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INTERACTION OF CIVIL LAW AND ANGLO-AMERICAN LAW IN THE LEGAL METHOD IN PUERTO RICO*

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I. *A Savignian Commission*

The nineteenth century witnessed the struggling agony of the Spanish colonial empire in America. The year 1897 saw the empire make an effort, a belated and last effort, directed at the preservation of its greatly undermined existence. The year 1898 saw its life come to an end.

It was in the first quarter of the nineteenth century that the vast Spanish colonies on the mainland of America succeeded in attaining their independence. And, in the years that followed, what remained of the empire was threatened more than once by shots aimed at the liberation of the Islands.

On November 25, 1897, the Crown of Spain decreed an Autonomic Charter for the Government and Administration of the Islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico.¹ The draft of that decree, as submitted by the President of the Council of Ministers to the Queen Regent, was preceded by an able Statement which indicated an effort to keep the Islands.

For a better understanding of the situation created by the change of government in Puerto Rico as an outcome of the Spanish-American War, let us examine some pertinent provisions of the Autonomic Charter:²

*After the change of sovereignty in 1898, the English name for the Island became "Porto Rico." By virtue of Public Resolution No. 20, 72d Congress, approved May 17, 1932, the Island was officially designated as Puerto Rico.

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¹Laws, Ordinances, Decrees, and Military Orders having the Force of Law, effective in Porto Rico May 1, 1900, H. R. Doc. No. 1484, 60th Cong., 2d Sess. 1861 (1909). This will hereafter be cited as Laws, Ordinances, etc.

²See text of Charter in Laws, Ordinances, etc., *cit. supra* note 1, p. 1850.