

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## IN THE MARKETS OF LIMA.

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Lima, Peru, June 3, 1898.—The American minister and myself spent this morning in the markets of Lima. We met at the market house at 7 a. m. and ate our *diceuno* at a little restaurant just off the main aisle. *Diceuno* is what the Peruvians call their first meal. It is taken on rising and consists of two little pieces of toast and a cup of coffee or tea. The real breakfast is not taken until 11 or 12 o'clock, and dinner does not come until 6 or 7 in the evening. The minister and myself are afflicted with good American appetites and we pieced out the meal with two bunches of white grapes, each of which was as big as your head, the grapes themselves being as large as damson plums. Our meal was a most democratic one. The table was large, and we had hardly taken our seats before an Indian woman with a broad-brimmed Panama hat coming well down over her bronzed features sat down opposite us, and ordered an ice cream, which was served in a champagne glass. Then a pock-marked Peruvian of the lower class took a seat at the table for his chocolate, and just as we were about to leave a fat old negress wearing a black manta or shawl which covered the whole of the upper part of her body, and all of her head excepting her face, slid down into a chair beside me. While we were eating we were besieged by peddlers of various kinds, from women who offered us lottery tickets to men who had for sale waxen images of the Virgin Mary dressed in the latest modern styles. All about us were the queer characters which make up the lower classes of the Peruvian capital. There were cooks by the hundreds buying their marketing for the day. Some were Chinese, some negroes and many were Peruvians with the yellow skins which show that they are a product of the native Indians and the Spanish. There were scores of women dressed all in black, with only their faces showing out of their black shawls. There were many market women in calico dresses wearing straw hats, and not a few queer people from the mountains who looked about with eyes of wonder at their first sight of the great city. The crowd numbered thousands, and it was the busiest crowd I have seen in Peru.

Peru is a land of fat things. There are really so many wonderful products here that I hesitate to describe them for fear I may not be believed. What would you think of string beans as long as your arm? We saw lots of them at the vegetable stands. They were tied up in bunches and hung upon poles. We saw potatoes as yellow as gold. These are the *papas amarillas* of Peru, which are a bright yellow when cooked. We saw sweet potatoes of many kinds, some of which were as big as the yams of America. Then there were quantities of yucca, a tuber which grows about two feet long, and which is as big around as a base ball club. It is not unlike the potato, but the flesh is more transparent, waxy and jelly-like. This is one of the chief foods of Peru. We saw roasting ears at nearly every vegetable stand, and in the grain markets handled varieties of corn which I have never seen at home. Some of the corn was as black as ink and another kind was of a light yellow, with grains almost as big as a Lima bean. These two varieties are so mealy that you can make flour of

them by pounding them with a stone. They come from the mountain farms, and to a great extent form the food of that part of Peru. We saw squashes and melons of all kinds. Many of the vegetables I could not understand, and the fruits embraced those which are grown in the tropics, as well as apples, peaches and pears. The apples were not good, however, and most of the peaches we saw were of the clingstone kind. The best fruits are the grapes, the *chiremo*, which is as big as a naval orange and which tastes a little like ice cream; the *palta*, which is eaten as a salad or an appetizer, with vinegar, salt and pepper, and which has a flesh not unlike that of stiff butter; the blue and white figs, which grow in all the coast valleys, and bananas of many kinds and different varieties of oranges, limes and lemons. Then they have here guavas, pomegranates, tunas, the fruit of the cactus, and olives, which are pickled in such a way that when they come to the table they are black and soft rather than green and solid, like the olives we eat.

On the whole the living here is very good. You will not find in Washington or New York a better meat and fish market than that of Lima. The meats are largely sold by women, and the women seem to have monopolized the milk, meat and vegetable trade of this city. The steaks and chops are very good and you can buy a little kid or a half dozen guinea pigs for a trifle. The Peruvians are very fond of kids, and guinea pigs are a delicacy not to be sneered at. They taste much like young pigeons or very tender squirrels. They are raised and fattened for eating all about here and nearly every farmer keeps a guinea pig pen. Another queer dish is fish cooked by putting cold lemon juice on it. It is really raw fish served with lemon juice, but the lemon has much the same effect on the flesh of the fish as boiling, and I have a number of times smacked my lips over what I thought was the most delicious boiled fish I had ever eaten to find that it was fish a la *serviche*, that is raw fish and lemon. The fish of this coast are delicious. They are of nearly every kind from the sole to the corbina, which is a very large and sweet fleshed fish not unlike the blue fish of the Atlantic, though of a more delicious flavor. I tried the Peruvian oysters at the National Club today. They were brought in parboiled on the half shell. I did not like them.

