that she is, dislikes me, too, for something—I do not know what. She almost never comes near me, nor does she get me anything to eat. I'd as soon turn an elephant into the kitchen and expect a meal as to ask Harry to cook anything. Next time you train a son to get married and be a missionary, do teach him at least to boil an egg. But even if Harry could cook, we feel

that it would be an open insinuation against our friend to have him invade the kitchen in her very presence. I am wretched and Harry is embarrassed. I lie here and rack my brains to know where and when I have offended the dear Bible reader, but she placidly lets me alone. I'm starving by inches, for I just cannot eat Carmela's soup when I am perfectly certain that she cooked it in the dish-pan or something of equal rank and dignity, and that she didn't wash the meat, and that she has sampled it over and over to make sure that it is perfectly palatable. Poor faithful Carmela! She religiously serves me this stuff three times a day, which I do thrice refuse, and each time she returns looking just a little bit more injured.

I am certain that Harry wishes he had not married me and I wish I were home. The only doctor here does not know any English and the Bible woman is the only one here to interpret for us, so I am at her mercy and she apparently has no intention of helping me out.

I am tired now and cannot write more. I hope you won't hate me, too, for I love you because you gave me Harry, and I hope you will write to your son and tell him to take good care of me.

Masalla, Sept. 14, 1905.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

I am quite myself again this week. Harry says he is not sorry he married me and the Bible woman has made up. On Friday morning, she came to me and sat down beside my bed. It was "a beautiful day?" Of course it was, anybody could see that, so I agreed, only too willing to please her. And "how did I feel this morning?" "Fallen to a state of sin and misery, thank you" (I assured her). "And the Lord is very good and gracious to us, is He not, Sister Blythe?" I replied that He was, and then I asked her, point-blank, how long she expected me to lie there without a doctor. I then got the whole situation in a nutshell, for she said—"Can't you trust the Lord to heal you, Sister Blythe?" She smiled so sweetly and seemed so genuinely kind that I knew it was not I, but my doctrines that she did not approve. But since my faith was running low and I was getting peevish, she sent for the doctor. I have since learned that she has been ill for over a year, but the fact that she is leaving her work for this reason is, in her own mind, no reflection upon her views, but only on her faith, and she is bravely fighting it out.

Our boy Manuel was looking at Harry's graduation picture yesterday and he wanted to know if that was taken when the pastor was a gentleman.

It has suddenly begun to rain. I never saw it really and truly rain until we came here. It begins without the least warning and comes down in sheets. We are sometimes compelled to shut all the windows and doors and sit in utter darkness, for it seems to come from all directions at the same time. Then, the first thing we know, the sun bursts out, the water is all gone from the streets, the banana palms sparkle in the new light, and everything looks as though nature had just completed her weekly house cleaning.

Harry threatens to make me his private secretary, and I am afraid his letters will never be written unless I consent. He studies Spanish all the while, and every now and then he says, "Now, Mrs. Blythe, for your edification, I will recite to you the verb *estar*," and then, in spite of my protests, he begins and goes through every form and tense. At noon, I say, "Come, dear, lunch is ready," and he looks up with a vague far-off expression and says, "*fuí, fuiste, fué, fuimos, fuisteis, fueron.*" I shall be glad when the verbs are all learned.

The Señor Professor says that we Amerrrrrricans do not rrrroll ourrr rrrrrrrs enough. So he has decided to begin a course of treatment by which he hopes to limber up the unruly member of the particular American mentioned above. The operation began while the particular American's wife was out in the kitchen preparing dinner. "You must rrroll your rrrrrs," began the Señor Don Professor, and Harry, being in a perfectly plastic mood, got his very unplastic "dumb servant of the mind" into position ready to begin. "Now," continued his instructor, "I want you to repeat this after me, ten times" and then—poising the tip of his tongue like the toe of the winged Mercury—he began at the rate of a Rocky Mountain locomotive letting off steam, "rrrr con rrrr cigarrrros porrrrr el ferrrocarrrril rapidos corrrren los carrrrrros." His audacity seemed to overwhelm Harry at once, for he so far forgot himself as to actually attempt to say that awful sentence. Personally, I believe in recognizing my own limitations.

Doquiere, Porto Rico, Sept. 29, 1905.

Dearest Mother Gertrude:

Since writing my last letter, we have been to San Juan, the reverend heads have all

conferred, and we are now landed in Doquiere, the frying-pan of America. We miss the mountains of Masalla, though we are glad to be on the seacoast. What we dislike most, though, is this second "breaking in" process.

If you want to enthuse over Porto Rico, just leave Masalla, as we did, at four o'clock in the morning, and drive to Doquiere. You will then know that it is possible to shiver even in the tropics. The morning was fragrant and clear and the sky was just beginning to unfold itself into wonderful sheets of gold and emerald and amethyst. As we wound our way down the steep mountain grades, our eyes met at every turn some new and wonderful sight. Range upon range of jagged mountains stretched away before us, growing fainter and fainter as they reached on into the distance, changing from green to purple and blue and white; dainty little valleys lay between the mountains dotted all over with the huts of the mountain folk who spend their lives on the plantations, and big patches of spreading shade trees that form a lacy canopy above spread out around us, through which the sun filters down upon the rich coffee trees—the almost sainted trees of the island. The people, from the pompous *señor* of the plantation to the

humblest *peon* who gathers the ripe red berry, have a feeling of almost true adoration for the coffee tree.

As we began the three-mile descent into the town of Mediavia, we sat almost speechless before a broad sweeping stretch of low lying valley, bordered on all sides by high mountains and decked all about with wonderful royal palms that lift their heads in queenly dignity wherever the eye falls. Cocoanut palms, too, were scattered here and there, though it is on the coast that they grow in their wildest profusion. Here, too, we saw gigantic *ciebas* and *magas* and even the stumps of the now all but extinct mahogany trees, lonely reminders of lavish wasteful days when their stately trunks had been felled to serve as rafters and beams in country dwellings. In the distance, like a sleeping child only now awakened by its mother's call, lay the village of Mediavia, touched by the first rosy glow of day, for, as the sun arose above the filmy bank of mist hanging over the distant canyons, the whole landscape was lighted up like an enchanted garden, and we heard the bells from the old church towers ring out as they have rung for three centuries, summoning the faithful to their early morning devotions. It was all so new

and wholesome to us that for the time we forgot the difference in our creeds, and, joining the worshippers there, we lifted our hearts and thanked our heavenly Father that we could live and love.

But that was all on an early morning trip from the mountains some two weeks ago. The present finds me the picture of utter dejection, sitting in the stuffiest little parody of a hotel you could ever imagine, wondering if we are ever going to find a house to live in.

This afternoon we walked two miles down the beach to see the cross that marks the spot where Columbus first landed. This is one of the first things a newcomer in Doquiere always does.

There is only a thin board partition between our room and the adjoining one, where two men are lodged, and this goes only part way up, but that is no uncommon thing here. I've heard of things I like better than travelling in Porto Rico and living in hotels, especially when we are on our hôneymoon: I suppose that is where we are, for we haven't stopped since we were married, nor have we arrived at any particular place or thing. I wonder why the "Board" telegraphed us "Come, field waiting." Personally, I've had enough honeymoon,

for there is so much more moon than honey in this kind of life, that it loses its sweetness.

The furnishings of our room are beyond my descriptive eloquence. Suffice it to say that such articles as are found here—most things being conspicuous by their absence—are decidedly dinky and wobbly, and taken in a heap would pale beside the bed, a rickety, skeleton-like affair, painted black. This offense, funereal as it is, I would overlook were it not for the fact that the posts are decorated in green leaves and red rosebuds. Above our heads is a canopy made of old lace curtains and net which nominally serves to keep out the mosquitoes. As a matter of fact, it only keeps them all inside, where they while away the long night hours singing their lullabys to two young missionaries and flitting dreamily about among the red roses. Beneath us, in lieu of a mattress, is a scanty quilt of red and orange calico, cut after the pattern of the Spanish flag. This covers the woven wire springs very well until some one gets in, when the springs go down in the middle —dragging the Spanish flag with them, while you "swing low, sweet chariot," and if you don't wake up in the morning bearing the marks of woven wire, it's a sign you are made of wood.

As to food, I have dined in almost every conceivable thing from a California cook-wagon to a Fifth Avenue hotel, but I never was down to hard pan before. There is, on the part of our Porto Rican host and his understudies, an evident desire to please their two American guests and, to the best of their ability, they do it. But everything floats in lard, garlic abounds in the most innocent-looking dishes, and the *ménu* is like the laws of the Medes and Persians. I am afraid my missionary zeal will not survive many weeks of this.

Doquiere, Oct. 11, 1905.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

We are still in the hotel, but we plan to move to-morrow into a little house very near the sea, where we hope to stay at least long enough to unpack our trunks. A home of any sort "where we can be alone and faith renew" will be the rarest of treats. We are not sorry to have had the experience of sampling a Porto Rican hotel, but we are glad to take a little house for our stomachs' sake.

Yesterday, from the hotel balcony above the street, I watched the funeral of a baby girl, and a very simple, sad procession it was, consisting of but one barefoot man in checked gingham

trousers, pink shirt and large *sombrero*. On his head he carried the little rough board open casket where lay the child, her face upturned to the midday sun. The body was clothed in a simple white garment and about its head were arranged a few gaudy flowers. From the balcony where I stood, I could plainly see every detail. The man, we were told, was a friend of the bereaved family, who, as is the custom among the very poor, was in this way showing his friendship. We also learned that on reaching the cemetery he would remove the body from the box and bury it in a few feet of earth. Every three years the bodies of the poorest people who cannot pay for a resting-place are taken up and their bones are thrown into an enclosure in the corner of the cemetery, known as the "bone pile." Boxes or caskets cannot be buried, as it is troublesome at this time to unearth them.

You ask if it is difficult to live here. I cannot say it is for those whose bump of adaptability has been properly developed. We do not suffer any serious hardships, but if we did not feel sure that we are about our Master's business, Porto Rico, I am afraid, would soon lose its charm. It is hard to be shut off from things American and from friends at home, and once

in a while we turn our feelings loose and indulge in a spell of homesickness; but we always survive these attacks and life seems the brighter for having weathered them; just as the skies do after one of the bursts of tropical storm that we so often see here. On the whole, we have begun to really love the balmy tropics. With so much all about us in this unkept field that needs to be done, so many dear little dark eyes that look up into ours, so many old and neglected people, so many, too, of the young who look to us, the representatives to them of the new master of their treasure isle to give them a better chance in the world than they have had before, there is little time, we find, to sit and fold our hands and think of the good things we are missing at home. To return has been the least of our plans. On the contrary, our entire time and thoughts have been occupied in adjusting ourselves to our new surroundings, and we trust that at the Beautiful Gate there will be some one from Porto Rico "waiting and watching" for us.

Doquiere, Oct. 21, 1905.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

The past week has been spent in getting moved and settled, which we find requires some

time in a country where *mañana* is always better than to-day. At present, our house reminds me of the girl who was hurriedly dressing to go out, when her mother remonstrated with her about the untidy condition of her room. "You should have a place for everything and everything in ——"

"I have," broke in the daughter, opening the top bureau drawer and dipping up a tangled mass of things commonly found there, "and this is it."

We had roast lamb to-day for the first time since we left New York (it's goat, but it's roasted, all right). Harry got a whiff of it and came out and asked me where I "made the raise." You ought to see some of the fine meat cuts we get here. I think they kill beef just for the sake of getting the hoofs and the neck, for I don't seem to be able to find anything that could possibly have grown any place else. Our meat-grinder is almost a wreck already, for whatever cut I send for, or however hard I try to avoid it, I always wind up by having "Hamburg steak."

Here comes Harry, and he demands the privilege of reading my letter. He says I have an evil look in my eye and he is sure I am writing something about him (I wonder if he comes under the head of tough things). Mother dear,

your boy is a fine husband and I thank you for him every day and try to be worthy of him, but when you write next time, just think it over and see if you do not owe me a vote of thanks as well, for coming down here and grinding Hamburg steak for him. If I hadn't come, he would still be in that hotel, amusing the mosquitoes and staring at red rosebuds. I am taking as good care of him as I can. The only thing I make him do is to hang up his clothes; and the only things I won't do for him are to press his trousers and send his collars and cuffs to the laundry. My aunt, who is a successful husband-trainer, put these notions into my head, just before I was married.

Doquiere, Oct. 31, 1905.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

Your last letter telling of the day you went shopping and of the new things for winter, and the open fire in the library grate, made us homesick. I was just in a mood for it, for things have been piling up almost to the breaking point.

You have been picturing us, I know, in the little house by the sea, comfortably settled, but not so. I'm too tired to-night to stick to my purpose of writing only the sunny side of things,

and I'm going to tell you what I had decided to keep to myself, for I have so often told you that we were too busy to get everything in. There seems to have been a depression at home in the teaching force and we were unsupplied with teachers for this term. Our school has had a hard struggle for existence ever since it opened two years ago, and it was a case of dropping it or holding the fort, which I and a kind sister from a neighboring town are doing. For this reason we had to break up our home and move into the teachers' quarters where I could keep one eye on the schoolroom and the other on the kitchen. I shall probably continue teaching until January, at which time we have the promise of help.

Yesterday I went with Harry to the country to play the organ for services, as has become my custom on Sunday afternoon. It had been raining and the roads were so slushy and slippery that I almost held my breath from the time we started until we returned. Going up hill, we had to cling to the horses' manes to keep the saddles from slipping back over the horses' tails, and going down, we held on to their tails to keep from pitching over head first. I didn't enjoy the ride very much. I had made dumplings for dinner and on the way home I

got a pain in my side. Harry assured me that the ride had nothing to do with the pain but that it was only one of my dumplings.

To-day I bought four chickens for sixty-five cents. This sounds fine, I know, but the results of the morning's marketing taken together were not encouraging. I sent for fish, string beans, oranges and *aguacate*, and our boy Felix returned with nothing but *aguacate*. Now with no cream or butter, what am I to have for dinner? We're so sick of chicken that I haven't the courage to fry another. We shall, as everybody else does, fall back on rice and beans. There is a never-failing supply of these.

You ask if our congregation sing well. They certainly do sing, but this is what tries men's souls. Our predecessor wore himself out on them and now we've taken up the task. You cannot make them see that they ought to get through on time. The Porto Rican seems to have a natural affinity for a lazy good time, and an equally natural aversion to being in a hurry, which applies to singing as well as to other things. There is plenty of time—all the time there is, and just to get a hymn sung. No matter if the organ is a measure ahead of them or that the leader is wearing his lungs threadbare, there's no use to hurry and get all overheated.

This afternoon, I went out to inspect the doings in the kitchen and found the cook scouring my silver teaspoons with ashes. I find there are still a few things to teach her.

You also wanted to know in your last letter what I mean by a "*cocoa-de-agua.*" Well, a "*cocoa-de-agua*" is composed of a green cocoanut, a small black boy with no more clothes on than the law demands, and a savage-looking knife about two feet long. The railway station is his favorite haunt, and when you toss him a penny, he will flop himself down upon his knees and cut a hole in the top of the cocoanut so quickly that it will make your head swim. Then you drink the cocoanut water from the shell, and that's a "*cocoa-de-agua.*"

Christmas will soon be here. How we should like to spend it with you in Berkeley, but since we cannot, just have a good time without us, and when you have dinner, don't feel too badly about the chair that I robbed last June.

Doquiere, Nov. 28, 1905.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

Since writing you, we have celebrated Thanksgiving Day. The same day having been the occasion of our wedding a few short months before, we dressed up in our wedding clothes

and had a turkey dinner, which Harry was good enough to commend most highly. We also decorated the dining-room and looked as festal as we could. We had no cranberries or celery, nor several other things that go with the day, but we enjoyed our dinner quite as well as we ever did, and in the evening we read together, admired each other to our full satisfaction, said nothing about the United States, and got through the day pretty well. I learned two things that day: First, that you can make a cake without eggs, and, secondly, the cake won't be very good.

Last week, just before closing the school for the holidays, I examined my fifth and sixth grades in hygiene. The following are some of the results, and they really are not so bad when we remember that they represent Spanish heads thinking in English:

Q. With what organs do we breathe?

Ans. Will breath with the nose.

Q. Name the five senses.

Ans. The five senses are see, tast, herd, swell, and ——

Q. When we eat, where does the food go?

1st Ans. The food go to the mouth.

2d Ans. The food go to the lungs.

Q. Why do we need to wear clothing?

1st Ans. A child need clothing because its vital parts.

2d Ans. A child need cloth is to cannot see his body.

3d Ans. A child need cloding to preserb the worm of the body.

Last Sunday, after the service in the country, Harry had a wedding. After our return, I was telling about it and describing the bride's attire to our predecessor, who was here with us that day. When I came to the hat, he broke in "Oh! you need not describe that hat. I know all about it. I've married that pink hat many a time."

It seems that there is an unwritten law that a bride must wear a hat—an article little used here. So they have a sort of a community affair out there that is used by all the brides.

Our movable feast continues: Word came on the mail this week that our new teachers will be here in January, so we shall have the pleasure and distinction of moving again. We landed here with nothing but our trunks and we haven't had time to get much of anything else. "Blessed be nothing."

I have two canary birds that live in the sun-

shine on my balcony. The lord of the cage is orange and black with a bright blue head, and his *señora* is a beautiful soft cuddling green creature trimmed in blue. By way of making melody, they whistle, and they live entirely on bananas. Yesterday the head of the house escaped, and, after dashing madly about for some little time and making himself generally ridiculous, he allowed me to take him in my hand and I put him into the cage again. His gay coat was much soiled and he sat on the perch looking quite disgusted with himself, while the good wife of his bosom proceeded to brush him up. She flew back and forth to the water, each time dipping her dainty bill with which she gave her disgruntled spouse a rub here and a finishing touch there, until he quite regained his good humor and looked as clean as ever, and then they whistled. I think the method worth remembering and if ever Harry gets unruly, I'll apply it.

I hope you don't think I am giddy. I am quite sure the Bible woman up in the mountains does, for one time she looked right at my one solitary diamond that sits so proudly above my wedding ring and said, "Missionaries haven't any right to wear jewels. I've sold all mine and given the money to the Lord's work."

I once heard a cheery old minister say that the Lord makes little round faces and puts them here and we make them long. Well, I mean to keep mine round as long as I can. I'm quite sure we would not be here now if we were not in dead earnest about our work, but I'm convinced that a missionary needs about so much frivolity. It serves as anti-queerator. If he doesn't have it, he gets the dyspepsia, and a missionary with the dyspepsia is like a bear with a sore paw. We have some down here already who serve as a great means of grace to the rest of us, but I don't think the Lord needs any more of them.

