

heard from every tongue throughout the day. These "pantanos" are sinks in the clay soil where one's animal plunges from perfectly solid footing fairly out of sight. The "pantanos" are bad enough, but the desechos (literally, refusals; avoidances;) are worse. These are ways cut around impassable places involving serious riding through bogs and jungles, and not infrequent goings astray in the dense forests.

The fences of these remarkable "roads" are curious affairs. Frequently they are of the Spanish bayonet, and the hemiquen with a broad leaf and barbed point six inches long, strong enough to impale your horse. Again strips of stone fence will be seen. Others are of pina de raton, or bastard pine-apple tree. But the larger number are of pinos botija. Green limbs are cut from this, and when thrust in the ground grow instantly and luxuriously. Between the branches the vejucos de angarilla, a hardy vine, is planted. This weaves itself through and through the hedge in all manner of fantastic and tightening freaks; and as it bears a lovely purple blossom, this fence is always strikingly beautiful to the eye.

One class you will miss in Cuba—no, only in shops, but everywhere else—is the women workers. The most sensiblet and often the handsomest of women can be found occupying places of trust in American mercantile establishments and offices. In all Havana but one place is noticed where white women are employed. This is a modiste's on Calle de Obispo; and these are a scraggy lot indeed. Women in Cuba are ladies, washerwomen, or demimonde. Shopping is done by the fair senoras or senoritas in the afternoon, and one will then certainly see beautiful women. They are neither flippant nor trifling in their purchases as in some countries. No salesman would dare gossip with them; suggest for them; or chatteringly enter upon discussion of their affairs. Nor do they inform shopkeepers of their own or their neighbors' intentions. They seem to know just what they want and go straightway and get it. The turnouts are very gay; thousands of women meet, mingle and pass greetings; but there seems to be a general understanding that a shop is not just the place in which ladies should entertain one another. This may arise from the fact that Spanish women are well bred. And well bred women set some store upon their own dignity and the home.

There being neither stoves nor fireplaces in Cuba, the question of cookingfires becomes an odd one. In the cities all cooking is done on charcoal urns, in the larger establishments these often being arranged in the form of massive charcoal ranges. But in remote country places a little pagoda like corner is built next the house, or a detached structure, not unlike an American farmer's large smoke-house, is seen. Here the fire is built squarely upon the ground, or upon, or within, rude stone bases, and the smoke ascends at will, usually finding vent underneath raised roofs.

In this primitive cocina or kitchen, the guarda candela (literally candle, or fire, guard) is always smouldering. It is practically the fire-place "back-log" of our olden days to the Cuban country-home. If it should happen to go out, which is seldom permitted as unhappy

superstitions attach to the fact, on discovery it is instantly relighted from flint and steel sparks struck into buncher of corn-tassels or dry and splintered leaves of the palm.

At the old Cuban town of Guines, which is scarcely more than a village, the loiterer has much to study and enjoy. It is more Moorish than Havana; more Doric than any village of the Holy Land; and as pretty as a rose-embowered garden. No hamlet in Europe that I have ever seen furnished such quaint old corners, or, when the eye and mind tire of these, given in every direction across its marvelous valley such enchanting prospects. The untold riches of the earth far and near have set their opulent seal on all things; and one can easily imagine that the handsomest women in the world are here housed. So, too, in Guines the Spanish idea of the constant seclusion of women is less rigorous. Balcony and portico swarm with the beauties, fair as the tropic flowers among which they smile. They are even upon the streets in dainty squads. Everywhere are song and music and flowers and women and indolence.

