

—What width is it?—Two metros. I will take nine metros. I think you said the price was three dollars a metro, did you not?—No, ma'am I said three dollars fifty cents.—*That will do.* ⁽³⁾ Now, show me some stockings. I think in this case. I prefer the French goods.—Here are some at two dollars a pair, very good value for the money.—I will have four pairs. Now some children's sizes, of the same quality; I suppose they will cost a little less.—Yes, ma'am one dollar, fifty.—I will have five pairs.—And the next thing ma'am.—I see you have some nice-looking shawls there, those small ones.—They are made at the factory at Il-defonso, are very good, beautifully soft, and cost only four dollars.—I will take two of this pattern. I do not think there will be anything more to-day; to-morrow I will bring my little two girls down as I said. When can you send these goods?—Within an hour, ma'am.—Please send the account with them, and I will *settle* ⁽⁴⁾ to-morrow when I come. Can you tell me where I can buy a portmanteau? you do not keep them I believe.—No ma'am; but you can get everything in that *line* ⁽⁵⁾ in the next street.—Thank you, good day.

Lady at the portmanteau shop, to shopman. I want to see a portmanteau, please.—About

(3) Eso bastará.

(4) Pagar.

(5) Ramo.

what price, madam?—Say, fifteen dollars, a brown one for travelling.—Here is one *at that figure*, ⁽⁶⁾ ma'am.—I think that rather dear.—Well say fourteen ma'am.—Then, you were trying to rob me of a dollar. You said fifteen dollars, and now you ask me fourteen. Good day. I never deal at a shop that has two prices, and shall not forget to tell my friends of my experience with you.

At another store lady sees the same article marked at at twelve dollars, and purchases it.

A conversation on the English Language.

Are you learning English?—Of course I am, how can I *get on* ⁽¹⁾ without it? It is indispensable in my office, and I earn just about twice the salary I should receive if I did not speak the language?—The latter is certainly a consideration. How long have you been learning?—About eighteen months.—That is not very long.—Well, I have a great advantage, in this way, that all the men in our office except two, speak English; so that I have a good opportunity to practise what I know.—That is *half the battle*, ⁽²⁾ as we say. It

(6) A este precio.

(1) Progresar.

(2) La mitad de la batalla.

seems to me that taking three or four lessons a week, as most of us do, is of very little use, unless we have the good luck to be able to practise it in our daily work. Where did you learn?—I took private lessons from a very good man, an Englishman from London; his pronunciation was perfect, and he always spoke very slowly and deliberately. He was a Teacher by profession and had taught in various schools and countries from the time he was a boy. Then you had an advantage; so many *take to teaching* ⁽³⁾ in this city as a *dernier ressort*, as the French say. They seem to think that, because they can *Speak* a language, they can *Teach* it.—This is a great mistake; there is an art in teaching, and a person must be taught how to teach in the same manner as he must be taught anything else.—You are quite right; the gentleman in question was a born teacher; he had taught all classes of boys, rich and poor, sailors and landsmen, Americans, New Zealanders, Australians, Kanakas, Chinese, French, German and I do not know how many more. He had a large connection in this city, and was teaching from seven in the morning till ten at night, with very few hours' intermission: and besides all this he was writing books. How did he *stand* ⁽⁴⁾ the strain? You

(3) Enseñar.

(4) Aguanta.

may well ask that; I often put the same question. His answer was that he had an iron constitution. He led a very regular life; was an "Early to bed, and early to rise" man, and took great care of himself.—What system did he use? The Berlitz, in a modified form; but Berlitz was his text book.—Did he know any Spanish? Yes, enough to make himself understood; but it was all the better for me that he did not speak it much; I used to like him to explain things to me in English.—Is it not very difficult to do that sometimes with pupils who do not know English?—Yes, and that is one of my objections to the Berlitz system; the teacher has to resort to a kind of deaf and dumb motion, when he might make use of the Spanish word, and have done with; in fact, my teacher did this, and found it very helpful; but he had a great deal of discretion, and used his own language on every possible occasion; it was only *now and then* ⁽⁵⁾ that he fell back upon a Spanish word.—Did you not find English very difficult?—Difficult is not the word; it is atrocious. The spelling is a perfect torture. To take only one example out of a thousand I could name. I was told that e. y. e. spelt "I" and was sounded just like the letter "I;" and that h. i. g. h. was pro

(5) De cuando en cuando.