I am quite consumed with curiosity over the teachers who are coming—one of them in particular. This is one of the things that the birds of the air tell and I would not repeat it even to you if you were not so good as to be interested in everybody who comes within shouting distance of us. Besides, I know that with all your sweet piety and proper notions, you relish a bit of romance, especially when it is all supposed to be a state secret. I have loved that dear girl from the moment I first heard of her and my heart just aches for her, for she comes here leaving behind her somebody's son, who, I doubt not, is as dear to her

as your sweet boy is to me. Why can't people just take a good square look at life together and manage to fulfill their callings and elections without compelling the little love god to squander all his ammunition and then, perforce, weep from sheer discouragement. She is sure she is called to the mission field ; he is sure he is not, so there they are. She, who would be Mrs. Somebody, is on her way down here because her conscience won't let her stay at home, and he is at home for the same reason, facing the trials of being an eligible young parson. My birds settled their differences more wisely, I think, and they now sit side by side whistling their little lives away and making the world happier because they whistle together. There is no bridge between here and New York, and the water is deep, but if I were a builder of bridges, I would begin on January first to construct one just wide enough for one man to walk on and the moment he set foot in Doquiere, I'd demolish the whole structure.

Doquiere, Dec. 27, 1905.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude :

A Happy New Year to you all, to begin with, for the tropics seem as full of the spirit of the season as is the homeland.

Our first Christmas away from home is now passed. For weeks I planned in my own mind to have a tree, but I gave it up at last, for fear that it would only serve to remind us of the gay one you trimmed for us just a year ago. Then I told Harry about it and we got braver, because there were two of us. So, while he went to the country to attend the closing exercises of one of our little schools, I proceeded with my plans. My faithful maid Dolores, and our man Felix, entered into the spirit of the occasion with a hearty relish, and by the time Harry returned the tree was set up, our shacky, whitewashed dining-room was quite converted into a green palm bower and dinner was almost ready. Together we trimmed the tree and put on the finishing touches. We took out those mysterious packages which Harry had locked in the steamer trunk and put under the bed, and we put them beside the tree. Then we had dinner. My salad, lacking something more appropriate, was garnished with pink rosebuds; I wore my fluffy pink organdy gown and Harry was as dignified and grand as could be in his Prince Albert.

For favors, I had fudge in little pink paper things tied with green ribbons, and we were both host and guest to each other. We felt

then as we had not felt before, that there was no place like our own little corner, so long as we were away from home and the only Americans in a Spanish city at Christmas time. After dinner, think of it! Harry had to rush off and marry a couple, but he made uncommon quick work of it, and soon returned to devote himself to me and the Christmas packages. That Battenburg centerpiece is a dream and the sofa pillow is too pretty for words. Then there was father's innocent looking letter containing the money. We were delighted with it of course and we haven't spent it yet. I haven't ink and paper and time to tell you all we had and said and did. We thought fondly of those at home, but not a thing was sprinkled with briny drops. Then we began to get tired and I snuggled up beside the best gift you ever gave me, Momsie, and he read me those sweet chapters in Isaiah where it tells of the Coming One who shall feed His flock like a shepherd and gather the lambs in His bosom, and we went to sleep as tired and happy as two children, feeling somehow that it was all right to be away from home even at Christmastide.

The room is now (the day after it all) a confusion of crumpled tissue-paper and strings and wrappings and I am writing against time—for

the mail goes at noon to-day. This morning, just at daybreak, we were awakened by the softest notes of a serenade beneath our balcony. I know now why God put guitars into the world.

Doquiere, Feb. 1, 1906.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

The events of the past few weeks have been full of interest to us but I have been too busy to chronicle them in my scrappy weekly letters. We have moved again, school has been going for a month, and three perfectly dear girls are here as teachers. One of them, a very young thing from New Mexico, wants us all to distinctly understand that she is not from Texas, so now we call her "little Texas." They are all to dine with us this evening. I mean to serve fish—four fine fellows that Felix bought this morning for fourteen cents. Like other tropical things they are of the gayest hues,—pink, blue and lavender with gold stripes on them. After fish, I shall serve the family joke. I mean, of course, "Hamburg loaf." Every time we have it Harry exclaims as though it were the first Hamburg steak he ever tasted in his life. He says it is capital stuff and whenever we have company he pre-

tends that I am just spreading myself by having Hamburg steak.

My little widow (for that is what in my thoughts I call her) is all and more than my wildest imagination had painted her. She is a bundle of gay optimism and downright seriousness and devotion to her work—with the sweetest face and kindest blue eyes that are so deep, yes, deeper I believe than the water between here and New York and bright enough to be seen from there, too, and so sad at times. I've begun to drive the piles for my bridge already and if that magnetic heart of hers does not draw all the steel out of that man who thinks he has no calling, and give him a calling so quick that he will want to come down by cablegram, then I'm no builder of bridges.

And how is the weather during these winter months? Just like the little wee bear's porridge—neither too hot nor too cold, but just right.

Harry has booked another wedding for Sunday in the country. I suppose he will marry the pink hat again and expect me to sit at the organ and look solemn.

We bought a tiny ice cream freezer "built for two," and to-day we had ice cream for the first time. We paid five cents a pound for the

ice, but don't let this fact get abroad among the brethren at home or next year's contributions for home missions will diminish by half-and I shall feel responsible. We feel that Porto Rico is not so awfully behind the times when we can have ice cream and ride in automobiles. But, to be true to the facts here, the two extremes seem to meet. On the same road are found automobiles and ox-carts, and in one field you may see a modern gang plow or a steam plow while just over the fence may be its original ancestor—a crooked stick creation, which, if not really antediluvian, at least dates back to the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It just scratches up the ground a little on the surface and the seeds are planted. The farmer sits placidly down in his little shack while the rains come and the floods descend, but somehow an all but too gracious Providence (not exactly by means of him, but, rather in spite of him) looks after his seed.

We went to a newly opened country station last evening to hold services and we took the baby organ,—that ghost of missionaries that sticketh closer than a brother. Such spellbound delight and curiosity I have never before seen displayed. It was their first sight of an organ.

Our poor teachers are having some experiences they never counted on. They are beginning to see that in most respects a missionary's life is made up of quite the same things that we find among other lives, and that there are several things to be done beside singing hymns. Their latest encounter is the rat problem. Their house is overrun with these soft, downy creatures who seem bent upon doing everything in their power to make life unbearable for the girls. They play football and do the high hurdles in the bedrooms at night and even have the impudence to come to the dining-room door and wink at them while they are at dinner. Such familiarity, even in the case of rats, is bound to breed contempt. While we lived there, one got drowned, poor thing, in our water jar, and I didn't find it until after I had used some of the water for our breakfast of poached eggs and coffee. This is the only thing I've kept from Harry since we were married. Some time when we get better acquainted, I'm going to tell him.

Well, last week "little Texas" set her foot down on the rat question—she has the daintiest little foot, and the most opinionated way of setting it down hard. *She* wasn't going to stand it another day, and intended to put out

some poison, in which project she soon secured the coöperation of the other two girls. They bought some "rough on," and, after warning all the neighbors, as the law requires, they spread the tempting morsel all about the house. The next day the sound of the grinding was low and "little Texas" thought she had done a mighty clever thing. But the next! Live rats are bad enough, but they are not a circumstance to dead ones. They were silenced but not yet defeated. The dining-room seems to have been their grand rendezvous, so we invited the girls over here to dinner and breakfast and as many more meals as seemed necessary. "Little Texas" was somewhat humbled, but we still mean to duck her in the ocean for thinking of "rough on rats."

We expect to be favored next week with a visit from a reverend doctor something from the Board. The little widow says she is going to edge up to him and put in a bid for a better school building.

Doquiere, March 18, 1906.

Dearest Mother Gertrude:

The weeks are all so full of work that we do not have time to count them, but there is a thrill that comes with knowing that we are

helping some one, even "the least of these," that repays us tenfold for all our effort and gives us strength and purpose for each new day. While I was in New York, I saw a framed placard containing a morning prayer which I have never forgotten. It is this:

> "Now I get me out to work—
> I pray the Lord I may not shirk.
> If I should die before the night
> I pray the Lord my work's all right."

I mean to recommend it to General Assembly to be put into the new prayer-book. I sent it to an old college chum who is now the mother of four babies. She replied that it was a great comfort and consolation to her on mornings when she had time to say it.

I scold Harry for writing such scrappy businesslike letters to you, and he has promised to mend his ways. I tell him that he doesn't put enough of himself into his letters and I know that is what you want, so that is the reason I mix him into mine. He says that one of the principal reasons for which a man gets married is to have some one to write his letters for him.

The rainy season is opening again in good earnest. It rains more or less all the time, but

most in summer. Both people and cattle are dependent for their very lives upon the rains, so when they fail, there is great suffering. Doquiere, however, has a never-failing water supply which comes from an underground stream springing from a hillside. This is known as Columbus fountain, so named because it was discovered by Columbus and his men while they were exploring the coast, and they were, by this spring, led to land here. In times of drought we are told that cattle are driven as far as twelve or fifteen miles to water at this spring.

Any oranges here? I should say so. We drink them instead of water. If they cannot be had at four for a cent Felix returns and says, "*Muy caro, señora*," and he waits until he can find some that he considers cheap. We have bought delicious ones up in the mountains at the rate of ten for a penny. I wish you could eat some of our fine pineapples and bananas, and I wish, oh! how I wish I could even see some of the cherries and peaches and strawberries that are just now beginning to show themselves in the Golden State.

We have moved again into the big stone house I wrote you about. It faces the ocean and is very cool. The walls are two feet thick,

and the high glassless windows being almost always open give a good circulation of air. Some homes here are one hundred and fifty years old. This one was built by an Italian, eighty-six years ago, and he certainly knew how to build for this climate. It is so big and open that I am afraid at night. I am now on the balcony of our *sala*, and just below me in the street is a motley crowd of packhorses, ox-carts, barefooted *peons* and very muscular boatmen, for the shipping station is just above and all the loading of steamers is done by men and rowboats. The steamers anchor about a quarter of a mile out, and there are no wharfs, on account of the great depth of the water near the shore. Then, too, I can see the ever-present venders of sweetmeats, fruits and most anything, who, with their morning's supplies balanced carelessly on their heads, call out their wares in high-pitched voices. Great quantities of sugar and of coffee are shipped from here and the street is never quiet.

You never mention being ill. I wonder if you and father keep well. We think of you often and talk of you a great deal, and in the evening we frequently go out on the balcony or up on our roof garden to watch the sun as it sets way, way, way out, straight to the west,

leaving a gleaming, brilliant path of red and gold across the ocean that reaches almost to our door and sparkles and glistens on the wet sand below us. Once Harry said, "Say, if we'd start out and follow that path it would lead us straight to a door in Berkeley that is marked 2720." Then we didn't talk much more, but sat and watched the path disappear and turn into the beautiful lavender and gold and emerald of twilight, and then deepen into purple and blue and—dark. Dear fairy-land of the poppies! I wonder if we shall ever be with you again at 2720 "before the silver cord is loosed or the golden bowl is broken," and some one of us is missing.

Doquiere, May 2, 1906.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

We have no thought this week but of the terrible accounts that fill up the newspapers from all quarters. I have just finished my letter home, and now I am wondering whether it will ever reach there. If reports are true, it means that my home is gone, and that those there are perhaps without even clothes and food. You can imagine our state of mind.

We do enjoy our big home on the ocean. The interest on the extra rent invested comes back

to us by way of whole nights of sound sleep and a brand new feeling every morning, which we consider to be the very best use a missionary could possibly make of his surplus cash. We open everything that has hinges on it and let the wind play at will through the house. Being up-stairs, this is perfectly safe.

Some days ago there was a heavy wind storm on the eastern coast of the island and we are getting it over here on the west side in terms of breakers—long, unbroken foamy heaps that chase each other in on the sand, tumbling over one another in wildest fury, each one seemingly attempting to make a bigger display than the preceding one. But one by one they break and disappear, leaving their places to be filled by other waves, equally anxious to roll in, and break and disappear. How human they are!

Doquiere, May 20, 1906.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

We've both been half sick for the past week. The weather took a sudden sultry turn and our relish for rice and beans and pork and tin cans and Hamburg loaf failed us. I want a square yard of porter-house steak, some green corn, some crisp crackling lettuce that has been on the ice, and some strawberries and cream.

I'm out of sorts anyhow this week, so I'm just going to demand of you, mother—why you didn't let Harry have a dog twenty years ago when he wanted one? He says that a dog is the only thing you ever denied him, and now that he is master of his own house, he means to have one. So he bought one—for *me*. Think of it! If every dog has his day and every boy must have his dog, why postpone the agony and shove it off on to an unsuspecting wife? The thing is cute, I must admit—a round, wobbling, fluffy, white creature, only a month old. You would laugh to see him being trained. He yaps and yells at night in a most heart-rending manner. For the first few nights Harry got up and cuddled him and gave him some milk; but last night, by way of bringing him up properly, he switched him and drove him back to his box.

Still no word from San Francisco. Last night I dreamed that I went home to see about the earthquake. I went horseback and took no clothes other than my riding suit. My horse wore no girth and the saddle slipped and slipped, until, after a horrible ride through squishy, squashy mud holes, over half buried boulders, narrow paths, under drippy, overhanging trees, over the very road we travel

every Sunday afternoon to our country chapel, I slipped right off—into my own bed and the moonlight was streaming into the room, and the waves, now all quiet and placid, rolled lazily up beneath our window, lapped the sand and then died away. Daybreak was just painting up the skies in her daintiest hues, and I lay there wondering how in such a peaceful, slumbering world with such a good God to look after things, there could ever be earthquakes and fires that drive people from their homes and leave them to suffer. I tried to picture San Francisco to myself, but I could only wonder again what had happened there.

The teachers have been entertaining their father superior from the Board this week. He looks very well fed and I don't believe anything ever got drowned in his wife's kitchen water jar. He looked about and said, "Now, girls, what's the matter with this house? It looks cozy enough." The little foot from Texas came down and she exclaimed: "Rats, fleas and bedbugs! Isn't *that* enough?" The little widow then modestly ventured that it was badly in need of repair, there being, among other numerous defects, certain boards in the dining-room floor that they didn't dare step on for fear of going through, and here the third

sister broke in—"Yes, and if we did we'd land in the midst of the town band that practices there every day."

I just wish you could hear what those girls endure from that band. You would increase your missionary contribution next Sunday. When it comes to the question of missionary heroism I always stand aside and give my place to the teachers; Harry and I have each other, but they are here like soldiers in a strange land and all that is dear to them is at home. They, and not the honeymooners, are the ones who are adding jewels to their crowns.

And the town band? It is composed of a bandmaster with a terrible voice, and about twenty of the youth of Doquiere still "to fortune and to fame unknown," and all the instruments that were ever invented. The musicians sit about a long table and each fellow plays whatever piece of music he happens to like, in his own pitch, time, and style. Horns, flutes, violins, 'cellos, drums and cymbals, all go at once, each one in happy disregard of anybody else. They begin just about the time classes close up-stairs and continue until about ten o'clock in the evening. But, on second thought, maybe all bands are like this one. I have never belonged to a band. Perhaps all

bandmasters have great big voices and perhaps it is band etiquette to play whatever piece you like in just the way you like. I really ought not to say, for I have never lived above the town band before, and it certainly will be my earnest endeavor never to do it again. All this was related in calm dignity by one teacher, vouched for by another, and punctuated by little Texas, with the result that they have the promise of a better building next year. As we are to have a manse built during the year, they plan to take our big stone house.

Yesterday we took another horseback trip into a new country district where Harry had been asked to go for a wedding. Such country! We went through the most picturesque little valleys and passes, crossed pretty fern-grown streams and tiny farms ranging in size from one acre to ten, and learned, too, a little more about how the country folks live. Porto Rico, though rich in possibilities, is still unused. The greater part of the country people are illiterate and shiftless. They are content to build a little shack, sit down in it, and let the bananas ripen and the cocoanuts fall, gathering enough to keep body and soul together and not bothering with the rest. There is not a month in the year that does not bring a harvest of some kind

and they know it is coming—so, "sufficient unto the day" seems to be their motto. I have heard people say that it is only throwing time and money away to bring the Gospel to such a place, but I do not believe the Gospel will balk at anything in human form. If it will, then I don't think it is worth much. The fault here is not with the people. They have never had half a chance. Spain never played a game of marbles with Porto Rico in her life without cheating.

It is ever a mystery how the people here live. The island is only about one hundred miles long by forty wide, and a million people live here. Yet there are great tracks of uncultivated land, acres of unused forests, and abandoned coffee plantations. Extreme poverty is in evidence wherever we go, yet one never hears of a person dying of starvation—an eloquent tribute to Spanish hospitality. No one here is so poor that he cannot share what he has with some one who is poorer.

Ever since we came here I have persistently tried to cultivate some northern vegetables, which feat I am now convinced is quite beyond me; however, the experience has not been without its reward. I have at least learned another thing that one cannot do here,

and also gained a few side-lights on the character of gardeners. It happened in this wise: I had the yard cleared out, ready to be spaded and filled with suitable soil, all of which seemed perfectly reasonable and fitting to me, in view of the fact that I wanted a garden. I then made it known that I was desirous of securing the services of a gardener, and, after interviewing several specimens of this calling who presented themselves to me, my choice fell upon one Alexandro by name. He was barefooted and barelegged to the knees and had muscles that looked proper.

In addition to these recommendations he had a balmy smile, a most gracious manner and legs exceedingly bowed. I asked him to give me his bid on the work I had in hand. After looking it over carefully, he assured me that he never would think of charging the Protestant minister's wife much, and would only ask a mere trifle at my hands. After considerable effort on my part, he modestly fixed his price at sixteen dollars, whereupon I immediately saw the great advantage of hiring him by the day. In a short time he had the ground prepared and I sociably remarked that he would soon be through, at which remark he looked sad, for he saw his sixteen dollars dwindling.

"Oh, yes, *señora*," he said, "sure yes. All this work I have done is gratis—done gladly and willingly as a true brother in Christ. But this!" referring to the planting, "*Ave Maria!* what vegetables you will have! See this!" he went on, indicating the size with open eyes and mouth and with hands and bow-legs. "You will have peppers so big. This patch for your own table? Why, my good *señora*, this patch if I should plant it will supply all the tables in town. Surely you will give me eleven dollars, *señora*. Say," drawing nearer and getting very confidential, "the planting I will do for nothing; the eleven dollars is only for clearing the yard; you see I will bring all the plants from my own home and give them to you. *Ave Maria purissima!* I am working for nothing according to your own holy doctrine."

To-night we had greens, the first and only harvest I have reaped, and they made us both sick. I think that is doing pretty well. I think that a great variety of things could be raised here, but so long as a Porto Rican has rice and beans, he doesn't care whether school keeps or not—so gardening is not extensively pursued.