There is no place that I have yet visited which has so much pepper and potatoes upon its tables as I find here. It is said that the Peruvians eat more pepper than salt. They serve it with nearly every dish, and you always find a little dish of *aji* (pronounced ah-he) a sort of red pepper paste beside your plate ready for use as you may fancy. *Papas con aji* is a favorite dish made of potatoes and pepper with a sauce of tomatoes and eggs. It is as hot as fire, but not bad to eat. *Papas ariena* is made of potatoes mashed and then mixed with olives, onions, eggs and raisins and then fried. *Papas con arros* is potatoes cooked with rice, and there are several other queer combinations of potatoes and other things. One of the chief dishes found on every Peruvian table is a soup called *sanchchow*. This is made by cooking together nearly every kind of vegetable and a goodly portion of meat. The soup is drained off and served clear and the vegetables and the meat brought in on a separate plate to be eaten after the soup. This dish forms the chief

meal of many of the poorer classes. The rich live here as well as in any city of the world. Meals are usually served in courses, one dish being brought on the table at a time and the plates changed with every course.

Peru is, it seems to me, the paradise of the housekeeper. There are few places where it is easier to manage a house than here. There are no long stairs to climb. In many cases the whole house is on one floor, and I have visited Lima families who had houses containing twenty large rooms, all on the first floor. The cooks do all the marketing of Lima. A lady seldom goes out of the house except to shop or visit. The way the marketing is managed is to allow the cook so much a day, according to your pocket and style of living, say \$2 a day or more, and for this he is expected to supply the meals and see that the table is completely furnished with food. In other words, you board with your cook. If you have a good cook you will be better and more cheaply served than if you tried to manage it all yourself, and at the same time save all of the wear and tear. Many of the cooks are Chinese. All expect to make a profit off of the marketing in addition to their wages. Servants are cheap here. I give the usual prices in our money, having reduced them from the silver paid here. Cooks get about \$6 a month; housemaids, \$5; chief butlers, \$10, and the second butlers, about \$5. These are the prices paid by foreigners. The native Peruvian families pay less, and in the country districts there are many house servants who do not get much more than their board and clothes. Seamstresses who come to the house to sew receive from 30 to 40 cents a day, and washerwomen 25 cents for washing and about 50 cents for ironing per day.

The chief servant of the house is the first butler or chief major-domo, as he is called. He has general supervision, keeps things in order and waits upon the table. Sometimes he is good, and sometimes not. I heard last night of a major-domo who created something of a sensation at a dinner given to W. R. Grace and James Gordon Bennett some years ago. Messrs. Bennett and Grace were visiting Lima, and Mr. Eyre, the head of the house of Grace here, gave them the dinner. He had, however, a new butler, who was not used to foreign ways, and who when he came to open the champagne was astonished to see the cork fly out with a crack like a pistol. He had never handled such an article before, and he was so scared that he threw the bottle out of the window and then dropped down upon the floor and howled. I do not know how Mr. Eyre was able to allay his fears so that he could proceed with serving the dinner, but I am told that the man came to his master after breakfast the next morning and begged to be allowed to leave. Said he: "I like you and the *senora* very much, but I cannot remain in a house where they drink such explosive materials." The Peruvians, however, drink about as strong liquors as any people. The places where beer is sold in the country towns are marked by red flags, and in some villages nearly every other house is a saloon. The "smile" Peruvian is quite as common as the "smile" American, and drunkenness is the great vice of the poor.

But let me tell you how our American minister lives at the Peruvian capital. His house, which is one of the best in the city, faces a beautiful garden filled with palm trees and a rich growth of tropical plants. There are winding walks where you can stroll about under the trees among flowers more gorgeous than any we have at home. The house, like all of the houses in Lima, is built of mud, but it looks as though it was