nounced exactly like it with the letter "h" before it. Put the three words together; look at them; HIGH, EYE, I. Does it not seem ridiculous? I could give you hundreds of similar inconsistencies. I do not mean to say that this is the general character of the spelling but there is much to worry a learner; especially one who knows the Spanish language with its beautiful regularity in this matter.—What other difficulties did you meet with?—The pronounciation of some words I found very troublesome; for instance, such words as Sir, brother, truths, rooms, writer, and words with the "sh" sound, like *shoes*, and *brushes*, sounds that we never hear in our language; and a host of others, too numerous to mention; nevertheless, I conquered them by degrees. I know very few Mexicans who are able to speak pure English.—I am not surprised at that; in fact, I wonder that they speak it so well, when you consider its difficulties.—On the contrary, many English and many Germans speak Spanish perfectly; I mean as far as pronounciation is concerned.—I should think it is one of the easiest languages under the sun, from that point of view. Every word is pronounced as it is spelt, and the spelling is consistent; I love the language; it has a majestic "ring" about it: the prominence given to the sound of the consonants is very fine. Do you

not think the English language very rich?—What do you mean by "rich"?—I mean that it has a word for everything, and for every shade of meaning of a word. With you one word does duty for many. I notice that there is no equivalent in Spanish for several of our common expresions take, for instance, the word "wear" you say "usar" which is the same word you would employ if you were speaking of using a broom or a pen. Then again, you have no word for "ride"; that is very strange, and so of others.—I think those remarks apply to English as well.—When you had got through the First Berlitz book, what did you take next? I went a little way into the second book; but found it very difficult; it seemed to me a *great leap* ⁽⁶⁾ from the first book to the second. The *early* ⁽⁷⁾ part I liked very well; but when I came to the second part, I made very slow progress. I think the book could be improved. My professor wrote several easy dialogues himself which I used to read with him. They were principally on Mexican matters, and were very interesting. Some of them were written expressly for particular pupils; a lawyer, a watchmaker, a doctor &c. It always appeared to me that

(6) Mucha diferencia.

(7) Primera.

we want some good English Readers, compiled expressly for Mexican students, with subject-matter interesting to the people of the country. The books now in use are very good for the purpose for which they were intended: but the subject-matter is either English or American; and is far from interesting to Mexicans. — I quite agree with you. Did you ever learn any English poetry? — Yes, a little, and liked it very much. — Did your teacher ever ask you to translate your English into Spanish? — Yes, when I got into the second book, and I found it very helpful; it was a test of my knowledge of the real meaning of the piece I read. — At what time did you take your lessons? — At night from eight till nine, often after a hard day's work. — Can you read an English newspaper? — Fairly well; it is very good practice. — What did you pay your teacher? — Twenty dollars a month, for three lessons a week — Do you not think that rather dear? — No indeed, if you want a good article you must pay for it: I certainly got my money's worth. My teacher never missed a lesson, except under very pressing circumstances, and then he always gave me due notice of his inability to come: I felt I could depend upon him; he was always punctual too. Sometimes he would offer to come on a Fiesta day, but I never would allow him to do that. It showed he had

no wish to *shirk* ⁽⁸⁾ his work. — Can you write a letter in English? — Yes, I made a special study of that in my spare time. — Well, I am very glad to hear you speak so well of your professor. — Here are some curious lines that recently appeared in the Bangalore Magazine (India) and are worth preserving:

“When the English tongue we speak
 Why is ‘break’ not rhymed with ‘freak’?
 Will you tell me why it’s true
 We say ‘sew’, but likewise ‘few’?
 And the maker of a verse
 Cannot cap his ‘horse’ with ‘worse’
 ‘Beard’ sounds not the same as ‘heard’;
 ‘Cord’ is different from ‘word’;
 ‘Cow’ is cow, but ‘low’ is low;
 ‘Shoe’ is never rhymed with ‘foe’.
 Think of ‘hose’ and ‘dose’ and ‘lose’;
 And of ‘goose’ and yet of ‘choose’.
 Think of ‘comb’ and ‘tomb’ and ‘bomb’;
 ‘Doll’ and ‘roll’, and ‘home’ and ‘some’.
 And since ‘pay’ is rhymed with ‘say’,
 Why not ‘paid’ with ‘said’, I pray?
 We have ‘blood’ and ‘food’ and ‘good’;
 ‘Mould’ is not pronounced like ‘could’.
 Wherefore ‘done’, but ‘gone’ and ‘lone’?
 Is there any reason known?”