Yesterday I told my maid that we would have the broom for dinner. I meant cake, but

that was not quite so bad as another woman who told her cook to have fried sin for dinner when she meant fried fish; or still another, who asked her man servant to give her a kiss when she wanted cheese, or the man in the hotel who ordered fried pope when he wanted fried potatoes.

Doquiere, June 10, 1906.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

We took a trip this week to Isabela, twelve miles from here, where Harry preached the dedication sermon of a new church. Some weeks before, we had ordered a new buggy which we so needed in our country work, and it had just arrived from the States, so we christened it that day. The new harness looked big enough for elephants and Harry spent Wednesday afternoon draping it about our tropical steeds, tightening a buckle here and lopping off a strap there, until we felt comparatively certain that the beasts could not slide out of it and leave us horseless and helpless in the middle of the road, and we planned to start early on Thursday morning. As ill luck would have it, one of our horses got sick, so we had to hire a team, one half of which was larger than the other half, therefore it required two hours more of readjusting of

harness before we could start on Thursday. The larger horse looked quite presentable, but the smaller one was like a little boy in his father's shirt. Unfortunately, too, new harness is black and oily, and these horses were white and the day was warm, so by the time we got to Isabela, they looked like zebras. We both wore white suits and there were yards and yards of surplus reins folded up in front of us and as we had no lap robes, we were sights. Harry was obliged to appear at lunch that day feeling much overdressed in his official cloth; especially as the only other guest was a colored man of extremely plain appearance.

The services in the evening went off well and I was proud of our boy. The ride home after half-past ten in the evening was cool, but warm enough to ride without hats or wraps. The road was hard and smooth all the way and we fairly skimmed through space, the air all about us laden with the perfume of blossoming trees and the most dreamy perfect moonlight I ever saw shimmering in the palms and the banana groves along the way. Do you wonder that the crusty old bachelor is an unheard-of creature down here and that everybody, old and young, is in love?

Our school closes soon and little Texas is to

be with us for the summer. The other two girls plan to go away on vacation trips. They've had a pretty hard battle since they came and they have fought it like good soldiers. Why and how that man without a "call" can live in New York with those soft, winsome eyes down here, is a mystery to us. If he could just take a moonlight ride from Isabela as we did, he would never survive the temptation.

The ocean is lovely just now with its jewelled path from our door to the golden gate over which we have made so many imaginary trips in wonderful fairy boats where Harry is captain and I am mate.

Our dog is fast leaving babyhood and he is as full of mischief as can be, racing from study to kitchen in wildest glee. To-day I found one of my white shoes on the kitchen balcony, and I suspected the culprit. He seems particularly fond of delving into the clothes-hamper.

But, possibly you are not interested in dogs, so I will tell you of a letter I received this week from the sweetest woman, I am sure, though I never saw her. She has been writing to know if she cannot help us in our work, and now she wants to have her missionary society at home assume the support of my darling blue-eyed teacher, and give her ever so many things to

help her in her work. I do not dare to hint at it to any of the girls, but I really wrote and told her all about the "little widow" and the man who would not come down here, and the hurts, bumps, successes and failures that sweet girl is meeting all by herself, and she is just as excited about it as can be. I believe this good soul is just the one to show that other lonely one where he belongs.

I took the letter right over to the schoolhouse and gave it to the one it most concerned and left her to answer it. As she read it her blue eyes got bluer and brighter and I knew that she had just pushed aside all her own sufferings and disappointments and that she is living only for her work. I wanted to tell her that I knew all about it and that I was sure it would all turn out right, but I had to keep still, and that is the hardest thing in the world for me to do. But I am just going to help her and do all I can to make her life bright, while I lay a plank here and drive a spike there, and watch my bridge grow.

Doquiere, July 3, 1906.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

Monday evening is here again and with it comes our weekly letter. We have driven

sixteen miles and held a country service since six o'clock. Sunday is always a hard day, so we slept late this morning and did not get started to work until nine o'clock, between which time and eleven o'clock we were interrupted by the washerwoman, the tract society agent, our Spanish teacher, a banana peddler, two elders and the pineapple man; so we had to put off our letters until now.

The latter individual should most certainly be condemned as a public nuisance. He insists upon selling me his wares regardless of my wishes. This time he came to the top of the stairs and I looked up and said "No." Then he began his lingo—"Very fine, very cheap, *señora*, very fine." I said "No" again without looking up, to which he benignly replied: "They are *very* large and *very* cheap, *señora*." Again I said "*No!*" but he replied with perfect composure, "They are large and fine and cheap. They are very large and very fine and very cheap." Then I fairly screamed "No! No!! No!!! Don't you know what No means?" Apparently my fierceness frightened him this time for he said: "*Que mujer brava!*" (What a vicious woman!) and he turned and fled down-stairs, saying just as I did—"No! No!! No!!!"

Doggie is growing into quite a reality. Harry began about two weeks ago to teach him to lead. After the strap was on his neck, there was a veritable show—Harry pulling one way, and the dog, howling like a maniac, the other. They kept up this performance with distressing regularity for two weeks, when, just as I was on the point of leaving home, the dog submitted like a little major. His favorite amusement is untying shoe-strings, which we indulgently allow him to do, though I dare say you would pronounce this bad training even for a dog. Besides this, I am almost forgetting again that you don't like dogs and wouldn't let Harry have one when he was little.

The teachers have been entertaining four other teachers from Loma Vista. They all sail from here this week for their vacation. This morning we all went sea bathing. We stayed in the water for two hours and did not even feel cold. The tropics is the place for this. They were teaching me to float, and when, after various attempts, I had succeeded and felt so comfortable lying there in the sun on top of all that soft water that I was on the point of taking a nap, little Texas called out, "It floats! Take her picture for the Ivory Soap Company." My feet went up and my

head went down and they had to fish me out or I should doubtless be there yet, playing with the pebbles and the sharks.

Doquiere, July 20, 1906.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

We have just returned from the funeral of a little daughter of one of our Presbyterian families, where, of course, Harry had charge. This was our first experience in this line, so we felt a little awkward. We went to the house and Harry sat down in the front room where were gathered the friends of the family, including ever so many children who chattered and played about, and seemed perfectly accustomed to the occasion. I went with the women into the next room where the child lay on a canvas cot, covered with a white veil. She was a very pretty little thing with dark curls and olive complexion and she was clothed in blue satin and white lace and ribbon. None of the family except the father was present, and after the services, he took her with his own hands, placed her in the casket, and, after the other members of the family had come in for a moment to see her, he closed the casket, which was of rough board covered with white cloth, and nailed it shut. Then we followed it to the

cemetery, the father taking charge of everything. Children acted as pallbearers and carried the casket all the way to the place of burial. When we arrived there, the grave was found to be too small, so the father brought two spades and with the assistance of a friend, they dug it larger. After we had sung a hymn we left them and the two men remained alone to bury the body. Through it all the people talked and visited. Death is so common here that even the children seem to have no awe of it.

On Wednesday afternoon I had a most memorable party at our house. I invited about seventy-five small children of the Sunday-school and a few outsiders, and they all came in twos and fours and sixes. Wishing to do something extra fine, I spent the entire day preceding the event in making cookies for them —two apiece and ten for Harry, but he couldn't wait for the party and ate his before they were cold. Then I spent the best part of the forenoon of the next day making lemonade out of limes. I squeezed three dozen and thought I had a grand treat for them. I even made some of it pink, but I was soon to see my mistake. If you want to get at the exact truth concerning what they think of a thing, trust children

to give it to you. These children certainly did give me their unvarnished opinions of my refreshments.

There were seventy-five expectant little faces turned to me as we began to serve them, and then seventy-five little noses turned straight up and they said the lemonade was nasty—which it certainly was for I had put pounds and pounds of sugar into it; but I didn't like to be told so by seventy-five uppish little noses. They also added frankly that their mothers did not allow them to touch lemonade because it would give them colds. I could have cried with sheer disappointment, but we ate the dry cookies and then, to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," we played "Going to Jerusalem," which we followed by "London Bridge," and thus forgot our sorrows. I afterwards learned that what Porto Rican babies like is water with brown sugar in it. I'll know better next time.

Harry has been working very hard lately, holding a series of special services and doing some country visiting. Last Sunday he held four communion services and rode forty miles in coach and saddle. There was little left to tell the tale when he got through the last one.

We have felt deeply concerned since we got your last letter. We did not know father's illness was so serious, and we have had a strange homesick feeling ever since you wrote of it. We shall be anxious until we know he is better.

Doquiere, Aug. 16, 1906.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

It is still very warm and we feel a little bit wilted. It is hard to keep enthusiastic the whole year round, and in spite of our efforts, things drag through the summer. Even our adopted canine has become fickle and Harry feels it keenly. There is a black-eyed *señorita* living on the street back of us who loves dogs with a devotion that is truly touching. We first began to notice that the dog was feeling rather too grown-up and sophisticated and that home seemed dull to him. Then he took to staying out late evenings and we learned that this siren on the back street was feeding him candy and rocking him to sleep and kissing him, so the deluded young thing, perhaps, ought not to be blamed too much. At any rate, if that is what he is looking for in life he will never get it here and he might as well leave now as ever.

As I look over the ground for something of

life here that might interest you, I think of a friend of mine at home who used to say that her idea of the happy hunting-ground was that of a place where you could have a freshly laundered white linen dress every day. This is just the place for her to come. I have just finished counting my week's laundry and find that I have put in five white dresses—besides a perfect mountain of other things. I do not like to let my thoughts dwell upon what will happen to them, but you might be interested to know. They will be put into cold water in a long trough-like tub made of the spas of the royal palm tree, with the aid of an old board or a stone they will be then sozzled and squeezed and pounded, soaped and scraped with a piece of a cocoanut shell, then sozzled and squeezed and soaped again, spread out on rocks or on dry palm branches, sprinkled with soapy water again and then left in the sun until the next day. Then they will be squeezed and scraped and pounded all over again, rinsed and blued and hung up on thorny bushes or barbed wire or anything under the sun except a clothes-line. The next day they will be starched and hung up again, and the next day; and the day after, they will be ironed and then brought home in a flat splint basket—a perfect heap of clean snow-

white fluffy starchiness with a pair of black feet sticking out from beneath them. It is reasonable to suppose, too, that somewhere there is a boy fastened to the feet, though it is a matter of faith rather than sight.

Our programme for some months past has been church services every night except Friday; Sunday and Wednesday being here in the city, and the rest of the evenings in the country. We find it a little bit strenuous, but we seem to thrive under it.

Last evening after we returned, I went out to the dining-room to make some lemonade and found a scorpion on the sideboard. Of course I called for help for we certainly had to kill it. Harry, in his deliberate, methodical way, went out to find a stick to hit it with—just as though that scorpion was going to sit there and wait to be killed. I thought he might have taken a cue a little better, but I did not stop to lecture on the point just then—but flew to the kitchen and got the carving knife. Of course *I* knew how to kill a scorpion, but effervescent little Texas, when she saw the knife, rushed into the study and got Harry's fountain pen, declaring as she flourished it in mid-air that "the pen is mightier than the sword." Needless to say that scorpion is still at large.

Doquiere, Sept. 5, 1906.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

I am still "fixing up" our house which I yet have faith to believe will some day be in order. When we came to Porto Rico, I thought that in two months I could have a home all furnished and be settled for all time. Behold us now: We have been here something over a year, moved seven times and no prospects of staying here in this house very long, as the owner is to return soon. I feel for "the man who tried to hustle the East."

We were surprised and worried to hear that you have taken father to Chicago for treatment. We cannot rest easy until we hear the outcome of the trip. It is hard to be so far away from home during such anxious times.

Last week we had a visit with a teacher from a neighboring town who has just returned from New York. My! she did look stylish and she was just bubbling over with new ideas as well as with the news and gossip from mission headquarters. Our own three soldiers will soon be with us again and we shall be glad to see everything moving once more. With several months' experience now back of them, a new building, and the added help of our friend Mrs. Williams (who has grown more and more in-

terested in us all since she knows more of what we are doing), they plan to do a truly worthy work this year. I hope the blue eyes of my "little widow" have not grown any sadder this summer, nor the heart that looks out of them any heavier, for she doesn't deserve it. Mrs. Williams writes me that she is cultivating the acquaintance of the man at the other end of the bridge, and together we plan to march him straight over it as soon as it is completed.

People all over the island have for several days been much frightened and disturbed owing to reports of an approaching cyclone. They have not yet forgotten the terrible storm that swept the island about eight years ago, just after the American occupation here. Many people lost their lives, buildings were wrecked, large rich coffee and tobacco plantations were destroyed, and hundreds of people were left homeless and penniless. Latest reports from different points, however, tell us that the present danger is passing, the storm having changed its course. We have had enough of it to give us a faint idea of what might have been. For three days the wind has been blowing stronger and stronger and the ocean has been rising higher and higher in long unbroken banks of angry, green surf, that

pound like an army of giants on the rocky cliffs above our house, seeming to threaten to carry us all away with them to their home in the terrible depths out beyond. They have washed over the street below and entered the *patios* of the houses, and, as if to lend a helping hand to it all, sudden heavy drenching showers have been falling for two days, and the streets are streaming in red, clay-stained water. A large schooner with one of her anchors gone has been madly tossing about in the harbor, and if her other anchor that has been putting up such a brave fight alone all day gives way, she will surely be driven on the rocks. She looks like a living, breathing, struggling fellow being, left alone at the mercy of the storm, and we hold our breath every time she plunges, her staring black masts reaching ever up, silhouetted against the wild, lurid sunset sky.

This is the first Sunday afternoon in a long time that Harry has gone to the country without me, but I felt myself nearing the end of my rope, as I do once in a while, so I just let it slack up a little. Miss Texas will play the organ for me this evening and I am anticipating the pleasure of being one of the congregation for the first time since Harry began preaching

here. He was to have a wedding to-day and as he is late in returning, I suppose he had to wait for the bride to finish primping. He always does have to wait, so we have learned to consider it a necessary part of the wedding. How those brides do adorn themselves for their husbands! On the hottest days they plaster their faces with powder and the perspiration runs down in little rivers through it, but they never touch it for fear of losing some powder. What makes me laugh is the sight of the dusky belles with white smudges on their cheeks and across their foreheads, while the spaces between are left quite natural.

Now, since I have begun the subject, to be fair, I want to say that if the Porto Ricans can be said to have any artistic bent at all, it seems to express itself in the question of clothes. They have a perfect genius for making the most of things in any line, but especially in regard to their clothes. There is a breezy fluffiness and a style about the cheapest bit of pink lawn and lace and ribbon, when it has once been through the hands of a seamstress, that truly does them credit. They almost never use a pattern, or fit a garment, yet somehow it always suits and looks natty. In no place, I believe, can it be more truthfully said that you cannot judge

A Country Home in the Interior of Porto Rico

a person by his clothes than down here. To see people on the plaza or at the church in the evening you might reasonably conclude that they were at least in comfortable circumstances, and you would, if you were at all new here, take it for granted that their homes were clean and orderly.

But follow them home, and you will find that the great majority of them live in huts or little shacks with smoky walls, and in many cases not the first sign of comfort, as we think of the term. The mystery is how they keep so presentable, and the ease with which they carry the burden of their poverty is nothing short of incredible. "Take no thought for the morrow" is one Biblical injunction that they certainly know how to keep. No matter whether there is a cent in the house or not. If you have had supper, why work yourself all up into a pet and get indigestion by worrying about breakfast? They can lie down and sleep the sleep of the just, feeling perfectly confident that they will, some way, get some bread and coffee from some source in the morning. They just go on and get more fun out of life than the multi-millionaire ever dared dream of, and as for the simple life, they easily out-Wagner Wagner.

We have an albino horse—exceedingly pink

and white, that we bought for fifty dollars from a brother missionary who doted on him, his wife and children being the only living creatures who held a higher place in the brother's affections. The crowning glory of this albino, and the source of all his vanity, was his white, wavy, silken mane and his luxuriant tail which actually touched the ground. A few months ago the poor thing was bitten by a tarantula which left an ugly scar on his side. While under treatment for this affliction he ran some barbed wire into one of his eyes and put it out, which did not enhance his beauty any. Then he lost his appetite and got thin and poor, owing, we later discovered, to a troublesome growth in his mouth which prevented his eating. We had this operated upon and poor Blanco was just beginning to regain his former flesh and strength when he ate of the forbidden fruit—a kind of weed that if eaten causes a horse's mane and tail to drop off. I don't mean his entire tail, of course, but only the hair. Blanco's pink tail foundation still remained, also a pink strip along his neck where his mane had been. He is now a most sorry, pitiful looking quadruped, so we have decided to part with him to the first bidder; and as the Porto Ricans are so much more utilitarian than

æsthetic, we hope to get as much as five dollars for him.

I must close now and leave the rest for Harry to write. We try to tell you everything that we think will interest you, but, as the Jap said, "on account of the busy of our lives," we don't always have time to write long letters. We are afraid something has gone wrong for we did not get the regular letter from you this week and we cannot but associate such a calamity with the trip to Chicago.

Doquiere, Oct. 1, 1906.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

Though we were fearing it and had tried to prepare ourselves for it, your cablegram came hard. We had just returned from the church on Sunday morning and a messenger was waiting at our door. The mere sight of the envelope, somehow, told us the sad news, and before night we had decided that Harry must go home to see you if nothing else, so that is why I received your letter alone this week, telling of your sad trip home with poor father. It made me feel so badly to read it. How I wish Harry had started a week sooner, and how I wish that father and I had known each other better.

I am very anxiously awaiting word from Harry. It will be three weeks at least before a letter can return to me. I feel so far away from you all. I never dreamed what it meant to be separated from the one that has become such a part of my life that I am only half here when he is away. Are you willing to let me have him again? I am afraid it will be harder this time than it was at first. I think of you so often with father gone—never to return—and I cannot bear the thought of your loneliness. Whatever you and Harry decide upon in readjusting matters will be all right for me. For the first time in my life I feel selfish for keeping your only boy away from you.

Letters have been so interrupted of late and after writing Harry's daily letter, there is not much left to write to you; but I send this line to you anyhow, even though I am so unable to say what I feel for you. Our little house which is just next door to the school looks like a new spring nest bereft of its birdies. I am living with the teachers but I go over every morning and open the house and do my work there. Our church people and our Porto Rican helpers are showing true steel, and the work of the station goes on as ever. We have not missed an appointment or a service yet. I

must close now as the mail is due. Think of me once in a while, and write your usual letter if you can.

Doquiere, Oct. 30, 1906.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

I am counting the days that still remain before Harry's return. You are good to want him to come back. I am glad we do not have to leave now, as I feel that the work we want to do here is not yet done.

