

and dangerous passes to somnolent piano accompaniments, and Minnie's sister was only saved from napping by the necessity of translating the shadowed letterpress that accompanied the heroes to their interesting goal.

For the rest the Spanish language offered no conundrums to Minnie. On board she had matriculated in that sonorous idiom by memorising the terms "Gracias" (thank you), "Muchas gracias" (many thanks), "Si" (Yes).

"No" (No).

"Buenas dias" (Good day), and, above all: "Como no" (of course).

She had thoroughly appreciated the fact that the latter terms of acquiescence will enable any well-meaning beginner to follow an incomprehensible explanation with courtesy, filling the pauses of conversational rhetoric by a smile and the magic "Como no!"

"Como no" became Minnie's pet pass-word, her mascot in times of stress. "Como no," with varying intonation offered a hundred safety valves from the troubled onrush of enigmatical words.

To offers of free coaching in Spanish she replied: "I did not come here to study, I have earned a long holiday, and I am not going to grind Spanish! You leave me alone, I'll get along all right!"

And she did.

Almost from the start she was reading the local papers and commenting on their contents.

She generally knew far more of politics and general events than we did and conversed on what she read.

Her knowledge of Latin was, of course, a great help and when in doubt she did not hesitate to Latinise an Anglo-Saxon term, occasionally to the bewilderment of her listeners, but on the whole making herself perfectly understood.

The drudgery of Spanish verbs and other grammatical traps she ignored altogether.

"I don't want to teach Spanish," she said.

Unfortunately the altitude of Copiapo disagreed with Minnie and she found it necessary to settle in the neighbouring port of Caldera, where by courtesy of the American Smelting Co., an earthquake and fireproof bungalow was placed at her disposal.

Here she cemented a sincere friendship with her hosts and with other representatives of the English-speaking colony and learnt to love, as all do who live for a time in its vast spaces, the mystery of the desert and its hidden beauty, which is a parable.

She learnt to appreciate North American energy of purpose as illustrated by its great co-operative organisations.

The American calls himself a "hustler" but in this he is unjust: his work in neither fussy nor hustling. His

industrial foundations once planned and approved, grow by steady mutual effort of human units, perfectly placed and in harmony with the whole.

Rapidly and surely civilised centres spring up in desert wastes, on arid heights, among snows that for ages have hidden unclaimed mineral wealth.

"Cannot" and "impossible" are words that do not exist for him when once his goal is fixed.

At the same time he makes no merit of physical discomfort: All sanitary, domestic, recreative, moralising advantages he is used to at home, he imports heedless of expense.

"Money is meant to circulate."

Entire houses, first-class furniture, excellent plumbing and of course, plentiful bathrooms, with hot and cold water laid on, electric light, tennis courts, libraries, theatres, billiard tables, model huts and houses for workmen, surround the working plant and form the American idea of a camp.

Water is made to flow where before was drought and if the United States of North America boast of more centenarians than any other country they certainly deserve the distinction.

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When Lina's work allowed her to be in Caldera such topics would be discussed with her sister as she and Minnie sat by the open fireplace in a cosy, well-lighted room, while possibly, the winter down-pour roared on the roof and a storm-wind lashed the waves.

And Lina who besides being headmistress of a Lyceum was president of a peace society, would speak of a time when nations would learn of each other, would appreciate each

the other's merits, do justice to alien talent surpassing their own.

But Minnie shook her head.

"Peace will never be universal," she declared, "because it is not natural. 'Life' itself is constant warfare."

Then after a pause, in which to consider this biological tragedy she would toss back her head as though shaking away unwanted thoughts (exactly as she used to do sixty years ago!) and exclaim cheerfully: "Let's drop it. Let's play *bésique!*"

Thus then passed the time—or, she would call up and vivify from the beyond, romps of children, she the wildest of them—studies at Barts, her companions there, her chums, teas in Sister John's room, and the joy of professional success, her long friendship with her former superior, their spirited intellectual duels behind which was always a rampart of mutual esteem until, perhaps, she dropped unconsciously into silence, and Lina would begin a low sing-song of Folk songs which Minnie loved and into which she would always join, beating time softly on the arm of her lounge-chair.



FEATINOS—LA SERENA. OFF THE COAST OF CHILI.  
"A Scene Minnie viewed with admiration."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)