(8) Eludir.

And, in short, it seems to me
Sound and letters disagree."

They are very clever.—Will you allow me to take a copy of them?—With much pleasure.—Good bye.

At the University School

Good morning, sir, have I the pleasure of addressing the Principal of this School?—Yes, sir, I am one of them.—We have just arrived from England, and I want to place my two boys with you. This is my card.—We shall be very glad to have them, sir. There is a large English element in our school, and I am sure your boys will feel quite at home here.—Thank you. We heard of your school the day after we arrived, from a Mr. F. of Tacubaya.—Yes, Mr. F. has two boys here, and they are doing remarkably well.—As I am a little particular about my boys' education, I hope you will pardon my asking you a few pertinent questions.—Pray do not name it, sir, I shall only be too glad to answer any questions you may propose.—I have one of your prospectuses, and I see that both you and your partner are highly qualified for your work; but may I ask, without appearing to be rude, whe-

ther the other professors are equally qualified?—I am very glad you to hear you ask such a question; and I can say, without the slightest hesitation, that such is the case. We are extremely careful in the selection of our teachers, and have refused applications from apparently good men and women, because we are particularly jealous of our reputation.—Thank you very much. I know your difficulties in such a school as this, and in such a city, so far from England and the States; and I am sure you will agree with me that the engagement of teachers is a matter of vital importance.—Now with regard to your premises; should you have any objection to my looking round?—Not the slightest, sir; on the contrary, I was just about to suggest that you should see our rooms. This is our largest room; I think you will say it is a good one.—I am delighted with it: it is so well lighted and ventilated. There is brightness about it that is very pleasing.—These are the other rooms; and I hope you will be equally pleased with them.—Indeed, they are everything that could be desired; lofty and well lighted, two very important considerations.—Then you see we have a very fine hall here, which gives us all the fresh air we need; and a large patio as a play-ground, and these are our lavatory arrangements. I am just about to take the next house, as we are rather

crowded.—Well I am charmed with all I have seen. Now, with reference to the boys: one is twelve and the other ten; they are very good boys as boys go; that is, they are amenable, and not given to shirk their work. This is their last Report from a very conscientious man; you will notice that he does not overlook their shortcomings.—That appears very satisfactory, indeed. May I ask where this school is?—Right in the heart of London, not far from St. Paul's Cathedral. There were only twenty boys; and they were remarkably well taught. But before sending my boys there, I put them to a good Board School in a very select neighbourhood, and I never regretted it. Most of the scholars were the children of people in good positions, and the boys got a thorough grounding the elementary work, as you will soon find out.

I see by your prospectus that you have what you call a Commercial Course. I am afraid my boys would be too young for that work just yet; and from what I am able to judge, I should think they would be about equal to the work of the Third year. However, that is a matter entirely for you to decide. Later on I shall want them to take up Shorthand and Book-keeping, as I intend to put into them business. I am a merchant myself, and hope they will follow in my steps.—I suppose they do not speak Span-

ish.—No, but I do.—They will pick that up very soon. All our pupils speak that language. If it is not a rude question, may I ask whether you have come to settle in this city for good?—Yes, and if all goes well, you may depend upon having my boys for at least three or four years. I see you have no Latin in your prospectus; the boys are fairly well on in that subject, and I should like them to continue it, if possible, as an extra; can that be managed?—Nothing is easier, sir, it can be taken either before or after school hours, as you may desire.—Well, that is a matter for arrangement in the course of a few days. I see you mention Cricket and Swimming in your prospectus; you seem to be very broad; how do you arrange those matters?—That is done on Saturdays; I go with the boys to a very good swimming bath in the Reforma; and afterwards to Cricket. I am quite an enthusiast in the latter, and play in all the games through the season here.—My boys shall certainly avail themselves of those two sports. They can both swim. When will be the most convenient time for the boys to enter?—The month commences on Wednesday, and they had better come up then.—If you will let me have a list of what they require in the way of books &c, I will get them.—Yes, sir, you shall have that the first day they are at school.—I see that some of

the boys have a uniform. I should like my boys to have them. I notice your terms are payable in advance; if you will make out the account, I will settle with you now.—This is it, sir.—Thank you very much. I should like my wife to see the rooms before the boys come; I will bring her and the boys too.—Any time you please, sir, say to-morrow at ten: I shall be here, and so will my partner.—Very well, then, till to-morrow, Good day.—Good day, sir.

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