It has just stopped raining—one of those spasmodic showers that come at this season of the year, and the heavy clouds have rolled back far away out over the ocean in great, wonderful heaps of yellow and crimson and pink and violet, while beyond, still farther, shines the clear sky of a quiet sunset which seems, each time I watch it, more radiant and grand than the one before. Soon the glory will all die away and the pale, round, full moon will appear and retouch my ocean patch where to-night I sail alone, for my absent captain is now at the other end. But do not think I begrudge him at all. I cannot but feel that he is just where he belongs to-night. The vacant chair will not seem quite so vacant so long as you have him.

On the train from San Juan,
Nov. 24, 1906.

Dearest Mother Gertrude:

Of course I came to San Juan to meet Harry. The train never could have brought him soon enough if I had not been here to help. The tragedy of it all was that even after coming all this way just to meet the steamer, I all but missed him. He was not expecting me and with a New York suit of clothes, a heavy coat of tan and the loss of some considerable flesh, I stared at him a while, let him walk past me and about ten feet ahead of me before I recognized him. Then with a wild spring I broke loose from the lady I was with, and made such an unexpected necktie tackle from behind that I almost frightened Harry out of his senses. Then I remembered that there were other people on the wharf, and I realized that I had made myself unmistakably ridiculous—though I did not stop to feel badly about it then, but just captured my booty and made way with him as decently and unnoticeably as I could under the circumstances.

Before we left San Juan I had a tooth filled and Harry says that while he waited for me in the office he planned a whole sermon on the text "Why do the heathen rage and imagine a

vain thing?" Wasn't that invigorating sympathy! It took me months to brave up to that dentist, but, to be honest, it didn't hurt much, though I'm not going to admit it to Harry.

You would laugh to see us now. If there had been many passengers we could not possibly have gotten into this train, for we have with us a trunk, two suit cases, two huge boxes, and divers other small packages. In fact, everything except a bird cage. Harry sent the teachers this telegram: "Coming tomorrow. Fifteen packages, two people, 'to say nothing of the dog.'"

Our journey is, for the most part, along the coast, through luxuriant fields of sugar-cane and palm groves. Everything is fresh and cool and bright and we are happy, for we have each other again and we are on our way to our own home.

Now I am just going to say plain "thank you" for the pretty silk gown you sent me, and it means all those two little words could mean even though they were said a thousand times. I am afraid that, in the case of Harry, absence made the heart grow all too fond. I knew he would bring me something nice but I was not looking for a silver tea-set with a chafing-dish thrown in. I accepted them all and was

just delighted to get them, but I gave Harry a regular curtain lecture for buying them. I am sure that were the fact known, it would scandalize the church at large, for most people think only Christians and some preachers at home should have silver things and that a minister who is paid (think of it!) to do missionary work hasn't even a right to think silver teapots are pretty. I am certain that if they could see me about a week hence,—me, the wife of a missionary—sitting beside a solid mahogany table, dressed up in my new dress serving rarebit out of a shining chafing-dish to the very missionary who is being paid to do missionary work, they would go right up in the air. Well, bless their generous hearts and their missionary collections! When they get tired being up in the air I advise them to just come back to earth and settle down again and get busy and give the missionaries a few more pretty dresses and silver things, instead of compelling them to live in old houses where rats hold nightly carnival and get drowned in water jars and do so many other unnice things.

As for me and my teapot, I've been down here alone for six weeks, been to "meetin'" almost every night, kept every engagement that Harry had planned ahead, and, except

that he was not here to preach the sermons, not a thing has been left undone. I have managed the Sunday-schools, played the organ, kept all the mission accounts, and been at the post in all kinds of weather. I haven't seen cream for a year and a half, nor tasted a porter-house steak, nor heard an English sermon or a pipe-organ, nor wasted my substance on candy and street cars or afternoon teas. If chafing-dishes and pretty dresses would put in an appearance a little oftener, it would lighten our burdens a little more, for, with it all, missionaries are intensely human. They like to see their wives look pretty and serve rarebit and fudge once in a while, just like preachers and lawyers, doctors and farmers and other men at home do. "*He dicho.*"

Doquiere, Dec. 8, 1906.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

I've been so insanely happy since Harry returned that I can hardly keep my wits together. The teachers give me periodic lectures on spoiling my husband—the kind that unmarried people always give, you know. I'm longing for the day when I can return them all with interest.

Among other things that I did while Harry

was away was to sell our pink and white trotter, and I accepted fifteen dollars, for which crime I hope some time to obtain forgiveness. Beside having this on my conscience, I have incurred, I am sure, the everlasting contempt of the former owner. It came about this way: It was time for communion service, and as none of our Porto Rican preachers are ordained men, Harry had invited this brother to come up and conduct the services during his absence. While here the visiting clergyman went out to the stable and learned from Felix that the apple of his eye had been sold. Unlike Cæsar, I think that it must be the good that horses do that lives after them, for never have I heard the praises of the departed sung with such eloquence as were the excellences of this dejected beast: He wasn't blind—never had been, was as round and fat as any horse in town; you couldn't count his ribs, you only imagined you could. He had the best pace of any horse on the island, and the absence of his mane and tail were at best but temporary afflictions, and, altogether, the horse couldn't be improved upon and *he* would give fifty dollars any day to get him back again. I was glad that these lamentations had taken place in the stable and that I did not hear all the details of the performance

until after the songster had departed, for I should have had a hard time holding my own against it. The offer of the fifty dollars has not yet put in an appearance.

The next week, an American doctor came up from the city, where Blanco's former master lives, to see one of our teachers who was ill, and I was standing out on the balcony with him towards evening when the doctor remarked, "What a forlorn-looking nag that is tethered out there on the beach." I explained that I had just sold the animal alluded to to a Porto Rican and that he had formerly belonged to Brother So and So. Then the doctor began to laugh. "Well," he said, "is that the horse So and So has been weeping and wailing about for the past week?" When everything else fails, I think I can qualify as a horse trader—though I'll take care not to injure the tender feelings of my brother missionaries.

Another Christmas is near and we are so busy that we hardly know where to begin when we get up in the morning. We have planned quite an elaborate programme and every one is taking real lively interest in it. We are to have a special celebration in every country station where we have work.

We received this week some fine specimens of

grape fruit from one of our country friends, and, just to show what grows here, I tried my brush and canvas on them. They measured seventeen and a half inches in circumference and I honestly tried to get them the exact size of my models, but I think I stretched the measure about an inch. One of the teachers said that so long as I was within an inch of the truth that was all anybody would expect of a Californian.

This letter seems to be stringing out pretty well, but I want to tell you of another wedding experience we had, or rather, a double wedding experience. This was at the home of a prominent country gentleman, one of the grooms being his eldest son. The time for the ceremony was set for ten o'clock and we drove out and arrived at that time. One of the brides failing to arrive, we whiled away the time until eleven-thirty visiting with the assembled guests. When we drove up to the house the old man came to the buggy and greeted us very cordially. The *señora* met me at the steps leading up to the second floor of the house, and, holding my hand up just like the pictures of knights and ladies of olden times, she led me up to the *sala* where everybody, even the small children, shook hands and greeted us most warmly. The

house was large and airy, the walls all unpainted and black with age. Though the people are prosperous and independent in this world's goods, they seem to have no idea of beautifying their home. There were benches of crude boards around the walls, a few chairs, a perfectly bare table, a corner cupboard and some very old, cheap pictures in the *sala*, though this would be considered a well furnished home. The family that lives here is large and includes an unusual number of women and girls and each one as she entered the room kissed every other woman and girl who was present, first on one cheek and then on the other. Through the open door leading into the bedchamber, where the brides were receiving the finishing touches, we could see all that was going on.

Everybody had a hand in the preparation. Their white veils and their orange blossoms were repeatedly readjusted, the powder on their faces was repeatedly retouched, and the brides repeatedly kissed and admired by each new arrival. Even after they were finally ready, they waited for some guest of honor. In the *sala* the family and the guests were impatiently moving about in squeaky shoes and high collars and new dresses to which they were unaccustomed by daily usage, while men,

women and children smoked to pass away the time.

At last all was ready and the procession came out of the bedroom, the proper girl on the proper man's arm. Harry arranged them, as he supposed, in the right order, but the father of the family protested that there was a mistake; however, Harry assured him that all was very correct and the ceremony proceeded. A fitting sense of solemnity settled upon all present, and Harry began, "Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and in the face of this company to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony"; the solemnity intensified, and he went on until he came to the words—"If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else ——" Here a chorus of voices, headed by that of one woman who had been especially officious through it all, called out, "There is none whatever." Then all was quiet again until Harry came to the joining of hands, when a great clamor arose and Harry discovered, to his confusion, that he was marrying the wrong man. Everybody began to talk, the old man said, "I told you so," the best man, looking greatly relieved, stepped

back, giving his place to the anxious-looking groom; everybody laughed, the brides blushed becomingly, Harry dropped his book, and general consternation threatened the occasion; but Harry recovered his book, assumed his most commanding and dignified mien, and the company was soon put to rights and the ceremony concluded. After this we were urged to remain and have some beer, and when we declined, the old gentleman insisted that it was very good beer and seemed hurt that we did not indulge. When we were ready to leave, I found the *señora* awaiting me at the head of the stairs. She escorted me down as she had brought me up, and we were bidden a kind farewell. We felt that we had spent a pleasant forenoon. But think of the pity of it! Neither the brides nor the grooms knew how to sign their own names. In this very place they are urging us to open a Christian school and a meeting-house, but we have neither the time nor the money to do it. This kind of thing makes up the heart-breaks of the missionaries.

The weather is perfect these days and I just wish you could breathe a little of the country air. The hills are all green and the ocean is blue and

purple and green and opalescent all at the same time.

I have thus far forgotten to tell you one very interesting thing about Harry's trip home. While he was in New York, he went to see Mrs. Williams, and they talked over everything we are doing and she wanted to know all about the man who let our pretty blue-eyed teacher come down here alone. Then Harry found the man himself and told him in real polite ministerial language that he was making a perfect chump of himself, and before they parted they were the best of friends, and the other man was almost ready to sail with Harry, but he didn't. Instead, he remained behind, feeling lonely and uncomfortable. I know he must have seen those blue eyes again in his dreams that night and heard a soft, brave voice calling him to come down here and help do some of the many things that we who are here cannot find the time or the strength to do.

Doquiere, Dec. 17, 1906.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

We have just a week left before Christmas and we begin the week of country *fiesta* to-night so that we may go the rounds, and a

week of great events it promises to be. The *señoritas* will be out in their gayest plumage, with an extra coating of cosmetics, and the children will be crimped and scrubbed and starched on the exterior at least, and doubtless there will be many bare little feet, and big ones too, of both men and women, and the old women with the bath towels over their heads; everybody who cares to do it will smoke, and all will have the time of the season. In some of our meeting-places where the walls are particularly black and dirty we have used the Christmas tree as an excuse to get them to whitewash their houses. In most country places we meet in the homes of the people.

I spent two days of last week, with the help of our Porto Rican Bible woman, dressing some little colored girls for the Christmas festivities. They were wearing black for their mother—for even mere babies are put into deep mourning, no matter how remotely connected the deceased relative may be. How the little girls do glory in it! Well, these particular black calico gowns went from bad to worse, until we could stand the sight and smell of them no longer, so the teachers "chipped in" and together we resolved to make them clean and presentable.

We bought new shoes and stockings and enough cloth to begin and make everything new. The dresses were of white and black print. How the needles did fly for two days! By noon on Thursday, everything was ready and three of the dirtiest but most expectantly happy little girls you can imagine came over to dress for the school exercises, which were to begin at half-past one. We began by giving them the first tub bath they had had in many a long day, I am sure, and they were surprised that we put soap all over them, for they said it was necessary only for their hands. Then we combed and puffed their hair and tied it with big black bows, and they felt like princesses, I know.

They were worried about their bare feet, however, and wondered why we would not allow them to go and get their shoes, which I had asked them to leave out-of-doors. Then, to their perfectly entranced vision, I produced the shoes and stockings. But alas and alack! The stockings, for which I had sent Felix, were sizes and sizes too small. There was no time to exchange them, so the only thing to do was to draw on my own stocking bag, which I did, but to save my life I could find only five clean black stockings. So I just disappeared long

enough to change one of the black ones I had on for a white one, and soon my three little girls were dressed to rival Solomon in all his glory, and they went off hand in hand, looking first at their new shoes and then back at me. It was worth all my trouble just to see them grin.

Harry and I have set up our home tree and we plan to trim it to-morrow and light the candles, for a little while at least, every evening. We plan to celebrate on Friday evening after everything else is over and we can have a breathing spell. We have invited twelve guests. Among them a Rev. Mr. Small, the man who succeeded us in Masalla. He came here just after his graduation from Princeton, and he is the only bachelor on the force. He says there isn't money nor love enough in the world to hire him to work up there, and that while he is willing to do it for the Lord, nothing else would ever induce him to live as he does. I can feel for him. Ten days in a hotel that is a palace compared to the one in Masalla was enough for us, but there he has lived for months. We all take off our hats to him. He is the meek and the pure in heart and those that hunger and thirst and are persecuted for righteousness' sake and all the rest of the

blessed, rolled into one, and if he does not get his reward long before he goes to heaven, I am greatly mistaken in the way the Lord uses people. I have always felt that the teachers had a claim to all the laurels there are, but even they must step aside for the bachelor preacher who lives in a Porto Rican hotel.

Next to the man without a country the most helpless thing I know of is a man without a wife, and, though they all know this is true, there are but two classes of men who are willing to admit it—those who are married and like their wives and those who are recklessly in love. The man in question obviously does not belong to the first class, nor has he ever even hinted that he is one of the second, but, in my opinion, he is a wooden man if he hasn't progressed somewhat in that line by this time.

Doquiere, Jan. 4, 1907.

Dearest Mother Gertrude:

Now that Christmas is over, I can collect my wits to write you about it. Our country *fiestas* were great successes and we enjoyed them all. On Thursday afternoon we had one about four miles from town and then proceeded about four miles further on for the evening. We took our lunch with us and stopped near a

stream and ate in the buggy while the horses fed by the roadside. We had cold chicken and bread and cake and some other things and we bought a hatful and all our pockets full of oranges for three cents. After eating lunch, feeling very full of Christmas cheer, we rolled the bones and scraps up in a paper and gave them to the first scrawny yellow dog that came out and barked at us.

On Tuesday afternoon we dined with the teachers and had our big church celebration in the evening. Our house party was a great success and our bachelor friend almost screamed when I opened the parlor door and showed him the Christmas tree all lighted up. He had just come in from a twenty-five mile ride on horseback and he sat there and feasted his eyes on the sight like a ten-year-old. We spent the time from eight to ten o'clock at dinner, and after that a most extraordinary Santa Claus came tooting down the balcony. He apologized for being tardy, but he had a gift, he said, for every *Americano* in town and he made good by distributing them. It took even Harry some time to discover that this strange Santa was none other than our Felix, who is always ready for anything for which we want to use him.

The new year has opened and new plans claim our attention. Harry has been out all this week visiting and looking after the country work. We have, at present, beside the central church here in town, ten outlying stations, where we hold regular weekly services. One of our helpers spent three days visiting in an isolated district not far from here, but shut off by a chain of mountains and impassable roads. He visited every home out there and found but four persons who could write their names. Twenty dollars per month will support a country mission school, yet there are hundreds of our new American citizens growing up in absolute ignorance because we have not the money to help them.

The government is doing an immense amount of educational work, but Porto Rico cannot be made over in a day. When we remember that during the four hundred years of Spanish control here, there was not a real public school on the island, and then look about us and see what is being done now, we find no room for criticism, but plenty of opportunity to lend a hand. It is hard to conceive the helplessness of a people such as our Bible worker visited. They have never known anything but poverty and ignorance. All they need is a start in the

right direction. The Porto Rican children are naturally quick and bright and tractable, but how can they learn without a teacher, and how shall *they* teach except they be sent?

We wish every day that you were down here this winter where it is so delightfully cool and at the same time so balmy and warm. You would not be suffering from a cold then, I think. Neither do we have any coal famines, but only glorious sunshine that filters down through lacy verdure, and dazzling moonlight that lights up the palm groves at night and carries you right off into fairy-land. Every time we drive into the country we want to stay there, it is all so fresh and wholesome. I never saw such a place for things to grow. They cut down small trees and trim them up to use as fence posts, and in a little while they begin to grow and the first thing we know there is a row of new shade trees along either side of the road. The rose-bushes have to be cut back several times a year to keep them within bounds at all. Cocoanut palms grow in rank confusion, many of them attaining a height of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet. Not a dry patch of earth is to be seen anywhere. Fields of sugar-cane and corn and banana groves are to be seen all about us, while

the hills and roadsides furnish green pasturage for horses and cattle. I am afraid the brown September hills of California would look lonely enough to us now.

There is scarcely beginning nor end to our weeks, they are all so full. We simply close one and begin another just like it, yet they are quite as full of pleasure and happiness as of work. The programme for the next few weeks includes the communion services in all our stations, a trip to the mountains where Harry goes to help organize a church, the meeting of presbytery, and the making up of yearly reports that go in to headquarters.

My maid is planning to be married, so I am looking forward to the pleasure of training another. I wonder how many of my domestic precepts she will turn to account in her own home. As she is to marry a man who is earning the handsome sum of seven dollars and a half per month, I hardly think they will indulge in many extravagances.

Next summer will be our third one here, so we are to have a three months' vacation. We are beginning to plan for it already. Our life here is such a constant giving out that we feel we need to be replenished once in a while. I wonder how New York will look. I shall

probably be afraid that the sky-scrapers will fall over and crush me, and run from the electric cars, and point my finger at things in the shop-windows. I may have to practice on a few side streets before I venture out in public.

Doquiere, Feb. 12, 1907.

My dear Mother Gertrude:

For two weeks there has been a rustle and a stir and an air of expectancy about everything and everybody. The shops show it in their new and tempting displays of pretty lawns and dainty dress stuffs of all kinds, ranging in color from the gaudiest orange and scarlet especially designed to take the eye of the country *señorita*, to the daintiest whites and dots and pinks and blues that go to adorn the more patrician blood of the city. All the forenoon the country people throng the streets and the shops, after having exchanged their little stock of whatever they happen to have had for a pocket full of small coins. Never was a bunch of American beauties sent to my lady fair with more pride and love than a plantation *peon* feels in carrying home a gayly dyed piece of lawn which has cost a possible eight cents per yard with blue ribbon to trim it, too; never was

gift any more graciously or tenderly received. There is gingham, too, and pink calico for new pantaloons and dresses for the half dozen or more olive branches, and cobalt stockings to go with them, and a new supply of cosmetics, and a string of beads and a frill cap for the "*chiquita.*"

In the city, every one is busy. It is next to impossible for one to procure the services of a seamstress, for all are working night and day. *Confetti*, too, has begun to show itself about the streets, just as the premature firecracker does at home on the first of July. Then, we are greeted by an occasional masked face, and "dressed up" street children who can hardly wait any longer for the fun to begin—all this because Lent is approaching and carnival time is near. Who could be such a mope as to sit by and be unmoved? Harry and I have caught the spirit of the season and we are planning for as big a time as any of them. In the Casino, where the *élite* of the community gather for all their social affairs, the flame of the week's hilarity begins and spreads like Samson's firebrands through the fields of the Philistines, and by the time carnival week is here it has ignited the remotest corner of the district, and there is not a family so poor that they cannot

afford to suspend their labors to share in the season of merrymaking, which will be formally inaugurated on Wednesday by the coronation of the carnival queen in the Casino. To this event we have been invited, and we mean to attend, the saint up in the mountains (I call him St. Cecilia) and some others who ought to be canonized, to the contrary.

