MATANZAS DE CUBA.

What the Traveler Sees Today in a Railway Ride Through the Central Provinces—Family Life in La Cubana—Mysteries of the Cuisine.

Matanzas, Jan. 12, 1899.
Special correspondence.

Railway traveling in Cuba is always uncomfortable and very expensive—at least at twenty cents a mile one sees all the roads, and there are peculiarities about it which the foreigner will do well to understand beforehand. For example: A passenger-ticket does not provide for any baggage in the line of trunks, etc., and in such cases there is considerable charge, per "arroba" or 25 pounds. If your trunks are extraordinary heavy, their transportation may cost more as baggage than your own fares and in that case you would better buy a regular ticket for them, or for another passenger. People are permitted, however, to carry all manner of trunk into the coaches, free of charge; from household goods to sacks of fruit and huge bundles of clothes tied up in sheets—in spite of the startling complacency noted, to the chief case cited from English, as follows:

"Matrita, The Tomora, passenger, are notified that on this train (Cuba) it is allowed to carry: Not one valise, one hat and one gamecock."

The cars of the first, second and third classes. Those of the first class are comfortable, healthy coaches, and seats for passengers but women. Nearly all the seats face in the dingy upholstered mahogany-back, and are cushioned, but the price for equal discomfort, though their wires and springlessness is rolling rather more on the same train. The third class cars, at one-third the first class fare, are roughest of cattle cars, furnished with rude benches, and to them are assigned laborers and soldiers, whose ease on the immediate, brutline attached to every train as a guard against desertion. There are no smoking compartments in the Cuban railway service, because here, as in all Spanish countries, men smoke everywhere—in the parlor, in the parlor, in theater—with never a thought of the lady companion—it being taken for granted that nobody can possibly objet to the odor of good tobacco, and very seldom to an ill, sandalin and the fragrance of flowers.

Instead of the omnipresent newsboys of the North, lottery-venders are heard the train at every station, Chinese, and ragged politicos, male and female, scenery through the cars, or stopping you at the window, offering samples of cocoanuts, oranges and bananas, dirty-looking, fetid-smelling cigarettes, and the fruit of the country, cream skins of cheese pilly, sing birds in wicker cages, bright-colored candies and "dulces" (jellies) by the big and pulpily strangling, and boxes of iced glycerine, the last named artificial, but very popular and rarely sale among curmudgeonly foreigners. Each line "cakeing box" carries a lunch counter for sale, so brightly shining that one or three of them illumine the darkness better than a yellow ship. Non-stop trains have a lunchable drought of the quality lolly that used to circulate by hundreds of tons in Cuba, because the lives of those who picked such enormous quantities of oranges were mostly cut short by one scurvy or the other. The favorite comesto, with whom avocado tolo and oyster is a delicacy, and tea a fanatic, usually come to bare, the brown soap, or wallet in case. In all first class cars, and in private cars throughout the West Indies it serves prominently at breakfast and dinner, served with soup, chicken, game or dessert, and the traveler soon considers it indispensable.

Now and then the train stops to "water" at some wayside elevated cistern, and always close by is a wretched lunch counter, where, unknown to reverent dispense coffee, Cubitos who can travel only second class, and who are the construction in steam and labour. The traveler who has not brought a basket, or a well-filled lunch, finds himself worse off than the foolish virgins when lamps went out, for he stands a chance of starvation in the long journey between Cienfuegos and Matanzas. But he would better endure the pangs of hunger than to take the "yerk of dirt" prominently in the miserable but high-priced food, cooked by the sometimes dirty, sometimes dirty, dirty, dirty,