



The Hawaiian Islands and Porto Rico: Illustrated (Classic Reprint)

William D. Boyce

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Excerpt from The Hawaiian Islands and Porto Rico: Illustrated

In Selecting from my larger book, United States Colonies and Dependencies, sections for this smaller volume, I have taken two of the best examples of our colonial rule, the Hawaiian Islands, in the Pacific, and Porto Rico, in the Atlantic. One lies some 2,000 miles southwest of San Francisco, the other 1,400 miles southeast of New York, and both are tropic, lying almost in the same degree of latitude. A line drawn east and west through Hawaii and Porto Rico passes just north of the Panama Canal. This being so, the importance of these islands as United States possessions becomes apparent at once, and information relative to them of value to all.

Few of us have appreciated how favorably these islands are placed as United States naval bases, the one facing Europe eastward from the Canal, the other facing the Orient westward from the Canal, each a great natural outpost lying in the central ocean track of the world's future commerce. In the pages that follow the reader will find an account of what we are doing in the way of making Pearl Harbor, in the Hawaiian Islands, a naval base and military stronghold. But at Porto Rico, our main outpost in the south and east in the direction of Europe, Asia, Africa and South America - so far as fortifications are concerned, we are "going slow." It is my opinion that a naval base, fortified with guns of the largest caliber and longest possible range, should be prepared in San Juan and other good harbors on the island, making an ocean stronghold from which our fighting craft might operate, or in which they might find shelter, in case of war. For who knows upon what day war may come? If we ever face the need, and have not prepared such a base, it will then be too late.

Aside from the importance of these colonies as military outposts, their acquisition was a distinct addition to the area and wealth of the United States.

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