I cannot see why some people want to be so unimprovably good. They seem to be trying to get to glory before their time and in so doing they stand in the way of a lot of deserving people who have a perfect right to the little foretaste of heaven we are permitted to have here in this world. Now if I say anything that isn't real nice and sanctimonious about missionaries, do not conclude that I am losing my religion. I can't say much, for I am sworn to keep the missionary skeleton in the closet, for that increases the contributions at home, but down here in this tropical atmosphere where things get so musty and mouldy, it seems to me a good thing to take it out and air it once in a while. Besides keeping his rickety old bones a little sweeter I think it actually does the cause good. In New York we met a man—an awfully worldly man he was—who announced upon being introduced that he belonged

to a society for the extermination of missionaries. It was rather shocking, but even with these views, I liked him. Now I see why he feels as he does. Still, I pronounce him a pessimist, for he sees only the hole in the missionary doughnut. We have learned a good deal about this much talked of and often slandered order of tract sowers among whom we number ourselves. Most of them are the kind of people whose very presence makes one better, but a few of them are like the Sheriff of Nottingham in "Robin Hood." They "never have made one mistake." They explain to us the existence of the society to which our worldly friend in New York belonged. Sensible missionaries do not like them any better than do sensible people who are not missionaries; however, there are far too many grand and noble people among us to get excited about the few whose chief pleasure in life seems to be to make trouble for other people. But I guess that in spite of these unhallowed views of mine, we will all reach heaven and doubtless we will understand each other better when the mists have rolled away. If we do not, I hope the Lord will allot us a bigger playground than Porto Rico affords.

Missionaries are, it seems to me, just like the

little girl who had a little curl that hung right down on her forehead: When they are good, they are very, very good, and when they are bad, they are—horrid! Some of them—only a few of them—down here would certainly have been translated long ago had they been, in the eyes of the Lord, one-half as deserving of such a blissful exit as they are in their own. I never shall forget the gentle response that two of these saintlets gave us when we invited them to accompany us to the Casino to see the queen crowned. It frightened me half out of my wits and threatened a case of spontaneous combustion right then and there. I shall always feel that the cause of the promulgation of the Gospel in foreign parts would fare much better if they had spontaneously combusted. But I am not losing my religion, assuredly I am not, I am only taking observations on missionaries; and whenever I see and hear some of them indulging in one of their tirades against things they have not taken the trouble to inform themselves upon, I feel like praying the prayer of the Pharisee.

But I'm off my subject again. Sometimes when I get to writing to you it is as hard for me to stay on the track as it is for that lightning express that runs between here and San

Juan, and I fly the rails nearly as often. I believe I began to tell you about the carnival. Like other coming events, it has only cast its shadows before it and I will tell you more after it is over. I've spent all my time on other subjects and now I have only a moment to tell about ourselves. Harry is very busy with special meetings and country visiting. I am busy too. For the past eight months or so, since my faithful Dolores left me, I have had the dearest little maid you ever saw, but I soon decided that she was too good to spend her life scouring and scrubbing for me, so, after doing what I could for her by way of preparatory training, I sent her to our hospital in San Juan, where she is training to be a nurse. Since then, my kitchen has been the scene of such a series of calamities that I think I shall go mad if relief does not come before many more months.

I now have a new cook who came this week —"Mary, queen of pots" I call her, but for fear you will give me credit for coining such an apt and fitting epithet I want to say that I saw it in a magazine story. I adopted it immediately, as it seemed to meet my need so well. Her name is Tomasa, and when I want to assert my authority, that is what I call her.

She will be the death of us all yet, I am afraid. So far, I have been unable to impress her with the faintest idea of why I do not wish her to scrub and iron on Sunday. She never heard of such an absurd idea before. I tell her that it is right to do just as little work on Sunday as possible, and that we go to church and worship on that day and she must be ready on time to go with us, which she does, but I am sure she goes to church in exactly the same spirit in which she washes the dishes—simply because I tell her to go.

Last Friday morning, in view of the approaching Sabbath, I said to her, "Tomasa, I'm going out to be gone all the forenoon and you must scrub the kitchen floor before I come back, and also this little passageway into the dining-room." "*Si, señora*," she replied, and I mounted my pony and spent the forenoon visiting in a little shack district down the beach. At noon I returned, very tired and warm, and she met me in the doorway of the kitchen. "I wanted to iron this morning," she began, "but I'll scrub this afternoon." As I had no serious objections, I agreed to this, and after luncheon, I went out again, returning just in time to see about the dinner, and found the floor still untouched. "Tomasa," I said, "why

didn't you scrub the floor?" "Well, you see, *señora*," she replied, "I was tired. My back aches and my shoulder," soothingly rubbing the affected member, "is all stiff with rheumatism, and my knees," dropping her dish towel on the floor as she bent over and grasping her afflicted knees the better to illustrate her point, "my knees are so swollen I'm afraid I shall fall over." "Tomasa," I broke in here, "I don't care to listen to any more of this. We'll proceed with dinner," I went on imperiously, "and you may scrub the kitchen in the morning, and no more excuses from you!" The next morning I spent writing some important letters and did not leave my room until almost noon. "Tomasa," I roared, as I entered the kitchen, "how many times do you think I intend to tell you to scrub this floor? Do you own this house or do I?" But she was unmoved. She only explained most deliberately and volubly, leaving off her work to do so, that she had had a dress to iron for herself and that at the market that morning she had met her cousin whose sister was ill and she had to go and see her, and that she meant to scrub the floor, but if she did not get it done that day, she would surely do it on Sunday and give up the pleasure and distinction of going to

church. "Tomasa," said I, looking my sternest and hoping to touch a more vulnerable spot, "if this floor is not scrubbed before night, you shall not go to the carnival on Monday. Do you understand?" "*Si, señora,*" she replied, in the same unruffled tone. At four o'clock she came to my room and I repeated my inquiry concerning the kitchen floor. "Yes, my good *señora,*" she replied with her most amiable smile, "I've washed the floor—that is," she added, "I've washed that little part next to the dining-room, and God willing, I'll do the rest on Monday."

Do you wonder that I am beginning to almost repent of my generosity towards my little nurse maid and that I am beginning to feel the need of a vacation?

Doquiere, Feb. 26, 1907.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

We have had another jaunt into the country since I last wrote you, and I think you would like to hear about it.

We started on horseback in the morning and had a long ride before us. About eleven o'clock we stopped at an old plantation and asked for some water and permission to eat our lunch under some large shade trees near their

house. The young man with whom we spoke invited us to come in and meet his mother, a most kindly and gracious *señora*, which we did. They would not hear to our eating a cold lunch, but urged us to honor them with our presence at dinner. The house of the good *señora* was "*a sus ordenes*" (at your orders), as were also her sons and anything else she had. A *peon* was sent to drive up a cow which they milked and then presented me with a glass of milk. We were then escorted about the plantation where we saw the cane fields and the old sugar mill, that, judging from its hoary appearance, must have occupied that spot ever since the landing of Columbus. Then we returned to the house where the *señora*, in a fresh white kimono, sat awaiting us. As we approached this old tile-roofed abode of many generations, we were greeted by the most conglomerate assemblage of living creatures I ever beheld. Ducks waddled up from the mud puddle beside the house, chickens wandered aimlessly about in and out of the house, mother hens with their broods scratched and pecked here and there; a swarm of pigeons swooped down upon us from the cote at the end of the porch; goats, pigs, a calf and several cats and a few dogs mingled in happy disregard, while screech-

ing geese stretched their inquisitive necks in all directions. Everybody and everything seemed to be on perfectly friendly terms. In the kitchen,—a decidedly antiquated adjunct to the house proper,—a colored personage with a faded bandana kerchief on her head, scanty clothing that parted badly at the waist and the remains of some old shoes hanging to her stockingless toes and flip-flopping with every step, was preparing dinner, while savory odors of lard and garlic floated out to greet us. She stood before an open table-like arrangement, upon which among the coals and ashes of a year's accumulation, were some stones and bricks which served to support her pans and kettles that sizzled and sputtered over the coals. It was only natural to a person like myself, who is accustomed to move and endowed with a more or less whirlwind temperament, to wonder, as I watched this performance through some wide cracks left open by a few missing boards in the kitchen walls, how and when, at the pace that woman was crawling about, we might reasonably expect to be summoned to dine; but I had no more than fairly launched this calculation, than I was interrupted by the *señora* herself who, in a most courtly manner, announced dinner and led the way into the dining-room.

The walls and the rafters were black with age and bedecked in cobweb and the floor I am certain had never even been christened in infancy. The table was laid with a once white oilcloth—now much the worse for wear, and about it we were seated with our hostess, her sons, and several other men and women whose function about the place had not been explained to us. Everybody was extremely solicitous for our welfare and seemed a little bit hurt that I should hesitate to pitch right in to any or all of the various dishes set within my reach. There were fried eggs, fried chicken that had laid the eggs, fried mutton, fried pork, fried beef and fried bananas; egg salad, pepper salad, and *aguacate*, rice and beans and bread—whole loaves of it scattered about the table, but still I looked helplessly about, for there was no serving spoon. Finally, one of the men who had already begun his repast came to the rescue, and, with his own fork and knife, helped me most generously, and said, "Now eat." He then served Harry in the same fashion, giving him an extra supply of fried bananas, which he detests, but there was not to make reply nor to reason why. I wanted to poke Harry with my foot, but I knew it would mean our utter undoing if I did. We both knew better than

even to glance at each other, so we just assumed the same air of absolute composure that we wear whenever Harry marries the pink hat, and looked straight down our noses and ate for dear life.

Only once did I feel that I would surely lose my grip on the situation, and that was when another brother who had almost finished eating noticed that I had no pork left on my plate. I had been watching him to keep my mind off of Harry, and I certainly thought his knife would disappear with every mouthful, but he always managed to keep the handle in sight and in this way rescue the blade. He offered me the pork, but I thanked him and assured him in very bad Spanish that I had been most generously served; but he seemed to think that I was bashful, so he arose in his chair just across the table from me, licked his knife all clean and cut me another chunk of pork, which he, leaning across the table, deposited on my plate. I almost balked at this, but I had learned to always remember that I am a missionary's wife and that we are guests in a strange land and that we must never offend people; so I ate on in grim silence, and was glad when the dessert came. I knew it would be made of pure sugar and be insipid and sickish, but anything would

be a relief from lard. It soon came, with coffee that was strong enough to stand alone, but I drank it without a whimper, taking courage the while, because I knew I was on the home stretch. Then the men left the table and stretched themselves out on the benches around the room for a smoke and a *siesta*. The past three hours had been rather strenuous for us, but, though I hear you "Oh dear!" and "Oh my!" as you read this, we felt that we had learned something worth our while from these, nature's own people, who are as sincere as they are hospitable. The lard, the garlic, the cobwebs, the table etiquette and all were but mere details of the background, which served to give us a better insight into the open-hearted kindness of the people we have learned to love and are trying to help. We had been allowed to share freely the best they had to offer and we would have been worse than Hottentots had we failed to recognize the honor they were paying us.

The Porto Rican is ever agreeable and courteous, whatever his station in life or the condition of his home. The people are generous almost to a fault, and even the humblest mountain dweller who has never known anything beyond his rickety hut and his *machete*—a long

knife with which he does all his work; who cannot write his own name or tell you what a shoe feels like, will doff his *sombrero* with as much dignity and offer you such hospitality as his humble roof affords with as much ease and grace as the most finished gentleman of the land, only he shows more native grace and less of studied mannerism. He never thinks of apologizing for what he has to offer, but he and his wife and his family are all so graciously "at your service" that you forget everything except that you are the guest of honor, and it is not always easy to do justice to the situation. It would certainly ill become the stranger within their gates to fail in any measure to appreciate such good-will as was shown us on this trip, even if we were not brought up to relish garlic.

Doquiere, April 10, 1907.

My dear Mother Gertrude:

It took us two weeks to get ready for the carnival and two weeks more to get over it. The whole country has been as restless as a lot of small boys kept after school. I think I said I would write you more about it, so I'll begin now. The coronation of the queen was a brilliant success, but I cannot begin to tell you all

they did. The halls of the club-room were elaborately hung in most fantastic effects of tissue-paper designs of all colors, while green boughs and potted plants and palms banked all about made the place quite a successful piece of out-of-door staging. The queen and the court marched in in royal procession to the music of the town band. The music was good, too, and we felt repaid for some of the tortures we had suffered from having lived above them in the school quarters. On an elevated platform at the end of the ballroom was the coronation chair, where the queen was formally crowned. After this, she, with her knights and ladies and entire court train, gave an old Spanish court dance and I didn't feel a bit demoralized after I had watched it. Then, the queen taking the lead, a general jollification followed, in which young men and old men, vivacious, daring *señoritas* and coaxing demure ones and their papas and mamas or their chaperones (for none were unattended) all joined. *Confetti* (or, as they say here, *papelito*) battles then ensued where unexpected and unseen foes lay in ambush and pelted their dainty missiles in all directions. Then, just as some lady was about to own defeat, some other gallant from the emergency corps would appear and offer his atomizer

loaded with perfume which the all but vanquished lady would aim at the pit of her opponent's ear or down his collar and then a new relay of *papelito* would be proffered and the day would be won. Through it all, of course, the queen was the centre of attraction and a real queen in a real court could not have been more queenly. Then the assembly would quiet down for a breathing spell. Some would promenade while others withdrew to the lobbies and balconies where the older and more sedate sat visiting and listening to the music.

Throughout the evening the younger people filled up the time with dancing, every now and then giving place to more *papelito* battles. No one was left unentertained nor did any one seem to be bored. As a rule, wives danced with their own husbands only, though in cases of strong friendship between families or in the case of relatives, this rule was not strictly observed. Fathers who had escorted their daughters there danced with them and treated them with all the attention and deference of a young courtier. We retired at eleven-thirty, the evening having opened at nine, and we haven't felt a pang of conscience yet. We have no account in our Bible where it says that our Saviour folded the robes of righteousness

about Himself and felt too holy to associate with saints and sinners alike, but we have an idea that He went about doing good wherever he saw the opportunity, and I don't believe St. Cecilia or the others who ought to be canonized are ever going to improve upon His methods. One woman said to me that evening, "We do not see you here very often, *Señora* Blythe." "No," I replied, "we come very seldom because you have so many of your social functions on Sunday evening, and we believe that is not the right thing to do." "Oh," she said, "do you think it is wrong?" I told her that we believed that the Bible teaches us to keep the Sabbath holy and to spend it in worship and in thinking about higher and holier things. The idea was perfectly new to her, and I was glad I had had the opportunity of speaking to her. I would not have had it if I were too good to go where she was.

But to resume: On Friday evening the whole town was on the plaza—the entire mission force included. The air was filled with gay colored paper *serpentinas*, yards and yards long, thrown by the practiced youth, carrying love's tender missives and twining them about the objects of their desires as they passed. Or some of them may have been intended only as

a gallant courtesy to some elderly lady or to the stranger within their gates, as was the case with us. Everybody, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, had a good time; only the darker brothers, in conformity to an unwritten but well understood law, were obliged to walk only on the outside of the plaza, while the white and more favored people held sway down the centre walks. Those who preferred to do so sat in rocking-chairs which could be hired for ten cents each. Although all classes and kinds of people participated in the events of the evening there was little or no need of police, for perfect order seemed to reign. Should such a thing occur in the United States I am sure the press would unite with the clergy in proclaiming that the world was coming to an end or that the millennium was about to dawn.

Our church work, of course, was not suspended during this time and we were as busy as ever; however, we did not censure those who did not attend services. The final wind-up of the carnival was on Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, on which day everybody found it convenient to go on parade, every carriage and horse in town apparently trying to rival every other in display of color. The flat roofs

of the buildings around the plaza were lined with spectators who flung down their *serpentinas* and *confetti* and flowers as the procession, followed by the rabble in comic mask, passed in the streets below.

Everything is quiet now and the next stirring event will be during Holy Week. It is all like a box of candy. After you have eaten all you want, it isn't so tempting. Every one seems to have had enough carnival to satisfy them for another year.

Doggie is as prodigal as ever, and think of it! He rode in the carnival parade beside his doting *señorita*, with a Spanish flag stuck in his collar. I'm afraid that when this fact becomes known throughout the mission, the presbytery will take it up and some self-appointed committee will not allow us even to entertain him beneath our roof again. He has gone the way of all dog flesh. Bring up a dog in the way he should go and away he goes.

Doquiere, May 10, 1907.

Dearest Mother Gertrude:

Summer is again here and with it the heavy rains and the steaming heat of the tropics. We have loved too well the lovely days that ought never to be called winter and

we would hold them with us, but the good God who knows what is best for His gardens and for those of us that He has permitted to live in them, is taking the delightful season from us, so we must let it go. We are not as well as we would like to be to face another summer, but we find ourselves too busy to stop. So much depends upon us that we sometimes wonder how or when we shall ever be able to break away from it. The thought, too, of your lonely lot is ever with us and we sometimes wonder if there is not some one at home with whom Harry could trade places. We sometimes get discouraged, but when we remember the brave girl at the school who is fighting her battles alone, we take new courage. I feel so tired, lately, but when my head gets too heavy for my own shoulders there is another, strong and kind, to lean upon; and when people misunderstand me and hurt my feelings, there is another calm, steady soul to believe in me and a loving hand to smooth over the hard places and to polish up the ugly bruises, making things shine again. I want to be strong and sweet and brave like my little widow who works alone, but now I get discouraged so often. Of course I tell Harry all about it and he just holds me close

and tells me I am helping him and this makes me strong enough to begin another day with him. At times like these, I feel that he is all I have in the world that means anything to me, and I want to get right up and write to you and tell you that I haven't forgotten that you gave him to me.

I have such a good letter from Mrs. Williams this week. I wish she could multiply herself by fifty thousand and then join every church in the United States, for she is the kind of a sister that missionaries need at the home end of the line. We never get the blues or feel down and out but there comes a loving, grateful missive from her and her people who are doing so much to help us, that bolsters us right up again.