Seated underneath the cool porches of old Posada de Roig, what medieval sights and groupings are beheld! There against the portals of San Julien de los Guines churches is a group of lazzaroni baking in the sun as typical of all that is desperate and dolorous as Rome, Constantinople or Morocco can show. Here, beside you, are Gitani filthier and more persistent than ply their black arts in Lisbon, Madrid or Valladolid. At the mouth of that narrow calle are a dozen whites and blacks as innocent of clothing or shame as the Kanaker girls of the Solomon Islands. All about in half-caught threnodies, are sounds of music from instruments made and played precisely as when the same note resounded among the arabesques and fret-work of the Alhambra Court of Lions half a thousand years ago. Water carriers pass with puncheons on their heads just as they did in the days of Herod in Egypt. While through the medieval vision set actually before your eyes of today, coming to a later time and form, which yet seem but relics of dead centuries, are the ancient volantes, dragged sleepily along; caballeros and senoritas on horseback, as though a page of Don Quixote were furnished; and half naked guajiros with ox-boats, primitive as the portage of the ancient Goths and Huns.

At sundown in Havana harbor cannon boom from all the forts and men-of-war. Instantly every flag in the harbor is lowered. At 8 o'clock again the cannon bellow. Instantly again from hundreds of vessels come the clanging sound of "eight bells!" With these mingle the chiming of bells from a hundred churches. Far and near sound the notes of the trumpeters in the forts upon the mountains. Then for a little it seems as if deep silence came upon mountain and city and bay; and then—here a song; there the notes of a guitar; over yonder the merry click of the castinet; beyond, sailors singing roysteringly or well; here again an old American accordion full of sentiment and sweetness; out there in some Scotch craft a bagpipe, softer sounding than upon shore; beyond that clump of vessels, the crew of a German man-of-war, singing as only Germans

can sing some soulful bundeslied; upon the shore near and far and all about, all manner of half-heard tones of laughter and melody, hidden and intensified in mystery and sweetness by distance and night; while from the look-outs on Moro tower, around to Jesu del Monte, and on again circling to the sea, are heard, as in medieval days of old Spain, the chanted calls of challenging sentinels, travesty of our later time with owl like hooting from monarchy's mold and gloom.

An agreeable diversion in Cuba is participation in a genuine "cobijar" or house-raising. I was once a guest at one of these in the country region north of Trinidad. A couple had been married. About a caballeria of land had been given them by an old montero father, and planters and yeomen alike, some from as far as twenty leagues away among the mountains, had come to make a sort of festivity out of setting the queer home upon its legs.

Over a hundred men were here, and their little ponies were tethered for a half mile up and down the road. Two fat bullocks had been killed, and roasted, and there was no end of roasted pigs and tender lambs from the mountains with all sorts of unnamable Cuban country dishes. Perhaps a score of men were employed in the cooking alone. There were casks of aguardiente and flagons of cheap Catalan wine, and these splendid swarthy fellows made many picturesque groups among the laurels, palms, tamarinds and mignonettes which grow to the height of our own flowering locusts.

But to me the construction of the house itself, as it arose in the wilderness garden, under the lazy, "visiting" sort of efforts of the crowd, was fully as interesting. It was built of guabrahaca (ax-breaker) woden posts, interwoven with the long, straight and thin saplings of llaya, until a complete and most dextrous net-work of side-walls was made. This woven work is perhaps eighteen inches in thickness, and as rapidly as it progressed upward a score or so of guajiros forced into the chinks and interstices a hard plaster made of clay, water, and the tough espartillo grass; so that by the time the casa de vivienda was ready for its roof, as two or three days are consumed in a Cuban house-raising, the sides are dry and solid as a brick wall. This particular structure was about forty feet square in area, making a pretty comfortable home for a newly wedded pair. The roof went to a tremendous height at the ridge, and with its bellying arch of llaya poles reaching out over rude, wide porches, was thatched with the broad leaves of the palma de manaca, a small species of the palm, which serves for a perfect shelter for a period of seven years.

The quaint little village of San Francisco de Paula, between Havana and Guines, is one of the most winsome places to be found in Cuba. It is romantic in situation and prized for beautiful women and famous bread, both worth traveling a distance in any country to enjoy. The village nestles within a narrow gorge—the main street being formed by the calzada itself—and then truantly struggles on either side to a cock-pit on the one height and to a queer old church on the other. But down below, along the street and about the ways and paths between the houses, are bowers of roses—