When one gets to feeling sorry for himself, there is no other remedy so effective as looking about for some one who is in a worse plight. We began a course of this kind of treatment not long since and we did not look far before we found the object we sought. Our bachelor friend has been laid up for three months with boils—ten of them—a fitting climax, we think, to ten months of fried things (just a boil a month). Whenever I see him, I want to sing "Hold the Fort" and "Deliverance will

come." He says that but for the fact that he has neither sons nor money to lose, he could go down into history as a rival of Job. Masalla is just the place for greenhorns to get experiences. We had our share of them and I've begun to think that the town was built for just that purpose. Mr. Small tells of a Sunday afternoon when he, contrary to his custom, went with his Porto Rican assistant to conduct a service in a certain station heretofore left to the care of his Porto Rican helper. The teacher up there who usually accompanied them to play the baby organ was unable to go that day, so, as he had been practicing for some time himself, and had quite mastered hymns numbers one hundred and sixty-nine and one hundred and fourteen, he felt quite independent of her services.

The congregation assembled in a shack, but was deeply impressed, he said, with his august presence, and as the service was about to open he sat himself down before his double manual pipe and proceeded to pipe. He ran his hands carelessly over a few chords, ahemed, and announced that they would open the meeting by singing hymn number one hundred and sixty-nine, and, as it was already a little bit late, they had better have but two

hymns that day, all of which sounded, he thought, reasonable enough. He did not attempt to sing, as it took all his wits to pipe, so he piped a prelude and then piped through the first stanza, only to discover, to his confusion, that he had piped and they had not danced. He looked helplessly at his Porto Rican leader, who explained that they were not familiar with number one hundred and sixty-nine, and that it would be better to select something else. He felt a slight nervous chill, he said, as he realized that one of the two hymns that furnished his *repertoire* had vanished into thin air, but he boldly said, as he carelessly—but with a studied attempt at ease—turned the leaves of his book, "Then let us try number one hundred and fourteen." But, "pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall," for, alas and alack! the hymn was not to be found. The only book out there containing the notes was minus the page that bore hymn number one hundred and fourteen. It was the last time, he said, that he ever attempted to inflict his piping on any one. Poor boy! He is now in the hospital at San Juan. As soon as he is able he expects to return to Masalla for two months and then take a trip to the States. I am willing to wager my next horseback ride

that he does not come back alone. I cannot believe that there is not some girl at home who would be as delighted to come down here and turn the meat-grinder for him as I am to do it for Harry; neither can I believe that he would not be delighted to have her.

A breezy young woman at home said as she was starting for the mission field, "I feel towards missionary work as the Chicago girl feels every morning when she puts her shoe on. 'It's a big thing and I'm glad to be in it.'" I should like to know that girl, for I feel the same way and I would not have you think we joke all the time. This missionarying is dead serious business, but at the same time there is a tremendous amount of fun in it. Worldly, cynical people laugh at us and want to exterminate us and make what they consider clever jokes about missionaries. If we were but silent sufferers their darts might hurt us, so we, perforce, must laugh, or we would have heart failure; sometimes we laugh at each other and sometimes we laugh at worldly, cynical people—but, way deep down, we feel sorry for them, because they are so worldly and cynical and have not yet had even a faint glimpse of Christ in all His loveliness, nor have they ever felt the heart thrill of joy and contentment that comes with

spreading this loveliness in the dark corners of the earth. Poor worldly, cynical people! How we pity you! You do not know what you are missing and you don't know yourselves that you don't know. After you have spent your little handful of cynical years and are *blasé* and bowed down near to the grave and are still worldly and cynical (because it is the only thing you know how to be) when people are all tired of your jokes, what are you going to do? We will be old, too, by that time, and we will still be sorry for you. Why then are you so worldly and cynical?

Doquiere, June 28, 1907.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

We are feeling better than when we last wrote, and working day and night to get our house finished by the end of the summer vacation. Our three girls will soon leave for the summer and we will again be left to uphold American dignity alone, so we are not looking forward to anything of a particularly exciting nature to entertain us during these months. I try to think of other things, but my mind always goes back to the house which grows at the rate of a century plant. It is getting on our nerves and we have about come to the con-

clusion that we would rather live in a shack than to go through such an upheaval of affairs as the building of a house requires in Porto Rico. We began it some three months ago and we thought it would be almost finished by this time, but it is only begun. Porto Ricans have their own way of doing things and there is no use trying to change it. If you give them time enough they will produce a pretty good thing in most any line, but they do not know how to work under pressure. I shall feel like a queen in her palace when once we can live in a house of our own, but I sometimes wonder if any such pleasure will ever be ours in Porto Rico.

As things in general give promise of being dull for me these days, I try to take in everything that affords me diversion from the sometimes humdrum weekly round. To-day I was sitting on the side balcony, where a huge almond tree grows up and shades us, and I had on clean fresh white from shoes to collar and a nice breeze came in from the ocean to cool me as I sat there at work on a missionary report, which, to worldly people would be dry enough, I know. In the midst of this, a very dirty little black girl with woolly pugs and scuffy, grimy feet and an ugly running sore, came in to tell

me that her foot was awfully sore and that they had tried for two months to cure it and that it hurt her and would I please give her some medicine. Of course I would, so I put aside my letter and got some fresh water and soap, a bandage and my much used bottle of peroxide, and sent out for some medicine.

I was just in the act of putting poor little Sinferosa to rights when there appeared at the doorway two women, who, I saw at once, were Americans. They explained that they were tourists and had come in from the steamer that was then unloading freight in the harbor. I welcomed them and asked them to sit down while I finished dressing the sore foot. They were hot and very dusty and loaded down with what they supposed to be articles representing Porto Rico art and workmanship, but what were, in fact, a collection of trinkets for the most part manufactured in the United States and shipped here, and for which they had paid the usual high tourists' rates. Their belts parted badly at the back and they said "ain't" and "'tain't" and seemed bored with everything they saw. I felt so sorry for them and asked them to stay a while until the heat of the day had passed, and they seemed grateful. I gave them some water with lime juice and sugar and

they sighed and wondered how in the world I could stand it to drink lemonade without ice, and did I really live in such a dreadful country, and how could I bear to touch such a dirty little colored girl as Sinferosa was, and how could anybody possibly say they enjoyed such a life. I assured them that it was indeed a very pleasant way to spend one's time and felt not a little sorry for them as they trudged away, for I knew that they did not know the secret of my happiness. I watched them, too, as they went down the street, still hot and tired and bored, and then I went back to my missionary letter, feeling cooler than ever in my clean linen clothes, and the almond tree seemed a little more friendly, the breeze from the ocean was a little more refreshing, and I was a little gladder that I had been kind to a very dirty little dark girl with woolly pugs and scuffy, grimy feet, and that I had given her some medicine for her foot that was awfully sore. There are so many, many Sinferosas in the world and so many, many things that are awfully sore that need so much medicine! Why are there so many people who are bored when they might be washing scuffy, grimy little feet, and why is there so much money lying idle when it might be buying medicine for awfully sore things?

Doquiere, Aug. 2, 1907.

Dearest Mother Gertrude:

Your letter, telling us of the day you spent in San Francisco, made us wish we were there. What a treat to wander through those fascinating Chinese shops! I do so love the oriental things and whenever I think of dainty little Japan, I feel badly all over again, because we were not allowed to go there. But we try to be good soldiers and obey orders even if we do love hammered brass and hand-painted china, pretty silks and cherry blossoms and bamboo, better than old tomato cans, cocoanut shells, faded calico and kerosene boxes. The Porto Rican seems to be utterly lacking in any æsthetic sense. There is not a thing here that approaches an art that can be said to be distinctively Porto Rican.

Their homes are, for the most part, bare and unattractive, and the pity is that they don't seem to know it. Most of the houses follow the same model—square, with an L running back, and perfect symmetry seems to be the ideal of good taste. If there is a chair on this side of the room, there must be one on that side in exactly the corresponding position. The only tables they will tolerate are centre tables, or a pair of side tables, and their cup of con-

tentment is full to overflowing if their purse can afford a dozen chairs, four rockers with tidies on them, and a sofa all to match, said articles to be arranged in all cases as follows: The sofa is in the middle of the side of the room opposite the balcony, straight chairs pasted in a row around the remaining walls and one rocking-chair on each corner of the rug, or the place where the rug would be, if they had one. But the crowning glory of the *sala* is the inevitable centre table, stacked as full as it can stick with all sorts of things, ranging from wonderful blue, pink, or green glass vases (always a pair of them) to those assorted bisque creations such as boy-blue, hen-and-chickens, Mary had a little lamb, Saint John and the Virgin Mary.

We are told that some time ago the people of this city voted to beautify the plaza and began the undertaking by cutting down four most beautiful flaming *frambollan* trees that stood one on each corner of the square. Then they covered the places with cement so that people could walk there. Brick and mortar are more beautiful in their eyes any day than the most lavish of nature's gifts. Houses are built with the doors opening directly on the side-walks, and the gardens, of which there are

many, are hidden back of the houses and walled in until all possible sight of them is cut off. So what might be a veritable fairy bower is found, upon close inspection, to be but a squalid, dirty, tumbled-down village. There is everything here to make the whole island into a magnificent garden except the eyes to see nature's gifts and a love of beauty that is strong enough to utilize them. To see beauty in Porto Rico, one must leave the city and take to the country. Here the people live picturesquely, not because they choose to do so, but because they can't help it. What one sees at a glance, however, is not the best, but the commoner and worst class of homes. The better class of people live more within doors. Some of the best houses, having nothing to recommend them from the outside, are found, when one has entered, to be delightfully cool and attractive and elegantly furnished in solid mahogany and other valuable materials. In the larger cities, especially, which were the centres of the now almost absent and forgotten Spanish life and gayety, we find the kind of houses we read about. The very sight of them sheds romance about the place. We find here marble floors, high heavy beamed ceilings, arched doors and windows, roof gardens, latticed balconies, spacious halls and salons, and

In a Cocoanut Forest

handsomely decorated corridors, all of which, in the days of the Spanish cavalier and the winsome *señorita*, did their part to make up the life of luxurious indolence of old Spain.

To the thoughtful mind there is something exceedingly pathetic in the shifting of scenes that is taking place in this little land, and no one who has a heart big enough to in any measure share the sorrows of others, can, without a throb of deepest sympathy, watch the passing of the old and the invasion of the new, nor censure those who have not been able to accept the new in all its consequences. The Americanizing process does not rest so sadly on the young, but it is touching indeed to see those who are already too far spent in years to adapt themselves to changes, bereft of all that made their younger lives dear to them, holding on to the little that is left of their former selves, and nursing with pathetic tenacity the memory of better days. At the time of the American invasion here, practically all of the wealth and influence of the island was in the hands of the Spaniards, who, so far as they were able, left to return to their mother country. I have seen the wife and the daughters of a once wealthy plantation owner reduced to a mere shack of a dwelling, where they eke out a pitiful existence

by making lace—a genteel but profitless occupation. Their poverty has never affected their innate gentility or their dignity of bearing or their position in society. Their very presence is queenly and their pride unbroken, though they enjoy only the most meagre comforts of life, the plainest of food, and the cheapest of clothing. Their patrician blood is as pure as it ever was and money cannot buy social recognition in Porto Rico, nor the loss of money rob them of the place bequeathed them by noble sires.

The destruction of rich plantations by the cyclone of 1899 was responsible for the loss of much money and property here, but this might have been overcome had it not followed so closely upon the American occupation (which closed the markets of France and Spain and left only the American markets open, where prices were so much lower) that land owners were unable to recover themselves and were forced, in many cases, to abandon their plantations. The poor, they tell us, were in Spanish times poorer and the rich were richer. Whatever may be the facts in this regard, there are to be found here many instances of individual suffering that enlist our deepest sympathy. There is a class of all-sufficient,

self-satisfied, swaggering Americans who always take it for granted that things American are necessarily the best, and they are no special ornament to Porto Rico. The average Porto Rican will tell you he considers that, as a whole, the island has been benefited by American rule, yet of the two political parties found here, the anti-American party is in power.

Now this is all I dare say on such a profound question that rightly belongs to profound minds, for I do not know anything more about it and Harry just told me that. I try to understand a woman's share of politics, but Harry has to explain the whole question to me afresh on every election day and then I straightway forget what manner of thing it is, just as nine out of every ten women always do, but what I can see here is the shattering of much that is good and the substituting of much that is bad. The massive stone structures that the tropic dwellers knew so well how to build are giving way to flimsy American dwellings, pine boards and varnish are replacing polished mahogany and marble, the notes of the guitar and the serenade are now seldom heard and screeching phonographs fill up our Sunday afternoons. On the streets one is greeted by drunken men

—Americans, too, for when a Porto Rican wants to get drunk he usually stays at home to do it. The only closed saloons here are American. Not long since our teachers found a man lying in their yard, intoxicated, as we soon learned. A policeman was summoned to take charge of the case. "*Es Americano*," he said, "*Un paisano suyo*" (He's an American, one of your countrymen). And we said "Yes" and felt mighty proud of him!

In the time we have lived here we have seen but one intoxicated Porto Rican and he was still in possession of his legs. This is not to say, however, that the people here do not drink, though they do not drink as we do. They sip a great deal, and to refuse the social glass is to make oneself noticeable and "queer," but they know when to stop. The Porto Rican is ever decent, courteous, respectful and well-behaved. He is never rude. I have been in the company of scores of people all playing carnival in wildest hilarity, yet, in passing in the street below, one would never know that anything was taking place. How they do love the city and the *plaza*, and the balcony! There are some lines from Browning which could easily have been written about the Porto Ricans, though I believe it is the Italian the

author has in mind. They are these, from "Up at the Villa—Down in the City."

"Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there.

"Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast:
While up at the villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

"Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain's edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
—I scratch my own sometimes to see if the hairs turned wool.

"But the city, oh, the city—the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high:
And the shop with fanciful signs which are printed properly.

* * * * * *

Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, tootle-te-tootle the fife
Oh, a day in the city square, there is no such pleasure in life!"

But here I am rambling again. I sometimes wonder if you do not weary before you get through my letters. What are we doing? Just what we were doing when I last wrote. Harry prepares his sermons and preaches them, holds his classes for his three Porto Rican helpers, visits and goes the regular rounds of a missionary; I play the organ for him, teach two Sunday-school classes, study Spanish to the best of my debility, cook some, mend some, train cooks and do all sorts of uninteresting things that a pastor's assistant is supposed to do.

I am planning to try my powers this winter on the infant class at Sunday-school. The streets are full of future presidents and ladies of the White House—black, some of them, to be sure, but I think that the president and I together can manage that phase of the question, for, by the time I get a little black fellow trained up to fill our nation's executive chair, he will have educated the public up to the point of electing him. Many of them wear little more than the garb with which nature endowed them but I can make them some little pink and blue gingham shirties and aprons and they will feel quite dressed up in them, as indeed they will be, and they will come to church on Sunday

mornings with their little woolly pugs tied up in fringy red calico strings, their black faces broadening into sweet, sunny grins that show their white teeth, and they will dangle their bare feet and beam at me until I am sure my reward is great for coming to Porto Rico.

But do not think that all the children here are black. Many of them are as pink and white and sweet and clean and jaunty as a batch of new, fluffy, downy chicks, but, somehow, as much as I love their silken coats and dainty "peeps," the black babies—they are like little wet straggling turkeys—who seem so neglected and "cheep" so mournfully and look so muddy and unhappy, they appeal to me most. There are a great many orphans here, too, and when I am a rich, smart, eloquent woman, I want to build a home for them; but, for the present, I must learn my verbs, cook a little, mend a little, watch my pretty chicks, and take care of my little wet turkeys.

Doquiere, Sept. 20, 1907.

My dearest Mother Gertrude:

School reopens in a few days and our own three girls are with us once more, looking as blooming and fresh and resolute, withal, as three lives devoted to the service of others ever

could look. I always renew my strength and mount up on wings like the eagle whenever they come back from their vacation. Next spring we are to have a vacation and a welcome one it will be. It has been so hot at times this summer that we have been afraid the corn would all pop before it was ripe, and we have almost wilted, but the delicious cool of the winter months will soon be here and we shall revive with the flowers.

My little widow's face is as sweet as ever—a little more softened by a little more pain, but still strong and kindly. And we have a secret which we are trying to keep from her because we promised to do it, but how I want to tell her, just to make her heart a little gladder. Ever since Harry found the lonely man in New York and talked with him, he and Harry have been corresponding, and now he writes that ever since his dear lady left he has been trying to forget that he loves her, but that those blue eyes and her brave spirit ever haunt him. I'm glad of it, and I hope he has suffered hours and hours of pain, just as I know she has. It will be good for what ails him. Now, what do you suppose he proposes to do? He says he does not feel any more missionary than he did two years ago and that he is going to assert his

claim over her and that there is plenty of work to be done at home (he seems to forget, though, that there are thousands of people there to do it) and that he has decided to come down here in the spring and storm the castle and take her home, and nobody must tell her, either, for she is to be taken by surprise. He must be, even with all his fine qualities, a conceited chap, and I opine that he has not "reckoned with his host." He asks us to help him out and we are going to do it, but we cannot promise to subscribe to all of his plans. At any rate, it is exciting enough, and whatever part we take we'll play to the end. The hero and the heroine are fixed, of course, and the other girls may make up the chorus, and Harry may be stage manager, but I insist upon being the villain. I mean to write the whole thing to Mrs. Williams to-night, and she must be the fairy godmother. The mere thought of it all is enough to spice up the entire winter, and I have already forgotten that I am tired.

My rag-tag school that I wrote you about is too dear and fascinating for anything. I did not know that you would be interested in the details of this little corner of our vineyard down here, but, since you ask for it, I will tell you all about it.

Some time before the Americans took possession of the island, we are told, a small tract of land, lying down the beach to the south of town with cocoanut palms all about it, was purchased by the Masons of this place to be used as a cemetery, as live heretics were not allowed to bury dead heretics within the sacred enclosure —the town cemetery—and besides, you know a Romanist always loves a Mason backwards. However, before this new ground was used, Uncle Sam came here to live and he gave the Masons their share in "the garden of sleep." This was soon followed by the cyclone, which left so many poor people homeless, so the land among the cocoanut palms was given over to them and they were allowed to go there without cost and build their huts for themselves and their families. Naturally enough, the place, though soon filled, did not attract a very high class of people, as there are not many feelings so strong in the Spanish heart as the consolation they get from being better than somebody else.

No one here is so poor but he can tell you of some one who is poorer, or one who is quite as low as somebody else he knows of, and no one so black that he cannot tell you of a dozen people who are blacker. So it came that only

those who were completely pushed to the wall availed themselves of the proffered relief. One old woman, a sweet Christian too, whom I love dearly, and who lives just outside the confines of this little district known as Pueblo Nuevo, told me with ill-disguised pride that *she* was no pauper—that she paid twenty-five cents a month for the little patch of ground where her shack stood, and that only those who are very common indeed live in Pueblo Nuevo, and that those who still had "*un poquito de dignidad*" (a little dignity) left, lived outside. Dear old soul! I would not deprive her of such a comforting thought for anything. How these people do hug their *dignidad*, but our Master Himself said, "Blessed are ye poor." Perhaps if more of our "degenerate sons of noble sires" would reflect oftener on better days, they would be the stronger and better for their reflection.

So it came about that the small degenerate sons of Pueblo Nuevo who knew a great deal more about the ocean and the sand and the birds and of nature's ways than they did about clothes and books and God's love, had never been to school. There was no use telling their parents that they ought to send their children up to the big town school, for they were cer-

tain that schools were for the rich and the proud alone and they who were so poor and who had no "*dignidad*" should not aspire to such luxury; so we said within ourselves that if the mountain would not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. We had some surplus though much worn school-books, a few other supplies, and some old desks that a carpenter had made in the earlier days of our large mission school. Such desks as they were! When one of these babies sat down in front of one of them it was like trying to eat dinner off the mantelpiece, but we made the best of them. One of the teachers said she was certain it would not be a sin to worship them as they surely were not a likeness of anything in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth. We also had at our disposal ten dollars per month, the gift of a small church at home which wanted to help; so with my old lady friend who pays for the land where her hut stands, I canvassed the little district and told the people that if they would do a little to help, I would furnish books and a teacher and they should have a school there in their own town. This seemed to touch a responsive chord in their hearts, and they agreed to send their children and pay two,

three, or four cents per week, according to the number of the family. This amounted to two dollars per month, with which we rented a little twelve by fourteen foot hut for a schoolhouse, and with the ten dollars I secured the services of a bright girl in our church who had graduated from the eighth grade in the public school, and we started our work. There was hardly a person in the little village who could read or write, and people laughed at me and said I did not understand the Porto Ricans or I would know better than to try to help Pueblo Nuevo, but we went right on, my old lady friend doing visiting and Bible reading in the homes, and my teacher devoting herself heart and soul to her work.

Now, after a year and a half, we have a school of thirty-five children, and some of them are ready to enter the third grade, and I just love every one of them. All they need is a chance, and they will rise as well as any of us. I feel sure that ten dollars per month never reaped a bigger harvest than it does here. We have weekly preaching services and fourteen people have become members of the church. The women keep their homes better, the streets are cleaner, the children are more tidy, and their faces are brighter; and now, whenever I

go there, I am greeted by happier and lighter hearts than the place formerly knew, and this alone is worth all the thumps and bumps and inconveniences I have had since I came here. A number of the children even take their lessons home with them at night, and by the light of a flickering, crazy little torch lamp they teach their parents what they have learned through the day. How they do love the pictures of the old colored Sunday-school lesson charts that adorn the walls of the schoolhouse, and you should just hear them review their Bible lessons! They can tell you all the stories from Adam and Eve in the Garden to that of the seven golden candlesticks, which are the seven churches of Asia.

Not long since, a woman from New York, who was touring the island, came to Doquiere and spent a few days with us. She wanted to see our work, she said, so at eight o'clock in the morning I started with her for my little school. We arrived in time for opening exercises and were invited to enter. The children, not to mention the somewhat conscious teacher, were noticeably impressed with our presence. They looked admiringly at the long black plume in my friend's hat and examined her from head to foot when they discovered the

swish-swash of her taffeta shirt-waist suit. She, too, was impressed, and being of somewhat Amazonian proportions, she measured with her eye the height of the room before she ventured to enter, looking suspiciously at the props and stilts upon which the house rested. However, I appeared not to notice her hesitancy and stepped aside for her to enter, which she did; but such a look of genuine alarm came into her face as her two hundred pounds avoirdupois landed on the squeaky, rickety floor and her plume brushed the roof, that I laughed outright, and told her that I thought the house would stand the strain for a few moments at least, though I did not feel at all sure of my ground. With this we sat down, but I noticed that she did not dare move a muscle for fear of breaking asunder the pillars and, like Samson, slaying the multitude—for a multitude it truly was for that little room. They sang, "*Jesús es la luz del Mundo*" ("The Light of the World is Jesus"), and then the teacher announced that Angelito would lead us in prayer. At this, seven-year-old Angelito stood up and closed his eyes while every other head bent down on the desk before it, and Angelito, in a sweet, childish voice, said the "*Padre Nuestro*." After this the teacher read a chapter from the Bible,

and then, at my request, they reviewed their Bible work, which I interpreted as we went along. They told us all about the first man and the first woman, Moses, Joseph and Abraham, Delilah, Samson, Daniel and David. Here the children all laughed. The teacher said, "Rafaelito, who was David?" "A shepherd boy," was the response. "And who was Goliath?" she went on. "A giant," came promptly from Rafaelito. "But what is a giant?" she pursued. He paused a moment, then said, "A man as tall as a palm tree"—some of them are two hundred feet high, and that was the biggest thing he knew anything about. Then the teacher pelted them with questions and they went through the Old Testament, recited verses from the Psalms, rehearsed all of the parables and the miracles, and then passed on through to Revelation. Before they were half through, the tears were rolling down our visitor's cheek and she told me that she had had her first sight of mission work. I was proud of my ragamuffins, too, and, though I had so often seen them and helped them and watched them grow, my tears mingled with hers, and I never before wished so hard that I was a millionaire.

I did not mean to write such a long letter

and I hope you won't weary before you read it through, but my dear shack school babies touch so many springs in my heart that I cannot say just a few things about them. I must either keep still, or, as some one has said, tie my tongue in the middle and let it wobble at both ends.

Doquiere, Oct. 23, 1907.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

For several days our attention has been quite taken up with preparations for an "at home" to all of our church-members who live in the city. We were obliged to limit it to the city, as we could not possibly have entertained the six hundred members who live throughout the district. The event was a pleasant success for us all. For some time this question has vexed us, for our house was not large enough for all we should invite, and besides there was the question of "*dignidad*" to consider and that is quite a serious one here. It was unreasonable to suppose that the "high-ups" would care to mingle in a social gathering in our house with their servants and others who are humble but also members of our church, so we had to give up the idea until we hit upon the plan of giving an open air "at home" in the church-

yard, the church being the one and only place here where social equality prevails.

There are in the churchyard some banana palms, cocoanut palms, and some coffee trees, an old stone well, and ever so many roses. Among these we erected a platform, moved the church chairs out, decorated some pretty refreshment booths where we served the favorite sweets, and hung the yard with Japanese lanterns. We arranged a pretty programme, hired an orchestra of six pieces, and Harry and I received our guests at an accidental passageway formed by the well and the corner of the church. The evening was as perfect as though Diana herself were in league with us. Not a breath of wind disturbed our lights, and not a cloud marred the purple heavens, and the moon, assisted by every star,—from the great deep ones that twinkle, to the tiniest ones that make up the milky way, proffered their light to enhance the evening. It was such a night as is found only beneath tropical skies. Our guests, including the black horny fisted *peon* and his shy *señora*, and the young folks who make up the Christian Endeavor Society, and the more wealthy and favored families who belong to us, all mingled together and all had a

good time. We had songs, recitations and speeches by appropriate people, and, after the proscribed programme had been disposed of, the orchestra threw in a few extras by way of giving us our money's worth. Among other up-to-date classics they most sympathetically rendered "After the Ball." I could hardly believe my ears. Little Texas rushed over to me and said, "Now listen a moment! Doesn't that sound familiar? It seems to me I've heard that piece somewhere before." After this they played another waltz and another, for by this time all the servants and some other people, too, whose back-yards back up against the churchyard, had assembled on the other side of the dividing fence and were enjoying a dance at our expense. Before I knew it, I caught myself beating time with one foot while my missionary foot said, "Don't! It isn't becoming to you!"

On Thursday afternoon of last week, hearing a loud rap at our front door, I answered the summons and was greeted by an old man—an American, I saw at a glance, who inquired if Mr. Blythe were at home. I told him that he was, and asked would he come in and sit down while I called him. When Harry entered I saw at once that he was as much in the dark as to

our guest's identity as I was, but he explained that he was Mr. So-and-So, and that a brother thus-and-so who lived in the town above us had sent him there, that he was travelling over the island and was delighted to see us. We, too, were not ungrateful for even this chance call from one of our own countrymen, so we talked with him for a half hour or so, and then we began to grow a little bit restless, as we both had a full afternoon's work before us. He, however, seemed to be enjoying himself and was in no hurry, so he talked on, relating the history of his life and all his achievements and failures.

By four o'clock Harry began to shift in his chair, and by five I had to excuse myself and start dinner, as we were planning to go out to a wedding in the evening. By five forty-five dinner was ready, and as our guest still remained, we invited him to dine with us. This he most willingly did, occupying the entire dinner hour with a detailed rehearsal of his experiences during a seasick voyage down, relating carefully all he felt, said and did. At seven o'clock he showed no signs of departing, so we braved up to the occasion: I told him that we regretted to feel obliged to tell him that we could not ask him to pass the night with us, but

as we had been cleaning and rearranging our guest-room and had not been expecting company, we were not in a position to offer our hospitality. "Oh," he replied, "don't worry about my comfort, I can easily sleep on this lounge," referring to a small stiff-backed, cane-seated sofa upon which he sat. I left the room and nodded to Harry to follow me, and we held a hasty conference. I was afraid to leave him alone in the house, and afraid to stay with him. I had fired my gun and missed my mark, and now it was Harry's turn. He sent Felix to the hotel to hire a room for our guest and then he returned to the *sala* and said, "If we had known you were coming, we could have as well as not been prepared for you, Mr. So-and-So, but we hope you will be comfortable in the room I have for you in the hotel across the way." Then he explained that he had a wedding at seven-thirty and that I was to accompany him, and that we felt obliged to start very soon and he hoped we would be pardoned if we seemed in any way to hurry him. He assured us that we had been very kind to him, and we then made ready to start, but he was looking over a book that he had, and seemed to be unmoved by the seriousness of the occasion, so we said, "Well, Brother So-and-So, we feel that we must

start now as it is already seven fifteen o'clock," and by way of reply he said he was sure he would be very comfortable on the lounge, and as it was now a little bit late I need not bother to make it up then and he hoped we would have a pleasant evening out. Harry gave me such a look of desperation that I almost laughed in his face, but I escaped from the room and left him to deal with his adversary as best he could, and I was heartless enough to laugh when I saw him completely floored. But he arose to the situation again: "Felix," he said, "are you ready to go now? Here is the gentleman's suit case," he added, taking up the carpetbag which had been deposited at the end of the "lounge," and at the same time turning the light down. "Felix is ready to take you to the hotel now, Mr. So-and-So,—and—I trust you will rest well," he added nervously, as he fairly shoved the two out of the front door. We almost ran to the wedding and then waited an hour for the bride, as usual.

The next morning our friend was on hand, as chipper as ever, for breakfast. Not a word was said about his plans until about ten o'clock, when he asked me what time the train went to *Loma Vista*, and with a sigh of relief I told

him that it left at twelve-fifty and would he, I asked, feeling a sudden burst of sympathy for his gray head and his bent, tottering, childish figure, would he, I urged again, stay with us for luncheon at twelve o'clock? Of course he would, and I was glad, for after all he was a wanderer in a strange land—a derelict he looked, cast on an aimless course by who knows what, and, had I followed my uncharitable impulse of the evening before and shut my door against him, I am sure I should have been consumed with shame before night. At lunch he said, rubbing his head the while, "Let's see, who is the minister at *Loma Vista?*" We gave him the names and addresses of three who were there and bade him Godspeed, sending Felix to carry his luggage to the train. We watched him as he tottered off in the noonday heat, wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

Tomasa has left me, life in an American household having been too strenuous for her, and life, at the pace she set, being too slow for me. She was to be succeeded by one Juana by name. I had engaged her on Wednesday afternoon and on Thursday morning, before I was up, she had arrived, having been admitted by Felix, who carries a key, and I was awakened

that morning by the most satisfied make-yourself-at-home strains of music I had ever heard. I reflected as I turned over for a final doze that the neighbors on our left must have a new cook, and then, as I realized that I was without one, I decided to dispense with my nap and get up a little earlier so that I could be through with breakfast before the new acquisition should demand my attention for a formal introduction to her new round of duties. I dressed and hastened to the kitchen, and as I entered the door I pinched myself to make sure I was not walking in my sleep. Juana I, heir to the throne and the distinctions of Mary, queen of pots, stood before me, having already pulled out everything in the kitchen and arranged it to her own fancy and proclaimed herself mistress of all she surveyed. There was coffee enough on the stove for a regiment, and between her fingers she held a half-consumed cigar. I won't inflict upon you a rehearsal of all that followed, but, for the moment, I did regret the impulse that, in the larger interests of humanity, had led me to part with my sweet nursemaid.

The weather is growing cooler and our spirits are reviving to meet the occasion. Thanksgiving will soon be here again.

Doquiere, Dec. 1, 1907.

Our dear Mother Gertrude:

The Christmas season, our third one away from you, is again upon us. Of course we shall have a *fiesta*, and, as I begin preparation for it, I feel again all the intoxication of enthusiasm that belongs to the season and never fails to come with it. This year we shall celebrate, too, at Pueblo Nuevo and already they have begun their preparation. My little school there seems like an old neglected garden that has been renovated and my thirty-five busy tots are like thirty-five plants that we once took for weeds, but found, after a little cultivation, to be roses. We have watched them unfold and put forth their tiny, tender leaves and we have kept the soil loose and watered their feeble efforts until they can now stand quite alone and even help a few weaker ones, who lean against them. Yesterday I started out on foot to see them, and on the way, I stopped at a little shack dwelling where I saw an old woman and a wee mite of a girlie seated on the floor bending over their work of weaving hats, by which occupation the child, an orphan, assists her grandparents to eke out a living.

"Good-morning, *señora*," I said, stopping at the door. I was invited to enter and was given

the only chair they had, which happened to be a soap box. "Your hats are very pretty," I remarked, after the usual greeting had been said. "Does the *chiquita* know how to weave them? How old are you, little girl?" I added, and her grandmother informed me that she was seven. "And does she not go to school?" I asked, as she sat there in mute silence, her shoulders and back bent over and her little brown fingers deftly weaving in and out, in and out. I was told by the grandmother that she was an orphan, that an orphan's duty was to earn her bread, that they could not afford to keep her if she did not help, and that neither her mother nor her grandmother had gone to school before her, and that it was not necessary for her to go. I further learned that with two weeks' work the little hands could weave a hat that she could sell for from sixteen to twenty cents, which, after paying for the straw they used, left her as much as a penny a day—the price of the small loaf of bread in general use—the price of her education and of her very life's blood. I do not mean to stop until I have uprooted that dear little weed and planted her in my garden of roses.

I am so busy these days that my letters must be short until after Christmas. The teachers,

too, are very tired, but as busy as bees, and are looking forward with pleasure to their Christmas vacation. Mrs. Williams has sent them a box and a purse to help them celebrate the occasion. Isn't she the salt of the earth?

Juana I has abdicated. By the end of the first week, I had fully made up my mind that she was not the kind of a sovereign I cared to associate with even in my kitchen, so I did not pursue her.

Doquiere, Jan. 4, 1908.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

If you are not already tired of my chattering I want to tell you this week of some of the Christmas customs that hold down here and ask you if you do not think that we at home could afford to take a few lessons on the subject. Christmas—that is, the anniversary of the birth of Christ—is, and ever had been a purely religious feast, until some few Americans, who try to improve everything whether it needs improving or not, came here and inaugurated our Santa Claus. There are some of our own people here who feel and act on the principle of the little girl who said, "Mama says it's so, so that makes it so, whether it's so or not." They are thoroughly convinced that

America is the only sensible country in the world and that our ways are, as a matter of course, always the best. Before they came here to improve things in general, the Porto Ricans knew little and cared less for our pagan idea of Santa Claus. Now don't think I have any quarrel with old St. Nick, for he is now as wonderful and new to me every year as he ever was, and his packs hold the same fascination for me as they did in my childhood days—but he ought to be made to keep his place, and, in the interest of public education, his pedigree should be written up and published in tract form for free distribution.

The children here know that Christmas day is the day on which the infant Jesus was born, and some one asked a little girl who Santa Claus was and she said that he was the saint of the *Americanos*. But at home Santa is so stirred and mixed and twisted into our Bible and churches, that the average Sunday-school scholar and half the grown people do not know whether to turn to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, or the Acts of the Apostles, to find the story of his reindeer and their impossible journeys over housetops and down chimneys. Is it any wonder that the story of the Christ Child is quite crowded out of their

whirling, excited little brains? Among the Porto Rican families Christmas is not disturbed by such fancies, and the great day of days to the children is January sixth: "Three Kings' Day" they call it, which they claim is the day when the three wise men came from the East with gifts for the Child Jesus.

It seems to me that we are going to have a hard time improving upon this idea and I don't see how we are to better matters by importing a Santa Claus. But, however that may be, I did not start out to give a dissertation on Christmas day ideas, but to tell you how our southern children keep Three Kings' Day, which day expands into a week. And such a week! Every home is astir with preparations, another new outfit of clothes comes into being for every member of the family, work is suspended for another week, as old and young, rich and poor, one and all join in the preparation for the reception of the three kings who, according to long accepted tradition, are to come from Greece, India and Ethiopia, respectively, the first of these being mounted on a white beast, the second riding a bay, and the third, a black one.

The whole island is on holiday and the country roads from Dan to Beersheba are

lined with happy peasants who carry boxes containing the images of the three important personages to which you are expected to make at least a copper offering. The beggars, too, whose number is legion, make the most of the opportunity afforded by this occasion to add to their store, and the benedictions or maledictions that fall in copious showers from their lips are measured by the sum of your contributions, or your failure to take notice of their distress. This custom of almsgiving, I believe, originated in bygone times when the whole story of the three kings in all its detail was religiously believed by the people and made a part of their worship, the images having been employed as a means of replenishing the coffers of the church at this time of the year. The day, however, has quite lost its religious significance as have most all of the great feast days and it is considered as little more than a grand holiday for all. If there is any one thing the Porto Ricans seem to love above everything else, it is a *fiesta*. To pass a holiday without a *fiesta* of some kind is worse than going home and finding that when you get there the cupboard is bare. There are country house parties where beer —another American improvement (?)—flows like water, and dancing continues all night, and

there are barbecues and bonfires and eating and drinking and dancing to the music of the *wichero*, an instrument made of a long gourd upon which are cut rows of notches and threads which the musician scratches to the time of the waltz and the two-step. We also hear rattle-bones and an occasional guitar which heads some serenading party and the *Aguinaldo* fills the air and is on everybody's lips.

The latter is a survival of olden days, when her majesty's courtiers ushered in this season of merrymaking by singing their good wishes to their queen. It is sung in a chant-like strain that is at once catchy and monotonous, and there seems to be an endless chain of stanzas to it. If I ask what it is they are all singing, they tell me it is the *Aguinaldo*, and when I ask what the *Aguinaldo* is, they say it is a present, which means, I have learned, that I am expected to give something to the singers. I have listened to groups of children who have ventured up to our door, and to the more respectable people among us, too, as well as to beggars, and, although they all seem to know what they are saying, it is beyond my powers as a linguist to make rhyme or rhythm out of it. Our milkman who comes to town with his cans swinging in his saddle-bags has caught the

strain and an *Aguinaldo* goes with every *quartilla* of milk he dispenses. Juana II, now duly installed, buys an extra supply of *Aguinaldo* with every penny purchase she makes in the morning market and her viands are flavored with it.

On the evening of the fifth of January, baskets ranging in quality from the pathetic little home-made tissue-paper affair of the shack dweller to the larger and more elaborate silk and gilt creations of the wealthier homes will be hung around the houses, or, better still, left in the gardens or on the front door-steps to receive the offerings of the never failing three kings who come in the night to fill their baskets as certainly and mysteriously as our Santa comes to fill our stockings. The children are too excited to sleep late in the morning, but they bound from their beds,—that is, in cases where a kind Providence has provided beds—or, if not, they pull themselves up from an old home-made hammock, a canvas cot, a straw mat on the floor, or even a bare floor. Their one thought is of their baskets, the *Aguinaldo* and the nightly visit with which they are sure they have been honored.

We spent Christmas in our new house and we felt as grand as could be. We had our tree,

as usual, and some guests and a good time, quite like what we had the year before. Our house is both usable and pretty and we feel repaid for the eight months of strain we underwent to get it up. I wish every missionary in every land had as good a place to live. We never have anything new given us, without feeling a deeper gratitude to the people at home, and a deeper love for our work here.

Masalla, Feb. 2, 1908.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

You may be surprised to learn that Harry and I have separated and that I have taken to the woods. Last Friday the daily auto, which recently began operations between Doquiere and Masalla, stopped at our door, and to our surprise we were greeted by the principal of the Masalla school, who told us that she had come down to see if I could help her out during the illness of her assistant. It was sudden, but Harry said he could spare me if I could go, so I left him to keep bachelor quarters and took the return auto and here I am, a schoolma'am again.

My trip up was one long to be remembered. A Porto Rican with a coach is daring enough, but if you want to see him at the height of his

recklessness, just give him an auto. The man who brought me up here certainly deserves credit for not having dashed me to pieces. The way he rounded those mountain curves with great walls and overhanging rocks above our heads and gaping caverns and steep banks beneath us, is enough to make the most predestined Presbyterian in the world wonder if the Lord took automobiles with Porto Rican chauffeurs into account when He predestined people. The way hens did fly to right and left in front of us surely was an eye-opener, and the way a stiff-jointed, superannuated horse that chances to be snoozing in the middle of the road can run when that auto is after him, is nothing short of miraculous. We just grazed a dozen or more ox-teams and not a tail was taken off.

I have never quite lost my fondness for Masalla, our first love. It is perched high up in the mountains with a wall of almost barren rocks guarding it from behind, while on the other three sides are little valleys and ravines and canyons thickly set with shade-trees that hide rich little coffee fields. The public road ends here, and to go further, one must mount a horse and follow broken mountain paths or rough roads cut deep by the wheels of the

lumbersome ox-carts. By these you are led through little valleys into larger ones and through shady, damp ravines and passes that widen and deepen until you find yourself back in the high mountains in the very heart of the coffee district. Here the landscape thus shut off from the outside world, is beautiful beyond description. This district was Porto Rico's gold mine during Spanish times and it is now probably the place where the change from Spanish to American rule is most keenly felt. I have seen a coffee plantation of four hundred acres not far from here completely abandoned, the coffee trees growing wild and rank, the buildings falling to pieces, and hundreds of orange trees scattered about as they are among the coffee trees, left to carry their golden burdens until they fall from their own weight and are left to decay, their market value being less than the expense necessary to harvest them and carry them from the inaccessible plantation.

But I am off my subject again. I began to tell you about myself: I am temporarily in charge of the primary room in the Presbyterian school at Masalla. I have always had my doubts as to the justice and the success of the prevailing method of teaching here, for neither Porto Rican nor American teachers are supposed

to use anything but English in the classes above the second grade. Since it is an established rule in this particular school to begin the use of English with the wee tots, I determined to give it a fair trial, now that I had the raw material for the experiment before me.

My beginners' class consists of eight fat, twisting, wriggling, black-eyed children who have never even heard a word of English in their lives. I had practiced the kindergarten smile before my mirror that very morning in my own room, so at this point I put it on, and lined my class up around me and began: "Now, children, you know we are going to talk English." Eight pair of frightened eyes looked up at me, eight chubby brown hands began to twist their coat buttons or crumple up their petticoats, while eight little roly-poly bodies began to squirm. "Now, let us count," I continued, "all together, now, one, two, three, four ——" I counted up to ten and by way of response I received some more squirming. Then I counted again, with the same result, only one of the more daring of the number turned around and began to make marks on the blackboard and a half dozen more craned about to see what he was doing, but I put my line to rights and proceeded, this time smiling harder

and longer than at first. I counted again and again and after a while they were tired and I dismissed them. In a few days it dawned upon them that I was counting. Then I said, "Carmita, one finger," holding up one finger at the same time, but poor Carmita began such a series of contortions that I was alarmed, so I said, "Rafaelito, one finger, put up one finger —everybody put up one finger," but still I got nothing but wriggling and twisting. Then I held up one finger again and assisted Carmita in the same feat, and in an instant all the fore-fingers went up, and we counted fingers. After several days more of this, they had the firmly fixed idea that they were to do just as I did, and I was highly elated over the strides they were taking. But one day I was particularly tired and they seemed particularly stupid, and I lost patience and said, "Oh, no, no! no!!" clapping my hands together to emphasize what I said, and eight pairs of eyes looked up so pleased, and eight hands came down hard, and they said, "Oh, no, no! no!!" If I had to stay here forever, saying, "book, one book, two books, one finger, two fingers," and other like startling things, I think I should go insane. I always love Harry better after a hard day of this. I'm terribly lonesome to-night. I

think Harry must be giving me absent treatment.

At present we teachers and our Porto Rican followers in Masalla are making preparations for a fitting reception to our bachelor missionary who sails from New York next Saturday, and nothing is too good to suit the occasion, for, on top of the fact that we all love him, is the news that Mrs. Bachelor is with him.

Harry writes that he had a letter this week saying that there is a package waiting for him at the express office in San Juan. He is wondering what it is, but I have an idea that I know, though I am biding my time to tell it.

Doquiere, March 1, 1908.

Our dearest Mother Gertrude:

Home again after a month in Masalla. My eight twisting cherubs, though they promise well, are not yet what one could call eloquent in the use of the king's English.

I had planned to have quite an elaborate programme for Easter Sunday this year, but being side-tracked in Masalla has left me little time for preparation; but I shall begin at once, and I can promise that my children will not fail me, for they are always ready for any amount of work so long as it concerns a *fiesta*, and I

have never seen them excelled in native ability along these lines.

Our idea of Easter is quite foreign to the people here. They do not think of it as the day of Christ's resurrection primarily, nor do they feel any of the freshness and sweetness and newness of life that is attached to the day in our land. The days of Holy Week seem to us to be anything but holy. If you ask the average Porto Rican of the less intelligent classes—and they far outnumber the higher classes—what Holy Week is, they will tell you that it is a week of holidays and processions; but, as to the real religious significance of the season, they know little. Though the time honored order of celebrating this week still holds, the demonstrations as seen now are slight compared to what they were in former times, and in many towns the majority of the people give little or no attention to them, while in others there is little else to be seen or heard. Here in Doquiere all is comparatively quiet during the earlier part of the week. On Thursday, the day of the crucifixion of Christ, the bells are tolled. Friday, the day of burial of Christ, is the day of horrors to us. At three o'clock the burial procession leaves the Catholic church. First comes a large gilded casket which contains a more

than life-sized wax figure of the body of Christ, which can be seen through the glass front of the casket. This is placed upon a splendid gilt bier which is borne on the shoulders of men. Then comes a procession of priests and people, varying in length according to the interest in the event at the time. Then we see a large figure dressed in black, carrying in her hand a black-bordered handkerchief. It is Mary, mourning for the death of her Son. There are groups of altar boys bearing candles, groups of girls and groups of women who help to make up the procession proper, which is led by the town band and followed by the street rabble. They pass through the principal streets of town and then return to the church.

On Saturday, all is quiet. Even the bells are not rung. But early on Sunday morning we are awakened by the clanging of bells and the shouts of the rabble in the streets, for on the plaza there is another demonstration in honor of the glorious resurrection day. Two processions are formed. One is headed by an image of Christ, and the other by an image of Mary. These two divisions move in opposite directions around the city square until they meet, when the images are made to bow to each other. This is Mary greeting the risen Christ. Then

another figure appears. It is an effigy of Judas, who has betrayed his Master. It is sometimes carried and sometimes mounted on a horse. It is seized by the mob, torn limb from limb and carried out of the city, and often the luckless horse who carries this effigy is cruelly treated, and the scrabble continues until they have banished the traitor Judas from their midst. Little Texas asked her class of small boys what Easter day stands for and one of them said, "It's the day they run Judas out of town." This sounded strange to us until we learned that not only in the minds of the small boys, but in the minds of grown-up as well, this is the idea that characterizes Easter day.

Our vacation time is fast approaching and I must very soon begin preparations for the trip. As our church year closes on April first, we plan to leave on the last of the month. Harry is busy making up the year's reports, and we go the regular weekly rounds as is our custom. It is not easy to leave our field even for a few months, but we feel that we shall return brighter and sweeter and fresher for a new term of work.

There is talk all over the island of the danger of an epidemic of bubonic plague which they say has been carried from Venezuela. The

health department is seriously concerned about it, and they are taking every precaution to arrest its progress. To this end they ordered that all dogs running at large should be slain, as it is claimed that they carry infection, and poor Doggie fell a victim—a fitting end, I think, to his waywardness. Personally, I have been unable to feel the blow very deeply, but both Harry and the *señorita*, who so shamelessly tempted him from his home, took it so to heart that I erected out in the garden a fitting monument to his memory. It is made of wood painted white, and upon it are these words, which I consider particularly appropriate and touching:

Sacred to the Memory
of
Doggie
who died
A Martyr to Science
in the year of our Lord, 1908.

'Tis better to have loved and lost
than never to have loved at all.

R. I. P.

When Harry saw it, he forgot his grief and laughed aloud, but the *señorita* loved him with an intensity exceeded only by

the brother's fondness for our ill-fated pink and white tailless horse. She is inconsolable.

Doquiere, April 23, 1908.

Dear Mother Gertrude:

I have been busy these past few weeks preparing for our trip home. We plan to sail next week. How happy we shall be to see you! I almost wish the journey to California were ended. However, the distance does not seem so long to me now as it did when I first looked out upon it.

Harry is now in San Juan and I am spending the time during his absence with the teachers in the big stone house. An acquaintance of Harry's who is visiting the island wrote that he would arrive in San Juan on the steamer this week, and we thought it would be a welcome surprise for him to have Harry there to meet him and bring him over here. Since he left, I received, from the express office in San Juan, the most mysterious and interesting looking large box which had been forwarded from there. A card accompanied it which strictly stipulated that it was to be opened in the presence of the entire mission force of Doquiere, and I knew at a glance that the handwriting

was that of Mrs. Williams. The girls and I are like a lot of children just before Santa Claus arrives. We are sure that it must contain something for each of us and we can hardly wait for Harry to return. The box now occupies a place of honor in the middle of our parlor rug, and there is a hatchet beside it, that no time shall be lost when Harry comes to reveal its treasures.

I have been sitting alone on the big balcony again this evening, living over in my thoughts the whirl of the past three years, and twilight is just setting in. Our life here is now as a tale that is told. I think of my girlhood, and of the day when Harry said he loved me, the day when we were married, the day we left home, and of the happy, happy days and weeks and months since, and of happier, still happier days that yet await me. The path across the ocean seems shorter to me now than when Harry was with you two years ago, for in two weeks more we shall be nearing the door that bears the number 2720, but the thought of leaving behind the scenes that have claimed our interest for three years and the people that we love here is not free from a tinge of sadness. I feel to-night a new kind of homesickness that I have never felt before.

I love everything here but I am so tired. I want to go home.

Doquiere, April 26, 1908.

My dear Mother Gertrude:

In my last letter I tried to be calm and matter-of-fact, so that I might give you a taste of some of the surprises that have filled up the past few days. The most exciting adventure I ever shared, and the most thrilling event of our three years here, culminated on Saturday evening. Harry had returned from San Juan with his friend at noon, and I had the house as spick and span as work, soap and water, fresh flowers and two faithful servants, could make it, and, by way of overdoing it, I had decorated the guest-room in its daintiest apparel with a bunch of pink roses on the table. The girls laughed at me for spreading it on so thick for a friend of Harry's whom I had never seen, but I did it anyhow. We all agreed to have an early dinner and open the box in the evening and when I tell you all that happened that evening, you will not wonder that, as the little boy said, "I just thought I'd bust any minute."

The girls came over at six o'clock, and after they had finished exclaiming about my decora-

tions, we gathered about the box and Harry pried the cover. It was as good as Christmas. There was a set of books for Harry, some trifles for the servants, and for every one of us a new white dress with everything to go with it! That dear woman must have had her Aid Society and the Missionary Society and all her friends at work for weeks. Our eyes opened as big as saucers as, one by one, the fluffy, dainty things came to light. There were even white shoes and gloves and belts and handkerchiefs of the daintiest linen. They were all as girlish and as pretty as could be, but the little widow's gown, I noticed, was just a little bit more elaborate than the rest, with an extra touch of embroidery here and an extra frill there. A bevy of schoolgirls with a box from home could not have been more delighted than we were, and Harry insisted that we should go then and there and put them on and appear at our best to meet his friend, who, not being personally interested in the box, had gone out for a stroll on the beach. This took some little time, and I cannot begin to describe to you the scene that was enacted when we returned.

For the past two hours my heart had been thumping like a hammer, and I was then worked up to such a pitch that I could hardly

contain myself a moment longer. The box and all the wrappings and paper and sticks and nails had been cleared away, and there stood Harry in his best Prince Albert and beside him, in full dress, was his friend. The two girls who followed me out paused and stood modestly by waiting to be presented, leaving space in front of them for the owner of the blue eyes, who never in her life looked sweeter than she did that evening as she stepped into the room, where we stood breathlessly awaiting her. She glanced first at me, then at Harry, and then as the whole unusual situation seemed to dawn upon her in a flash, she started forward with a smothered cry that carried with it all her pent-up longings of three years and went straight to our hearts as two strong arms caught her up. Harry and I could not stand it another minute and we instinctively started for the study door, fairly dragging the other two girls with us.

"I've come to help you, my brave, sweet girl," the strange voice said, "and you ——"

But Harry closed the door and we did not hear the rest.

The excitement had been all too much for me and I sank into the morris chair and cried. Harry's eyes glistened suspiciously, too, and

the teachers looked frightened and could do little more than to gasp, "What? Who is he? What does it all mean?"

Then Harry explained and I helped him out, and brushed up my frowzled tresses, and, after half an hour or so, we returned to the *sala.* The stranger and his darling teacher, still agitated but in perfect self-control and radiantly happy, arose as we entered and stood beneath a pretty bell of pink that represented all the gardens in town and all the roses we could steal, borrow or beg, which had been worked together by the town florist. It had hung there when the girls had entered before, but in their excitement they had not noticed it.

The whole affair was as clear as could be to all now, and Harry stood up before the two, and the words "Whom God hath joined," though we had so often heard them, took on a new meaning to us.

When all was over and Mr. and Mrs.——— had been presented and kissed by us all, we went out to the dining-room where we refreshed ourselves with the modest little repast that, during the busy day, I had been able to prepare. We tried for another half hour to explain ourselves, then, as it was dangerously near Sunday morning, our last

Sunday, too, we left the dining-room and on entering the *sala* again Harry handed over the key of the house to his friend. "It is yours," he said, "until we return."

We bade them good-night and left the house, explaining to the girls that we were to be their guests until Monday noon, at which time we were to leave. And now that I have told you all, and our trunks are strapped and off, and the time is about up, I must close. Our next letter will, I hope, be mailed in New York.

New York, Nov. 1, 1908.

Our own dear Mother Gertrude:

The summer has seemed long to you I know, as it has to us, but now that you are coming to see us we feel repaid for the disappointment we felt when the doctor said I needed a year's rest and quiet, and we decided we would not return to our tropical home, but remain here in New York. The man who took our key to keep until our return is true to his post and Doquiere, my rag-tag babies and all are receiving the best of care.

"The bridge is burned," he wrote Harry a few days ago, "and you may be interested to know that I touched the match to it during my walk alone on the beach that happiest of happy

evenings when you opened the box from Mrs. Williams. I am thoroughly won over to your work. We deeply regret the loss of our two teachers, one of them having been called home by her mother's illness, and the other sent to a new field that claims to need her more than we do. Our sincerest love to you and yours," he added, "for to your kind interest I owe my present happiness as well as the love I have for my work in this little adopted country of ours."

Harry and I often talk of our life there and of the two who now fill the places we left. Our three years there were happy ones and the memory of them will ever be sweet to us. We got our share of the hard knocks that go with such a work and such a country, but we tried to take them bravely and wisely. Though we loved our little home in that sunny clime we must admit that the United States feels good under our feet and English sounds like music to us. I have pasted a white paper over the recipe for Hamburg loaf in my cook-book and we are again able to remember to eat the butter placed beside our breakfast plates.

I am happy in the expectation of seeing you so soon, for now I know that I have taken root in your heart and that you love me. Have you forgotten, dear Mother Gertrude, that it took

you a long time to be real nice to me after Harry told you that we were going to be married? And have you forgotten the time when you told me that you liked me just as well as you could like any girl who could have the presumption to marry your boy? and you said, too, that you "just didn't care!"—that some day I might have an only son and some one might take him from me and then I would know how you felt, "so there!" You forgot that way back years ago you married somebody's son, and that he was the father of your boy, but if you could but see us now, you would remember the boy you married and the little boy you held in your arms and the big boy you lost, and I know, too, that you would enter into his happiness and love me for taking him away, for you just couldn't help it. And you would kiss him and then kiss me, and then kiss the wee little boy in my arms, just because the boy you gave me is his father.

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